



Localisation Strategy and Action Plan

October 2020

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1. Overview

RedR Australia's *Localisation Strategy and Localisation Action Plan* (LAP) is our expressed commitment to supporting increased local ownership and leadership within the humanitarian sector. The LAP provides a framework to integrate localisation priorities within all aspects of operations and management, including the *Australia Assists* program.

RedR Australia's organisational vision is to create a world where sufficient competent and committed personnel are available and responding to humanitarian needs before, during and after crises and conflict. This LAP guides RedR Australia's commitment to necessary system and governance reform to ensure we are achieving our organisational vision.

The Grand Bargain and World Humanitarian Summit highlighted the imperative for localisation. This LAP not only outlines our own organisational commitment but articulates a definition in the context of RedR Australia's work.

2. Introduction

RedR Australia is a leading international humanitarian response agency that selects, trains and deploys technical specialists.¹ We are a member of RedR International, the only United Nations Standby Partner in the Southern Hemisphere and partner to 14 United Nations agencies. We are a donor partner of the Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and the United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), among others.

RedR Australia is the implementing partner for the Australian Government-funded *Australia Assists* program, a global training and deployment capability that responds to emerging humanitarian needs as they arise. The goal of *Australia Assists* is to save lives and alleviate suffering by building resilience and responding to disasters and conflict.

The *2019 Australia Assists Mid-Term Review* recommended that "DFAT and RedR should work together to define what localisation means for Australia Assists, systematically explore opportunities and barriers to advancing the localisation agenda, and develop an action plan to progress localisation efforts". This document directly addresses this recommendation.

RedR Australia is active in the global localisation discourse. We aim to strengthen not only our own localisation approach, but that of our partners. The LAP builds on our previous initiatives – the identification of barriers to increasing local representation on our roster and the formation of career pathways to overcome them – and formalises our ongoing efforts to advance localisation.

The LAP outlines RedR Australia's two-year path of sustained progress covering October 2020 to August 2022, with a review period scheduled before continuing to deliver on new 2022-24 targets. The LAP

¹ <https://www.redr.org.au/about-us/who-we-are/>

replicates and aligns with the tested and proven approaches of our [Gender Equality Strategy and Action Plan](#)² and the [Disability Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan](#)³.

2.1. Context

The first World Humanitarian Summit, held in Istanbul in 2016, resulted in commitments to make transformative changes in the way that the humanitarian system operates and thereby deliver better outcomes for crisis-affected populations worldwide. Of the 24 Transformations that formed the outcomes of the summit, 4A and 5A committed stakeholders to reinforcing – not replacing – national and local systems and local capacities. Known as the Localisation Agenda, these commitments have gained significant traction since 2016, with donors, implementing organisations and networks committing to reinforcing national and local response capabilities.

Localisation is a priority for all DFAT humanitarian interventions. The Australian Government committed to all six sub-commitments under the Localisation commitment.⁴ In line with the Localisation Agenda, DFAT's humanitarian support is aimed at supplementing and elevating national and local efforts, while enhancing the capacities and competencies of national and local actors to be better prepared to respond to humanitarian crises.⁵

While humanitarian action has become considerably more localised in some areas, longstanding and substantial challenges continue to slow overall progress.⁶ Significant global events, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, have increased the focus on, and, in some cases, accelerated progress towards, more localised humanitarian action.⁷ Australia's 2020 COVID-19 Development Response also reinforces the importance of a focus on localisation of assistance through partner governments and local organisations, both in the response and recovery phases.⁸

'We will place a strong focus on the localisation of our assistance through partner government systems and local organisations in both the response and recovery phases. This will ensure our efforts are informed by local knowledge, support local priorities, and contribute to local capacity and accountability.'

***Partnerships for Recovery: Australia's COVID-19 Development Response
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade***

Increasingly, governments of disaster-affected countries are also reconsidering the roles of international humanitarian actors in response. For example, during the Sulawesi earthquake and tsunami response in 2018, the Government of Indonesia issued a statement declaring that all responses

² Australia Assists Gender Equality Strategy (2018-2024)

³ Australia Assists Disability Inclusion Strategy (2018-2024)

⁴ [Grand Bargain Annual Self-Reporting – Australia \(2018\)](#)

⁵ DFAT (2016): [Humanitarian Strategy](#)

⁶ HPG (2020): [Grand Bargain Annual Independent Report](#)

⁷ HPG (2020): [The future of the Grand Bargain](#); HAG and VANGO (2020) [No Turning Back: Local leadership in Vanuatu's response to Tropical Cyclone Harold](#)

⁸ DFAT (2020): [Partnerships for Recovery: Australia's COVID-19 Development Response](#)

had to be implemented through local partners rather than international actors. Such decisions are increasingly becoming the norm, and are critical factors promoting a shift from the traditional mode of foreign-led humanitarian action to one where local actors are front and centre.

