



UNDervalUED AND UNDERUTILISED: NON-HUMANITARIAN ACTORS AND HUMANITARIAN REFORM IN INDONESIA | OCTOBER 2021

This report is part of Humanitarian Advisory Group's *Blueprint for Change* research project.

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Authors: Jesse McCommon, Kate Sutton, Humanitarian Advisory Group; Puji Pujiono, Pujiono Centre

Research team: Puji Pujiono, Henny Vidiarina, Dio Fikri Aditama, Putu Hendra Wijaya, Disya Marianty, Pujiono Centre; Jesse McCommon, Eleanor Davey, Kate Sutton, Humanitarian Advisory Group; Surya Rahman Muhammad, Humanitarian Forum Indonesia; Harris Oematan, Jaringan Mitra Kemanusiaan; Arifin Muh Hadi, Indonesian Red Cross Society; Arif Nur Kholis, Muhammadiyah Disaster Management Centre

Research Editor: Eleanor Davey

Copy Editor: Campbell Aitken

Graphic Designer: Jean Watson

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INTRODUCING THE RESEARCH

Building a Blueprint for Change

Building a Blueprint for Change is a two-year research stream under Humanitarian Advisory Group's Humanitarian Horizons research initiative. It aims to provide an evidence base to progress transformative change in the humanitarian system at the country level.

Humanitarian Horizons

Humanitarian Horizons is a three-year research initiative implemented by Humanitarian Advisory Group. The program adds unique value to humanitarian action in Asian and Pacific contexts by generating evidence-based research and creating conversations for change. The program is supported by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

WHO WE ARE

Humanitarian Advisory Group

Humanitarian Advisory Group (HAG) was founded in 2012 to elevate the profile of humanitarian action in Asia and the Pacific. Set up as a social enterprise, HAG provides a unique space for thinking, research, technical advice and training that contributes to excellence in humanitarian practice. As an ethically driven business, we combine humanitarian passion with entrepreneurial agility to think and do things differently.

We believe we cannot provide research or technical support in countries without the support and guidance of national consultants. Our experience is that national consultants improve the quality of our work by ensuring that we focus on the most relevant issues, providing contextual understanding to our projects, and enabling linkages into national and regional networks. We seek to engage national consultants for all our projects that involve in-country work; for us, this is both a principle and a standard way of working.

Pujiono Centre

Pujiono Centre's mission is to build effective multidisciplinary and intersectional knowledge by expanding the capacities of practitioners and learners via innovation, tools and services. The Pujiono Centre promotes evidence-based policymaking in disaster management and climate risk reduction through the provision of credible information.

Certified



Humanitarian Advisory Group is BCorp certified. This little logo means we work hard to ensure that our business is a force for good. We have chosen to hold ourselves accountable to the highest social, environmental and ethical standards, setting ourselves apart from business as usual.



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ACRONYMS

AAP	Accountability to Affected People
AHA Centre	ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management
AKPI	Indonesian Humanitarian-Development Alliance
ASB	Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BPDLH	Environmental Fund Management Agency (Badan Pengelola Dana Lingkungan Hidup)
BNPB	National Disaster Management Agency (Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Bencana)
CGD	Center for Global Development
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
Gol	Government of Indonesia
HAG	Humanitarian Advisory Group
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IFRC	International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
MDMC	Muhammadiyah Disaster Management Centre
NEAR	Network for Empowered Aid Response
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PEER	Preparing to Excel in Emergency Response
PKPU	Penundaan Kewajiban Pembayaran Utang
PMI	Indonesian Red Cross (Palang Merah Indonesia)
SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
UN	United Nations
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WHS	World Humanitarian Summit



Description. Photographer

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is the final output of the *Building a Blueprint for Change* research project, led by Humanitarian Advisory Group and Pujiono Centre. It examines the conditions and drivers of humanitarian reform in Indonesia. The study was designed to apply a new approach to reform efforts, one which is built entirely around the local priorities and contextual factors of one country rather than an attempt to adapt international agendas.

The study focused on Indonesia because it was identified as the country with the most momentum for change in the Asia Pacific region. Indonesia has been recognised for its leadership in nationalising and localising humanitarian response and has served as a prime candidate to explore opportunities for a localised approach to humanitarian reform.

Our research suggests that a key challenge for humanitarian reform in Indonesia is the tendency of international agendas to put non-humanitarian actors in a marginal position despite their crucial role in the vast majority of Indonesia's frequent emergency responses. In a country that faces thousands of natural hazards each year, responsibilities for disaster response rest across a wide range of local actors that are generally not recognised by the conventional humanitarian system. This oversight results in the exclusion of key non-humanitarian actors from humanitarian coordination mechanisms, accountability practices, capacity strengthening programs and funding opportunities – identified by Indonesian stakeholders as the four priority areas for reform.

Findings demonstrate the need for greater recognition of and investment in these non-humanitarian actors, systems and structures in order for reform efforts to be effective and grounded in local realities. The study highlights the importance of reform priorities being nationally led and locally owned, with efforts unique to the strengths of each context rather than attempting to conform to the international model – while still drawing on expertise and opportunities from the conventional system. The research was not intended to propose specific mechanisms, rather to build an evidence base to support Indonesia's reform journey.

IN THIS REPORT

This report includes three main sections, which seek to:

- ▶ **Outline the reform context in Indonesia**, including the country's shift to more localised disaster response and the insufficiently recognised role of non-humanitarian actors
- ▶ **Present findings about the four priority areas for reform in Indonesia** to shed light on the challenges faced by non-humanitarian actors and propose potential entry points for engaging these actors in a more inclusive reform process. This includes sections on:



Coordination



Accountability



Capacity



Funding

- ▶ **Explore the implications of the findings** for the future of humanitarian reform and specifically for the unfolding Grand Bargain 2.0 process to highlight how learnings from Indonesia can be applied in other contexts

What do we mean by non-humanitarian actors?

Our use of the term 'non-humanitarian' captures organisations or individuals whose primary mandate is not explicitly in the conventional remit of humanitarian response, yet who participate actively in response activities in an intentional, institutionalised and planned manner. They include local charities, private businesses, advocacy groups, religious organisations and others. Their mandates spread across all sectors of society, yet these non-humanitarian national, local civil society and grassroots organisations are the principal actors in emergency responses in Indonesia.





Coordination

Key Findings

Conventional humanitarian coordination structures are too top-down and generally do not recognise or support the role of non-humanitarian actors.

- ▶ Despite progress, existing coordination structures vary in effectiveness and inclusivity
- ▶ There is appetite for clearer systems and agreed ways of working
- ▶ Coordination forums are proliferating



Recommendations

Adapt coordination approaches to account for the role of non-humanitarian actors.

- ▶ Identify opportunities to include non-humanitarian actors in local coordination platforms
- ▶ Invest in support for non-humanitarian actors that will allow them to meaningfully participate in local-level coordination
- ▶ Strengthen humanitarian emergency coordination by building on the broader, multisectoral, online coordination that takes place during non-emergency times



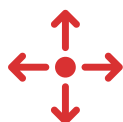
Accountability

Non-humanitarian actors have relationships with communities that could make accountability a reality, but they have been left behind in the technicalities of the conversation about accountability to affected people.

- ▶ The AAP concept is mostly used by conventional humanitarian actors, it is not widely shared or understood among local actors
- ▶ Non-humanitarian actors have no access to AAP standards and guidance
- ▶ Non-humanitarian actors have untapped potential to make AAP meaningful

Replace the current focus on training with a focus on co-creating a shared understanding of accountability that incorporates both international principles and local realities.

- ▶ Find a shared language to express the goal of accountability to affected people
- ▶ Use this shared understanding to develop more participatory ways for communities to inform decisions



Capacity

Conventional humanitarian capacity-strengthening initiatives do not recognise the importance of non-humanitarian actors in preparedness and response, leverage their existing capacity, or align with their needs.

- ▶ Capacity strengthening is too narrowly focused on conventional humanitarian agendas
- ▶ Key responders are missing out on the chance to learn and share their experience
- ▶ There are opportunities to learn from good practice

Make capacity strengthening a collaborative learning process, not one-way training, and incorporate more local and non-humanitarian actors in its design and delivery.

- ▶ Adopt a 'life skills' approach to include local and non-humanitarian actors in capacity strengthening
- ▶ Embrace two-way learning
- ▶ Consider identifying local 'humanitarian champions' to become leaders when scaling up



Funding

Lack of recognised contribution to humanitarian response is reflected in lack of funding available to non-humanitarian actors.

- ▶ The conventional humanitarian system is not built to support local actors
- ▶ Non-humanitarian actors lack access to funds for disaster response
- ▶ There is currently no consensus about what form a national funding mechanism should take

Develop a tailored, nationally managed financing mechanism for Indonesia that recognises the vital role of non-humanitarian actors.

- ▶ Organise inclusive conversations about innovative financing to build consensus on a new national model
- ▶ Incorporate insight from national as well as international experiences

1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia has decisively embraced the shift to more assertive sovereignty in humanitarian response operations. Indonesia is recognised for ‘charting the new norm’ in limiting international support and nationalising response operations, for example during the 2018 Central Sulawesi earthquake response.¹ Momentum for this shift has been building for decades. After the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami decimated Aceh, international actors arrived in large numbers and were criticised for overwhelming and side-lining national actors. Ever since, the Government of Indonesia (GoI) has undertaken disaster management reform to ensure the experience is not repeated.² The GoI has demonstrated greater confidence in responding to crises and has supported increasingly sophisticated local responses, as shown through responses to the Mt Merapi eruption in 2010, Pidie Jaya earthquake in 2016, Mt Agung eruption in 2017, and Lombok and Sulawesi earthquakes in 2018.³

Nonetheless, as in other countries, there are opportunities to improve. Indonesia has strong national response leadership and established humanitarian systems and structures, but persistent barriers, bottlenecks and inefficiencies remain. This report examines four areas that Indonesian stakeholders identify as priorities for reform: coordination, accountability, capacity and funding. While the report aims to be practical, it does not prescribe specific mechanisms or technical features. Instead, it presents the views of key stakeholders on how reform efforts in the country have progressed so far, what is still needed, and what factors might contribute to the success of future efforts.

The report’s overarching finding is that more needs to be done to account for the essential role of non-humanitarian actors in disaster response in Indonesia. Its people face thousands of natural hazards each year, so disaster response at various scales is a vital responsibility shared by many. Yet many first responders are undervalued, underutilised and largely ignored, because they do not fit easily within the conventional humanitarian system’s configuration. There must be greater recognition of their contributions and investment in providing them with basic humanitarian competencies as part of a ‘life skills’ approach, as well as integrating them into local and national coordination mechanisms. The report explains what this means in the Indonesian context and the implications for approaches to humanitarian reform elsewhere.

ABOUT THIS RESEARCH

This report is part of a project by Humanitarian Advisory Group (HAG) and the Pujiono Centre to identify leverage points for systemic change in the humanitarian system in particular country contexts. It was part of HAG’s Humanitarian Horizons research program, funded by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

The project aimed to elevate local voices and priorities to national and international reform discussions; it is hoped that Indonesian stakeholders will use the contents of this report to achieve this aim, as well as to guide continuing reform efforts in Indonesia. The report also presents the international community with evidence of the merit of a localised approach to reform, revealing the many intricacies of a country context that could never be fully addressed by sweeping global reform. It proposes a new way to reshape the humanitarian system, not by increasing commitments and upgrading agendas, but by turning the whole process on its head.

1 HAG and Pujiono Centre, 2019, *Charting the new norm? Local leadership in the first 100 days of the Sulawesi earthquake response*.

2 HAG and Pujiono Centre, 2021, *Shifting the system: The journey towards humanitarian reform in Indonesia*; Willets-King, 2009, *The role of the affected state in humanitarian action: A case study on Indonesia*, HPG Working Paper.

3 Interviews 11, 24



STRUCTURE

The remainder of the report is divided into five sections.

Section II explains the methodology and key concepts used in the research, including the concept of non-humanitarian actors.

Section III outlines the reform context in Indonesia, including the country's position ahead of the curve in the shift to more localised responses and the insufficiently recognised role of non-humanitarian actors in disaster response. This section also highlights how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected Indonesia and approaches to emergency operations.

Section IV presents findings about the four priority areas for reform in Indonesia. It sheds light on the experiences and difficulties faced by non-humanitarian actors as they navigate reform priorities that often fail to translate to the local level. It addresses the main challenges identified in Indonesia, and proposes potential entry points for engaging non-humanitarian actors in a more inclusive reform process.

Section V explores the implications of the findings for the future of humanitarian reform and specifically for the unfolding Grand Bargain 2.0 process, which builds on the first iteration of the Grand Bargain during the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) in 2016. It highlights how learnings from Indonesia can be applied in other contexts, and how the sector can continue to increase the meaningful inclusion of all actors involved in humanitarian response.

Section VI concludes the report.

