



The Future of Charter for Change

Summary

The key messages in this paper are

- C4C should continue
- It should move its centre of gravity from HQ to country level
- It should continue to aspire for accelerated progress by signatories toward greater fulfilment of the 8 commitments
- It should continue to be a major advocacy platform to push the system to localise more and better

Introduction

This paper sets out proposed ways forward for the Charter4Change (C4C) in view of its current end-date being December 2020, and a recognition among INGO signatories and national NGO endorsers that C4C's work is not done.

The Charter4Change (C4C) was launched at the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016 as a coalition of international NGOs and national NGOs committed to press for more deliberate action to implement wider global commitments on localisation. The C4C Charter outlines 8 Commitments that the INGO Signatories commit to translate into action. There are 35 INGO Signatories and 340 LNNGO Endorsers to the Charter from 56 countries.

Learning and exchange between signatories and endorsers

At a global and institutional level, we aim for the next phase of C4C to catalyse more ambitious and transformative change both within specific INGO signatories and at a collective/inter-agency level. Signatories will be encouraged to articulate agency-specific localisation action plans to catalyse transformative change within their agency. Beyond this, groups of signatories will be encouraged to collaborate on collective localisation action plans on shared challenges. National and local NGO endorsers will be involved in reflecting on defining the problems, the solutions and progress on outcomes. Examples of the kinds of issues that could lend themselves to this approach include providing adequate and consistent overheads to local partners, and a partnership-based approach to risk-sharing.

Charter for Change welcomes the initiative of over 60 Endorsers to develop the Charter of Accountability that emphasises the importance of ensuring downward accountability to people affected by crisis through strengthening principled humanitarian partnerships between local and international actors.

Localisation has suffered from the gap between global level policy statements and action on the ground. Unless there is greater emphasis by signatories on implementation at country level, not much progress will be made. Country teams of INGOs and many national and local NGOs themselves are not aware of C4C and other localisation commitments. The next phase of C4C will seek to transform this, catalysing a wider shift to country-level implementation of localisation commitments under the Grand Bargain. An emphasis will be

placed on ensuring strong collaboration and dialogue between INGO signatories and LNNGO endorsers on the country-level C4C approach. INGO HQs will make greater efforts to ensure proactive engagement by their country offices.

Building on the country-level reporting for the signatory report in 2020, we will make this a regular feature of C4C reporting in future. Country-level C4C working-groups will be engaged to provide feedback on a country-specific basis.

Within the C4C working-groups, as well as through the country-level processes and informal collaboration in the fringes of the coalition, C4C has catalysed interesting learning in all directions, international/local, international/international, local/local. A dedicated C4C working-group on capacity-strengthening exists. Looking forward, C4C will be more ambitious and deliberate in creating opportunities for learning. Each working-group of C4C as well as the country-level C4C processes will be encouraged to identify priorities for learning and capacity-sharing through to 2030. Planning on an annual basis within these groups will factor this into what gets actioned. There is a risk that a few agencies tend to have a continued influential presence on the leadership groups of C4C. We will try to encourage rotation and the introduction of new including younger faces to increase ownership and buy-in and encourage fresh ideas and perspectives.

Expand C4C membership and strategic collaboration with other actors

A wider range of actors have expressed an interest in localisation since we first launched in 2016. This includes INGOs that did not historically operate a partnership-based approach, and for whom the shift towards localisation is challenging. C4C will work to find ways to engage with these kinds of agencies and foster cross-learning in support of more credible approaches to localisation and ensuring that our understanding inspires others. For those INGOs interested to join C4C as new signatories, we will work with them to identify ways that other signatories or endorsers might help them in starting on the C4C journey. We will develop more strategic engagement with donors and the UN, who we recognise are key stakeholders in the humanitarian architecture. Options to commission real time reviews of implementation of C4C commitments in specific emergency responses, as well as thematic research initiatives will be explored. There is a risk that our current processes serve as a barrier to entry which has deterred any recent new signatories to Charter for Change. We will seek to ensure that the processes to enter are sufficiently simple and light-touch not to prevent growth of the movement. We aspire to continue to be adaptable, anti-bureaucratic, flexible, nimble and voluntary,

Strengthening our strategic and evidence-based approach to advocacy linking up global and country-level engagement

The C4C coalition continues to be a lead player for advocacy collaboration between INGOs and LNNGOs interested in localisation. Both around the Grand Bargain Annual Review and other key moments, C4C has catalysed effective joint advocacy by signatories and endorsers, as well as hosting policy dialogue and other processes to generate new thinking and inputs to wider debates in the sector. Looking forward, C4C will build on this with a more consistent approach to elevating good practices and challenges highlighted by the annual reporting process, and by more systematically engaging a wider range of national and local NGOs, and country offices of INGO signatories, at the country level. The problems and challenges at the global level are well defined, and policy commitments to address these have been articulated. Bridging the HQ-country level divide is key to the next phase.

We recognise that decolonisation and structural racism are important factors in blocking accelerated progress toward more genuine localisation. Decolonisation will be an important lens through which future C4C activities are developed. C4C agencies will strive to eliminate bias in recruitment and promotion, seek more space for local actors in coordination and policy forums, and look to diversify linguistically away from English language monopolisation.

C4C will endeavour to articulate a road map and theory of change, to help bring all the above directions of travel together into a coherent whole. Finally, we will never forget to put people affected by crisis front and centre of all our decision-making.