2.2. Defining Localisation

For RedR Australia, the limited nature of our downstream programming and the way we leverage human resourcing solutions to achieve local impact, requires the definition of localisation to be nuanced. In developing our definition, we have engaged our RedR International members, RedR Indonesia and RedR India, to ensure this definition resonates.



Localisation – a process of recognising, respecting and strengthening the independence of leadership and decision-making by national actors in humanitarian action, in order to better address the needs of affected populations.⁹

*For RedR Australia, this means:*¹⁰

- Prioritising partnerships that reinforce and strengthen local leadership and capacity across the disaster management cycle.
- Ensuring local participation in, and ownership of, training and deployment outcomes. A more diverse training pool, roster and network will help our activities represent, reflect and serve the needs of local communities while advancing the minimum standards of humanitarian action.
- Fostering an internal environment that promotes localisation.

2.3. Purpose

RedR Australia's LAP guides our progress on localisation and supports every RedR Australia staff and roster member, associate trainer and volunteer to progress our localisation plan. The LAP also seeks to bring unity to our work among RedR International members, and more broadly, to our work with our donors and partners to support local and national partners to lead and deliver humanitarian action.

⁹ From ARC and HAG (2017) [*Going Local: Achieving a more appropriate and fit-for-purpose humanitarian ecosystem in the Pacific*](#). The definition was developed by Pacific leaders but is relevant to other regions and contexts.

¹⁰ Elements adapted from the *Localisation* snapshot in RedR's Australia Assists Annual Report (FY19) and supplemented with interview data.

2.4. Rationale

Localisation is a key strategy for delivering more effective humanitarian action.¹¹ Local actors are always the first to respond to a crisis. Local actors are better placed to facilitate a sustainable transition from response to recovery programming due to their sustained proximity to disaster-affected populations.

Locally-led responses benefit from greater access to, and understanding of, the needs of crisis-affected people. Due to their in-depth understanding of underlying risks, vulnerabilities and capacities of communities, local actors are well placed to support communities to mitigate, and respond to, existing and future crises and threats.¹²

Localised surge contributes to a better ability to identify needs, provide a quicker response and offer a cost-effective alternative to other surge models.¹³ The Transforming Surge Capacity Project identified a range of lessons about how more localised surge models can achieve localisation objectives. Significant opportunities exist to enhance regional, national and local surge capacity. As a critical surge partner, RedR Australia is well placed to support the strengthening of local and regional surge capabilities.

The localisation agenda recognises the complementary roles of international actors in support of national and local actors. Localisation does not sideline international humanitarian responders but shifts their roles from direct implementation to supporting local actor implementation – *‘as local as possible, as international as necessary.’* Even though there is a reduction in the proportion of international actors in a more localised response, international actors maintain an important and complementary role in a more localised humanitarian system.

Within this evolving picture, there continues to be an integral role for organisations such as RedR Australia in strengthening regional, national and local capacities for humanitarian action – particularly *outside* of a response phase – to improve outcomes for disaster and crisis-affected populations.



Australia Assists employee, Mayada, is an Inclusive Education Officer with UNRWA in Jordan. Mayada is working to raise awareness of disability inclusion in education and is part of a COVID-19 Task Force for education in emergencies. As an Egyptian national and long-term resident of Jordan, she has a direct affinity with the Arab population and speaks the local language. Photo Credit: RedR Australia 2020

¹¹ IFRC (2015): [World Disasters Report](#)

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ [Transforming Surge Capacity Project \(2018\), 'The Future of Humanitarian Surge'](#)

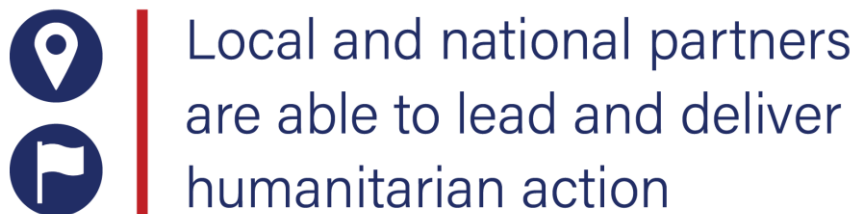
3. Strategy Overview

This section provides an overview of RedR Australia's strategic approach to localisation, including the guiding vision and principles.

