



## MESSAGES ON PRINCIPLES AND PARTNERSHIP IN CONFLICT SETTING

**The report:**  
“Towards principled humanitarian action in conflict contexts. Understanding the role of partnerships” is available here.

[LINK TO REPORT](#)

A coalition of organisations - Caritas Norway, DanChurchAid (DCA), Kindernothilfe (KNH), Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) and Dutch Relief Alliance (DRA) - commissioned a research on principles and partnerships in conflict setting giving voice to local actors in South Sudan and Nigeria on these issues.

**Below, 4 key messages derived from the research are highlighted and some related actions proposed.**

### 1 Collective responsibility for principled delivery of humanitarian aid.

Principles are well known and relevant to local actors; however, local actors shared that, like INGOs, they face dilemmas and challenges in applying principles in their context and there is hardly any opportunity to exchange and share experiences on how to contextualise and operationalise the principles in practice. Hence, an urgent need transpires for dialogue between International and local humanitarian actors on how to collectively take responsibility for realising principled delivery of aid.

#### **Proposed action:**

Humanitarian coordination and collaboration platforms - i.e. clusters/sectoral groups at country level, DRA, Charter4Change - organise dialogue between local and international actors to exchange and collectively learn to progress on applying humanitarian principles in practice.



### 2 Principled partnership is fundamental for principled humanitarian action.

Local actors experience partnerships with international agencies as largely transactional, and as a ‘take it or leave it’ proposition. In the perspective of local actors, the way partnerships are shaped influences principled delivery of aid. This calls for transforming transactional partnerships into equitable partnerships in which humanitarian and partnership principles (equality, transparency, result-oriented approach, responsibility, complementarity) are discussed, commonly understood, and agreed upon. The collaboration moves beyond regarding local partners as service deliverers for international actors.

#### **Proposed action:**

Include partnership principles in contractual agreements or MoU’s between partners, set indicators for partnership and monitor these throughout the partnership, and establish joint understanding of practising the humanitarian principles through the partnership.



### 3 Facilitate a broader range of actors to advance principled humanitarian assistance.

Local actors are diverse and include a range of actors beyond local and national NGOs from local government and private sector to community leaders and faith-based groups. Their role and attributes relate to proximity to communities, understanding of the context, norms and culture. These local actors can significantly facilitate community acceptance, access, security/safety, and therefore delivery of timely principled aid. Current focus on transactional INGO-LNGO partnerships does not facilitate sufficient engagement with other local actors and local-local collaboration, nor value the attributes they bring in, which ultimately can work against localisation and delivery of principled assistance. Donors and INGOs should promote collaboration with a broad range of local actors and promote local leadership with a view to safeguard and advance principled humanitarian response and accountability at all levels.

#### Proposed action:

Mapping of all local actors and their role and capacities in a humanitarian context and include and value the role of LNNGOs to facilitate engagement of other local actors in a response.

### 4 Risk aversion and transfer hinders the empowerment of local actors and undermine principled humanitarian action.

Increased compliance requirements inserted by donors and increased risk transfer in the funding chain (from donors to INGOs to local actors) is complicating the delivery of principled humanitarian assistance. It requires an open conversation about the risks for each actor in the chain and how these are to be shared equitably or compensated.

#### Proposed action:

In each response identify specific risks taken by different humanitarian actors implementing humanitarian assistance and allocate resources and ICR (indirect cost recovery) accordingly to mitigate or compensate for identified risks. Donors to allow additional resources or flexible allocation of resources for risk mitigation or compensation.

