



ASAL Horizons - January - September 2025 Newsletter



Introducing *ASAL Horizons* a quarterly newsletter of the ASAL Humanitarian Network (AHN). This first edition spotlights achievements from January to September 2025, showcasing the progress, learning, and collective impact of our members as we advance locally led humanitarian action across Kenya's arid and semi-arid lands.

Each edition brings evidence from our four thematic pillars; Advocacy & Accountability, Climate-Resilient HDP Nexus, Research, Innovation & Learning, and Organisational Capacity Development, showing how AHN strengthens localisation while amplifying the work of frontline actors.

This publication is designed for both members and partners, offering updates on achievements, collaborative projects, media highlights, and opportunities for engagement. Through *ASAL Horizons*, we invite you to explore how local leadership is shaping humanitarian, development, peace, and climate action and how, together, we're building resilient ASAL communities.

In the spotlight

Citizen TV

On 7 September 2025, **Ahmed Ibrahim Abdi**, Convenor of the ASAL Humanitarian Network (AHN), appeared on *Citizen Sunday Live* alongside Bessie Nikhozi of Oxfam to discuss the state of humanitarian support in Kenya. During the interview, Ahmed emphasized the vital role of **civil society in complementing government and private-sector efforts** to meet growing humanitarian needs. He noted that the number of crises affecting communities ranging from floods and drought to conflict is rising faster than available resources. [Watch the interview here...](#)

On **10 April 2025**, AHN joined 25 civil society representatives from the Global North and South in issuing a **joint statement** responding to the proposed "*Humanitarian Reset*" by Emergency Relief Coordinator Tom Fletcher. While welcoming the renewed focus on reform, the statement called for a **more ambitious transformation** one that genuinely shifts power, resources, and decision-making to local and national actors. It emphasised that meaningful change must be shaped by those closest to the challenges, rather than imposed from above. [Read the statement here...](#)

In **April**, the ASAL Humanitarian Network supported seven women's rights organizations with funding from Irish Aid through Oxfam to document powerful impact stories from the Survivor and Community-Led Response (sclr) approach. These stories, told by the communities themselves, showcase the strength of local leadership and the transformative impact of women-led responses in Kenya's ASAL regions. [Watch the documentaries here...](#)

Network in Action

February

On **10th to 22nd February 2025**, the East Africa Community of Practice (CoP) Coordinator undertook a peer-learning visit with AHN members in Garissa, Tana River, and West Pokot to review and exchange insights on Survivor and Community-Led Response (SCLR) practices in Kenya. The mission created space for members to showcase their locally led initiatives, share challenges, and co-develop ideas for scaling SCLR approaches across ASAL counties. Lessons from the visit are informing ongoing learning events and policy advocacy on strengthening community-driven humanitarian action.



On **26 February 2025**, the ASAL Humanitarian Network (AHN) convened a **Survivor and Community-Led Response (SCLR) Roundtable**, bringing together practitioners from local member organisations, international NGOs, and the East Africa Community of Practice.

The session created a platform for **peer learning and strategy development**, fostering a shared understanding of the SCLR approach, reflecting on its progress in Kenya, and mapping out collective priorities for the future.



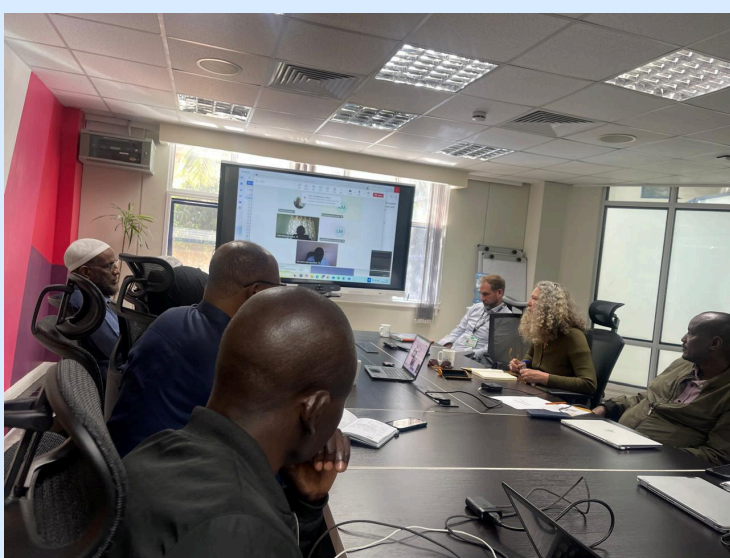
In **April and May 2025**, with the support of Oxfam, we undertook a gender analysis in four key arid and semi-arid (ASAL) counties: **Garissa, Tana River, Turkana, and Marsabit**. This timely assessment was aimed at informing drought response, early recovery, and long-term resilience programming with a strong gender lens. The study provided updated, intersectional, and actionable insights into the varying needs of women, men, girls, and boys especially across critical sectors such as WASH, livelihoods, nutrition, and protection.