2. METHODOLOGY

Given the frustration with many of the global and broad higher-level policy discussions, the *Building a Blueprint for Change* project sought to identify if greater traction could be found in the national experience of humanitarian reform. The research was based on the premise that reform needs to be prioritised and led at the country level, based on – rather than adapting to – the particular needs of each context, while being continuously informed by reform dynamics at the global level. The research focused on Indonesia, because it was identified as the country with the most momentum and appetite for change in the Asia-Pacific region. The project applied an action research approach, meaning the research team was actively involved in humanitarian change initiatives and activities, documenting the processes and results and using this as the data for analysis.





RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

The Blueprint research set out to investigate the potential of nationally and locally led humanitarian reform in contrast to internationally driven efforts, and identify specific priorities, conditions and drivers of reform in Indonesia that could be advanced by local and national actors to achieve transformative change.

The project focused largely on the national disaster management system in Indonesia, highlighting that this is distinct from (although it interacts with) the international humanitarian system. The distinction was important in maintaining the research focus on dynamics at the national level. While the report refers to the formal or conventional ‘humanitarian system’ to reflect the integration of multiple types of actors in emergency response, it does not aim to analyse conflict settings and responses in detail.

The project had two main phases. Phase 1 of the research engaged a diverse range of Indonesian stakeholders to map the humanitarian system in Indonesia and identify priorities for reform with the greatest potential for systemic change. Data consistently identified and validated four key focus areas for the research, as shown in Figure 1 below.⁴

Figure 1: Priority areas for reform in Indonesia

	Coordination	To refine and clarify roles and responsibilities and to ensure coordination is inclusive of all actors responding.
	Accountability	To strengthen accountability to affected populations and all stakeholders.
	Capacity	To contextualise and expand capacity development programs to reach all actors as a priority for humanitarian resources.
	Funding	To improve access to and transparency of funding for national and local actors.

⁴ For more information about Phase 1 of the Blueprint research, please see: HAG, 2020, *Building a blueprint for change: Laying the foundations*.

Phase 2 of the research interrogated the prospects for reform through a targeted literature review, in-depth interviews, workshops and focus group discussions (FGDs). This report presents the phase 2 findings, focusing on the four priority areas. It builds on the description of the country's national trajectory towards humanitarian reform and locally led response in HAG and Pujiono Centre's literature review, [Shifting the system: The journey towards humanitarian reform in Indonesia](#). It also highlights and focuses on an overarching theme that emerged repeatedly across all four key areas: the importance of engaging non-humanitarian actors.

TERMINOLOGY

This report argues that non-humanitarian actors, structures and processes are undervalued, underutilised, and largely ignored in humanitarian reform efforts. This finding emerged from our study in Indonesia, but we believe it is relevant elsewhere. But what do we mean by non-humanitarian actors?

In discussions in and about the humanitarian sector, there often appears to be a self-perpetuated belief that organisations associated with this sector have a specific and distinctly identifiable mandate to act upon humanitarian imperatives, and that they are capable, organised, and resourced top-down from the national to the local level. The reality, of course, is much more complex.

Disasters, emergencies and crises are multifaceted and not necessarily perceived or distinguished as humanitarian crises. Most humanitarian action takes place in non-conflict settings where national and local governments are intact and organised; some may be overwhelmed by the crisis, but most are capable of making decisions and carrying out emergency responses. Many national and local civil society organisations (CSOs) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have responded to multiple disasters over years or decades. Some may have worked alongside or with international actors, growing in sophistication, increasing their resources and building networks that may surpass those of many aid organisations. Few of these organisations, however, have 'humanitarian aid' as their core mandate, or use this language to describe their role during crises (see Box 1).

Box 1. Non-humanitarian actors and systems

Our use of the term 'non-humanitarian' captures organisations or individuals whose primary mandate is not explicitly in the conventional remit of humanitarian response, yet who participate actively in response activities in an intentional, institutionalised and planned manner. They include local charities, private businesses, advocacy groups, religious organisations and others. Their mandates spread across all sectors of society, yet these non-humanitarian national, local civil society and grassroots organisations are the principal actors in emergency responses in Indonesia. Their efforts to assist affected communities in times of crisis and recovery are invaluable in meeting needs and reaching the most vulnerable.

By using the term 'non-humanitarian actor', we are hoping to expand the understandings of 'local' and 'national' actors to include a wider array of entities. This term has been used similarly by others, for example, to acknowledge the role of non-humanitarian actors in protection work and in the context of COVID-19.⁵ In our usage, the term 'non-humanitarian' can also apply to systems and structures.

5 InterAction, 2017, *Implementing the IASC Protection Policy: What does it mean for NGOs?*, available at <https://protection.interaction.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Implementing-the-IASC-Protection-Policy-What-does-it-mean-for-NGOs.pdf>; IFRC and UNICEF, 2020, *Interim Guidance: Localisation and the COVID-19 response*, in collaboration with IASC Results Group 1 on Operational Response Sub-Group on Localisation, available at https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/2020-11/IASC%20Interim%20Guidance%20on%20Localisation%20and%20the%20COVID-19%20Response_0.pdf

International humanitarian labels and structures do not apply to every context; research has highlighted the importance of challenging ‘the notion of a uniform local that takes the lead of the response.’⁶ Local responders are interacting and coordinating with each other, with the government and with other stakeholders in many ways outside the conventional humanitarian sphere. Different capacities and ways of working are developed over time that may not fit the mould required by international agencies. These should not be dismissed, but built upon and learned from in tailored, country-led reform.

It is important to note that this paper does not suggest that elevating and supporting the role of non-humanitarian actors is the only change that needs to occur in Indonesia, but rather that it has been an overlooked area with high potential dividends. Nor is it the intention of this research to ‘convert’ them into humanitarian actors in the conventional sense; instead, this research argues for sufficient recognition and investment for their capacity strengthening and inclusion in systems and structures at different levels.

METHODS

This report builds on two years of research in Indonesia (July 2019 – July 2021). It draws on the experience and perspectives of a range of local, national and international actors across Indonesia and globally using a mixed methods approach, as represented below.



Data collection was conducted both in English and Bahasa Indonesia. Translation was supported by the Pujiono Centre to ensure all actors’ views were captured accurately. In circumstances when transcripts were not available, translated summaries were provided. In some instances, this prevented the use of direct quotes from local and non-humanitarian actors, but their views are embedded throughout the report.

This report is supplemented by four briefing papers produced by national partners in Indonesia. These briefings serve to elevate local voices in the reform discussion and further contextualise local priorities in the four focus areas of the research.⁷ The study also involved a resource review to draw together findings and highlight learnings that may be relevant and applicable to other contexts and global discussions.

⁶ Melis and Apthorpe, 2020, The politics of the multi-local in disaster governance, *Politics and Governance* 8(4):370.

⁷ For more information about the briefing papers, see HAG and Pujiono Centre, 2021, *Local voices on humanitarian reform: A briefing series from Indonesia*.

Data from all sites and sources was analysed through thematic coding, according to the four priority areas identified in phase 1 of the project. The key informant interviews were particularly important in the process of identifying early findings in each area. The researchers tested emerging findings in the focus groups and workshop conversations.

CONTEXTUALISING THE STUDY

In many ways, Indonesia is notably advanced in the journey towards locally led response, yet looking at country-led reform through a holistic lens reveals that much progress remains to be made. We believe Indonesia's combination of strong leadership and persistent challenges makes this a valuable case study that offers lessons for other contexts.

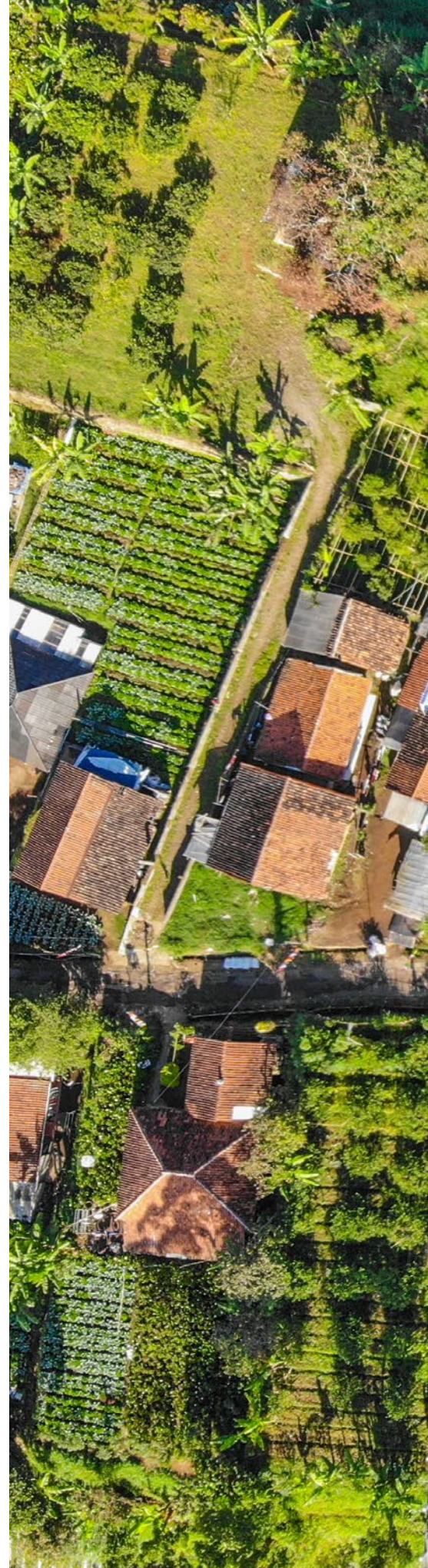
The COVID-19 pandemic shaped the research context and conduct, significantly affecting data collection. HAG and Pujiono Centre both collected data remotely. Participants, including government representatives, had to deal with public health measures as well as other emergency responses, unavoidably reducing their availability.

The research intended to identify potential leverage points to support country-level reform processes. It was not intended to produce recommendations for specific reform mechanisms. Further involvement and strengthening of civil society and grassroots networks, whether as participants in emergency response or as stakeholders in national and local governance, must be led by these groups and recognise their realities.⁸ In Indonesia, for historical reasons, it has been argued that 'the default position of civil society organisations is that the state should be the main mechanism of social justice.'⁹ Analysts have identified a tightening of some democratic spaces in recent years, reducing the ability of these networks to interact with authorities in the promotion of a more just and equitable society.¹⁰ Conditions like these must be acknowledged as influencing the conditions of humanitarian reform and response.

8 While the concept of civil society is ambiguous and expansive, it has been summarised as the 'realm of organized social life that is voluntary, self-generating, (largely) self-supporting, autonomous from the state, and bound by a legal order or set of shared rules' (Diamond, 1994, Rethinking civil society: Toward democratic consolidation, *Journal of Democracy* 5(3):4). We recognise that the concept of 'civil society' has limitations when applied to the diversity of societies and political cultures across the world.

9 Diprose, McRae & Hadiz, 2019, Two decades of reformasi in Indonesia: Its illiberal turn, *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 49(5):706.

10 Diprose, McRae and Hadiz, Two decades of reformasi in Indonesia; Mietzner, 2021, Sources of resistance to democratic decline: Indonesian civil society and its trials, *Democratization*, 28(1):161-178.



3. THE SETTING FOR REFORM IN INDONESIA

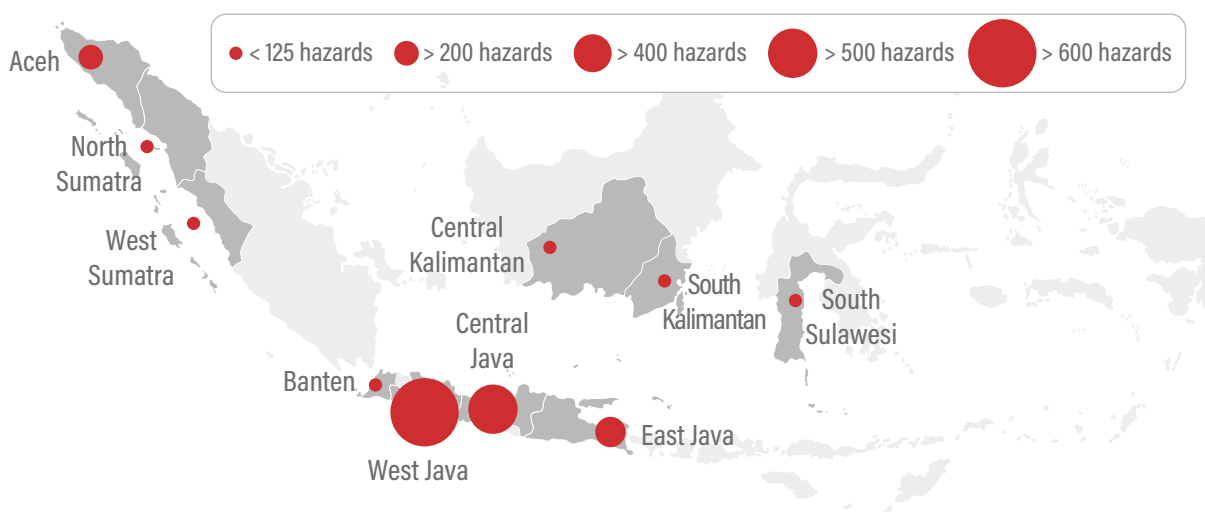
Humanitarian operations in Indonesia, as in many other countries, are implicit in the emergency response-related provisions of several laws and related policies and regulations. While there are legislative frameworks on disaster, conflict and health crises, none specifically regulate humanitarian operations as its own sector. In the absence of definitive and standardised parameters of humanitarian actions, or a humanitarian grand design that is agreed by all concerned, each crisis response brings new innovations, with no guarantee that they will become institutionalised enough to inform subsequent responses.¹¹

The following section outlines emergency response structures and systems in Indonesia and the space occupied by non-humanitarian actors. It describes some of the changes to their roles necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic and continued small-scale disasters.

