

## Highlights and Ways Forward: A Synopsis of Grand Bargain Signatories' Achievements and Challenges Implementing their Grand Bargain Workstream 2 Commitments on Localisation

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the Charter4Change coalition and Accelerating Localisation Through Partnership consortium collaborated on an analysis of reports against the Localisation Workstream provided by the wider range of Grand Bargain signatories. We highlight 5 examples of good or promising practice that might be built upon; we then note 5 continuing challenges. Finally, we suggest 6 recommendations on ways forward.

### 5 Good Practices

- **Supporting institutional capacity strengthening:** The launch of the **National Society Investment Alliance** by IFRC and ICRC is a positive example of efforts by global humanitarian actors to work with partners to build mechanisms that overcome the challenges that have made it difficult to ensure investment in well-structured, locally-led efforts to strengthen long-term capacity, helping National Societies to achieve their potential as principled humanitarian actors. The first funding round was completed in 2019 with CHF1.5m allocated to 10 National Societies.
- **Reducing barriers to partnership:** To facilitate efficient collaboration between the UN and local partners, UNHCR, WFP, and UNICEF rolled out the **UN Partner Portal** - to date, 9,610 civil society organizations have self-registered. The Netherlands stands out in its explicit mention of working towards improving partnership practice. In 2019 **NL focused on quality partnerships** with local organisations, especially in cooperation with the Dutch Relief Alliance. Emphasis was placed on empowerment of local organisations to set their own priorities, including capacity strengthening as a regular activity in partnerships, and including affected people in planning of response. Some of these shifts were a result of strengthened direct dialogue between NL and local organizations
- **Meeting the 25% funding target, as directly as possible:** 99% of Luxembourg humanitarian funding and 27% of German humanitarian funding in 2019 was provided to local and national responders as directly as possible. **Germany's 2019 funding data reflects a 6% increase from 2018** – a growth rate that stands out amongst donors. UNFPA (39%), UNICEF (34%) and UNHCR (25%) achieved the commitment to provide 25% funding to local and national responders. INGOs living up to 25% include CAFOD (65%), Action Aid (62%) and Christian Aid (55%). And in 2019, IFRC signed an agreement with ECHO for €500 million to provide cash-based assistance for Syrian refugees in Turkey – the largest humanitarian programme in the history of the EU and the largest programme ever implemented by IFRC. The Turkish Red Crescent is the operational partner of the programme
- **Measuring direct and indirect funding: OCHA's Financial Tracking Service** has classified 8,000 organisations according to Grand Bargain definitions, improving capacity to better measure progress against funding flow targets. This is an essential step in improving public tracking of funding flows to local and national responders.
- **Making greater use of different funding tools, including pooled funds:** DFID remains the largest contributor to the **Start Fund**. In 2019, the first three hub locations - DRC, India and Pakistan - were selected and are running a due diligence pilot in 2019-2020, enabling local organizations to access direct funding. DFID also supports Start Fund Bangladesh. In recent alerts, 60% of the funding disbursed through Start Fund Bangladesh has gone directly to local and national organizations. **UN Country Based Pooled Funds** with the highest 2019 funding to NNGOs were the Turkey Fund for Syria (54%), Somalia (46%) and S Sudan (39%).

## **5 Gaps and Challenges**

- **High quality data** on funding flows is still unavailable. While information on the level of funding channeled to local and national responders is improving, the detail, level of disaggregation, and systemic nature of this data widely varies. 4 years on from the signing of the Grand Bargain, one of the significant barriers to progressing localization commitments is some signatories inability to measure – even within their own organizations – how much funding is being shared directly and indirectly to local and national responders.
- Limited progress has been recorded towards increased specific global and national allocation of funds - including unearmarked and core funding - to **Women’s Rights Organizations and Women-Led Organizations**.
- Humanitarian funding going **directly** to national partners is still very modest and only increasing very slowly.
- Localisation is consistently **under-reported** on in Grand Bargain self-reports – several signatories, not least INGO signatories, left the localisation section of the reporting template either blank or very thin.
- Many of the actions taken in 2019 under the localisation commitment constitute one-time in-country events and activities – there is not much evidence of systematic **transformative change**.

## **5 Recommendations**

- Given the steadily increasing pressure for **Country Based Pooled Funds** to better deliver on localization for donors, there needs to be clear, explicit guidance at the global level and specific measures in each of the 18 CBPFs to ensure improved access to funding and engagement in governance for L/NNGOs.
- Structures and ways of working need to change within INGOs and the broader humanitarian system to enable and incentivise better engagement with non-traditional civil society partners, especially **Women-Led Organisations, Women’s Rights Organisations** and youth movements.
- Signatories should consider the extent their work supports **transformative partnership practices** that reflect an investment in the capacities, confidence, relationships and experience of local actors. Local actors want to lead on programmes, consortium and funding proposals – as opposed to just become more effective partners to sub-grants from international agencies. Measurement of progress needs to include this essential, qualitative shift.
- We call for increased dialogue on the importance of **risk sharing** in partnering with local/national partners.
- A **localised approach to the nexus** is important. Efforts on the nexus are overly centred on UN and government institutions, and too often neglect the contribution of local civil society or attention to local community engagement and accountability. This is a missed opportunity and risks generating conflict-insensitive and unaccountable approaches, which undermine the objectives of bridging humanitarian, development and peace efforts.
- We call on Grand Bargain signatories (INGOs as well as UN agencies and donors) to push forward with **localisation dialogue in the countries** where they are present, starting with **their own staff**

**Charter4Change** was launched in 2016. It consists of 8 commitments to drive change on localisation - building on those in the Grand Bargain itself. The coalition’s Coordination Group has equal participation of INGOs and national/local NGOs. Website: <https://charter4change.org/> Contact: [admin@charter4change.org](mailto:admin@charter4change.org)