PEER LEARNING MEETING OF LOCALISATION NETWORKS COMMUNIQUÉ

Nairobi, Kenya, 8-11 September 2025

Thirty-seven (37) local and national network representatives from 16 countries across Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East convened in Nairobi, Kenya, from 8th to 11th September 2025 to reflect, learn, and strengthen the role of networks in advancing local leadership. Their discussions were situated within the changing operating environment for civil society actors, marked by five ongoing system shifts: including the Closing Civic Space, Reduced Funding, Humanitarian Reset, Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) Nexus, and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and UN-led Processes.

Amid these shifts, the networks highlighted diverse ways they are already exercising leadership. They described influencing coordination platforms, advancing access to pooled funds, expanding women-led and women's rights platforms, and securing recognition in national and regional fora. While network models differ by context, they are united in their role of advancing local leadership.

Participants included women-led and refugee-led organisations, reinforcing that localisation must also mean inclusive and diverse leadership.

This **communiqué** is both a reflection and a joint commitment by the networks to deepen collaboration, influence global processes, and take collective action toward system change. It summarises four days of peer learning and engagement and invites partners to work with networks to put local leadership into practice across the aid system. The networks agreed to continue collective advocacy in global arenas such as the Grand Bargain, the IASC, and UN reform processes, to ensure that local leadership is at the centre of aid system reforms. Going forward, networks will sustain peer learning through an annual convening, virtual exchanges, and joint evidence generation to track progress on localisation.

Shift 1: Closing Civic Space

The situation: Restrictions on association, assembly, registration, and finance are intensifying in several contexts. Intimidation and attacks are on the rise, often targeting human rights defenders. Administrative harassment and hidden costs further undermine the ability of civil society to operate effectively.

What are networks doing?
- Leading collective, context-specific advocacy, as it is harder to silence networks than individual voices.
- Maintaining solidarity mechanisms that provide emergency protection, temporary shelter, and psychosocial support to network members.
- Facilitating peer learning on resilience, legal support, and digital security.
- Consolidating and reporting evidence of human rights violations and abuses to international mechanisms and reporting back decisions to members.

"Civic space is our right to express ourselves freely and associate with others. A free, safe, and open civil society space is the foundation for us to operate, participate, and raise our voice."

Shift 2: Reduced Funding

The situation: Funding across the humanitarian, development, and peace sectors is shrinking. Humanitarian response is hyper-prioritised, while project cycles are shorter and funding conditions more restrictive. Local actors compete with international organisations for a diminishing pool of opportunities. Heavy reliance on institutional donors leaves networks vulnerable, and domestic resource mobilisation and government budget allocations remain limited, with only a few emerging examples such as county-level disaster-risk budgets in Kenya.

What are networks doing?
- Implementing locally managed funds, such as the AASHA Fund in Pakistan and capacity-strengthening funds in South Sudan.
- Advocating for more direct, flexible, and multi-year funding that covers core costs and enables long-term planning.
- Exploring domestic resource mobilisation through philanthropy, private sector partnerships, and social enterprise models.
- Engaging governments to allocate resources for disaster preparedness and response.

"Local networks are in paradox. We are increasingly recognised as frontliners. However, when it comes to discussions on funding shifts, there is no space for us."

Shift 3: Humanitarian Reset

The situation: Reset processes are largely steered by international actors, with limited local voice. A narrower focus on programmes, partners, and geographies risks excluding community organisations. Coordination reforms are being introduced without resourcing local leadership. Access to pooled funds can be constrained by complex requirements and short deadlines. We caution that without explicit shifts in funding and decision-making power, the Humanitarian Reset risks reinforcing the status quo rather than transforming it.

What are networks doing?
- Sharing information on global and national processes and decisions and elevating national-level voice through Humanitarian Country Teams and sub-national coordination forums.
- Developing joint positions on coordination reforms and pooled fund governance.
- Taking up leadership in coordination platforms, including co-chairing transitions to nationally anchored models.
- Advocating for locally led pooled funds and inclusive pooled fund decision-making.

"We need a seat at decision-making platforms, not just as participants but as leaders."