It also delved into deep-rooted gender norms and beliefs that continue to shape vulnerabilities and risks in these communities. Key focus areas included:

- Understanding gendered access to services and participation in decision-making.
- Identifying gaps in GBV prevention and response services, including accessibility, policy barriers, and coordination mechanisms.
- Offering county-specific recommendations that will feed into local Gender Action Plans and humanitarian programming.

The findings from this analysis will be used to strengthen ongoing programming and advocacy efforts in the ASAL region. We will engage with county governments and other local stakeholders to integrate the recommendations into county-level Gender Action Plans and ensure that future humanitarian interventions are more inclusive, gender responsive, and community-informed. [See the report here...](#)

On **24–25 April 2025**, the ASAL Humanitarian Network (AHN) co-hosted the **East Africa Humanitarian Reset Dialogue** in Nairobi, in collaboration with **OCHA** and **Denise Brown**, and hosted by **Oxfam Kenya**. The forum brought together humanitarian actors from **Kenya, Somalia, and South Sudan** to reflect on lessons from recent crises and explore practical pathways for reform. Discussions focused on strengthening localisation, improving risk-sharing, and building more adaptive, people-centred responses across the region.



During **April–June 2025**, the ASAL Humanitarian Network (AHN) operationalised the **Virtual Pooled Fund (VPF)** to enable rapid emergency response in **Marsabit, Garissa, and Isiolo** counties. Through support from the **Dutch MFA** and the **Kenya Cash Consortium**, over **€225,000** was mobilised to address floods and emerging public health threats. Local AHN members **PACIDA, SND, and IREMO** led multi-sectoral interventions, reaching more than **17,790 people directly** and **200,000+ indirectly** with lifesaving cash assistance, WASH, protection, and gender services. This response demonstrated the power of **local leadership and alert-triggered financing** in delivering timely, community-driven humanitarian action.



On **20th May 2025**, the ASAL Humanitarian Network (AHN), represented by its Convenor **Ahmed Ibrahim**, joined more than **1,500 humanitarian actors** at the **4th European Humanitarian Forum (EHF2025)** in Brussels.

Speaking during a high-level panel, Ahmed underscored the urgent need to **simplify and harmonise due diligence processes**, sharing AHN’s experience of undergoing 12 donor assessments within a single year. He called on donors and partners to support initiatives such as the **Due Diligence Passport**, which aims to reduce administrative burdens and enable more effective, locally led humanitarian action.



On **24 June 2025**, **Ahmed Ibrahim Abdi**, Convenor of the ASAL Humanitarian Network (AHN), participated in a global webinar titled *“Localizing Humanitarian Supply Chains: Lessons from Kenya and Nigeria,”* hosted by the **Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition (RHSC)**. During the session, Ahmed highlighted Kenya’s progress in advancing **decentralized supply chain systems** and stressed the importance of **empowering local actors** to strengthen efficiency and resilience in crisis response.

WEBINAR

SYSTEMS STRENGTHENING WORKING GROUP

Localizing humanitarian supply chains: Lessons from Kenya and Nigeria

25 JUNE 2025

9:00 AM EDT

As momentum grows around locally led development and humanitarian response, new models are emerging to put local actors at the center of supply chain systems. Join us for an insightful discussion hosted by the Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition's Systems Strengthening Working Group.

This webinar will highlight key lessons from Kenya and Nigeria, where local humanitarian stakeholders—supported by the Fritz Institute, USAID, and technical experts like Pamela Steele Associates—have developed roadmaps to strengthen localized response systems.





