



Humanitarian Funding, Partnerships and Coordination in the COVID-19 crisis:

# Perspectives from local women-led organisations and women's rights organisations



# About this Policy Brief

Local women-led organisations (WLO) and women's rights organisations (WRO) play critically important roles in crisis response, but their efforts often lack both political and financial support. On 16th July, the UN launches an updated Global Humanitarian Response Plan (GHRP) for COVID-19. CAFOD, CARE International UK, ActionAid, Danish Church Aid and Oxfam partnered with local WLO and WRO partners in Lebanon, Jordan, Bangladesh, Uganda, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Kenya, Nigeria, Occupied Palestinian Territories and South Sudan to gather a snap-shot of the Covid19 response to date in terms of access to funding, partnerships and decision-making for WLO/WROs. This paper summarises our findings and recommendations.

The following national and local WLO/WROs shared their insights with us and/or helped with outreach to a wider range of local women's groups in their context for this research:

**Alkeram Association** – Jordan

**Arab Women Organisation Jordan**

**Association Najdeh Lebanon**

**Association of Voluntary Actions for Society** – Bangladesh

**Association Zain Alsharaf** - Jordan

**Candle of Hope** - Kenya

**Nari Maitree** – Bangladesh

**New Women's Connector** – Netherlands

**Reach Out** – Cameroon

**Refugee Consortium of Kenya**

**Rehabilitation Empowerment and Better Health Initiative** – Nigeria

**Titi Foundation South Sudan**

**Voice For Change** – Papua New Guinea

**Women International Peace Centre** – Uganda

**Women's Affair Center** – Gaza

Whilst our survey involved a small number of WLOs/WROs in these contexts, the findings have been corroborated by colleagues working in global women's rights networks as resonating with experience of others.

The paper summarises relevant policy commitments on localisation and participation by local women's groups in humanitarian action and the COVID-19 response, analysis from consultations with local WLO/WROs at the country level, and concludes with recommendations developed in consultation with our local partners on the research.

The INGOs involved in this research commit to follow-up with our partners and other relevant stakeholders to deepen the analysis and advocate for change on the priorities raised. The coming months and year ahead, as the COVID-19 response and recovery unfolds, will be decisive ones – both for saving lives in the face of the pandemic, and for reshaping the humanitarian system. We know we all have to do better at supporting women community leaders, local women-led organisations and women's rights organisations working at the frontlines of crisis response. They should be at the table when decisions are made both during the COVID-19 response and beyond.

**Cover:** Local women's group producing soap as part of the COVID-19 response supported by Centre Olame, a local women-led NGO partner of CAFOD in South Kivu, DRC. Since March 2020, demand for soap has risen five-fold in their area as people look to follow the guidance on protection from Coronavirus.

# Policy Commitments

## on Funding and Supporting Localised, Women-Led COVID-19 Response

To an unprecedented extent, the COVID-19 crisis has forced a recognition of the central role played by national and local organisations in humanitarian action.<sup>i</sup> Donors, UN agencies and INGOs have talked about the need for a radical step-change in funding and partnerships with local actors in inter-agency humanitarian policy fora, such as the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) and Grand Bargain. An IASC paper on unlocking and disbursing funding to NGOs in the COVID-19 response calls on the UN system to ‘strengthen national NGO involvement in planning and coordination processes’, including in HRP revisions and cluster coordination processes, and highlights the importance of involving WLOs/WROs. The paper also calls on donors and UN agencies to directly fund NGO networks and instruments, and cites an example of a women’s fund (Urgent Action Fund for Women-Africa). It also calls for tracking of funding to local actors (including WLO/WRO) and engagement to: ‘foster a practical dialogue to identify ways forward on risk-sharing, partnership and other strategic priorities to enable NGO responses.’

