

ANALYSIS REPORT



LOCALIZATION BAROMETER

West and Central Africa – Year 2024-2025

CAMEROON

Conducted by



Supported by



ANALYSIS REPORT



CAMEROON

Year 2024-2025

Table of Contents

List of acronyms	3
Foreword	4
Executive Summary	5
Introduction	7
Summary	10
<i>Summary table</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Summary figure.....</i>	<i>11</i>
Detailed analysis by dimension.....	12
A. Capabilities.....	12
B. Coordination	16
C. Financing.....	20
D. Partnership	24
E. Participation	28
F. Policy, Influence, and Advocacy	32
Recommendations	36
Annexes	38

List of acronyms

USAID - BHA	United States Agency for International Development – Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance
CHINGO	Coordination of Humanitarian International NGO
C.H.O.I	Cameroonian Humanitarian Organizations Initiative
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
FONGA	Forum des Organisations Non Gouvernementales en Afrique de l'Ouest et Centrale
GHD	Good Humanitarian Donorship
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team
IASC	Inter-Agency Steering Committee
ICVA	International Council of Voluntary Agencies
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organizations
IO	International Organizations
L/NNGOs	Local / National Non-Governmental Organizations
NGO	National Non-Governmental Organizations
NORCAP	Norwegian Capacity
NWSW	Northwest Southwest
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bounded
SPONG	Secrétariat Permanent des Organisations Non Gouvernementales
UN	United Nations
WCA	West and Central Africa
WG	Working Group

Foreword

For several years, the issue of the **localization of humanitarian assistance** has been central to international debates, especially since the adoption of the Grand Bargain in 2016, which commits humanitarian actors to strengthening the participation and leadership of local and national organizations. In Cameroon, a country facing multiple humanitarian crises (armed conflicts, displacement, food insecurity, climate shocks), thinking about how assistance is planned, financed and implemented takes on particular significance. This report on the Localization Barometer in Cameroon presents the results of a study initiated by ICVA and FONGA, funded by USAID-BHA and NORCAP, and implemented by C.H.O.I., with the objective of assessing the level of implementation of the localization of humanitarian aid in Cameroon and analyzing progress, challenges, and opportunities. It highlights collaborative dynamics between international, national, and community-based actors, as well as the efforts made to strengthen local capacities, promote national ownership, and enhance the sustainability of humanitarian interventions. The approach that guided this study is based on a simple but fundamental conviction: effective and equitable humanitarian assistance can only be achieved if local actors, those closest to affected populations, are fully recognized and supported in their role.

We hope that the results and recommendations contained in this report will help to enrich dialogue among partners, informing decision-makers and guide future strategies aimed at making **localization** a tangible reality in Cameroon. Finally, we express our deep gratitude to all the institutions, organizations and individuals who contributed to this study, whose engagement reflects a shared commitment, building a more inclusive, more relevant and more sustainable humanitarian response.



Dr. Noma Eloundou
National Coordinator
Cameroonian Humanitarian Organizations Initiative (CHOI)

Executive Summary

The main aim of this study, entitled "Localization Barometer", is to strengthen the accountability among humanitarian actors and boost local leadership by providing a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the progress achieved and the challenges that remain. Using a regional methodology adapted to the national context, the study aims to establish a quantitative measurement framework for tracking localization, helping to orient collective priorities and objectives for the humanitarian community, and to formulate concrete proposals to further improve localization efforts in the country. 'Localization' has been a central concept in humanitarian assistance since the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit. It refers to "provide more support to local and national actors and strengthen the financing mechanisms available to them". The initial commitments aimed to increase multi-year investments in institutional capacity and to reach a target of at least 25% of humanitarian funding allocated directly to local and national actors by 2020. Since then, these commitments have evolved to place communities at the heart of localization and ensure equitable partnerships, leadership, and national grounding of interventions. However, the lack of clear targets and measurable criteria makes it difficult to assess progress. It is in this context that Burkina Faso served as a pilot country for the first national review of localization, an initiative led the SPONG with the initial support of ICVA and later of FONGA. Building on this first experience, the project then spread to other countries in the region, including Cameroon.

State of localization in Cameroon

An evident commitment and tangible progress towards localization

The study highlights a genuine breakthrough of Local and National NGOs (L/NNGOs) within humanitarian coordination spaces. The CHOI platform now sits on the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), alongside three L/NNGOs, and national and local organizations actively participate in clusters and sectoral working groups. This presence marks a significant milestone: L/NNGOs are now recognized as legitimate stakeholders.

The role that L/NNGOs play in front-line humanitarian response is widely recognized and appreciated by many international organizations. Likewise, the support provided to L/NNGOs is broadly valued: these partnerships are viewed positively, a majority of actors provide funding, and numerous training and mentoring initiatives are being implemented.

The capacity of L/NGOs, a subject of debate

Behind the progress observed, the study highlights diverging perception between international and national actors regarding the institutional, financial and governance capacities of L/NNGOs. While several local organizations acknowledge some weaknesses, they also emphasize the diversity of Cameroonian civil society landscape: alongside fragile structures, there are strong, experienced NGOs with well-established procedures. Above all, they stress their role as first responders in crises, sometimes being the only ones present in the hard-to-reach areas. Many local actors also denounce the fact that these weaknesses are sometimes instrumentalized in the context of competition for access to financing. This perception gap has tangible consequences: the risk-management requirements imposed by international partners are often seen as excessive and disproportionate to the capacities of local organizations.

This asymmetry is reflected in the quality of the partnerships: most of which remain limited to short-term, project-based collaborations, with little focus on structural capacity-building. In the absence of strategic collaboration and mutual trust, local capacities struggle to be sustainably consolidated, despite their crucial contribution to the humanitarian response.

Financing, the central node of localization

Funding remains the most critical bottleneck. On average, the L/NNGOs that responded to the survey obtain only 26% of their financial resources directly from donors, compared to 60% for INGOs.¹ But beyond quantity, it is the quality of the funding that is most concerning. The fair allocation of indirect costs is far from systematic - despite IASC guidance - and expenses related to security, operational functioning or capacity-strengthening are not consistently covered.

In a context where Cameroon is described as a "forgotten crisis", the overall decline in funding complicates the situation of L/NNGOs. The current trend of pooling funds into larger envelopes, primarily benefiting well-established organizations, risks further marginalizing smaller ones.

Recommendations and call to action

The progress made in Cameroon represents a strong foundation for advancing localization. Yet, the ongoing contraction of funding, within a context already marked by its "forgotten crisis" status, calls for urgent action. More than ever, the effectiveness of humanitarian action will depend on the collective ability to build a system in which the strengths of every actor – local, national and international – are recognized and leveraged.

A detailed list of recommendations is presented at the end of the report. The following have been identified as **priorities**, due to their potential for short-term transformative impact:

- Jointly develop a roadmap through an inclusive dialogue led by the HCT, aimed at overcoming differences in perception regarding the capacities of L/NNGOs, building a shared vision and defining priority actions to strengthen their contribution to the humanitarian response.
- Develop two concrete tools to guide and measure progress:
 - A partnership code of conduct, defining shared principles, commitments and monitoring mechanisms.
 - A "localization" marker, ensuring compliance with financial standards (pre-financing, operational costs, indirect costs, security, etc.).
- Reinforce partnership accountability by systematically involving L/NNGOs in strategic discussions with donors. In this regard, donors - individually or through the GHD - could organize regular roundtables to gather feedback from 'partners of partners'.

¹ These percentages refer to the budget structure of the organizations surveyed (share of resources obtained directly from donors) and should not be interpreted as the overall share of humanitarian funding transferred by donors to L/NNGOs or INGOs.

Introduction

Scope of the study:

Localization² has become a central issue in humanitarian aid, particularly since the Grand Bargain commitments adopted at the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit. Among the ten commitments, two directly relate to localization: (1) to increase and support multi-year investments in the institutional capacities of local and national actors, and (2) to ensure that 25% of humanitarian funding is directed to these actors as directly as possible. Two subsequent revisions have refocused localization on affected populations and broadened its objectives to include equitable partnerships, local leadership, and the national anchoring of interventions. In West and Central Africa, several initiatives have been undertaken to strengthen the place and role of national NGOs in humanitarian responses, alongside the development of various methodological approaches to evaluation. However, in the absence of clearly established goals and measurable criteria, it remains difficult to assess the progress made in localization and to identify the remaining challenges. Inspired by the initiative to develop national guidelines on localization carried out in Burkina Faso with SPONG, ICVA developed a regional methodology to quantitatively and qualitatively assess the degree of localization of humanitarian responses, monitor its evolution over time and identify both achievements and challenges specific to each of the West and Central African countries covered by the program. For the 2024 exercise, eight countries were included in this process: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Chad and Democratic Republic of Congo. The initiative is coordinated at the regional level by FONGA, building on work initially launched by ICVA. It nevertheless relies strongly on national leadership through the project's national steering committee, in order to ensure alignment with local actors' needs and expectations, foster full ownership and strengthen sustainability. In Cameroon, CHOI led the project, mobilized the steering committee, organized national workshops and supervised the collection, analysis and triangulation of data.

Methodological approach:

The methodology builds on existing approaches³ while adapting their components to design a framework that is: 1) contextualized, 2) comparable and 3) sustainable. Its objectives are to:

- Establish a quantitative measurement framework to track localization progress at the WCA regional level, enabling cross-country comparisons and serving as a basis for repeated assessments over time.
- Strengthen advocacy capacity at both national and regional levels.
- Create a system for the exchange of good practices and lessons.

In each country, the L/NGO Forum led the process, with support from national and regional technical consultants (ICVA and later FONGA). A process for defining the location agenda was developed by L/NGOs forum partners, allowing for the identification of key monitoring variables. At the regional level, the focus was on ensuring comparability across countries, maintaining consistency between the data collection methodology and the results obtained, and facilitating constructive exchanges of good practices.

² 'Localization' has been a central concept in humanitarian assistance since the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit. The aim is to "provide more support to local and national actors and strengthen the financing mechanisms available to them".

³ HAG, NEAR and IASC in particular

The monitoring of the implementation of the localization agenda followed a cascading structure, allowing the identification of key SMART variables⁴ through three analytical levels:

- **Dimensions:** the main themes of the localization, corresponding to the agreed workstreams of the agenda.
- **Issues:** for each dimension, the specific aspects to be considered to assess progress.
- **Questions of interest:** for each issue, specific questions used to measure the achievement of objectives and characterize the situation.

While the dimensions and issues were standardized across all countries through the common methodological framework, the questions of interest and related variables were adapted to each national context.

In the case of Cameroon, 53 questions of interest and 123 related variables were used to address the 18 localization issues organized under 6 dimensions (see complete list in the Appendix).

Data collection was carried out in several phases:

1. Collection phase: a series of forms shared with the humanitarian community to:
 - Gather perception on the implementation of the localization agenda among stakeholders.: "perception" **questionnaires**.
 - Collect specific information on funding, partnerships, projects, etc.: "**actors**", "**finance**", "**partnership**", "**coordination**" **questionnaires**.
 - Review and analyze key documents such as attendance lists, frameworks, etc. to extract factual data for certain variables.
 2. Comparative analysis phase: the comparison of data from these three sources enabled the development of working hypotheses and were then refined through qualitative interviews.
- Interview phase: bilateral interviews followed by discussions within the national steering committee formed the comprehensive corpus of the country study.

For Cameroon, the sample is as follows (respondents by type of questionnaire):

Limitations:

- Despite the efforts made, several limitations must be highlighted. On the representativeness of the sample:
 - Donor participation remained limited despite multiple follow-ups: only four responded to the "perception" questionnaire and two to the "actors" questionnaire, out of 10 donors active in Cameroon. While this limitation should be acknowledged, it does not compromise the overall validity of the results or the valuable insights derived from the contributions of other participating actors.
 - For the other categories of actors, participation rates can be considered relatively satisfactory. According to the OCHA dashboard of 30 June 2025, there were 68 L/NNGOs, 24 INGOs and 10 UN agencies in Cameroon. Based on this, participation rates ranged between 35% and 82% for L/NNGOs (depending on the type of questionnaire), 50% for INGOs and 60% for UN agencies.

⁴ See definition of a SMART indicator

- On consideration of the Cameroonian context:
 - o The national steering committee noted that the report does not provide analysis by region (East, Far North, North-West, South-West), as the information was not collected. This aspect could be integrated into future barometer' phase to better capture regional dynamics specific to Cameroon.
 - o The question of pre-financing and co-financing practices emerged as a major issue during the interviews. However, no systematic data were collected on this aspect, which should be integrated into future editions of the barometer.
- On the treatment of the Participation dimension:
 - Participation is a key component of most localization analysis frameworks, referring to the engagement of affected populations. However, the study did not directly involve affected communities. Their participation was captured indirectly, through the perspectives of L/NNGOs, INGOs, UN agencies and donors. A specific and direct data collection process would have been required to properly address this dimension — something not feasible through electronic questionnaires. Nonetheless, this aspect warrants further exploration through complementary qualitative studies. On certain formulations:

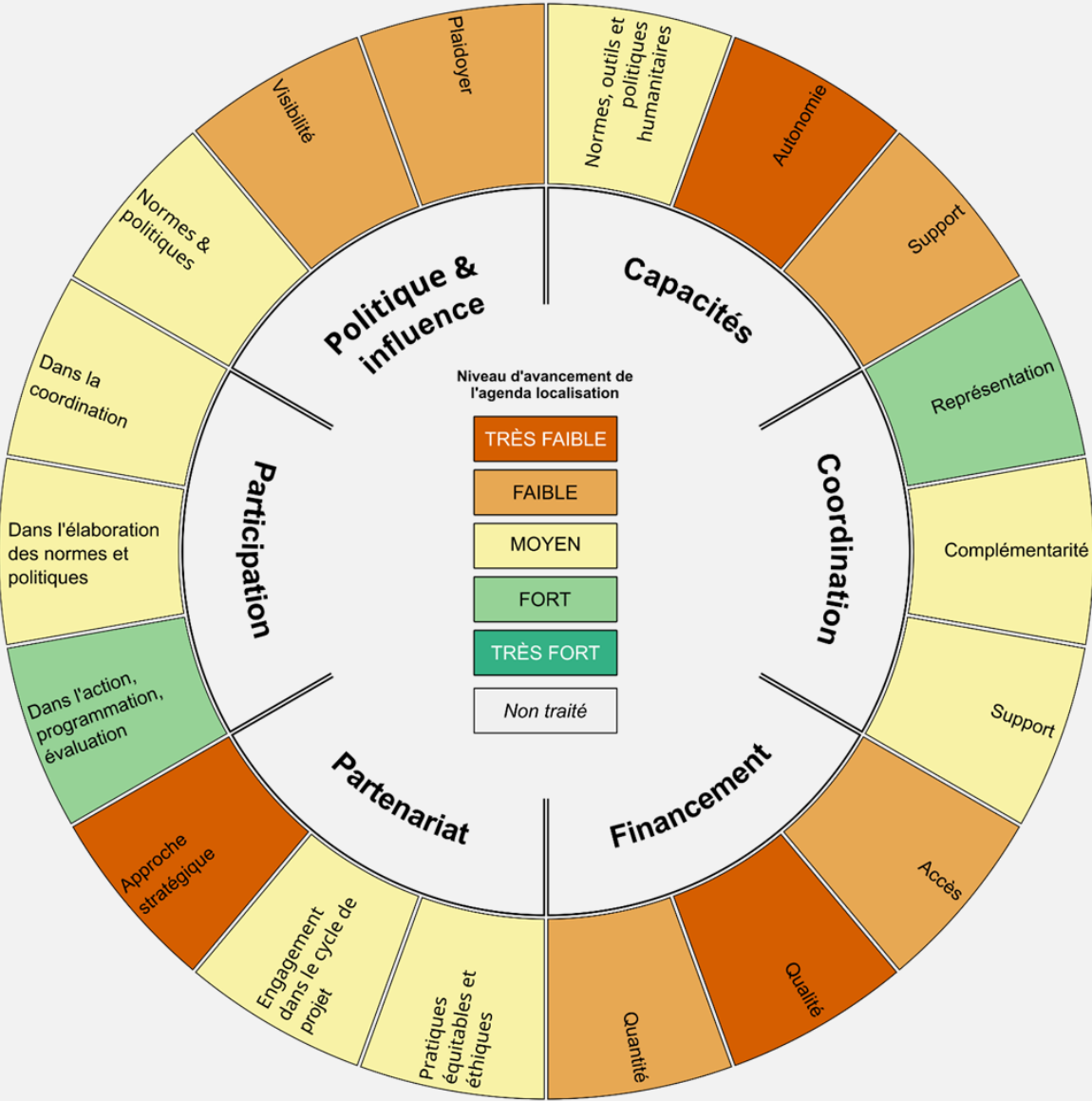
Some actors noted that the term “CSOs” (Civil Society Organizations) would be more appropriate in the Cameroonian context. However, the authors chose to retain the term “L/NNGO” (L/NNGOs) - as used in the questionnaires. It should be noted that smaller, often less formal community-based organizations were not included in the sample — a significant limitation in terms of representativeness. For readability, the report occasionally uses generalizing expressions such as “L/NNGO believe that...” or “donors report that...” ». These statements refer exclusively to the respondents to this study and should be interpreted as such.

