



ARDD

النهضة العربية للديمقراطية والتنمية
Arab Renaissance for Democracy & Development



مركز النهضة الاستراتيجي
Renaissance Strategic Center

Caught in the Cycle:

Aid Fluctuations and the Struggle for Sustainability

ARDD as a Case Study



August 2026

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Executive Summary

This study examines how fluctuations in international aid affect local organizations in contexts of protracted crisis, representing the experience of the Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development (ARDD) in Jordan as a case study. While aid volatility is a global phenomenon, local NGOs often bear a disproportionate share of its consequences, remaining accountable to communities despite declining resources and shifting donor priorities.

Drawing on a review of humanitarian financing trends and interviews with local NGOs, international NGOs, donors, and ARDD staff, the study explores how funding volatility influences organizational sustainability, service delivery, staffing, and localization.

Jordan provides an important context for this analysis. After a decade of substantial international assistance linked to the Syrian refugee crisis, donor priorities gradually shifted toward COVID-19, Ukraine, Gaza, and domestic fiscal pressures, leading to a significant decline in funding despite persistent humanitarian and development needs.

ARDD's experience illustrates both the opportunities created by periods of expanding aid and the challenges associated with its contraction. As funding declined after 2018, the organization consolidated offices, reduced staffing, and redesigned service delivery while continuing to respond to growing community needs.

These pressures intensified following recent USAID funding cuts. By March 2025, at least 576 jobs had already been lost across Jordan's humanitarian and development sectors, with projections suggesting that more than 3,200 positions could disappear by the end of the year. More than 500,000 vulnerable people are expected to lose access to essential services, including approximately 450,000 children who may lose literacy and numeracy support and 12,000 persons with disabilities who risk losing critical assistance.

The study finds that aid contractions often affect local organizations more severely than international NGOs. While many INGOs can rely on headquarters support, guidance and compliance assurances, diversified fundraising, and institutional reserves, local organizations frequently depend on short-term project funding and sub-grants, making them considerably more vulnerable to sudden funding shocks, and reduction of core staff, and pressures on essential organizational functions

The ARDD experience demonstrates that building institutional resilience is both possible and effective. Even amid severe funding uncertainty, ARDD has remained committed to its mission and strategic objectives, with its staff continuing to deliver high-quality programmes, adapt to emerging challenges, and serve communities with professionalism and dedication. However, this resilience has been sustained through extraordinary institutional effort and should not be mistaken for an unlimited capacity to absorb shocks. It also depends on long-term trust and confidence between local organizations and their partners, built on a shared commitment to the mission, vision, and core humanitarian and development principles. As geopolitical dynamics and donor priorities evolve, funding decisions can become increasingly influenced by external factors beyond the control of local actors. In such contexts, preserving trust-based partnerships and maintaining support for credible, locally led institutions is essential. Without predictable, long-term investment and

confidence in local leadership, the financial, operational, and human costs of sustaining resilience become increasingly difficult to bear, ultimately placing at risk the very capacities that donors and partners seek to strengthen.

The report concludes that localization is essential for building the resilience, capacity, and long-term sustainability needed to respond effectively to increasingly volatile and protracted contexts. However, localization cannot be achieved solely by transferring implementation responsibilities to local actors. This is particularly evident in humanitarian settings, where local organizations are often expected to rapidly scale up their operational capacity during emergencies, only to face declining support once the immediate humanitarian response subsides. Without sustained investment, equitable and trust-based partnerships, and long-term commitments that bridge the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, localization risks becoming a temporary operational mechanism rather than a transformative shift in the way aid is designed and delivered. Genuine localization requires continuous investment in institutional strengthening, locally led leadership, predictable and flexible financing, and partnerships built on mutual trust, shared accountability, and a consistent commitment to agreed humanitarian and development principles. Such partnerships should be resilient to shifting political priorities and geopolitical dynamics, ensuring that support for credible local institutions remains guided by shared values and evidence rather than short-term external influences.



Introduction

The report examines how fluctuations in international aid shape humanitarian and development responses in contexts of protracted crisis, with a particular focus on Jordan and the experience of ARDD. While aid volatility is a global phenomenon, its consequences are experienced unevenly. Local NGOs are often the actors most exposed to the effects of sudden funding increases and abrupt cuts, yet they are also the organizations expected to remain in place when international attention shifts elsewhere.

Jordan provides a particularly important setting through which to understand these dynamics. Over the past decade, the country has hosted one of the world's largest refugee populations relative to its size, while receiving substantial levels of international assistance linked to the Syrian crisis. This aid enabled the rapid expansion of humanitarian and development programs across the country, including the growth of both local and international NGOs. However, as donor priorities shifted toward other crises and domestic political pressures increased in donor countries, funding levels declined even though humanitarian and development needs remained high.

ARDD offers a particularly useful case study through which to examine these issues. Founded in 2008 as a legal aid organization, ARDD expanded significantly to respond to the needs emerged as a result of the Arab Spring and the Syrian refugee crisis, growing into a national institution with offices across Jordan and programming spanning legal aid, protection, livelihoods, psychosocial support, social protection, women and youth empowerment programs, and good governance and community resilience. At the same time, ARDD is not one of the largest international organizations operating in Jordan, nor is it a very small grassroots initiative. Rather, it represents a relatively strong and well-established local NGO that invested heavily in internal systems, staffing, and institutional growth. For this reason, its experience is especially revealing: if even an organization with ARDD's scale, reputation, and diversification struggled to absorb aid contraction, the pressures facing smaller local organizations are likely to be even more severe.

ARDD's trajectory is therefore used to explore the broader structural challenges facing local NGOs in aid-dependent settings. The report argues that the humanitarian system often distributes the consequences of aid fluctuation unevenly: international actors may scale down or exit when funding declines, while local organizations remain accountable to communities, staff, and operational commitments long after donor attention has faded.

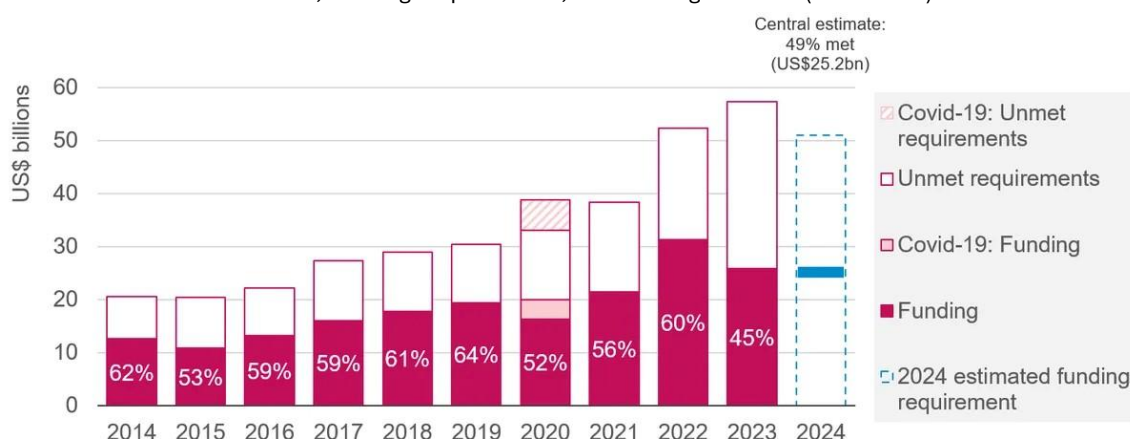
Methodologically, this research combines a review of global humanitarian financing trends with a case study of Jordan and ARDD. It draws on document analysis, sector reports, and semi-structured interviews conducted between late 2025 and early 2026 with representatives of local NGOs, INGOs, donor agencies, and ARDD staff. These interviews explored how organizations experienced funding volatility, managed operational change, and understood the challenges of sustainability and localization in Jordan.

