Charter for Change:

From commitments to action

Progress Report 2016-2017

Charter4CHANGE

Charter4CHANGE

This report was compiled by the C4C coordination group on behalf of the C4C signatories.

The information has mainly been anonymised, except for some highlighted examples of work or where individual or groups of signatories have already been collaborating publicly.

The content of this report is a summary of inputs from the C4C signatories, and does not necessarily reflect the views and positions of individual signatories.

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Cover caption: **The Tayngon Kyaung (the monastery on the hill) in the Irrawady Delta was badly damaged when Cyclon Nargis hit Myanmar in 2008. Still, as the resident munk explained,** *Nargis night was very chaotic so I cannot say it exactly but thousands found shelter and help here during the cyclone and in the days and nights that followed.*
Photo: Nils Carstensen, L2GP/DCA

Introduction

This report synthesizes the financial and narrative data shared by 23 of the 29 Charter for Change signatory organisations in their One Year Progress reporting[1]. The Charter for Change (C4C) was initially presented at the World Humanitarian Summit's (WHS) Global Consultation in Geneva in October 2015, and officially launched at the WHS in Istanbul in May 2016. The majority of the signatories had signed up to the Charter by October 2015, and most started to work on organisational change initiatives post-May 2016.

Each chapter of the report broadly addresses five aspects: progress, challenges, good practices, learning in relation to making progress and next steps. It is structured into chapters according to the 8 C4C commitments as follows:

- Commitments 1 and 3 on financial flows and tracking
- Commitments 2 on partnerships
- Commitment 4 on recruitment
- Commitment 5 on advocacy
- Commitment 6 on equality
- Commitment 7 on capacity support
- Commitment 8 on communications

Overall most signatories report that the C4C is becoming increasingly well-known within their organisations, although this is often at the headquarter level and amongst senior and middle level management, with less emphasis at the country programme level. However it is now beginning to roll-out in a significant number of the signatories. Many signatories report incorporating C4C into their new international strategies, organisational emergency response approaches or their communications strategies. Others have incorporated it into new partnership policies, for example having to report on the commitments to their programme quality committee

whose membership includes a number of the organisation's trustees.

For the more traditionally partnership-focused organisations, C4C has sharpened their focus and helped strengthen their work with partners. Some of the signatories have taken a more mixed direct implementation/partnership approach, and C4C has served as a catalyst for wider change within these organisations.

Most signatories have prioritised taking forward two or three (or more) of the commitments, and thus progress towards full implementation is uneven both between and within organisations. They note that achieving the C4C commitments is part of organisational follow-up to the World Humanitarian Summit, and as such is still very much a 'work in progress'. There are clear synergies with other related processes, for example the Core Humanitarian Standards, the Grand Bargain Workstream 2 on more tools and funding to national and local actors, and work going into initiatives such as the START Network's Shifting the Power and Financial Enablers projects, the Local2Global Protection, and the Missed Opportunities work, as well as linking up to southern-led work, particularly through the NEAR Network and other initiatives which evolved out of the WHS process.

Whilst a number of signatories report that some of their partners are directly engaged in a few of the commitments (e.g. around advocacy) most believe that the implications and role of the C4C endorsers has not yet been clarified. In many cases partners of the signatories are also not familiar with the C4C or the potential use they could make of it in encouraging INGO partners to live up to the 8 commitments.

Commitment 1: Increase direct funding to southern-based NGOs for humanitarian action. At present only 0.2% of humanitarian aid is channelled directly to national non-governmental actors (NGOs and CSOs) for humanitarian work – a total of USD 46.6 million out of USD 24.5 billion[2]. We commit through advocacy and policy work to influence North American and European donors (including institutional donors, foundations and private sector) to encourage them to increase the year on year percentage of their humanitarian funding going to southern-based NGOs[3]. We commit that by May 2018 at least 20% of our own humanitarian funding will be passed to southern-based NGOs. We commit to introduce our NGO partners to our own direct donors with the aim of them accessing direct funding.

Commitment 3: Increase transparency around resource transfers to southern-based national and local NGOs. A significant change in approaches towards transparency is needed in order to build trust, accountability and efficiency of investments channelled to national actors via international intermediaries. We commit to document the types of organisation we cooperate with in humanitarian response and to publish these figures (or percentages) in our public accounts using a recognised categorisation such as the GHA[4] in real-time and to the IATI standard[5].

Commitments 1 and 3: Financial Flows and Tracking:

The data represented in this summary is based on voluntary data submission by the C4C signatories and no further verification has taken place. For most signatories, this was the first time that they have tried to track and report on this data and all encountered significant obstacles and uncertainties in the process. Many have therefore stressed the **indicative nature of the data submitted this year**. A lot of work is going into improving the quality of data submitted with a clear commitment to improve its collection and reporting during 2017, and in coming years.

Progress

Out of the 29 C4C signatory INGOs, 16 have submitted data allowing for a rough estimation of the respective share of their humanitarian funding transferred to L/N partners. Ten (10) signatories distinguish their funding flows according to the GHA categories; two (2) according to IATI categories; and seven (7) have reported "Combined Funding to Local and national NGOs". Only two signatories submitted the complete data set allowing for a calculation of the percentage of funding going to local and national actors according to the C4C/L2GP guidance note.

In the C4C Commitment 1, the signatories "*commit that by May 2018 at least 20% of our own humanitarian funding will be passed to southern-based NGOs*." Based on the data submitted, C4C signatories' share of funding to local and national partners (which in this case roughly equals "southern based NGOs") varied between 4% and 88% with a majority (10) of those who have submitted data already transferring more than 20% of their funding to local and national partners. Three signatories also indicated the

amount of funding going indirectly (through an additional INGO partner) to local and national actors. In each of these cases, this represented significant additional funding to local and national actors (respectively 18%, 20% and 33% of their respective humanitarian funding).

Converting the overall humanitarian funding reported by those signatories who have separated humanitarian from development funding, the total combined amount of humanitarian expenditures by these 14 signatories in their respective reporting periods amounted to USD 834,797,106. Together these 14 signatories transferred USD 203,553,282 to a combination of local and national partners. Keeping in mind the gaps and weaknesses, this would **indicate** that as a collective, **these 14 signatories transferred approximately 24% of their humanitarian funding to "southern based NGOs"** reflecting a strong commitment towards the original C4C commitment 1. It should be noted that this 24% only represents actual **direct transfer of funding** for humanitarian activities to local and national humanitarian actors. Contrary to what some international actors are trying to argue, the 24% does NOT include in-kind contributions (food or other relief items) and they do NOT include transfer to southern based branches of INGOs.

Challenges

There are a number of significant caveats and limitations relating to the data that has been submitted. Signatories submitted data using six different currencies, based on the "home country currency" of the reporting signatory[6]. Two signatories submitted data reflecting combined humanitarian and development funding as their current

tracking systems do not allow for a separation of funding spent on humanitarian and development efforts. Furthermore, signatories have used different methodologies to calculate the humanitarian share of their overall spending. Some have calculated the proportional humanitarian share of their total annual expenditures (as recommended in the C4C/L2GP guidance note for the reporting)[7], while others have submitted only their total amount of expenditure on humanitarian programming. In the reported data, it is not possible to distinguish between these different approaches behind the calculation. This needs to be noted as one of several uncertainties embedded in this data set. Some larger confederations or alliances of agencies have included the majority of, but not all, international member data in this year's data set. Eleven (11) signatories have used data covering 01 January 2016 – 31 December 2016, three (3) have submitted data reflecting 1 April 2015-31 March 2016, while the remaining signatories have used different reporting periods.

Ten signatories reported on the amount of funding that they can verify as having been spent on capacity building of local and national partners. Although it is not actual money passed on to local actors, five signatories have reported on the value of in-kind contributions to local and national partners. Furthermore, the modest number of signatories reporting on funding for capacity building could also indicate that tracking of financial data on capacity building remains a significant challenge for most signatories.

Several signatories reported that they are waiting to change their tracking and reporting systems until there is a system-wide agreed set of definitions of national and local actors. During the reporting period this work was being undertaken by the IASC Humanitarian Financing Task Team (HFTT), and was finalised in April 2017. The definitions were due to be discussed and agreed upon at the June 2017 meeting of Grand Bargain signatories[8].

Examples of good practice

Some signatories have pooled their approaches, for example in IASC fora or feeding into the sector-wide discussions on definitions or humanitarian actors, nominating a spokesperson to represent their views. Others have shared their learning and knowledge of IATI reporting to support those less familiar with IATI. Two of the C4C signatories are particularly well-versed in IATI reporting and their experiences and advice has been highly valued by others.

Learning

A number of signatories have struggled to both track and publish their funding to local actors. Some organisations do track the figures passed to their partners for internal purposes, but until C4C they have not published these figures externally. Several noted that the guidance note produced by the Local2Global Protection initiative was very helpful in assisting them to think through approaches, definitions and pitfalls . Others have noted that post-WHS there have been a number of useful forums where they can discuss and swap experiences with other NGOs, sharpen their analysis, thinking and approaches and identify best ways forward for their own institutions. Amongst those mentioned were post-WHS workstreams, the Grand Bargain Workstream 2, the IASC Humanitarian Financing Task Team, national platforms and discussions, discussion amongst other C4C signatories, (e.g. at the October 2016 meeting in London) and discussions with their own donors.

