

## THE TIME IS NOW!

Voices from local, national and international NGOs, UN, Donors, and Government representatives during Uganda, Kenya, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Sierra Leone, Sudan, South Sudan, Malawi, Bangladesh and Philippines C4C annual country dialogues

### Introduction

Charter for Change (C4C) was launched at the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016 as a coalition jointly committed to press for more deliberate action to implement global commitments on localisation. It is an initiative, led by local, national and international NGOs, to concretely implement changes in the functioning of the humanitarian system to enable locally led response. The coalition currently comprises [39 INGO Signatories](#) and [518 local and national NGOs \(LNNGO\) Endorsers](#) from 57 countries. Below are the 8 commitments that make up the Charter:

1. Increase direct funding to national and local NGOs for humanitarian action
2. Reaffirm the Principles of Partnership
3. Increase transparency around resource transfers to national and local NGOs
4. Stop undermining local capacity
5. Emphasise the importance of national actors
6. Address sub-contracting and ensure equality in decision making
7. Robust organisational support and capacity strengthening
8. Promote the role of local partners to media and public

Every year, C4C Signatories, Endorsers and allies are encouraged to hold annual meetings where they discuss the challenges and opportunities for advancing localisation in their respective countries

### Uganda Annual Dialogue

The dialogue was organised by the Uganda C4C Working Group and was conducted on 20 October 2021 in Golden Tulip Hotel, Kampala. In attendance were representatives from local, national and international organisations and Kenya C4C Working Group members who attended for learning purposes.



*Ms. Donna Juliet, Chairperson C4C Uganda Working Group, giving her opening remarks during the annual meeting.*

### Uganda's Key Deliberations and Recommendations

- ❖ There is need for Signatories of the C4C to continue honouring their commitments to localisation, for it is this fundamental commitment that will create sustainable impact to those that we serve.
- ❖ Prioritise institutional capacity strengthening and integrate these into partnership agreements to sustain localisation.
- ❖ Uganda C4C Working Group to develop a national database of Women Led Organisations (WLOs) and Women Rights Organisations (WROs) working on humanitarian and development programmes.
- ❖ Set up specific funding mechanisms to providing direct funding for WLOs to sustain commitments towards strengthening the capacity of local and national WLOs.
- ❖ Partners to develop partnership beyond funding and project life cycles.
- ❖ Multiyear funding to adopt and integrate the triple nexus approach by local and national actors.

- ❖ INGOs and donors were requested to include local organisations' logos in reports and acknowledge local contributions towards development of programmes.
- ❖ Adopt and strengthen the use of Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) as a tool to strengthen networks, profile visibility, sharing and branding.

## Kenya Annual Dialogue

The Kenya Charter for Change annual dialogue took place on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> November in Nairobi. The objectives of the dialogue were (1) to take stock of the implementation of C4C commitments in Kenya, (2) to share best localisation practises within and across the globe that are practical in the Kenyan context, and (3) to advocate for local and national actors to participate and influence coordination and decision making across the triple nexus. Participants were drawn from local, national, and international NGOs, UN, and Government representatives.



**"Localisation is about acceptance and approach. We need to strengthen the trust between different stakeholders."**

Ahmed Ibrahim, Co-Chair Kenya C4C WG and CEO of Arid Lands Development Focus (ALDEF)

#C4CKenya #GlobaltoLocal

### Kenya's Key Deliberations and Recommendations

- ❖ There is need to reframe capacity building to capacity strengthening and capacity sharing.
- ❖ More deliberate efforts need to be invested in not only supporting local and national NGOs but also Community Based Organisations (CBOs)
- ❖ Kenya C4C WG was requested to monitor progress of Charter of Accountability regularly through setting up a monitoring framework.
- ❖ There is a need to have the localisation agenda discussed in Swahili and other local languages to ensure that CBOs are included in the conversation.
- ❖ Triple Nexus – members expressed the need to have the localisation agenda discussed not only in the

humanitarian sector but as well as the development and peace sector.

- ❖ INGOs to stop claiming local space by legally registering themselves as local actors; it is possible for them to be actors in the national space while remaining legally classified as international NGOs.
- ❖ A disconnect exists between INGOs' participation in localisation discourse at headquarter level versus at country level, as reflected in lack of attendance at working group meetings. This needs to be improved so that localisation commitments are put into action at country level.
- ❖ All organisations' departments (e.g. fundraising, finance, communications, auditing etc.) need to be brought into the localisation conversation.

## Sierra Leone Annual Dialogue

Sierra Leone's local, national and international NGOs, Donors and Government held the first localisation dialogue meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2021 in Freetown. The event was organised by Trócaire, Kambia District Development and Rehabilitation Organisation (KADDRO), Action for Advocacy and Development-Sierra Leone (AAD-SL), Catholic Agency for International Development (CAFOD) and Action Aid. These organisations are Signatories or Endorsers of the Charter for Change.

