

Grand Bargain in 2021:

Annual Self Report – Narrative Summary

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(NB. Please limit your answer to no more than **4 pages in total** – anything over this word limit will not be considered. Please respond to all of the questions below.)

Grand Bargain in 2021

Question 1: Reflecting on the information you have provided in the Excel spreadsheet, please highlight the 2 or 3 key outcomes or results relating to the Grand Bargain that your institution achieved in 2021?

Partnerships with Local and national women-led organisations have been central to 2021 ActionAid’s Covid-19 response and other humanitarian crises responses in 2021. Local and national women rights and women led organisations, including young women’s organisations managed humanitarian and protection responses in over 40 responses, to lead needs assessments in their communities, beneficiary registration and selection, distribution of relief supplies, Covid-19 awareness raising activities, protection advocacy and response monitoring. Other activities led by women’s organisations include social media campaigns, video and case study development.

ActionAid and partners continued to participate actively in the UN cluster system, especially in the protection, food security, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), nutrition, shelter and education clusters as well as in a number of sub-clusters/working groups including the gender based violence (GBV) sub-cluster and cash working group. In Vanuatu, participation with the health cluster and Ministry of Health allowed for strategic collaboration on Covid-19 and other priorities of the Health cluster. These engagements are contributing towards the Grand Bargain’s efforts on participation revolution by improving leadership and governance mechanisms at cluster/sector level as well as ensuring engagement with and accountability to people and communities affected by crises.

At global level, eight¹ ActionAid countries, supported 22 women rights organisations to advocate for their leadership in the future Grand Bargain 2.0. Their advocacy messages were contained in the ActionAid “Bargaining for Better: Bringing a Feminist Lens to the Grand Bargain 2.0” policy brief which is available on the [ActionAid website](#). The policy brief focuses on the importance of investing in local women’s leadership and promoting the Inter-Agency Steering Committee (IASC) Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and Girls policy framework and considerations within all humanitarian action as well as in the new Grand Bargain operational framework as a means to achieve effective localisation that works for, and empowers, women and girls affected by crisis.

ActionAid recognises that, as well as being an effective and efficient way of delivering humanitarian support, cash programming has gender transformative potential. ActionAid is a member of The CALP Network and the Cash and locally-led response Working Group (linked to the Grand Bargain) is advocating for greater leadership of women’s organisations in designing cash programmes to meet the protection and other life- saving needs of women, girls and communities in crisis contexts.

¹ ActionAid Countries - Bangladesh, Colombia, Ethiopia, Haiti, Jordan, Myanmar, Nigeria, Lebanon, Liberia, and Palestine.

Of the 40 humanitarian responses implemented in 2021, 50% included cash and voucher assistance in excess of (1,523,421.21 USD). Of the 10 sampled countries of the Covid-19 responses real time evaluation (2020-2021), 80% provided economic support as part of their response, with 54% providing cash for basic needs. Cash and vouchers were provided where cash transfers services are common and integrated into the local economy such as Myanmar and DRC. Other countries such as Colombia prioritised providing cash to GBV survivors for other varied needs. Through providing cash, countries such as Kenya and Afghanistan boosted local income generating activities and farming to support livelihoods.

Question 2: Briefly explain how the outcomes contribute to achieving the Grand Bargain 2.0 enabling priority 1 (quality funding).

Enabling priority 1: A critical mass of quality funding is reached that allows an effective and efficient response, ensuring visibility and accountability. (For ease of reference, see Senior Officials Meeting recommendations [here](#).)

ActionAid prioritises meaningful partnerships with women's organisations and working with grassroots women's groups, encompassing quality funding for their organisations. ActionAid Brazil's strong commitment to partnerships is demonstrated with 51% funding transferred to women-led organisations that implement programmes with an intersectional approach, prioritising Black and indigenous women in their 2021 humanitarian programming. ActionAid Haiti's Earthquake response provided 30% of the funding to national and local partners of which half was extended to women's organisations. In the Zimbabwe response to drought and Covid-19, that percentage was 80%. ActionAid Liberia reported that no less than 60-70% of their budget went to national and local partners.