Summary

Summary table

Dimension	Stake	Definition	Level of advancement
Capabilities	Humanitarian standards, tools and policies	Humanitarian standards, tools and policies are accessible and adapted to the context.	Medium
	Autonomy	The NNGOs operate autonomously.	Very Low
	Support	L/NNGOs benefit from the support of other actors in their skills development.	Weak
Coordination	Representation	L/NNGOs are represented at the national level and participate in forums and coordination meetings	Strong
	Complementarity	Humanitarian response is delivered in a collaborative and complementary way.	Medium
	Support	National coordination mechanisms are supported and have the technical capacity to respond to the humanitarian response.	Medium
Financing	Access	L/NNGOs have access to direct funding with little or no barriers	Weak
	Quality	The quality of the funding available to L/NNGOs is equivalent to that of INGOs.	Very Low
	Quantity	The amount of funding available to NNGOs is proportional to their commitment to implementing the activities.	Weak
Partnership	Fair and ethical practices	Partnerships are based on fair and ethical practices.	Medium
	Engagement in the Project Cycle	Partnerships specify implications and responsibilities in the project cycle.	Medium
	Strategic approach	Longer-term strategic partnerships to build systems and processes that reflect the ambition and goals of the local/national partner	Very Low
Participation	In action, programming, evaluation	Communities participate in shaping programming, including evaluating the work of NGOs (international, national, and local)	Strong
	In the development of standards and policies	Communities are involved in developing community/contextualized norms for all actors working in this context.	Medium
	In coordination	Communities are the driving force behind aid coordination.	Medium
Policy, Influence, and Advocacy	Standards and policies	The standards and policies that define the humanitarian response frameworks are defined with the L/NNGOs.	Medium
	Visibility and communication	L/NNGOs are visible and recognized as actors in aid communication exercises.	Weak
	Advocacy	L/NNGOs develop influence and advocacy strategies at all scales	Weak

Summary figure



Detailed analysis by dimension

A. Capabilities

The "Capacity" dimension reflects marked contrasts in perception between national and international actors.

Regarding humanitarian standards and policies, most actors acknowledge that contextualization is well underway, with the active participation of L/NNGOs. However, L/NNGOs affirm that they integrate these standards into their strategies, international actors remain more skeptical.

The question of L/NNGOs' autonomy also gives rise to divergent views. Local organizations emphasize their internal procedures and governance systems, and their role as first responders during crises, including in hard-to-reach areas. International actors, meanwhile, highlight technical weaknesses, unequal accountability, and sometimes problematic practices such as nepotism and corruption.

This perception translates into stricter control and reporting requirements imposed on L/NNGOs. As one international respondent admitted: *"We do not apply to ourselves the same standards we impose on local NGOs."*

Finally, although international support is widely promoted, it is often perceived as theoretical. While there are direct funding opportunities, training programs and mentoring initiatives, these remain sporadic and rarely tailored to the needs expressed by L/NNGOs themselves. In practice, competition between national and international organizations for funding and institutional recognition sometimes prevails over genuine partnership logic. Some actors feel that commitments to localization are more often a 'showcase' than as a genuine effort to sustainably strengthen local capacities.

Recommendations:

1. Jointly develop a roadmap through an inclusive dialogue led by the HCT, aimed at overcoming differences in the perception of the L/NNGOs' capacities, building a shared vision and defining priority actions to strengthen their contribution to the humanitarian response (HCT).
2. Support the implementation of the Localization Working Group's action plan, particularly the capacity-strengthening component, and establish a sustainable mechanism for organizational development that goes beyond ad hoc training initiatives (all).

Stake	Definition	Level of advancement
Humanitarian standards, tools and policies	Humanitarian standards, tools and policies are accessible and adapted to the context.	Medium
Autonomy	The NNGOs operate autonomously.	Very Low
Support	L/NNGOs benefit from the support of other actors in their skills development.	Weak

AA. Humanitarian standards, tools and policies

Humanitarian standards, tools and policies are accessible and adapted to the context.

Overall, with the exception of donors, most actors are relatively positive about the contextualization and translation of humanitarian policies and standards: 68% of survey respondents consider that this contextualization is partially or fully achieved.

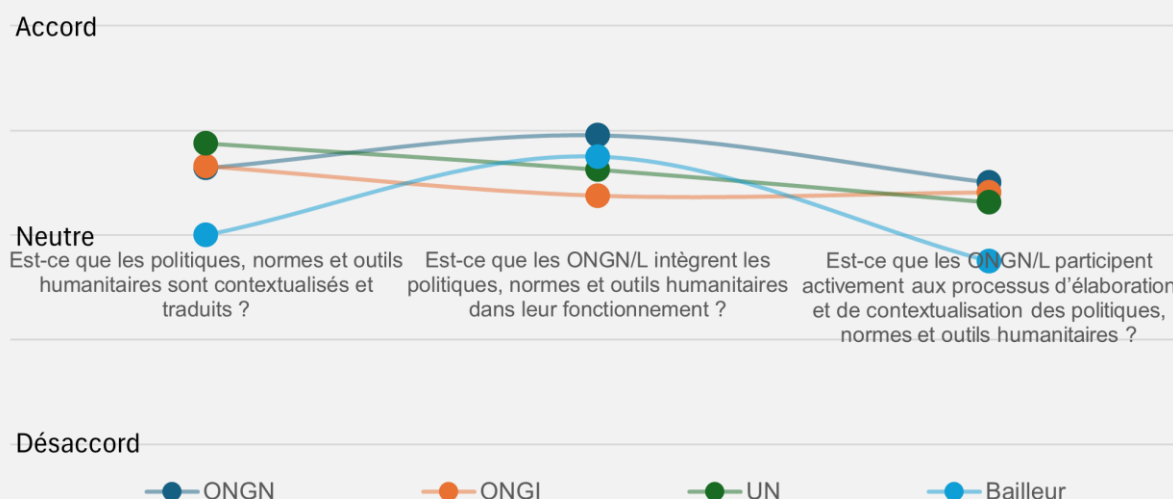
The integration of these standards by L/NGOs is, however, more debated. L/NGOs consider it quite positive that they integrate - at least partially - humanitarian standards. 71% report that their strategies refer to international humanitarian policies, standards and tools and 85% state that their strategies are aligned with them. INGOs and UN agencies are more skeptical with only 53% (perception questionnaires) believing that L/NGOs effectively integrate these standards. Interestingly, donors display the opposite trend — being more critical of the contextualization of standards than of their actual integration by L/NGOs.

As one respondent put it: "

"What we see in practice is that international organizations receiving direct donor funding arrive with pre-designed tools that they simply impose on local implementing partners. When some partners try to propose alternatives better adapted to field realities, they are often sidelined in future calls for proposals."

An international respondent also noted "International standards do not always take into account the limited capacities of smaller organizations. Some administrative and accountability requirements are disproportionate to their means. They can strain partnerships and even appear excessively rigid."

Level of perception according to the type of actor



AB. Autonomy

The L/NNGOs operate autonomously.

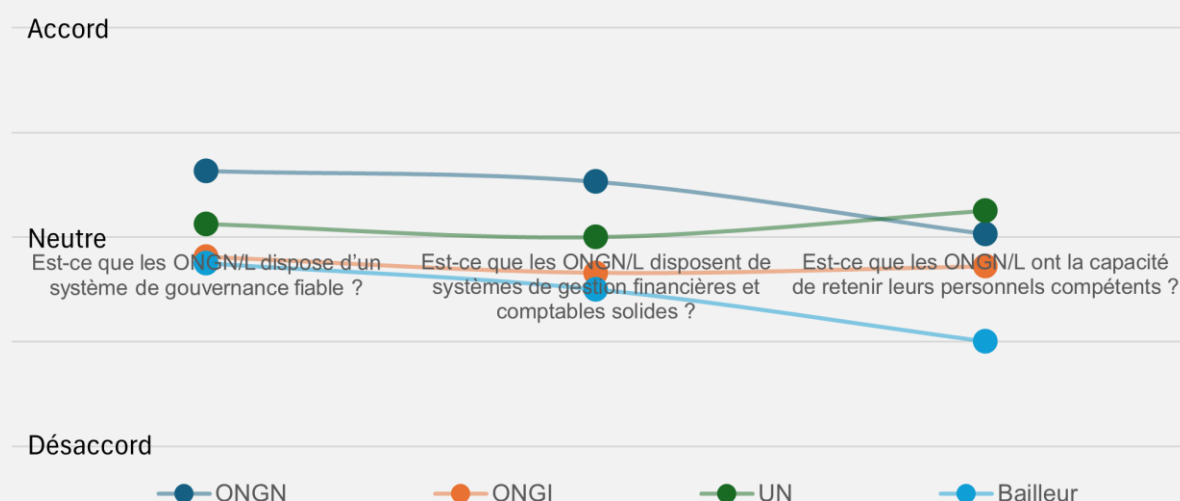
Perceptions of L/NNGOs' autonomy differ sharply between national and international actors. L/NNGOs have a much more positive view of their autonomy, while international actors tend to remain critical.

Institutionally, a majority of NGOs report having structured systems and policies: 85% have specific financial and accounting management procedures, 77% anti-corruption and anti-fraud policies, and 91% possess strategic documents such as procedures manuals or internal policies. Moreover, 62% consider their governance reliable and 55% rate their financial and accounting systems as strong. From the perspective of INGOs, however, 31% believe that L/NNGOs/ have a reliable or very reliable governance system (compared to 62% of L/NNGOs themselves). Similarly, 22% of INGOs believe that L/NNGOs have a reliable or very reliable financial system (compared to 55% of L/NNGOs).

As one respondent observed: "There is a wide variety of L/NNGOs. Some have strong governance and financial management systems, while smaller ones do not always have the human or financial resources to maintain these standards. «Other respondents reported issues such as nepotism, corruption and recurring governance problems, including cases of fraud, and aid diversion. These practices, according to respondents, pose significant risks to the reputation and credibility of L/NNGOs. While many organizations demonstrate solid project and reporting skills, their accountability is often seen as inconsistent and below the expectations of international partners.

That said, many representatives of L/NNGOs emphasize that they are often the first responders in crises and sometimes the only ones present in hard-to-reach areas. After decades of experience across multiple emergencies, their proven capacities and operational autonomy are increasingly recognized.

Level of perception according to the type of actor



AC. Support

L/NNGOs benefit from the support of other actors.

Around 78% of respondents consider that the support provided to L/NNGO is relevant (fully or largely), making this one of the most positively rated findings in the survey.

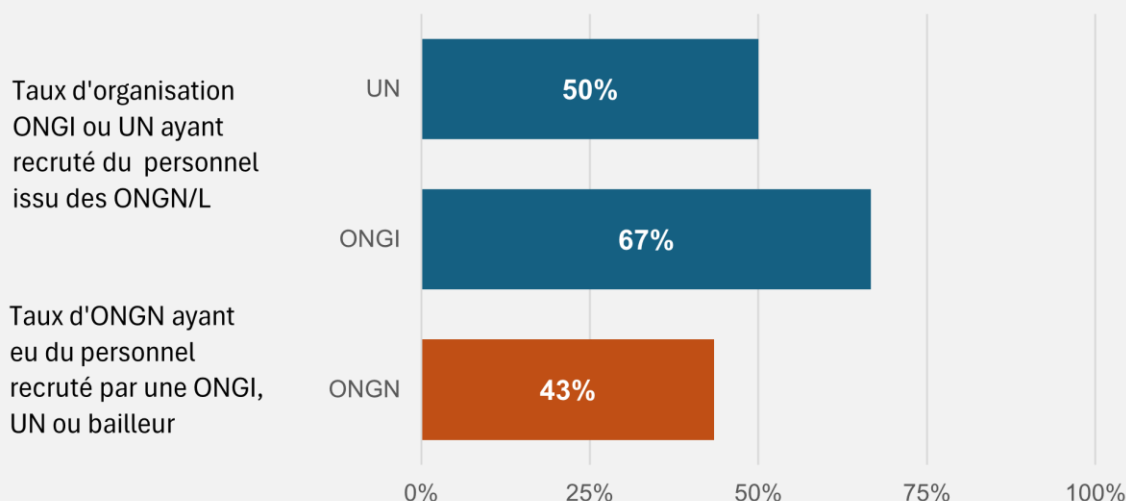
International organizations (including 75% of INGOs and 100% of UN agencies and donors) report that they have integrated localization principles into their recruitment policies. However, 43% of L/NNGOs report within the past twelve months that some of their staff have been recruited by INGOs - a trend confirmed by INGOs themselves, 67% of which acknowledge having hired staff from L/NNGOs during the same period.

In terms of financial access, 83% of INGOs and 100% of UN agencies report having directly funded L/NNGOs in the last 12 months. Yet, for half of them, these funds represented less than 10% of their overall budget.