Shift 4: Humanitarian–Development–Peace Nexus

The situation: Communities experience needs holistically, yet financing remains fragmented and underfunded. Donor trust in local actors is often filtered through compliance and capacity concerns. New alliances are emerging to bring together humanitarian, development, and peace actors.

What are networks doing?
- Convening diverse actors at country and sub-country levels across humanitarian, development, and peace to align strategies and reduce duplication.
- Translating community priorities into Nexus language that donors and policymakers can act on.
- Fostering donor confidence by pooling compliance tools and sharing capacity on due diligence.

- Drafting joint positions on approaches that aggregate local voices into national and global processes.
- Enabling grassroots, women-led, and refugee-led groups to participate in Nexus spaces, including peacebuilding processes.
- Providing space to test new models (e.g., localisation labs, shared services, cross-sector platforms) that make the Nexus practical at community level.

> *"Capacity sharing with network members: the stronger the individual organisation, the stronger the network."*

Shift 5: SDGs and UN-led Processes

The situation: Progress on SDGs is slow. The UN development and cooperation frameworks are often designed without meaningful participation of local actors. National development plans and disaster-risk frameworks do not consistently align with commitments on localisation. Women- and refugee-led organisations remain particularly excluded from policy dialogues and SDG follow-up. In contexts where governments restrict civic space, networks face additional barriers to influencing UN country programming.

What are networks doing?
- Advocating for localisation to be embedded in national development plans, SDG strategies, and disaster-risk management frameworks.
- Securing representation in national and UN coordination fora related to development planning.
- Engaging governments to dedicate resources to local priorities.

Beyond the Shifts

What are networks doing?
- **Risk sharing:** Safety, security, and duty of care practices across members.
- **Inclusion:** Advancing women led and refugee led leadership in decision making.
- **Innovation:** Network led standard operating procedures to scale quality, capacity sharing models, due diligence passporting approaches.
- **Accountability:** Muli-dimensional and go beyond financial reporting to donors. This includes community feedback mechanisms, member vetting through due diligence process including peer references, ethics and safeguarding mechanisms that reviews complaints received against members.
- **Equitable partnerships:** Resource pooling, peer capacity sharing, transparent opportunity sharing, and area based coordination models.

Invitations to Partners

We extend these invitations not only as asks, but as pathways to shared accountability — urging all actors to move from rhetoric to practice.

Mutual Commitments Among Networks:
- **Solidarity and protection:** Strengthen protection for members, including shared safety and security practices, and duty of care.
- **Accountability:** Maintain robust accountability and peer-learning systems, and document impact with evidence from the ground. Accountability will be upheld at multiple levels:
  1. **To communities**, through formal and informal feedback mechanisms (hotlines, suggestion boxes, assemblies, joint supervisory committees) and clear commitments to timely responses.
  2. **To members**, through vetting procedures, ethics committees, safeguarding protocols, constitutions that define responsibilities and sanctions.
  3. **To governments and donors**, by maintaining transparent financial and governance standards.
- **Inclusive network governance:** Ensure fair participation through rotational leadership and collective decision-making.
- **Innovation and inclusion:** Scale up innovations in localisation, compliance, and financing, and ensure meaningful inclusion of women- and refugee-led groups.

The networks commit to sustaining this momentum by continuing joint learning, coordinated advocacy, and evidence generation, and by reconvening annually to take stock of progress and refine strategies.

Invitations to Governments

Governments are called upon to embed the role of civil society and community actors in national disaster risk management policies, financing frameworks, and national development plans, thereby ensuring sustainability beyond external aid.

- **Protect civic freedoms:** End restrictive laws and practices.
- **Stop harassment and attacks:** End intimidation, violence, and reprisals against activists and civil society workers.
- **Recognise networks:** Treat networks as legitimate partners in humanitarian and development action.
- **Institutionalise participation:** Include local and national actors in decision-making and create enabling environments to fast-track localisation.

Invitations to Donors

Donors are invited to champion collective metrics of progress on localisation (e.g., percentage of pooled fund decisions made by local actors, percentage of direct multi-year grants) and ensure that such metrics are reported via FTS or IATI or validated by third parties.