Next steps

Many signatories indicate that the challenges noted above (both internal and sector-wide) are currently being addressed; demonstrating that more and better data may become available in coming years. For example, signatories have indicated that they will use the definitions elaborated by the IASC HFTT. Almost without exception, signatories note that within the next year their systems will be improved to enable them to monitor and publicly report on their C4C commitments for financial spend to partners, tracking and publishing the data.

Commitment 2: Partnership. We endorse, and have signed on to, the Principles of Partnership (Equality, Transparency, Results-oriented Approach, Responsibility and Complementarity) introduced by the Global Humanitarian Platform in 2007.

Commitment 2: Partnership

Progress

A large number of C4C signatories reported to have adapted their strategies, policies, guidance documents and tools to incorporate the Principles of Partnership (PoP), in instances where they did not yet include them. Signing the C4C has helped many signatories to make explicit mention of the PoPs in their organisational policies. However, several organisations also state that their existing policies sufficiently synchronize with the PoPs, to not require any further amendment.

Specific policies or organisational documents that were mentioned as having been amended to include or reflect the PoPs include:
- organisational partnership policies
- organisational partnership and capacity strengthening frameworks
- partnership strategies of country offices
- research frameworks for localisation research
- partnership agreements
- emergency toolkits/pocketbooks

This last example refers to a C4C signatory's basic reference toolkit for staff when responding to emergencies. The section on partnership in the toolkit has been overhauled, encouraging a move towards more transformative and equitable partnerships. Other interesting examples of reported progress include conducting desk reviews of partnership agreements currently in use with local organisations to identify strengths and weaknesses, and skills-building trajectories within a signatory organisation on partnership brokering skills. Having reaffirmed the Principles of Partnership as part of the C4C appears to have strengthened one signatory's ability to move discussions on partnership from the realm of broader strategy sessions, to discussing the specifics of recruitment, appraisals and funding. One signatory organisation developed and rolled out a new Partner Monitoring Policy, integrating finance and programmes with practical guidance and tools that reflect their partnership principles and ways of working. Another organisation developed a new 2-way Partner Assessment Tool allowing for extensive partner feedback on their conduct and work.

One organisation reported piloting new ways of working with their partners in one country, seeking to increase the levels of equality and transparency as basis for the relationship with their partners. Another interesting example mentioned by one signatory was efforts to share partner assessments they had conducted with other organisations, to enhance

transparency and initiative complementarity of programming and support to national actors.

Challenges

Signatories also reported a number of challenges: while the PoP are well known within signatory organisations, they tend to not yet be embodied consistently. With some signatories, the PoPs match onto the organisation's own partnership principles to such an extent that they are almost taken as a given and are not accorded additional explicit thought as to how reaffirming the commitments should affect changes in conduct at field, country and HQ levels. Especially the competing priorities and time constraints at field level contribute to structured dialogues on the PoPs often not taking place with programme staff, nor with partners. Actual programme implementation with partners takes precedent over joint explorations about whether the partnerships are truly based on the principles of Equality, Transparency, Results-orientation, Responsibility and Complementarity.

Where the desire to meet the PoPs is evident, signatories report a lack of understanding of how to actually implement the principles into practice in day-to-day programmes implementation. There are also challenges around the less tangible aspect of attitude; a quality of humility, as well as openness to shared learning and measured risk taking. Structurally, one or two signatories report that the current organisational culture and business models of their organisations embody disincentives to collaborating more

equitably (e.g., risk-aversion, high visibility and branding, subcontracting model, power imbalances).

Outside of their own organisations, signatories report encountering challenges in putting the PoPs into practice due to the nature and architecture of the humanitarian eco-system. A few of the issues mentioned include:
- the humanitarian system's inherent promotion of competition instead of collaboration;
- the growing administrative requirements, and;
- donor compliance requirements as well as reductions in funding for partnership processes.

Examples of good practice:
- **Responsibility:** One signatory collaborated with partner organisations in designing or adapting key processes and systems that affect them or their joint objectives; in this case, joint reworking of a signatory's agreed system of gathering and analysing complaints to more accurately gather meaningful inputs. Another organisation ensured that the PoPs were incorporated as part of the organisation's ongoing quality and accountability processes rather than being positioned as an additional add on.
- **Transparency:** One signatory developed a partnership financial management policy that includes mandatory capacity strengthening activities, following identification of needs after a financial assessment. Through this process the signatory's partners know exactly the actions

Sara Torres is a resident of San Juan de Miraflores in Peru. She explains how: *When there's an earthquake, people who live in the communities can lead evacuations. We can do search and rescue, and make sure everyone has food and water and shelter. We can apply a tourniquet and splint a broken leg with a piece of wood. We act fast, and we can save lives, especially if we have training and support.*
Photo: Elizabeth Stevens, Oxfam

they need to take to improve their financial status with the INGO and to move into a position where they can possibly access donor funding on their own without the INGO's support. These financial assessments are conducted in conjunction with the partner organisations and detailed explanations of results and next steps are critical elements of the process.

- **Equality:** One signatory and the wider network they belong to have taken the decision not to ask partners to report in any more details than donors ask of them. Another important aspect of the equality principle is 'equality of voice' - providing consistent, honest and, ideally, structural opportunities for genuine dialogue with partner organisations on issues that affect them or their partnership. One signatory is putting this principle into action by ensuring that partners participate in essential conferences and meetings.
- **Complementarity:** ensuring that organisational strategies or tools build on the understanding of context and reality that partner organisations can provide. For example, one signatory is basing their understanding of issues on the collection of data from local actors, on the basis of which a position paper was developed that in turn will be used to design, develop and implement a training module.
- **Results-orientation:** In order to maximise opportunity for action, and minimise administrative burden, signatories are joining forces where possible. An example is engaging in a joint programme with another organisation in Syria,

allowing the INGOs to minimise the costs of adequate due diligence support and follow up systems, maximise grants and minimise the transaction costs for partners (one report for two partners). Another signatory is pooling resources in support of a local member of their network that is responding to an emergency, allowing the local partner/member to produce one proposal, one budget, and one set of reports for the network, but be supported by a large number of federation members.

Learning

Signatories reported on factors that helped them to achieve progress, pointing to learnings on what works well to support putting the Principles of Partnership into actual practice.

A number of signatories reported the widespread discussions in the humanitarian sector on localisation, and the drive exhibited by important humanitarian stakeholders on this issue, as reinforcing internal efforts to have partnerships high on the agenda of organisations' own leadership. Actual signing of the C4C as well as endorsement of the Grand Bargain resulted in a push to revise tools, and in some cases, rethink business models.

Internal factors that contributed to achieving progress included having organisational and departmental leadership committed to a partnership approach, as well as having strategic indicators to meet and report on related to

partnership. Some signatories reported having partner platforms or global advisory groups with CSO leaders from the global south. Some also reported that having annual partner meetings enables them to work more truly in accordance with the PoPs .

One signatory mentioned that going through the Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS) certification process was helpful, as standards 3, 4 and 6 closely align with the Charter for Change and the PoPs.

A number of factors mentioned by signatories point to the importance of having an 'appreciative perspective' when facilitating and supporting change. Examples include focusing on areas where organisational practices are already in line with the PoPs, such as an organisation's standard practice to complete capacity assessment tools together, or another organisation's effort to build on partnership models and tools used in country programmes where partner-led response models are the norm.

Next steps

A number of signatories that have not yet done so will reaffirm the PoP in new organisational documents, such as partnership guidelines, as well into broader partnership strategies. Reported plans also include efforts to further embed the PoPs in the heart of signatories' core business by using them to review and enhance existing Quality Management systems.

Commitment 4: Stop undermining local capacity.
We will identify and implement fair compensation for
local organisations for the loss of skilled staff if and
when we contract a local organisation's staff involved
in humanitarian action within 6 months of the start of
a humanitarian crisis or during a protracted crisis,
for example along the lines of paying a recruitment
fee of 10% of the first 6 month's salary.

Commitment 4: Stop undermining local capacity

Progress

On the commitment not to recruit national NGO staff in
emergencies, 12 signatories reported that they have not yet
started to work on this commitment or explored how they can
take it forward. For several this was because they are primarily
partnership focused and so recruit very few nationally-
based staff. For others it is because implementation of other
commitments have taken precedent. Still others intend to
begin by establishing a baseline and use that information to
inform what their organisational response should be.

Four signatories undertook research to assess the extent
of the issue and to seek national NGO's views on how
to address it[10]. The research, which covered several
humanitarian contexts including South Sudan and Pakistan,
with a particular focus on the Philippines, was published
in early 2017 in a report titled *Time to Move On*. A human
resources specialist was commissioned to produce a short
paper, *Time for HR to Step Up* aimed at HR professionals,
which took the analysis, and recommendations of *Time
to Move On* to outline a series of approaches NGOs could
take to change their practices to address the recruitment
of national NGO staff during emergency response[11]. The
group are now working with the START Transforming Surge

Project (which funded the research), the CHS Alliance and
senior NGO HR managers to raise awareness within the
INGO community of the detrimental impact of this practice
and to promote sector wide changes within NGO's human
resources and recruitment practices to address this.