HUMANITARIAN LEADERSHIP

Most disasters in Indonesia are localised occurrences with small to medium adverse consequences and often do not attract national, let alone international, attention or support. These small-scale disasters regularly impact the lives and livelihoods of thousands of Indonesians. In 2019, 3,622 hazards struck across the nation's 34 provinces.¹² In 2020, there were 2,291 recorded, by this time overlaid by the COVID-19 pandemic, which was first identified in Indonesia on 1 March, 2020.¹³ These responses are led by provincial governments and local actors, many of which are not a part of the conventional humanitarian system.¹⁴

Figure 2: Natural hazards in Indonesia in 2020



Source: BNPB, Data Informasi Benaca Indonesia, <https://dibi.bnpb.go.id>

11 Interview 24.

12 News Desk, *Jakarta Post*, 2019, 3,622 natural disasters occurred in 2019: BNPB, *Jakarta Post*, 18 December, <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2019/12/18/3622-natural-disasters-occurred-in-2019-bnpb.html>

13 Renaldi, 2021, Indonesia's latest natural disasters are a wake-up call, environmentalists say, *ABC News*, 21 January, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-01-22/indonesia-hit-by-series-of-disasters-in-the-first-weeks-of-2021/13075930>

14 Interviews 3, 5, 11, 12

Strong national systems place Indonesia ahead of the curve on various localisation objectives. The GoI has proven itself capable of mobilising resources and activating national systems and structures to respond to major disasters that affect large parts of a province, multiple provinces, or which (as with COVID-19) have nationwide impacts. Established in 2007, the National Disaster Management Agency (Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Bencana – BNPB) has supported, and over time strengthened, national leadership in humanitarian response. BNPB regulations clarified national coordination mechanisms and defined the role of international organisations in emergency response as early as 2008.¹⁵ National structures were further developed and institutionalised over the next decade leading up to the Central Sulawesi earthquake in 2018, and have continued to progress following this landmark response.¹⁶ However, there are challenges in translating strong central leadership to the local level.¹⁷ As seen in other countries, disaster responses can reveal ‘contestation over roles and legitimacy within and between the national and local levels, complicating locally led responses and challenging the uniform understanding of “the local” in practice.’¹⁸

Decentralisation of governance in 2001, and the legislation of local autonomy a decade later, resulted in stronger local governments, better positioned to respond to the needs and crises of their constituents. This progress, however, is shaped by the uneven development of sub-national governments across Indonesia. Disaster management capabilities have developed inconsistently due to varied priorities, commitment of leadership, and unequal access to resources.¹⁹ In an effort to rectify this, in 2018 the GoI included emergency preparedness in the mandatory minimum service standards for provincial and district governments.²⁰ This spurred improvements in risk assessment and contingency planning, yet regions with fewer resources continue to struggle to meet requirements.²¹ Today, the capacities, abilities and incentives of local authorities to coordinate and support relief and recovery efforts vary vastly across provinces and regions, leading to encouraging progress as well as challenges facing local leadership in response.²²

Engagement with civil society in humanitarian response is also inconsistent. BNPB officially recognised and institutionalised the role of civil society in disaster management in 2014.²³ More recently, BNPB leadership introduced the Pentahelix Approach (see Box 2) as a new pathway to inclusive disaster management,²⁴ updating its predecessors’ collaborative government–private sector–community approach.²⁵ However, CSOs and humanitarian NGOs have argued the approach is a national narrative that lacks a proper framework, missing official space for engagement and resulting in differences of interpretation around what constitutes collaboration.²⁶ They advocate for increased recognition in decision-making, more egalitarian partnership and wider scope for interoperability of programs, services and resources. On the ground, engagement with civil society is largely driven by local authorities or the corresponding local humanitarian coordination mechanisms of the international system, and is therefore dependent on these actors’ willingness and capacity to include a broader spectrum of contributors.

15 Head of BNPB, 2008, Guidelines for emergency response command, Reg. 10/2008; Concerning participation of international institutions and foreign non-governmental organisations in disaster management, Gov. Reg. 23/2008; The role of international organisations and foreign non-government organisations during emergency response, Reg. 22/2010.

16 A full list of BNPB regulations can be found at <https://web.bnpb.go.id/jdih/>

17 HAG, CGD, Pujiono Centre and NEAR Workshop with Indonesian CSOs, 14 December 2020; HAG, 2021, *Learnings from the SEJAJAR initiative*; Interviews 3, 8, 12, 19

18 Melis and Athorpe, 2020, 370.

19 Interviews 1, 2

20 UCLG-APSC (2021) Supporting revision of the ministry regulation: Accelerating application of minimum standard principles for local public services in Indonesia, <https://uclg-aspac.org/>

21 Interview 11; Rai et al., 2020, Strengthening emergency preparedness and response systems: Experience from Indonesia, *WHO South-East Asia Journal of Public Health* 9(1):26-31.

22 Interviews 1, 2, 15, 19, 22

23 Head of BNPB, Civil society participation in the organisation of disaster management, Reg. 11/2014

24 Tempo, 2019, Kepala BNPB Perkenalkan Pendekatan Pentahelix Penanganan Bencana, <https://nasional.tempo.co/read/1206278/kepala-bnpb-perkenalkan-pendekatan-pentahelix-penanganan-bencana>

25 https://twitter.com/bnpb_indonesia/status/767973421632237568?lang=en

26 SEJAJAR, 2021, Konsep Pentahelix untuk Kerjasama efektif antara Pemerintah dan OMS/LSM Menuju Suatu Sistem Penanggulangan Bencana di Indonesia, FGD, 8 February 2021

Box 2. Pentahelix approach in disaster management

The Pentahelix approach involves bringing together government, civil society, the private sector, academia and media to optimise disaster response. Doni Monardo, former head of BNPB (2019–2021) and chairperson of the COVID-19 Task Force, was a strong advocate of the multi-sectoral Pentahelix approach to disaster management, claiming:

■ 'Disaster prevention and management cannot be carried out by one party. In this case, Pentahelix is an answer.'²⁷

The adoption of the Pentahelix concept demonstrates the recognition that all actors have an important role to play in disaster management in Indonesia. It has been endorsed by BNPB and the GoI as a key multi-stakeholder approach to disaster management.

Civil society is increasingly taking a leadership role in reform efforts. Recently, CSO/NGO networks and platforms have emerged to continue to drive these conversations and bring together local humanitarian and non-humanitarian actors to share learning, build consensus and gather momentum for change. This includes initiatives such as SEJAJAR and the Indonesian Humanitarian-Development Alliance (see Box 3).

Box 3. Civil society initiatives to drive change

SEJAJAR (Sekretariat Jaringan-Antar-jaringan, translated as Network-of-Networks of Civil Society Organisations), established in March 2020, is a multi-sectoral platform designed to support the response to the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia in ways that will underpin a more robust civil society in the long term. It seeks to provide and develop value-added services for CSOs/NGOs and communities, through exchanging information, strengthening grassroots and CSOs/NGOs cooperation at national, provincial, and district/city levels, and strengthening engagement with government stakeholders. SEJAJAR is comprised of 25 national organisational networks, comprising more than 600 organisations from various sectors, working across all provinces of Indonesia.

The **Indonesian Development-Humanitarian Alliance** (ID-HA/ Aliansi Pembangunan-Kemanusiaan Indonesia, AP-KI), established in April 2021, is a network of humanitarian and development-mandated CSOs and NGOs that have come together to better serve affected communities. ID-HA focuses on promoting local leadership and supporting the implementation of the Pentahelix approach across its diverse membership. ID-HA seeks to demonstrate that 'community organisations are already highly capable, but their roles need to be more visible and brought to the forefront.'²⁸ AKPI also hopes to influence the international community through the Indonesian experience, and has hosted discussions to contextualise the Grand Bargain 2.0 framework for Indonesia.

■ "In the future, Indonesia should not only be seen as an object of global policies, but have an influence on said policies, including national and regional."²⁹

27 BNPB, 2020, Disaster and Pentahelix in disaster management in Indonesia, <https://bnpb.go.id/berita/bnpb-pastikan-abu-vulkanik-erupsi-gunungapi-tak-tak-sampai-ke-indonesia-1>

28 APKI, 2021, A collaboration of mass organisations and NGOs in Indonesia to aid the government in humanitarian problems, *Kompas*, 13 April, <https://biz.kompas.com/read/2021/04/13/210916728/apki-a-collaboration-of-mass-organizations-and-ngos-in-indonesia-to-aid-the>

29 Ibid., quote from Rahmawati Husein, AKPI member.

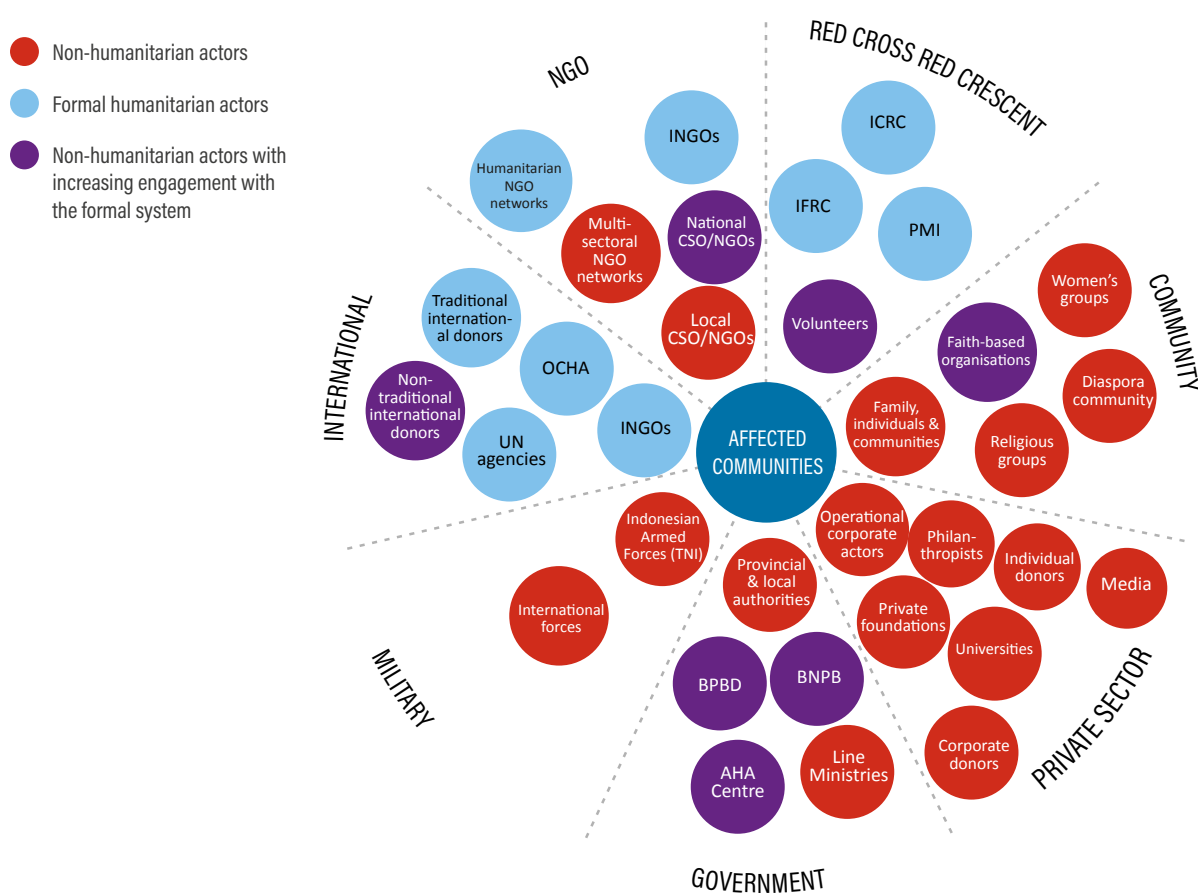
NON-HUMANITARIAN ACTORS

The role of community groups and private sector entities in humanitarian response has been identified as critical in many instances in Indonesia. For example, in the response to floods in Jakarta in January 2020, the private sector contributed food, equipment, cash, medicine and clothing, while community and religious organisations provided shelter, volunteers and medical workers, public kitchens, and worked directly with affected people to conduct evacuations and meet critical needs. Universities provided additional food, necessities, and temporary shelter for evacuees, as well as psychosocial services and education to affected communities.

A rich and diverse civil society, comprising local actors, self-help groups and active community-based organisations, has years of experience as first responders. Such groups have often coordinated through their own networks and platforms, working directly with affected communities and raising funds.³⁰ Different groups operate differently and may serve specific groups or niche needs, yet they share a goal – to help crisis-affected people. In the case of the Jakarta flood response mentioned above, an independent evaluation identified CSOs as the ‘most active’ responders in the operation.³¹

Figure 3 provides an overview of humanitarian actors in Indonesia and shows where non-humanitarian actors fit in the broader picture.