ActionAid is a proud member of and currently hosting [the Feminist Humanitarian Network \(FHN\)](#). This is a global collective of local/national women's organisations, international organisations and individuals advocating for transformation of the humanitarian system to one that is responsive, accountable and accessible to women and their organisations, in all their diversity. As part of internal advocacy related to hosting the FHN, and feedback from women's rights organisations (WROs) being part of the FHN, AA reviewed and changed some internal policies that have led to reduced reporting burden on FHN women's rights organisations in Liberia and Nigeria. The changes include simplifying reporting requirements, harmonising partnership agreements and sharing partner capacity and assessment information with donors.

ActionAid continued to engage with [the Charter for Change](#) in 2021, with focus on AA country level support to link the charter with on-going (and improving) partnership principles and practices with local organisations and networks. This entails ensuring meaningful partnerships for humanitarian work, allocation of a fair share of overhead costs, advocating to donors to release funding directly to local organisations, tracking the quality of funding released to local organisations and increasing the role of local organisations in humanitarian media and communications work.

Question 3: Briefly explain how the outcomes contribute to achieving the Grand Bargain 2.0 enabling priority 2 (localisation and participation). *Enabling priority 2: Greater support is provided for the leadership, delivery and capacity of local responders and the participation of affected communities in addressing humanitarian needs.*

As part of ActionAid’s commitments to localisation within the Grand Bargain, the federation has committed to transferring at least 25 per cent of our humanitarian funding to local and national organisations. ActionAid further recognises that there is a direct link between localisation and transparency. Transparency supports tracking progress on the localisation agenda more effectively by providing accurate information and trends to our organisations across the federation to help inform future decision-making processes.

ActionAid UK and AA International Humanitarian Action and Resilience team continued to engage in the Grand Bargain’s Workstream 1 on Greater Transparency, influencing for improved and increased entry points for local actors’ uptake and use of the existing data platforms. The workstream will be taking forward recommendations such as ensuring an increase in local actors’ engagements with donors, which would bring a better understanding of the work done by local partners during programme implementation

ActionAid UK and Bangladesh initiated organisation-wide learning on the use IATI (International Aid Transparency Initiative) by producing a learning brief to visualise AA Bangladesh’s Covid-19 response in 2021. The learning brief increased knowledge of IATI across AA members and also demonstrated AA’s approach to localisation in practice. It also showcases how useful regular reporting to IATI can be in tracking funding flows to local organisations during humanitarian response. ActionAid UK Bangladesh, Kenya, Ghana and Rwanda are IATI publishers and are therefore included in the Humanitarian Data Portal.

Grand Bargain and cross-cutting issues

Question 4: How has your institution contributed to the advancement of gender equality and women’s empowerment² in humanitarian settings through its implementation of the Grand Bargain? What results/outcomes have been achieved in this regard? (Please outline specific initiatives or changes in practice and their outcomes/results).

ActionAid co-chairs the [Inter-Agency Standing Committee \(IASC\) Reference Group on Gender and Humanitarian Action](#) group with UNOCHA, actively championing the integration of gender equality and women’s empowerment in the humanitarian action system coordinated by the IASC. ActionAid is one of four civil society members on the [Women Peace and Humanitarian Fund](#) board, with a collective agenda of shifting the power and increasing quantitative and qualitative funding for women’s organisation at the frontline of crisis. These memberships are a demonstration of ActionAid’s commitment to championing a feminist, transformative agenda at a global level. In the Strategic Programme Implementation Framework (2021-2023) guiding our collective programmes within the [Action for Global Justice Strategy](#), ActionAid will apply a decolonial and racial justice lens vis a vis global governance rules, systems and institutions including the humanitarian system.

ActionAid joined other international NGOs and networks in lobbying the IASC Deputies group to make gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls (GEEWG) a priority in their future strategy. This led to IASC Deputies meeting on 22 November 2021 in Geneva, where it was agreed to “establish gender equality and the empowerment of women as a standalone strategic priority for the IASC in 2022-2023 to ensure its centrality to humanitarian action”. This major win could be referred to promote gender and women’s leadership in other influencing work in the Grand Bargain and Charter for Change.

² Refer to the IASC definitions of gender equality and women empowerment, available [here](#).