One of the four commissioning NGOs, has produced an
ethical recruitment policy[12] which includes a commitment
to provide resources directly to partners before creation
of a new organisational vacancy. The other three are
investigating how to take it forward during 2017, and planning
to work together on this.

Other signatories are focusing on supporting partners in
their efforts to strengthen their human resource systems
and processes, including on staff development and
retention, staff care and well-being and terms and conditions
of service. Several are developing approaches which will
ensure that resources are first provided directly to partners
to help them respond at scale, rather than opening up new
vacancies.

*'Our research has contributed to our understanding of the
negative impact of INGO recruitment on local actors. We*

see capacity building of partners as an important aspect of recruitment for example working with partners to improve their recruitment and retention processes and policies' CAFOD.

We uphold a corporate responsibility to ensure best practice in recruitment of both national and international staff. An example of this is in the 2015 Nepal earthquake. In the initial stages a surge team was deployed which included HR personnel. There were a number of local and national NGO staff that applied to work with us on the Nepal response. Tearfund Human Resources staff had a clear mandate to question candidates thoroughly on their reasons for leaving the NGO they were working with, whilst also encouraging openness with their current employer on their decision to move on. One candidate in particular was transparent in letting her current employer know of her plans to move on. The employer was supportive, provided a reference and agreed the contractual notice period must be worked.' Tearfund.

Challenges

This commitment has some far-reaching implications for international NGOs, which undertake direct implementation of humanitarian response, touching on issues of ethical recruitment practices, developing national versus international surge responses and demanding new approaches to direct implementation. The research undertaken through the START

Transforming Surge Capacity Project (TSCP) found that national NGOs more often lost staff to international organisations during the reconstruction phase of humanitarian response, rather than in the initial response phase. The C4C commitment is limited to the first 6 months of an emergency, so there are clear implications for signatories about both the 'letter' and the 'spirit' of this commitment which need to be addressed as we move forward.

The commitment also speaks to a number of complex human resources related issues such as staff/career development, staff retention, salaries, and terms and conditions of service. Whilst there is no 'one size fits all' answer to these issues, signatories do need to identify, in consultation with their partners, what their position is on these issues, and how far they are prepared to support their partners, embed or second their own staff with local partners, and work to support local organisations' response capacity.

Good practices

'We were able to galvanise our existing partners to support surge capacity required in CAR when there were spikes in conflict and violence resulting in displacement. We did not have to recruit additional staff.'

'Our support for this commitment so far has been demonstrated through three primary workstreams:

i. Identifying, evidencing and measuring the impact of the problem and deciding on strategies to address it
ii. Adaption and implementation/embedding internal policies and procedures to ensure ethical recruitment practices are applied
iii. Leadership on advocacy around this initiative within the humanitarian sector'

Learning

Several signatories report that they are beginning to adopt an approach of embedding international surge staff/advisors within the structure and physical space of the local partner organization, or supporting the local partner to recruit staff, who are contracted to the local organisation but work on a joint INGO/NNGO humanitarian response project. These experiences have led to supporting the development of know-how and considerable mutual learning between INGO and NNGO staff. One agency reports that out of these experiences they have worked with their national partners to jointly develop tailored tools and approaches to ensure more predictability of the next (joint) response and enhanced readiness on the part of both parties to respond. Capacity gaps were jointly identified, with a focus on addressing them during (and after) the crisis.

Several signatories who are part of the START Network report how useful the discussions on surge and ethical recruitment as a result of the TSCP-funded research and

Mohammed Mohammedian works in Darfur as a program officer with the Kebkabiya Smallholders Charitable Society. *In the past five years, there have been four major crises in the area of Kebkabiya. In each case, we were the first aid agency to arrive with help. We started water trucking operations, distributed plastic sheets, water cans, sleeping mats, and other essentials, and as soon as possible, we helped the communities get started on building latrines and sharing key information about health and hygiene. People arrived with nothing, so we distributed cash to help them buy the things they needed most.*
Photo: Elizabeth Stevens, Oxfam

other initiatives within the project have been in helping to raise the issue of recruitment of national NGO staff amongst their own human resources teams as well as at a senior HR level. The discussions have also been useful to understand and clarify the HR implications of the C4C commitment on their own country and surge capacity.

Next Steps

Several signatories report that although they have not prioritized this commitment during the reporting period they plan to put increased emphasis on it during the upcoming year. Amongst the range of initiatives outlined are: undertaking research to establish the extent to which they recruit national NGO staff during emergencies to establish a baseline; establishing an internal working group to define required changes in HR policies and procedures; working with country office HR managers to raise awareness of the commitment and exploring how it translates into recruitment and performance review mechanisms, developing ethical recruitment guidance for heads of HR in countries affected by emergencies; engaging with their own rapid response/surge teams to train them in partner relations; and developing internal analysis and practices on localizing surge.

One signatory who works primarily through national actors has indicated that they are examining how they can integrate this issue into the development of their new partnership policy and administrative and practice guidelines.

Several C4C signatories, who are members of the Transforming Surge Capacity Project (TSCP), are working collaboratively on establishing nationalized surge rosters. One of the four C4C signatories involved in the TSCP Time to Move On research intends to develop action and communications plans based on the findings and recommendations of the research. The action plan will include identifying key stakeholders (at the global, regional and national level) and their potential role in implementing recommendations (for example donors, UN agencies, C4C and relevant networks such as the CHS Alliance). Several signatories note the need to gather case studies which document the impact of INGO recruitment, and the need to undertake continued advocacy work on this issue with stakeholders from across the humanitarian sector (particularly amongst HR actors).

One signatory is on the steering committee of the CHS Alliance HR Conference Europe. It will take place in September 2017 and focus on the role of HR in enabling the localisation of aid, and they will use the opportunity to co-define the agenda as well as increase the engagement among their own HR stakeholders in the Localisation of Aid agenda.

Commitment 5: Emphasise the importance of national actors. We will undertake to advocate to donors to make working through national actors part of their criteria for assessing framework partners and calls for project proposals.

Commitment 5: Emphasise the importance of national actors

Many C4C signatories have advocated to donors on direct funding for national and local actors, as well as taking a broader approach, which encompasses advocacy to the wider humanitarian system on issues around localisation, coordination and participation. Five signatories indicate that promotion of local partners' role in the response is already standard practice within their ways of working, whilst five other signatories indicate the need to further advance on this commitment, offering real potential for exchanging and learning between peers on what has been done already by others.

Progress
A number of C4C signatories report that they have been actively involved in advocacy in relation to localisation. Not all signatories have dedicated humanitarian policy and advocacy capacity, and in these cases they report either being unable to actively undertake advocacy, or working through existing NGO platforms and networks where they can add their name or voice to initiatives led by larger organisations.

Several signatories are active in advocating to their own government donor to promote the localisation agenda, including in Scotland and through national platforms with the German, Swiss, Dutch, Danish, British and Norwegian governments. The work with the German government appears to be particularly well advanced, and the group are working to develop advisory guidance to the German MoFA for funding approaches to humanitarian programmes as well as recommendations on partnership models and strengthening capacity for local partners.

A number of signatories have advocated to their ministries of foreign affairs or departments of development cooperation on the localisation agenda, and some have managed, through concerted lobbying to have these issues/themes to get localisation reflected prominently in their government's new strategy, for example in Denmark, Sweden and Germany.

Challenges
Risk aversion (both fiduciary and reputational), particularly amongst donors, remains a huge barrier to taking forward localisation. Anti-terrorism legislation is placing increased burdens on all NGOs, but particularly Islamic organisations. Several signatories are working on this with their donors participating in cross-government/civil society working groups or processes taking place at the international/supra governmental level. Some note the need to work with national donors to develop innovative approaches to risk sharing, tailored to national context and legislative frameworks. At the same time they note that there is mainly a disappointing lack of progress on this agenda.

Some C4C organisations have noted that when they talk to donors they highlight the need to make multi-year predictable funding available for sustained capacity building of national and local organisations ,to enable them to absorb additional funding and utilise and report on it effectively.

Those involved in advocacy on localisation report that even within some donor governments the commitment to localisation varies depending on what section of government one interacts with. For example, one of the largest donors is promoting the localisation agenda strongly within HQ and in international fora, whilst at the national level project applicants are being told they are over dependent on local actors in places such as Afghanistan and Somalia.

> **We have consistently advocated for greater inclusion of Syrian NGOs in the United Kingdom's Syria response through NGO roundtables and closed door discussions. Islamic Relief helped to facilitate a discussion on what can be learnt from Syrian NGOs/CSOs in accessing besieged and hard-to-reach areas, including measures of success, what activity can be scaled up, and what role humanitarian actors play in supporting this work.**
>
> Islamic Relief

Some signatories report that working through the international NGO humanitarian networks on the localisation agenda is challenging because they represent both partnership focused NGOs as well as direct implementation NGOs.