Figure 3: Response actors in Indonesia



Adapted from Labbe, 2012, *Rethinking humanitarianism: Adapting to 21st century challenges*, International Peace Institute.

³⁰ Interviews 5, 12; HAG, CGD, Pujiono Centre and NEAR Workshop, December 2020; HAG, 2021, *Learnings from the SEJAJAR initiative*

³¹ Rahmayanti et al., 2020, Actor-network and non-government failure in Jakarta flood disaster in January 2020, *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science*, <https://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.1088/1755-1315/716/1/012053/pdf>

In most response operations in Indonesia the range of the conventional, international humanitarian radar is too narrow to capture local and especially non-humanitarian actors. This means that they are not considered for humanitarian partnerships or funding, despite often being best placed to reach affected communities and those most vulnerable. Non-humanitarian actors are generally not invited to participate in 'humanitarian' structures and systems. Numerous sources for this research agreed that such actors are rarely invited to coordination meetings, given access to shared information, or considered in decision-making.³² Rare instances of local and less prominent actors being included in critical forums and high-profile discourses have occurred because of their perseverance and adaptability; they bend to the established structures and practices, but there are far fewer examples of the system adapting to them.

One example of non-humanitarian actors being included in high-level decision-making about disaster response occurred during the Central Sulawesi earthquake response in 2018. The Palu Sigi and Donggala Working Group for Disabled Persons Organizations (Pokja OPDis Pasigala), comprised of four organisations of persons with disabilities in Central Sulawesi, was included in the earthquake response through its partnership with Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund (ASB). ASB is a German organisation that has been active in Indonesia since 2006 through partnership with the Ministry of Home Affairs, maintaining an approach to humanitarian assistance that emphasises social inclusion. ASB has actively supported the inclusion of non-humanitarian actors through programs such as the Inclusive Emergency Management Program for Communities Affected by the Earthquake and Tsunami in Central Sulawesi and Strengthening Local Capacity for Humanitarian Action and Inclusive Early Recovery after the Earthquake and Tsunami in Central Sulawesi.³³ However, this type of support from an international organisation is rare, particularly in most smaller, localised disasters, when these actors are left to fend for themselves.

More often, we see examples such as Jaringan Komunikasi Radio Indonesia (JKRI) and its emergency radio program, which plays an increasingly active role in disaster management, being unable to secure adequate recognition or be officially included in the response system.³⁴ Another is the Central Kalimantan Borneo Women's Network, which supports women and protects against human rights violations during crises, losing all funding during the COVID-19 pandemic and being forced to create its own CSO network to mobilise resources.³⁵ Similarly, when the Maluku province was hit by an earthquake in 2019, local CSOs wanted to help, but with no access to coordination mechanisms, the Mutiara Maluku Foundation attempted to form its own local network, but with minimal funding or support, the network gradually dissipated.³⁶ More attention is needed to ensure these actors – which may be very well placed to offer humanitarian assistance – are not shut out of operations.

CONTEXT-DRIVEN CHANGE TOWARD RECOGNISING THE ROLE OF NON-HUMANITARIAN ACTORS

While CSOs acting as first responders is not new, the continued occurrence of small and medium-scale disasters in Indonesia during the COVID-19 pandemic has amplified this practice and required a broader range of actors to draw on their resources in new and different ways. It has made the role of non-humanitarian actors more visible; humanitarian actors realised they were just a small part of the mass response.

32 HAG and Pujiono Centre Workshop 2, Jakarta, December 2019; HAG, CGD, Pujiono Centre and NEAR Workshop, December 2020; HAG, 2021, *Learnings from the SEJAJAR Initiative*; Interviews 15, 23

33 ASB, 2021, Konsultan pengembangan produk pengetahuan, <http://www.asbindonesia.org/newsread-201-konsultan-pengembangan-produk-pengetahuan-.html> Accessed 12 September 2021

34 Siaga Bencana, 2020, Radio Komunitas: wadah baru dalam pengurangan risiko bencana, <https://siagabencana.com/berita/post/radio-komunitas-wadah-baru-dalam-pengurangan-risiko-bencana>

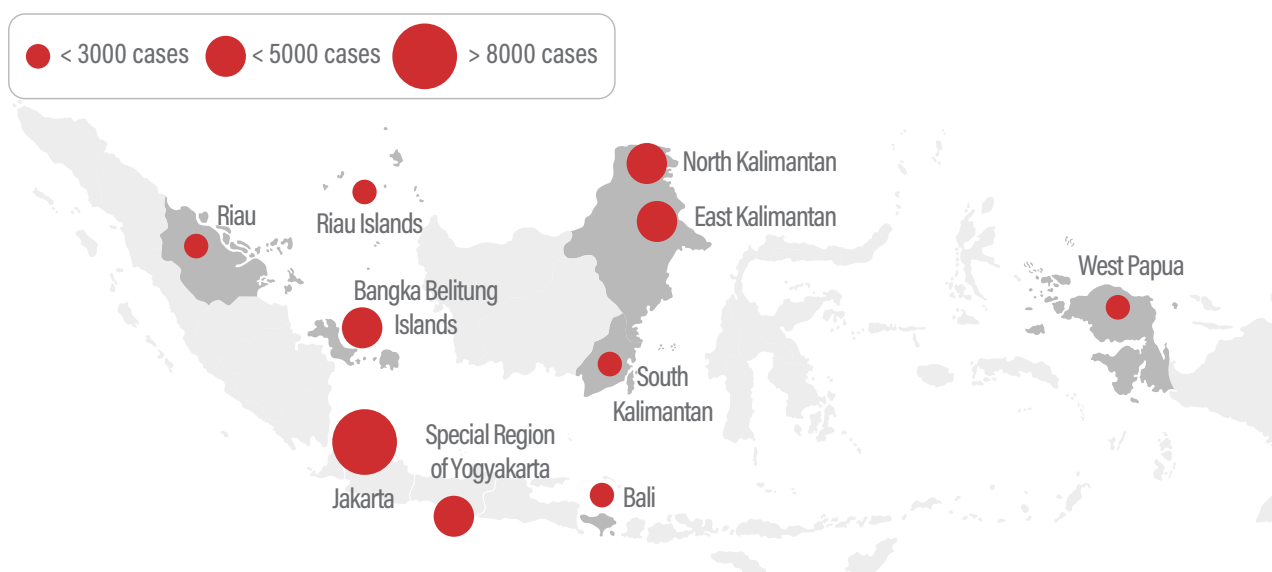
35 HAG, CGD, Pujiono Centre and NEAR Workshop, December 2020

36 Ibid.

The first COVID-19 cases were confirmed in Indonesia two months after the first report of SARS-CoV-2 infection in China.³⁷ The GoI established a national COVID-19 taskforce (Gusgas COVID-19) on 11 March, with similar structures created at sub-national level. The virus came in two waves: a smaller peak in February 2021, and a much more destructive second wave from mid-2021 driven by the highly infectious Delta variant.

By June 2021, Indonesia had become the epicentre of the global pandemic. As of 28 September 2021, the country had 4,208,013 confirmed cases (see Figure 4 for more detail).³⁸

Figure 4: 10 provinces with the largest number of COVID-19 cases per 100,000 people



Source: Indonesian government COVID-19 portal, <https://covid19.go.id/peta-sebaran>; accessed 1 October 2021

The government task force developed a National Response and Mitigation Plan for COVID-19, which outlines a whole-of-society approach for detection, verification, reporting, relief and communication concerning the virus.³⁹ The response employs the Pentahelix concept, recognising the critical role played by civil society and actors outside of the dedicated disaster management sphere (see Box 2 above). Across Indonesia, citizen-organised, village-level task forces have been crucial to the pandemic response, supporting health services and countering the security impacts of lockdown measures.⁴⁰

The pandemic also affected the conduct of international organisations, drastically reducing the number of international staff in field locations. Restrictions on movement have further limited access to populations in need, and global economic challenges have diminished funding for aid.⁴¹ A recent Pujiono Centre study revealed that more than half of humanitarian and non-humanitarian CSOs/NGOs in Indonesia face financial problems that may force them to end operations.⁴²

37 Vivi Setiawaty et al., 2020, The identification of first COVID-19 cluster in Indonesia, *The American Journal of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene*, 103(6):2339-42. <https://www.ajtmh.org/view/journals/tpmd/103/6/article-p2339.xml>

38 Johns Hopkins Corona Virus Resource Centre, Indonesia, <https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/region/indonesia>

39 Indonesia Multi-sectoral Response Plan to Covid-19, Extension 2020, https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/msrp_extension_final_20201208.pdf

40 Lorch and Sombatpoonsiri, 2020, Southeast Asia between authorisation and democratic resurgence, in Richard Youngs (ed), *Global civil society in the shadow of coronavirus*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington DC; FGD led by Pujiono Centre on West Sulawesi earthquake response, 12 March 2021.

41 United Nations University, 2021, Covid-19 and humanitarian access: How the pandemic should provoke systemic change in the global humanitarian system, <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/covid-19-and-humanitarian-access-how-pandemic-should-provoke-systemic-change-global>

42 Pujiono Centre and SEJAJAR, 2020, Pentahelix approach towards effective government-CSO/NGO collaboration, unpublished paper presented in a BNPB focus group discussion ('Towards an Indonesian disaster management system'), February 2021.

The retreat of international humanitarian actors and resources from the frontline has both opened space for and burdened a whole range of civil society and local partners. Non-humanitarian actors have stepped up to support the pandemic response and combat the effects of many other disasters. For example, residents and local responders were active in the response to the West Sulawesi earthquake in January 2021, whilst many formal humanitarian responders were hampered by the ongoing COVID crisis (see Box 3). At the same time as the Sulawesi response, local actors launched major responses to two volcanic eruptions on Java, landslides in West Java, flooding in South Kalimantan, and mounted search and rescue operations for Sriwijaya Air flight 182, which crashed into the Java Sea on 9 January.⁴³

WEST SULAWESI CASE STUDY



In the early hours of 15 January 2021, a magnitude 6.2 earthquake struck the province of West Sulawesi. Its epicentre lay between the seaside city of Mamuju, the province's capital, and the smaller but more severely affected Majene.⁴⁴ Early assessments suggested that some 27,800 people had left their homes,⁴⁵ with makeshift shelters housing approximately 19,000 people left homeless by the quake.⁴⁶ The death toll was at least 91, with more than 2,000 people injured and over 70,000 estimated to be in need of humanitarian assistance.⁴⁷

Provincial disaster management agencies (Badan Penanggulangan Bencana Daerah – BPBD) from Majene, Mamuju and Polewali districts mobilised rapidly and delivered medical treatment, evacuations and data collection.⁴⁸ The military also mobilised. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) facilitated a 3W (who-does-what-and-where) mapping of information and resources about education, psychosocial support, shelter, gender-based violence, reproductive health, WASH and logistics within a week of the quake.⁴⁹ National clusters were active in the response, with some employing online meetings to increase activity. BNPB also established a Volunteer Desk (Desk Relawan) to support coordination outside the formal cluster system.

In Central Sulawesi, national organisations were able to deploy field responses, but pandemic-induced restrictions on movement prevented them reaching all affected areas. Underlining the challenges, many critical government officials and NGO staff tested positive to COVID-19 following visits to West Sulawesi and South Kalimantan.⁵⁰ As a result, many national organisations channelled funding to local non-humanitarian actors and organisations that may otherwise have been sidelined in the response.

43 Regan and Jamaluddin, "Indonesia grapples with earthquake, flooding, landslides and fallout from Sriwijaya air crash," *CNN*, 18 Jan 2021, <https://edition.cnn.com/2021/01/18/asia/indonesia-disasters-earthquake-floods-intl-hnk/index.html>

44 AHA Centre, 2021, *Flash update: No. 02-M6.2 Earthquake in West Sulawesi Indonesia*, 16 Jan, <https://ahacentre.org/flash-update/flash-update-no-02-m6-2-earthquake-in-west-sulawesi-indonesia-16-jan-2021/?web=1&wdLOR=c95DEB264-88EC-1445-A809-ECD6B42BE133>

45 Widiyanto and Beo Da Costa, 2021, Quake death toll reaches 73 in Indonesia's West Sulawesi province, *The New Daily*, 17 Jan, <https://thenewdaily.com.au/news/2021/01/17/indonesia-earthquake-west-sulawesi/>

46 Hajramurni and Sagita, 2021, Medics in West Sulawesi overwhelmed by quake casualties, *The Jakarta Post*, 18 Jan, <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2021/01/18/medics-in-west-sulawesi-overwhelmed-by-quake-casualties.html>

47 Indonesia HCT, 2021, *Action Plan on COVID-19 and Natural Disaster Responses January-June 2021*, https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/hct_action_plan_on_covid-19_and_disaster_responses.pdf

48 IFRC, 2021, *Emergency plan of action, Indonesia: West Sulawesi earthquake*, 16 Jan.

49 Indonesia HCT, *Action Plan on COVID-19*.

50 Pangestika, 2021, COVID-19 task force chief tests positive for virus, *The Jakarta Post*, 25 Jan, <https://www.thejakartapost.com/paper/2021/01/24/covid-19-task-force-chief-tests-positive-for-virus.html>

The use of digital communication technologies and remote working platforms helped with processes such as induction and needs assessment and helped make information more accessible to non-humanitarian actors. CSOs' accountability to the government was channelled through the on-site Emergency Operation Command Post, the National COVID-19 Task Force, and through online reporting. For donors, regular use of zoom meetings allowed discussion with their non-humanitarian counterparts about the changed conditions for response during the pandemic and the need for new mechanisms, including for procurement and delivery. Leaders were able to convey feedback and community needs to maintain accountability to affected people (AAP), but the response could have expanded upon the linear and vertical structures to extend accountability to CSO and NGO platforms, local governments, and communities affected by disasters.

