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BEYOND BARRIERS

DRC CASE STUDY:

CONSEIL NATIONAL DES FORA DES ONG
HUMANITAIRES ET DE DÉVELOPPEMENT
(CONFOHD)

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INTRODUCTION TO CONAFOHD AND THE HUMANITARIAN ARCHITECTURE

CONAFOHD (Conseil National des Fora des ONG Humanitaires et de Développement/ Platform of National Fora of Humanitarian and Development NGOs) is the umbrella platform of five platforms operating in the main humanitarian provinces of the DRC and the capital Kinshasa. The five platforms represent the L/NNGOs active in their respective provinces, however, there had not been any formal coordination at a national level previously. It was created following the initiation of the Start Network – DRC Hub that includes both national and international actors among its members. CONAFOHD was established out of a desire to have a platform that is exclusive to national organizations.

CONAFOHD PLATFORMS	
PLATFORM NAME	LOCATION
RONHD	Kinshasa
RHONA	Tanganyika
FONAH I	Ituri
CCONAT	South Kivu
FONAH D	North Kivu

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, one of the main obstacles for L/NNGOs is their lack of participation in humanitarian decision-making. There are estimated to be more than 5,000 L/NNGOs across the country, meaning that coordination between these actors is extremely challenging. There is a lack of long-term core funding to support L/NNGO networks and their action plans to stimulate localization. Without such networks, there is insufficient consultation between small local actors and L/NNGOs. Their voices are often not heard by international actors, despite their commitment to the Grand Bargain.

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ACHIEVEMENTS

- CONAFOHD, with support from DIAKONIE and the ToGETHER Consortium, was established in DR Congo on September 26, 2022. Since then, it has had number of achievements which are outline below:

Humanitarian Country Team	5 representatives
Country-Based Pooled Fund - Advisory Board	3 representatives
Pôle de Soutien	2 representatives
COHP and Humanitarian Hubs	2 representatives
Durable Solutions Task Force	3 representatives
PSEA (Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse National Leadership	2 representatives

- Organization of the first ever national symposium on localization in DR Congo, October 2-3, 2023, bringing together all stakeholders involved in humanitarian action in the DRC. This symposium defined "localization" in the DRC context with 5 main pillars: (1) Coordination and Balance of Power, (2) Equitable Partnership, (3) Transfer of Skills (Capacities), (4) Direct and Quality Financing and (5) Establishing Humanitarian Fund for L/NGOs.
- Organization of dialogues with donors (FCDO, SDC, German Embassy, USAID, etc.) on access to direct funding for NGOs.

- Participation in international meetings related to policies on localization to share DRC's experience and best practices.
 - Conference on Supporting Local Actors Across the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) Nexus (October 2023),
 - European Humanitarian Forum (March 2024).
- CONAFOHD participated in the preparation of the Humanitarian Response Plan 2024 and delivered the launch speech alongside the Humanitarian Coordinator, the US Ambassador (representing donors), the National Minister of Social Affairs, Humanitarian Action and National Solidarity.
- Worked with the DRC Humanitarian Fund unit on the revision of the DRC 2024 Humanitarian Fund's aid localization strategy.
- Prepared advocacy letter to DG ECHO to respect their commitments made in the Grand Bargain and more specifically in their new strategy for 2024.
- Sharing of best practices on equitable partnerships and risk sharing at a DG ECHO Partners' Segment meeting, 20 March 2024 "Equitable Partnerships: towards a fairer sharing of compliance-related risks".
- Drafting of several advocacy notes on localization in the DRC for various actors with influence on humanitarian decisions and policies.

CONAFOHD'S POINTS OF ADVOCACY

CONAFOHD advocates on behalf of its members on a number of issues that affect L/NNGOs. The issues are in line with the barriers as identified on the Beyond Barriers project.

First are the challenges for L/NNGOs to access funding. There is no dedicated funding mechanism for L/NNGOs and they advocate for a specific Pooled Fund. Most humanitarian funding opportunities are not realistically accessible to L/NNGOs. The major barrier being the high level of due diligence and compliance requirements.

There was no framework for exchange between local actors and donors and/or existing funding mechanisms in the DRC to enable discussion and build trust between the two groups.

There is no funding mechanism to finance platforms such as CONAFOHD to enable the implementation of their action plans. The size of DRC makes it difficult to coordinate between the local actors and will require funding.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **L/NNGOs should collectively organize to ensure a permanent dialogue with donor groups and coordination mechanisms in order to influence decisions and policy change at national and international levels. The creation of a national network has enabled CONAFOHD to speak with one voice on behalf of L/NNGOs.**
- **International actors can play a role in supporting initiatives such as the ToGETHER consortium in this case study.**



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