**Analysis of the Collective Action of IASC Subsidiary Bodies to Implement the Grand Bargain**

IASC Working Group Meeting

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Rome

* There continues to be a considerable degree of momentum within the IASC Subsidiary Bodies for advancing the activities of 10 of the 51 different Grand Bargain commitments.
* As previously reported to the IASC Working Group, some work streams are more developed in concretizing their work. In particular, the work streams related to transparency, reducing management costs, multi-year funding/ planning, reporting and bridging the humanitarian-nexus, appear especially far advanced in defining guidelines, methodologies, tools and outputs.
* The work of some of the subsidiary bodies is more cross-cutting and interlinked than others. For example:
* The activities of the Humanitarian Financing Task (HFTT) straddles Grand Bargain work streams 1, 2, 7, 9 and 10.
* The Task Team on Strengthening the Humanitarian-Development Nexus in Protracted Crisis (HDN) and the UN Working Group on Transitions have facilitated a joint workshop, developed a joint work-plan, and produced a roadmap and plan for future action to advance the New Way of Working between humanitarian, development and peace actors. The roadmap details activities to operationalize the implementation of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus in the field and the required complementary activities at the global level.
* There IASC Reference Group on Protracted Displacement has requested assistance in framing and defining its outputs within the context of the Grand Bargain commitments. The Reference Group has yet to become a fully-fledged and functioning group and community of practice.
* Further details are needed regarding the engagement - or otherwise - of some groups in forwarding the Grand Bargain commitments. These include the IASC Cash Task Force, the IASC Costing Sub-Group, theinformal Cash Working Group,and theIASC Task Force on Needs Assessments.
* There have been recommendation that the IASC Costing Sub-Group be expanded to include budget and finance experts with expertise in developing response plans at the country level.
* The Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP) has been very active in advancing the discussion on the cash transfer programming, referencing the 106 cash related commitments made at the WHS to argue the case that that cash assistance is an important component of the new aid architecture. CaLP will launch The State of the World of Cash initiative to support the implementation of cash commitments and track its progress.

**Some work stream specific questions:**

* **Transparency:** It is unclear how this work stream will contribute to reducing the ‘burden’ of donor reporting, and how it will support the investment in partner capacity to publish data. (IATI’s Senior Business & Data Analyst and Development Initiatives are convening a workshop at the end of March focused on the Grand Bargain work stream on transparency.)
* **Local and National Responders:** Who will be following up the Grand Bargain commitments to incorporate capacity strengthening in partnership agreements? Will the 25% target be addressed collectively, or only individually? Will consensus on the definition of a local actor, interpretation of ‘as directly as possible’ when referring to direct funding, and agreement on the tracking of funding flows be forthcoming through the development of a localisation marker?
* **Cash-based programming:** The Informal Cash Working Group and IASC Costing Sub-Group had sought to explore options for a light, incremental approach to cash-based programming, building on field analysis and lessons learned from current and previous costing approaches, and testing of different methodologies, initially through a table top simulation exercise. It is unclear whether there has been significant progress with this initiative. And will additional reporting on cash contributions undermine attempts to simplify and harmonize system-wide reporting?
* **Duplication and Management Costs:** What is happening to follow-up the commitment to “provide transparent and comparable cost structures by the end of 2017” And if there any role for the Working Group in advancing this commitment? TheHFTT is commissioning a study to explore options for partner capacity assessments to become more inter-operable in some country contexts. (In their capacities as co-convenors of this work stream, UNHCR and the Government of Japan hosted a workshop on 23 March that discussed reducing individual donor assessments; harmonization of partnership arrangements and cost structures; joint procurement and the options for increased efficiencies through technology and innovation.)
* **Needs Assessments:** Clarity on the status of the IASC Task Force on Needs Assessment would be useful. Some discussions around this work stream activity have suggested that one ‘global’ joint needs assessment is unable to meet the objectives of all the actors in the ground. Instead in dynamic and evolving contexts multiple agile, multi-level and multi-timeframe assessments are more useful.
* **Participation Revolution:** There is some uncertainty regarding what the Theory of Change is meant to accomplish, and who is leading and spearheading this area of focus?
* **Multi-Year planning and funding**: Is there sufficient enough ongoing activity to provide the research and evidence to substantiate the benefits of multi-year funding?
* **Earmarking:** There appears to be ‘spotted’ activity within the IASC to explore the reduction of donor earmarking. (The co-convenors of the Grand Bargain work stream dedicated to working on reducing donor earmarking – ICRC and Sweden – will facilitate a workshop in the coming weeks.)
* **Harmonized and simplified reporting requirements:** Are there linkages being made between this work-steam and other subsidiary bodies whose work also encompasses transparency and reducing management costs elements?
* **Strengthening engagement between humanitarian and development actors:** What is the role of IASC subsidiary bodies in ensuring a joint approach of the UN humanitarian and development systems to respond - for instance – to crisis in current feminine-affected countries? How can the IASC spearhead efforts that deliver both life-saving, shorter term interventions and those longer term interventions that support resilience against future shocks?

**More generic Grand Bargain-related questions:**

* How is the work of each particular subsidiary body to be measured given that the focus of engagement may deliver greater impact at a capital, as opposed to a field level, and vice versa? Are there agreed benchmarks and indicators to measure progress, which will necessarily be sequenced and progressive? Can existing measurement tools be utilized, or can new tools be developed without creating complex new coordination systems? Is there some flexibility to refine indicators against which to measure progress and definitions of ‘success?’
* Does the IASC Working Group recommend narrowing down some of the activities of the subsidiary bodies to a very concrete set of objectives? Are some of the subsidiary bodies’ work-plans too broad and unmanageable?

* Is there sufficient enough activity focused on narrowing the funding gap and deepening the available pool of resources that was the initial starting point of the Grand Bargain discussions?
* Where does the strongest added value of the subsidiary body collective lie, and realistically how long might it be anticipated before the Grand Bargain leaves a footprint?
* How does the Working Group view the IASC’s role in taking forward and contributing to realizing the commitment from the Grand Bargain?
* Are there perceived opportunities where the IASC Working Group can further support and contribute, or challenges and gaps where the Working Group can offer guidance?
* Given the diversity of constituents engaged in the Grand Bargain process, how can those stakeholders who are not ‘obliged to report to the IASC’ be encouraged to give feedback and inputs?
* Is there guidance that the Working Group can provide where there is overlap between the work streams? The work stream on localization and cash call for more earmarking of donor contributions, and consequently appear to be ‘undermining’ the activities of work-stream 8 that focuses on reducing earmarking.
* How can the Working Group promote the Grand Bargain? Are there opportunities for both internal and external advocacy to promote the ‘New Way of Working?’