

Six NNGOs & mutual aid groups lead the ‘Lebanon Locally Led Pooled Fund’



Photo Credit: CAFOD

The Lebanon Locally Led Pooled Fund is a funding mechanism set up by Lebanese organizations (MADA, LOST, Jibal, Threads of Peace, Jeyetna and SIDC), with support from CAFOD and Christian Aid, and funding DEC and CAFOD.

Its purpose is to channel funding directly to grassroots, mutual aid, and community-led groups, including registered and unregistered initiatives, responding to crises and locally identified needs in Lebanon. The fund is locally designed and governed, using a locally led, conflict-sensitive approach, simplified due diligence, and participatory decision-making.

The first funding round launched in May 2026, with 151 applications received. This built on a pilot round of microgrants provided by CAFOD from March 2026 to enable swift response to the on-going crisis.

DEC (Disasters Emergency Committee)

Driving equitable partnerships in appeal funding

The DEC recognises its role as a funding entity in **driving equitable partnerships and local leadership**. It is advancing this through policy and standards, funding practice, research and learning and collective innovation; including:

- DEC commitment to channel at least 25% of appeal funding through local actors, which is currently exceeded at 44% allocated across 10 responses.
- Funding to Collective Initiatives which pilot innovative approaches to locally led humanitarian action (eg Local Actor Pooled Funds & innovation on due diligence).
- Multi-year, flexible funding to support sustained local partnerships; and 10% indirect cost recovery for local partners.
- Support to survivor-and-community-led approaches, placing affected communities at the centre of response design and delivery.



Start Network, CAFOD & local partners centering community knowledge in Anticipatory Action

Bridging science, government and community knowledge and ownership is vital for anticipatory action to deliver on its potential; especially in a context like the Democratic Republic of Congo, where the presence of state institutions is weak across much of the country.

Caritas Kindu – a local diocesan church organisation – worked with Start Network funding and CAFOD support to build partnerships with community leaders, local government authorities, the national and local sub-office of METELSAT (National Agency of Meteorology and Satellite Remote Sensing), Civil Protection and others to bridge those gaps. A ‘Five Senses’ Early Warning tool was developed and integrated into a Community Early Warning System.

The project has catalysed investment across humanitarian, resilience and development efforts, and extended to collaboration with other agencies, including WFP, FAO, IFRC, ECHO and RSS-Hydro. Together with those agencies and the government Civil Protection department, a new national-level Technical Working Group on Anticipatory Action is being established to drive wider change in DRC.



Flood Beacons in AA action, DRC. Photo Credit: CAFOD

Oxfam: Centering local humanitarian leadership in Ukraine



Learning from Oxfam’s partner-centered response in Ukraine:

“What enabled a genuine partnership-centred model was not new processes, tools or templates, but a shift in mindset: from control to collaboration, from compliance to conversation.”

For more information on the learning review, head to the Oxfam website

<https://www.oxfam.org/en/research/learning-oxfams-partnership-centered-response-ukraine>



OXFAM
International

Local Actor Led Pooled Fund in Myanmar: Enabling life-saving support in hard-to-reach areas, civil society resilience and equitable partnerships

Local NGOs in Myanmar that have demonstrated ability to deliver a significant scale of grant management, acting as ‘local intermediaries’ in directly accessing donor funding, have established a new Myanmar Locally-led Pooled Fund.

Flexible micro-grants will reach frontline organisations via locally managed sub-granting methods; drawing on their network of over 2,000 CSOs, including women-led and mutual aid groups. Partnerships will be tracked to maximise efficiency and the percentage of resources reaching local first responders and programmatic outcomes for communities. Partnerships supported through the Fund will also be assessed against a contextualised *Local Perspectives on Partnering Index*.



Emergency Response in Myanmar. Photo Credit: CAFOD

Opening advocacy space to local and diaspora groups

In Plan International's work on the Sudan crisis steps are being put in place to ensure that policy decision making and advocacy asks are locally and diaspora-led, and that we are platforming, amplifying and handing over power to local and diaspora groups in advocacy spaces.

To help with this, Plan International has established a partnership with the Sudan Women's Action Group (SWAG), a volunteer-led diaspora organisation based in Scotland with a focus on fundraising and advocacy, and has set up a 'Sudan Youth Advocacy' project with them. This project has consulted with a group of 20 young Sudanese activists based across Scotland and the UK, run a series of training sessions on topics requested by the young people and supported them in delivering their own advocacy, including to journalists and other UK actors.

Alongside this Plan International have run briefing sessions with diaspora activists and the media to educate journalists from Sudanese perspectives, shared policy documents with Sudanese activists for feedback which has then incorporated, hosted a briefing session for an Emergency Response Room delegation to update UK actors, and platformed various Sudanese activists at Plan International events.



Photo: Young Sudanese diaspora activists in Glasgow, following a youth consultation day with the Sudan Women's Action Group (SWAG) and Plan International UK staff – October 2025. Plan International.

Co-governance in programming to centre community priorities and needs

In Ethiopia and Sudan, ADRA is testing a locally anchored Community-led Responses (SCLR) and Community Action Planning (CAP) model, where ADRA **co-governs programme decisions alongside local communities.**

Early evidence highlights measurable shifts: local partners are increasingly involved in budget allocation discussions, adapting programme design based on community priorities, and taking on formal roles in decision-making structures.