1. Global and Jordanian Context of Aid Fluctuation

1.1 Global Aid Volatility

Humanitarian needs have increased dramatically over the past decade, driven by armed conflict, forced displacement, climate-related disasters, economic instability, and public health emergencies. According to the 2025 Global Humanitarian Overview, approximately 305 million people worldwide require humanitarian assistance and protection, while humanitarian actors are seeking more than USD 47 billion to respond to the most urgent needs (UNOCHA 2025). Even these appeals are increasingly designed around difficult prioritization, as humanitarian agencies acknowledge that they are unable to reach everyone in need.

Figure 1. Global Humanitarian Needs, Funding Requirements, and Funding Received (2014–2024)



At the same time, international aid has become increasingly volatile and politically driven. Funding tends to increase sharply when crises attract global visibility, as happened during the Syrian refugee crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the war in Ukraine, but often declines once political attention shifts elsewhere. This creates a pattern of rapid expansion followed by abrupt contraction, leaving humanitarian actors struggling to adapt. In practice, aid allocation is shaped not only by humanitarian needs, but also by donor priorities, geopolitical interests, domestic political pressures, and competition between crises (European Commission 2024).

This volatility has serious implications for humanitarian organizations. During periods of increased funding, NGOs are often encouraged to expand staffing, open offices, diversify programming, and scale up operations rapidly. However, when funding decreases, these same organizations are forced to reduce services, lay off staff, and close programs even when needs remain high. The effects are especially severe in protracted crises, where communities continue to depend on humanitarian and development support long after donor attention has diminished.

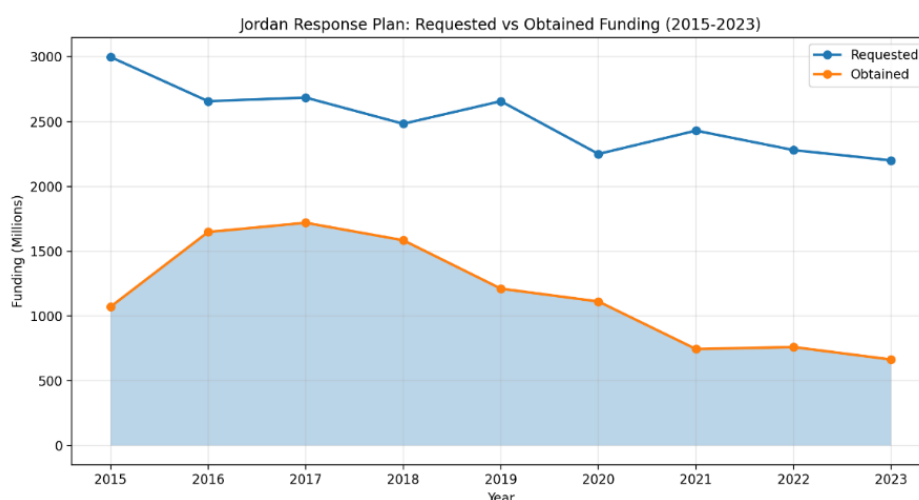
The burden of these fluctuations is not distributed equally. Large international organizations may be able to absorb funding shocks through headquarters support, global fundraising networks, private donations, or institutional reserves. By contrast, local NGOs often depend on short-term grants and subcontracting arrangements, making them far more vulnerable to sudden reductions in donor support. This unequal distribution of risk is one of the central structural weaknesses of the current aid system.

1.2 Jordan and the Syrian Crisis Aid Cycle

Jordan provides a particularly important case through which to understand these dynamics. As one of the world's highest refugee-hosting countries per capita, Jordan currently hosts around 1.3 million refugees, including more than 638,000 registered Syrian refugees under the UNHCR mandate. The majority of refugees live outside camps, placing pressure on host communities, public services, labor markets, housing, education, and health systems (Relief Web 2024).

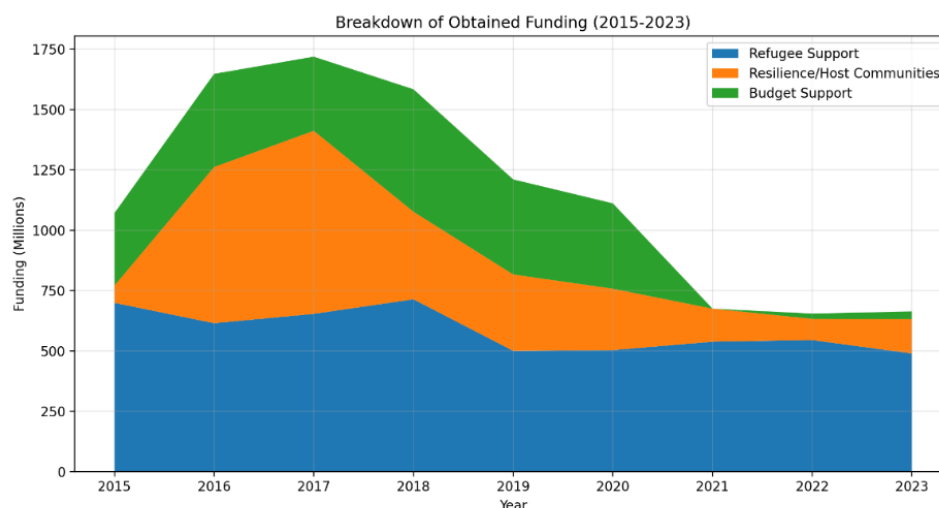
The Syrian crisis triggered a major increase in international assistance to Jordan beginning in 2011–2012. Humanitarian and development actors expanded rapidly, supported by large donor commitments and the establishment of frameworks such as the Jordan Response Plan (JRP) and the Jordan Compact. These mechanisms aimed to coordinate the response to refugee needs while also supporting host communities and promoting longer-term economic resilience. The JRP in particular became a central platform for aligning the efforts of more than 150 national and international actors (Jordan Response Plan 2024).

Table 1. Jordan Response Plan Requested Funding vs. Funding Received (2015–2024)



However, despite the scale of these efforts, funding has consistently fallen short of actual needs. Since the launch of the Jordan Response Plan in 2015, donor contributions have covered less than half of the requested funding requirements. By early 2024, overall funding for Jordan's refugee response plans stood at approximately 45.9 percent of requirements, reflecting a long-term pattern of underfunding (Jordan Times 2024).

Figure 2. Humanitarian and Development Funding Trends in Jordan (2015–2023)



At the same time, donor attention has increasingly shifted toward other global crises, including Ukraine, Gaza, climate-related emergencies, and evolving domestic priorities within donor countries. The major changes to U.S. foreign assistance introduced in early 2025, affecting USAID, PRM (Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration), and other U.S.-funded programmes, further intensified these pressures, creating an unprecedented shock across the international development and humanitarian sectors. For many organizations, this represented not only a funding gap but an abrupt disruption to long-standing programmes, partnerships, and institutional planning.

As one of the countries most affected by these changing donor priorities, Jordan has experienced a familiar aid cycle: rapid growth during periods of international attention, followed by stagnation and decline even as humanitarian and development needs remain high. The 2025 changes to U.S. foreign assistance accelerated this trend, affecting both local and international organizations, many of which had built programmes, staffing structures, and long-term partnerships around multi-year investments. Organizations that had expanded significantly during the Syrian refugee response were suddenly required to consolidate operations, reduce staffing, close offices, redesign programmes, and seek alternative sources of financing while continuing to respond to growing and increasingly complex needs.

ARDD's experience illustrates these dynamics clearly. As an organization that received direct USAID support and also implemented programmes through partners funded by USAID and PRM, it was affected both directly and indirectly by the abrupt funding changes. The sudden contraction in resources required rapid operational adjustments while safeguarding core programmes, institutional capacity, and commitments to the communities it serves. At the same time, the organization experienced the wider ripple effects of reduced funding across the humanitarian ecosystem, as partner organizations, local civil society actors, and service providers faced similar financial pressures.

It is within this broader context that ARDD's experience becomes particularly significant. The organization's trajectory reflects both the opportunities created during periods of sustained international investment and the realities of navigating sudden funding contractions.

2. ARDD's Experience: From Expansion to Contraction



The table below summarizes the main phases of ARDD's institutional trajectory, from its establishment and expansion during the Syrian crisis to later consolidation, downsizing, and strategic adaptation.