The proposed implementation of this overall approach is articulated in Section 6.

3.1. Vision

RedR Australia's strategic vision for localisation is:



A series of principles guides our approach to achieving the vision through the LAP.

3.2. Guiding Principles



Capacity sharing: We take a two-way approach to capacity strengthening that enables local and national partners' independence and self-reliance.



Partnering for success: We build mutually beneficial and sustainable partnerships that align with the Principles of Humanitarian Partnership: *equality, transparency, results-oriented approach, responsibility and complementarity*.¹⁴



Building on our mutual strengths: We recognise and leverage our strengths while working alongside our partners and following the lead of local partners. We identify, learn and integrate localisation good practice into humanitarian action.



Diversity and inclusion: We recognise and value diversity and the knowledge and expertise of our people and partners, and their ideas and perspectives. Diversity is essential for our shared success.

¹⁴ <https://www.icvanetwork.org/resources/principles-partnership>

4. Priorities

The LAP delivers on three RedR Australia priorities: Partnerships; training and deployments; and organisational systems and governance reform.

Priority 1: RedR Australia's new and existing partnerships build on, and support, the capacity of local and national actors working across the humanitarian continuum.

Priority 2: RedR Australia's training and roster are responsive to, and representative of, the needs and priorities of local and national humanitarian actors.

Priority 3: RedR Australia offers an enabling environment that reflects and supports organisational commitments to localisation.

The table below shows how these three priorities of the LAP align with *Australia Assists* end-of-program outcomes.

AUSTRALIA ASSISTS END OF PROGRAM OUTCOMES	LAP PRIORITIES
Improved ability of Australia and partner countries to reduce disaster risk, build resilience, and contribute to conflict mitigation	Priority 1; Priority 2
Improved ability of Australia and partner countries to prepare for and respond to disaster, fragility and conflict	Priority 1; Priority 2
Improved ability of Australia and partner countries to stabilise, recover and rebuild following natural disaster, fragility and conflict	Priority 1; Priority 2
Improved harmonisation of Australia's humanitarian efforts and advancement of humanitarian policy imperatives	Priority 1; Priority 2; Priority 3
AUSTRALIA ASSISTS MANAGEMENT OUTCOME	
Effective and efficient management by RedR Australia and DFAT of an integrated deployable civilian capability	Priority 2; Priority 3

5. Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) and Communications

5.1. Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning

We will measure achievements against our localisation priorities through both established and new MEAL processes. We will take *Australia Assists* program achievements and learning into account, and develop MEAL metrics that reflect the Action Plan table (commencing on page 10 of this document). The MEAL process will provide important data to track progress, and identify challenges and opportunities, for continuous improvement.

The following LAP considerations will be integrated into RedR Australia MEAL processes:



Greater voice and representation of local, national and regional actors: Voices of regional and local actors will be expressed, where possible, through qualitative and quantitative data monitoring and analysis. This includes employing local, national and regional partners and experts to provide input and analysis, reflect local perspectives into our MEAL architecture and lead some of our LAP MEAL processes. Diversity and inclusion indicators will form an increasing part of RedR Australia's MEAL.



Build on, rather than replace, existing processes: Critically evaluate current RedR monitoring and evaluation processes to ensure we are tracking and reporting on LAP progress at quarterly intervals.