Finally, 88% of international respondents reported having conducted mentoring, training or workshops activities for L/NNGOs over the past year. However, qualitative interviews indicate that these initiatives are often project-driven primarily respond to the needs of international actors rather than those expressed by L/NNGOs. As one INGO respondent summarized: "Support to L/NNGOs is often shaped around donors or INGOs needs. It's essential to better reflect the real priorities and needs of L/NNGOs."

The interviews and qualitative responses confirm a significant perception gap regarding the quality and intent of international support. While international actors are engaged in capacity-strengthening, their efforts are often perceived as theoretical or aimed more at legitimizing international strategies than enabling genuine empowerment for local organizations. Both national and international respondents regret the absence of long-term, structured mechanisms to strengthen the governance, financial management and monitoring systems of local organizations.

Recruitment rate of employees from NGOs/L



B. Coordination

Humanitarian coordination in Cameroon follows a differentiated architecture between the national level and specific regions, adapted to the three ongoing crises. At the national level and in the Far North, the system is predominantly government-led with key sectors co-chaired alongside OCHA and partner agencies. In the Northwest and Southwest (NWSW), the state is absent from cluster coordination structures, which are led or co-led by INGOs, UN agencies, or L/NNGOs. The CHOI platform acts as an observer to the Inter-Sector WG and that network – together with three L/NNGOs - sits on the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), reflecting a hybrid governance model tailored to local constraints.

L/NNGOs are widely represented across coordinating for a and bodies, participating at all levels. However, interviews suggest that this representation can sometimes be formal: their concrete contributions are not always reflected in final decisions. As one respondent noted "we sign the attendance sheet, but decisions are taken elsewhere".

Some international actors feel that L/NNGOs have not yet fully internalized their strategic role within coordination structures. At times, internal organizational priorities are conflated with those of collective action, and more proactive engagement would help ensure their voices are heard. This underscores the need to strengthen their capacity to turn representation into real influence, by providing concrete and constructive proposals.

Although still unclear, the “humanitarian reset” and any resulting reorganization could reduce the number of coordination groups and streamline processes, creating opportunities for L/NNGOs to play a more central role. However, without targeted support and capacity-strengthening, consolidation may simply reproduce existing limitations in decision-making and in valuing local contributions.

Recommendations

- > Continue financial support to L/NNGO representation platforms (donors, INGOs, UN agencies and all HCT members) and encourage greater financial contributions from their members (L/NNGOs).
- > Strengthen ownership, governance, and collective representation within L/NNGOs Coordination Platforms (HCT, L/NNGOs)
- > Consider a participatory review of coordination platforms to assess representativeness and define clear priorities (L/NNGOs)
- > Strengthen dialogue and collective action between national and international representation platforms (CHINGO, CHOI, other platforms, etc.).

Stake	Definition	Level of advancement
Representation	NGOs/Ls are represented at the national level and participate in forums and coordination meetings	Strong
Complementarity	Humanitarian response is delivered in a collaborative and complementary way.	Medium
Support	National coordination mechanisms are supported and have the technical capacity to respond to the humanitarian response.	Medium

BA. Representation

L/NNGOs are represented at the national level and participate in forums and coordination meetings.

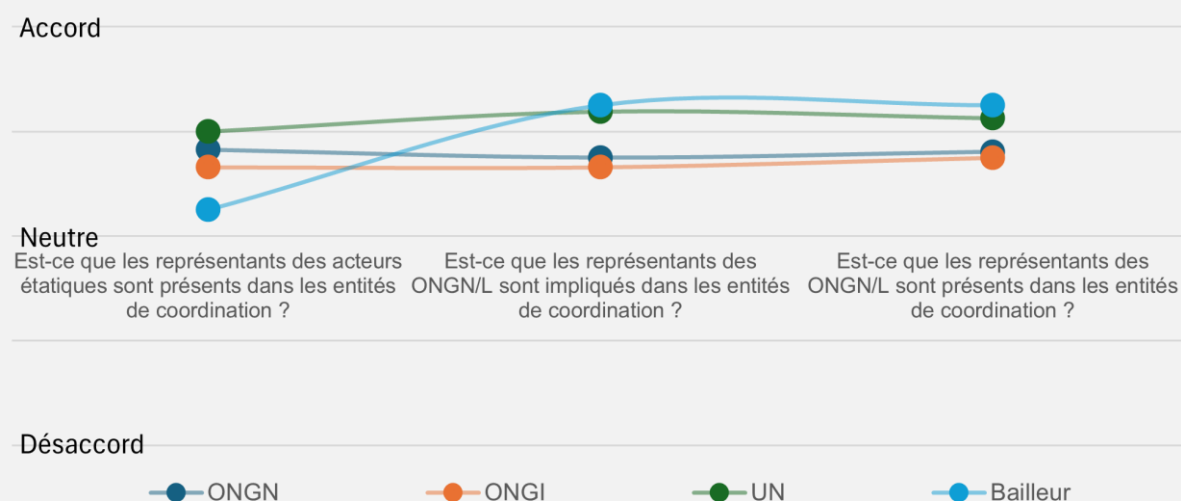
This issue emerges as the most favorable in the survey, with positive responses ranging from 66% to 71% across questions. Respondents consider that coordination entities facilitate the inclusion of L/NNGOs representatives and that national organizations, their networks, and State representatives are present and engaged within coordination bodies.

Cameroon's coordination system is highly decentralized to reflect the three crises: " Sectors at the national level and in the Far North are led by the government. However, the government is not represented in the Northwest and Southwest (NWSW) clusters. Several sectors and clusters are co-led by L/NNGOs. The L/NNGO platform, CHOI, is an observer to the Inter-Sector Working Group (WG) and four NNGOs are members of the HCT."

Finally, qualitative interviews largely confirm the effective representation of L/NNGOs in coordination bodies. Stakeholders point to the near-systematic participation of local organizations in the relevant fora, while stressing that this representation remains uneven: some L/NNGOs have the means to contribute regularly and substantially, while others still face resource and capacity constraints that hinder consistent engagement.

Overall, coordination is seen as a space where L/NNGOs are increasingly visible and active, though their decision-making can still be limited compared with INGOs and donors.

Level of perception according to the type of actor



BB. Complementarity

Humanitarian response is delivered in a collaborative and complementary way.

On complementarity, data and interviews reveal a tension between perception and practice.

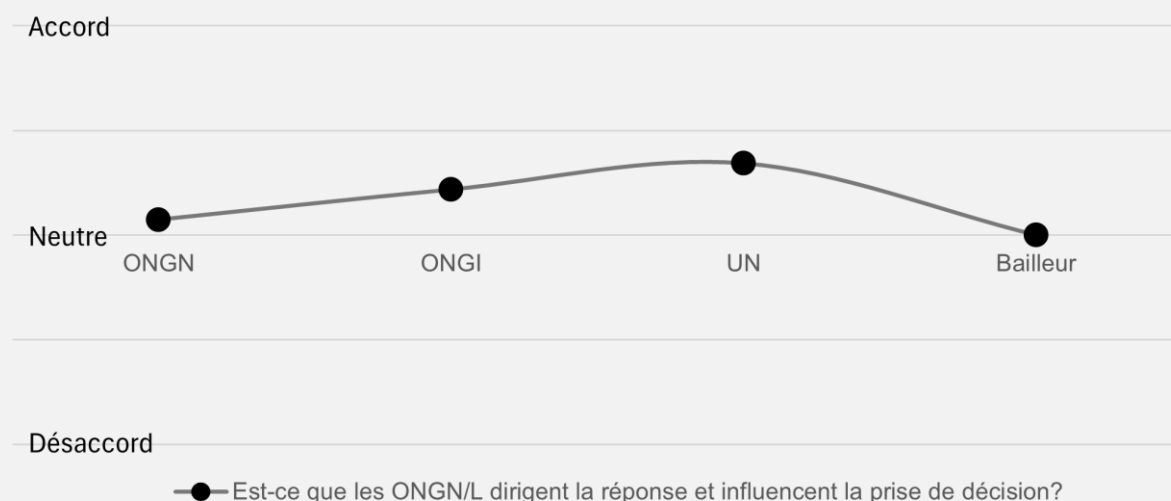
On the one hand, the L/NNGOs are regularly present in coordinating fora and consulted on strategy, giving the impression of formal participation. On the other, several respondents stress that this representation can be superficial: L/NNGO inputs are not always factored into final decisions.

Conversely, some international actors believe that L/NNGOs have not yet fully embraced their strategic role: they sometimes conflate organizational priorities with collective ones and could be more assertive in shaping debates and putting forward practical, constructive proposals. This dual reading highlights the need to strengthen the capacity of L/NNGOs' capacity to turn their presence into meaningful and constructive influence.

One international participant noted: "L/NNGOs are not sufficiently listened to by the HCT and, more broadly, by INGOs/UN/IOs, nor sufficiently supported. They should be more central to consultations and to the response."

Another respondent nuanced this view: "Major decisions are taken in coordination meetings where L/NNGO representatives do participate and their views are considered, however, in most cases the overall direction of the response still rests with INGOs/UN/IOs."

Level of perception according to the type of actor



BC. Support

National coordination mechanisms are supported and have the technical capacity to respond to humanitarian emergencies.

This issue analyses the support provided to national coordination mechanisms and their technical capacity to play an effective role in the humanitarian response.

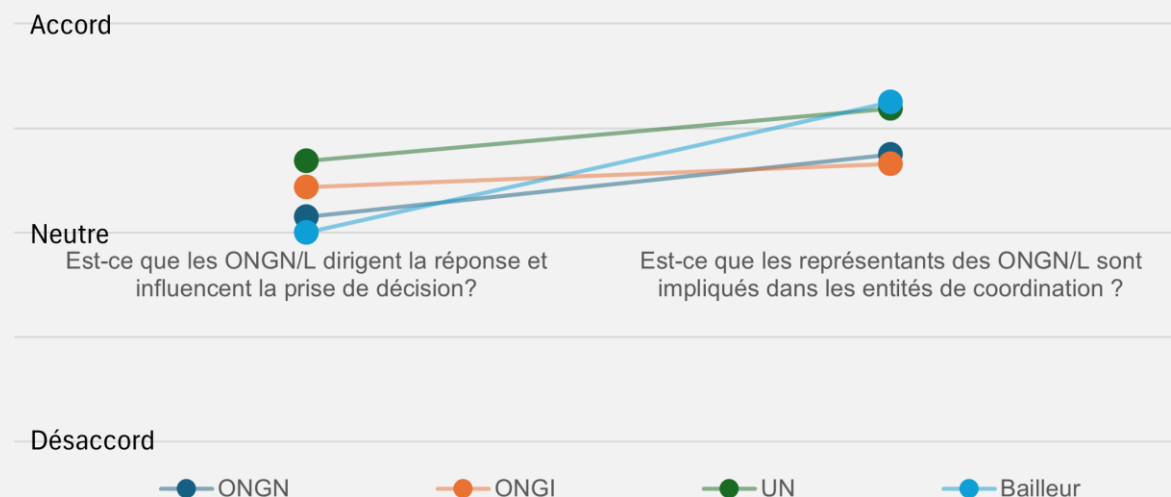
Findings reveal a mixed picture: while national mechanisms are well integrated into coordination structures, they generally lack autonomy despite significant support. A notable feature is that the L/NNGOs are both less critical of the forum's level of autonomy and more demanding regarding the support they received. The main challenge raised concerns financial autonomy: " We cannot speak of autonomy if, to organize a General Assembly, we have to turn to partners for funding.». «That said, recent initiatives signal encouraging developments: " Support has only just begun with capacity-strengthening for L/NNGOs: for example, initial gender mainstreaming activities by NORCAP and UN Women."

The CHOI platform plays a central role in the national L/NNGOs, serving as an interface between local organizations and decision-making bodies. Data and interviews indicate that it brings together a large share of L/NNGOs and represents their interests across several national and intersectoral fora.

Some stakeholders, however, suggest that the platform could further broaden its approach to better reflect the diversity of actors and local priorities. Several comments voiced concerns about the representativeness of national forums: " To my knowledge, only one national platform is highlighted. I would respond differently now, because a single platform that does not include most L/NNGOs will not create a snowball effect. Other organizations essential to the process remain on the margins of coordination."

CHOI remains a key platform for the coordination and visibility of L/NNGOs. Further ensuring the inclusion of a plurality of local voices could strengthen its role and influence in strategic decision-making.

Level of perception according to the type of actor



C. Financing

Access to humanitarian funding for L/NNGOs remains one of the main barriers to their empowerment. The data and interviews reveal a shared finding: L/NNGOs still have limited direct access to funding and must largely operate through intermediaries (INGOs, UN agencies). Data collected from L/NNGOs in this survey show that 26% of their resources come from direct donors, compared to 60% for INGOs. Conversely, they remain heavily dependent on indirect funding (via INGOs or UN agencies), which significantly restricts their autonomy and flexibility.

Access procedures appear particularly burdensome for L/NNGOs. They more frequently report facing disqualifying eligibility criteria, long and complex processes, insufficient information and overly short deadlines. These constraints reinforce the perception of a system that perpetuates structural inequalities between international and national actors.

The quality of funding further exacerbates these disparities. The issue of "indirect costs" is particularly illustrative: while some donors or agencies comply with the IASC policy, others only treat it as recommendation leading to highly inconsistent application depending on the interlocutor and rarely monitored after contracting. The lack of transparency and information deepens this asymmetry: only 21% of L/NNGOs report knowing the budgetary rules of their international partners, compared with 96% of INGOs.

Overall, the funding available for L/NNGOs remains insufficient, fragmented and overly conditioned by the priorities of international partners. This situation undermines their ability to strengthen themselves sustainably and play a strategic role in the humanitarian response.