The meeting objectives were:

1. To raise awareness among NGOs in Sierra Leone of the Charter for Change and other networks
2. To share examples of localisation and civil society strengthening efforts in Sierra Leone
3. To identify challenges and opportunities for advancing localisation in Sierra Leone; these ideas are to feed into the Global Charter for Change Annual Meeting in December 2021



## Sierra Leone's Key Deliberations and Recommendations

- ❖ Set up the C4C Working Group in Sierra Leone and enhance collaboration among Endorsers, Signatories and allies championing localisation.
- ❖ Continue sensitising other stakeholders on the localisation agenda.
- ❖ Local and national NGOs to collaborate with other regional and global bodies championing localisation.
- ❖ INGOs expressed a need to ensure that risk is shared at all levels. INGOs felt that they often assume a disproportionate amount of risk when working with partners.
- ❖ Greater efforts can be taken to coordinate efforts around capacity strengthening (including assessments, trainings, and tools) and ensuring that there is co-ownership of these processes.
- ❖ INGOs support the idea of longer-term funding commitments based on mutuality and respect, but there is also a need to be clear about partnership duration and what phasing out looks like to avoid dependency and to promote organisational resilience.
- ❖ There is need to follow up with organisations that have signed onto the Charter for Change to see how committed they are to its principles in Sierra Leone.
- ❖ Participants should coordinate on how they are measuring progress on localisation, with the Charter for Change as a starting point for setting benchmarks.
- ❖ Follow up with the EU on recommendations from research conducted by Trócaire, AAD-AL, AdvocAid and KADDRO on partner-led granting models.

## South Sudan Annual Dialogue

A C4C country-level dialogue was organised in Juba on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2021 by Child's Destiny and Development Organization (CHIDDO), a national NGO and Endorser to the C4C, supported by DanChurchAid (DCA) and CAFOD/Trócaire.

## South Sudan's Key Deliberations and Recommendations

- ❖ **Invest in capacity strengthening:** Local actors need to define what capacity they need and engage donors and partners in strategic discussions on how institutional capacity strengthening can be prioritised and resourced.
- ❖ **Setting up C4C group in South Sudan.** The group should meet on a regular basis and help drive the localisation agenda forward. The group will be responsible for coordinating with the NGO Forum and

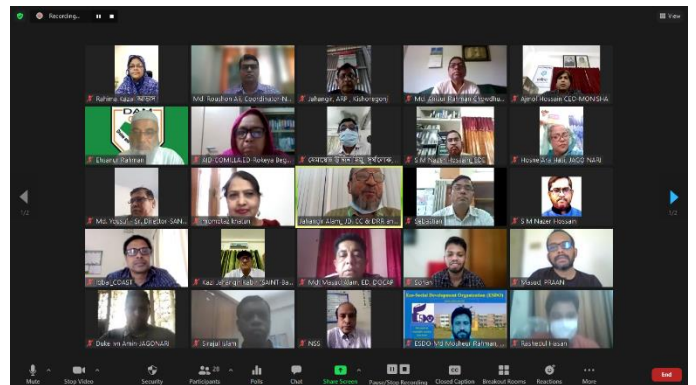
the localisation group in South Sudan as well as ensuring that the C4C is well engaged with the Grand Bargain National Reference Group to be established in 2022 in Juba. The group will complement and build bridges to parallel localisation efforts happening in South Sudan, such as the localisation group, and draw from the National Localisation Framework for South Sudan that many of the participants helped draft.

- ❖ **Peer to peer learning** among C4C Signatories to encourage exchange of ideas among those doing well and those that have not made as much progress.
- ❖ **Support a locally led localisation advocacy platform.** This would support Endorsers holding Signatories accountable to what they should be doing in country, strengthen locally led coordination, and support Endorsers engaging the government as an actor in enforcing localisation through policies.

## Bangladesh Annual Dialogue

The Bangladesh C4C country level dialogue was jointly organised by Oxfam in Bangladesh as host and Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM), Jago Nari and Programme for Helpless And Lagged Societies (PHALS) as co-host with technical support from National Alliance of Humanitarian Actors, Bangladesh (NAHAB).

C4C country level Endorsers, Signatories and joint dialogues were conducted on 23<sup>rd</sup> September, 9<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> November, respectively.



## Bangladesh Key Deliberations and Recommendations

- ❖ C4C secretariat can support to prepare a clear indicative pathway on localisation for its Signatories and Endorsers.
- ❖ Signatories need to support direct funding for L/NGOs by giving priority to harmonisation of due diligence process to be followed across INGOs and donors to make the local organisations comfortable to handle that issue.