Likewise donors and UN agencies have also highlighted the gendered impacts of COVID-19, and the critical frontline role played by WLOs/WROs.<sup>ii</sup> The UN Secretary General himself has called for a global campaign to address how COVID-19 has unleashed “a shadow pandemic” of violence against women and girls. In different countries there are reports of 60 – 775 percent increase in calls to domestic violence helplines<sup>iii</sup>, including 775 percent increase in calls of the national hotline in Kenya<sup>iv</sup>. In Lebanon, out of 250 women and girls interviewed, 37 percent reported feeling less safe since the COVID-19 lockdown. In Jordan, domestic violence also increased by 33% during the first month of lockdown (according to Family Protection Department of the Police.) In remarks calling for action on domestic violence, Guterres highlighted how institutions mandated to address gender-based violence were under huge strain from the demands of dealing with the pandemic: “*local support groups are paralyzed or short of funds. Some domestic violence shelters are closed; others are full.*”<sup>v</sup> His top recommendation on tackling the upsurge in domestic violence was to: “*Increase investment in online services and civil society organizations.*”<sup>vi</sup>

Other UN agencies have also highlighted other gendered consequences of the crisis, spanning access to healthcare, education, livelihoods and decision-making, and the important contributions of WLOs/WROs to mitigating these impacts. Research indicates that states with more women in leadership are more likely to deliver COVID-19 responses that consider the effects of the crisis on women and girls.<sup>vii</sup> The World Health Organization’s Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan (SRSP) for COVID-19 places a huge emphasis on social mobilization and community engagement. As experience in other public health emergencies like Cholera and Ebola has demonstrated, WLOs/WROs have critical, but all too often neglected contributions to make to this. As an IASC note on gender in the COVID-19 response highlights:

*The participation and leadership of women and girls – and their respective women’s networks and youth rights organizations – in responding to this crisis will be crucial to ensuring the most effective humanitarian response. With only 54% of crisis contexts holding at least one consultation with local women’s organizations in the planning of their humanitarian response strategies in 2018, it is clear the humanitarian system has a long way to go to address this debilitating gap.*<sup>viii</sup>

# Key Findings

## Concerns that commitments to mobilise funding to WLOs/WROs for crisis response are being backtracked on.

Of the 18 women-led organisations (WLOs) and women's rights organisations (WROs) consulted for this statement, only 3 have been able to access new and additional funding for COVID-19 response through the UN system so far. Several partners described an almost existential threat to their organisation's ability to keep functioning beyond monthly salaries for staff, as donors and UN agencies cut their funding or redirect their funds to other priorities and agencies.

The inability to plan beyond the immediate response means that women humanitarians and their organisations also face the grave risk of being shut out of the medium and long-term socio-economic recovery to build back better – and to help to build back equal.

The partners consulted for this paper perceive that the vast majority of the funding for COVID-19 through the UN system has gone to a narrow range of health interventions, and into the budgets of UN agencies and host government. Local civil society in general, and WLOs/WROs in particular, have fallen to the bottom of the priority list for funding through the UN system. **Gender and women's rights related funding appears to be amongst the first to get cut.** Several partners interviewed currently face unsustainable job losses on top of pre-existing problems like staff burnout or one spoke of potentially having to close their organisation by January 2021. Partners also described knock-on consequences for contractors that work with them on their programmes but are not full-time employees, for example drivers. One local WRO described paying for their drivers' salaries during lockdown with a prize they were awarded by an organisation in New York.

For those WLO/WRO partners that have accessed funding from the UN for COVID-19 response, gratitude was expressed. For example, Association Najdeh, a Palestinian women-led NGO in Lebanon, has received funding from UNICEF to provide assistance for women, girls and children during their quarantine; including support for psychosocial support and food parcels for the camp's population in Wavel camp. However, in those cases where WLOs/WROs had received funding from UN

agencies, it represented a decline in the level of funds previously received from the UN.