Recommendations

- > Engage in a structured dialogue within the GHD to expand direct access and reduce faced by L/NNGOs in obtaining humanitarian funding. This could include the establishment of dedicated "pool funds" or specific funding for L/NNGOs, revising the timing of call publications, and organizing information or coaching sessions tailored to L/NNGOs (donors).
- > Within the HCT or GHD, develop a 'localization marker' reflecting key financial quality standards (pre-financing, operating and security costs, indirect costs, etc.) and promote its systematic use among all stakeholders.
- > Systematically involve L/NNGOs in donor consultations and ensure budgetary rules and funding criteria are made accessible across the full project cycle (donors, INGOs, UN agencies)

Stake	Definition	Level of advancement
Access	NGOs/Ls have access to direct funding with little or no barriers	Weak
Quality	The quality of the funding available to L/NNGOs is equivalent to that of INGOs.	Very Low
Quantity	The amount of funding available to L/NNGOs is proportional to their commitment to implementing the activities.	Weak

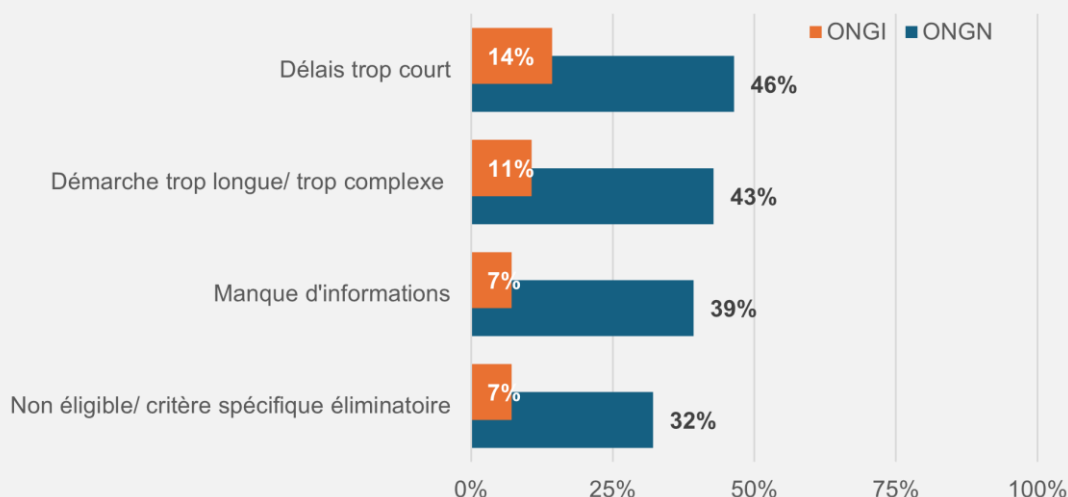
CA. Access

L/NNGOs have access to direct funding with little or no barriers

This issue examines both the level and the degree of directness of funding accessible for L/NNGOs. Overall, respondents share a critical view, with L/NNGOs and donors more severely than INGOs and UN respondents. Except for the question on how donors integrate localization, most responses were negative. Two figures summarize the trend: 40% of respondents believe L/NNGOs have little or no access to direct funding, and 42% think that access conditions vary depending on the actor.

To date, no mechanism exists to accurately quantify the direct and indirect financial flows to L/NNGOs. However, the data collected here provides an indicative picture: for L/NNGOs, about 26% of funding comes from direct donors, while significant shares come through INGOs (28%) and UN agencies (18%). In contrast, INGOs receive the majority of their resources from direct funding from donors (60%), supplemented by indirect contributions from the UN agencies (17%). Among L/NNGOs that have applied for funding in the past year, 96% report having faced obstacles, compared to only 60% of INGOs. The nature of these barriers is telling: L/NNGOs more often report disqualifying eligibility criteria (39% vs. 20% for INGOs), lengthy or complex procedures (52% vs. 30%), limited availability of information (48% vs. 20%) and short deadlines (57% vs. 40%). These differences suggest that current funding mechanisms disproportionately burden national organizations, limiting their ability to mobilize resources compared to their international counterparts.

Obstacles encountered in applying for funding



CB. Quality

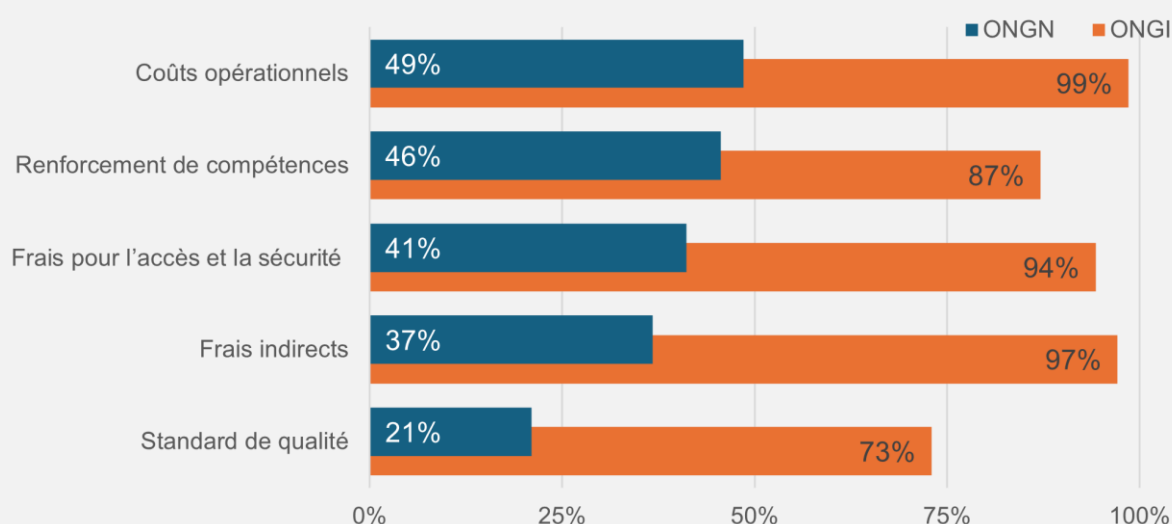
The quality of funding available to L/NNGOs is equivalent to that available to INGOs.

A significant gap also exists in the quality of funding received by L/NNGOs and INGOs. Only a minority of L/NNGOs benefit from coverage of essential costs such as operational expenses (49% vs. 99% for INGOs), institutional strengthening through indirect costs (37% vs. 97%), or safety or access-related expenses (41% vs. 94%). Similarly, support for capacity building and advocacy is far lower for L/NNGOs (46% and 38% respectively) than for INGOs (87% and 61%).

This unequal treatment is reflected in overall perceptions of funding quality: 40% of L/NNGOs consider their funding far below quality standards, compared to only 4% of INGOs. Conversely, 73% of INGOs deem their resources sufficient, compared to just 21% of L/NNGOs. These results confirm that funding available to L/NNGOs is more limited and less conducive to institutional strengthening. There is general convergence among respondents regarding the limited quality of funding available to national structures, except for "indirect costs", which remain contentious. On this point, UN agencies and donors express a more positive view than L/NNGOs. Interviews reveal strong variability in policies: some actors systematically grant such costs, while others only recommend them without specifying a percentage. Post-contract monitoring remains limited, and actual transfer to L/NNGOs is rarely verified. As a result, the application of these policies therefore depends heavily on the specific interlocutors and context.

This situation is further compounded by limited access to information: only 21% of L/NNGOs report knowing the budgetary rules applied by UN agencies or INGOs with their donors, compared to 96% of INGOs. As one respondent noted: "Operating costs of local partners are granted according to the donor's own requirements, which determine the percentage".

Estimation of specific cost coverage by type of actor



CC. Quantity

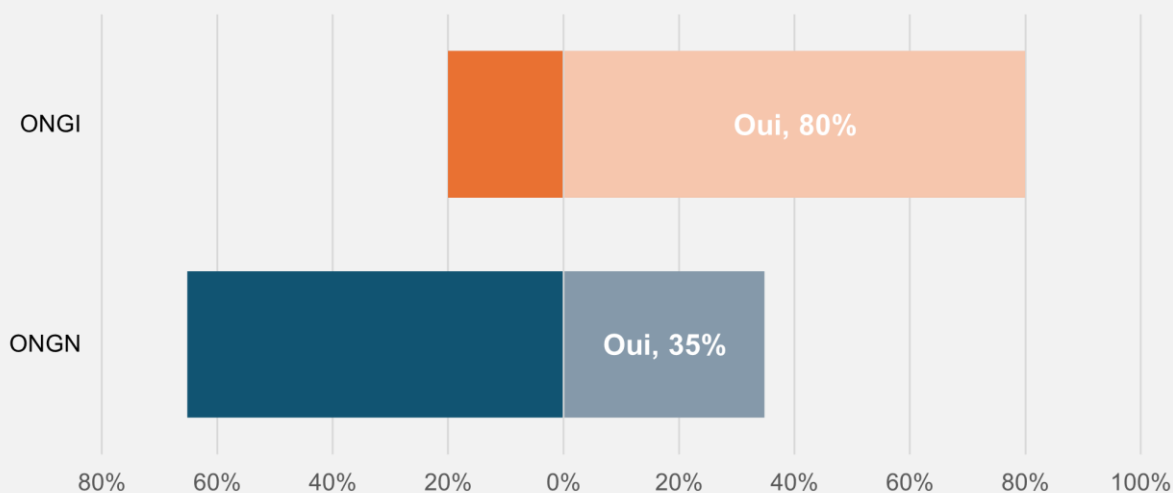
The amount of funding available to L/NNGOs is proportional to their commitment to implementing the activities.

When asked whether the allocations to L/NNGOs are increasing, perceptions diverge sharply. L/NNGOs express a slightly negative view, reflecting a lack of perceived progress, while international actors tend to believe that a positive trend is underway. Several comments highlight an overall decline in humanitarian funding, affecting the entire response. As one participant remarked: "In fact, even the funds allocated for humanitarian action *are decreasing year after year*." This contraction of resources translates into increased pressure on L/NNGOs, which are often tasked with implementing l» This volume of work without proportionate funding. As one international respondent put it: "I definitely observed that L/NNGOs were asked to deliver a high volume of work for very limited funding".

While some respondents acknowledge a rise in the number of L/NNGOs receiving funding, both the distribution and amounts remain insufficient. One respondent summarized it as: "Accountability for funding always *falls to* the INGOs through which funds are channeled. Certain donor compliance requirements limit the volume of funding that can go to L/NNGOs. Prioritizing donor compliance over technical capacity significantly reduces the amount allocated to L/NNGOs."

Finally, this perception of limited access is closely linked to issues of consultation and transparency. 74% of L/NNGOs report having access to information on funding opportunities, compared with 90% of INGOs. - — and only 35% of L/NNGOs participate in donor consultations, versus 80% of INGOs.

Reported participation rate in consultations with donors on funding opportunities



D. Partnership

The analysis highlights significant progress towards more collaborative partnerships between L/NNGOs and international actors but also points to structural limitations that continue to hinder the emergence of genuinely equitable and strategic relationships.

The data show that partnerships are still predominantly project-based, focusing mainly on activity implementation. While financial transparency is widely acknowledged, the fairness of budget allocation is perceived more positively by INGOs than by L/NNGOs. Perception gaps are particularly evident regarding involvement in budget management and contractual relationships, which L/NNGOs often describe as unbalanced.

Interviews reveal that, behind the appearance of balanced partnerships, power dynamics persist. L/NNGOs denounce practices resembling subcontracting, reinforced by unequal access to donors. Some collaborations are described as being driven more by funding opportunities than by genuine complementarity, fostering competition rather than cooperation. From the perspective of international actors, L/NNGOs are sometimes perceived as passive or insufficiently proactive in strategic forums, limiting their actual influence.

Across the project cycle, L/NNGOs are strongly involved in needs assessments and activity monitoring but remains underrepresented in strategic and budgetary decision-making. Long-term partnerships remain rare: only one-third of respondents identify strategic dynamics extending beyond the project framework, even though most agree that current partnerships are broadly aligned with the needs of L/NNGOs.

Recommendations

1. Develop a partnership code of conduct, defining shared principles, concrete commitments and a joint monitoring mechanism. (HCT)
2. Organize dedicated "round tables" or dialogues with L/NNGOs to enhance transparency, communication and feedback from "partners of partners". (Donors)
3. Promote partnerships with local structures to strengthen skills transfer and avoid concentrating support on already established organizations (All actors).

Stake	Definition	Level of advancement
Fair and ethical practices	Partnerships are based on fair and ethical practices.	Medium
Engagement in the Project Cycle	Partnerships specify implications and responsibilities in the project cycle.	Medium
Strategic approach	Longer-term strategic partnerships to build systems and processes that reflect the ambition and goals of the local/national partner	Very Low

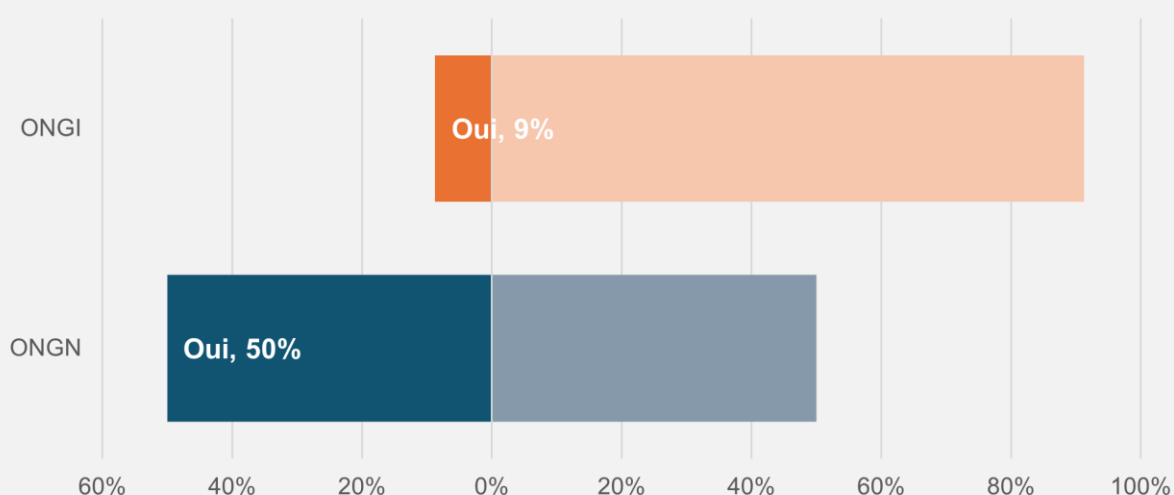
DA. Fair and ethical practices

Partnerships are based on fair and ethical practices. The data reveal that both L/NNGOs and INGOs share a broadly similar perception of partnerships, despite the absence of a unified definition. In both cases, partnerships are mainly project-based (68% for L/NNGO and 71% for INGOs) and focused on activity implementation (94% for both groups). Most respondents consider these partnerships to have been co-defined (84% for L/NNGOs, 94% for INGOs), reflecting genuine efforts toward collaboration.

Regarding financial management, a large majority acknowledge transparency in budget allocation (85% of L/NNGOs and 93% of INGOs). However, perceptions diverge on fairness: while 85% of INGOs view budget distribution as equitable, only 67% of L/NNGOs share this opinion. The results also highlight a lack of clarity and mutual understanding of roles. Only 13% of INGOs consider L/NNGOs to be involved in budget management beyond their own activities, whereas 62% of L/NNGOs believe they are. Conversely, half of the L/NNGOs (50%) perceive contractual arrangements as monopolistic, compared to just 9% of INGOs. Interviews suggest that these discrepancies stem from limited transparency and understanding of partnership terms on the part of L/NNGOs.

One respondent observed: "Partnerships are still largely service delivery rather than equitable collaboration between L/NNGOs and international actors [...]. It is more of a service-provider relationship where the L/NNGO is expected to deliver outputs".

Estimation of the rate of contractual documents of partnerships that define a monopolistic relationship



DB. Engagement in the Project Cycle

Partnerships specify implications and responsibilities in the project cycle.

Analysis of responses on L/NGO inclusion in the project cycle indicates substantial but uneven participation.