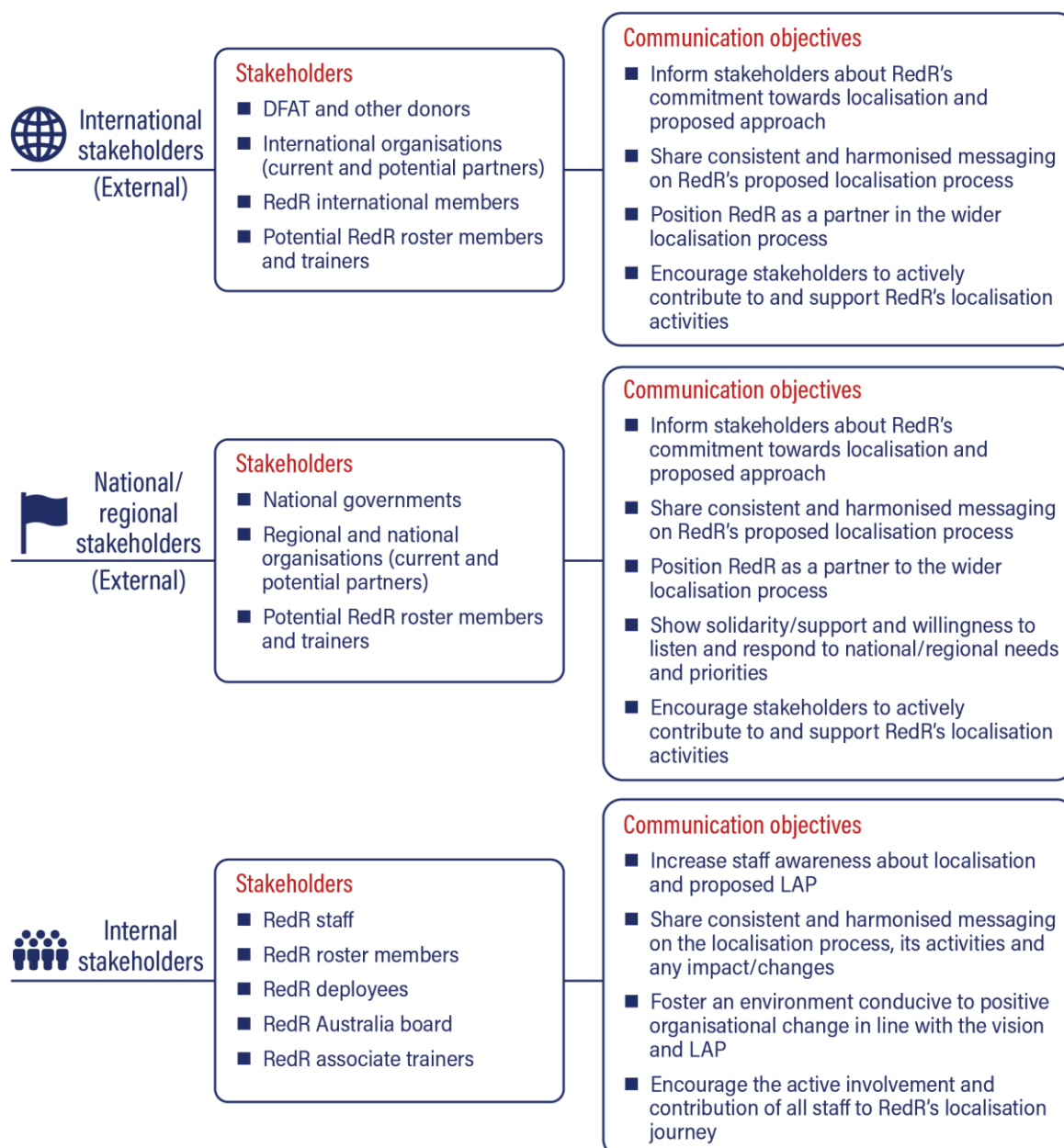


Encourage a culture of learning: Establish formal and informal internal systems of review to identify progress and barriers to LAP implementation. Learning will be formally captured, gaps will be identified and opportunities progressed when possible. We will develop case studies on best practices and learning experiences to support our own learning and that of the broader sector.

5.2. Communications

Internal and external communications will identify stakeholder groups and develop targeted communications through the implementation of relevant internal and external communications plans. Targeted communication will increase the visibility, accountability and understanding of our localisation commitments.¹⁵

Stakeholders in the LAP can be grouped as indicated below.



¹⁵ The extent to which RedR Australia can meaningfully engage on this will be limited to the available donor resources and commitment to realise the objective. At the time of implementation, the donor contributions and environment are heavily impacted by the global Covid-19 economic crisis. RedR Australia will remain a strong advocate for targeted program communications to realise localisation and will prioritise donors that share the same vision of success.

