



Grand Bargain third annual meeting
27 June 2019
International Rescue Committee's Statement

The International Rescue Committee (IRC) wishes to make the following statement as a signatory of the Grand Bargain on the occasion of its third annual meeting.

In Year Three of implementation, the IRC has continued making considerable progress against its commitments, particularly on cash, transparency and reduced management costs. In this regard, we wish to recall the following three achievements:

- The proportion of assistance we delivered as **cash** increased 8.32 percentage points, from 17.68% in FY17 to 26% in FY18, exceeding our target of 25% in cash assistance by 2020. To support other organizations efforts, we developed and disseminated a report, [*Seven Steps to Scaling Cash Relief: Driving Outcomes and Efficiency*](#), which reflects the steps we have taken towards the 25% target.
- On **transparency**, as of mid-2019, IRC had published 71 IATI activities, up from 37 activities in 2017. IRC continues to publish IATI data on all projects funded by the UK's Department of International Development (DFID) and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. We also published IATI data for a number of awards funded by other European donors that do not make it a requirement, including Irish Aid, Danida and Sida.
- To improve **cost effectiveness**, IRC partnered with a number of agencies to pilot our [*Systematic Cost Analysis \(SCAN\) tool*](#), which is designed to improve the transparency and comparability of cost efficiency data across INGOs. As of December 2018, an additional ten IRC country programs have been actively using SCAN for cost efficiency analysis, and four INGO partners have used SCAN in Iraq. We also launched a consortium to expand the tool sector-wide, working jointly with Accion Contra el Hambre, CARE, Mercy Corps and Save the Children.

The IRC has also been a leading voice on increasing the amount and quality of **multiyear financing** from donors, including United Nations agencies. Through our advocacy work, we have shown how a number of government donors have increased disbursement of multiyear humanitarian aid, while UN agencies have yet to pass along this financing to implementing partners. Our work has been shared with the Grand Bargain leadership and other key stakeholders and has generated much interest among donors.

We appreciate the Grand Bargain's renewed focus on **gender equality and women's empowerment**, which are cross-cutting priorities for the IRC, as shown by our ongoing efforts to integrate gender-sensitive considerations into IRC's standard program practices. On the other hand, despite the Grand Bargain's repeated calls for mainstreaming the humanitarian-development **nexus**, we have not seen concrete change since last year and remain concerned that the issue of the nexus is only considered for annual reporting purposes.

Going forward, and in preparation for the discussions that will be held at the third annual meeting itself, we suggest the following **priority actions to scale up the progress** made by the Grand Bargain so far:



1. Focus on **overcoming the barriers of short-term funding** in protracted crisis contexts by accelerating the reforms needed to plan for medium and longer-term responses. As a contribution to this priority – and its interplay with other work streams –, IRC will carry out research and continue to advocate with key government donors and UN partners to reform policies that currently prohibit UN agencies from **passing through multiyear financing to frontline implementers**. We will also promote stronger linkages with other global policy processes, such as the Global Compact on Refugees, which recommends the use of flexible, unearmarked and multi-year funding wherever possible.
2. **Improve efficiency of cash delivery through increased collaboration**. As a member of the Collaborative Cash Delivery Network, (CCD) the IRC is committed to its vision of improved efficiency, reduction of duplication, and improved impact. We will be increasing cash across outcome areas, building the evidence base.
3. On **transparency**, ensure that the shift towards a focus on IATI data use is grounded in a clear understanding of who the data users are and what their needs are, and that changing expectations for NGOs are sensitive to the administrative burden created by new requirements. We **support greater use of data** and conversations towards automating/harmonising data production and suggest that any upcoming Grand Bargain commitments on data use should be based on the results of the Publish What You Fund research on transparency data use, which will highlight the information which is of most value to the sector. We also recommend that any future tool development and changes to donor requirements are centred on reducing the reporting burden to free NGO capacity to engage with data use instead of data production.
4. On **reduced management costs**, seek a shared understanding and use of value-for-money data to get a better sense of what are reasonable costs for a specific humanitarian intervention in different contexts. As a contribution to this priority, IRC is co-leading the release of a guidance note on cost-efficiency analysis of cash and other basic needs programming, based on the SCAN method.
5. Treat the **nexus** as a top priority for collaboration across work streams. The Grand Bargain Facilitation Group has a key role to play to make sure all work streams learn from good practices to longer term funding and planning. The World Bank's approach to addressing refugee situations is a promising example of how the nexus can work in practice. The Bank's co-chairing of the **joint needs assessment** work stream together with the Netherlands is another encouraging factor that can help identify more sustainable solutions at the outset of a crisis.

The IRC will continue to engage on the Grand Bargain, providing its technical expertise and advocacy support to several work streams, including localization, the participation revolution and harmonized reporting. As we embrace Year Four of implementation, we look forward to renewed political momentum under the leadership of the incoming Eminent Person, Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation Sigrid Kaag of the Netherlands. Together, we stand ready to engage in meaningful discussions – both with other Grand Bargain signatories and other relevant policy fora – on how the Grand Bargain can promote faster systemic change in policy and practice.

Thank you.