PERIOD	PHASE	MAIN CHARACTERISTICS	ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES
2008–2011	Origins and Mandate Formation	ARDD was established in Amman with a focus on legal aid, refugee protection, and access to justice, initially responding primarily to the Iraqi displacement crisis.	Core team centered around legal services and documentation support. Rights-based institutional identity established.
2011–2016	Expansion During the Syrian Crisis	The Syrian refugee crisis led to a major increase in humanitarian needs and donor funding. ARDD expanded rapidly across Jordan to respond to growing demand for refugees and host communities.	Recruitment of lawyers, social workers, and protection staff. From 2012, opening of branches in six additional governorates and expansion into Syrian refugee camps through satellite offices.

2016–2018	Consolidation and Diversification	As the Syrian crisis became protracted, ARDD shifted from emergency expansion toward institutional consolidation, investing in stronger systems, staff training, monitoring and evaluation, and service quality. ARDD contributed to the establishment of JONAF in 2016, while the Renaissance Strategic Center (RSC) was established in 2018.	Significant increase in staffing and programming. More than 120 staff, including around 35 lawyers. Ten offices and community centers across Jordan. Diversification into livelihoods, social protection, research, policy advocacy, and community resilience.
2018–2024	Contraction and Funding Decline	Donor fatigue around the Syrian crisis, COVID-19, competing global crises, and shifting donor priorities contributed to a more difficult funding environment. ARDD faced growing pressure to reduce costs while maintaining services and institutional capacity.	Office consolidation, staffing reductions, programme redesign, and increased reliance on referrals, helplines, and partner facilities. In 2021, ARDD received the Ford Foundation BUILD grant, providing flexible institutional support during a period of growing funding uncertainty.
2023–2025	Strategic Adaptation and Resilience	ARDD adopted a more sustainable operating model focused on preserving core services, diversifying funding, and reducing dependency on a single donor stream.	Reduction in dependence on UNHCR funding from around 70% to around 30%. Greater diversification across EU, RDPP, Ford Foundation BUILD, USAID, PRM, other UN agencies, and other donors, alongside flexible staffing arrangements and streamlined service delivery.

2.1 Early Years and Institutional Formation

The Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development (ARDD) was established in 2008 in Amman as a national organization focused on legal aid, refugee protection, and social justice. In its early years, ARDD’s work was shaped largely by the Iraqi refugee crisis and by the needs of vulnerable Jordanians facing legal, social, and economic exclusion. The organization initially operated through a relatively core team centered around legal assistance, documentation support, and access to justice for marginalized populations (ARDD 2022).

This early phase was important in shaping ARDD's identity as a rights-based organization grounded in direct engagement with communities. Unlike many international actors operating through short-term project cycles, ARDD developed long-term relationships with communities and positioned itself as an organization that combined legal expertise with broader concerns related to protection, dignity, and social justice.

This local grounding later became one of the organization's main strengths during both periods of rapid expansion and periods of contraction.

2.2 Expansion During the Syrian Crisis

The Syrian crisis marked a major shift in ARDD's institutional trajectory. As hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees entered Jordan after 2011, the scale of humanitarian and protection needs increased dramatically. Demand expanded rapidly for legal aid, documentation support, child protection, gender-based violence services, psychosocial support, livelihoods assistance, and programming specifically targeting refugee camps.

Like many organizations operating in Jordan at the time, ARDD was required to scale up quickly in response to growing needs and donor priorities. The organization expanded from a relatively small legal aid provider into a large national NGO with offices across multiple governorates and a broad portfolio of services. From 2012, ARDD opened branches in six additional governorates and expanded into Syrian refugee camps through satellite offices, while recruiting and training lawyers, social workers, and protection staff (ARDD 2022; Jordan Response Plan 2016).

During this period, ARDD's work expanded beyond legal aid to include protection, livelihoods, social protection, psychosocial support, gender-based violence case management, child protection, and community resilience programming. This diversification allowed the organization to reach larger numbers of refugees and vulnerable Jordanians while strengthening its visibility and credibility as a national actor.

ARDD's expansion was accompanied by sustained investment in organizational capacity, internal systems, and staff development. Rapid growth also brought new challenges: ARDD was required to manage larger and more diverse teams, comply with increasingly complex donor requirements, and develop more sophisticated management and operational systems. Its ability to navigate this period therefore depended not only on the availability of donor funding but also on its commitment to strengthening internal procedures, developing staff capacities, and building institutional systems capable of sustaining long-term growth and responding to evolving humanitarian and development contexts (ALNAP 2022).

2.3 Consolidation and Peak Growth

As the Syrian crisis became increasingly protracted, ARDD moved from emergency expansion toward a phase of consolidation and institutional strengthening. By the mid-2010s, the organization had become one of Jordan's most prominent local NGOs, employing more than 120 staff members, including around 35 lawyers, and operating through ten offices and community centers across the country (ARDD 2022).

This period was characterized by major investments in internal systems, staff training, financial management, monitoring and evaluation, and service standardization. ARDD increasingly sought to strengthen the quality and sustainability of its work, moving beyond the geographical expansion that had characterized the preceding period.

ARDD also took on a broader role within the humanitarian system. In 2016, it contributed to the establishment of the Jordan National NGO Forum (JONAF), followed by the Localization Task Force in 2021. JONAF and the broader localization agenda became central to ARDD's institutional journey, positioning the organization not only as a national service provider but also as a platform supporting local civil society organizations across humanitarian response, the Women, Peace and Security (UNSCR 1325) agenda, decentralization, governance, and civic participation. Through these initiatives, ARDD invested in networks and communities of practice designed to strengthen dialogue, foster collaboration, and promote collective action around the enabling environment and civic space in Jordan. This marked a broader shift in ARDD's role from primarily implementing programmes toward contributing to national and regional discussions on localization, civil society leadership, and humanitarian and development policy.

At the same time, ARDD strengthened its role as a national organization working on refugee protection through legal, policy, and development responses for refugees and vulnerable communities. This included a long-standing commitment to the protection of Palestinian refugees through strategic partnerships with UNRWA and the development of dedicated programmes and policy initiatives addressing Palestine and Palestinian refugee rights. By connecting humanitarian response with legal empowerment, the rule of law, policy advocacy, community participation, and longer-term development, ARDD sought to contribute to stronger national protection systems and advance more inclusive and locally led approaches to refugee protection.

This institutional consolidation was accompanied by further diversification of ARDD's programming and an expanding role in research, policy advocacy, and community resilience alongside its established legal aid, protection, and social-development work.

ARDD's capacity to support its advocacy through evidence-based research expanded with the establishment of the Renaissance Strategic Center (RSC) in 2018. Alongside ARDD's programme work, the Center generated research, policy analysis, and documentation to inform engagement with policymakers, humanitarian actors, and other stakeholders. This reflected ARDD's view that effective advocacy requires not only responding to immediate needs but also producing evidence capable of informing longer-term policy discussions. At the same time, sustaining research within local civil society organizations remained challenging, as donor funding often prioritized short-term programme delivery over independent research and knowledge production.

This diversification reduced ARDD's dependence on a single type of intervention or donor stream and allowed it to respond more flexibly to changing needs. At the same time, its long-term presence and rights-based approach strengthened relationships and trust with communities, providing an institutional foundation that would become particularly important as funding conditions deteriorated.

