

# Anti-racism & Localisation Community of Practice

## Theme 4 - Local and National Actor Visibility

April 2025

*We can think of **visibility** as the degree to which the presence, activities, and impact of humanitarian organisations or initiatives are recognised and understood by stakeholders, including affected populations, donors, governments, and the general public.*

### Resources

The July 2021 IASC **Guidance on Strengthening Participation, Representation and Leadership of Local and National Actors in IASC Humanitarian Coordination Mechanisms** reinforces that "LNAs like other humanitarian actors have the right to be visible inter alia to, raise awareness of their contributions to humanitarian response (including their challenges, opportunities and views), mobilise funds as well as receive acknowledgement for their work." (see section on visibility, page 15)

The **Inter-Agency Toolkit on Localisation in Humanitarian Coordination** specifies that visibility is one of the seven dimensions of localisation and provides practical suggestions for increasing LNA visibility such as creating opportunities for LNA representatives to interact directly with in-country donors. (see pages 3, 30, 52, 53, and 57)

The **GNC Strategic Communications Guide** highlights that LNAs are "often operating in the shadows of international actors. This is despite LNAs often providing most frontline nutrition services, being paid a fraction of international actors' salaries, and incurring the highest personal risks in a humanitarian setting". (see pages 7 and 15)

## Key takeaways:

*These are a collection of key takeaways generated among CoP members while discussing the practical ways in which LNA visibility remains a challenge to equity in the NiE sector as well as approaches to address some of the challenges. They do not necessarily represent the views of any specific organisation or the Global Nutrition Cluster. Further, we acknowledge that the resources shared and CoP discussions are currently exclusively in English.*

1

Visibility takes time and money and is very much underfunded for local and national actors (LNAs).

2

LNAs are often very overstretched and it can be difficult to designate staff that can also take on the role of visibility, such as by attending coordination meetings, especially if these meetings are not valuable for the LNAs.

3

As long as there is a power imbalance, visibility will always be higher for international actors.

4

There have been examples where LNAs collaborate on research with international actors, but the LNAs have no visibility on the research and final publications.

5

We have seen scenarios where INGOs lead a project with many LNAs contributing to it. The LNAs send reports to the INGO who compiles them into one report. The LNAs end up being lost in the final report and do not receive recognition.

- Example project for the prevention of malnutrition of millions of women and children in Africa, 3-year project, many CSOs are doing the work, but only the two INGOs were credited in the report.

6

Sometimes LNAs also perpetuate this.

- Example from Syria where larger, more well known National NGOs are sometimes not sharing recognition with the smaller Local and National NGOs.

7

LNAs often feel that international organisations still hold the majority of power in decision-making, resource allocation, and overall strategy. This all influences visibility and who is credited with doing what.

8

Local organizations often find themselves in the role of subcontractors, implementing activities designed and managed by international actors. They desire more opportunities to lead needs assessments, design programs, manage resources independently, and increase their visibility by showcasing the important work they do.

9

Visibility is not a given in equal partnerships. For example, the [2007 IASC Principles of Partnership](#) do not mention visibility.

10

How do LNAs define visibility for themselves? Going beyond logos on t-shirts, backpacks etc. Ask your local and national partners what visibility means to them and help them enhance it.

11

Even the terms we use can be more or less equitable. Instead of 'the LNA is doing x work for us' we could use language such as 'collaboration' to reflect a more equitable arrangement.

12

Even when coordination mechanisms engage in mapping of LNAs to understand who they are and what their work focuses on, these exercises may be one-off or have rigid deadlines, rendering them incomplete. Such mapping should be updated on a rolling basis.

13

By shifting to an Accountability to Affected People (AAP) approach, ideally the affected population will be centred and supporting LNAs should have increased visibility, instead of the focus and visibility being on outside 'experts'.

14

Capacity strengthening initiatives for LNAs need to be tailored to the specific needs and contexts of local organizations, focusing on long-term institutional strengthening rather than just project-specific training. This includes support for organizational development, financial management, leadership skills, and strategies to increase their visibility.

15

LNAs don't always have the in-house capacity for designing logos. Explore opportunities for providing visibility support on logo and website design to interested LNAs.

16

Explore how LNAs can be in consortium with others and share human resources to improve their visibility.

17

During emergencies, when international actors arrive on the ground, they should always collaborate with LNAs. There are situations where international actors take off and before support has been fully provided, leaving the burden on LNAs to pick up the pieces.

18

LNAs are not homogenous, we need to name them by their name, not just 'we collaborated with x number of LNAs in x context'. Be conscious, deliberate, and intentional about specifying the local and national partners in reports:

- a. Name the organisation or agency
- b. Display their logo
- c. Link to their website or social media account
- d. If possible, display logos in the order of those closest to the affected population and working outwards (local and national logos first)

19

The current short-term and often heavily restricted funding cycles hinder the ability of local organisations to invest in their institutional development, build sustainable programs, and respond effectively to evolving needs. They call for more predictable, flexible, and multi-year funding. Better funded local organisations will in turn benefit from increased visibility.

20

Host webinars where LNAs can present their work and INGOs/international partners invite their stakeholders and donors to attend.

21

Coordination mechanisms should ask themselves:

- a. 'Do our local and national partners have strong voices during cluster/sector meetings?'
- b. 'Do our local and national partners have equal visibility to our international partners?'
- c. 'When our international partners present their work, do they credit their local and national partners?'

22

Advocate for donors to require that organisations name their implementing partners.