6. Localisation Action Plan

Objectives	Activity	AA ¹⁶	Evidence/Output	Means of Verification	Timeframe
Priority 1: RedR Australia's new and existing partnerships build on, and support, the capacity of local and national actors working across the humanitarian continuum					
1.1. RedR's partnerships strengthen regional, national and local capability	1.1.1. Identify barriers and solutions to delivery of localised deployments	AA	1.1.1.a. Opportunities and barriers to achieving localised deployments documented	Partnership updates	Annually
			1.1.1.b. Deliver one or more country-specific localisation outcome per region	Documented localisation approach	Annually
	1.1.2. Develop sustainable collaboration with regional/national organisations that build on, and elevate, our mutual strengths to deliver sustainable local impact	AA	1.1.2.a. A developed and approved partnership model that enables sharing of rosters/experts	Approved agreement model	February 2022
			1.1.2.b. At least one agreement developed that increases the ability for local/ national organisations to deliver humanitarian action through RedR Australia or a local partner	Signed agreement	August 2022
	1.1.3. Expand collaboration with RedR International members and private sector organisations that enhance our deployment capability	AA	1.1.3.a. All private sector partnerships reflect RedR localisation priorities	New MoUs	August 2021
			1.1.3.b. Roster sharing arrangements implemented with RedR international members	Agreements in place	August 2021
	1.1.4. Increase deployments aimed at capacity strengthening and improving the preparedness of regional/national actors, whilst maintaining capacity for response	AA	1.1.4.a. Increased deployments with a specific focus on improving preparedness of regional/national actors (at least 35% of total deployments)	Roster and deployment records, deployment TORs	Bi-annually
			1.1.4.b. Specific localisation objectives included in all applicable deployment TORs	Roster and deployment records, deployment TORs	August 2021

¹⁶ Activities that are applicable to the *Australia Assists* program.

Objectives	Activity	AA	Evidence/Output	Means of Verification	Timeframe
Priority 2: RedR Australia's training and roster are responsive to, and representative of, the needs and priorities of local and national humanitarian actors					
2.1. RedR Australia's training products are fit for local and national purpose	2.1.1. Increase delivery of training outside Australia, targeting regions and countries with greater potential for roster members. Work with regional and national experts to develop contextualised content for country contexts and diversify facilitation teams	AA	2.1.1.a. At least two RedR trainings delivered outside of Australia	Training reports	Annually
			2.1.1.b. Increased diversity of training staff by 5%	Training reports	Annually
			2.1.1.c. Regional/national experts engaged in customising training content	Training plans/training modules	Annually
	2.1.2. Increase support for regional/national experts to attend prerequisite trainings		2.1.2.a. Scholarship opportunities (with criteria and secured donor funding) initiated to support regional/national experts to join trainings and become Training Associates	Sponsored scholarship scheme	August 2022
	2.1.3. Together with RedR International members, strengthen training standards through joint facilitation and adaptation of training materials		2.1.3.a. Increased frequency of joint locally-led training sessions leveraging RedR Australia expertise	Training reports	Annually
	2.1.4. Link RedR training with vocational accreditation to benefit career advancement of participants	AA	2.1.4.a. At least one MOU signed with accredited vocational or higher education provider to recognise RedR Essentials of Humanitarian Practice training	Signed MOU	August 2022
			2.1.4.b. Shared external communications on the benefits and limitations of training and roster membership	Communication material published	Annually
	2.1.5. Embed localisation in RedR learning objectives wherever possible	AA	2.1.5.a. A dedicated learning component on localisation included in all RedR humanitarian trainings and reviewed annually	Training modules, training reports	August 2022
2.2. RedR Australia's roster benefits from an increase in national and local experts that	2.2.1. Build outreach, career pathways and a mentor process to attract and support regional, national and local roster members	AA	2.2.1.a. Annual percentage increase to roster diversity of 5%	Roster records	Annually

