

Charter **4** **CHANGE**

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

**ADVOCACY NOTE FOR THE LOCATION OF
HUMANITARIAN AID.**

**CALL FOR A QUALITY PARTNERSHIP FOR THE
EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
COMMITMENTS OF THE CHARTER FOR CHANGE-
C4C IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO.**

C4C-RDC March 2021.

I. CONTEXT OF THE HUMANITARIAN LOCATION AT THE GLOBAL LEVEL AND IN DR CONGO

The World Humanitarian Summit and the Grand Bargain have placed particular emphasis on the localization agenda with the aspiration to make aid “as local as possible, as international as necessary”. This summit focused on international investment in the capacity, response and leadership of national and local stakeholders with the involvement of national and local government as well as civil society. Indeed, since the Grand Bargain and the World Humanitarian Commitments of the summit in 2016, multiple stakeholders - donors, UN agencies, NGOs, civil society groups and others - have dedicated efforts and resources to advance the process of localization of humanitarian aid. Despite these efforts, there is still work to be done. A 2019 localization workstream stocktaking meeting acknowledged that while the localization program has made much progress, “the localization program has yet to move from rhetoric to action, from policy to operations, and to build on (more) evidence of how localization delivers better and stronger principled humanitarian aid”.

The localization program, an essential point of the implementation of the Grand Bargain (Grande Négociation), and the scope of its scale became clear in 2017. From this, the IASC (Inter-Agency Standing Committee) shared, at the start of 2018, a common definition of what a local actor represents. Regarding the target entitled “at least 25% of humanitarian funds go to local and national operators as directly as possible” by 2020, the funds reported to the OCHA Financial Traceability Service having reached local and national non-governmental organizations directly, or provided through an intermediary, accounted for 3.6% of humanitarian aid in 2017. This was an increase of 2.3% in 2016 (GHA 2018 report).

The Charter for Change (C4C) initiated in 2015 by 37 INGOs and adopted in 2016 in Istanbul (Turkey) and one of the initiatives to materialize localization. It aims to transform the way the humanitarian system operates to allow local and national NGOs to play a leading and more important role in the humanitarian response because they live in communities before, during and after humanitarian crises.

It contains the following eight commitments:

- 1. Increase direct funding to NGOs in developing countries to support humanitarian action**
- 2. Reaffirm the Principles of Partnership**
- 3. Introduce more transparency in payments made to local and national NGOs in Southern countries**
- 4. When recruiting, preserve the capacities of local actors**
- 5. Emphasize the role of local actors**
- 6. Address the issue of subcontracting and equality in the decision-making process**
- 7. Build operational capacities and improve organizational support**
- 8. Communications on partnerships for the media and the public.**

Thanks to awareness-raising efforts and good practices in the materialization of the humanitarian localization by the signatories and endorsers of the charter for change and the commitments of the Grand Bargain (Great Negotiation), several organizations in the South are in the process of

endorsing the charter for change. To date, there are 403 endorsers of the charter globally, including 83 in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

In addition to the charter for change, other initiatives to materialize the localization of humanitarian aid are reported, among others:

- a) Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness: The use of institutional structures and national systems for the management of aid, when these provide reasonable assurance that the aid will actually be used agreed targets, increases aid effectiveness by sustainably strengthening the capacity of partner countries to formulate and implement policies, and to be accountable to the population and to parliamentary bodies.
- b) The triple Nexus: The World Humanitarian Summit in 2016 thus urges us to transcend the gap between humanitarian and development and to integrate the actors of peace. This new way of working thus defends a vision where humanitarian, development and peace actors work together towards collective results, on the basis of their comparative advantages and according to the specificity of the context.
- c) The Agenda for Humanity: The future of humanitarian action must include the experiences and perspectives of this set of actors in order to adapt to the challenges of the 21st century.
- d) Local humanitarian leadership: “Local organizations have important knowledge - about language, culture, history, politics and geography - as well as valuable networks. They are the ones who should take the lead in an emergency, rather than following orders. Carlos Mejía Managing Director of Oxfam Colombia.