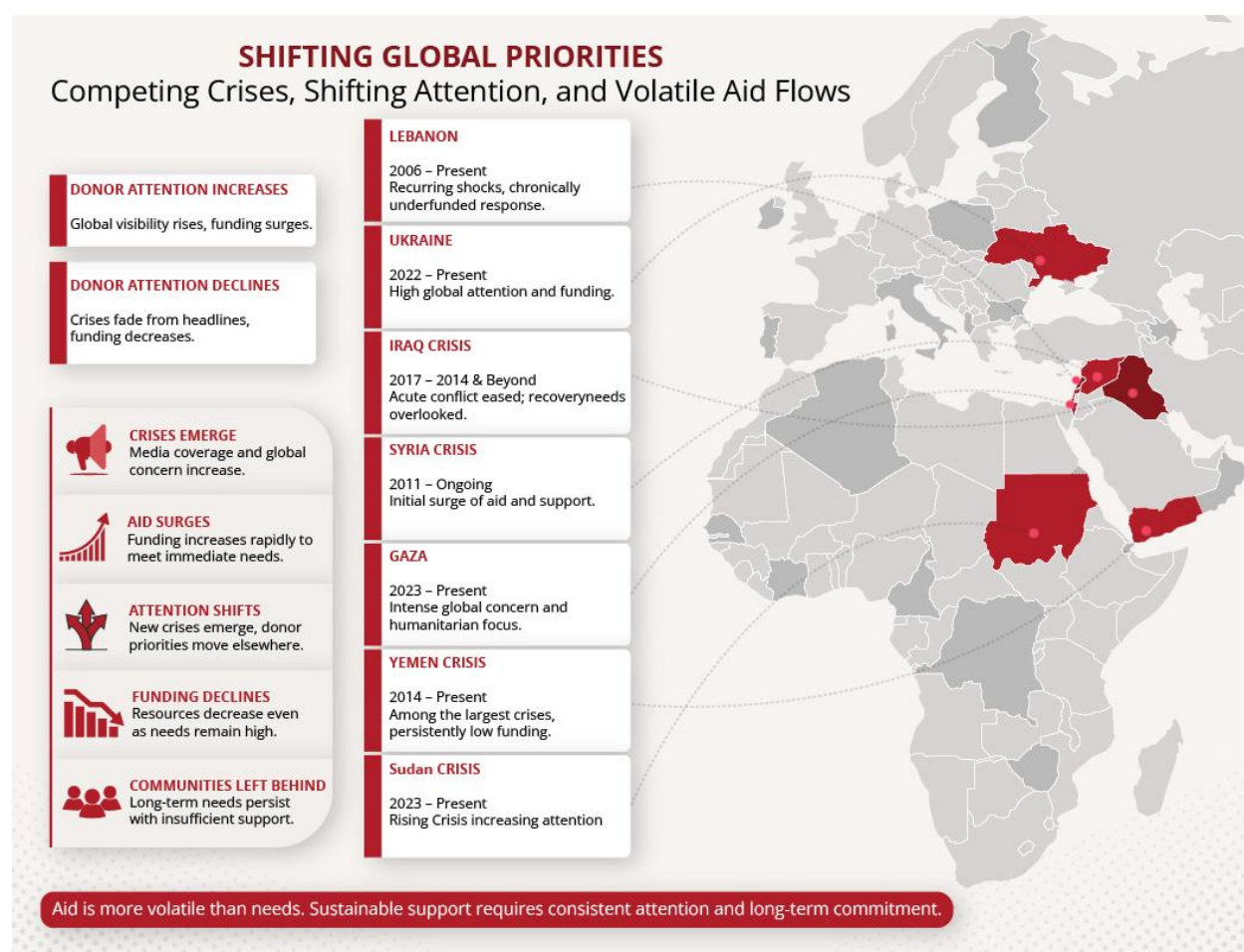
Another significant milestone was ARDD's receipt in 2021 of a Ford Foundation BUILD (Building Institutions and Networks) grant. The BUILD grant represented an important milestone in ARDD's institutional development. Unlike conventional project-based funding, it provided flexible support

that enabled ARDD to invest in its people, systems, organizational capacity, and longer-term policy and advocacy work rather than focusing exclusively on programme delivery. This institutional investment strengthened ARDD's ability to consolidate its internal systems, retain and develop expertise, and engage more consistently in research, policy dialogue, advocacy, and knowledge production. It also supported ARDD's evolution from primarily implementing programmes toward playing a broader role in shaping policy discussions and contributing to national and regional debates on humanitarian response, development, and localization. At a time when much of the organization's funding remained project-based, the grant demonstrated the value of investing in local organizations as institutions rather than only as implementers. This contributed to strengthening ARDD's position as a national civil society actor increasingly engaged not only in programme implementation but also in policy dialogue, advocacy, and knowledge production.

The investments made during this period would later prove essential to ARDD's resilience. Stronger internal systems, more diversified funding relationships, and a broader institutional identity provided the organization with a degree of resilience that many smaller local NGOs lacked.

2.4 Emerging Challenges and Institutional Adaptation

2.4.1 Political Pressures and Evolving Humanitarian Priorities



The outbreak of the Gaza war in late 2023 shifted international attention and reshaped the humanitarian and development landscape in Jordan, as donor priorities and funding allocations increasingly adapted to changing political realities in the region. For organizations operating in Jordan, this added a further layer of uncertainty to an already constrained funding environment, affecting both the availability of resources and the nature of partnerships.

For ARDD, these developments went beyond funding availability alone. The organization maintained its engagement and programming on Palestine even as heightened political sensitivities made some partnerships more difficult to sustain and narrowed funding opportunities. This experience illustrated how geopolitical developments can affect not only the availability of resources but also the conditions under which civil society partnerships operate. Despite these pressures, ARDD continued its advocacy through platforms such as the Jordan International Cooperation Forum (JICOF), established as an arm of JONAF, while maintaining close engagement with the communities it serves and dialogue with humanitarian and development actors.

2.4.2 Contraction, USAID Cuts, and Downsizing

Beginning around 2018, the funding environment in Jordan became increasingly difficult. Donor fatigue around the Syrian crisis, combined with competing global crises such as COVID-19 and Ukraine and rising domestic pressures in donor countries, contributed to declining levels of humanitarian and development assistance (UNOCHA 2025; Jordan Times 2024).

For ARDD, this meant that a period of rapid growth was followed by a period of contraction. Funding reductions required the organization to consolidate offices, reduce staffing, redesign programmes, and rethink how services could be delivered more efficiently. These changes took place even though the underlying needs of refugees and vulnerable Jordanians remained high.

The major changes to U.S. foreign assistance in 2025 intensified these pressures significantly. According to estimates documented by the Jordan International Cooperation Forum (JICOF), at least 576 layoffs had already occurred across Jordan's humanitarian and development sectors by March 2025, with projections suggesting that at least 3,200 jobs could be lost by the end of 2025. More than 500,000 vulnerable individuals were expected to lose access to essential services, including approximately 450,000 children at risk of losing literacy and numeracy support and 12,000 persons with disabilities at risk of losing services such as physiotherapy and speech therapy (JICOF 2025).

For local organizations such as ARDD, these cuts have implications that go beyond immediate financial losses. Downsizing can mean the loss of experienced staff, the erosion of institutional memory, increased pressure on remaining employees, and a reduced ability to maintain a strong presence in communities. It can also damage long-term trust with beneficiaries when services are reduced or discontinued. ARDD's own analysis of the changing aid environment has similarly highlighted the wider risks that abrupt funding contraction poses to local organizations, institutional capacity, and the sustainability of locally led humanitarian and development responses (RSC/GMI 2025).

Unlike international organizations that may reduce or end their presence when funding declines, ARDD remained accountable to the communities it serves. Even as resources contracted, refugees, women, children, and vulnerable Jordanians continued to rely on its services. This illustrates an important difference between local and international organizations: local NGOs often remain present long after donor attention has shifted elsewhere.

ARDD responded to these pressures by adopting a series of strategies aimed at preserving core services while reducing operational costs. These included consolidating community centers, introducing alternative service-delivery mechanisms such as helplines and referrals through partner organizations, offering staff more flexible work arrangements, and further diversifying funding sources.

ARDD also reduced its dependence on UNHCR funding over time, lowering it from approximately 70 percent of its budget to around 30 percent while diversifying relationships across a broader range of international donors and partners and exploring new partnerships with the private sector (ARDD 2022).

These strategies enabled ARDD not only to withstand a period of significant contraction but also to reassess and adapt its operational model to a rapidly changing funding and policy environment. The organization revised its operational strategies, strengthened institutional efficiencies, and reprioritized interventions while seeking to maintain quality, participatory approaches, and meaningful engagement with partners and affected communities. However, resilience should not be mistaken for the absence of impact. The costs of adaptation were substantial, requiring difficult organizational decisions, continuous institutional adjustment, and increased pressure on financial and human resources. ARDD's experience demonstrates that even relatively strong local organizations face significant strain when international aid contracts abruptly.