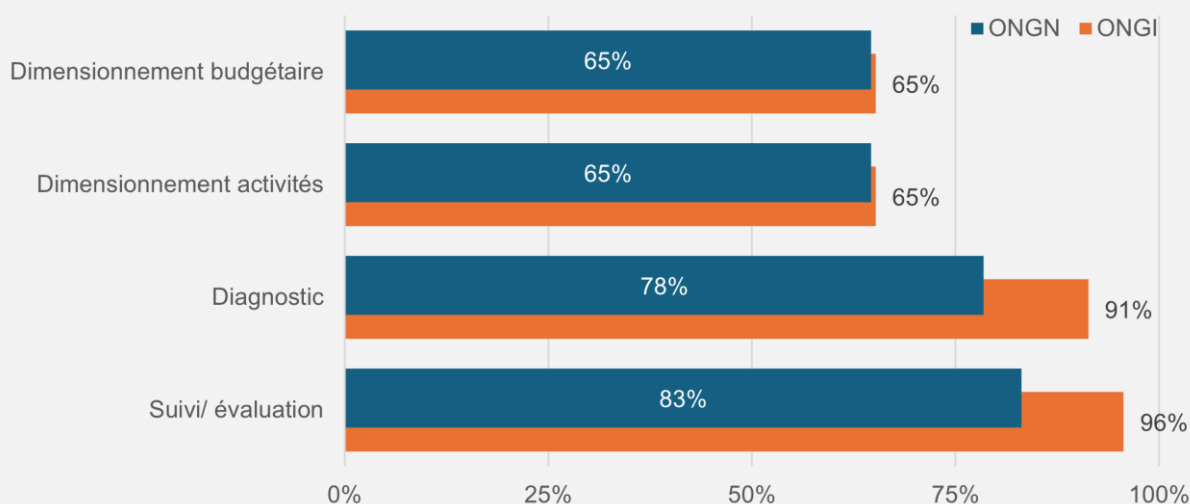
Both L/NGOs and INGOs recognize strong involvement of local actors in initial assessment (78% according to the L/NGOs, 91% according to the INGOs) and in the monitoring of their own activities (83% and 96% respectively), reflecting appreciation for their contextual expertise. However, participation decreases significantly in strategic and budgetary phases and decisions: only 65% of respondents (L/NGOs and INGOs) confirm meaningful involvement of L/NGOs in these decision-making stages. Access to donors also illustrates this asymmetry: while 91% of INGOs affirm that L/NGOs are involved in follow-up meetings with donors monitoring missions, only 66% of L/NGOs report being involved.

Overall, the findings suggest that despite genuine progress towards more collaborative partnerships, the next challenge lies ensuring balanced engagement throughout the entire project cycle, particularly in strategic and financial decision-making. Perception data confirms a general convergence between L/NGOs and INGOs, both rating national partners' involvement across project stages as moderate. These results contrast with the view of the UN agencies, which rate all dimensions highly, and those of donors, whose perceptions are markedly more negative, revealing divergent interpretations of partnership quality across actor groups.

An INGO representative noted: "There is a certain wait-and-see attitude among national organizations."

Another respondent added "Partnerships are still mostly about service delivery rather than equitable collaboration", "Local actors tend to be involved only after funding is secured, mainly for implementation purpose."

Rate of involvement of NGO partners in the stages of the project cycle by type of respondent



DC. Strategic approach

Longer-term strategic partnerships to build systems and processes that reflect the ambition and goals of the local/national partner

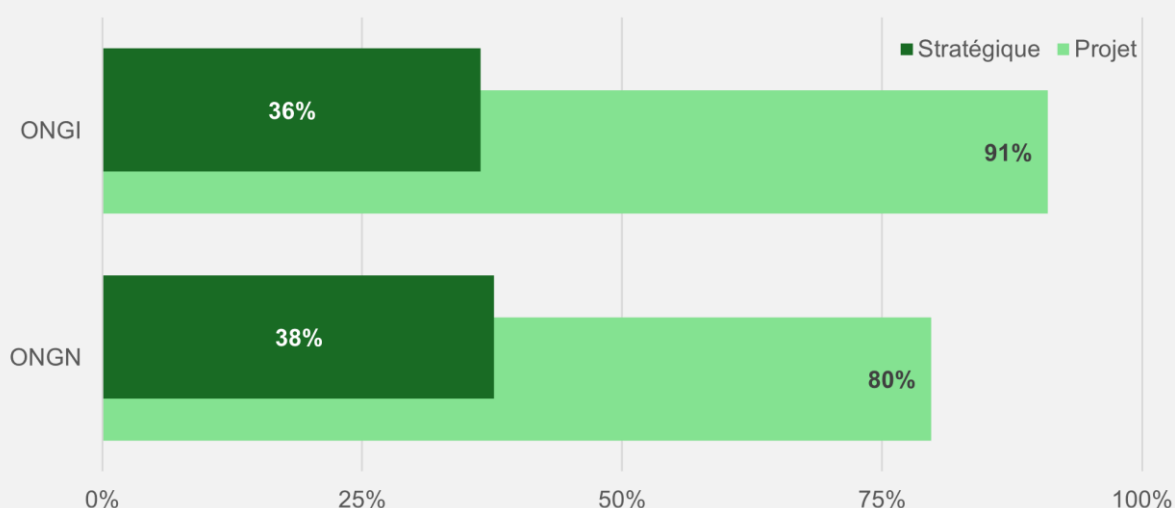
As noted earlier, most partnerships between L/NNGOs and INGOs remain confined to a project logic, rather than a strategic one. 68% of L/NNGOs and 71% of INGOs consider their partnerships to be primarily project-based, while only about a third (32% for L/NNGOs, 29% for INGOs) identify more strategic relationships. This reflects the ongoing difficulty of embedding collaboration within a long-term vision, institutional vision, beyond operational implementation.

Nevertheless, perceptions of **partnership** quality are broadly positive. A large majority of L/NNGOs (93%) and INGOs (95%) agree that partnerships help adjust roles in favor of national actors and strengthen their autonomy. Similarly, they consider these partnerships to be aligned with the needs and objectives of L/NNGOs (97% for L/NNGOs, 95% for INGOs).

Perception data confirm these trends. Both groups acknowledge that partnerships reflect national actors' priorities to some extent, though UN agencies are far more optimistic in their assessments. Donors, by contrast, remain more skeptical – particularly regarding the integration of local priorities and the establishment of partnerships beyond project frameworks, —suggesting persistent challenges in moving beyond short-term funding cycles toward genuinely structural collaboration.

In sum, while partnerships between L/NNGOs and international actors are increasingly collaborative and responsive to local needs, they remain anchored in a short-term project framework rather than **long-term strategic alliances**

Type of partnership according to the type of actor



E. Participation

The analysis reveals a clear desire and growing commitment to involving communities in humanitarian action. However, largely confined to implementation rather than strategic decision-making. As noted in the study's limitations, the data and findings presented here should be interpreted with caution, as the study did not directly consult communities. The information therefore reflects the perspectives of L/NNGOs, INGOs, UN agencies, and donors.

Across humanitarian action, programming and evaluation, communities are actively involved in targeting, implementation, accountability mechanisms, and, to some extent, project evaluation. However, they remain marginal in areas such as budget planning and activity design. This imbalance highlights strong operational involvement but limited participation in key decision-making processes. Donors, in particular, tend to view this participation more critically, pointing to its limited depth and influence.

In the development of humanitarian norms and policies, communities are consulted but rarely engaged in strategic stages. Their participation is described as occasional, informal and falling short of institutionalized mechanisms. Communities tend to contribute primarily to the operationalization of standards rather than their formulation, limiting the adaptability of humanitarian frameworks to local contexts.

In coordination processes, the role of communities remains peripheral. Most coordination mechanisms are concentrated at central or regional levels, far from community settings. Their participation in meetings is sporadic, often limited to needs assessments, and rarely effective in decision-making spaces. This discrepancy between formal presence and real influence reflects an inclusion that is more theoretical than substantial.

Recommendations

1. Develop participation mechanisms that take into account the specific challenges faced by communities – including geographical remoteness, security constraints, transportation, and communication barriers (HCT)
2. Conduct a dedicated study to gather community feedback on their role in humanitarian action (HCT).

Stake	Definition	Level of advancement
In action, programming, evaluation	Communities participate in shaping programming, including evaluating the work of NGOs (international, national, and local)	Strong
In the development of standards and policies	Communities are involved in developing community/contextualized norms for all actors working in this context.	Medium
In coordination	Communities are the driving force behind aid coordination.	Medium

EA. In action, programming, evaluation

Communities participate in shaping programming, including evaluating the work of NGOs.

Overall, community engagement is viewed positively. Communities are actively involved in activity implementation, accountability mechanisms, holding people accountable and, to a lesser extent, project evaluation.

However, their participation remains limited during project design, such as budgeting phase or activity planning.

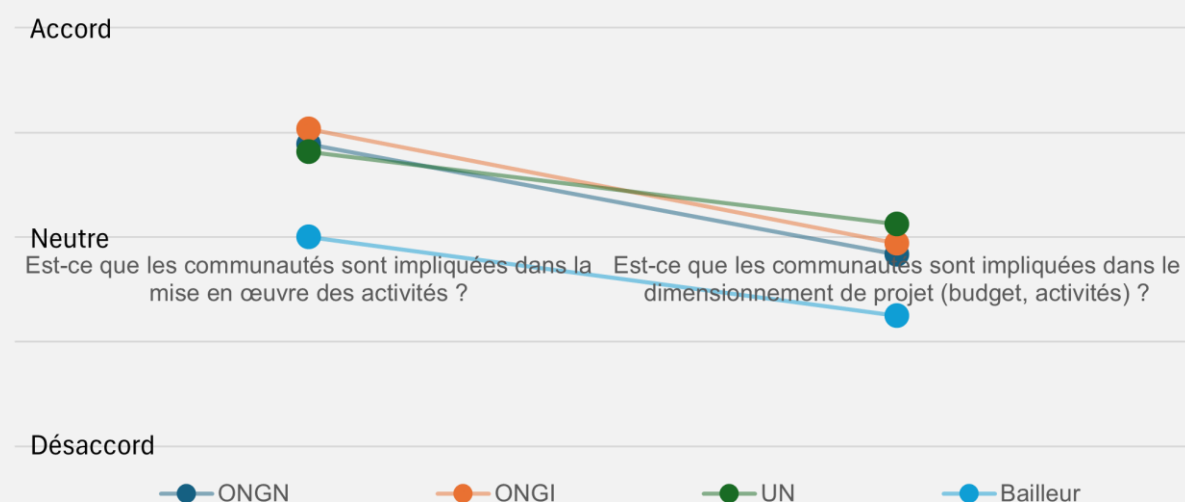
As one respondent summarized: "In all interventions, communities are involved in targeting and accountability mechanisms, but the project design and budgeting are done without them."

Another added "although communities are involved, they find it difficult to participate in budget planning: for the project itself, yes — but not for the financial dimension."

This gap reveals a structural asymmetry between implementation and influence, where communities play an operational role but remain sidelined from strategic choices and program design.

It is noteworthy that, despite broadly similar trends across stakeholders, donors express a less positive overall perception than other stakeholders, suggesting differing interpretations of the depth and quality of community participation.

Level of perception according to the type of actor



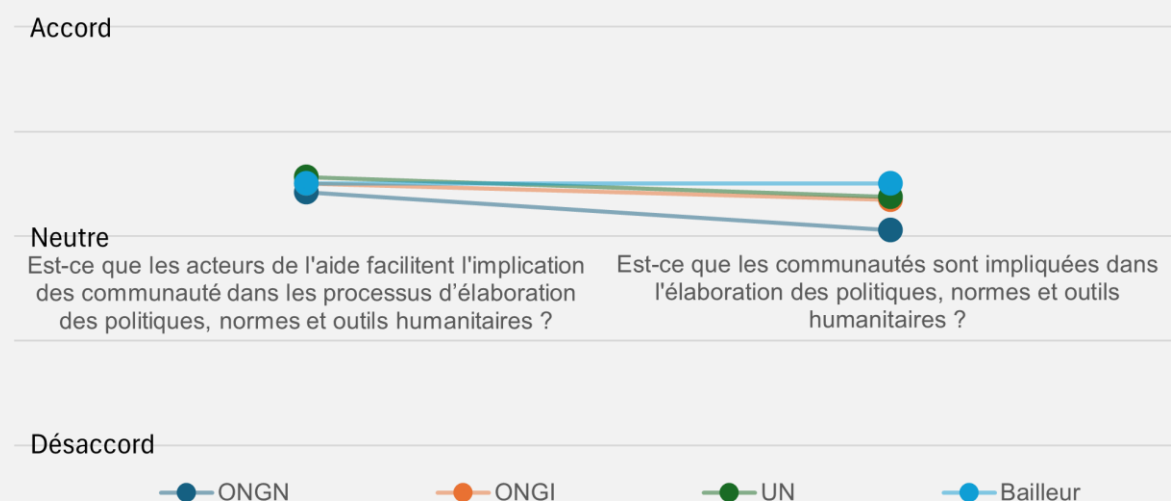
EB. In the development of standards and policies

Communities are involved in developing community or context-specific norms for all actors working in this context. Community involvement in the development of humanitarian standards and policies remains limited and often informal. While some actors acknowledge that "communities participate in the humanitarian programming cycle", others emphasize that they are mostly confined to implementation.

One respondent state« Communities are only involved in implementation instead of being included before, during and after implementation »

The data confirms this finding: the perception of meaningful community participation in the development of humanitarian policies, standards and tools is low, well below scores related to the existence of engagement mechanisms. In other words, communities are consulted rather than genuinely involved in decision-making processes.

Level of perception according to the type of actor



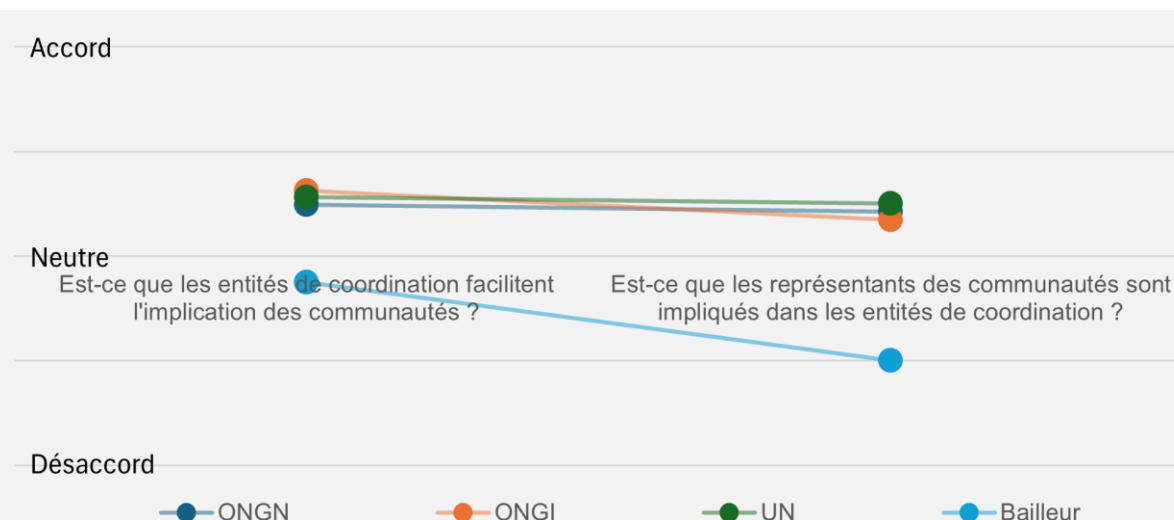
EC. In coordination

Communities are the driving force behind aid coordination.