Source: Focus group discussion led by Pujiono Centre and conducted in Bahasa Indonesia, 12 March 2021.

While civil society has long been active in crisis response in Indonesia, the prominence of non-humanitarian actors in response to the pandemic and multiple localised disasters has further emphasised its value and the need for increased support.⁵¹ The international community has highlighted the efforts of grassroots organisations in Indonesia, sparking discussions about ways to facilitate people-centred approaches and community-led engagement.⁵² These discussions are, in turn, helping to reveal the range of vantage points (see Box 4).

Box 4. Building momentum for reform

Multiple conversations, including those convened by the Blueprint project, are allowing Indonesian stakeholders to progress thinking on reform. For example, participants in a workshop held by HAG, Pujiono Centre, the Center for Global Development (CGD) and the Network for Empowered Aid Response (NEAR) explored the proposition of 'area-based humanitarian coordination' – extension of the national-level Humanitarian Country Team to sub-national hubs to overcome some weaknesses of cluster-based coordination models.⁵³ The possibility that this approach risks maintaining the status quo was raised in a regional webinar on local humanitarian leadership held by Oxfam and SEJAJAR.⁵⁴ Local CSOs and NGOs argued that any coordination mechanisms based on geographical areas need to involve non-humanitarian and humanitarian actors (if any) and should be tailored to strengthening local actors' readiness for localised crises at a time when national responses are uncommon and international ones exceptionally rare.

This research suggests that there is potential to build on these live discussions to inform humanitarian reform efforts in Indonesia and beyond. The Grand Bargain 2.0 calls for national reference groups to ensure meaningful participation of local and national actors, as well as increased engagement with affected people.⁵⁵ It is important that the role of non-humanitarian actors be recognised through full contributions to such groups and the wider networks they will bring together. Our research has highlighted the urgency of providing more space for non-humanitarian actors in the approach to the priority areas of coordination, accountability, capacity and funding.

51 HAG and Pujiono Centre, 2021, *Shifting the system*; HAG, CGD, Pujiono Centre and NEAR workshop with Indonesian CSOs, 14 Dec 2020; FGD on West Sulawesi earthquake response, March 2021.

52 Lorch and Sombatpoonsiri, 2020, Southeast Asia between authorisation and democratic resurgence; Fighting COVID-19 in Indonesia / Melawan COVID-19 di Indonesia, Sphere webinar, June 25, 2020, recording available at <https://spherestandards.org/wp-content/uploads/COVID19-WEBINARINDONESIA.mp4>.

53 HAG, CGD, Pujiono Centre and NEAR workshop with Indonesian CSOs, 14 Dec 2020.

54 Oxfam and SEJAJAR Local Humanitarian Leadership webinar, 8 June 2021.

55 IASC, 2021, Grand Bargain Meeting 2021: Summary note, available at <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/2021-07/Grand%20Bargain%20Annual%20Meeting%202021%20-%20Summary%20Note.pdf>

4. PRIORITY AREAS FOR REFORM IN INDONESIA

Consultations in Indonesia identified the four areas discussed below as priorities for humanitarian reform in the country. Strikingly, these areas are also noted in response evaluations and reports over the past 20 years in Indonesia, and are recurrent concerns in global humanitarian literature and reform discussions, yet meaningful solutions to persistent challenges have been scarce.⁵⁶ Our research found that a potential explanation is the tendency of humanitarian reforms to perpetuate the marginal position of non-humanitarian actors, despite their crucial role in the vast majority of Indonesia's frequent emergency responses.

4.1 COORDINATION

Why is this a priority?

In a large, diverse, and disaster-prone country, effective coordination is vital. Coordination in Indonesia is led by the national government, specifically the National Disaster Management Agency (BNPB), and supported by OCHA and occasionally the AHA Centre in managing offers of international assistance (when applicable). The GoI adapted and adopted the cluster system in 2014, with eight national clusters led by government ministries and supported by United Nations (UN) and INGO counterparts.⁵⁷ In keeping with the local autonomy law, local governments increasingly play a key role in coordinating responses to most crises – namely, small-scale, localised and recurring crises. In the case of a major disaster, local clusters are established and operate alongside coordination structures of local authorities, with support from the national system and in some instances UN agencies, regional intergovernmental bodies like the AHA Centre, and other international actors.

Despite these systems, Indonesian stakeholders have consistently identified coordination practice as a major bottleneck in efficiency.⁵⁸ The COVID-19 pandemic has further amplified challenges, and with the reiteration of the Grand Bargain increasing the audience for ongoing civil society discussions, weaknesses in Indonesia's disaster response coordination structures have become more visible.

Findings



Key finding: Conventional humanitarian coordination structures are too top-down and generally do not recognise or support the role of non-humanitarian actors.

Despite progress, existing coordination structures vary in effectiveness and inclusivity

Significant progress has been made in establishing national, provincial and local coordination structures. Nonetheless, nationally, the clusters have evolved inconsistently – some sectors maintain sufficient resources and activities, while others are weaker.⁵⁹ Sub-nationally, local government disaster management capacities have developed differently across provinces due to varied commitment of leadership, different rates of staff turnover and knowledge transfer, uneven access to resources, and varying frequency of disasters in the region.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ HAG and Pujiono Centre, 2021, *Shifting the system*.

⁵⁷ Ibid; BNPB Cluster System Decree No. 173/2014.

⁵⁸ Workshop 1, Jakarta, December 2019; Workshop 2, Jakarta, February 2020

⁵⁹ Interviews 6, 8

⁶⁰ Interviews 1, 2, 15, 19, 22

Current structures are also disjointed and have inadequate reach. There is a disconnect between national and local coordination bodies, as well as between the local structures and important local and non-humanitarian responders.⁶¹ Critical actors largely marginalised by the system have very little awareness of the existing coordination mechanisms and practices. Even when there is awareness, participation in these mechanisms is limited by time, resources and accessibility of platforms.⁶²

There is appetite for clearer systems and agreed ways of working

Most actors agree that government-led coordination is both important and necessary. However, local actors continue to call for more clarity and consistency in government-led coordination practice to minimise duplication, avoid wasted time and resources and ensure they are able to contribute meaningfully to response.⁶³ Stakeholders envisage that government-led coordination could be strengthened with more standardised structures accompanied by clear, binding regulations and standard operating procedures (SOPs). These could then be adapted as required to the needs for each region.⁶⁴

‘Government planning and strategies should establish minimum requirements for coordination structures that can be adapted and translated to the local level.’ (National actor)⁶⁵

However, a strengthened version of the current model would not automatically solve the problem of key responders being left out. This is seen in the creation of parallel structures among different groups.

Coordination forums are proliferating

A lack of awareness of existing structures, or the inability of these structures to effectively include a broad range of actors, has led to the proliferation of coordination platforms across the local landscape. Many local and non-traditional actors have organised their own forms of coordination through WhatsApp and various CSO networks.⁶⁶ These new platforms provide an avenue for support, training, information sharing and resources that are not available through the traditional forums. There is substantial engagement in these forums from non-humanitarian actors (e.g. gender, technology, human rights, media networks) and support for them to continue.⁶⁷

Enthusiasm for continuing these non-humanitarian coordination mechanisms suggests that they are fulfilling an unmet need; however, the proliferation of platforms also presents challenges to the system. The lack of coordination between these non-humanitarian mechanisms, both among themselves and with recognised government and humanitarian mechanisms, results in poor information management and duplication of effort.⁶⁸

‘There are many different entities that are playing in the same sandbox, but they are not playing together.’ (International actor)⁶⁹

61 HAG, 2021, *Learnings from the SEJAJAR initiative*; Interviews 2, 6, 20

62 Ibid; HFI, 2021, *Briefing paper on coordination for Blueprint project*, July.

63 Workshop 1, Jakarta, December 2019; Workshop 2, Jakarta, February 2020

64 Interview 6, 8, 10

65 Interview 11

66 HAG and Pujiono Centre, 2019, *Charting the New Norm*; HAG, *Learnings from the SEJAJAR Initiative in Indonesia*.

67 HAG, 2021, *Learnings from the SEJAJAR initiative in Indonesia*.

68 Ibid.; Interview 1, 8, 20

69 Interview 1

What needs to change?



Recommendation: Adapt coordination approaches to account for the role of non-humanitarian actors.

Identify opportunities to include non-humanitarian actors in local coordination platforms

Our research suggests that the role of non-humanitarian actors must be more consistently recognised and supported to allow better preparedness and more effective coordination during responses. Fundamentally, this means ensuring that such actors are aware of existing coordination platforms and able to engage with them on some level. A more modest form of engagement may be sharing of information, while a more proactive form of engagement may involve attendance and participation in decision-making forums.

This reform could build on the GoI's Pentahelix approach, taking concrete steps at subnational levels that could help implement this national vision of broader collaboration in disaster preparedness, response and recovery. Expanding the scope of local coordination is important, considering that most local organisations are non-humanitarian.

It is also important to address entrenched power dynamics within the system when considering 'meaningful' participation. There is a difference between access and participation. Expanding access to information for non-humanitarian actors is critical, yet without these actors feeling empowered to participate and engage in decision-making, the impact of their inclusion is greatly diminished.

Invest in support for non-humanitarian actors that will allow them to meaningfully participate in local-level coordination

Most actors agree that non-humanitarian actors will only be able to contribute effectively to coordinated humanitarian efforts if they have both the knowledge and the means to do so, which will require significant resource investment. In practice, this means that information about coordination mechanisms and training support to engage with them must be shared across the range of potential responders in advance of a crisis event. Many actors called for creation and socialisation of and training in mandated coordination procedures, carried out regularly, not only during emergencies.⁷⁰ The importance of developing coordination capacity as a means of preparedness was emphasised repeatedly.⁷¹

'For the sake of good coordination, removing barriers is needed, they must have wide open access to information, be familiar with posts, clusters, not exclusive to certain groups, not only humanitarian bureaus, but representatives of other communities such as philanthropy etc.' (Local actor)⁷²

This does not mean forcing non-humanitarian actors into a conventional mould, but supporting them to build on their response skills and helping them work with – and not be overwhelmed by – specialised humanitarian actors.

⁷⁰ Interviews 3, 5, 13, 15, 19; HAG, CGD, Pujiono Centre and NEAR Workshop, December 2020; HFI, 2021, *Briefing paper on coordination for Blueprint project*

⁷¹ Interviews 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 9, 11, 13, 19, 20; HFI, 2021, *Briefing paper on coordination*

⁷² Interview 19

Strengthen humanitarian emergency coordination by building on the broader, multisectoral, online coordination that takes place during non-emergency times

Ensuring inclusivity of a broader range of actors will also require conversations about how best to coordinate. This may require adaptation by broadening the scope to include multisectoral topics without losing focus on humanitarian response and actions, and may mean changing the mechanics of coordination, for example, expanding online participation or more extensive use of social media for communication.⁷³ Actors report that coordination has become more inclusive through meetings and information sharing through online platforms during the COVID-19 response – a good starting point for this shift.⁷⁴

'COVID-19 had a positive impact on coordination, as it has forced organisations to collaborate effectively in an online context [...] It has pushed everyone to start thinking together across different sectors, to break the siloed thinking of people and explore new methods for response, innovative methods.'
(National actor)⁷⁵

Stakeholders also recognised that strengthening and changing coordination mechanisms at the local level would require a strong commitment from leadership and the strengthening and empowerment of local governments to lead.⁷⁶ This could include establishing the clearer structures and SOPs called for above. What this looks like in practice, and how sub-national structures interact with national ones, will depend on the current approaches and strengths of provincial and local governments, as well as the hazards and vulnerabilities in their areas.

The bottom line

The coordination context in Indonesia is instructive for other countries looking to nationalise and localise their structures. Ultimately, strengthening of government coordination mechanisms needs to include the plethora of actors that will be engaged in disaster response operations. Those overlooked by formal humanitarian actors may fall through the cracks and be left to their own coordination devices without intentional efforts to engage them and support their critical role in response.

⁷⁵ Interview 11



4.2 ACCOUNTABILITY

Why is this a priority?