Concerns were also raised about **inadequate coverage of overheads costs, including covering staff salaries and basic infrastructure and office supplies.** As Association of Voluntary Actions for Society (AVAS) told us:

“The lack of support for our overheads costs means that we have to draw on our contingency funds and from income-generating activities like micro-credit and our training centres. Members of our Executive Committee have contributed some funds. All this has meant that our manager's salary is not covered, and sometimes volunteers are stepping up to do more of the work.”

### AVAS Bangladesh

Similarly, a WLO from Kenya highlighted that the limited contributions that are received to cover staff salaries remain small, with the expectation the amount will also cover further costs, including other indirect costs, governance functions and policy systems.

Another concern raised is the lengthy periods and delays between the submission of proposals, indications from the UN that proposals were approved, and receipt of any funding. Examples were shared about UN agencies which had approved proposals submitted by WLOs/WROs and pledged funds to them, but then these funds had still not arrived months later.

One local WLO applied for UN funding for GBV programming in January 2020, received notification of being shortlisted in June 2020 and are awaiting confirmation of being chosen before receiving funds. This same organisation applied to a donor government to work on women's economic wellbeing in March/April 2020, and received a holding message and are awaiting further details. In Uganda, WROs organised themselves into a Gender Taskforce on COVID-19, which approached donors managing a basket fund on governance and human rights issues, but months later these requests are still under “review.”

## **Back-donors should make effective and empowering partnership approaches mandatory when channelling funds through intermediary INGOs to local WLOs/WROs.**

Our partners reported very mixed experiences with UN agencies and INGOs as intermediaries, and expressed support for donors outlining more explicit and mandatory expectations on them in terms of implementing good partnership practices. For example, the European Union has established country-level funding opportunities for local civil society. As a consequence, some of our partners found that some humanitarian INGOs, not previously committed to localisation, have partnered with WLOs/WROs to access this funding, but without clear or credible steps to support those WLOs/WROs to graduate to lead on funding applications and stand on their own two feet in managing such grants.

One of the INGOs involved in this report acknowledged challenges with ensuring a coherent approach to effective partnership with local WLO partners in the midst of scaling up a humanitarian response. For example, small-scale grants to local WLOs were being managed with the same onerous bureaucratic procedures as much larger grants, which went beyond either the backdonor or the INGO's own policy requirements. This was spotted and addressed, but it illustrates how the pressures of crisis response can be overwhelming and make good partnership harder to practice. Other INGOs were appreciated for their longer-term solidarity and support, including through flexible funding to support the gaps that more short-term, projectized funding through the UN system does not provide for.

## **Lack of meaningful engagement by WLOs/WROs in COVID-19 response coordination, planning and decision-making by the UN and by governments.**

A consistent theme in the feedback from these partners was a sense of being excluded from meaningful participation in setting priorities, decision-making or shaping the plans which determine where funds are allocated in the UN response. The discussions in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee amongst UN agencies and INGOs about engaging with national and local actors to understand and address their needs in COVID-19 response is yet to have translated into consistent engagement

with WLOs/WROs on their challenges or potential contributions in these contexts. Even when WLOs are included in humanitarian coordination processes, there are challenges for their participation and collaboration as processes are dominated by INGOs and UN agencies. Steps to engage them in a meaningful way are at a nascent stage.

One positive experience in recent years has been steps taken by UN OCHA to engage WLOs/WROs in the advisory boards to UN Country-Based Pooled Funds in some contexts. This initiative followed advocacy by WLOs/WROs and their INGO partners on women's participation in humanitarian decision-making. This also builds on wider forms of technical advice and accompaniment to WLO/WROs in navigating humanitarian coordination, funding processes and proposal development.

For example, last year in South Sudan, \$1.5 billion was pledged for Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) and \$72 million was realized and allocated to NGOs. From that total, 8 women-led NGOs benefitted from those funds. This followed advocacy by local WLOs/WROs supported by their INGO partners, including the agencies involved in this brief. Titi Foundation South Sudan undertook a mapping of local WLOs, which identified over 50 groups with relevant expertise and programming that could be eligible for CBPF funding. However, in 2020, only 4 out of 50 women-led NGOs received funding under the HRP's Standard Allocation 1, which is a decline on last year. So far, none have accessed COVID-19 funding from the Pooled Fund or the new CERF Block Grant for NGOs, for example.