One of the risks of the localisation agenda is that donors are primarily willing to support local and national actors as they see it as a way to reduce administrative costs, by cutting out the middle person. This means donors going straight to large national NGOs who are already capable of meeting all their administrative requirements. This potentially excludes more locally based NGOs, who are always the first responders in their geographical areas, and this could both threaten the quality of the response as well as reduce the diversity of actors.

Organisational self-interest on the part of some key international actors is another huge stumbling block to effective implementation of the localisation agenda. Particularly through the evidence gathered through the Shifting the Power Project

research on Walking the Talk, several signatories note that this is likely to be difficult to crack.

Learning

A number of signatories note that working through small focused coalitions of like-minded organisations for advocacy, such as the Charter for Change, the Missed Opportunities group, the Local2Global Protection initiative or through national NGO platforms, is a more effective way of achieving advocacy successes than through individual lobbying. Other effective groupings have been through formed faith-based networks or partnering with one other organisation.

One signatory has developed an influencing strategy on Local Humanitarian Leadership and has invested considerable resources in being part of global networks working on localisation issues. This is also contributing to the C4C network in joint advocacy to donors. In addition to influencing global policy arenas, the same signatory, which is a confederation, is well placed to influence multiple home donor governments, as affiliates are important national players in key humanitarian donor countries such as the UK, the Netherlands, Belgium, the United States, Australia and Spain, and also engage closely with ministries of foreign affairs for fundraising for humanitarian action in Germany, Sweden, Denmark, Ireland and Canada.

In the Netherlands for example, several signatories are part of the Dutch Relief Alliance working group on localisation where they provide key inputs, based on the signatories' programming experience and policy work.

One of the Nordic signatories points out: *"The donor has taken the localization agenda upon themselves and have decided to assess to what degree their strategic partners collaborate and capacity build local organizations and authorities. While this is positive, it is also evident that the donor applies a "wait-and-see" approach as to how the localization agenda can be rolled out in practice. This in terms of both accountability towards taxpayers' money and level of due diligence procedures within local organizations/actors – as well as volume of the interventions as few local organizations have a great absorption capacity of funds while delivering large scale programmes (which donors prefer due to their own limited HR capacity to monitor a large range of partners. At the same time the donor is engaged in discussions with the UN agencies on how aid can be transferred as directly as possible)."*

Another notes that *"there seems to be an earnest interest among donors in supporting local and national actors, but still an unclear vision of the way forward to make this possible. There has also been overwhelming agreement amongst a number of donors that if we want to ensure a quality shift of more funding towards local organizations then we must first and foremost institute a stronger focus on capacity strengthening of local organizations. Additionally, donors still recognize that they must do their part to revise granting processes and financial requirements to make the processes more accessible to local and national organizations, although they highlight that they are also facing stiff criticism and oversight from their governments, parliaments and tax paying constituents. Thus, this will be more difficult than they initially perceived."*

Others are working through NGO networks and activities such as through the CHS Alliance, the START Network and its Shifting the Power, Financial Enablers and Transforming Surge Capacity projects, through ICVA and InterAction, and through the VOICE Grand Bargain Taskforce which is focusing on 3 priority areas, one of which is localisation. Five of the C4C signatories, have signed the Grand Bargain and are active in Workstream 2 on more tools and resources to national and local actors. Several have been active in the IASC Humanitarian Financing Task Team (HFTT) and the IASC+ localisation marker working group

which was established in August to draw up definitions of terms in the Grand Bargain and advice on the feasibility of elaborating a localisation marker to track funding to local and national actors. Nine C4C signatories are ACT Alliance members and a number of them note the work ACT members have done in driving forward advocacy on the localisation agenda.

Several C4C signatories have worked together to develop a proposal for a Start Fund National NGO Window, led by national NGO partners. This work is still at the detailed concept stage, however there are indications that some donors may be interested to explore this further as it could offer them a way to reach their Grand Bargain commitment of passing 25% of funding as directly as possible to national and local actors.

Five of the C4C signatories working together through the Missed Opportunities[13] research group have advocated to donors to make passing money through to national actors a funding criteria indicator, whilst others have advocated to ECHO that the EU regulation, which means only EU registered NGOs can directly receive ECHO funds, is changed to enable NGOs based in other locations to receive ECHO funding. Several signatories, including those working through the Missed Opportunities group have advocated to OCHA on addressing blockages and internationally oriented approach of the coordination mechanisms which effectively marginalize national actors.

Good practices

At the request of its local partners in Uganda and Bangladesh, one signatory is working with the Network for Empowered Aid Responders (NEAR) and Development Initiatives (DI) and others to develop coordinated research agenda on localisation and is undertaking research across five countries to understand how funding flows from donors to local and national actors at the country level.

One signatory notes: *'we published at least 3 op-eds last year where local partners is the main theme'.* Another reports: *'As a rule we always take up the issue of the role of local actors with donors in meetings concerning humanitarian issues in general and specific emergencies in particular'*

A third signatory reports: *'in our country programmes we are also assisting partners to strengthen their own internal systems in order to make them more capable of absorbing funding and, by proxy, more attractive to donors. Additionally, we share calls for proposals with local partners, when they are announced, and work alongside them to strengthen their proposals and ultimately their ability to access funding.'*

'We try our best to highlight the great work of our national partners and their value added with our programming, particularly in sensitive conflict zones where many of our partners are the only organisations with access to affected populations'

'We see our role as that of advocates to encourage donors to identify ways they can most effectively provide support to national organisations directly and indirectly.'

Next steps

One signatory is working on field-level Grand Bargain localisation work stream implementation, for example undertaking local partner case studies in Ukraine and field level implementation outcomes in Nigeria and planning to share these within the work stream. The same organisation also reports accessing external funding for partner capacity strengthening, pilot innovation in MEAL for capacity strengthening, using various methodologies like Sense Maker and building the evidence base for the need for consistent, long-term and predictable funding for capacity strengthening.

Sidi Jaquité, is the director of the National Association for Local Development, in Guinea-Bissau. He was involved in the Ebola response and observed a discrepancy during this work: *For the salary of a project manager deployed from Europe or the US, I could hire 50 outreach workers to talk to communities near the border about Ebola prevention. Which is more important?*
Photo: Jane Hahn, Oxfam

Commitment 6: Equality. Our local and national collaborators are involved in the design of the programmes at the outset and participate in decision-making as equals in influencing programme design and partnership policies.

Commitment 6: Equality

The majority of the signatories report that the issue of subcontracting local and national organisations, rather than partnering equitably, is not an issue of significance for them, since they have operating models in which local and national NGOs are the central actor in the design and delivery of the response. Partnership policies do not explicitly refer to the issue of subcontracting, hence few report finding specific issues or challenges related to this. A few signatories take a slightly more self-critical lens, stating that 'some projects and programmes show close involvement from partners in design. Others still look quite pre-packaged and presented to partners as a contract', or highlight that different contexts see different approaches being taken, both to contracting as well as to equality in decision-making. One signatory undertook a research study to better understand how the issues play out in different contexts, using the Principles of Partnership, which includes the principle of equality, as part of the research framework. Another signatory has engaged less formally with selected national offices to look into subcontracting arrangements and partnership models to identify areas for improvement.

Reporting under this commitment generated a wide variety of responses, some responding to the issue of subcontracting specifically, others citing the many ways in which they strive to enhance equality in the partnership relationships. Others again reported ways in which partner organisations were part of accountability and governance systems, while some cited particular statements in specific documents to demonstrate how equality principles are anchored in the institution. This amalgamation of responses makes it difficult to discern a common trend or joint progress, however a number of reported actions merit mentioning, even if they were already in place before signing C4C, as they may serve to inspire others to take a similar approach.

Progress

One signatory mentioned that guidance has been developed to carry out partnership reviews, which includes a tool to systematically review our partnership principles. This same organisation developed guidance for conducting partnership assessments and partner portfolio reviews, using a methodology that identifies how the signatory and the local or national partners add value to each other (highlighting the complementarity principle). This new guidance has been rolled out globally as part of a new partner monitoring policy, and training of trainers trajectories targeting finance and programme colleagues from country offices

accompanied the roll out. The training included sessions on the organisation's partnership approach, principles, power in partnerships, and participatory partnership management.

Another signatory reported to be actively working on further strengthening equitable partnerships as part of their accountability mechanisms, as well as seeking out efforts to coordinate with sister INGOs to minimise administrative burdens on partners while maximising accountability and learning.

Challenges

Reporting on challenges to putting this commitment into practice was more elaborate, ranging from restrictions imposed by back-donor funding to taking a longer-term approach to partnership and instituting partner participation in key organisational structures. One signatory points out that:

"There are enormous gaps, and much heavier discussion is needed on how INGOs move from subcontracting to investing in the long-term structure of local/national NGOs. Donors and UN agencies especially also need to be on board with the cost of moving beyond subcontracting to equal partnership, using accompaniment to strengthen capacity, and establishing clear exit strategies for the INGO."

Signatories for whom subcontracting is part of their organisational ways of working state that there is no quick fix to address these issues, but rather that broader organisational and cultural change is required. For these organisations, their business models and funding models, relying on high levels of visibility for themselves and their technical expertise and high levels of dependency on restricted project funding, are challenges to an organisational capability of equitable partnering in and of themselves.