Ahmed Ibrahim Abdi
Convenor @ ASAL Humanitarian Network (AHN)

Ahmed Ibrahim Abdi is a seasoned humanitarian and development practitioner with over 30 years of experience across the Horn of Africa. Throughout his career, he has held strategic leadership, technical, and advisory roles within international NGOs, bilateral programs, consultancy firms, local organizations, and public institutions. His work spans major emergency and recovery contexts including the Horn of Africa famine, the Indian Ocean tsunami, recurring droughts, cholera outbreaks, and displacement due to conflict and climate shocks.

Currently, Ahmed serves as the Convenor of the ASAL Humanitarian Network (AHN), a coalition of over 20 local and national organizations operating in Kenya's most disaster-affected counties. Since 2019, he has led AHN's efforts in advancing locally led humanitarian action, elevating the voices of frontline responders, and shaping the localization agenda at both national and continental levels. He also serves as Vice Chair of the Africa Humanitarian Organizations Network (AHON) and is a member of Kenya's Humanitarian Country Team (HCT Lile) and the WASH Strategic Advisory Group.



Akinyi Awora
President @ Kadana Foundation

Akinyi is a self-described "imagineer" with over 15 years of experience in solutions design across development, private sector and government. With a rich background in community development, public management, design thinking, and foreign relations, she has carved out a career in systems thinking and social innovation. She is the creator of the DALE framework, a systems thinking tool co-developed with changemakers in 12 African countries. Akinyi has contributed to global learning platforms as a Mandela Washington Fellow, Ashoka Changemaker, and One Young World delegate, and has led inclusive design initiatives with organizations like the British Council, HEVA Fund, and the Institute for Economics and Peace. Her recent work includes facilitating the designing of localized humanitarian supply chains in Kenya and supporting ministries of health on co-creating NTD procurement strategies, and facilitating piloting roadmaps for medical waste management systems with the EU in Nigeria. With backing from ASHOKA, SAP, and SYR, she is currently using the DALE framework to drive mindset shifts and empower African communities through tech-enabled, locally grounded development tools. She's also fond of dogs, but would happily take a horse.



Pamela Steele
Founder & CEO @ Pamela Steele Associates Ltd (PSA)

Pam is a health supply chain expert from Kenya, specialising in improving access to medicines in Africa. Over the past thirty years, she has worked for several organisations, including Oxfam, UNFPA, and UNICEF, and now leads her own supply chain consultancy. She is an executive committee member of the Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition. Pam is a proponent of gender equality and recently began an initiative called 'Girls on the Move' to encourage more young women to work in the supply chain.

On **7th - 12th July 2025**, the ASAL Humanitarian Network (AHN), together with **PACIDA, IREMO, and SND**, carried out a **real-time review** of the networked response to the March–May floods in Marsabit. The exercise combined **Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)** and **Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)** with cash transfer beneficiaries in **North Horr** and **Dukana**, capturing their feedback on timeliness, relevance, and impact of the support. The team also spoke with **local administration officials, health practitioners, and gender department representatives**, gathering insights on coordination, service delivery, and protection. Findings from this joint review will guide improvements in preparedness and locally led emergency response across AHN’s membership.



On **17 July 2025**, following the real-time review of the March–May floods, the ASAL Humanitarian Network (AHN), together with **PACIDA, IREMO, and SND**, convened a **validation workshop** in **Marsabit**. The session brought together key humanitarian actors including **INGOs, local organisations, the County Government of Marsabit, NDMA, the Gender Department, local administration officials, and a donor representative through Oxfam** to discuss and validate the findings from the review. Participants endorsed the report as an accurate account of the response and offered recommendations to strengthen coordination, accountability, and locally led preparedness for future emergencies across the ASAL region.



On **22 July 2025**, the ASAL Humanitarian Network (AHN) convened a **National Consultation and Engagement Forum** on the **Draft Public Benefit Organizations (PBO) Regulations 2025**. The forum aimed to ensure that grassroots and frontline voices inform this pivotal legal framework shaping how civil society operates in Kenya.