Progress has been inconsistent and, inevitably, dependent on personalities and the personal commitment of OCHA staff and Pooled Fund managers in different contexts. With the onset of COVID-19, with global appeals going underfunded and other pressures on humanitarian agencies at all levels, it appears that **decision-making on funding has centred between international agencies, UN and INGO, in clusters. Local partners, including WLOs/WROs, have become in practice deprioritised.**

## **Multiple WLO/WROs consulted expressed an interest in more direct engagement with donors.**

The INGOs involved are all signatories or allies to the Charter4Change charter,<sup>ix</sup> which includes a commitment to introduce our local NGO

partners to institutional donors, and in different ways we have done this. Facilitating this often happens linked to policy dialogue about a given context or thematic issues. For more substantive and sustained dialogue, organisations involved in this research highlighted the importance of support for country-level dialogue and more direct engagement by donors through country-level funding instruments, consortia and platforms.

### **WLOs/WROs being bottom of the pile in terms of access to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) with months of delays in receiving PPE to respond to COVID-19 from the UN and others.**

In several cases, UN agencies had told WLOs/WROs that they would provide funds or supplies, including PPE supplies, to support their COVID-19 response, but then neither the funds, nor the supplies had materialised. In one case, a UN agency had announced that it has provided PPE supplies on social media to a WRO and others in the country, but that WRO had not yet received the supplies and was not aware of any other WROs that had received the PPE supplies either.

"International agencies in Nigeria can withdraw their staff and they have the budgets and flexibility to survive as organisations and not lose their jobs. Many local women's rights organisations are working at the grassroots on a shoe-string budget, and most cannot provide PPE for their staff. This leads to organisations and their staff being exposed to serious risks, and yet we do not feel like we have the backing of international agencies to cope."

**Local women's rights activist, Nigeria**

### **COVID-19 is compounding the insecurity, erosion of civil society space, threats and violence against WLOs/WROs**

In several contexts, partners described shocking incidents and worrying trends as security forces and other power-holders have used the cover of COVID-19 emergency measures, and wider instability brought about by the crisis, to perpetrate violence, harassment and intimidation against women active in local civil society. In conflict-

affected and fragile state contexts, the secondary impacts of COVID-19, in particular economic consequences in terms of job losses, and wider impacts on trade and markets, have been especially destabilising. In the occupied Palestinian territories, for example, local women's rights activists described how COVID-19 lockdowns and the Israeli government's moves towards annexation are resulting in a perfect storm of "economic precarity and gender-based violence in home, political instability and military actions in the public sphere." The impacts on organisations' ability to move around and implement work led, amongst other things, to the temporary closure of the only women's shelter in the Gaza Strip with the staff struggling to find new, safe accommodation for its residents.

In Colombia, a women's rights activist working with partners of CAFOD, Carlota Isabel Salinas Pérez, was killed on 24th March 2020 at her home in San Pablo. Carlota lived in an area that housed families displaced by the armed conflict. Her activism included support to peacebuilding and women's rights. On the day she was shot, she was organising food supplies for local families affected by the pandemic. Carlota had been working with young people on a campaign called "SOS – we are all vulnerable" to help those without food who could not access local markets due to the shutdown.

In Uganda, one local women's rights activist told us:

"The face of vulnerability in Uganda, like in many African countries is women, girls and people with disabilities; many of whom have now had their access to basic services cut off. Some women market traders are forced to sleep in their stalls, lacking basic sanitary provision. Others have been targeted for harassment. The number of gender-based violence cases has sky-rocketed, but there's no increase in the funds available to support survivors. COVID-19 is being used as an excuse for the abuse of human rights under the guise of enforcing emergency measures, and the ability for organisations to speak out against such abuses is more and more constrained."