Community participation in coordination mechanisms appears limited and often peripheral. Several testimonies emphasize that “coordination mechanisms take place at the level of departmental or regional capitals and are very far removed from communities,” and that their involvement remains sporadic, “only when there are a few coordination meetings in the field.” Some respondents noted that “if it were through coordination meetings, I would say no, but yes in the needs assessment”. Finally, others insisted that “communities are certainly represented in sectoral meetings, but they still need to be represented at the central level to be effective.”

The data confirm this trend: the perception of their presence in the coordinating entities remains low, despite the existence of formalized involvement mechanisms. This discrepancy illustrates an inclusion that is more theoretical than substantive, where communities remain on the margins of strategic decision-making spaces.

Level of perception according to the type of actor



F. Policy, Influence, and Advocacy

L/NNGOs are involved in the development and contextualization of humanitarian standards and policies, but their role remains largely consultative. Their real influence on strategic orientations is limited by the centralization of leadership within UN agencies and major INGOs, as well as by restricted access to donors: only 35% participate in consultations and just 21% are aware of the budgetary rules of financial partners. Meetings with donors are rare and often conditioned by partnerships already established with INGOs, which reinforces a logic of dependency and limits the strategic influence of national actors.

An increasing number of stakeholders insist that visibility should better recognize the leading role of local and national actors. However, several respondents still point to persistent shortcomings and instances where activities or results are appropriated by international partners.

The advocacy capacity of L/NNGOs has strengthened over the years through the creation of joint working groups and innovative multi-stakeholder platforms. Nevertheless, their influence remains limited: strategic leadership continues to be concentrated at the level of UN agencies and INGOs, which restricts the impact of local contributions in decisions on public policy and priority setting.

Overall, while progress is evident in terms of inclusion, visibility and advocacy, L/NNGOs remain largely dependent on international actors and must transform their presence into real and structured influence.

Key recommendations:

1. Invite L/NNGOs to GHD meetings on a quarterly or biannual basis, or ad hoc during strategic consultations, to gather their views and briefings on the humanitarian situation (donors)
2. Strengthen advocacy capacities by supporting the structuring of multi-stakeholder platforms and groups to increase their autonomy and legitimacy.

Stake	Definition	Level of advancement
Standards and policies	The standards and policies that define the humanitarian response frameworks are defined with the NGOs/L.	Medium
Visibility and communication	NGOs/Ls are visible and recognized as actors in aid communication exercises.	Weak
Advocacy	NGOs/Ls develop influence and advocacy strategies at all scales	Weak

FA. Standards and policies

Standards and policies that define humanitarian response frameworks are defined with the L/NNGOs

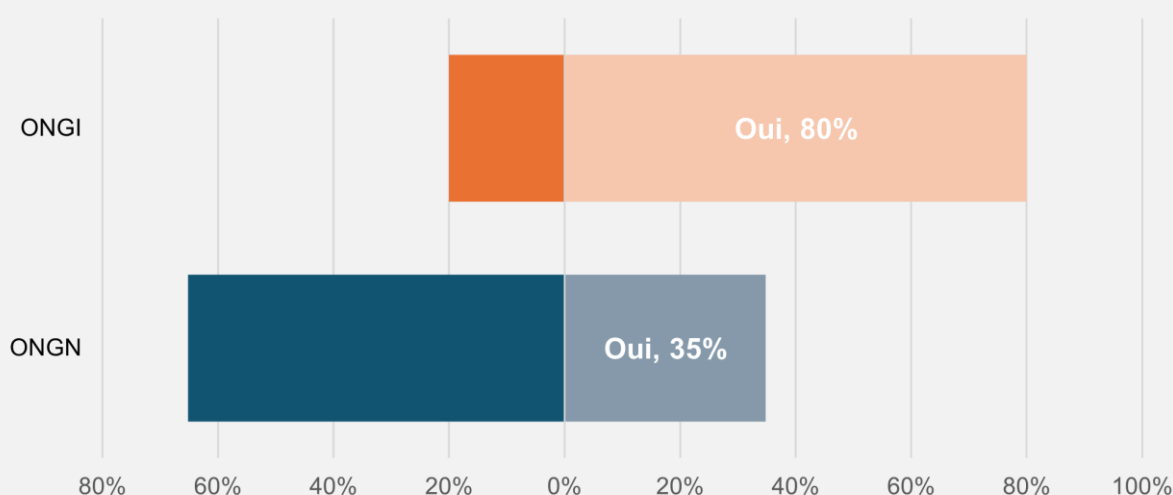
The involvement of L/NNGOs in the development and contextualization of humanitarian policies and standards is mixed. Several respondents note that "L/NNGOs participate, but do not influence decision-making", and the data confirm this mixed perception: their active participation is seen as moderate and their recognition as key actors remains uneven.

Some, however, highlight positive progress, noting that "all actors are involved in defining humanitarian policies and standards, and in Cameroon, *increasingly* L/NNGOs are participating in major humanitarian forums where strategic priorities are set".

This evolution must nevertheless be qualified: "Leadership in Cameroon still lies with the UN, not even with the INGOs. We must work to decentralize it toward L/NNGOs, who best understand local realities." While international actors have made efforts to improve the inclusion of L/NNGOs, their role remains more consultative than decision-making and their capacity to influence strategic orientations is still limited.

A central issue in this participation concerns direct access to donors and dialogue spaces. The data show that only 35% of L/NNGOs participate in donor consultations, compared to 80% of INGOs. Similarly, just 21% of L/NNGOs report being familiar with the budgetary rules of UN agencies or INGOs with their donors, compared with 96% of INGOs. This gap in access and information limits the ability of national organizations to influence strategic and budgetary decisions. Interviews also underline that opportunities to meet donors remain rare and often conditional perpetuating a dependency dynamic. As one respondent explained: "Accountability for funding always lies with the INGOs through which funds are channeled. Some donor requirements limit the volume of funding that can be allocated to L/NNGOs."

Participation in consultation meetings organized by donors



FB. Visibility and communication

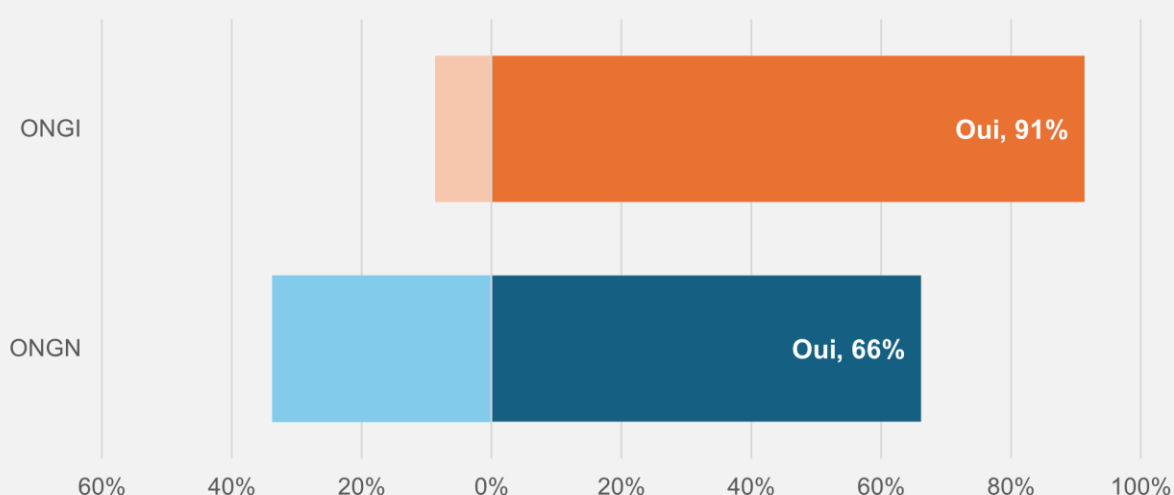
L/NNGOs are visible and recognized as actors in aid communication exercises.

L/NNGOs are visible and recognized as actors in aid communication, but this visibility remains ambivalent and often symbolic. Several local actors point out that it is frequently limited to superficial aspects, such as "the wearing logos on vests", rather than reflecting genuine recognition of their role and strategic contribution. The data confirms this perception: the assessment of visibility is generally average, but donors tend to be more critical, considering that institutional recognition of L/NNGOs does not match their operational engagement.

Interviews provide further insight, showing that both media and institutional visibility remain weak, limiting the ability of L/NNGOs to be perceived as key actors. Some respondents underline that this situation reinforces existing power imbalances: "L/NNGOs do a lot in the field, but in the forums, their role is not valued; they are often reduced to implementers for international partners", or that "some partnerships exist mainly for fundraising, not for the recognizing local expertise".

This limited recognition contrasts sharply with the growing operational role of L/NNGOs, which are central to community access and contextualization of responses. Valuing their expertise and increasing the visibility of their contributions are therefore essential, not only for their institutional legitimacy, but also to build community trust and strengthen the effectiveness of humanitarian response.

Rate of involvement of L/NNGOs in follow-up meetings with financial partners by type of actor



FC. Advocacy

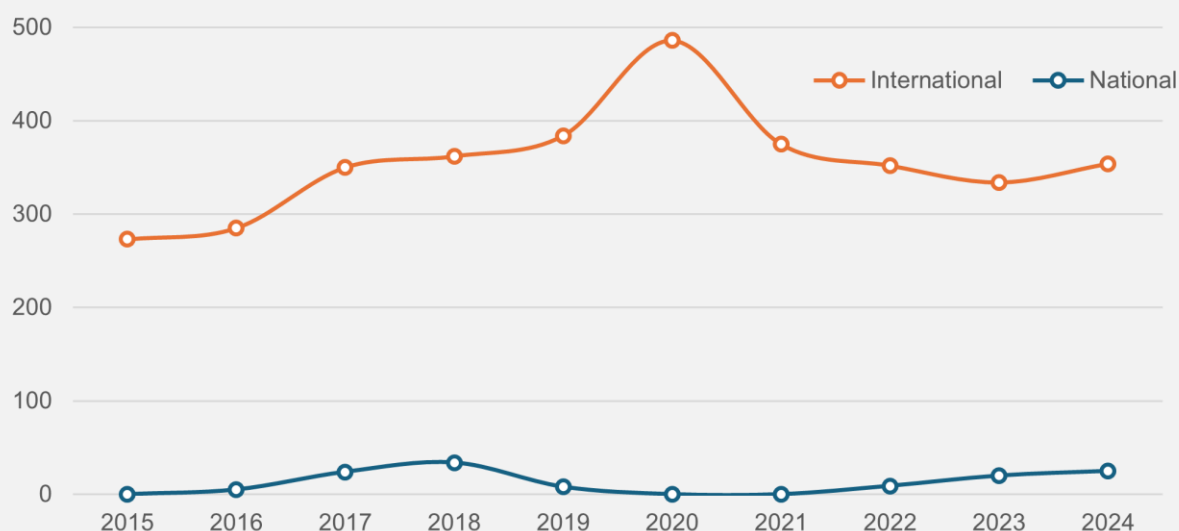
The data also reveals a limited perception of L/NNGOs' influence and leadership in advocacy processes.

Nonetheless, progress is visible. The creation of joint working groups between L/NNGOs and INGOs has yielded some concrete results, and advocacy initiatives driven by national multi-stakeholder platforms, including innovative public-private partnerships, are producing tangible outcomes. Several respondents also noted that "L/NNGOs have *greatly* improved their advocacy, and it is important to maintain and sustain these actions".

Still, the dominant perception is that strategic leadership remains concentrated at the level of UN agencies and major INGOs. As one respondent put it, "as long as UN agencies and INGO do not change their approach to localization by redefining their role [...] the voice of L/NNGOs will remain little heard". This limits their impact in strategic fora, despite their willingness to contribute to the evolution of laws, regulations and public policies that serve communities.

In short, while the advocacy capacity of L/NNGOs has clearly strengthened in recent years, their real influence on decision-making remains marginal and heavily dependent on external dynamics. This underlines the importance of consolidating their spaces of autonomy, legitimacy, and strategic participation within the humanitarian system.

Volume of publication carried out on Relief web per year and by type of player.



Recommendations

Capabilities

1. Jointly develop a roadmap through an inclusive dialogue led by the HCT, aimed at overcoming differences in the perception of the L/NNGOs' capacities, building a shared vision and defining priority actions to strengthen their contribution to the humanitarian response (HCT).
2. Support the implementation of the Localization Working Group's action plan, particularly the capacity-strengthening component, and establish a sustainable mechanism for organizational development that goes beyond ad hoc training initiatives (all).

Coordination

3. Continue financial support to L/NNGO representation platforms (donors, INGOs, UN agencies and all HCT members) and encourage greater financial contributions from their members (L/NNGOs).
4. Strengthen ownership, governance, and collective representation within L/NNGOs Coordination Platforms (HCT, L/NNGOs)
5. Consider a participatory review of coordination platforms to assess representativeness and define clear priorities (L/NNGOs)
6. Strengthen dialogue and collective action between national and international representation platforms (CHINGO, CHOI, other platforms, etc.).

Financing

7. Engage in a structured dialogue within the GHD to expand direct access and reduce faced by L/NNGOs in obtaining humanitarian funding. This could include the establishment of dedicated "pool funds" or specific funding for L/NNGOs, revising the timing of call publications, and organizing information or coaching sessions tailored to L/NNGOs (donors).
8. Within the HCT or GHD, develop a 'localization marker' reflecting key financial quality standards (pre-financing, operating and security costs, indirect costs, etc.) and promote its systematic use among all stakeholders.
9. Systematically involve L/NNGOs in donor consultations and ensure budgetary rules and funding criteria are made accessible across the full project cycle (donors, INGOs, UN agencies)

Partnerships

10. Develop a partnership code of conduct, defining shared principles, concrete commitments and a joint monitoring mechanism. (HCT)
11. Organize dedicated "round tables" or dialogues with L/NNGOs to enhance transparency, communication and feedback from "partners of partners". (Donors)
12. Promote partnerships with local structures to strengthen skills transfer and avoid concentrating support on already established organizations (All actors).

Participation

13. Develop participation mechanisms that take into account the specific challenges faced by communities – including geographical remoteness, security constraints, transportation, and communication barriers (HCT)
14. Conduct a dedicated study to gather community feedback on their role in humanitarian action (HCT).

Policy, Influence, and Advocacy

15. Invite L/NNGOs to GHD meetings on a quarterly or biannual basis, or ad hoc during strategic consultations, to gather their views and briefings on the humanitarian situation (donors)
16. Strengthen advocacy capacities by supporting the structuring of multi-stakeholder platforms and groups to increase their autonomy and legitimacy.