Emergency programmes with high levels of urgency to respond, and response engagement in fragile states, are repeatedly mentioned as contexts in which it is difficult to put this commitment into practice given the involved time constraints, limited communication means and donor regulations. Despite policies and guidance on partnership being in place in such responses, prior work with partners is often undermined when partner capacity is perceived to be insufficient to meet the humanitarian imperative. The pressure to spend large sums of money quickly also encourages fall-back to subcontracting relationships where local actors are asked to deliver what has already been agreed between the INGOs and donors.

One signatory mentions having had to tighten its due diligence procedures due to the type of countries in which it works. These locations require a level of regular anti-terrorism checks to ensure the funds are being used for their intended purpose. This requirement encourages subcontracting rather than trust-based relationships so central to equitable partnering.

Good practices

- Embedding partners' involvement in project cycle management by explicit inclusion in the organisation's various PME tools and methodologies, partnership MoUs, evaluation policy and monitoring procedures.
- Including the specific wording of the commitment in its international partnership manual/programme management manual by stipulating that local/national collaborators be involved in design of programmes at the outset and participate in decision-making as equals.
- Orienting, training and measuring performance of how their staff work with partners. Staff are trained on not treating partners like sub-contractors, but like equal partners in project implementation.
- Simplifying and harmonizing systems and processes to make them more agile and easy to use for partners, thereby contributing to the INGOs becoming more fit for partnering and moving away from sub granting.

- Including partners in organisational strategy development, country strategy development, development of response strategies, reviews and evaluations at country and organisational levels (e.g. mid-term and end-term evaluations of Strategic Plan).
- Including partner representation on the organisation's board committees.
- Supporting comprehensive and multi-stakeholder assessments of a country's humanitarian capacity – by and for local and national humanitarian actors as a starting point for deeper engagement with humanitarian stakeholders in strengthening collective national capacity as well as enabling local and national NGOs to exercise leadership.

Learning

The importance of modifying the language around partnership with the organisation's own staff as well as with our partners was raised. Such a focus on softer aspects of change, in addition to promoting the use of partner agreements as opposed to sub-contracts, has been fundamental to create a paradigm shift in how the organisation's staff perceive and treat the local partners and how the local partners view their relationship with the organisation's country programme teams. The same signatory also reported that the additional

focus or steer through a more top-down method served to reinforce this approach, such as most staff being asked or required to include an objective in their personal development plans around partnership.

Another emerging insight worth underlining is the importance of building on approaches and tools from within the organisation that are already more suited to equitable partnerships than the more rigid due diligence instruments that are standard in the organisation. One signatory invested resources to understand and document a particularly relevant response, in which the signatory and its local partner developed the response strategy together, and the partner organization's financial rules and procedures were used. Due to the thorough documentation of the experience, the approach and tools from that context and response can now play a more significant role and serve as an example to adopt.

Next steps

Signatories report a number of next steps on this commitment, including:

- Conducting reviews of partnership processes and ways of working as part of the annual review process.
- Critical reviews of partnership agreements, policies and

guidance, including review of recruitment and performance management practices.
- Analysis of results of an anonymised online survey administered with partners in humanitarian assistance in 2015 and 2016 on their perspective of a signatory's Standard Operating Procedures, with the specific focus on the issue of subcontracting.
- Initiating steps to place more of a signatory's organisational resources at the 'front-line' with partners themselves rather than be retained within the signatory's capacity.
- Concerted efforts to map current local and national partners , their capacities to respond to different emergencies as well as their organisational capacities, as well as to identify the current nature of partnerships and the extent to which partners are part of the design and decision-making of humanitarian initiatives from the outset.
- Support regional and country partnering skills building initiatives, identify and address blockers to partnering and equal partnerships in organizational ways of working.

Commitment 7: Robust organisational support and capacity strengthening. We will support local actors to become robust organisations that continuously improve their role and share in the overall global humanitarian response. We undertake to pay adequate administrative support. A test of our seriousness in capacity building is that by May 2018 we will have allocated resources to support our partners in this. We will publish the percentages of our humanitarian budget which goes directly to partners for humanitarian capacity building by May 2018.

Commitment 7: Robust organisational support and capacity strengthening

The reporting on this commitment looked into whether C4C signatories had a clear common understanding of what 'adequate' administrative support for partner organisations looks like, as well as whether signatories are able to track the budget allocated for humanitarian capacity building. From signatories' reports, it was possible to create a rudimentary insight into what signatories' capacity strengthening support focuses on, and which approaches they feel add the most value.

Challenges

Being able to support partner organisations with "adequate" administrative support is particularly challenging. One agency reported to mostly share 50% of earmarked administrative support with their partners. However most agencies reported lacking a clear or consistent approach to the issue, citing differences in country contexts and in the nature of projects and programmes, making it difficult to define a specific organisational policy on this issue. Such practices by INGOs do not contribute to higher levels of transparency between INGOs and their partners.

The majority of respondents indicated supporting direct charges of actual expenses, requesting partners to specify the administrative support required in their budgets (e.g. 15 % of finance manager's salary, 30% of bookkeeper's salary, 5% of institutional audit etc).

One signatory however states that *"It's challenging to truly validate and confirm true costs in many settings. Varying interpretations of support vs. admin are encountered, especially at proposal development stages. Essentially, 'the cost of doing business' will be much more expensive in some settings than others."*

"If we are to develop the capacity of local partners, we will have to commit resources over a long period of time and beyond the immediate needs to implement projects effectively. In the current funding climate this poses an enormous challenge. We need a commitment towards long-term, flexible resources in order to support our partners to become strong independent entities.

Christian Aid

Another signatory points out that the direct charge option is often a challenge for partner organisations as they actually require these funds for future expenses, such as when there are gaps in funding, in which case they don't qualify as indirect costs.

When discussing challenges to ensuring investments in capacity building and institution strengthening, one signatory notes that it has been challenging to really pin down evidence that investments these themes has led to actual improvements in organisational capacity. This ongoing discussion of the real value (return on investment) of capacity development, and with it *what constitutes capacity development*, is also felt by INGOs themselves when faced with donor reluctance to cover administrative support for both themselves as well as their partners. A small number of signatories noted their luxurious position of being less dependent on restricted donor funding, and having more leeway to top up budgets from individual donor to ensure that their partners receive adequate institutional and capacity strengthening support.

Overall, signatories are not yet able to track funding for capacity building, without going into every specific project to pull out the numbers. Such data at the moment cannot easily be retrieved from most signatory's financial systems, and a lot of manual work would be required to be able to put a number on transfer of funds for capacity building activities.

In addition to donor disinterest and information systems' inability to track expenditures, one signatory noted that 'for the most part budgets are determined at country level and generally few Program Managers or Funding Managers are sensitive to prioritizing partner capacity building'.

In conclusion, one signatory sums up the issues as follows, and calls for INGOs to coordinate and collaborate in servicing a local NGO's capacity strengthening needs: *"The question*

here is not so much to give a percentage of project funding, but it is important to disconnect where possible project funding from strategic institutional support, and to make this a long-term commitment. As international partners of local and national actors, we need to improve our approach to jointly supporting local capacities. Therefore, capacity assessments and agreements to build capacity need to be done together with all involved partners, building on a clear strategy developed by the organization that we intend to support in their capacity building. We also need to establish together with relevant donor governments better financial policies that would allow for such activities with more than just a short-term perspective."

What constitutes humanitarian capacity building?

From the reporting, a number of topics and approaches to humanitarian capacity building can be identified. The list is by no means exhaustive, but does create a picture of what capacities INGOs are investing in with their local partner organisations. The types of capacity building or training mentioned in reporting include:
- Conducting assessments
- Digital needs assessment using appropriate ICT tools
- Financial management
- Strengthening HR, Finance and Accountability systems
- Core Humanitarian Standards
- WASH
- Logistics and Supply Chain Management
- Security management, and
- Community-based psychosocial support (CBPS)

Good practices

On financing humanitarian capacity building, funding administrative costs:
- Make available funding for capacity building support in separate grants following a capacity building assessment.
- Include the percentage of funding being allocated to local partners as key indicators under Capacity Building

in organisational partnership agreements with donors (as an instrument to influence and increase country-level investments in partners).
- Setting internal targets: one signatory reports that they have included a target on funding capacity building in their draft International Strategy 2018-2021 (we have

Learning on Capacity Development
One signatory's case study research unearthed the following lessons learnt on capacity development within the context of localized response:
a) jointly planning for emergency preparedness pre-crisis,
b) changing the marker of success from quick, direct delivery mode where leadership, autonomous decision-making and quick action is prized, to: success marked by transferring skills, helping local partners to 'learn by doing', mentoring, supporting, advising and accompanying, showing respect, humility and trust yet being firm of what is required of a life-saving intervention, taking a back seat and elevating the national counterpart;
c) using every opportunity to strengthen skills during response: from designing joint response to defining targeting criteria for assistance, from attending cluster meetings to leading assessments etc.
d) most useful pairings between surge staff and local partner staff were the longer deployments, where relationships were strong, trust established, key capacity gaps filled and responsibilities handed over before the departure of surge staff.

committed 20% of all development and humanitarian funding towards capacity building of partners. This includes in kind contribution in the form of workshops, training courses, technical guidance etc.)