**Ritah Nansereko, AWYAD Uganda**

To help counter the negative impacts of these trends, partners acknowledged that UN agencies can play an important roles – both in terms of funding community-based protection, and supporting advocacy on protection and civil society space through private and public means of

influence. However, realising that potential requires a wider shift in partnering with local WLO/WROs. One of our questions to local partners sought to gather insights on how UN agencies address risk management and whether or not they support a risk-sharing approach with local WLO/WROs. The responses described the relationships with UN agencies as being ones of a donor relationship with a sub-contractor, rather than a partnership centred on enabling and supporting local partners' work.

Women humanitarian leaders also raised concerns in some contexts about UN agencies responsible for

humanitarian coordination and gender being heavily constrained and influenced by their relations with the host government. This impacted on their willingness or ability to channel funds to more independent local WLO/WROs, with influence happening in various ways to exclude them from funding opportunities and direct UN funds to government co-opted and directed 'NGOs' (also known as 'GONGOs').

In partnership with the Palestinian Developmental Women Studies Association, ActionAid Palestine distributed essential supplies in the Gaza Strip.

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# Recommendations

Donors, UN agencies and INGOs have committed to empower local women-led organisations and women's rights organisations (WLOs/WROs) in humanitarian action and wider crisis response. From UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, through to the commitments made on gender equality at the World Humanitarian Summit (Grand Bargain), under the Call to Action on Protection from GBV in Emergencies, at the Oslo Conference Ending Sexual and Gender-based Violence in Humanitarian Crises and the Women Deliver summit in 2019, the commitments are there. Now we need to see action.

The international NGOs involved in this paper recognise that we also need to strengthen our own approach to funding, partnership and engagement with our WLO/WRO partners in decision-making in our own work with them and others. In different ways, our agencies are undertaking processes to

interrogate and reshape our own approach, and partnering with local women's rights organisations as critical friends and allies to identify creative new approaches, challenge us and hold us accountable.

There is a need to shift towards support for capacity-sharing, rather than the top-down model of capacity-building. This involves recognising the potential for cross-learning between local women's groups within and across contexts, and that learning should be a two-way exchange between humanitarian actors and local WLOs/WROs. As we cope with the impact of COVID-19 on our funding and ways of working, alongside wider political trends challenging efforts on gender justice and anti-racism, making these changes is not easy, but it becomes all the more important.

Based on consultations with local WLOs/WROs involved in this survey, we identify the following priority recommendations:

Ruqia, A social organizer is describing the awareness paper to Azada on Covid-19 conducted under Covid-19 emergency response implemented by partner organization CAHPO/ActionAid Afghanistan.

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## Urgent action for a more effective response to COVID-19 that centres women's leadership:

### Direct funding

Directly fund WLOS/WROs with more, flexible, and unrestricted funds to ensure they survive:

- Channel COVID-19 funding direct to local WLOs/WROs, or through funding instruments, platforms and consortia that **promote models of leadership by local WLOs/WROs, including feminist leadership, and/or co-leadership** with any international intermediary organisations involved.
- **Maintain funding for longer-term work by WLOs/WROs on women's rights and gender justice**, and refrain from redirecting scarce resources for these efforts to COVID-19 response.
- **Strengthen support for overheads costs** and flexible, adaptive programme management approaches with WLOs/WROs enabling them to adapt their work to the new demands and risks generated by this crisis.

### Funding and partnerships through intermediary organisations

- For donors unable to provide direct funding to local WLOs/WROs, **priority should be given to Women's Funds, like the Urgent Action Fund for Women Africa, and international agencies which have demonstrated credibility** in meaningful and equitable partnerships with local WLOs/WROs, and can accompany and support them in bringing their priorities into the wider crisis response.
- For funds channelled through UN agencies and INGOs, **require intermediary agencies to report on the timeliness of their channelling of the funds to these groups**, as well as the quality of partnership and funding cascaded to these groups. Quality of funding and partnership should be assessed with attention to how the coverage of overheads costs, flexibility and duration of grant provided by the back-donor to the international intermediary agency is passed onto the WLO/WRO partner.