II. PROBLEM AND CHALLENGES IN THE APPLICATION OF COMMITMENTS IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO.

Although efforts to promote localization are noted both among signatories and endorsers of the Charter for Change as well as other signatories of the Grand Bargain commitments, some challenges remain, including:

- The maintenance of subcontracting instead of the partnership: It is observed in the field the application of subcontracting instead of the partnership. Indeed, subcontracting is the most common mode of collaboration between INGOs and LNGOs / N who for the most part approach INGOs as funders, donors who can direct everything and with whom we must engage less. discussion. The principles of partnerships are less well known by many INGO staff members who either do not have partnership policies or communicate less about the partnership. “For reasons of organizational survival, the leaders of NGOs accept any type of partnership, sometimes even knowing straight away that they will not achieve the results to which they are committed. Not only does this undermine the image of all NGOs, but also opens the door to corruption and embezzlement ”. For the most part, it

is the partners who are rated low on the partnership. This is due to a low level of knowledge, processing and understanding of the principles of partnership.

- The capacity building so much vaunted by INGOs with LNGOs-N remains more at the level of training than of institutional support: It is true that several members of the staff of LNGOs / N participate in training organized by their "partners" INGOs, however, staff instability for non-payment of adequate salaries and deficits of multi-year projects make LNGOs / N less competitive with INGOs when it comes to competition observed in research. funding. This is one of the consequences of weak institutional support (the administrative costs mobilized are not, in most cases, equitably distributed between the INGOs and LNGOs / N having together mobilized funds for projects). Hence the inability of many LNGOs / N to even cover the operating costs of their organizations. Added to this is the weak support from the Congolese Government to LNGOs / N. This also has an impact on their coordination capacity and their influence in decision-making spaces.
- Direct access to funding remains wishful thinking: While the target to be reached in this regard was 25% of direct funding to NGOs in developing countries, Competition between local, national and international actors in the mobilization of resources, the weak involvement of LNGOs / N in the development of project proposals as well as the weak coaching by INGOs are among the factors that continue to undermine the commitment of 25% of funds to be mobilized directly by national organizations. Even for local funding opportunities, LNGOs / N remain the last served. The agencies of the United Nations system come first, followed by INGOs.

III. THE DESIRED CHANGE

In view of the above, the signatory partners and endorsers of the charter for change believe that it is possible to do better and to hope for the following change:

- A quality and effective Partnership for more empowerment of LNGOs / N as well as the sharing of risks and gains: this change can only be possible if there is a clear will on the part of both to ensure that the principles are respected. partnership. INGOs were encouraged to take a more inclusive approach to defining and assessing capacity needs - by defining the capacities and contributions of all actors in the partnership rather than focusing on specific gaps, for example, technical gaps or capacity related to compliance.
- Complementarity between humanitarian actors following mutual capacity building: “Complementarity is a result where all capacities at all levels - local, national, regional, international - are exploited and combined to support the best”.

IV. SOLUTIONS TO ACHIEVE THIS CHANGE

The recommended solutions are as follows:

- Define and regulate a national policy of partnership and / or humanitarian action (By the Congolese State and its partners): this policy must ensure the representation and participation (presence and voice) of the local population and national actors in coordination mechanisms: including clusters, Humanitarian Country Teams (HCT), sector coordination meetings and strategic advisory groups. This policy should prioritize the inclusion of all in coordination systems and stress the role played by local and national actors in humanitarian action.
- Implement a skills transfer strategy, reassure technical and financial support from INGOs Signatories C4C to LINGOs-N (by INGOs and agency of the United Nations system): Capacity assessments must be reciprocal to identify gaps in terms of the capacities of international and local actors, and be accompanied by investment and commitment to fill the gaps identified.
- Reform of the humanitarian system in the DRC to make it as inclusive as possible (By the Congolese State and its partners): "We must quickly finalize the new humanitarian architecture and make it effective. We need to think about the feasibility and the need for "decentralization" of inter-clusters / certain clusters. This would make it possible to have more precise and direct feedback from the beneficiaries "
- Promote predictable, flexible, multi-year funding (Donors): "It is necessary to set up and support, as is done for international organizations, coordination of national NGOs with a Secretariat.