Annexes

Appendix 1: Localization Barometer Methodology

Appendix 2: List of dimensions, issues, questions, variables

Localization barometer

Commitments under pressure?

A project run by national and local NGO fora, with support from ICVA

West & Central Africa – Analysis 2024



Methodology document

Table of contents

1	Approach	2
2	Structuring the analysis	2
2.1	Cascade approach.....	2
2.2	Data collection	3
3	Focus.....	4
4	Stakeholders and responsibilities	5
5	Overall process.....	6
6	Results	7

1 Approach

Localization has become a key issue in humanitarian aid in recent years. In West Africa, several initiatives have been undertaken to accelerate the place and role of national NGOs in humanitarian responses, in parallel with the development of different methodological evaluation approaches.

Building on an initiative implemented in Burkina Faso by SPONG, ICVA has developed a regional methodology to quantitatively and qualitatively assess the degree of localization of humanitarian responses, track its evolution over time, and identify successes and challenges in each of the West and Central African countries covered by the program. The objectives of this methodology are to (i) establish a framework for quantitatively measuring progress in localization at the WCA regional level, (ii) develop advocacy capacities at the national and regional levels, and (iii) establish a system for sharing good practices and lessons learned.

The methodology developed draws on existing methodologies and adapts their components to create an approach that is: 1) contextualizable, 2) comparable, and 3) sustainable.

In each country, the national NGO forum leads the process, with support from technical consultants at the country and regional levels (ICVA and then FONGA). A process for defining the localization agenda is developed by the partners of the NNGO forums, enabling the identification of variables for monitoring its implementation. The regional level will be primarily responsible for the regional and comparable aspects of the study and for ensuring consistency between the data collection methodology and the results obtained.

Eight countries are involved in the process for the 2024 exercise: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Chad, and DR Congo.

The approach was initiated and implemented by ICVA at the regional level. Regional support was then taken over and provided by the Forum of West and Central African NGOs (FONGA).

2 Structuring the analysis

2.1 Cascade approach

Monitoring the level of implementation of the localization agenda is structured around three cascading levels, facilitating the identification of questions to be answered by this monitoring:

1. The **dimensions** of localization: in other words, the major work themes on which there is consensus for this agenda.
2. For each of these, the **issues** at stake: i.e., the specific problems that we identify.
3. And finally, for each issue, **questions** of interest around it, in order to characterize the extent to which a satisfactory situation has or has not been achieved.

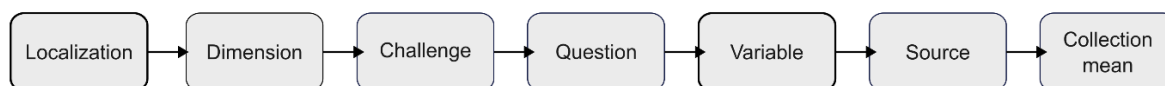
Example 1: with regard to funding and the need for NNGOs to have access to it, a question of interest will be to what extent do they have direct access to it?

Example 2: with regard to partnerships and the need for them to be long-term, a question of interest will be to what extent are they defined for durations beyond project duration?

The list of entries for each of these three levels comes from existing methodologies proposed by the following organizations: HAG, NEAR, START, IASC.

For each question of interest, one or more SMART variables are defined and associated with one or more specific sources and one or more means of collection:

3. Question of interest
4. SMART variable
5. Source
6. Collection mean.



Dimensions and issues are set in principle based on existing methodologies.

- > The questions of interest and variables are defined by the national workshops to correspond specifically to the context.
- > The sources and means of data collection are proposed by the technicians in charge of monitoring the study at both country and regional level.

The list presented in Appendix 1 has been drawn up to facilitate the choice, for each country, of the relevant questions of interest to be taken into consideration.

To make the exercise comparable over time and between countries, each issue will be rated independently on its level of progress and on a scale of five values ranging from “very low” to “very strong.”

For example, four questions are proposed by default to address the issue of access to financing. Each national workshop is responsible for determining whether all these questions should be considered, modifying them, and adjusting them according to their relevance to the context.

At the same time, each workshop will aim to list the stakeholders to be included in the process, as well as existing coordinating entities, whether they are part of the United Nations system.

2.2 Data collection

Once the questions of interest have been defined, data collection will be structured around three phases:

1. Collection phase, using forms to :
 - a. Collect specific information on funding, partnerships, projects, etc., by **stakeholder**.
 - b. Collect feedback on the implementation of the agenda from stakeholders. This process will provide contextual information on the involvement of different **people** and their understanding of the level of implementation of the agenda.
 - c. To collect and analyze various key **documents**, attendance lists, policies, etc., in order to obtain factual data for certain variables on the one hand (involvement of NGOs in coordinating bodies, for example) and to capture a corpus linked to the localization agenda on the other.
2. **Comparative analysis** phase: the comparison of data from these three different sources will enable us to formulate working hypotheses that will be explored in greater depth through the following phases
3. **Interview** phase: bilateral interviews, to form the overall corpus of the country study, which will enable us to define the level of implementation of the agenda in each country.

3 Focus

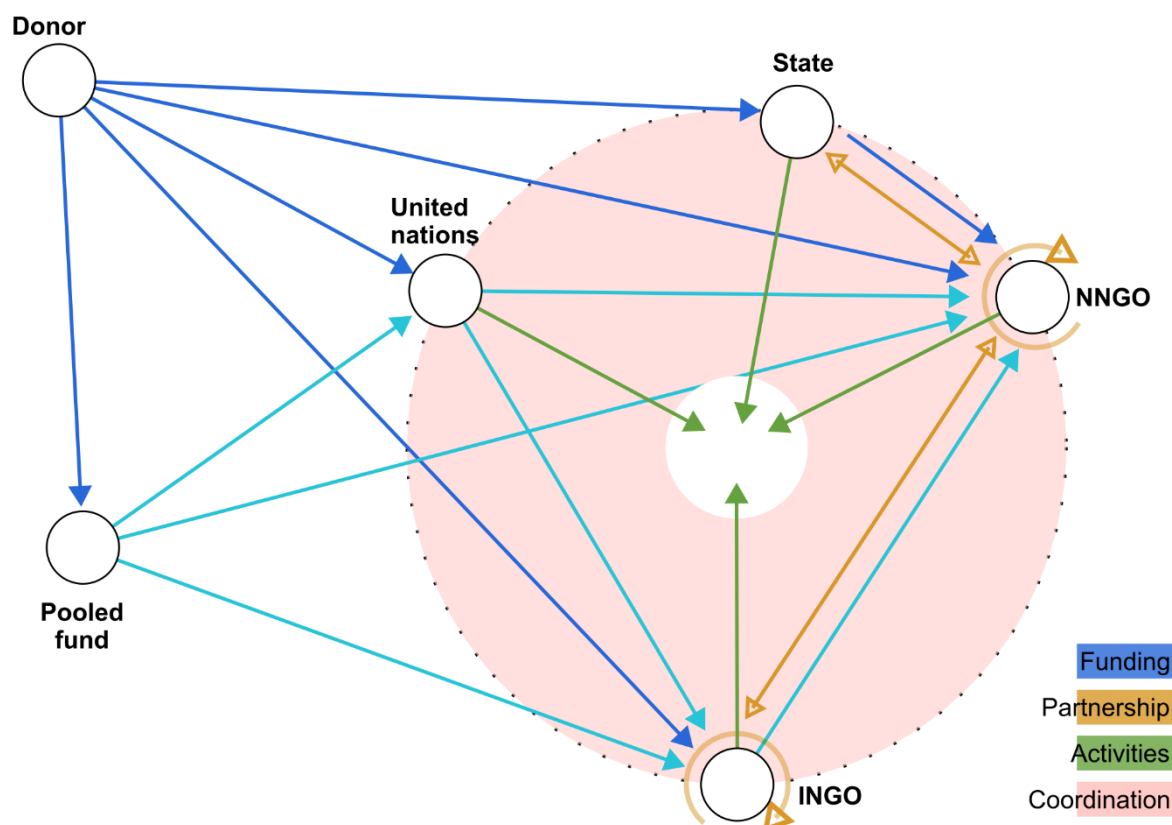
In most cases, the questions of interest target NNGOs and the level of their consideration, integration, participation, power, etc. vis-à-vis their intervention context.

The populations are also considered for the issue of participation in action, and the State for the issue of representation in coordination.

Through these questions, 6 types of objects will be questioned and analyzed:

1. Organizations
2. Individuals
3. Financing
4. Partnerships
5. Activities
6. Coordination structures.

The analytical framework of stakeholders and their relationships is summarized in the following figure:



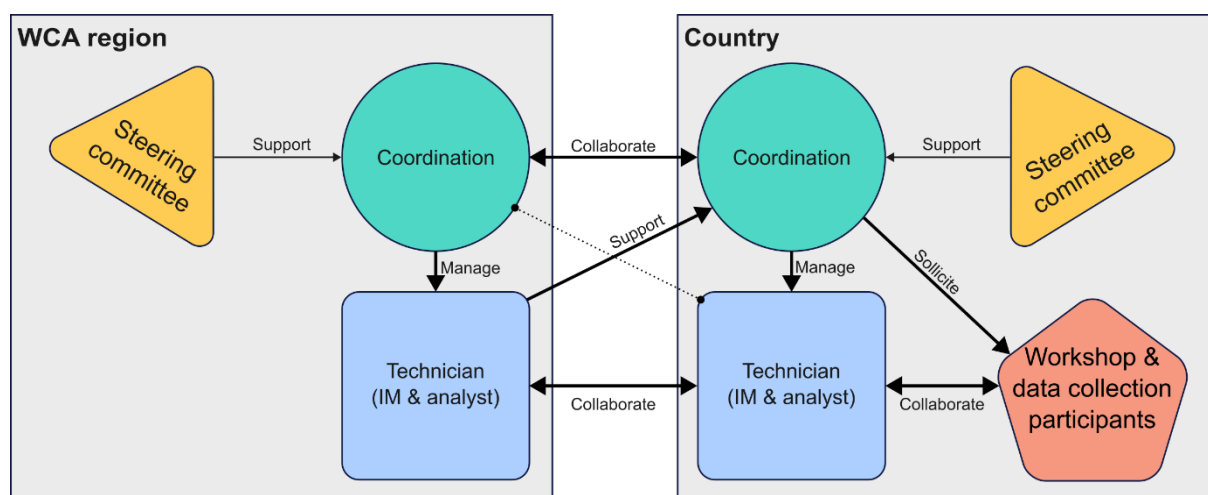
4 Stakeholders and responsibilities

There are two main stakeholders and responsibilities:

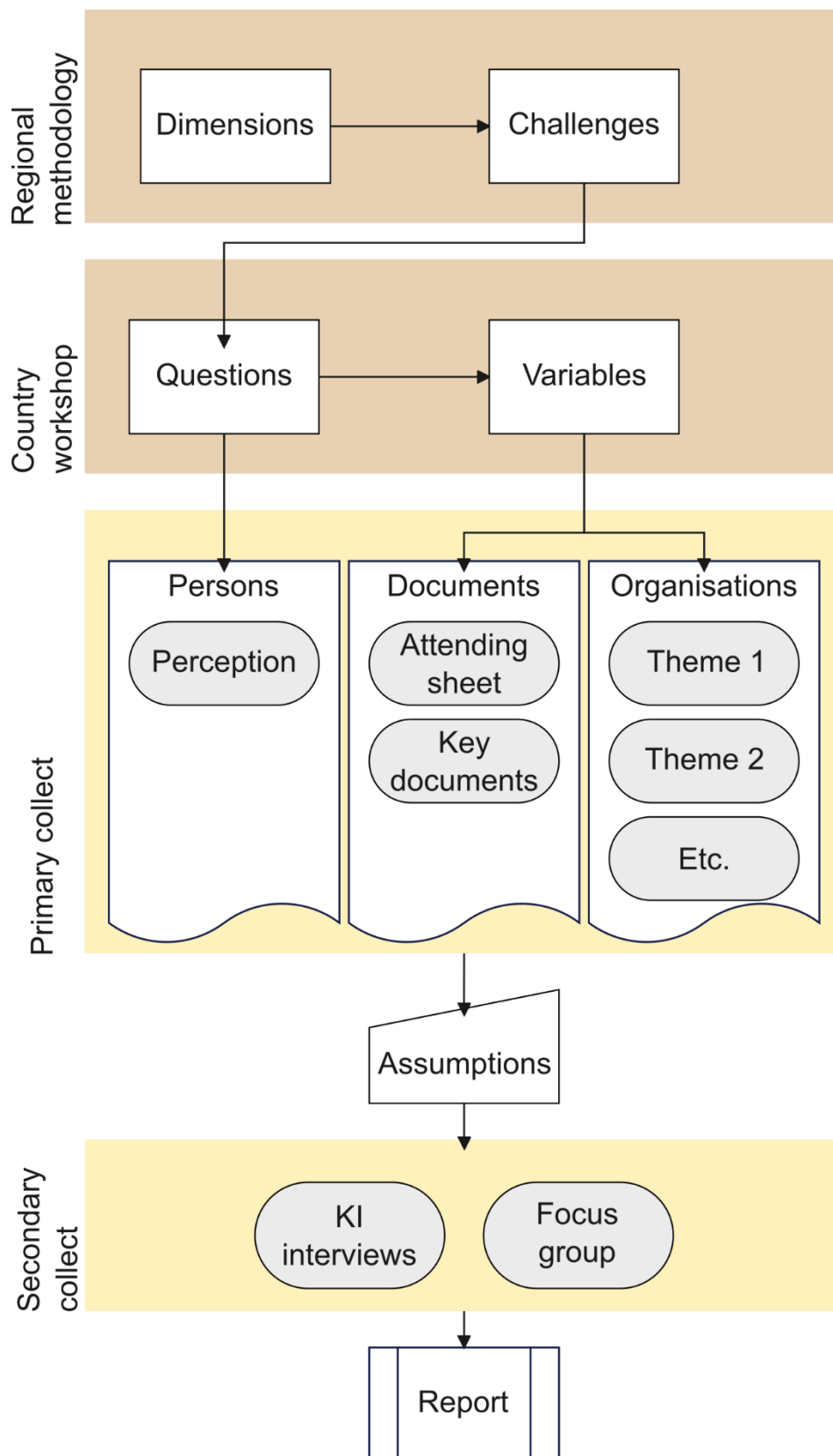
- The process of defining the relevant indicators to be monitored, as well as the collection process, is led by the **country** level;
- The **regional** level is responsible for supporting the process, facilitating its dissemination beyond the country, and ensuring that the conditions for comparing results over time and between countries are met.

Within these two levels, the same three types of players are involved:

- A **steering committee**, bringing together various players from NGOs, INGOs, donors and the UN;
- A **coordination structure**, responsible for the substantive process, defining objectives, etc.
- A **technical officer**, in charge of building tools, collecting information and data, processing and analyzing them.
- All the **organizations** and **individuals** taking part in the workshops and data collection process, who are expected to be heavily involved.