- Include budgets on direct funds for capacity building for partners when launching organisational crises appeals, in addition to already included budgets for assessments and other humanitarian training.
- Inclusion of a budget line for CHS training for partners in all appeals and humanitarian programmes.
- Follow-up partner capacity assessments with the development of a capacity building work plan, which is subsequently supported with resources.
- Work with partners on 1. Including administrative costs as direct expenses; 2. Helping partners to develop allocated cost policy/procedures; 3. Providing funds from private sources to cover gaps due to donor approaches.

On capacity building approaches: Accompaniment, learning by doing, mentoring and working jointly with partners to transfer skills are approaches to capacity strengthening that signatories highlight as being most effective. Also important to note is that strengthening of knowledge and skills go hand-in-hand with actual strengthening of organisational capabilities. For example through subsequent support for partners to develop or adapt their security plans and procedures, or building up effective systems (e.g. HR, Finance, Accountability) that enable partners to successfully access humanitarian funding (e.g. country based pooled funding).

Next Steps

Signatories list the following as key next steps in the run up to May 2018 on strengthening the capacity of local partners and providing adequate administrative support:

- Include analysis and recommendations on how best to build capacity in upcoming evaluations of key programmes to inform the new program (2018-2022).

- Prioritise core funding for partner organisations in next financial year.
- Increase the organisational budget for capacity building activities.
- Identify a focal person in the signatory organisation to develop an organisational policy on these issues.
- Review capacity assessment tools alongside new resources from other networks and agencies and reframe the internal mechanisms for measuring current capacity levels, specific to programmatic response. This should further strengthen future engagement with partners based on their specific programmatic capacity assessment, and ensure that joint development plans created alongside our partners can be appropriate, coordinated and timely.
- Prioritise "getting the basics right" in terms of needs assessments and include budgets in appeals and back donor grants for planned capacity building.
- Explore whether to wind-up the organisation's dedicated humanitarian capacity strengthening unit and mainstream the capacity support function across our emergency response work.
- Improve the coherence of capacity assessments across the organisation and ensure that capacity building is not a one-way approach, but a joint endeavour, based on clearly formulated responsibilities for both sides. Anchor capacity building fully with relevant indicators into our strategic goals and operationalize it on the project level.
- Continue our influencing efforts with donors in order to be able to better provide predictable and longer-term financing for similar activities.
- Configure/alter the organisation's programme and finance tracking system to capture relevant data on capacity strengthening and admin support.
- Manually capture the amount allocated for capacity building in humanitarian projects from now until May 2018, until project and finance information systems are adapted.

The Pathein Diocese takes part in a drill practice-carrying a 'wounded' patient in June 2014, led by Caritas Myanmar (a C4C endorser).
Photo: Caritas Myanmar

Commitment 8: Promoting the role of partners to the media and the public

Commitment 8: Promoting the role of partners to the media and the public. In any communications to the international and national media and to the public we will promote the role of local actors and acknowledge the work that they carry out, and include them as spokespersons when security considerations permit.

A small number of signatories reported that in general, this commitment has not been a priority commitment for them to tackle. A slightly larger number reported that the focus on partner organisations is already so rooted in the organisation's culture and communications, that they did not feel the need to engage in changing the organisation's practices on this issue. The largest portion of responding signatories however felt that the commitment has triggered them to re-examine their communications narratives and practices. They find that there are areas for improvement to more consistently and deliberately promote the role that partners play in humanitarian action. One signatory found that there were variances in adherence to this commitment depending on communications or media formats, and other signatories recognised similar inconsistency. Areas identified for improvement included: giving partner organisations a more visible and prominent place in communications materials, being more consistent in publicly recognizing partner organisations' contributions to the joint work and highlighting both the capacity building support as issues by the INGO as well as the work of the partners as first-responders.

The wording of the commitment ('in any communications')

was mentioned as ill-conceived, since there would be times when it would be unfavourable for the partner or the INGO to do so, triggering resistance in the signatory organisation due to the inherent likelihood of being non-compliant. In cases of such grievance, signatories discussed and identified their organisational commitment and intent in line with the spirit of C4C and commitment 8 specifically. For example, one signatory reported its intention to promote the role of local partners in communication, *when it is an advantage for local partners as well for the INGO to do so – and when it is possible*.

Progress

Most signatories reported to have engaged with colleagues in their communications, media, fundraising and marketing teams to raise awareness of the commitment and its intent. Some signatories report an overall positive response and interest to tell a better story about the organisations' partners and to inform the public about the role of local actors.

Out of the 20 signatories that reported, five indicated that they have developed guidance materials for their communications and media staff to be able better

represent the role and proportion or local actors in in the response work, either in overall organisational guidance materials or for specific responses like Syria. Two signatories reported to have adapted or developed their communications policy and two have incorporated the commitment in newly developed communications strategies. Also interesting is signatories' linking of this commitment to their advocacy work. A few signatories mentioned their communications efforts being an extension of their rooted advocacy work.

Another signatory took a different approach again, reporting that their organisational communications strategy (2016) states that they shall communicate their added value as a faith and partner based organisation by illustrating the advantages that follows this, such as 'being able to work more rapidly, cost-effective and more relevant in accordance with real needs'. This strategy seems to go beyond mentioning and promoting their partners only, but rather includes advocacy for partner-based approaches to humanitarian action by repeatedly highlighting the benefits of this approach.

One signatory reported that, in its hierarchy of messaging, the importance of keeping fundraising messages simple, short and effective is paramount, but that they are now clarifying the model of working with/through partners in supporter communications and outreach discussions with supporters.

Despite seven signatories stating that there was no progress to report yet, overall the following actions and outputs have already been delivered: explicit mentioning of partners in TV and newspapers reports of current responses, comments pieces and op-eds submitted to major newspaper outlets demonstrating local level importance and impact of partner organisations, the production of a powerful documentary film depicting a local partner organisation's work in the world's biggest refugee camp, and the development of new communications/media formats that put partners front and centre.

Challenges
Despite the overall positive tone of the progress reporting on the commitment to promote the role of local partners, signatories did highlight a number of challenges they encounter in putting this commitment into practice.

Some signatories reported that inclusion of partner information and partner spokespersons should not be pursued at all costs. Instead, good communications practice is to ensure that content and form are suitable to political, cultural and security sensitives that may exist around what is communicated.

Including local spokespersons in any communication is seen as potentially harmful as at times the work and the context of the work being discussed in the communications may be sensitive in the HQ country.

One signatory reported that only the organisation's CEO or senior staff members are allowed to talk to media, making it de facto impossible to comply with the commitment. The reasoning given is that local partners might be experts on the ground in their country but cannot know what is going on in the country where the INGO is headquartered - in the minds of the population or amongst politicians.

A few signatories also pointed specifically to the role that media outlets play in this dynamic. Regarding putting forward local partner spokespersons, signatories indicate the necessity to provide native language speakers for their home markets, as otherwise media outlets will not engage, and threaten to work with other INGOs who will

> "
> **Preparedness activities between CARE and local partners should include the development of media protocols for gathering survival stories for fundraising, communication or advocacy purposes. Importantly, both partners should invest in supporting their domestic team to engage and interact with local and international media, providing staff training and advice.**
> CARE International

provide native language spokespersons. This perceived 'straight jacket', contributes to maintaining the status quo and reinforces the nature of competition among INGOs, as it plays into the INGOs' vying for visibility in the media for brand awareness and fundraising purposes.

Related to this, one signatory reported the challenges in interesting their national media outlets in media stories on local partners, stating the national media's tendency to focus on home-grown INGOs as they feel such stories raise the interest levels of national audiences.

A few signatories discussed challenges in obtaining appropriate and quality content from local partners for inclusion in communications to home market public and media outlets. Some identified weaknesses include:
- Partners' abilities to clearly describe their organisation's mandates or nature of work.
- Partners' abilities to confidently represent their role and work to media and public in INGOs' home countries.
- Ability to refer or link to clear information on the partner organisation (absence of professional websites).
- Technical capacities to easily and quickly connect to partners, challenges in telecommunications and ICT infrastructure.

However, an equal if not longer list refers to internal challenges reported by signatory organisations. The most frequently mentioned issue was the apparent tension between the commitment and the marketing and brand positioning needs of INGOs for fundraising purposes.

Inclusion of references to partners in shorter communications is thought to overcomplicate fundraising messages, and inject complexity. One signatory reported their belief that individual donors often assume that their staff themselves go to deliver the work directly and that this is the premise upon which the individuals decide to support the organisation.

Especially in more operational INGOs, the income-generating models are reliant on high visibility and branding linked to their presence on the ground. Signing the C4C and committing to promoting the role of partners strikes at the heart of this model and asks for fundamental rethinking in order to be able to structurally do justice to the role and relevance of their partner organisations.

Other reported challenges pertain to the *form of communications*, such as the short form and character limitation inherent in social media communications, which form increasingly large shares of INGOs communications messaging. When perceived as a choice between inclusion of partner information and effectiveness of messages, the effectiveness of messages is given precedence.

