

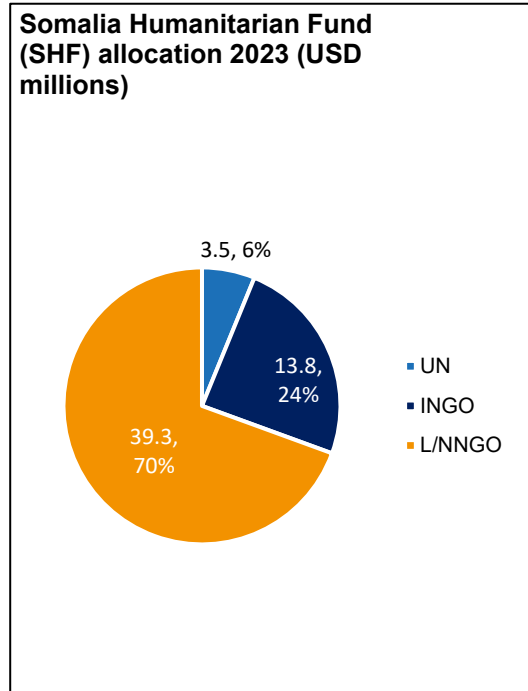
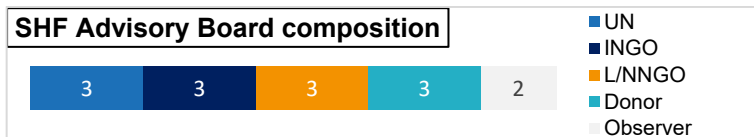
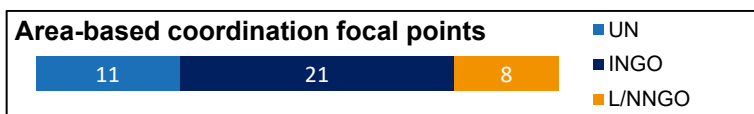
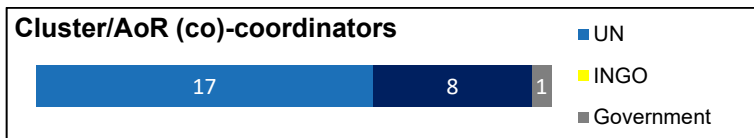
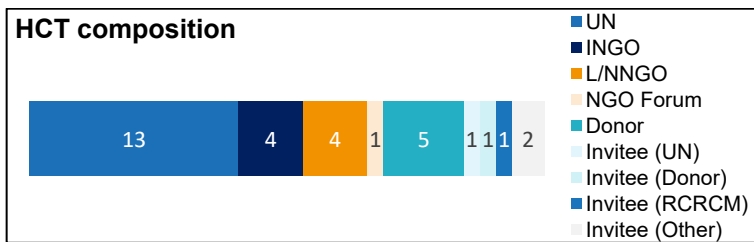
Localisation in Humanitarian Leadership - Somalia

October 2024



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SOMALIA



Coordination structure: Somalia has a sizeable humanitarian coordination structure, featuring sub-national inter-cluster/sector coordination groups (ICCGs) and, under these, area-based coordination which is undergoing revisions in 2024. The functionality of these sub-national bodies was perceived to vary primarily dependent on the presence of coordination capacity. One participant noted that more coordination investment and support was needed across all actors. With the presence of international actors limited by humanitarian access and security constraints, Local/national NGOs (L/NNGOs) play a particularly important role in the delivery of a response to the complex crisis of protracted conflict and increasing climate shocks.

Leadership in coordination: At the national level, the Somalia Humanitarian Coordination Team (HCT) has designated seats for NGO representatives, including three INGOs, three L/NNGOs, one women-led organisation, and one minority organisation (L/NNGO), along with the director of the Somalia NGO Consortium, a mixed NGO forum. Although there is a good representation of L/NNGOs in the HCT, the ICCG is mainly comprised of international staff from international organisations. ICCG members are mostly cluster coordinators (primarily UN and INGO), with one seat for the Somalia NGO Consortium.

At sub-national and area levels, a few participants described improvements in L/NNGO representation in recent years, including some increase in L/NNGO co-chairing sub-national clusters. The revised area-based coordination structure has a more diverse leadership, with NGOs taking on most focal point roles. L/NNGOs occupy eight focal point roles, six of which are leads for the area. This mechanism is supported by a national ‘operational cell’, where NGOs (all INGOs) make up half of its ten members.

While L/NNGOs have seats in coordination bodies, their influence at both national and sub-national levels¹ was described by participants as still limited. Interviewees from L/NNGOs felt decision-

¹ The area-based coordination mechanism was recently established at the time of writing, so only its setup was reflected on.

making was reserved for international actors only,² with agendas set by UN agencies and their expertise insufficiently recognised. One participant reflected on power dynamics, noting L/NNGOs can feel unable to challenge international actors in meetings or play a disruptive role when reliant on the same for funding.

One participant highlighted how actors' location and mobility impact dynamics in national-level coordination bodies. Even NGOs based in Mogadishu often find accessing the main UN premises time-consuming or difficult, particularly for Somali nationals. Additionally, UN co-location and movement restrictions affect how interpersonal connections, crucial for effective coordination, are formed.

Coordination participation: The participation and capacities of L/NNGO representatives in coordination leadership were topics of discussion among national and international interviewees. Current participation varies, influenced by individual personalities and the organisation's size and institutional strength. Larger national organisations with strong representation capacities were noted to be well-regarded but often stretched across multiple forums. Overall, participants felt that enhancing confidence, system knowledge, and representation skills would enable more consistent representation among L/NNGOs. In addition, expanding coordination space and providing quality funding for L/NNGOs are also essential.

Funding: Funding for L/NNGO coordination roles and response efforts was raised multiple times. Limited access of L/NNGOs to funding for full-time positions, such as cluster co-ordination, was noted. For part-time coordination roles usually performed by double-hatted programme staff at the area level, suffer from continuity issues due to short grants and staff rotation. This is a notable constraint, given hopes of expanding L/NNGO leadership in area-based coordination.

An IASC Peer 2 Peer mission in 2023 highlighted similar findings on participation and funding, noting that L/NNGOs are:

'Not sufficiently included in decision-making and face significant [funding] barriers to improving their institutional capacity', stating that 'the capacity of local responders is not being maximised'³.

Localisation strategy: While participants described localisation being often acknowledged as a critical issue in the response, and worked toward by individual entities, some noted that a collective vision would strengthen the coherency of effort. One participant also noted that there could be more opportunities taken to link up localisation visions with durable solutions work, especially since Somalia is one of 15 focus countries for the Special Adviser on Solutions to Internal Displacement under the Action Agenda. The Somalia NGO Consortium's work and advocacy towards localisation, particularly through its active Localisation Working Group, were positively regarded by participants.

Country-based pooled fund: Some L/NNGO participants noted improvements in L/NNGO inclusion in Somalia Humanitarian Fund processes in recent years, with equal representation on the Advisory Board and a specific number of seats required on cluster Review Committees. One participant specifically mentioned that they felt the Review Committee representation was important, appreciating that the L/NNGO members had a role in scrutinising INGO submissions, as well as vice versa.

² See also: NEXUS and Save Somalia Women and Children, [Research on the Progress of Localization in Somalia and Somaliland](#), November 2021.

³ Including a lack of equal partnerships, direct funding, and receipt of overheads. [IASC, Peer 2 Peer Support Operational Peer Review Mission Report](#) 21 May – 1 June 2023.



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