<i>are deployed within and outside of their regions</i>	2.2.2. Review RedR selection and deployment processes to align with regional/national context and practices		2.2.2.a. At least one regional pathway (eg. partnership or programming opportunity) developed to fast-track regional deployments	Approved pathway, roster records	August 2022
			2.2.2.b. Region-specific selection criteria and interview processes developed and implemented	Approved selection criteria	August 2021
			2.2.2.c. Region/country-specific, appropriately aligned salary scales developed to reduce pull factors that can undermine local organisations	Approved salary scales	August 2022
			2.2.2.d. Alternative roster due diligence requirements (that still meet compliance standards) approved to reduce barriers for local/regional deployment	Approved processes	Annually
			2.2.2.e. Framework for recognition of prior learning/experience (RPL/RPE) established	Approved RPL/RPE framework	August 2022

Objectives	Activity	AA	Evidence/ Output	Means of Verification	Timeframe
Priority 3: RedR Australia offers an enabling environment that reflects and supports organisational commitments to localisation					
3.1. RedR Australia personnel are empowered to advocate for and deliver localised action	3.1.1. Integrate localisation commitments into key human resources policies and documents, including recruitment processes, job descriptions and performance management		3.1.1.a. Key RedR policies are aligned with the LAP	RedR Policies	Policy review schedule
			3.1.1.b. Localisation included in annual staff trainings, as well as board and Senior Management Team (SMT) updates	Training records, board/SMT minutes	Annually
			3.1.1.c. Localisation objectives and targets included in job descriptions and performance measurements for senior management staff	Performance review templates and job descriptions	January 2022
	3.1.2. Establish LAP Working Group to track and progress LAP and integrate sustainable LAP organisational change.	AA	3.1.2.a. Internal communications plan to support roll-out of LAP developed and implemented	Internal communication plan	March 2021
	3.1.3. Identify learning opportunities for RedR personnel, including existing roster members, to strengthen capacity to support localised action	AA	3.1.3.a. At least two case studies prepared on localisation success stories	Published case studies	Annually
			3.1.3.b. Internal learning and reflection activities on localisation organised for RedR staff	Session report	Annually from 2021
3.2. Governance, management and staffing arrangements enable RedR Australia to progress localisation priorities	3.2.1. Increase representation of regional or local stakeholders on RedR Australia's board, including from other RedR members		3.2.1.a. Increased RedR Australia Board diversity and participation of international RedR partners as observers at least once per year.	Board minutes	Annually
	3.2.2. Review composition of RedR Australia personnel. Seek opportunities to enhance diversity within the organisation through greater representation of regional, national and local stakeholders	AA	3.2.2.a. Increased RedR Australia staff diversity (gender, age, citizenship, language capability)	Staff records	Annually

7. Appendix 1: Definitions

Capacity is the ability of individuals, institutions and societies to perform functions, solve problems, and set and achieve objectives in a sustainable manner.¹⁷

Diversity is all the ways we differ.¹⁸ It includes differences according to gender, age, disability, cultural background, sexual orientation, social and economic background, profession, education, work experiences and organisational role.¹⁹

International non-government organisations (INGOs) are NGOs based outside an aid recipient country and carrying out operations in one or more aid recipient countries.²⁰

Inclusion occurs when diverse people feel valued and respected, have access to opportunities and resources, and can contribute their perspectives and talents to improve their organisation.²¹ Both diversity and inclusion are needed to generate organisational success.

Local/ national actors:²²

- **Local and national non-state actors** are organisations engaged in relief that are headquartered and operating in their own aid recipient country and which are not affiliated with an INGO.²³
- **National and sub-national state actors** are state authorities of the affected aid recipient country engaged in relief, whether at local or national level.

¹⁷ UNDP (2009): Capacity Development: A UNDP Primer

¹⁸ Emergency Management Victoria (2017). The Emergency Management Diversity and Inclusion Framework

¹⁹ Adapted from Diversity and inclusion, Diversity Council Australia, 2018, <https://www.dca.org.au/di-planning/gettingstarted-di/diversityinclusion-explained>

²⁰ IASC Humanitarian Financing Task Team, Localisation Marker Working Group: [Definitions Paper \(January 2018\)](#)

²¹ O'Leary, J, Russell, G and Tilly, J (2015), Building inclusion: an evidence based model of inclusive leadership, Diversity Council of Australia, https://www.dca.org.au/sites/default/files/dca_inclusive_leadership_synopsis_accessible.pdf

²² As defined by the Grand Bargain Localisation Workstream

²³ A local actor is considered to be unaffiliated if it maintains independent fundraising and governance systems; being part of a network, confederation or alliance does not signify affiliation.