An approach anchored in local territories and knowledge to better support people in protracted crisis
In 2016, AGORA was created to practically implement the ambition of ACTED and IMPACT Initiatives to ground humanitarian and development work in local knowledge, in keeping with their motto:

« Think local, Act global »

AGORA is a bottom-up territorial approach that promotes the resilience and recovery of crisis affected communities in fragile contexts by putting local territories and their people at the center, supported and guided by local knowledge, structures and capacities.

It does so in three ways:

- **Using territories that make sense to local people** as the basis for the planning, coordination and provision of assistance;
- **Ensuring that this planning, coordination and assistance is guided by local knowledge** and supports local structures and capacity;
- **Enabling synergies** between local actors/needs and the aid system.

AGORA is an approach providing concrete solutions to implement the humanitarian-development-peace Nexus, the Localisation and the Accountability to Affected People agendas.

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**AGORA’S COMPONENTS**

**IDENTIFYING AND PROFILING OF TERRITORIES**
- Identification of territory
- Territorial assessment to support local planning

**LOCALLY DRIVEN PARTICIPATORY PLANNING**
- Consultations with communities and local decision-makers to identify relief, recovery and development priorities
- Empower local structures in target territories

**IMPLEMENTATION OF RELIEF, RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE BUILDING ACTIVITIES**
- Direct implementation of locally identified relief and recovery interventions
- Support to community-based organisations for projects implementation
- Promotion of local priorities and plans with external actors

**LOCAL ACTORS CAPACITY BUILDING AND SUPPORT**
- **Civil society** empowerment and engagement
- **Local institutional actors** capacity building and engagement
- **Sustainability, Local ownership and Local leadership**
AGORA is a multi-stakeholder initiative that partners with other international or local organisations in implementing wherever doing so adds value.

**WHO? WHERE?**

AGORA has been piloted in nine countries through twelve projects to date. AGORA builds on the SDG’s commitment to ‘leave no one behind’ and the Grand Bargain commitments that call for a new way of working with and through local actors, and draws on the experience of humanitarian action, recovery and peace-building efforts in fragile or conflict-affected contexts over the last decades. AGORA builds on the SDG’s commitment to ‘leave no one behind’ and ambitions to go beyond the Grand Bargain commitments that call for a new way of working with and through local actors.

The AGORA model can apply to a wide array of geographic and administrative scales.
AGORA'S ADDED VALUE

**AN APPROACH TO EMPOWER COMMUNITIES, ACCOUNTABLE TO AFFECTED PEOPLE**
AGORA plans and implements with crisis-affected communities in the areas they inhabit. It uses territorial entry points that espouse existing socio-spatial realities, identifying area-specific vulnerabilities through local knowledge, and relying on local actors to tailor and implement responses.

The AGORA approach therefore empowers local actors and creates greater accountability to affected people by enabling communities to identify their own priorities, and working through communities and local organisations to plan and implement projects.

**AN APPROACH TO HELP IDENTIFY AND IMPLEMENT DURABLE SOLUTIONS TO DISPLACEMENT**
By identifying and analysing linkages between areas of return and areas of displacement, AGORA provides solid evidence to support Durable Solutions to Displacement.

**AN APPROACH ADAPTABLE TO EACH CONTEXT**
The AGORA approach is designed flexibly to adapt to both urban and rural contexts, and to different levels of state presence and capacity. It is built on the knowledge that in many contexts where state capacity remains limited at sub-national level, resources essential to provide basic services and support livelihoods are often managed at community level by communities themselves without or with only limited government involvement. In such contexts, AGORA acknowledges the importance of complementing the traditional focus of development actors on supporting formal mechanisms with a greater focus on supporting existing legitimate community systems and linking them with formal systems.

**AN INNOVATIVE AND EFFECTIVE APPROACH TO LOCALISE AID THROUGH TERRITORIAL APPROACHES**
The aid system’s commitments to localisation remain largely unfulfilled. As local aid actors and communities generally do not have direct access to the main institutional humanitarian and recovery donors and as current trends do not suggest that this will change soon, **AGORA provides an intermediary platform between exogenous aid stakeholders (those who have access to institutional humanitarian, development or climate funding) and local actors (those with the local knowledge and capacity) designed to meaningfully empower and resource the latter across the program cycle.**

**A TOOL TO IMPLEMENT HUMANITARIAN - DEVELOPMENT - PEACE NEXUS**
By helping local actors formulate their own priorities outside of the traditional humanitarian / development divide and shifting from sectoral to multi-sectoral responses to the identified needs of crisis affected populations, **AGORA has been designed as an approach to practically bridge the humanitarian-development divide.**

When appropriate, **AGORA can also be a vehicle for peace-building and conflict resolution** through AGORA’s engagement with and understanding of community dynamics. This may be particularly the case when AGORA focuses on supporting local actors with the management of natural resources such as water and pastures which can contribute to conflict dynamics between users.

**AN APPROACH TO MITIGATE AND RESPOND TO THE IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES**
As a recovery approach implemented in fragile contexts that relies on local knowledge, **AGORA is able to mainstream responses and prevention of environmental challenges** into recovery solutions it generates. This is particularly important given the dramatic impact that climate change and other environmental challenges are foreseen to have on resources and livelihoods in many fragile contexts in the coming decades.

Through AGORA, local climate change related challenges are identified, and technical and financing resources to address them can be leveraged towards locally, environmentally sustainable solutions complementing national level policies and frameworks.
Since 2018, ACTED and IMPACT have been implementing a large AGORA project with the support of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs covering four provinces in the north of Afghanistan. This project works through 64 rural traditional solidarity zones called ‘manteqas’. ACTED has implemented community priority projects identified in each manteqa worth US$ 3 million in the last years. The project’s reliance on informal community governance mechanisms that underpin much of rural livelihoods in Afghanistan has facilitated community ownership and project sustainability.

MAP OF THE RURAL TRADITIONAL SOLIDARITY ZONES IDENTIFIED THROUGH THE AFGHANISTAN AGORA PROJECT
Since 2018, in Niger and the Central African Republic, two consortia of NGOs funded by the European Union have supported 24 local communities in identifying and implementing priority recovery interventions, and have built the capacity of local authorities. AGORA supported local actors in each municipality to develop and implement their local recovery plan.

EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES FUNCTIONALITY SCORE AND SOCIO-SPATIAL ANALYSIS OF THE FUNCTIONALITY AND CATCHMENT AREAS OF EDUCATION FACILITIES IN DIFFA, NIGER

![Map of educational facilities in Diffa, Niger](image)

1. Jardin d’enfant Diffa Koura
2. Jardin d’enfant urbanisé de Diffa
3. L. Idrissa Alaouma
4. Dubai
5. CEG 1
6. CEG 3
7. Franco Arabe Château
8. Koura
9. Diffa
10. CEG 3
11. L. Idrissa Alaouma
12. Jardin d’enfant urbanisé de Diffa
13. CEG 1
14. Dubai
15. Koura
16. Diffa

Functionality score of education facilities:
- Very bad: 0 - 0.20
- Bad: 0.21 - 0.40
- Medium: 0.41 - 0.60
- Good: 0.61 - 0.80
- Very good: 0.81 - 1

Catchment area of the infrastructure
Educational Facility
Displaced people resettlement area