Accountability to affected populations has been an international priority in every recent round of reform. While the technical concept hasn't always translated to the local level, a more accountable response that better serves the needs of affected communities is a priority for every responder. Stakeholders in Indonesia identified a lack of accountability to stakeholders and the lack of understanding of accountability principles as a key obstacle to more effective and efficient response.⁷⁷

Experience from recent disasters in Indonesia reveals that while many organisations involve the community in data collection and assessment, decision-making rarely involves affected people.⁷⁸ The Central Sulawesi earthquake response in 2018 saw notable progress, with the establishment of the Community Engagement Working Group to ensure affected communities were informed and able to provide feedback to humanitarian responders and decision-makers.⁷⁹ This group has also been active in combating misinformation throughout the national pandemic response; however, this practice is yet to be institutionalised across local-level response operations.⁸⁰ Actors see this shift to local practice as critical to better meeting the needs of affected Indonesians.

Findings



Key Finding: Non-humanitarian actors have relationships with communities that could make accountability a reality, but they have been left behind in the technicalities of the AAP conversation.

The AAP concept is mostly used by conventional humanitarian actors, it is not widely shared or understood among local actors

Accountability to affected populations in humanitarian response has largely been driven by international definitions and working groups. This process has failed to generate buy-in or traction with local government or first responders in Indonesia. There is little shared understanding of AAP among humanitarian NGOs and CSOs in Indonesia, and the concept is even less well understood by those outside the conventional humanitarian sphere.⁸¹

'The principle is good, but the principle needs to also be understood, it is not only jargon, without it being understood by the people who actually apply it; what actually are their values?'

(Regional actor)⁸²

Experiences in Indonesia and elsewhere have exposed weak implementation of AAP.⁸³ According to a local humanitarian network, affected communities in Indonesia are mainly seen as victims and

77 Workshop 1, Jakarta, December 2019; Workshop 2, Jakarta, February 2020.

78 Ibid.

79 Pulse Lab Jakarta, 2019, Sura komunitas: Improving disaster response through community engagement, *Medium*, 6 March, <https://medium.com/pulse-lab-jakarta/suara-komunitas-improving-disaster-response-through-community-engagement-3d6ca51e6e81>

80 HAG, 2021, *Shifting the system*.

81 JMK, 2021, *Briefing paper on accountability to affected populations for Blueprint project*

82 Interview 2

83 HAG, 2021, *Accountability to affected people: Stuck in the weeds*; Knox-Clarke et al., 2020, *Humanitarian Accountability Report 2020: Are we making aid work better for people affected by crisis?*, CHS Alliance, <https://www.alnap.org/help-library/humanitarian-accountability-report-2020-are-we-making-aid-work-better-for-people>

vulnerable, so they are always positioned as recipients of aid.⁸⁴ Without community involvement in decision-making, responses are prone to missing targets, inappropriate types of intervention, disharmonious relationships, crises of trust, duplication of aid, inconsistencies, and lack of sustainability – problems that are ultimately left to the community to resolve.⁸⁵

‘Some communities are reluctant to complain. They say, “people are helping, so we should not disappoint them.”’ (Local actor)⁸⁶

Non-humanitarian actors have no access to AAP standards and guidance

‘Most of the local humanitarian responders are not humanitarian NGOs, they are development-oriented NGOs [...] many do not understand why accountability for the humanitarian response needs to start from the rapid assessment, response planning and recovery stages. So they take a response decision without feeling like they have to consult with the community.’ (Local actor)⁸⁷

Organisations outside the formal humanitarian sector approach accountability in a range of ways. Many local and non-humanitarian actors perceive accountability as only financial and procedural, without understanding the importance of accountability to the people they serve.⁸⁸ No guidance or standards are accessible to local actors.⁸⁹ Moreover, affected communities in Indonesia tend to have low expectations of government accountability in response operations. This has hindered understanding of what effective AAP looks like and reduces external pressure to ensure accountability is prioritised.⁹⁰

‘It’s hard to hold anyone accountable if you don’t have a standard to hold account to.’ (International actor)⁹¹

Non-humanitarian actors have untapped potential to make AAP meaningful

This situation presents an important challenge for the sector, because community groups, local and non-humanitarian actors have the relationships in communities to make AAP a reality, especially in contexts where international organisations’ access to response sites is limited. Non-humanitarian actors are often embedded in their communities. They understand the power dynamics, social factors, culture and context-specific vulnerabilities that are often overlooked by national or international humanitarian actors deployed from other areas. And while most respondents in Indonesia agreed that AAP should be prioritised in future reform efforts, the path forward needs to be shared and agreed by all actors responding.

84 JMK, 2021, *Briefing paper on accountability to affected populations for Blueprint project*

85 JMK, 2021, *Briefing paper on accountability to affected populations*

86 Ibid.

87 Ibid.

88 Interviews 3, 5, 18, 19

89 Interviews 14, 15, 16, 19; HAG and Pujiono Centre, Workshop 2, Jakarta, December 2019

90 Interviews 1, 2, 5; JMK, 2021, *Briefing paper on accountability to affected populations*.

91 Interview 1

What needs to change?



Recommendation: Replace the current focus on training with a focus on co-creating a shared understanding of accountability that incorporates both international principles and local realities.

Find a shared language to express the goal of accountability to affected people

This research suggests the approach to accountability needs to be informed and driven by local and non-humanitarian actors that have both better access to and a more nuanced understanding of communities. Actors that will inevitably be involved in accountability need also to be involved in conversations that relate to the overarching purpose and meaning of an ‘accountable’ aid response. Instead of trying to train others in AAP processes as a form of technical expertise linked to compliance (which can reinforce assumptions that accountability is an obligation to donors), conventional humanitarian actors should be open to different ways of conceptualising and describing the goal of respecting and prioritising community needs and preferences.

‘We need to ensure that we create value to the people and not to ourselves; I would like to see this AAP principle because it’s been internationally driven; but when we talk about affected people that’s very local; are we talking about the same values? We have to create the values with the people, we need the people-centred approach.’ (Regional actor)⁹²

Use this shared understanding to develop more participatory ways for communities to inform decisions by building on the everyday interactions of affected people with non-humanitarian actors

A stronger foundation of shared understanding will enable non-humanitarian actors to strengthen AAP. This co-created knowledge can then inform expanded use of meaningful consultations and the development of new approaches by conventional humanitarian actors. These conversations should avoid a focus on tools and checklists that may be inappropriate or unable to be adapted to different contexts. For example, data from feedback mechanisms will not be meaningful without proper understanding and explanation of the objectives of the mechanisms to non-humanitarian actors and the community.⁹³

The bottom line

The AAP conversation needs to build on and complement improved approaches to coordination. It is through strengthened participation of all relevant actors in coordination platforms that accountability will begin to emerge as a shared and commonly understood priority. Current efforts to ‘shift the power’ to affected communities could be significantly strengthened by more intentional efforts to empower those who serve them every day. Non-humanitarian actors can give momentum to the practical effect of accountability through their everyday interactions and understanding of the community in a way that other actors are unable to.

⁹² Interview 2

⁹³ Interview 6, 15; JMK, 2021, *Briefing paper on accountability to affected populations*

4.3 CAPACITY

Why is this a priority?

Disaster management capacity has developed steadily in Indonesia over the past 20 years. National capacity has increased significantly since the establishment of BNPB and numerous laws and regulations that increase preparedness and enhance response operations; however, some local capacities across the diverse archipelago have not kept pace. The unique 2018 Central Sulawesi response demonstrated the increasing capacity of national and local actors, but also reinforced the status quo by prioritising nationalised INGOs and larger humanitarian organisations, which could most easily work within the international model, for funding and partnership.⁹⁴

Indonesian stakeholders believed that consistent, effective and inclusive capacity-building schemes would create a significant ripple effect across the system – improving coordination competency, accountability practice and management of funding.⁹⁵ Inadequate training and understanding of activities, systems and structures, among both local and international actors, can lead to inconsistent service delivery and inappropriate assistance for affected communities.

Findings



Key Finding: Conventional humanitarian capacity-strengthening initiatives do not recognise the importance of non-humanitarian actors in preparedness and response, leverage their existing capacity, or align with their needs.

Capacity strengthening is too narrowly focused on conventional humanitarian agendas

Many capacity-building programs in Indonesia are designed by international actors to train local actors to meet international requirements for specific programming or reporting. These programs rely on densely configured materials to be delivered rapidly at the onset of emergency to newly identified actors, with the expectation that they will be transformed into ‘mini INGOs’ in terms of knowledge, attitude and skills.⁹⁶

Training content and delivery is often determined by trainers and their needs rather than aligned with local actors’ needs and priorities, highlighting fundamental power imbalances.⁹⁷ Local and national actors continue to request greater focus on institutional capacities (e.g. administration, financial management, organisational systems and processes), yet these programs remain scarce outside of formal partnership arrangements.⁹⁸

‘It must be clear who is meant as a local actor, what we need to see is how capacity building can be accessed openly, easily, affordably, and inclusively [...] because this knowledge should be shared with everyone.’ (Local actor)⁹⁹

94 Robillard et. al., 2020, *We must be the pioneers: Perspectives on localisation in the response to the 2018 Sulawesi earthquake in Indonesia*, Feinstein International Center.

95 Workshop 1, Jakarta, December 2019; Workshop 2, Jakarta, February 2020.

96 Interview 24

97 Interviews 1, 2, 3, 5

98 Interviews 1, 16; PMI, 2021, *Briefing paper on capacity strengthening for Blueprint project*, July.

99 Interview 13

Key responders are missing out on the chance to learn and share their experience

In the existing approach, large national organisations and those based near urban centres typically have access to resources and training, while smaller, non-humanitarian actors are left with few options for training or support.¹⁰⁰ Capacity initiatives have frequently been described as inconsistent, internationally driven and inaccessible for most non-humanitarian actors.¹⁰¹

‘If someone delivers a training program, do it together with local partners, so they can replicate and do the training program themselves [...] if you haven’t been able to demonstrate achievements for training in the last 20 years, why should the same trainers keep doing it, it needs to be passed down.’ (Regional actor)¹⁰²

Such programmes fail to recognise that local actors are development organisations, civic associations, advocacy, religious or sectoral organisations, whose mandate and focus are not necessarily humanitarian. But they are the ones that will respond to crises. These non-humanitarian actors do not normally qualify to benefit from humanitarian training, but they are expected to transform overnight into capable humanitarian actors when crises occur.

‘Let the learning community determine training needs. Capacity-building activities should be needs-based and focused on what participants need to learn to respond effectively. Designing together training materials and approaches can reduce gaps and increase the enthusiasm of learning residents.’ (National actor)¹⁰³

Frontline responders continue to call for increased support, but what type of support is appropriate is increasingly questioned. On one hand, it is important for local actors to possess the skills and knowledge to engage with national and international systems when necessary. On the other, approaches to strengthen these skills often diminish the existing capacities of diverse actors and can ultimately result in unhelpful trainings. Because large-scale national and international responses are rare, actors are increasingly calling for a reconceptualisation of capacity building.

There are opportunities to learn from good practice

Despite a broadly ineffective approach to capacity strengthening, there are important positive examples of capacity development initiatives. These provide meaningful, contextualised, and inclusive training to local and non-humanitarian actors (see, for example, Box 5). Several respondents emphasised the importance of identifying and learning from established good practice to be able to replicate these programs at scale.¹⁰⁴

100 Interview 3, 10, 13, 14, 18, HAG and Pujiono Centre, Workshop 2; HAG, CGD, Pujiono Centre and NEAR workshop, December 2020

101 Interview 5, 14, 15, 16; HAG, CGD, Pujiono Centre and NEAR workshop

102 Interview 2

103 PMI, *Briefing paper on capacity strengthening*.

104 Interview 5, 6, 11, 13, 20

Box 5. Good practice in capacity strengthening

The Preparing to Excel in Emergency Response (PEER) project was a program run by Catholic Relief Services (CRS) in four countries (Lebanon, Jordan, India and Indonesia) from 2015 to 2018. PEER focused on building the capacity of local faith-based institutions to respond to emergencies. In Indonesia, CRS partnered with Muhammadiyah Disaster Management Centre (MDMC) and Penundaan Kewajiban Pembayaran Utang (PKPU), two large Muslim organisations that regularly respond to emergencies through their volunteer bases.

The PEER project worked to train ‘master trainers’ in MDMC and PKPU, who could then pass the training down to their local branches and local volunteer networks. This helped to strengthen and institutionalise capacity within the organisations themselves and reach diverse faith-based groups that typically lack access to disaster training. The program also supported local partners to develop, test and formally adopt SOPs for emergency response, which build on international standards in a way that is contextualised and appropriate for local and non-humanitarian actors.¹⁰⁵

‘We can improve the training, the materials, the contents. This is very important because many times the training is based on the provider, not based on the needs. But this is tailored training so we can address what we need. This includes how to use the international standards within local standards, how to use standards about effective response or quality of response at the local level.’ (National actor)¹⁰⁶

As this example highlights, non-humanitarian actors located in regions that experience frequent disasters have built significant capacity and experience in disaster response and have an intimate knowledge and understanding of their communities. Current approaches fail to harness this capacity, ensuring that the international system – when it becomes involved in a response – complements rather than overpowers.

‘Managing risks and responding to crises are part of our day-to-day duties [...] as the events befall us, we do what we can, with whatever we have, the best we know how to do it.’ (National actor)¹⁰⁷

What needs to change?



