



<https://charter4change.org/>

## Open Letter to International Humanitarian Donors in Uganda to Fulfill Localization Commitments

### Dear Donors,

We are the Charter4Change (C4C) working group in Uganda. The C4C working group in Uganda was established November 2019, convening an alliance of 51 local and national NGOs and 15 international NGOs, with the objective to support the Grand Bargain workstream 2 and the Charter4Change efforts on localization of humanitarian aid.

We are requesting for your support in taking forward the Grand Bargain commitments made in 2016, to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the humanitarian action. We recognize that we are already at the end of the period of execution of these commitments, however this does not mean that the commitments should end with this period.

As part of the Grand Bargain, International Humanitarian Donors and Aid organizations committed to providing more support and funding tools to local and national responders (Commitment 2)<sup>1</sup>. This involves:

- Making greater use of funding tools which increase and improve assistance delivered by local and national responders who are critical enablers of humanitarian action,
- Reducing barriers that prevent organizations and donors from partnering with local and national responders, and
- Increasing and supporting multi-year investment in the institutional capacities of local and national responders among other commitments.

<sup>1</sup> Full text of the Grand Bargain available at: [https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Grand\\_Bargain\\_final\\_22\\_May\\_FINAL-2.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Grand_Bargain_final_22_May_FINAL-2.pdf)

Despite the above commitments, progress on providing quality funding or quality partnerships to local actors by donors has been slow. Between 2016 and 2017, local and national humanitarian actors received very minimal levels of direct funding with less than 1% of total annual International Humanitarian Assistance to Uganda. The donors' reduced appetite for risk and the effect of more rigorous compliance requirements is also apparent<sup>2</sup>.

As Uganda and the rest of world continue to grapple with the COVID-19 pandemic, the crisis offers a unique opportunity to reflect on what more can be done, leveraging the different and complementary roles, strengths and weaknesses of different actors in humanitarian response. Indeed, the COVID-19 pandemic underscores Uganda's need for local leadership in emergencies as several international agencies had their work constrained and others withdrew their international staff following government lock down measures. We urge you to take the opportunity that the COVID-19 response offers and make more systematic progress towards strengthening localization in Uganda.

More specifically, we would recommend:

- 1) Each Grand Bargain signatory operating in Uganda set national targets to ensure humanitarian funding is shared as directly as possible with local and national humanitarian actors.
- 2) Build on the guidance provided by the Inter Agency Standing Committee<sup>3</sup> to provide flexible funding which

<sup>2</sup> <https://reliefweb.int/report/uganda/money-talks-assessing-funding-flows-local-and-national-actors-uganda>

<sup>3</sup> IASC Result Group 5 (March 2020) Flexible Funding for Humanitarian Response and COVID-19. Available at: <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/iasc-task-team-humanitarian-financing/interim-key-messages-flexible-funding-humanitarian-response>

is cascaded from donors through UN and INGOs to local NGOs, including adequate and consistent support for organizational overheads and staff salaries. Local NGOs should be supported to retain high quality, experienced staff on-board even as programs and budgets are adapting.

- 3) A comprehensive approach to risk management, and a partnership-based approach to addressing this with local and national NGOs, which considers core organizational costs. The current approach is focused overwhelmingly on fiduciary risk and increasingly on the safeguarding aspect of ethical risks.
- 4) Only fund or provide transformative capacity-strengthening initiatives on compliance and due diligence that explicitly enable LNNGO partners to directly access future funding or lead humanitarian consortia bids, rather than entrenching the international intermediary role.
- 5) Direct dialogue between donors and local NGO leaders, to establish an open and transparent discussion on the kinds of support and cooperation we, and the communities we represent, need to effectively and responsibly manage and mitigate the different risks involved in COVID response (health, safety, financial, safeguarding, etc.).

We would welcome your feedback and dialogue on how to move forward with the above in a spirit of cooperation and partnership. Please get in touch with Ritah Nansereko on email [ritahnansereko2@gmail.com](mailto:ritahnansereko2@gmail.com) to discuss any proposed next steps.

Yours faithfully,

**Ritah Nansereko**

Chair of the Charter for Change Working Group

### Signed-by

Action for Human Rights and Education Initiative-Uganda(AHEDI)  
African Women and Youth Action for Development (AWYAD)  
Amani Initiative  
Arua District NGO Network  
Care and Assistance for Forced Migrants (CAFOMI)  
Caritas Arua Diocese  
Caritas Kotido Diocese  
Caritas Uganda  
Catholic Relief Services  
Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group (CSBAG)  
Community Development Network Uganda  
Community Empowerment and Rehabilitation

Initiative for Development (CERID)  
Community Empowerment for Creative Innovation (CECI UGANDA)  
Community Empowerment for Rural Development (CEFORD)  
Diocesan Development Services North Karamoja (DDS-NK)  
Forum for Kalongo Parish Women Association (FOKAPAWA)  
Here is Life  
Humane Africa Mission  
Integrated Child Service  
Manna Development Agency (MADA)  
Meaning Well-being Of people through Knowledge

(MWOK)  
Northern Uganda Widows and Orphans Support Organization- NUWOSO  
Oxfam  
Partners in Community Transformation (PICOT)  
People Empowering People (PEP)  
Plan International Uganda  
Save Humanity Africa Uganda (SHA)  
Street Child  
Support for Peace Education and Development Programme (SPEDP Uganda)  
Tear fund  
The Organization for Children's Harmony (TOCH Uganda)

The Victim Relief Alliance.  
Touch Africa Now  
Transcultural Psychosocial Organization (TPO Uganda).  
Trocaire  
Uganda National NGO Forum (UNNGOF)  
Vision For Humanity (ViFoH)  
World Voices (WV)  
Xavier Project  
Xavier Project  
Young Women Creating Opportunities and Networks for Economic Transformation (YWCONECT)  
Youth Social Advocacy Team (YSAT)