The issue of the *safety* of local partners and avoiding unnecessary risks for partner staff was mentioned a handful of times. Communications on joint action in insecure environments asks for finding a balance between giving due recognition and ensuring safety of partners. One signatory appears to have discussed this issue directly with partners, reporting that 'some partners prefer not to be named for security reasons and in such situation, we will not name them, but we will indicate what their role is.'

A number of more operational challenges were listed as well, including templates that form the basis of information coming to media and communications departments not structurally including the required information. One signatory reports that 'tools such as Song sheets, SitReps and contingency plans do not structurally contain information on partners, their roles, and potential partner spokespersons'. For smaller signatory organisations such adaptation of templates may be relatively simple, whereas for larger confederation-type organisations such adaptation includes processes to agree on and harmonise templates across member organisations, as well as ensuring that new templates are used across the board by all countries.

Good practices
A few activities and approaches that were reported by signatories appeared to merit specific highlighting, as they could serve to inspire other actors keen to promote the visibility and role of local actors in humanitarian response:
- Instituting a practice of sharing media and communications coverage with partners to invite their feedback, looking

to resolve any issues that they might have. This practice helps to avoid 'thinking for others' and allowing partners to determine which communications may be unfavourable for them or pose security risks;

- Development of a guidance document in consultation with local actors, that can be used as a tool to aid in the collecting of appropriate and quality content;
- Provision of media spokesperson training to local actors, aimed at increasing confidence to navigate and maximise opportunities in educating the media and public of their role and work. The training provided by this C4C signatory is context specific, as media perspectives and how a local partner wishes to engage differs across contexts;
- Systematic dual branding of T-Shirts, vests, etc. that humanitarian response teams use in the field (with both signatory and partner logos), as well as dual-branding of marketing materials with the signatory's own and the partners' logos;
- Development of a "lessons learned" document on the integration of partner representatives in public events in the signatory's home nation and at the level of the EU.

Learning

Several signatories report factors that have been helpful in generating progress on the commitment, including initiating and encouraging ongoing dialogues about this commitment and partnership in general with communications, marketing and fundraising colleagues. One signatory chose to engage in conversations with the communications officer on quality and accountability issues, thereby also raising the issues of local actors and rights holders' role and work, framing the issue of how partners are presented in line with accountability and local actors' rights.

Linking into an organisations existing identity or ambition to have a partnership focus has been key to anchor the commitment in organisational strategies, policies, guidance and tools. In one case, the signatory joined forces with the Head of the Press Department to analyse past press releases and publications through this lens in order to identify the current status and discuss the way forward. Another signatory reported a focus on simple asking of questions about partner information in internal briefings and updates, in order to influence internal dialogue and awareness about the commitment to name partners and their role. Increasingly, reference to partner's names, roles and complementary value is being made by the signatory's humanitarian staff exposed to these briefings, as it has become part of the narrative of internal briefing sessions.

Next steps

In addition to further adaptation of organisational policies, guidance and tools, signatories reported on a number of issues that are critical to move this commitment forward. At partner organisations level:

- Invest in supporting their domestic team to engage and interact with local and international media, providing staff training and advice.

- Local and national actors should first be able to align their mandate with provided information based on organisational impact, results and performance, as part of their responsibility.

At signatory organisations level

- Define, in concrete and agreed upon terms, the roles and work of local and national actors.
- Drawing up clear communication protocols for joint clarity with partners on sourcing/developing compelling stories of communities and people affected by the disaster for funding appeals.
- Issues linked to media, visibility and branding of the partnership must be discussed and agreed to pre-emergency. Terms of reference should establish how the partnership will be portrayed including the appropriate use of the organisation's and local partner logos and brands. Preparedness activities between our organisation and local partners should include the development of media protocols for gathering survival stories for fundraising, communication or advocacy purposes. Importantly, both partners should invest in supporting their domestic team to engage and interact with local and international media, providing staff training and advice.

Reflections & suggestions

The progress reports submitted by the Charter for Change signatories demonstrate a huge commitment to change their systems and approaches to work better with and through local actors. By stating this the signatories do not underestimate the challenges and barriers identified by many organisations both within their own institutions and within the wider humanitarian sector. It is encouraging to note that there has been significant progress on the part of signatories and they remain determined to drive this progress further, and to address the barriers at all levels which have prevented national and local actors from playing a more central and recognized role in humanitarian action.

Based on the experience of the first year of working toward the implementation of C4C, we have as signatories identified these following issues, beyond our own commitments, which must be addressed in order to strengthen progress towards the Localisation of Aid:

1. Related to the humanitarian sector:

- Contextualize the localisation debate – recognize that there cannot be one 'fix-all model' to localised response. Context matters, which means different ways of 'localising' in, for example very volatile conflict situations or in contexts with vibrant civil societies.
- Interpret localisation-related funding targets to the benefit of local responders, using the IASC HFTT[14] agreed definitions such that:
  - Funding targets are measures in terms of financial transfers only.
  - Definitions of local responders exclude local/national branches of international organisation/entities.
- Develop new financing mechanisms to accelerate and maximize available support for adaptable and locally-led capacity strengthening.
- Encourage/support a mindset change from donors to jettison their over-cautious risk aversion toward working with NNGOs and to take measures to incentivize their own partners to work in partnership with local and national actors.

2. On partnership & collaboration with national and local actors:

- 'Nothing for me without me' – the consistent and proactive engagement of local partners (through legitimate representation) is critical to any change in the system. Today, engagement and participation of local actors is still lacking and is not systematically sought.
- Maximise the comparative advantage of local and international actors. As long as INGOs/UN continue to dominate direct service delivery, there will be little room for local agencies to grow their experience-based capacity. INGOs need to engage in serious consideration as to where they can really add value and ensure a significant shift away from direct service delivery if not urgently required to reinforce national capacity. This can only occur if:
  - Local actors (including government) have adequate (access to) funding.
  - Local actors have the capacity to deliver at the scale and quality required.
  - Local actors engage in direct service delivery in a way that respects humanitarian principles and minimizes (fiduciary) risk.
- Co-brand responses to ensure visibility for both the INGO and L/NNGO partners.

3. On organizational changes within INGOs:

- Take a 'whole of agency' approach – recognize that there is no quick, technical fix. Seek changes in the way humanitarian action is funded, invested and delivered as well as changes in staff behaviour and organizational culture.
- Foster acceptance, goodwill, recognition and humility within INGOs (and UN) and recognise that for local actors to gain a fair share of power and resources, international actors will need to embrace a future where INGOs have less power and resources and a changed role in the implementation of humanitarian action. Where an INGO is not present on ground when a large disaster hits, refrain from being directly operational and rather work through local and national partnership.
- Undertake joined up action through different initiatives which are driving forward localisation, for example through inter-related Grand Bargain work streams, e.g. on 'simplification and harmonization of reporting requirements', and 'making funding directly accessible to local partners'

Annex 1: signatories that contributed to this Charter for Change 2016/17 Progress Report

Terram Pacis
Johanniter International Assistance
ICCO & Kerk in Actie
Norwegian Church Aid (NCA)
KinderNotHilfe
Tearfund
Caritas Denmark
Caritas Norway
Dan Church Aid
Christian Aid
CAFOD
Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund (SCIAF)
Diakonia
Trocaire
Church of Sweden (Svenska Kyrkan)
Catholic Relief Services (CRS)
Islamic Relief Worldwide
War Child UK
Cordaid
Human Appeal
Oxfam
CARE
Diakonie Katastrophen Hilfe (DKH)

By June 2017, the Charter for Change has been signed by:

Annex 2: Non-INGO endorsers of the Charter for Change (as of June 2017):

Access Development Services *(India)*

ACT Alliance *(Global)*

Action Africa Help International (AAH-I) *(Kenya)*

Adamawa Peace Initiative *(Nigeria)*

ADES – Agences de Développent Economique et Social ONG *(Chad)*

Adeso *(Kenya)*

Adev *(Cameroon)*

Adilet *(Kyrgyz Republic)*

Adult Literacy Centre *(Malawi)*

Africa Humanitarian Action *(Ethiopia)*

Africa Peace Service Corps *(Kenya, Nigeria & Tanzania)*

Airavati *(Myanmar)*

Akkar Network for Development *(Lebanon)*

Amel Association *(Lebanon)*

American University of Nigeria *(Nigeria)*

Amity Public Safety Academy *(Philippines)*

Amity Volunteer Fire Brigade *(Philippines)*

Anglican Development Services (ADS) North Rift *(Kenya)*

Applied Research Institute *(Occupied Palestinian Territory)*

ARDD-Legal Aid *(Jordan)*

Ard El-Insan (AEI), Palestinian Benevolent Association *(Occupied Palestinian Territory)*