- **Direct, multi-year support:** Provide direct, predictable, multi-year support for local actors, including core support for network functions such as coordination, accountability, and quality assurance.
- **Close funding gaps:** Link humanitarian financing to Nexus programming led by WLOs and WROs, whose presence, expertise, and leadership are essential.
- **Simplify compliance:** Harmonise requirements by working with networks to pilot shared tools and due diligence passporting.
- **Accessible pooled funds:** Make pooled fund governance more accessible and inclusive.
- **Locally led pooled funds:** Leverage locally governed pooled fund mechanisms to accelerate progress toward the 25% direct funding target for local and national actors.
- **Risk-sharing and duty of care:** Resource practical risk-sharing and duty-of-care arrangements that reflect the realities of local actors working in high-risk contexts.
- **Recognize and promote network leadership:** Local networks should be recognized not just as participants but as co-architects of system reforms, including in the Reset processes.

Invitations to International Actors

International NGOs and UN Intermediaries are urged to measure partnership quality — not just quantity — and to document cases where decision-making and resources have shifted to local actors, providing evidence of change.

- **Cede leadership:** Transfer leadership in coordination platforms to local and national actors and engage with existing local coordination spaces.
- **Co-create equitable partnership:** Move beyond subcontracting toward models that involve joint design, shared decision-making, and fair allocation of resources and visibility.
- **Partner on systems change:** Support networks on due-diligence harmonisation, pooled-fund readiness, and quality assurance; engage through existing structures to reduce consultation fatigue.
- **Transfer decision-making power in pooled funds** to local actors and cover costs of local leadership roles.

"Localisation is not just about funding. It is about trust, respect and shared responsibility."

Countries and Networks Represented

Country	Organisation / Network	Description
Colombia	Colombia Localisation Working Group – GTLo / Apoyar	It is a network of local organisations in Colombia made up of 187 NGOs and 144 CBOs, created within the framework of the Flagship Initiative. The GTLo serves as a space to promote localisation in the country through five pillars of work: participation and coordination; capacity strengthening; access to quality and sufficient financing; communication and visibility; and advocacy. It also acts as a platform to foster synergies among multiple localisation efforts. This working group is led by APOYAR (a local NGO) and the Corporación Infancia y Desarrollo (LA CID).
Ethiopia	Charter for Change (C4C) Working Group / Consortium of Christian Relief and Development Association (CCRDA)	The newly established C4C working group brings together local, national, and international organisations to advance the C4C commitments in Ethiopia. CCRDA, with over 460 members, coordinates members and advances localisation agenda. It has established National NGOs Humanitarian Forum for members share and learn among themselves. CCRDA is a Charter for Change endorser and Chair of the national Charter.
Ethiopia	Ethiopian Localization Lab (ELL) / Network for Empowered Aid Response (NEAR) Affiliate	ELL was launched by 10 CSO who are NEAR affiliates and expanded to more than 25 local and national CSOs. These include refugees, women, youth, and IDP-led organization's working in some of the remotest and difficult areas in Ethiopia. ELL plays a critical role in the localization process in humanitarian, development, and peace sectors. By nurturing local leadership, strategic planning, innovative research, and high-level advocacy, ELL is transforming the delivery of aid to be more locally led, sustainable, and responsive to communities' priorities. ELL is co-convened by the Action for Integrated Sustainable Development Association (AISDA) and the Pastoralist in Action Development Organization (PIADO) and Community Initiative Facilitation and Assistance (CIFA).