Recommendation: Make capacity strengthening a collaborative learning process, not one-way training, and incorporate more local and non-humanitarian actors in its design and delivery.

Adopt a ‘life skills’ approach to include local and non-humanitarian actors in capacity strengthening

The dominant global capacity narrative is that actors with recognised and supported roles and responsibilities in response operations must meet international standards and protocols.¹⁰⁸ This research suggests that existing approaches fail to understand and meet the capacity needs of non-humanitarian

¹⁰⁵ CRS, 2019, PEER Project Final Evaluation, https://disasterplaybook.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/peer_evaluation_report.pdf

¹⁰⁶ Interview 5.

¹⁰⁷ HAG and CGD Regional Panel, 2021, *Rethinking Reform: Demand-driven humanitarian action in the Asia Pacific*, 19 May, quote from panellist Puji Pujiono.

¹⁰⁸ Barbelet, Davies, Flint and Davey, 2021, *Interrogating the evidence base on humanitarian localisation: A literature study*, ODI, <https://odi.org/en/publications/interrogating-the-evidence-base-on-humanitarian-localisation-a-literature-study>

actors, thereby excluding them from such roles, and fail to recognise that international actors also require new skills and approaches to enable meaningful engagement with a broader range of partners. One actor argued that this type of training should be mandated as part of the 'life skills' of every local organisation, similar to 'CPR or the Heimlich manoeuvre.'¹⁰⁹

Embrace two-way learning

This speaks directly to the shift in power that is needed to not only recognise local and non-humanitarian actors but support them to lead and engage on an equal playing field. Rather than attempting to train them to fit the international mould, capacity-strengthening initiatives should incorporate them as paid experts in the design and delivery of two-way capacity exchange. International actors should work on the development of partnership and adaptation skills so they can leverage and support the capacities that have existed in Indonesian communities for decades. In this sense, capacity-strengthening programs not only need to be more accessible and inclusive of all actors, but promote reciprocal learning and local ownership.

'They have enough resources and capacity in Indonesia; what I have seen is that those capacities are not managed well [...] we have been experiencing disaster for many years, we have much developed capacities.' (Regional actor)¹¹⁰

Consider identifying local 'humanitarian champions' to become leaders when scaling up

Discussions to date have already highlighted appetite for learning at a local level. In an FGD hosted by SEJAJAR, local actors argued for the importance of imparting basic humanitarian principles and capacities to all non-humanitarian local actors, and recommended investing in the preparedness of a handful of 'humanitarian champion' organisations in the localities.¹¹¹ This would allow them to better respond to small to medium-level crises, and when large disasters occur, to become viable humanitarian actors and partners for national and international organisations.

The bottom line

This research highlights that improving the capacities of all actors in humanitarian response requires recognising strengths and weaknesses in non-humanitarian and conventional humanitarian actors alike. Mutual capacity development will be critical in building coordination, enhancing accountability and accessing and managing funding, all in ways that recognise the variety of actors and systems necessary for effective humanitarian response at all scales. Because of this, capacity development must be a collaborative learning process, not one-way training. What matters is not the capacity of non-humanitarian actors to resemble the formal humanitarian system, but all actors' ability to work together.

¹⁰⁹ Interview 24.

¹¹⁰ Interview 2.

¹¹¹ FGD on humanitarian reform hosted by SEJAJAR, March 2021.

4.4 FUNDING

Why is this a priority?

Overall, the research found that lack of funding to keep their organisations viable and meet critical needs was the largest challenge facing Indonesian CSOs.¹¹² This was the dominant narrative at most stakeholder consultations for this research. While it reflects the demands of the COVID-19 response, which was a key context for this research, it is also applicable to the many small and medium-sized disasters that affect Indonesia every year.

Today there are multiple channels of funding for humanitarian response in Indonesia. However, their reach varies significantly and so does awareness of them. The main sources of funding are Islamic financing, international assistance through bilateral channels, the UN, government, fundraising drives and the private sector.¹¹³ Islamic financing, private fundraising, private sector funding and new government mechanisms are open to those non-conventional humanitarian actors, but opportunities remain slim for small grassroots actors. This has spurred important conversations in Indonesia, but solutions remain scarce.

Findings



Key finding: Lack of recognised contribution to humanitarian response is reflected in lack of funding available to non-humanitarian actors.

The conventional humanitarian system is not built to support local actors

In the context of the COVID pandemic, the Indonesian government required and embraced a whole-of-society response, but humanitarian funding systems did not adapt and provide broader access to funding. Global humanitarian funding throughout the pandemic has been channelled mainly through large multilaterals and alarmingly slow to reach the frontlines.¹¹⁴ Local CSOs, usually marginalised by the humanitarian system, have even more trouble accessing these funds without the pre-approved capacities and due diligence requirements to be considered for a humanitarian partnership.

'The volume [of international assistance] was already decreasing and then the pandemic stopped it entirely. As a local organisation, we feel powerless due to funding uncertainties that abruptly change our budget outlook, change our service activities, and affect our performance.'
(Local actor)¹¹⁵

Most international funding to Indonesia goes through UN agencies, earmarked by sector, which can lead to fragmentation and is not necessarily adapted to country needs. Some Indonesian organisations have had success working directly with donors to build trust and systems for receiving funding, but this is a slow process and not possible for many grassroots actors. More widely, the challenges in getting

¹¹² HAG and Pujiono Centre, Workshop 3, Jakarta, February 2020; HAG, CGD, Pujiono Centre and NEAR Workshop, December 2020; HAG, 2021, *Learnings from the SEJAJAR initiative in Indonesia*.

¹¹³ MDMC, 2021, *Briefing on humanitarian funding for Blueprint project*, July.

¹¹⁴ Konyndyk, Saez and Worden, 2020, *Humanitarian financing is failing the COVID-19 frontlines*, CGD, <https://www.cgdev.org/blog/humanitarian-financing-failing-covid-19-frontlines>

¹¹⁵ HAG, CGD, Pujiono Centre and NEAR Workshop, December 2020.

international humanitarian funds to local organisations are well documented.¹¹⁶ Dominant arguments of increased risk and challenges with compliance have resulted in minimal progress and few opportunities for direct funding of local actors.¹¹⁷

Non-humanitarian actors lack access to funds for disaster response

Civil society and grassroots organisations are rarely able to access dedicated humanitarian funding. Most CSO funding in Indonesia is raised privately and domestically, or channelled from the State budget via public procurement and grants.¹¹⁸ The 2018 release of Presidential Regulation 16 on public procurement enabled CSOs to access government funding for disaster relief activities; however, there is very little awareness and utilisation of these mechanisms.¹¹⁹

Efforts to increase funding opportunities have typically focused on building capacities in compliance and due diligence processes in order to help more local and non-humanitarian actors meet international standards and requirements.¹²⁰ Meeting these requirements is often impossible for small grassroots actors with few resources, reinforcing the argument (see Capacity section) that focusing on this type of capacity building is an ineffective use of resources for international and local actors.

There is currently no consensus about what form a national funding mechanism should take

This study tested appetite for establishing a new financing mechanism in efforts to generate greater access, transparency and reliability for local actors and civil society. Bringing all actors along to allow equitable and transparent access to humanitarian funding is perhaps the largest and most critical challenge identified by this research.

The research revealed that there is a strong appetite but lack of consensus around innovative financing in Indonesia. Increasing momentum around pooled funding has begun to make headway.¹²¹ Overall, the idea of a national pooled fund is welcomed across international, national and local actors as a way to bring together funds from multiple sources while avoiding government bureaucracy and international red tape.¹²² However, there are concerns around who would manage the fund, how to ensure funds are distributed evenly and equitably, and how to maintain accountability and transparency.¹²³

'Because of the size of organisations, the geography, the understanding, especially in the humanitarian sector. Because many times those who do the work are development NGOs, not humanitarian. So how can development and humanitarian have equal access? It's a good idea but the challenge is who will organise it and how will it be distributed.' (National actor)¹²⁴

116 For more information about challenges for direct funding of local actors, see: HAG, GLOW Consultants, CoLAB, Insights, 2021, *Bridging the intention to action gap: The future role of intermediaries in supporting locally led humanitarian action*; Els, 2019, *Funding to local actors still far from Grand Bargain commitments*, Local to Global Protection, https://www.local2global.info/wp-content/uploads/GB_funding_flows_2019.pdf

117 Ibid.

118 For more information about CSO access to government funding, see: World Bank, 2019, *Engaging with civil society in the health sector in Indonesia*, <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/637901568357782768/pdf/Engaging-with-Civil-Society-in-the-Health-Sector-in-Indonesia.pdf>

119 Ibid; Interview 7.

120 HAG et al., 2021, *Bridging the intention to action gap*.

121 The Indonesia Development-Humanitarian Alliance is currently forming a national working group to advance the establishment of a national pooled fund. Also see: SEJAJAR and NEAR online seminar: Sizing up the scope for CSO/NGO pooled funds for disaster & humanitarian response, 18 Mar 2021; Worden, Saez, McCommon, Pujiono and Arif, 2021, *Turning the Grand Bargain upside down: Views from Indonesia*, CGD; HAG, CGD, Pujiono Centre and NEAR workshop.

122 Interviews 1, 3, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22; MDMC, *Briefing paper on humanitarian funding*.

123 Interviews 3, 5, 6, 11, 13, 19, 20, 21.

124 Interview 5.

What needs to change?



Recommendation: Develop a tailored, nationally managed financing mechanism for Indonesia that recognises the vital role of non-humanitarian actors.

Organise inclusive conversations about innovative financing to build consensus on a new national model

The structure of any new funding model would need to be determined by Indonesian actors, not by international policy circles (although experience and analysis from elsewhere could be instructive). Inclusive national dialogues must occur to draft a model for Indonesia (see Box 6 for some priorities raised already). Current discussions and the establishment of a national reference group provide a good basis for this to continue.

Box 6. What a funding mechanism would need to be successful in Indonesia

This study identified the following considerations:

- ▶ The mechanism must have the confidence of the GoI, such that it is likely to accept international funds through that mechanism;
- ▶ It must have the confidence of international donors and be able to attract a reasonable proportion of international funding, and ideally able to attract private sector, philanthropic and religious funding;
- ▶ It must have the ability to provide funding quickly to national, regional and local organisations;
- ▶ Given the frequency of disasters, it must be able to prioritise and fund areas of greatest need;
- ▶ It must be able to manage fiduciary risk to the standard required by international donors without placing unrealistic compliance burdens on local actors; and
- ▶ It will require a trusted intermediary and governance structure that reflects local leadership and collective decision-making.

Incorporate insight from national as well as international experiences

Interviewees highlighted that the success of any funding model seems to depend on the role of an intermediary, responsible for managing a fund, and its ability to ensure equal access to funding and transparency of information.¹²⁵ This research, and recent work undertaken by the localisation workstream of the Grand Bargain, suggests that intermediaries should be incentivised and supported to provide an enabling environment for more localised and non-humanitarian actors to engage effectively in humanitarian action. This needs to include new ways to manage risk that allow for non-humanitarian actors to apply for funding in a way that is manageable and sustainable.¹²⁶

¹²⁵ Interviews 1, 3, 10, 21; MDMC, *Briefing paper on humanitarian funding*.

¹²⁶ HAG et al., 2021, *Bridging the intention to action gap*.

One potential model from Indonesia is the Environmental Fund Management Agency (Badan Pengelola Dana Lingkungan Hidup, BPD LH). As a public service agency (Badan Layanan Umum, BLU), the BPD LH is able to access and autonomously manage multiple sources of funds, and is unique in being allowed to accept international as well as domestic funding.¹²⁷ The BPD LH was identified as a model to explore in a regional workshop on humanitarian pooled funding.¹²⁸

This thinking can be used to inform reform in other sectors. Recently, there has been investment in funding mechanisms that allow for greater national decision-making power and more equitable and efficient allocation and disbursement of funds.¹²⁹ There has also been work articulating how mechanisms such as country-based pooled funds may be most effective.¹³⁰

The bottom line

For any new mechanism to be successful it will need to be Indonesian owned, trusted and accessible to the wide array of non-humanitarian actors. Improved access to resources will allow them to not only remain viable but to deliver and attend more trainings, to participate in and strengthen local coordination, and to resource accountability mechanisms, resulting in a more effective and accountable humanitarian response.

127 Mafira, Muhammad Mecca and Muluk, 2020, *Indonesia Environment Fund: Bridging the financing gap in environmental programs*, Climate Policy Initiative report, <https://www.climatepolicyinitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Indonesia-Environment-Fund-Bridging-the-financing-gap-1.pdf>

128 SEJAJAR and NEAR online seminar, 18 Mar 2021.

129 See, for example, the Start Fund Bangladesh, <https://startnetwork.org/start-fund/bangladesh>

130 OCHA, Country-based pooled funds, <https://www.unocha.org/our-work/humanitarian-financing/country-based-pooled-funds-cbpf>; ICVA, undated briefing paper, *Pooled funds: How can NGOs engage?* https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/ICVA_briefing_paper_topic3-EN_3_LoRes.pdf





5. IMPLICATIONS FOR GLOBAL HUMANITARIAN REFORM

Following the first Grand Bargain agreement at the 2016 WHS, there was great momentum to overhaul current structures and rebalance power across the system. However, five years later, reviews of the reform agenda have revealed moderate progress and uneven results.¹³¹ This research was designed to respond to these shortcomings by proposing an alternative approach to humanitarian reform, one that starts from specific local and national needs and priorities. The project offers two insights for efforts to improve humanitarian systems.