Arid Land Development Focus *(Kenya)*

Arysh (Public Association) *(Kyrgyz Republic)*

Asociación Benposta Nacion de Muchachos *(Colombia)*

Association des Acteurs de Développement *(Cameroon)*

Asociación de Desarrollo Agrícola y Microempresarial (ADAM) *(Guatemala)*

Asociacion para la Educacion y el Desarrollo (ASEDE) *(Guatemala)*

Association Tunisienne De Défense des droits de l'enfant *(Tunisia)*

Astha Sansthan *(India)*

Bangladesh NGOs Network for Radio and Communication *(Bangladesh)*

Belay Rehabilitation Center *(Philippines)*

Caritas Bangladesh *(Bangladesh)*

Caritas Developpement Niger (CADEV-Niger) *(Niger)*

Caritas Lebanon Migrant Center (CLMC) *(Lebanon)*

Caritas Nepal *(Nepal)*

Caritas Sri Lanka *(Sri Lanka)*

Cash Learning Partnership *(Global)*

CEN (Civil Society Empowerment Network) *(Afghanistan)*

Center for Disaster Preparedness Foundation *(Philippines)*

Centre for Legal Empowerment *(Kenya)*

Center for Protection of Children *(Kyrgyz Republic)*

Center for Support of International Protection *(Kyrgyz Republic)*

Center of Resilient Development *(Nepal)*

Centro de Promocion y Cultura (CPC) *(Colombia)*

Centro Intereclesial de Estudios Teologicos y Sociales (CIEETS) *(Nicaragua)*

Churches Action in Relief and Development (CARD) *(Malawi)*

Church's Auxiliary for Social Action *(India)*

Church of Uganda Teso Dioceses Planning and Development Office (CoU-TEDDO) *(Uganda)*

Coastal Association for Social Transformation Trust *(Bangladesh)*

Community Development Support Services (CDSS) *(South Sudan)*

Community Initiative Facilitation and Assistance Ethiopia *(Ethiopia)*

Community Initiative for Prosperity and Advancement (CIPA) *(Uganda)*

Community World Service Asia *(Pakistan)*

Concertación Regional para la Gestión del Riesgo (CRGR) *(Guatemala, Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador)*

Coordination, Rehabilitation and Development Service *(Afghanistan)*

Corporacion Manigua *(Colombia)*

East Jerusalem YMCA – Women's Training Program *(Occupied Palestinian Territory)*

EcoWEB *(Philippines)*

emBOLDen Alliances *(USA)*

Emergency Pastoralist Assistance Group – Kenya *(Kenya)*

Environment and Child Concern Organization Nepal (ECO-Nepal) *(Nepal)*

Forum Bangun Aceh *(Indonesia)*

Forum for Awareness and Youth Activity (FAYA) *(Nepal)*

Foundation for Rural Development *(Pakistan)*

Friends of Lake Turkana *(Kenya)*

Fundacion Tierra de Paz *(Colombia)*

GEPA *(South Sudan)*

Groupe d'action de Paix et de formation pour la Transformation (GAPAFOT) *(Central African Republic)*

Hayata Destek (Support to Life) *(Turkey)*

Health Link South Sudan *(South Sudan)*

Human Health Aid *(Burundi)*

Human Rights Movement "Bir Duino-Kyrgyzstan" *(Kyrgyz Republic)*

Humanitarian Aid International *(India)*

Humanitarian Development Consortium *(South Sudan)*

Humanite Plus *(Democratic Republic of Congo)*

Institut Bioforce *(France)*

Institute for Social and Economic Development Assistance (ISEDA – Public Fund) *(Kyrgyz Republic)*

Integrated Risk Management Associates *(USA)*

Indonesian Student Association for
International Studies (ISAFIS) *(Indonesia)*

InterAid *(Uganda)*

Iranian Lifequality Improvement Association *(Iran)*

Jabilia Rehabilitation Society
(Occupied Palestinian Territory)

Jindal School of International Affairs *(India)*

Joint Learning Initiative on
Faith & Local Communities *(Global)*

Joint Strategy Team (JST) comprising of: Bridging Rural
Integrated Development and Grassroot Empowerment
(BRIDGE); Kachin Baptist Convention (KBC); Kachin
Relief and Development Committee (KRDC); Kachin
Women Association (KWA); Kachin Development Group
(KDG); Karuna Mission Social Solidarity (KMSS); Metta
Development Foundation (Metta); Nyein (Shalom)
Foundation and Wunpawng Ninghtoi (WPN) *(Myanmar)*

Jordan Hashemite Charitable Organisation *(Jordan)*

Jordan Health Aid Society International *(Jordan)*

Just Project International *(Global)*

Kapoeta Development Initiative (KDI) *(South Sudan)*

Lawyers for Human Rights *(South Africa)*

Le Ceprossan Asbl *(Democratic Rebulic of Congo)*

Legal Resources Centre *(South Africa)*

Libyan Humanitarian Relief Agency *(Libya)*

Lotus Kenya Action for
Development Organization (LOKADO) *(Kenya)*

Lutheran World Service India Trust *(India)*

Mavi Kalem Social Assistance and
Charity Association *(Turkey)*

Mercy Malaysia *(Malaysia)*

Moroto Nakapiripirit Religious Leaders
Initiative for Peace (MONARLIP) *(Uganda)*

National Secretariat for Social Action (NASSA)/
Caritas Philippines *(Philippines)*

Nuba Relief Rehabilitation and
Development Organization *(Kenya)*

OFADEC *(Senegal)*

Omarang Charity Association for
Multipurpose *(South Sudan)*

ONG Eau Vie Environnement *(Senegal)*

Palestinian Benevolent Association
(Occupied Palestinian Territory)

Palestinian Vision Organisation (PalVision)
(Occupied Palestinian Territory)

Partnership for Faith & Development *(Global)*

People's disaster risk reduction network, inc. *(Philippines)*

PRISNA *(Democratic Republic of Congo)*

PRO-VIDA, Asociacion Salvadorena de
Ayuda Humanitaria *(El Salvador)*

Public Foundation "Bio Service" *(Kyrgyz Republic)*

Public Fund "Mehr Shavkat" *(Kyrgyz Republic)*

Rakai Counsellors' Association (RACA) *(Uganda)*

Ranaw Disaster Response and
Rehabilitation Assistance Center *(Philippines)*

REDESO *(Tanzania)*

Sawa for Development and Aid *(Lebanon)*

Seeds India *(India)*

Settlement Council of Australia *(Australia)*

Signature Research Centre *(Rwanda)*

Shafak *(Syria – registered Gaziantep, Turkey)*

Shaik Tahir Azzawi Charity Organization *(Libya)*

SHARP – Pakistan Society for Human Rights
and Prisoners' Aid *(Pakistan)*

Shoola-Kol (Public Association) *(Kyrgyz Republic)*

Smile Again Africa Development Organization *(South Sudan)*

Society Voice Foundation *(Occupied Palestinian Territory)*

South Sudan Grassroots Initiative for
Development (SSGID) *(South Sudan)*

START Network *(Global)*

STEWARDWOMEN *(South Sudan)*

Strengthening Participatory Organisation *(Pakistan)*

The Federation of Ethnic Communities'
Councils of Australia *(Australia)*

The Indonesian Society for
Disaster Management *(Indonesia)*

Transcultural Psychosocial
Organisation (TPO) Uganda *(Uganda)*

Ukraine NGO Forum *(Ukraine)*

UNASO (Uganda Network of AIDS
Service Organization) *(Uganda)*

Wajir South Development Association (WASDA) *(Kenya)*

Women Aid Vision (WAV) *(South Sudan)*

Women's Centre for Legal Aid and
Counselling (WCLAC) *(Occupied Palestinian Territory)*

Youth Empowerment Center (YEC)
(Occupied Palestinian Territory)

Youth Leadership Forum and
Giving Back Movement *(Indonesia)*

Zanjireh Omid International Charity Institute *(Iran)*

Zion Emergency and Disaster
Rescue Unit (ZEDRU) *(Philippines)*

* Any Southern-based National or Local Organisation
working in the humanitarian sector can endorse the
Charter, the process is open to all reflecting the ever
expanding humanitarian ecosystem.

Footnotes

1. For the list of C4C signatories that reported their progress and provided the input for this report, see Annex 1

2. See http://devinit.org/themes/humanitarian/

3. Either national NGOs or local NGOs as defined by the GHA categorisation, see footnote 3

4. GHA defines 5 categories of NGOs: international NGOs, southern international NGOs, affiliated national NGOs, (which are part of an INGO), national NGOs and local NGOs. see http://globalhumanitarianassistance.org/report/gha-report-2014 page 119

5. Fully respecting security and not necessarily publishing the names of individual partners in conflict contexts.

6. Currency conversions were done as per: http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/inforeuro/index_en.cfm - using the conversion rate from respective currencies to USD listed for month 6, 2016

7. see www.charter4change.org

8. see: www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc/

9. see footnote 6 above.

10. see www.charter4change.org Time to Move On

11. see www.charter4change.org Time for HR to Step Up

12. see www.cafod.org.uk CAFOD Ethical Recruitment policy

13. http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/14-461-j1503-partnering-in-emergencies-report-s0.pdf

14. https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/

Supported by C4C endorser East-Jerusalem YMCA, Palestinian communities are taking on project design and implementation themselves: *It was important for us to implement the project ourselves. It was not done by an NGO or by some company – it was done by us! A lot of work was done voluntary and nobody tried to make a profit. What was saved by choosing a good tender and by voluntary work, we could spent on more projects.*
Photo: Nils Carstensen, L2GP/DCA