This experience also reinforced ARDD's broader role within Jordanian civil society. Through JONAF and the Renaissance Strategic Center (RSC), ARDD documented the wider consequences of declining international assistance, particularly following the major changes to U.S. foreign assistance in 2025. Rather than focusing solely on its own institutional experience, this work sought to capture the experiences of local organizations across the country, highlighting disruptions in service delivery, workforce reductions, pressures on smaller national NGOs, and growing risks to localization and civic space.

This evidence informed a series of policy dialogues, analytical publications, and advocacy initiatives aimed at supporting a more sustainable and resilient localization agenda. These included the Renaissance Strategic Center and Global Mentoring Initiative's *Western Aid Cooperation in Meltdown: Radical Change Required—After Critical Self-Reflection*, which examined the systemic implications of reductions in Western aid; *Changes in the US Policies and their Impact on Women's Rights and Women Organizations in Jordan*, which documented the particular implications of the 2025 funding and policy shifts for women's rights and women-led civil society; and the 2025 RSC Bulletins, which addressed changes in U.S. international assistance, threats to the women's rights agenda, shrinking civic space, and the need to rethink partnerships and financing models for locally led humanitarian and development action (ARDD 2025; RSC/GMI 2025; RSC 2025)

2.5 Lessons from ARDD's Experience



ARDD's experience illustrates both the possibilities and the limits of local resilience. The organization was able to survive because it had invested in internal systems, diversified its programming, built strong community relationships, and developed a more varied funding base. These investments created a degree of institutional resilience that allowed ARDD to adapt when funding became less predictable.

At the same time, ARDD's experience highlights the structural weaknesses of the current aid system. Local organizations are often expected to absorb the consequences of funding cuts even though they have less access to reserves, fundraising networks, and institutional support than international organizations. They remain accountable to communities after international actors leave, yet they are rarely provided with the long-term funding and transition support needed to manage these responsibilities sustainably.

The experience of ARDD therefore demonstrates that localization cannot only mean shifting implementation responsibilities to local actors. If local NGOs are expected to remain at the center of humanitarian and development responses, they must also receive the resources, institutional support, and long-term financing needed to do so sustainably.

3. Why Local NGOs Are Impacted *Disproportionately* Compared to INGOs

Aid cuts affect all organizations operating in humanitarian and development settings, but they do not affect all organizations equally. Local NGOs and INGOs occupy very different positions within the aid system, with different levels of access to funding, reserves, institutional support, and decision-making power. As a result, local organizations are often significantly more exposed to the consequences of aid volatility.

Many INGOs benefit from institutional advantages that allow them to manage funding shocks more effectively. They often have headquarters that can provide strategic direction, absorb temporary deficits, redistribute resources across country offices, and mobilize support from global fundraising teams. Larger INGOs may also have access to private donations, endowments, unrestricted reserves, or global brand recognition that allows them to diversify their funding base beyond a single crisis or donor (Barbelet 2018).

More importantly, many international NGOs, particularly those headquartered in Western countries, operate within enabling legal, regulatory, and governance environments that provide institutional stability and protection. Their home governments often recognize civil society as an important pillar of international cooperation and foreign policy, investing in legal frameworks, diplomatic engagement, and financing mechanisms that enable these organizations to operate internationally and build long-term partnerships. In contrast, many local and national organizations across the MENA region operate in far more constrained environments, with limited institutional support, weaker legal protections, and fewer opportunities to access sustainable financing or international partnerships. These structural asymmetries create an uneven playing field, despite growing expectations that local organizations should assume greater leadership within the localization agenda (RSC/GMI 2024).

By contrast, local NGOs are often heavily dependent on short-term project funding and sub-grants passed down through international agencies. In many cases, local organizations receive only a small share of overall humanitarian financing directly, despite playing a major role in implementation. According to Development Initiatives, less than 2 percent of global humanitarian assistance is channeled directly to local and national actors (Development Initiatives 2023).

These structural inequalities become particularly visible when funding declines. International organizations may reduce staffing, close offices, or exit entirely from a country or sector. Local NGOs, however, usually remain in place, continuing to face significant needs for legal aid, livelihoods support, protection services, education, psychosocial support, and social assistance even as crises evolve.

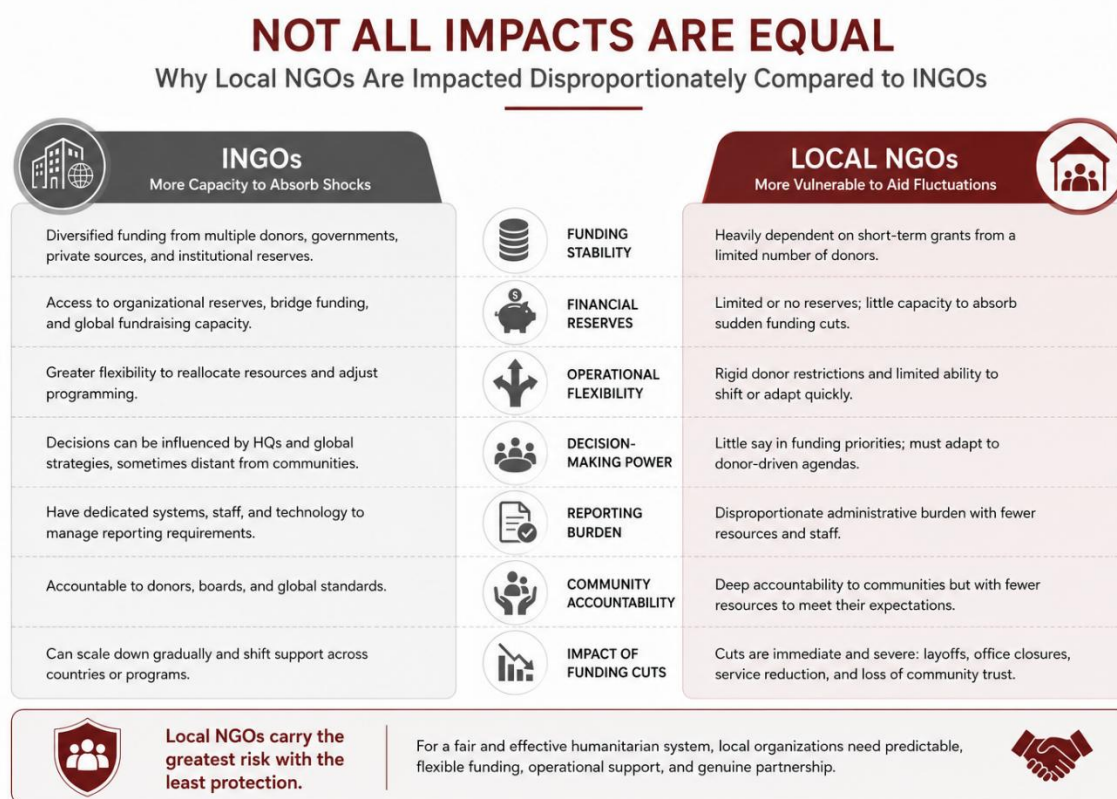
This unequal burden is particularly visible in the context of recent USAID cuts. Organizations with headquarters support, diversified fundraising mechanisms, and international reserves may be able to withstand temporary losses more easily. Local NGOs, however, often face immediate risks to their staffing, services, and operational continuity. In practice, this means that local actors are often the first to experience layoffs and program closures, despite being the organizations most likely to remain embedded in communities over the long term (ARDD and JIF 2025).

The problem is therefore not only that funding fluctuates, but that the humanitarian system distributes the risks of these fluctuations unevenly. Localization has often been framed as a matter of increasing the role of local actors in implementation. Yet in practice, local organizations are frequently given more responsibilities without receiving the funding, flexibility, or institutional backing required to sustain them (OECD 2023).