- **Strengthen transparency and accountability on reporting funding to WLO/WROs** by requiring UN agencies and INGOs receiving institutional funding to be channelled onto WLOs/WROs to report this into the OCHA Financial Tracking System (FTS) on a regular basis (ie monthly). Whilst a marker for WLOs/WROs is yet to be defined in the FTS, the system does allow for disaggregated reporting by national and local NGO categories, and fixing the system starts by reporting at this level.
- **Adopt a partnership approach to risk management; centring the risks faced by local WLOs/WROs.** Systematically review how the parameters and requirements of international funding and partnership approaches may generate risks for local partners, and consult partners on ways to prevent or mitigate this.

### Coordination

- **Ensure that WLOs/WROs are included in deliberations on strategic priorities in country-level Humanitarian Response Plans** as well as on both the gender sensitivity efforts and wider strategic priorities within sector-specific coordination processes. UN agencies that claim a mandate for gender, protection and human rights issues should undertake outreach at country-level to WLOs/WROs linked to the 6-weekly cycles of planning on the COVID-19 GHRP.
- **Do not let protection and accountability become after-thoughts in cooperation with governments** on COVID-19. Prioritise attention to women's rights, protection and the legal, political and security enabling environment for WLOs/WROs, in dialogue with governments, and factor these issues as priorities from the outset into accountability frameworks for grants and loans provided to governments in the crisis response.

## Longer-term actions during COVID-19 response, recovery and beyond:

- **Undertake independent reviews of learning from partnerships with WLOs/WROs in COVID-19.** UN agencies, INGOs and Funds which claim a role in channelling funds to WLOs/WROs for humanitarian action should commission an independent review of their approach to funding, partnering with and supporting the voice of such groups. Such reviews should be undertaken by monitoring and evaluation specialists, supported by an independent advisory committee comprised of humanitarian and women's rights specialists.

- **Define in more precise and practical terms how humanitarian agencies can act as 'allies' to WLOs/WROs on the ground**

OCHA, cluster coordinators and international humanitarian agencies committed to gender efforts should work with national women's rights organisations to map the number of WLOs/WROs that have potential to contribute to

humanitarian action across different sectors, and act as 'allies' to accompany and support those groups in piloting and scaling-up their partnerships on emergency preparedness and response across different sectors.

- **Support locally-led, multi-year capacity strengthening**

Increase support for multi-year, holistic institutional capacity-strengthening of local WLOs/WROs which centres their own leadership and priorities in capacity-strengthening plans; including flexible funding to pilot new approaches, learn from mistakes, and facilitate local-to-local capacity-sharing exchanges with other organisations in their context or on a regional basis.

- **Invest in global, regional and country-level Women's Funds** that link to diverse networks of WROs with expertise in different thematic issues and social groups; with particular attention to at-risk and marginalised groups facing intersecting, multiple forms of discrimination. •