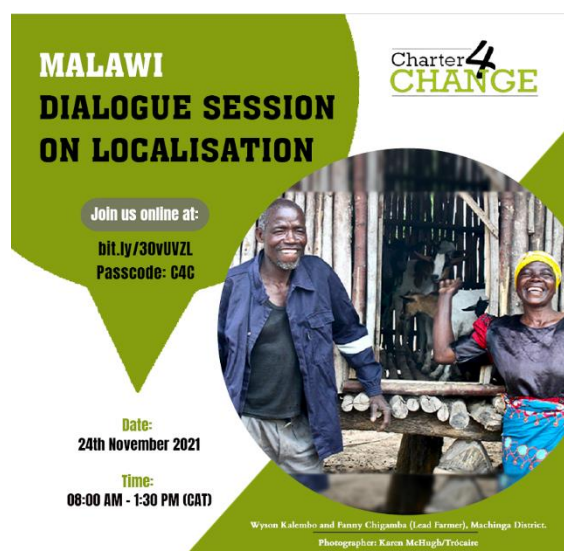
- ❖ The equal share of Indirect Cost Recovery (ICR) has to be ensured for the L/NGOs that enables the future development of their organisations. A high-level consultation with heads of INGOs and UN agencies at country level and their respective counterparts at HQ level is important to identify barriers and the way forward for equal sharing of ICR with implementing Endorser agencies.
- ❖ Establish country level initiatives for joint advocacy to donors, INGOs and UN agencies.
- ❖ Establish a country level Localisation Information Hub and establish a progress tracking mechanism involving Signatories, Endorsers, UN agencies, and other networks (i.e. NAHAB, Localisation Technical Working Group, CCNF, etc.) to share the progress at local, national, and global level and make them accountable to share their progress on localisation and C4C commitments.

(towards influencing funding practices, policies, systems and practices and developing funding partnerships).

- ❖ **Country-level C4C Reporting (on commitments including Charter for Accountability for locals), regularised meetings and sharing of good practices to make C4C as a platform for creating change:** shared due diligence; reduce funding barriers; capacity sharing & strengthening; practice equitable partnership; sharing good practices.
- ❖ **C4C to widen its stakeholder base to create more influence:** involve Signatories without country offices; engage community-based and other CSOs, PINGON for INGOs, HCT and National Reference Group; and maximise existing platforms/spaces for localisation (dialogue results as basis).

## Malawi Annual Dialogue

The first national level dialogue on localisation of aid in Malawi took place in Lilongwe on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2021. The meeting was a hybrid of both physical and online participants. Trócaire, Youth Net and Counselling (YONECA) and Churches Action in Relief and Development (CARD) jointly organised it. The Ambassador of Ireland to Malawi, H.E. Seamus O’Grady and Mrs. Martha Kwataine, Special Advisor to the President of the Republic of Malawi on NGOs and Civil Society Organisations, opened the event.



## Malawi’s Key Deliberations and Recommendations

- ❖ The scope of C4C should go beyond the humanitarian system and adopt a broader change to incorporate development initiatives and processes.

## Philippines Annual Dialogue

The first Philippines C4C meeting was conducted online on 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> November 2021. Ecosystem Work for Essential Benefits (ECOWEB), Oxfam, and Centre for Disaster Preparedness (CDP) organised the event. There are 13 Endorsers and 12 Signatories, 6 of which have country offices in Philippines. A total of 8 Endorsers and 4 Signatories attended the meeting. Prior to the meeting, there was a 6-month country level dialogue on localisation, in which INGOs, Government, UN, CSOs and affected communities participated. UN OCHA, ECOWEB, Oxfam, and Alliance for Empowering Partnership (A4EP) facilitated the dialogue and the results served as reference for the C4C country level meeting.



## Philippines Key Deliberations and Recommendations

- ❖ **Better understanding of the humanitarian financing system as a basis for advocacy strategy**

- ❖ Local/national NGOs need to work towards having all or most requirements needed by donors in their call for proposals. On the other hand, donors need to address structural barriers faced by local/national actors in accessing direct funding. Donors also need to provide a ‘push factor’ for increased funding to local/national actors.
- ❖ Council for NGOs in Malawi (CONGOMA) should take up the issue of localisation as it represents all local/national NGOs.
- ❖ NGO policy should be implemented in its entirety and government should ensure this happens.
- ❖ There is need to raise awareness on C4C among local, national, and international NGOs.
- ❖ A task group for C4C Malawi has to be established in the soonest period possible.
- ❖ There is need to step out of programme cycles and focus on long term programming that aligns with Malawi government vision 2063 priorities.
- ❖ Continuous learning from other countries making great strides on localisation and commitments of C4C should be emphasised.
- ❖ Long-term solutions need to prioritise systems strengthening.
- ❖ A report for Malawi on the progress made on the C4C since 2018 needs to be produced.
- ❖ A list of INGOs in Malawi that have endorsed or are Signatories of C4C should be shared.