The table below summarizes some of the main differences between local NGOs and INGOs in periods of funding contraction:

DIMENSION	INGOS	LOCAL NGOS
ACCESS TO HEADQUARTERS SUPPORT	High	Limited
ACCESS TO RESERVES AND UNRESTRICTED FUNDING	Higher	Lower
ACCESS TO PRIVATE FUNDRAISING	Higher	Lower
DEPENDENCE ON SUB-GRANTS	Lower	Higher
ABILITY TO SHIFT OPERATIONS GEOGRAPHICALLY	Higher	Lower
ABILITY TO EXIT PROGRAMS OR COUNTRIES	Higher	Lower
LONG-TERM ACCOUNTABILITY TO COMMUNITIES	Lower	Higher
EXPOSURE TO FUNDING SHOCKS	Moderate	High
CAPACITY TO ABSORB TEMPORARY DEFICITS	Higher	Lower

These differences help explain why local NGOs often experience aid cuts not as a financial problem, but as an existential challenge affecting staff, institutional continuity, community trust, and long-term sustainability.



4. Localization, Sustainability, and Advocacy

ARDD's own experience reflects the broader evolution of localization in Jordan, from an agenda that initially met considerable resistance, to one that gradually gained acceptance through adaptation, and ultimately to a space in which local organizations assumed increasingly prominent leadership roles in humanitarian policy and practice. Today, however, renewed funding uncertainty and shifting donor priorities require local organizations to rethink sustainability through new approaches such as the Global Mentoring Initiative (GMI).

The experience of ARDD and other local organizations in Jordan demonstrates that localization cannot be understood as a technical shift in implementation responsibilities from international actors to local ones. In many humanitarian settings, local NGOs are already responsible for a significant share of service delivery, community outreach, case management, legal aid, and long-term engagement with affected populations. The issue is therefore not whether local organizations are involved, but under what conditions they are involved and whether they are given the resources necessary to sustain that role.

ARDD's experience with localization reflects a clear arc from rejection to adaptation to leadership. In the early stages, calls for greater recognition of local organizations were often met with limited acceptance, and national actors continued to face barriers to meaningful participation in decision-making. As the localization agenda gained momentum, ARDD moved into a period of adaptation, strengthening its institutional capacity, expanding its partnerships, and taking on a more active role in coordination and policy discussions. Over time, this evolved into a leadership role, reflected in initiatives such as JONAF, the Localization Task Force, JICOF, and ARDD's continued engagement in national and international dialogue on locally led humanitarian action.

Today, however, ARDD's localization agenda is facing renewed uncertainty. Reductions in humanitarian and development funding, changing donor priorities, political considerations, and the reallocation of resources have placed pressure on local organizations, particularly in countries such as Jordan. These developments have reinforced the need to move beyond commitments made in global policy discussions toward more sustainable models of partnership and institutional support. In response, ARDD has continued to invest in locally driven approaches through initiatives such as the Global Mentoring Initiative (GMI), continuing to push for local organizations to sit at the center of decision-making rather than only implementation.

Over the past decade, localization has become a central theme in humanitarian policy discussions, particularly following commitments made through the Grand Bargain and related global frameworks. These commitments emphasize the need for greater participation of local actors, more direct funding to national organizations, and stronger partnerships between international and local NGOs (Inter-Agency Standing Committee 2023; OECD 2023). However, in practice, progress has remained limited.

Local organizations continue to receive only a small proportion of humanitarian and development funding directly. According to international tracking data, less than 2 percent of global humanitarian assistance is channeled directly to local and national actors, despite repeated commitments to increase this share (Development Initiatives 2023). Much of the funding available to local NGOs is still channeled through UN agencies or INGOs, often in the form of short-term sub-grants tied to

highly specific project outputs. These arrangements frequently provide limited overhead, little flexibility, and few opportunities for long-term institutional development.

This means that local NGOs are often expected to do more with fewer resources. They are expected to scale rapidly during crises, expand services to new populations, maintain strong relationships with communities, and remain operational when international actors reduce their presence. Yet they are rarely provided with the multi-year financing, unrestricted funding, staff support, and institutional strengthening necessary to manage these responsibilities sustainably (Barbelet 2018).

ARDD's experience illustrates both the strengths and the limitations of current localization approaches. On the one hand, ARDD was able to survive major funding contractions because it had invested in internal systems, diversified funding sources, strengthened staff capacity, and developed strong community trust. On the other hand, the organization still faced major operational strain, including staff reductions, office closures, increased pressure on remaining teams, and the loss of institutional knowledge.

Social protection has become a growing thread in ARDD's advocacy, reflecting a push to move beyond short-term humanitarian response toward systems that support vulnerable populations over the long term. This work is reflected in ARDD's participation, since 2023, in regional conferences bridging humanitarian aid and social protection. This same logic extends to ARDD's civic space work. Alongside service delivery, ARDD has increasingly positioned research, policy translation and strategic documentation as tools for influencing humanitarian and development policy. This has strengthened its advocacy on issues including social protection, civic space, refugee rights and locally led development while continuing to innovate in response to successive crises. Through the Renaissance Strategic Center, an independent think tank ARDD established in 2018, and through engagement in Brussels and regional platforms such as the Barcelona civic forums, ARDD has joined European institutions, civil society groups, and policymakers in discussions on shrinking civic space and rising authoritarianism, bringing Arab regional perspectives into these debates and expanding its reach and positioning as a regional voice for communities across the MENA region. None of this happens without research, translation, and documentation, work that ARDD continues to invest in even as funding for it remains harder to secure than funding for direct service delivery.

ARDD also expanded its engagement with European institutions and civil society actors through the establishment of the [EURO-MENA Initiative for Democracy and Development](#) in Brussels in 2025. As civic space narrowed across much of the Arab region, this engagement strengthened the organization's international positioning, enabling it to bring locally grounded evidence into European policy debates while expanding partnerships around localization, refugee protection, social protection and civic space.

This experience demonstrates that resilience should not be romanticized. Local NGOs are often described as more resilient than international actors because they remain embedded in communities and continue working even during periods of crisis and funding decline. However, this resilience often comes at a high cost. Organizations survive by reducing services, overburdening staff, postponing investments, and operating with greater uncertainty.

Meaningful localization therefore requires more than partnership language or symbolic recognition of local leadership. It requires structural changes in the way aid is funded and organized. ARDD itself has argued that localization should reinforce and support local organizations rather than replace or

undermine them, and that local actors need long-term institutional investment rather than short-term project-based implementation roles (ARDD 2023).

In practical terms, this means:

- Increasing direct funding to local organizations rather than relying primarily on sub-granting arrangements.
- Providing multi-year funding that allows organizations to plan beyond short project cycles.
- Covering adequate overhead and institutional costs, including salaries, systems, rent, and organizational development.
- Supporting staff wellbeing, retention, and professional development.
- Requiring transition and exit strategies whenever funding is reduced or programs are closed.
- Ensuring that local organizations participate in strategic decision-making rather than only implementation.
- Investing in institutional resilience, including financial systems, governance, monitoring and evaluation, communications, and fundraising capacity.

