



## Terms of Reference - Research Associate

### *Feminist Local Humanitarian Leadership in the Rohingya Response: Barriers & Ways Forward for the Meaningful Participation of Feminist & Women's Rights Organizations in the Rohingya Response*

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#### **Rationale**

Local humanitarian leadership of women-led and women's rights organizations is both an aspiration and a challenge in the humanitarian field. Humanitarian actors in the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) 2019 has made the commitment to improve the quality and quantity of local partnerships in humanitarian action. Particularly, it is committed to increase financial support and engagement with women's rights organizations to engage in humanitarian preparedness, response and influencing.

Moreover, focus from COVID-19 response show that having local women-focused organizations as responders in emergencies are critical in meeting the needs of women and girls. However, progress towards meaningful engagement have been a challenge. For instance, funding for women-focused and gender specific needs and interests are not clearly accounted for<sup>1</sup> and data from the latest Covid19 response show that only 1.9% of funding have reached local and national organizations, none of which are women-focused organizations.<sup>2</sup>

In Cox's Bazar, feminist and women's rights organizations tend to be less visible and engaged than INGOs and local male-led organizations that do not specialize in gender stand-alone programming. There are lesser known barriers to their participation in the response which require affirmative action, and must be brought into light if the Rohingya response is to truly respond to its commitments to Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and Girls (GEEWG), Grand Bargain and Charter for Change.

Partnering with, and building the capacity of, local Women's Rights Organizations (WRO) within a humanitarian response is at the nexus of these commitments. Limited knowledge products exist which capture the modalities and strategies to generate quality partnerships with WROs within a humanitarian setting. There is a need to document, reflect, learn and share from existing experiences in engaging WROs in a meaningful and empowering way which drives transformative change for gender and social justice.

To consolidate the experiences of local feminist, women-led and women's rights organizations in meaningfully participating in the Rohingya response, a **participatory study** will be conducted on the needs, barriers and ways forward for the meaningful engagement of women's rights organizations in the response. This study builds on the first piece on feminist LHL in Cox's Bazar, an internal Partnership Learning Review, conducted with a specific women's rights organization in the response in 2020. Learnings here will be used to contribute learning for the Rohingya Response to better partner and engage with feminist, women-led and women's rights organizations.

This study will be led by Oxfam Feminist local humanitarian leadership (LHL) practitioners, and supported by a **National Research Associate (NRA)**. The NRA will support the lead in design, data gathering, writing and analysis of the study; as well as in the technical and accurate translation of data from Cox's Bazar local language and Bengali to English.

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<sup>1</sup> UNFPA, UN Women (June 2020). Funding Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and Girls in Humanitarian Programming. <https://www.unfpa.org/publications/funding-gender-equality-and-empowerment-women-and-girlshumanitarian-programming>

<sup>2</sup> Gender in Humanitarian Action Asia and the Pacific (2020). Presentation Slides: Closing the Funding Gap for Women Focused Organizations in the COVID-19 Response.

## Objectives of the NRA

1. Support the research lead in mapping and engaging current and former feminist, women-led and women's rights organizations (WROs) operating in the Cox's Bazar Rohingya response and engage them in a participatory co-designing process for the methodology of the study;<sup>3</sup>
2. Review related literature on the theme, and support research lead in consolidating information from these.
3. Organize, conduct, and facilitate interviews, workshops and meetings related to the study. Support the research lead in data collection of feminist and WRO experiences - their needs and interests, what has worked and what has not, barriers and opportunities in having more voice, space and strength to meaningfully engage in the Cox's Bazar Response; and translate data in local language or Bengali to English.
4. To collect and consolidate research participants' recommendations, including affirmative action measures to enable their meaningful engagement vis a vis Charter for Change, Grand Bargain and WHS commitments.

## Outputs of the NRA

1. Review of related literature on the study, with guidance from the research lead.
2. Updated mapping of the WROs in Cox's Bazar Response.
3. Organize, conduct, and facilitate data collection activities with participants to the study in coordination with the research lead.
4. Translated primary data from participants to the study from local language or Bengali into English and interpretation of interviews and workshops.
5. Provided support to the research lead in the writing the following:
  - Methodology of the study co-created with WROs
  - 10-12-page report of the findings of the study including working definitions of WRO and other types of organizations.

**Timeline:** The NRA will be engaged for 20 working days, tentatively from **12 August** with an indicative timeline:

- Week 1-2: Developing Working Definition, Mapping, Connecting with WROs and Methodology Development; and Data Collection
- Week 3-4: Translation, Analysis and Writing Draft Report
- Week 4: Data Validation and Final Report

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<sup>3</sup> Oxfam and other actors have ongoing efforts to differentiate types of organizations. Some of these are summarized below. In this study, we will be using these as operational and working definitions, to be finalized with research participants:

**Women's Rights Organisations:** organisations led by women with the realisation of women's rights as their central aim or mission.

**Women's Movements:** broad movements campaigning for women's liberation and rights.

**Women's Rights Actors:** Can refer collectively to women's rights organisations, activists and movements with an intersectional approach and a transformative agenda, that are addressing the multiple forms of discrimination that create marginalisation, taking into account and seeking to address the unequal power dynamics that cause gender inequality.

**Gender interest organisations (GIOs):** organisations with some goals, objectives, programmes or activities related to women's rights and gender equality (they may or may not be women's organisations). In Bangladesh, an example would be a microfinance focused organization or a generalist organization but has some women-focused projects.

### **Qualifications for the National Research Associate**

- A feminist activist and advocate with at least 5 years' experience in working in community organizing women and adolescent girls.
- Experience in partnering with feminist and women's rights organizations or coordination with networks of WROs.
- An excellent facilitator and data collector using participatory research methodologies; can analyze data
- Excellent interpersonal and organizing skills with the ability to be self-reflexive of one's power, and challenge power imbalances between the self as a researcher and research participants.
- Can accurately translate and interpret from Bengali to English and from English to Bengali.
- Bachelor's or Advanced Degree in social studies or related field (i.e. development and international studies, public policy, gender studies, social sciences, etc) or equivalent experience.
- Understands Humanitarian Partnerships and Local Humanitarian Leadership principles, global norms, and frameworks.
- Good understanding of humanitarian contexts, particularly the Rohingya refugee crisis and its challenges in local humanitarian partnerships and engaging with Women's Rights Organizations.
- Has sufficient equipment to execute this assignment (e.g. laptop/computer, mobile phone, etc.)

### **Application Process**

Interested applicants for the National Research Associate (NRA) should submit the following on or before **03 August 2021** to [hrcox@oxfam.org.uk](mailto:hrcox@oxfam.org.uk):

- 1) Expression of Interest (EoI) outlining relevant experience and capacity for the assignment with a proposed professional fee for 20 working days as NRA.
- 2) Sample study or research product that they have participated in as a research assistant or researcher.
- 3) Curriculum Vitae including reference for the sample study or research attached to the EoI.