At the same time, communities are being supported to stand up for their own development priorities, actively engaging development partners and humanitarian actors to remain accountable to locally defined needs.



Community members in Ethiopia's Borana Zone participating in Community Action Planning (CAP) for community-based anticipatory action. Photo Credit: ADRA.

SCLR approaches place communities in the driving seat

Survivor and Community Led Response (SCLR) is a community led emergency response approach developed to support and resource individuals and communities affected by sudden or protracted crises, aspiring to bring together the cash, localization, nexus and participation agendas of the Grand Bargain.

Christian Aid along with local partner organisations Konbite pou Ranfose Aksyon Lakay (KORAL) and Service Jésuites aux Migrants (SJM) implemented this approach during the Haiti Earthquake Response in 2021 to test the approach at scale, with analysis highlighting that **community members are happier when in the driving seat of emergency response projects.**

“This is the method that is good for the community because the community is involved more. When they impose things on us, it is in the cadre of restraint. But when they give us the liberty of choice, we enlarge the cadre more.” - Community participant

The results come faster because the person says here is my problem and the same person says here is what I need, and they bring the results.” - Community Participant



Photo Credit: Christian Aid



Full approach can be found here:
<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/sites/default/files/2023-10/sclr-learning-analysis-haiti-v2.pdf>

Hope Restoration South Sudan - *Ways Forward on WLO Empowerment in South Sudan*

- **Building grassroots women's power:** Strengthening local structures for women's participation and economic resilience through Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) with 15,000 women reached on financial literacy and savings-led empowerment.
- **Leading the coordination landscape:** HRSS chairs the Start Network South Sudan Hub, serves on the Start Network Global Board of Trustees and Start Fund Strategic Committee, and actively co-chairs multiple UN humanitarian clusters multiplying local women's voice and influence at the highest levels.
- **Forging WLO-centred partnerships:** Actively collaborating with other women-led organisations to develop NGO consortia and funding partnerships that place WLO leadership at the heart of crisis response.



Start Network innovating on a pooled risk-sharing facility

Start Network is currently exploring the development of a pooled Network Risk-Sharing Facility, a collective **financial protection mechanism designed to help absorb and manage delivery risks across the network**. Similar to a mutual support or insurance-style fund, small contributions linked to grant funding would be pooled into a shared reserve that organisations could access when facing unexpected financial shocks during humanitarian response.

Under the proposed model, organisations could apply for support in situations such as funding disallowances, delayed reimbursements, liquidity gaps, banking disruptions, or pre-financing constraints. A core objective is to reduce the burden on smaller LNNGOs to build reserve balances from already stretched resources, whilst enabling faster mobilisation of funding and humanitarian response.



Participants share feedback after receiving winter kits in Nepal, Credit- Start Fund Nepal.

Advocating for systemic change at country & global levels



Meeting of the Alliance UA CSO. Photo Credit: Alliance UACSO

The Alliance of Ukrainian CSOs, uniting 26 national organizations, is far more than a coordination network; it is a strategic dialogue and advocacy platform - a "think and do tank" dedicated to fundamentally reshaping the humanitarian and recovery architecture in Ukraine. Moving beyond traditional sub-contracting, we invest deeply in the true quality of partnerships.

Relationship-building serves as our cornerstone. By cultivating trust internally among Ukrainian organizations and externally through robust coalitions with donors, INGOs, and the UN, we have paved the way for the equitable sharing of resources and risks, directly influencing funding practices at the global level.

Today, this social cohesion among all stakeholders is catalyzing tangible breakthroughs in Ukraine. We are seeing a rapid increase in locally-led consortia, the establishment of a local verification system endorsed by international donors, and the creation of innovative pooled funds backed by philanthropies and INGOs. Furthermore, our advocacy has elevated "Duty of Care" innovations into a standard increasingly recognized as mandatory, supported by highly visible, evidence-based research on localization.

The Alliance professionally invests in operationalizing localization at the country level to systematically remove national barriers. Ultimately, we demonstrate that localization is a comprehensive, systemic approach - a shared journey where international and local actors must genuinely meet in the middle.

Discover more about our work here:

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/102554521>

CAFOD commitments on local leadership of crisis response

Photo: Unity Woman's Group in Kuajok Warrap State, South Sudan. CAFOD.



- Investment in local civil society networks & their advocacy for systemic change
- Funding research to document what difference local leadership makes for humanitarian access and programmatic outcomes for communities
- Support to local actor led pooled funds and consortia (Myanmar, South Sudan, Syria, Colombia, DRC, Lebanon, West Bank, Ukraine); including WLOs & RLOs
- Co-convening of Grand Bargain Subgroup on Intermediary Agencies and Modern Partnerships, with SDC and Alliance of Ukrainian CSOs
- Funding & advisory support to Grand Bargain 'National Reference Groups' to model contextualized, local actor led policy dialogue on humanitarian system reform
- Corporate, programmatic and funding metrics to measure local partner direct access to funding and track mutual accountability