Bringing together civil society networks from across the country, the dialogue enabled participants to consolidate a joint position and craft a unified action plan. Hosted by AHN in collaboration with the **National Federation of PBOs-Kenya, Charter4Change Kenya Working Group**, and the **Global Partnership Organization**, and supported by the **Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken** through Oxfam Kenya, the consultation underscored AHN’s commitment to bridging national policy processes with the lived realities of underrepresented communities and local actors in Kenya’s ASAL regions. [Watch the recording here...](#)



From **20–22 August 2025**, the ASAL Humanitarian Network (AHN), in partnership with the **County Government of Garissa**, hosted the first in a series of five **County-Level Stakeholder Sessions on Disaster Early Warning and Alert-Based Systems**. The three-day forum gathered representatives from **national and county governments, humanitarian partners**, and local actors to:

- Assess the current **Disaster Risk Management (DRM)** landscape in Garissa
- Explore **alert-based models** for timely and anticipatory action
- Review **financing mechanisms** to sustain early warning systems

The session marked an important step in strengthening preparedness and coordination in Kenya's ASAL counties, laying the groundwork for more resilient, risk-informed responses.



From **8–11 September 2025**, the ASAL Humanitarian Network (AHN), together with the **Charter4Change Kenya Working Group** and **Trócaire**, co-hosted a landmark **Peer Learning Meeting on Localisation Networks**. The four-day forum convened representatives from networks across **Africa, Asia, the Middle East, Europe, and Latin America** including Kenya, Colombia, DRC, Ethiopia, Honduras, Indonesia, Lebanon, Myanmar, Pakistan, Somalia, South Sudan, Syria, Turkey, Uganda, Yemen, and Zimbabwe.

Participants:

- ☑ Shared lived experiences and diverse localisation journeys
- ☑ Reflected critically on sector-wide shifts and challenges
- ☑ Strengthened solidarity and collective voice across regions

At its heart, the gathering celebrated the pivotal role of **networks as catalysts for localisation**, shaping a more inclusive, equitable, and effective aid system for communities worldwide. [Watch the highlights here...](#)



Management Updates

During **Quarter 1 of 2025**, the ASAL Humanitarian Network (AHN) made significant strides in strengthening its institutional foundations. A key milestone was the successful **registration of AHN's official bank account**, streamlining financial operations and enhancing accountability in managing partner and member contributions.

On **27 February 2025**, AHN held its Annual General Meeting, bringing members and partners together to review progress, approve governance and financial updates, and set priorities for 2025. Participants reaffirmed their commitment to advancing **locally led, risk-informed humanitarian action** and strengthening collaboration across AHN's four thematic areas.



Between **March and April 2025**, the ASAL Humanitarian Network (AHN) issued a **new membership call**, inviting organisations from Kenya's ASAL regions to join the Network. The process attracted strong interest, with **15 potential members from Upper Eastern and Northern Kenya** shortlisted for onboarding by **August 2025**.

During the **1st quarter**, the ASAL Humanitarian Network (AHN) enhanced its Secretariat capacity to better serve members and partners. A **Communications Officer** was successfully recruited and has joined the team in January to drive visibility, knowledge sharing, and stakeholder engagement. Interviews for the **Policy and Advocacy Lead** position were also conducted, with a preferred candidate selected and expected to join in **October 2025**.

On **25 April 2025**, AHN's Board met to review progress, strengthen governance, and align priorities with key initiatives across the Network's four thematic areas. Members reaffirmed their commitment to supporting accountability, sustainability, and impact in Kenya's ASAL regions.

In **June 2025**, the ASAL Humanitarian Network (AHN) launched a partnership with **MapAction** to strengthen members' capacity in **data management and visualization**. An awareness seminar introduced practical tools for mapping organisational footprints and positioning local actors more prominently within national coordination platforms — a key step in enhancing AHN's **technical visibility and advocacy reach**.

Following the session, members agreed to share a list of staff with **Monitoring & Evaluation** and **geospatial expertise**, paving the way for a tailored training scheduled for **October or November 2025**. This collaboration is set to empower AHN members with the skills needed to leverage data for stronger preparedness, coordination, and influence.

Upcoming events

Internal Learning and Awareness on Risk Sharing Perceptions Survey in Kenya
Risk Sharing Perception in Kenya - Workshop/Forum - Dates TBC
Data Mapping/Geospatial Training with MapAction - Dates TBC
16 days of Activism - TBD
Participatory Scenario Planning - Garissa, Tana River, Samburu

Follow Us On



You're receiving this email because we believe these updates are important to you .

Want to change how you receive these emails?

You can [Unsubscribe](#) or [Update your preferences](#)