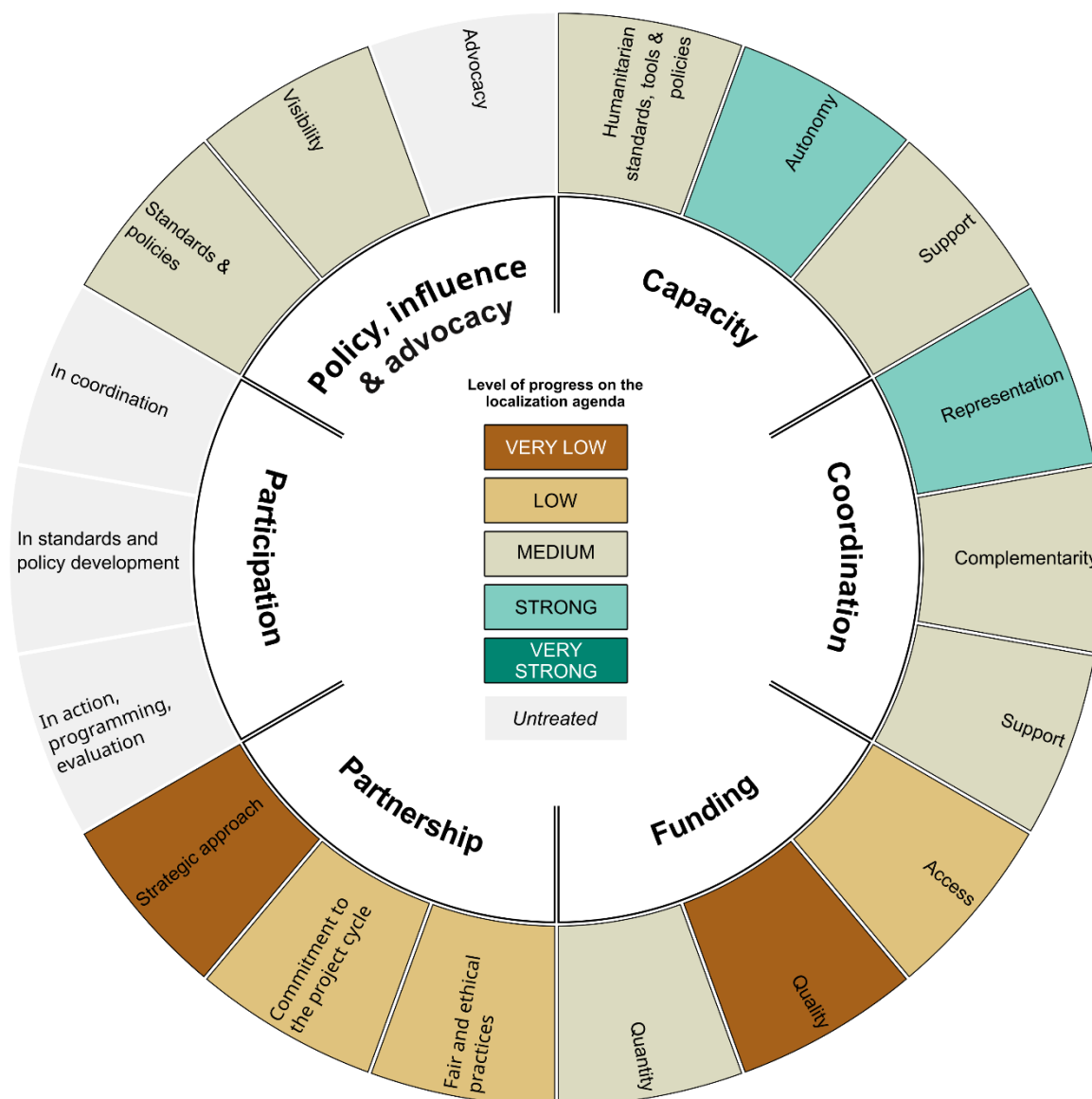


5 Overall process



6 Results

In summary, the objective is to obtain an analysis and an estimated level of implementation for each of the issues identified by dimension, i.e., 18 values. All of these elements will be included in a summary report.



In summary, the objective is to obtain an analysis and an estimated level of implementation for each of the issues identified by dimension, i.e., 18 values.

These values and analyses will be used:

- To define work recommendations at the country level to facilitate the improvement of the implementation of the localization agenda. This work could enrich the localization strategy at the country level.
- Make comparisons at the regional level to facilitate the identification of good practices and their exchange between countries.
- As a working basis for conducting a series of assessments over time to identify trends and thus facilitate the progressive evolution of the agenda's implementation.

List of dimensions, challenges, variables, and questions used for localization analysis

Dimension	Challenge	Question	Variable
Capacity	Autonomy	Do mechanisms exist and are they implemented to make the most of national/local expertise?	Number of documents published on Reliefweb Number of documents published on Reliefweb written by NGOs Number of INGO<->NGO partnerships by type (project/strategic)
		Do NGOs have a reliable system of governance?	Number of capacity-building processes implemented by INGOs/UNAs focusing on the objectives and needs of NNGOS Number of NGOs in compliance with public administration regulations Number of NGOs with anti-corruption and anti-fraud policies Number of NGOs with strategic documents (procedure manual, policy, etc.)
		Do NGOs have sound financial management and accounting systems?	Number of capacity-building processes where needs are defined with/by NGOs/L Number of FNGOs with specific procedures for financial and accounting management Number of products produced by coordinating bodies
		Do NGOs have the capacity to retain competent staff?	Number of NGOs implementing HR career plans Number of NGOs that include benefits in their salary scales (children's schooling, health insurance) Number of NGOs with a capacity-building plan for their teams Number of NGOs with a performance management system Number of partnership agreement protocols containing precise procedures for whistle-blowing, complaints, right of reply, reciprocal evaluation procedure. Number of products from coordinating bodies co-authored by state structures Number of products from coordinating entities led or co-written by NGOs/L Number of products from coordinating entities translated
		Does the recruitment of INGOs/UNs not hinder the development of NGOs?	Number of localization action plans implemented or in progress Number of NGOs whose employees have been approached for recruitment by an INGO, UNA in the past year
	Humanitarian standards, tools and policies	Are key documents (standards, tools, donor, INGO and UNS policies, procedures) contextualized and translated?	Number of standards or policies aligned with national policies Number of standards or policies in use Number of standards or policies in use that have been contextualized
		Are NGOs recognized as key players in the development of standards and policies?	Number of INGO<->NGO partnerships in which NNGOs are held accountable Number of INGO<->NGO partnerships integrating capacity building Number of INGO<->NGO partnerships integrating evaluations carried out by the NNNGO
		Do NGOs actively participate in the norm or policy development process?	Number of context-specific humanitarian policies, standards and tools drafted with community participation Number of INGO<->NGO partnerships Number of INGO<->NGO partnerships co-defined with NGOs (budget, activities, beneficiaries)
		Do NGOs integrate contextualized key documents (humanitarian standards, tools and policies)?	Number of INGO<->NGO partnerships involving NGOs in practice at all stages of the project cycle
	Support	Are partnerships developed with the specific objectives of NNGOs in mind?	Number of multi-year funding agreements
		Do NGOs play an active role in defining their needs?	Number of communication strategies by INGOs or UNAs incorporating specific NGNO issues Number of funding applications submitted by NNGOs that include operating costs. Number of NNGO financings that include operating costs
		Does the support of INGOs/IOs/UNs not undermine the skills of NNGOs?	Number of INGOs/UNAs with recruitment guidelines integrating localization issues
		Is support for NNGOs relevant?	Number of international meetings concerning the country in the last year involving NGOs
		Is the implementation of partnerships based on an equitable and ethical relationship?	Number of partnership agreements that define a monopolistic bilateral relationship.

List of dimensions, challenges, variables, and questions used for localization analysis

Dimension	Challenge	Question	Variable
Coordination	Complementarity	Do NGOs lead the response and influence decision-making?	Number of concrete proposals validated by NGOs/NGOs in coordinating entities (HCT, intersectoral, sectors/clusters, working groups)
			Number of NGOs with access to information on funding opportunities
			Number of ONGN/L in position of colead of a coordinating entity
		Do the coordination entities resulting from humanitarian reform / INGO / UN / IO facilitate the integration of NNGO/L representatives into coordination structures?	Number of meetings held in local language and/or bilingual
			Number of meetings organized allowing online participation
			Number of organizations that are familiar with their donors' funding rules in the case of indirect funding
	Representation	Are national organizations (forums, networks and single organization, etc.) are integrated into the coordination entities resulting from humanitarian reform?	Number of NNGO funding programs that include lines dedicated to capacity building
		Are NNGO representatives involved in coordination bodies?	Number of coordinating bodies resulting from the reform of the humanitarian system that make specific approaches to communities
			Number of coordination bodies at national level (clusters, WGs)
			Number of coordination bodies co-facilitated by NNGOs/L
			Number of coordination bodies resulting from the reform of the humanitarian system
			Number of coordination entities resulting from the reform of the humanitarian system with a policy of community integration
			Number of INGO<>NNGO/L partnerships where NNGO/Ls are involved in budget management beyond their activities
			Number of national-level coordination bodies (clusters, WGs) with NNGOs as leaders or co-leaders
			Number of partnership agreements in which the risks of corruption and fraud are identified and defined?
			Number of sub-national coordination bodies (clusters, WGs)
			Number of sub-national coordination bodies (clusters, WGs) with NNGOs as leaders or co-leaders
			Number of obstacles encountered by NNGOs in their efforts to apply for funding
		Are NNGOs recognized as key players in the development of standards and policies?	Number of national or international consultation frameworks where NNGOs are represented
		Are representatives of state actors present in coordination bodies?	Number of actors involving communities in activity design processes?
			Number of actors involving communities in activity evaluation processes?
			Number of actors involving communities in activity implementation processes?
			Number of players by type (including coordination structure)
			Number of products from coordinating entities resulting from the reform of the humanitarian system co-authored by state structures and translated into the two official languages
			Number of state actors co-leading a coordination entity
		Do the coordination entities resulting from humanitarian reform / INGO / UN / IO facilitate the integration of NNGO/L representatives into coordination structures?	Number of communication strategies of coordinating bodies that take into account the specific issues of NNGOs.
			Number of coordinating bodies with a policy for integrating NNGOs
			Number of INGO<>NNGO/L partnerships not linked to a single funding source
	Support	Are national coordination frameworks autonomous?	Salary levels by type of organization and position
			Number of NNGO coordination bodies
			Number of NNGO coordination bodies receiving specific funding
			Number of NNGO coordination bodies supported by HR deployment
			Number of NNGO coordination bodies with HR support
			Number of NNGO coordination entities with a self-financing mechanism (membership fees, etc.)
		Do donors (UNS, cooperation) integrate localization issues into their operations?	Number of consultations with donors on funding opportunities that include NNGOs
			Number of coordination bodies resulting from humanitarian system reform that have developed localization action plans

List of dimensions, challenges, variables, and questions used for localization analysis

Dimension	Challenge	Question	Variable	
Funding	Access	Are conditions of access to funding similar for different types of player?	Number of funding mechanisms Number of meetings held in local language and/or bilingual	
		Are funding mechanisms adapted to NGOs?	Number of concrete proposals validated by NGOs/NGOs in coordinating entities (HCT, intersectoral, sectors/clusters, working groups) Number of funding mechanisms accessible to NGOs Number of funding requests resulting in funding	
		Are NNGOs involved in all aspects of project implementation?	Number of INGOs agreeing to cover indirect costs as part of funding for NNNGO actors	
		Do donors and related international organizations adjust their funding standards to NGOs?	Number of donors Number of donors whose funding rules contain structural obstacles to funding NGOs	
		Do international agencies (UNS; cooperation agencies) facilitate direct access to funding?	Number of institutional capacity-building initiatives to enable NNGOs to improve their access to funding	
		Do NGOs have direct access to funding?	Number of NGO coordination entities with a self-financing mechanism (membership fees, etc.) Number of NGOs with direct funding	
		Is key funding information known/available (amounts, structure, etc.)?	Number of consultations with donors on funding opportunities that include NGOs Number of meetings organized allowing online participation Number of NGOs with access to information on funding opportunities Number of organizations listed in OCHA's FTS system Number of products from coordinating entities resulting from the reform of the humanitarian system co-authored by state structures and translated into the two official languages	
			Are NNGOs involved in the governance of funding?	Number of NNNGO financings for which they were involved in the sizing phase.
			Do NGOs have funding that covers their operating costs?	Amount of NGO funding by type (direct, pool fund, indirect consortium, indirect bilateral) for current period Number of NGOs with funding that includes operating costs
			Do NGOs have the funds to meet quality standards, whatever the level of crisis?	Number of funding applications drawn up Number of funding applications drawn up at the initiative of NGOs Number of grants lasting longer than one project Number of NGO financing operations
	Quantity	Are the amounts allocated to NGOs increasing?		Number of monitoring missions
	Participation	In action, programming, evaluation		Is the notion of conflict sensitivity integrated by the players?
		In standards and policy development	Are key documents (standards, tools, donor, INGO and UNS policies, procedures)	Number of advocacy campaigns funded by INGOs for the benefit of NGOs Number of INGOs financing advocacy campaigns on behalf of NGOs
			Is the notion of conflict sensitivity integrated by the players?	Number of capacity-building processes leading to an adjustment of roles in favor of NGOs/Ls
	Partnership	Commitment to the project cycle	Are NGOs are involved in all project evaluation processes (baseline, mid-term, final)?	Number of monitoring missions
			Are NGOs involved in all aspects of project sizing (budget, activities)?	Number of funding applications drawn up in which NGOs are involved in preparation Number of UN<->NGO partnerships where NGOs are involved in budget management beyond their activities
		Fair and ethical practices	Is the distribution of partnership funding equitable?	Number of UN<->NGO partnerships where NGOs are involved in budget management beyond their activities
Strategic approach		Are partnerships developed with the specific objectives of NGOs in mind?	Number of NGOs with knowledge of humanitarian policies, standards, and tools	
Policy, influence and advocacy	Advocacy	Do NGOs actively participate in the norm or policy development process?	Number of publications produced by NGOs over a one-year period (documents published in various media or shared in available activity reports).	
		Do NGOs lead the response and influence decision-making?	Number of advocacy campaigns funded by INGOs for the benefit of NGOs Number of INGOs financing advocacy campaigns on behalf of NGOs	
	Standards and policies	Do NGOs actively participate in the norm or policy development process?	Number of key documents identified at country level Number of NGOs involved in drafting key documents Number of NGOs involved in the development of standards and policies Number of NGOs with knowledge of humanitarian policies, standards, and tools	
			Number of INGOs Number of INGOs/UNAs	
			Number of international players Number of NGOs	
	Visibility	Do international players take into account the specific issues of NGOs in their coordination?	Number of advocacy actions on the national humanitarian context Number of advocacy actions on the national humanitarian context involving NGOs/Ls	
			Number of publications produced by NGOs over a one-year period (documents published in various media or shared in available activity reports).	
		Do NGOs have a visibility commensurate with the reality of their involvement in the humanitarian response?		



LOCALIZATION BAROMETER

West and Central Africa – Year 2024-2025

Initiated by



Supported by