## Democratic Republic of Congo Annual Dialogue

Oxfam and UPDDHE organised the annual meeting in DRC on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2021.



*Participants at the C4C annual meeting in DRC.*

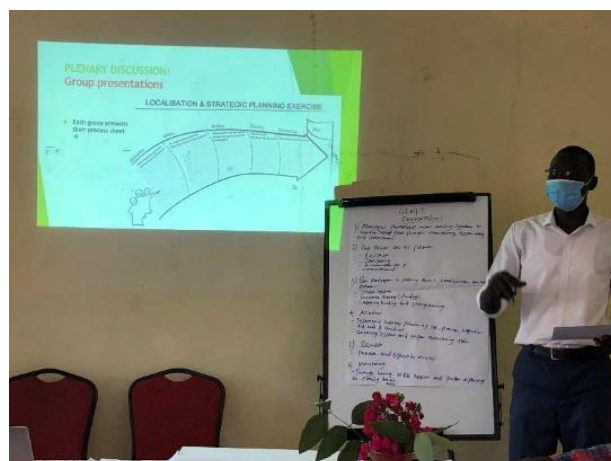
### DRC Key Deliberations and Recommendations

- ❖ Mobilise more Local and National NGOs to endorse the C4C.

- ❖ Conduct an advocacy forum targeting UN agencies and INGOs to encourage them to practise localisation in their systems and operations.
- ❖ Popularisation of the Charter for Change and its positive impact on humanitarian interventions in the DRC, particularly in the 8 pilot provinces, among the various stakeholders.

## Sudan Annual Dialogue

Signatory (DCA) and Endorser Omarang Charity Association for Multipurpose (OCAM) jointly facilitated a C4C workshop on localisation in Kauda, the Nuba Mountains, Sudan on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2021.



*Mr. Okuku, local actor in Nuba Mountain presenting during C4C meeting*

### Sudan Key Deliberations and Recommendations

- ❖ Set up a C4C Working Group in Sudan.
- ❖ Local actors at the grassroots level should not be left behind in the localisation agenda. Women and youth actors should be empowered. They all need support to connect with national and global actors. They are even further away from donor attention than national level NGOs.
- ❖ Reduce barriers for local actors to access funding, capacity strengthening and capacity sharing with other actors.
- ❖ Larger national organisations should engage smaller NGOs through mentoring and capacity sharing.
- ❖ Connect local actors at grassroots level with donors so that they understand how bottom-up approaches are empowering and strengthening community solutions to humanitarian problems.

## General Conclusions and Recommendations

Area	Recommendation
Localisation Framework	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. From the different in country meetings, there is a consensus that C4C needs to explore localisation across the <b>Triple Nexus</b> (humanitarian – development – peace).</li> <li>2. <b>Capacity Strengthening needs to be examined from a different lens.</b> Partners can collaborate to jointly develop and harmonise capacity assessments, and capacity strengthening plans should be locally led.</li> </ol>
C4C operationalisation at country level	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. <b>Establish C4C Working Group (WG)</b> in countries where these are not operational. The Working Group as a platform has the mandate to follow-up on deliberations of the annual dialogues and can also hold members accountable at country-level.</li> <li>4. Endorsers and Signatories operating within a respective country are encouraged to <b>participate in and support C4C engagements.</b> Follow up is required at head office level to encourage Signatories' consistency in participation across countries.</li> <li>5. C4C Working Groups should mobilise to get <b>more active Endorsers and Signatories in their membership.</b></li> <li>6. C4C Working Groups to <b>undertake greater collaboration with other platforms</b> (e.g. the Grand Bargain national reference groups).</li> <li>7. Signatories and Endorsers are encouraged to <b>enhance collaboration in programmes.</b> Examples include organising joint field visits, harmonising reporting tools, etc.</li> </ol>
C4C cross-country collaboration	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. There is need to have a simple <b>tool to monitor the implementation of the Charter of Accountability</b> in the respective countries. The C4C global secretariat can support in developing this tool.</li> <li>9. <b>Regular peer-to-peer learning</b> across different C4C working groups in different countries is encouraged. Cross learning enabled the success of several annual dialogue meetings in 2021.</li> <li>10. Identify and respond to the challenges that arise when international actors claim space in countries when <b>registering as local entities.</b></li> </ol>

**Acknowledgement:** This newsletter was prepared and edited by Trócaire's Global Hub on Partnership & Localisation, with inputs from Charter for Change Endorsers and Signatories across participating countries. For any clarifications in relation to the content, please contact: [infohub@trocaire.org](mailto:infohub@trocaire.org).