TAKE INCLUSION BEYOND THE RHETORIC

Our findings invite participants in global reform discussions to consider whether their proposals reflect the role of non-humanitarian actors. Over years of humanitarian reform, there has been increasing recognition of the importance of actors outside the conventional aid system, from affected communities themselves to faith-based groups and diaspora networks, to name just a few. In the lead-up to the WHS, researchers in the humanitarian sector argued it was facing a ‘new world order’, that it was ‘at a crossroads’ and needed ‘rethinking’, and that it was time for the powerful stakeholders to ‘let go’ of control.¹³² These analyses appeared to be elevating the views of a diverse range of local actors that had been struggling to have their experience and opinions taken seriously.

Nevertheless, our research suggests that this recognition remains negligible and, to the extent it exists, is yet to translate into effective inclusion. Following the first Grand Bargain agreement, which emerged from the WHS, efforts to make ‘localisation’ targets specific and measurable led to a strong investment in defining responders. Crucially, however, the axes of debate lay around how to distinguish the ‘local’ and ‘national’ strata from the ‘international’ – an argument about affiliation, with the goal of deciding

¹³¹ Metcalfe-Hough et al., 2020, *Grand Bargain annual independent report 2020*, ODI.

¹³² Cairns, 2012, *Crises in a new world order: Challenging the humanitarian project*, Oxfam, <https://policy-practice.oxfam.org/resources/crises-in-a-new-world-order-challenging-the-humanitarian-project-204749/>; International Save the Children Alliance, 2010, *At a crossroads: Humanitarianism for the next decade*, <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/sites/default/files/documents/2937.pdf>; Labbé, 2013, *Rethinking humanitarianism: Adapting to 21st century challenges*, International Peace Institute, <https://www.ipinst.org/2012/11/rethinking-humanitarianism-adapting-to-21st-century-challenges>; Humanitarian Policy Group, 2015, *Time to let go: A three-point proposal to change the humanitarian system*, Overseas Development Institute, <https://remake-aid.odi.digital>

who fell under which funding target. There has been very little, if any, debate on what constitutes 'humanitarian' actors and how they understand humanitarian action and response, particularly at the local level.

As others have argued, the term 'local humanitarian actor' does not capture 'the social and relational aspects of who is considered local' and may also 'exclude groups that do not identify as humanitarian but nonetheless play critical roles in crisis response.'¹³³ At the same time, the concept of 'localisation' itself appears to place the international system – cast as universal – at the centre.¹³⁴

As long as the reform debate remains driven by the presence and role of international humanitarian agencies, the local actors that most obviously resemble these agencies are the most likely to be seen when preparing for, responding to, or recovering from crises; however, they are not the only organisations that matter.

Grand Bargain 2.0 provides an opportunity to rethink the current global approach to reform, and early signs are positive. The reset will focus on two 'enabling priorities' over the next two years: better quality funding and increased support to local responders, with increased engagement of affected populations.¹³⁵ This provides a crucial opportunity to appreciate, anew, the contribution of non-humanitarian actors when defining and driving this next stage of reform. Only when this happens will the real first responders be able to shape how humanitarian reform is imagined and implemented. Our research findings suggest their engagement will be critical to effective reform – in Indonesia and elsewhere.

SHIFT THE POWER TO REFORM, NOT JUST SHIFTING POWER THROUGH REFORM

The Blueprint project set out to explore whether a single lever could unlock transformative change in country-led humanitarian reform. We did not find one ... or not quite. Our consultations identified four priority areas, rather than one transformative lever. But as the research continued, a theme emerged: the neglected role of non-humanitarian actors.

Whether or not this issue is transferable to other contexts (as we believe it is), this approach to conceptualising reform certainly is. Starting from specific country needs and approaches instead of globally defined solutions may provide new momentum for reform. Instead of trying to bring different voices into international discussions, these discussions could be held at national and subnational levels and international voices invited to join. The national reference groups planned for Grand Bargain 2.0 are a step in this direction.

'I don't think that we should be asking community and those involved in the response to be adapting on the run, as we have over the past year, instead we need the system internationally, regionally and nationally to find the flexibility to shape around this context specific response.'

(Regional actor)¹³⁶

¹³³ Robillard et al., 2020, *Anchored in local reality: Case studies on local humanitarian action from Haiti, Colombia, and Iraq*, Oxfam and the Feinstein International Center.

¹³⁴ Ibid, p. 9.

¹³⁵ Metcalfe-Hough, Fenton, Willits-King, and Spencer, 2021, *The Grand Bargain at five years: An independent review*, ODI, <https://odi.org/en/publications/the-grand-bargain-at-five-years-an-independent-review/>

¹³⁶ HAG and CGD regional panel: Rethinking reform, quote from panellist Fine Tu'itupou.

Approaches to reform can benefit from lessons from other areas of practice, where international humanitarian organisations' lack of emphasis on context has been shown to reduce the quality of responses. For example, an ALNAP study highlighted the international sector's repeated neglect of 'cultural factors' in humanitarian programming despite consistent evidence of the need for context to lead decision-making.¹³⁷ It also linked this to the challenges that 'national' staff face in reaching senior positions, and the high turnover (and hence limited contextual understanding) of international staff. This lesson could be applied to reform and taken even further, making 'context' the starting point instead of an aspiration.

This is not a call for humanitarian isolationism. Our review of the recent history of disaster response reform in Indonesia showed that change has often occurred through mutual influences and dialogues among national, international, regional and to some extent local actors. These exchanges should continue, but they should be driven by affected countries, who should not be expected to always 'adapt' the ideas or proposals of others.

'We know that international efforts have been quite slow in realising the Grand Bargain commitments. So perhaps rather than waiting for change to happen, why don't we advocate for change ourselves? [...] then there will be more diversity in the ecosystem, and it's no longer driven by only a handful of those who dominate the system because they have the resources to do so.' (Regional actor)¹³⁸

There is already support for a more decentralised approach to humanitarian reform. The Grand Bargain 2.0's emphasis on support for local leadership and engaging more with affected people offers hope of greater focus on national and local priorities. However, as Sema Genel Karaosmanoğlu, chair of the NEAR network, said, 'unless we start moving things at the country level, it's only talk.'¹³⁹ We should invest more heavily in country-led approaches, recognising that an inclusive discussion in which more affected actors can participate will take time. The proposals that emerge will be varied, as they should be; the international system must find a way to accommodate them as they take shape.

137 Brown, Donni, and Knox Clarke, 2014, *Engagement of crisis-affected people in humanitarian action*, Background paper, ALNAP 29th Annual Meeting, 11-12 March 2014, Addis Ababa.

138 HAG and CGD regional panel: Rethinking reform, quote from panellist Adelina Kamal.

139 Alexander, 2021, *Renewing the Grand Bargain, Part 2: Old goals, a new path*, *The New Humanitarian*, June, <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/analysis/2021/6/11/Grand-Bargain-international-aid-sector-part-2>





6. CONCLUSION

Humanitarian reform is making headway. This much is clear from evaluations of the Grand Bargain and from the agreement on strategic priorities at the fifth annual meeting, held online in 2021. But this progress is still leaving crucial actors behind, above all those local associations, organisations and networks that are not considered part of the conventional humanitarian system, despite their vital roles when crises occur.







Being 'non-humanitarian' excludes these actors from humanitarian discourses and decision-making. However, in Indonesia, which experiences thousands of disasters every year, local non-humanitarian actors are at the forefront of emergency response, with national and international actors only sometimes involved. The COVID-19 pandemic has underlined how damaging it can be to make decisions about participation and resources based on partial notions of whose role it is to help. The importance of bringing all actors along in future reform efforts is only growing more critical.

This research seeks to support current efforts to 'shift the power' to affected people and local actors by highlighting a critical group of first responders that are often overlooked in this discourse. The experience in Indonesia is an important case study for humanitarian reform. Exploration of the country's journey towards reform over the last two decades reveals tremendous progress and leadership in nationalising and localising response.¹⁴⁰ However, closer examination reveals how a seemingly 'localised' response still often fails to reach and support a broad range of first responders and identify the capacity needs and coordination platforms required to support such responses. Important lessons can be drawn from Indonesia, while recognising that specific country-led and local processes will vary greatly across contexts.

¹⁴⁰ HAG and Pujiono Centre, 2021, *Shifting the system*.

Figure 5 captures the key findings and recommendations emerging from this research in relation to non-humanitarian actors in Indonesia.

Figure 5: Key findings

 <p>Coordination</p>	 <p>Key Findings</p> <p>Conventional humanitarian coordination structures are too top-down and generally do not recognise or support the role of non-humanitarian actors.</p>	 <p>Recommendations</p> <p>Adapt coordination approaches to account for the role of non-humanitarian actors.</p>
 <p>Accountability</p>	<p>Non-humanitarian actors have relationships with communities that could make accountability a reality, but they have been left behind in the technicalities of the conversation about accountability to affected people.</p>	<p>Replace the current focus on training with a focus on co-creating a shared understanding of accountability that incorporates both international principles and local realities.</p>
 <p>Capacity</p>	<p>Conventional humanitarian capacity-strengthening initiatives do not recognise the importance of non-humanitarian actors in preparedness and response, leverage their existing capacity, or align with their needs.</p>	<p>Make capacity strengthening a collaborative learning process, not one-way training, and incorporate more local and non-humanitarian actors in its design and delivery.</p>
 <p>Funding</p>	<p>Lack of recognised contribution to humanitarian response is reflected in lack of funding available to non-humanitarian actors.</p>	<p>Develop a tailored, nationally managed financing mechanism for Indonesia that recognises the vital role of non-humanitarian actors.</p>

The engagement of ‘locals’ in humanitarian response is not uniform; it occurs differently in different contexts and varies widely. It is influenced by the status, capacities and active participation of CSOs, established local systems, the local political context and the types of organisations involved.¹⁴¹ In this sense, humanitarian response and actors take complex and multifaceted forms across the wide range of contexts in which action takes place. This research emphasises that, at the local level in Indonesia, most – if not all – the responders are non-humanitarian local actors, which are many and diverse.

This represents a challenging environment for identifying standard or widely applicable reform priorities or principles. Country-led reform discussions will undoubtedly reveal a wide range of potential approaches to resolving persistent challenges, as well as some specific challenges that may be struggling to gain attention alongside dominant global narratives. Nonetheless, the Blueprint research

¹⁴¹ Vielajus and Bonis-Charancle, 2020, *Aid localisation: Current state of the debate and potential impacts of the COVID-19 crisis*, Humanitarian Alternatives, <https://alternatives-humanitaires.org/en/2020/07/23/aid-localisation-current-state-of-the-debate-and-potential-impacts-of-the-covid-19-crisis/>

suggests that across many contexts it is important to consider, and where possible overcome, the tendency of humanitarian reforms to perpetuate the marginal position of non-humanitarian actors despite their crucial role in frequent emergency responses. The research suggests that in the Indonesian context the missed opportunity to redefine 'local actors' is hindering progress in critical reform areas of coordination, accountability and capacity. Underpinning strengthened engagement of non-humanitarian actors is the importance of access to funding that can enhance their crucial role; how else can under-resourced and underutilised actors influence the reform process?

These findings are timely in the context of the Grand Bargain 2.0 discussions. Non-humanitarian actors have consistently been identified as leading local responders; CSOs, in particular, have been described as the real change-makers that work directly with communities outside the traditional system to solve humanitarian problems.¹⁴² Research increasingly identifies the strength of local civil society coordination networks and their central role in delivering appropriate and timely humanitarian assistance.¹⁴³

'They are not trying to change an old system but are showing what alternative systems look like and how others can get there.'¹⁴⁴

Finally, this research suggests that the intent to bring non-humanitarian actors along will need to be much more strongly reflected in the next round of reform. With broad agreement on the Grand Bargain 2.0 framework and its four pillars – quality funding, equitable and principled partnership, accountability and inclusion, and prioritisation and coordination – efforts must turn to ensuring that implementation promotes the recognition of, investment in and collaboration with non-humanitarian actors. This will inevitably look different in each context, but in every case will need to consider how non-humanitarian local actors will fill the gap left by the retreating international humanitarian actors and system, and can be fully recognised as key contributors to effective responses in the post-COVID-19 world.

¹⁴² Bennett, 2021, *Grand Bargain 2.0: Tinkering or transformation?*, Bond, 8 July, <https://www.bond.org.uk/news/2021/07/grand-bargain-20-tinkering-or-transformation>

¹⁴³ HPN, 2021, Localisation and local humanitarian action, *Humanitarian Exchange Magazine*, May, <https://odihpn.org/magazine/localisation-and-local-humanitarian-action/>

¹⁴⁴ Bennett, *Grand Bargain 2.0: Tinkering or transformation?*