Country	Organisation / Network	Description
Honduras	Asociación Calidad de Vida (Organisation)	Asociación Calidad de Vida a women's organization that is representative of local and national networks focusing on women's rights and human rights.
Honduras	Coalición Nacional de Redes y Organizaciones Ambientales (CEHPRODEC)	A member of the National Coalition of Network and Environmental Organizations, which brings together 32 peasant, indigenous, religious, and human rights defender organizations in Honduras.
Indonesia	Indonesia Localisation Lab	Part of NEAR, the Localisation Labs that provide a framework, structure and space for local and national organisations to cultivate and experiment how to operationalise localisation.
Indonesia	Penabulu Foundation – Civil Society Resource Organisation	Penabulu Foundation is an Indonesian civil society resource organisation dedicated to strengthening the sustainability and leadership of local civil society through innovation in governance, financing, and collaborative ecosystems. Penabulu works to expand civic space, promote locally led development-humanitarian, and connect diverse actors—ranging from grassroots groups to intermediaries and donors—to co-create solutions for systemic challenges.
Kenya	ASAL Humanitarian Network (AHN)	AHN brings together over 30 community-rooted organizations across Kenya's arid and semi-arid lands to champion locally led humanitarian, development, and peace-building efforts. Grounded in the lived realities of frontline communities, AHN provides a trusted coordination and advocacy platform that amplifies local voices and solutions. The network has been instrumental in shaping county-level disaster preparedness, advancing localization practices, and ensuring that humanitarian responses are inclusive of women-led and community-based actors. AHN's strength lies in its ability to bridge local action with national, regional, and global policy spaces, keeping communities at the centre of decision-making.
Kenya	Charter for Change (C4C) Working Group	The C4C Kenya Working Group is a coalition of local, national, and international NGOs committed to advancing localisation in humanitarian and development work in Kenya. It is part of the broader C4C initiative, launched globally in 2015, which seeks to rebalance power and resources toward locally-led action. The Kenya Working Group is currently chaired by Empower and Serve Kenya (EmpServe) and co-chaired by Christian Aid.
Kenya	Refugee-Led Organization Network of Kenya (RELON)	National platform of refugee-led organisations for voice, policy influence and resource access.
Kenya	Reimagining the International Non-Governmental Organisation initiative (RINGO)	Hosted by the West Africa Civil Society Institute (WACSI), RINGO is a systems change initiative that seeks to co-create a more just and sustainable civil society in which power and resources are shared equitably. It is a globally coordinated cross-sectoral effort working to accelerate the transformation of civil society through innovation and active engagement with key actors across the system. RINGO supports majority world actors to revolutionize their role and take the driver's seat within civil society, while INGOs shift away from being the dominant actor and take on a more supportive, solidaristic role.
Kenya	Community-Led Action Network (CLAN)	The Community-Led Action Network (CLAN) is a coalition of NGOs and community-based organisations (CBOs) that brings together local actors to strengthen community-driven responses within the humanitarian–development–peace nexus in Kenya. CLAN provides a platform for collaboration, advocacy, accountability, and knowledge-sharing, promoting locally led solutions and ensuring meaningful community participation and voice in decision-making processes.
Lebanon	Charter for Change (C4C) Secretariat / National Reference Group (NRG) Lebanon / Lebanon Humanitarian and Development Forum (LHDF)	LHDF, Lebanon's largest network of L/NNGOs, plays a pivotal role in coordinating humanitarian and development efforts while advancing localization. As co-chair of the Localization Task Force and host of the NRG, LHDF ensures that global commitments are translated into tangible national progress and facilitates inclusive dialogue with donors and humanitarian stakeholders. In addition, LHDF convenes the Lebanon Localisation Lab to drive practical solutions and, since January 2025, has been hosting the global C4C Secretariat, providing critical coordination and administrative support to signatories, endorsers, and working groups. Through these roles, LHDF reinforces its leadership in promoting locally led action, equitable partnerships, and quality funding.
Myanmar	Local Intermediary Action (LIA) Network / The Women's Organisations Network Myanmar (WON)	A national platform of 14 large national organisations acting as local intermediaries to channel funds and support grassroots groups. Network of WLOs for rights and participation. WON is a network of 30 organisation. It was set up to support women's community groups across Burma working to contribute to the well-being of women and men across the country.
Pakistan	Charter for Change (C4C)	Brings together local, national, and international organisations to advance the C4C commitments in Pakistan.
Somalia	Somalia NGO Consortium (SNC)	SNC is a coordination platform of 122 national and international NGO members as of 2024, working across Somalia and Somaliland. It strengthens collective advocacy, enhances information sharing, and improves the impact of humanitarian and development interventions by engaging with donors, authorities, and ensuring that community voices shape policy and programming.