Budget lines exist for the institutional strengthening of national and local partners on a multi-year target. It is necessary to maintain, or even increase, contributions to common fund-type mechanisms because they offer leverage for national and local NGOs. As proof, the rate of access of national NGOs to the common fund for the DRC has increased from 7% to 30% in one year ". In addition, "you have to develop so-called recovery planning and not wait until you have reached the end of a response cycle to do so.

Moreover, in situations where part of the population is in a humanitarian crisis and another in a so-called recovery context, the two types of planning must go hand in hand and reinforce each other. In the DRC, NGOs regret that the financing mechanisms known as "transition or recovery funds" have not been activated. The problem of the lack of "symmetry of contractual conditions is also an obstacle to access to finance". Thus, for example, when an agency of the UN system signs with a donor and then contracts with an NGO, the latter does not necessarily apply the same contractual conditions on the last contract and does not pass on the "advantages" of its initial contract (in terms of administrative costs, duration of the contract, reporting method, etc.) ”.

It is therefore necessary to ensure that longer-term strategic partnerships are explored and / or in place, beyond projects and short-term funding, by supporting the organizational capacities and

interests of the national partner, beyond the projects. ; integrate strategic collaborations into the humanitarian response at the local level and exit strategies.

□ Advocate more complementarity, collaboration instead of competition between INGOs and United Nations System Agency): Support national and local leadership in crises and ensure that international actors do not invest in response mechanisms and parallel international coordination meetings are a big step forward in increasing national and local representation in decision-making processes as well as in coordination structures. In 2017, around 10 stakeholders showed promising examples of good practice in a limited number of countries, while developing training modules and guidelines to consolidate and expand them.

V. COMMITMENTS OF INGOs AND INGOs PARTICIPATING IN THE WORKSHOP

1. Capacity building:

Local and national organizations, United Nations agencies and INGOs establish and implement at local and national level, in collaboration with state institutions, joint capacity exchange plans (this plan is defined on the basis of needs expressed in terms of organizational development by the different parties - which goes beyond the projects that bind them. These plans should help strengthen local humanitarian leadership, promote good organizational management practices and partnership principles (governance, transparency, accountability, good management, especially financial, etc.).

2. Participation:

An agreement is reached between the different actors in order to promote the participation of local and national actors in the debate on funding policies and decision-making for the humanitarian sector in Congo. To do this, a strategy to materialize the location in DR Congo will be developed by the various stakeholders in the humanitarian ecosystem.

3. Complementarity:

The United Nations and international organizations undertake to work jointly with national organizations (and all the actors who are part of the humanitarian ecosystem) in order to strengthen the capacities of these actors / this ecosystem (in a logic of transfer skills and exit strategy - new complementarity between the different actors which leaves the implementation of projects to local actors). They are also committed to changing their practices so that their actions support the response, capacity and leadership of local actors.

In their work, international actors undertake to work in a coordinated manner with state actors and to position themselves as partners who support and strengthen and not as actors who replace or substitute partners.

4. Quality:

DRC organizations are committed to working in accordance with humanitarian norms or standards. They will report their results transparently to all stakeholders. They will have to collaborate with the actors present in the humanitarian field or ecosystem of the Congo in order to make this objective possible.

5. Funding:

Local and national organizations create a coordination table in order to establish regular contacts / dialogue with donors and funders present in the DRC (international actors promote this interlocution, by sharing their contacts and their know-how if necessary).

6. Monitoring of commitments:

A platform between signatory organizations and endorsers of the charter for change working in the DRC is created in order to monitor the level of achievement of the commitments made (Grand Bargain, Charter for Change, etc.).