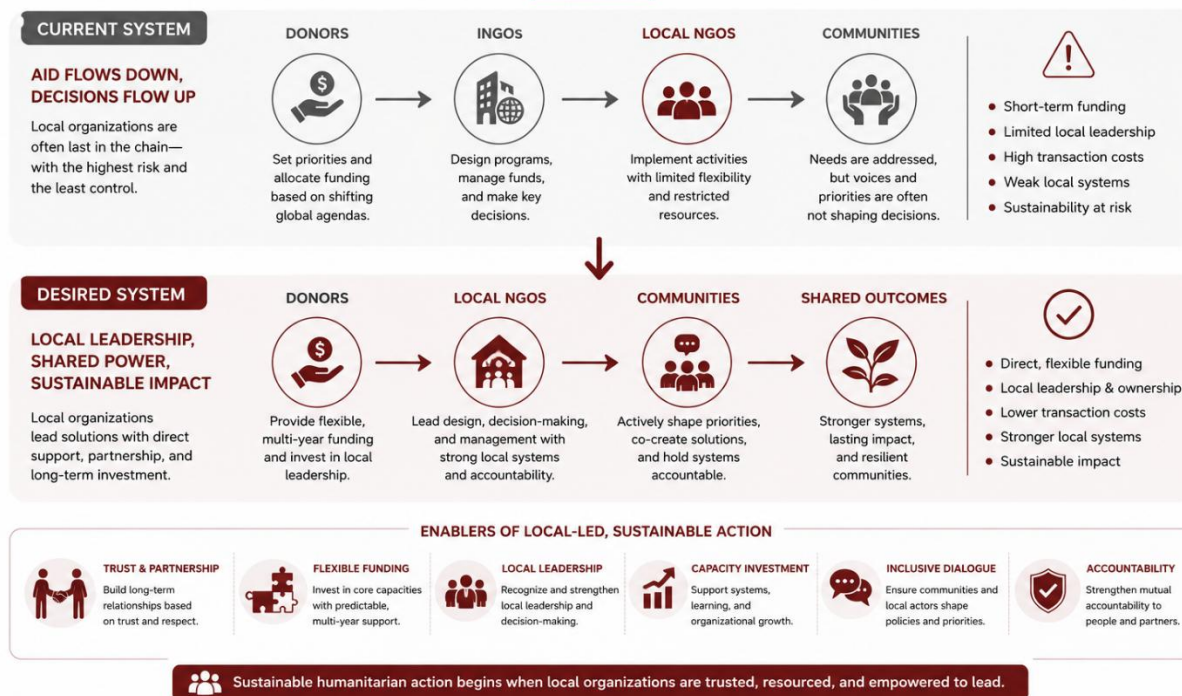
The current aid system often assumes that local NGOs will continue to absorb shocks indefinitely. Yet the experience of Jordan demonstrates that even strong local organizations have limits. Without more responsible donor practices and more equitable partnerships, local NGOs will continue to bear the burden of a system whose risks are distributed unevenly.

ARDD's experience ultimately shows that localization is not only a question of fairness. It is also a question of effectiveness and sustainability. When local organizations are properly supported, they are better positioned to maintain services, preserve community trust, adapt to changing circumstances, and remain present long after international attention has shifted elsewhere.

5. Recommendations

FROM AID SPECTATORS TO LOCAL LEADERS

Rethinking the Aid System for Sustainable Impact



The experience of ARDD and other local organizations in Jordan demonstrates that managing aid volatility requires action across the humanitarian and development systems. Governments, Donors, INGOs, and local NGOs all have a role to play in creating a more sustainable and equitable aid architecture. However, the burden of adaptation cannot continue to fall primarily on local organizations. More responsible funding practices, stronger partnerships, and longer-term institutional investment are needed to ensure that local NGOs can continue serving their communities even when international attention declines.

5.1 Recommendations for National governments

As international humanitarian and development financing becomes increasingly constrained and unpredictable, national governments have a critical role to play in ensuring that local civil society organizations remain effective partners in responding to national priorities. Strengthening civic space and creating an enabling environment for local organizations is no longer only a governance issue, it is a strategic investment in national resilience, social stability, and sustainable development. In times of shrinking international assistance, governments should actively adapt legal and regulatory frameworks to support not constrain the sustainability of national civil society.

To this end, governments should:

- **Recognize national civil society organizations as strategic national partners** in humanitarian response, refugee protection, social cohesion, and sustainable development, particularly during periods of declining international assistance.
- **Review and adapt laws, regulations, and administrative procedures to reflect the changing funding landscape**, ensuring that legal frameworks enable local organizations to remain operational, diversify funding sources, and respond effectively to evolving humanitarian and development needs.
- **Simplify and expedite project registration, approval, and reporting procedures during periods of funding contraction or humanitarian crisis**, reducing unnecessary administrative burdens and enabling organizations to focus limited resources on service delivery and community support.
- **Protect and expand civic space** by ensuring that legal and regulatory frameworks safeguard the independence of civil society organizations, freedom of association, and meaningful public participation.
- **Adopt transparent, proportionate, and risk-based oversight mechanisms** that promote accountability while avoiding excessive monitoring or administrative interference that can undermine organizational effectiveness, innovation, and public trust.
- **Institutionalize structured dialogue and partnership mechanisms** between government and civil society, recognizing local organizations as equal partners in policy development, humanitarian coordination, refugee response, and national resilience planning.
- **Develop national strategies to strengthen the sustainability of local civil society**, including exploring domestic financing mechanisms, public-private partnerships, tax incentives, and other measures that reduce excessive dependence on external aid.
- **Integrate qualified national civil society organizations into national preparedness, humanitarian coordination, and crisis-response mechanisms**, recognizing that they often remain operational and continue serving communities long after international actors reduce or conclude their presence.
- **Facilitate collaboration between civil society, government institutions, academia, municipalities, the private sector, and international partners** to build more diversified and resilient national development ecosystems.
- **Promote trust-based partnerships** that recognize the expertise, legitimacy, and long-term contribution of local organizations to national development, humanitarian action, and social resilience.

The recent contraction of international assistance has demonstrated that national resilience cannot depend solely on external financing. As the international funding landscape evolves, governments have an increasing responsibility to create adaptive legal, regulatory, and institutional environments that enable local civil society organizations to remain resilient, innovative, and sustainable. Investing in an enabling civic space is therefore not only a governance imperative—it is a strategic investment in national resilience, community wellbeing, and the country's long-term capacity to respond to future crises.

5.2 Recommendations for Donors

Donors play a central role in shaping how humanitarian and development systems function. Current funding models often encourage short-term project cycles, narrow output-based reporting, and rapid scale-up followed by abrupt contraction. These practices create instability for local organizations and undermine long-term resilience.

To strengthen localization and build more resilient, sustainable, and locally led humanitarian and development systems, donors should:

- **Provide predictable, multi-year funding** that enables local organizations to plan beyond short project cycles, invest in institutional development, and build long-term resilience.
- **Increase direct funding to local organizations**, reducing reliance on international intermediaries and enabling national actors to assume greater leadership in humanitarian and development responses.
- **Ensure that locally led organizations receive equitable and sustained support during humanitarian emergencies**, recognizing them as essential first responders, strategic partners, and long-term actors before, during, and after crises.
- **Include adequate overhead and institutional support costs** within grants, including funding for staffing, rent, administration, communications, monitoring and evaluation, digital systems, organizational development, and institutional capacity strengthening.
- **Create flexible funding mechanisms** that allow local organizations to adapt programmes and resources to evolving needs, changing contexts, and emerging crises without compromising quality or accountability.
- **Require responsible transition and exit strategies** whenever funding is reduced or programmes are closed, minimizing disruption to affected communities, protecting institutional capacity, and safeguarding the continuity of essential services.
- **Invest in staff wellbeing, professional development, retention, and institutional memory**, recognizing that skilled and experienced national staff are fundamental to effective localization and long-term organizational resilience.
- **Support local organizations not only as implementers but as equal strategic partners**, actively engaging them in programme design, policy dialogue, decision-making, learning, and accountability processes.
- **Promote trust-based partnerships** founded on mutual accountability, shared learning, and long-term confidence in the leadership, expertise, and legitimacy of local organizations.
- **Ensure that funding decisions remain guided by humanitarian principles, evidence, and locally identified priorities rather than short-term political or geopolitical considerations.** Predictable and principled financing is essential to protect the continuity of locally led responses, preserve institutional resilience, and uphold international commitments to localization.

These changes are particularly important because local organizations are increasingly expected to remain operational long after international actors have reduced or ended their presence, yet they are rarely provided with the predictable financing, institutional support, and equitable partnerships needed to sustain this role (OECD, 2023; Development Initiatives, 2023).

5.3 Recommendations for INGOs

International NGOs continue to play an important role in humanitarian and development responses through their ability to mobilize international resources, provide technical expertise, facilitate global advocacy, and connect local experiences to international policy processes. However, the changing funding landscape requires a renewed commitment to equitable partnerships that strengthen rather than substitute for local leadership and institutional resilience.