Face-masks made by local womens' groups supported by Titi Foundation South Sudan

# Footnotes

- <sup>i</sup> A guidance note on localisation in the Covid19 response from the IASC highlights seven key principles:
- Clarifying duty of care responsibilities regarding the safety and well-being of the staff and volunteers of local actors.
  - Practising good partnership principles, for example sharing of capacities and information (rather than extractive relations with local actors and a one-way flow of information).
  - Emphasising support to local principled humanitarian actors, whilst also engaging with other actors that play central roles to the provision of assistance like local authorities.
  - Supporting local leadership, enable systematic local participation and active engagement in coordination mechanisms and decision-making processes.
  - Flexible and simplified funding to front-line local actors being provided as directly as possible.
  - Giving visibility to sub-national and national responders, and their names, work and innovations explicitly acknowledged in reporting to donors and in all public communications.
  - Seeing COVID-19 as an opportunity to “build back better” in terms of working across the Humanitarian, Development and Peace Nexus.
- <sup>ii</sup> See for example: Wenham et al (2020) COVID-19: the gendered impacts of the outbreak, *The Lancet*, Volume 395, ISSUE 10227, P846-848; CARE (2020) Gender Implications of COVID-19 Outbreaks in development and humanitarian settings, CARE, <https://insightscareinternational.org.uk/publications/gender-implications-of-covid-19-outbreaks-in-development-and-humanitarian-settings>; CARE and IRC (2020) Rapid Gender Assessment of the COVID-19 pandemic based, <https://www.rescue-uk.org/press-release/new-covid-19-global-rapid-gender-analysis-addresses-concerns-women-and-girls-pandemic>; ActionAid (2020) Creating Lasting Impact: The power of women-led localised responses to Covid 19, [https://www.actionaid.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/creating\\_lasting\\_impact\\_the\\_power\\_of\\_women-led\\_localised\\_responses\\_to\\_covid-19.pdf](https://www.actionaid.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/creating_lasting_impact_the_power_of_women-led_localised_responses_to_covid-19.pdf)
- <sup>iii</sup> ICRC, COVID-19, Conflict and Sexual Violence: Reversing the Burden of Proof, June 2020
- <sup>iv</sup> Healthcare Assistance Kenya, Weekly National GBV Cases Analytical Report, Week Four (22 – 29 May, 2020)
- <sup>v</sup> UN News (2020) UN chief calls for domestic violence 'ceasefire' amid 'horrifying global surge', <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/04/1061052>; See also ActionAid briefing paper “Surviving Covid-19: A women-led response”: <https://actionaid.org/publications/2020/covid-19-women-led-response#downloads>
- <sup>vi</sup> A letter with over 550 signatures from women's civil society, and humanitarian organisations and missions has been sent to OCHA requesting a specific objective on GBV to be included in the next iteration of the global response plan: <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/553-concerned-agencies-are-calling-urgent-action-make-gender-based-violence-key>
- <sup>vii</sup> CARE (2020) 'Where are the Women? The Conspicuous Absence of Women in COVID-19 Response Teams and Plans, and why we Need them': [https://insights.careinternational.org.uk/media/k2/attachments/CARE\\_COVID-19-womens-leadership-report\\_June-2020.pdf](https://insights.careinternational.org.uk/media/k2/attachments/CARE_COVID-19-womens-leadership-report_June-2020.pdf)
- <sup>viii</sup> IASC (2020) 'Interim Guidance: Gender Alert for Covid-19 Outbreak' <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/2020-03/IASC%20Interim%20Guidance%20on%20COVID-19%20-%20Gender%20Alert.pdf>
- <sup>ix</sup> ActionAid is an ally to the Charter4Change and its commitments, in line with its humanitarian signature of shifting the power, women's local leadership and accountability.

Work on this paper has been facilitated by Howard Mollett at CAFOD, Natasha Lewis at CARE International UK and Niki Ignatiou at ActionAid UK, in collaboration with colleagues from Oxfam and Dan Church Aid.

Particular thanks are extended to Wesal Abdhullah, Arab Women Organisation Jordan, Gloria Soma, Titi Foundation South Sudan, Ritah Nansereko, AWYAD Uganda, and Thérèse Mema Mapenzi, Centre Olame, DRC, for sharing their insights to this paper.

Thanks are also extended to other staff in the headquarters, the International Secretariat and country teams of ActionAid, CARE International UK, CAFOD, Dan Church Aid (DCA) and Oxfam in Lebanon, Jordan, Bangladesh, Uganda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya and South Sudan; and the contributions of the many inspiring Women Right's Organisations that we have partnered with.

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