Country	Organisation / Network	Description
South Sudan	Charter for Change (C4C) Working Group	Brings together local, national, and international organisations to advance C4C commitments.
South Sudan	Localisation Working Group / National Reference Group (LWG/NRG)	Serves as a collaborative platform that brings together local and national actors to coordinate, advocate, and advance the localisation agenda within their contexts. Provides a structured space for dialogue with donors, INGOs, and governments, ensuring that local priorities and perspectives inform policy and practice. Strengthens accountability, promotes equitable partnerships, and facilitates collective action, positioning networks as credible and influential system actors in humanitarian and development processes.
South Sudan	Start Network / Hub	The Hub comprises 9 members, 5 INGOs and 4 NNGOs. It convenes actors and invests in locally led response and leadership. It's steering committee chair and deputy are from local NGOs. At the Global level, at the Start Network, local members are part of the board of trustees. This is to make sure the local voice is at the table of the decision-making. Start Network have 135 members both local and INGOs, and 10 hubs in 10 countries. It has pool funds (Start Fund for emergencies within 45 days period; and Start Ready for specific countries and it respond to disasters).
Syria	Syrian Women's Network / Localisation Lab in Syria	Network of organisations and individuals advancing women's rights, participation and democratic governance.
The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)	Charter for Change (C4C) Working Group	Brings together local, national, and international organisations to advance the C4C commitments to advance local leadership in DRC.
Turkey	National Reference Group (NRG) / Refugee Council of Türkiye (TMK)	TMK took a structural step in advocacy and ensured its sustainability by initiating the establishment of NRG in Türkiye. It successfully convened donors, UN agencies, and INGOs and jointly launched the NRG together with the Localization Advocacy Group (LAG). Within the framework of NRG meetings, challenges in the humanitarian system and the issue of localisation are discussed. Representing the NRG, TMK also carries out visits to various public institutions. Its advocacy has not only raised critical issues but has also contributed directly to shaping policy.
Uganda	Charter for Change (C4C) Working Group	C4C in Uganda plays a central role in advancing locally led humanitarian and development action. It advocates for direct funding to national and community-based organizations, ensuring they are recognized as equal partners rather than just implementers. It strengthens the capacity of local actors, promotes accountability to affected communities, and fosters equitable partnerships with INGOs. By amplifying local voices in policy and resource allocation, C4C helps make humanitarian responses in Uganda more inclusive, sustainable, and community owned.
Uganda	The Refugee Women Leaders Network (REWON)	REWON advances refugee rights and gender equality at national and global levels, with policy advocacy as a key focus. They strengthen diversity, women's leadership, collaboration, coordination, and participation through capacity building and strategic partnerships.
Yemen	National Reference Group (NRG) / Yemen Localisation Initiative (YLI)	NRG in Yemen is the country's foremost Yemeni-led civil-society platform driving localisation and optimisation of humanitarian and development response. Convened under YLI and hosted by Tamdeen Youth Foundation (TYF), NRG convenes over 80 NGOs, networks, women- and youth-led NGOs, and community-based actors. TYF plays a central role as initiator, host, and Secretariat, ensuring the NRG's independence, inclusivity, and accountability. Through this leadership, TYF has positioned NRG as a trusted interface with international actors, UN agencies, and donors, while linking Yemeni voices to regional and global reform arenas such as the Grand Bargain 3.0, Charter4Change, NEAR, and LOCALiance. NRG is anchored in Yemen Localization Strategy (2025–2027) and supported by the HST-LHL programme.
Zimbabwe	Zimbabwe National Association of NGOs (NANGO)	NANGO is the umbrella body of CSOs in Zimbabwe, fostering coordination, collaboration, and collective advocacy across diverse sectors. It works to strengthen CSOs' capacity, amplify their voice, and promote accountability in development processes. In the context of localisation, NANGO plays a critical role in advancing local leadership, ensuring community-driven solutions, and linking grassroots initiatives with national, regional, and global policy platforms. Through its networks, it drives inclusive participation and safeguards civic space for sustainable development.
Zimbabwe	Zimbabwe Alliance for Humanitarian Action (ZAHA)	ZAHA brings together national and international organisations to collectively advance the agenda for local leadership in Zimbabwe.