To support genuine localization, INGOs should:

- **Develop long-term strategic partnerships** with local organizations based on mutual trust, shared objectives, and institutional strengthening rather than short-term subcontracting arrangements.
- **Share leadership, decision-making, and strategic planning responsibilities**, ensuring that local organizations participate meaningfully in programme design, governance, resource allocation, and policy engagement.
- **Support and actively promote the leadership of local organizations within humanitarian coordination mechanisms**, including enabling national actors to co-chair or lead sector working groups, localization platforms, and coordination forums wherever appropriate.
- **Strengthen coordination, transparency, and joint planning with local partners**, particularly during periods of funding uncertainty, to enable collective prioritization, better preparedness, and more coordinated responses to changing humanitarian and development needs.
- **Invest systematically in strengthening local institutional capacity**, including governance, financial management, monitoring, evaluation, learning, communications, digital systems, organizational development, and resource mobilization, integrating these investments as a core component of every partnership.
- **Support local organizations in documenting lessons learned, generating evidence, and contributing to collective learning**, ensuring that local knowledge informs future programming, policy dialogue, and localization efforts.
- **Develop responsible transition, localization, and exit strategies jointly with local partners**, ensuring adequate planning, knowledge transfer, continuity of essential services, and institutional sustainability whenever programmes are reduced, transferred, or closed.
- **Ensure that organizational restructuring or reductions in international operations strengthen rather than weaken locally led responses**. When funding declines or international programmes are scaled back, transitions should be designed to transfer leadership, institutional knowledge, and appropriate resources to qualified national organizations, preserving local capacity and minimizing disruption to affected communities.
- **Avoid transferring disproportionate financial, operational, legal, or reputational risks** to local partners without providing the corresponding authority, resources, and institutional support needed to manage those responsibilities effectively.
- **Advocate consistently with donors for more direct, flexible, predictable, and long-term funding for local organizations**, applying the same localization principles in donor negotiations that INGOs promote in global policy commitments and public advocacy.
- **Demonstrate accountability to localization commitments** by measuring partnership quality, shared decision-making, local leadership, institutional strengthening, and transition outcomes not only programme outputs and publicly reporting on progress.

The changing humanitarian financing landscape presents an opportunity to redefine partnerships between international and local organizations. Localization requires INGOs to move beyond project delivery and capacity-building towards sharing power, strengthening local leadership, and supporting the long-term sustainability of national institutions. During periods of funding contraction, these responsibilities become even more critical. Rather than transferring risks to local partners or reducing localization commitments when resources decline, INGOs should use periods of transition to strengthen national leadership, preserve institutional capacity, and leave behind more resilient, locally led humanitarian and development systems than those they originally entered.

5.4 Recommendations for Local NGOs

In the context of shrinking international assistance and an increasingly uncertain funding landscape, local civil society organizations should strengthen both their institutional resilience and their collective capacity to adapt. To this end, local organizations should:

- **Develop long-term institutional strategies** that prioritize sustainability, resilience, and organizational development rather than relying primarily on short-term, project-driven responses.
- **Diversify funding sources wherever possible**, reducing dependence on a single donor or funding stream through strategic partnerships, private sector engagement, local philanthropy, social enterprise models, and other innovative financing approaches.
- **Strengthen internal institutional systems**, including governance, financial management, human resources, monitoring, evaluation, learning, communications, digital transformation, and risk management to improve organizational resilience and effectiveness.
- **Use periods of increased funding strategically**, investing in institutional development, staff capacity, organizational systems, and long-term sustainability rather than focusing solely on programme expansion.
- **Invest in staff wellbeing, leadership development, retention, and institutional memory**, recognizing that experienced and motivated personnel are among the organization's most valuable assets during periods of uncertainty.
- **Document organizational experiences, lessons learned, and the impacts of funding shifts**, generating evidence that can inform future preparedness, institutional learning, and policy dialogue at both national and international levels.
- **Promote collective learning and knowledge sharing** by contributing to communities of practice, joint research, peer learning initiatives, and collaborative reflection on emerging challenges and successful adaptation strategies.
- **Strengthen coordination and collective action** through active participation in national coordination mechanisms, localization platforms, and civil society networks, enabling organizations to anticipate changes in the funding landscape, share information, and identify joint solutions.
- **Engage in coordinated advocacy efforts**, working collectively to communicate the perspectives and priorities of local civil society and to promote more equitable, predictable, and sustainable humanitarian and development financing.
- **Build strategic partnerships** with government institutions, international organizations, academia, municipalities, the private sector, and local communities to diversify expertise, resources, and opportunities for collaboration.

- **Develop contingency, business continuity, and transition plans** that prepare organizations for funding reductions, operational disruptions, and changing humanitarian and development contexts.
- **Continuously improve organizational efficiency and effectiveness**, ensuring that limited resources are used strategically while maintaining quality, accountability, and meaningful community participation.

ARDD's experience demonstrates that organizations investing in institutional development, strategic leadership, knowledge management, and collaborative action are better positioned to navigate periods of financial uncertainty and organizational change. At the same time, one of the report's central lessons is that resilience is not solely an institutional attribute but a collective one. Stronger local organizations, more effective coordination, shared learning, and collective advocacy are all essential to building a civil society sector capable of adapting to future shocks. However, even the most resilient organizations have limits, and resilience should never become a justification for expecting local civil society to absorb repeated systemic funding shocks without sustained, predictable, and trust-based support from governments and international partners

Conclusion

Jordan is not an isolated case. The experiences documented in this report increasingly reflect a broader transformation taking place across the humanitarian and development sectors worldwide. As international assistance contracts and donor priorities shift, organizations in countries affected by conflict, displacement, and protracted crises are confronting remarkably similar challenges: shrinking resources, rising needs, growing uncertainty, and difficult decisions about what and who can be sustained. From the Middle East to Africa, Asia, and Latin America, local organizations are being asked to do more with less, while remaining the institutions that communities continue to rely on long after international attention has moved elsewhere.

This moment therefore represents more than a funding crisis. It is a defining test of the international community's commitment to humanitarian principles. If decades of investment in local leadership, institutional capacity, and community trust can be rapidly undermined by abrupt funding contractions, then localization risks becoming a temporary policy aspiration rather than a lasting transformation of the humanitarian system.

For countries such as Jordan, these choices carry particular significance. Jordan's civil society sector is relatively small, yet it has become one of the region's most experienced ecosystems in responding to displacement, humanitarian crises, social protection, and development challenges. This capacity has been built over decades through sustained partnerships among local organizations, international actors, donors, and government institutions. Rebuilding such institutional ecosystems, once weakened or lost, requires years of investment, trust-building, and accumulated experience. Protecting them is therefore not only more effective, it is considerably less costly than rebuilding them after they have eroded.

The report also highlights an often-overlooked reality of working in the region. Humanitarian and development action does not take place in politically neutral environments. Regional conflicts, displacement, identity and religion are enduring features of the operating context and inevitably influence humanitarian needs, funding priorities, and partnership dynamics. Rather than allowing

these complexities to undermine locally led action, they reinforce the need for principled, predictable, and trust-based partnerships that remain grounded in humanitarian principles, evidence, and long-term commitments to affected communities.

ARDD's journey demonstrates that institutional resilience can be built. Through sustained investment in organizational systems, legal empowerment, strategic partnerships, locally led leadership, joint efforts with other local organizations and national actors, and community trust, the organization has continued to evolve despite repeated external shocks. However, this experience also demonstrates that resilience should never be interpreted as an unlimited capacity to absorb successive funding crises. No organization—regardless of its strength—can indefinitely replace predictable international support through institutional commitment alone.

Ultimately, the future of localization will not be determined by policy statements or global commitments, but by the decisions made during periods of contraction. These are the moments when partnerships are tested, trust is demonstrated, and the true value placed on local leadership becomes visible.

ARDD's experience is offered not as a model to be replicated uncritically, but as an invitation to dialogue. We welcome donors, governments, international organizations, researchers, and practitioners to engage with our team, visit our programmes, and exchange experiences on how resilient, rights-based, and locally led institutions can be strengthened in an era of profound change. The future of humanitarian and development action will depend not only on the resources we mobilize, but on the institutions, partnerships, and trust we choose to preserve.

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