



Placing women responders at the centre of humanitarian protection programming: **Opportunities for Coordination Groups**

Coordination groups already work with many women-led organizations (*WLOs*); but as with many strategic priorities, more can be done. Women-led organisations are often already resilient, dynamic and creative – and simply making their work more visible can help with credibility and resource mobilization. Additional efforts to ensure that they are included in all stages of the Humanitarian Program Cycle can not only strengthen their work, but ultimately, can lead to greater coverage and quality of services. Collaborating with women responders requires an approach that cuts across traditional humanitarian agency classifications, recognizing that many WLOs that step up to deliver humanitarian assistance during crises are not traditional humanitarian agencies, but are usually active on wider rights and protection issues.

Given the diversity in humanitarian response, the following principles are designed to guide approaches towards all different forms of engagement with women responders in protection programming:

- ✓ **See women as the experts in their situation**
- ✓ **Respect the priorities of women-led groups and organisations**
- ✓ **Compensate for women’s time and remove barriers to access**

CARE International has recently completed research on the role of ‘women responders’ in crises to understand how the humanitarian protection sector can ensure the participation and leadership of individual women volunteers, activists, leaders, women-led groups, organizations and networks. The full report, recommendations and Guidance Note will be released and [available here](#) in November.

The table below provides a preliminary list of options for coordinators and coordination groups, who are interested in facilitating the work of these important humanitarian actors. Many of the suggestions below require human and financial resources and whilst Cluster Lead Agencies and their coordinators may be able to provide these resources, other Cluster/Sector members can also be encouraged to mobilise and provide resources for these activities, as part of their contribution to the humanitarian response.

| Needs Assessment and Analysis; and Strategic Planning |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and include trusted women leaders and women responders in data collection <u>and analysis</u> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold dedicated consultations with WLOs when developing and validating HNOs and response strategies to ensure existing local strategies are strengthened and not undermined |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When prioritising international actors’ project sheets, promote those that support or include support to WLOs |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote and place value on gender and protection, contextual knowledge and community relationships when making determinations or assessments about WLOs capacity |
| Resource Mobilisation |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that WLOs, particularly grassroots, community organizations are visible during resource mobilization activities – bring them to donor meetings, name them in relevant reports and highlight their efforts in public or interagency meetings |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnerships with WLOs should be considered as a positive criterion in pooled fund allocation strategies |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify resources to support strong WLOs to draft project sheets, proposals and funding applications |
| Implementation and Monitoring |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share the CARE International Guidance Note for implementing organizations and discuss periodically with coordination group members (in November will be available here) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support WLOs to have their results recorded in the cluster/sector IM systems (including identifying a partner to resource this outreach, if necessary). |
| Coordination |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the coordination group membership and take steps, if needed, to ensure membership is representative of the diversity of actors, including WLOs and actors who support people with disabilities, LGBTI etc |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify ways to remove barriers for WLOs who wish to attend coordination meetings including practical, physical, security and resource-related barriers |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate connections between grassroots, community organizations, national and international forums and authorities; and ensure that risks associated with this are mitigated. |

For more information:

[CARE International](#); [Global CP Area of Responsibility Helpdesk](#); [GBV Area of Responsibility Localisation Task Team](#)