As a co-founding member of the FHN, ActionAid supported the Network's research: "[Women's Humanitarian Voices: Covid-19 through a feminist lens](#)" on 20th May 2021. Led by FHN women's rights organisation (WRO) members in eight countries - Bangladesh, Kenya, Lebanon, Liberia, Nepal, Nigeria, Palestine, and South Africa - the research documents the challenges presented by the humanitarian system to women's rights organisations throughout Covid-19, and the feminist solutions that they have developed to overcome them. As a proud co-founding member of the network, ActionAid will continue to support women rights organisations to lobby governments and the international community towards investing in preparedness for WROs so that they are better connected to the humanitarian system, trained on the most up-to-date sector standards, and can scale up their funding and programming quickly in the event of emerging crises.

Question 5: How has the humanitarian-development nexus been strategically mainstreamed in your institutional implementation of the Grand Bargain commitments?

Please explain how your institution has linked commitments 10.1 - 10.5 with other commitments from other workstreams.

Humanitarian and resilience work is foundational to ActionAid's strategy; building resilience and preventing and responding to crises as we work to achieve climate and economic justice and respond to humanitarian crisis and disasters in line with our [humanitarian signature](#)³. ActionAid embeds and implements the resilience approach at the community level through a regional network of resilience hubs (Haiti, Uganda, Malawi and Cambodia). In 2021, the focus has been on strengthening the hubs through developing long-term strategies and immediate operationalisation work, with Haiti focusing on earthquake response.

ActionAid is an active member of the [Global Network of Civil Society Organisations for Disaster Reduction \(GNDR\)](#) at the operational and governance level (Board) of the network influencing with ActionAid propositions and initiatives that are aligned with our humanitarian and resilience signature and approaches. ActionAid has engaged extensively with UNDRR, promoting women's engagement over the past 3 years to speak at high-level and side event panels to showcase local women-led and resilience work in protracted crises. With the contribution and influence from ActionAid, women's organisations and GNDR, UNDRR has now a clear policy to [promote gender equality and women's leadership in the 2022 Global Platform](#) and other events (<https://globalplatform.undrr.org/practical-information/gender-equality>).

After a 3-year journey, the Guidelines on Working with and for Young People in Humanitarian and Protracted Crises were finalised and endorsed at the (final) IASC Emergency Relief Coordinator level. The Compact for Young People [in Humanitarian Action](#) includes an annex 5 on how to engage young women in humanitarian action, that ActionAid and Restless Development has produced, and which has – now with IASC endorsement – become the sector standard. ActionAid Denmark and AA's International Humanitarian and Resilience team continue to strengthen the capacities of young people in humanitarian action as co-chairs of the "Capacity" Taskforce, marked by a launch in February 2021, where AA Secretary General offered AA's support and commitment to the Compact. This entails

³ ActionAid (2020) "Creating lasting impact: The power of women-led localised responses to Covid-19". There is a graph of "ActionAid Humanitarian Signature" in page 5.

supporting the promotion of community-based disaster risk reduction and advocating for risk informed planning and public investment, strengthening resilience of the most at-risk communities to all shocks and stressors.

Question 6: Has your institution taken any steps towards improving risk sharing with its partners? If so, please describe how. *(For ease of reference, please see a set of actions to enhance risk sharing as suggested in the Netherlands and the ICRC [Statement on risk sharing](#).)*⁴

Across humanitarian responses, ActionAid countries have reported strong staff and partner capacity to implement the Covid-19 response work. Trainings were offered to staff and partners focusing on ActionAid's Human Rights Based Approaches (HRBA), the Core Humanitarian Standard, SHEA and Safeguarding Policies. These trainings and gradual investments in programme quality and systems strengthening for partners represents AA's commitment towards sharing power and ensuring that our collective humanitarian actions are delivering timely, accountable and quality responses to crisis affected communities guided by global humanitarian standards and principles.

As a member and Board member of the [CHS Alliance](#), ActionAid continues to promote accountability and learning throughout its humanitarian responses. Hence, the federation continues to invest in and conduct Real Time Evaluations of its' humanitarian responses. Lessons from the Real Time Evaluation of the Covid-19 crisis where 10 countries participated, have continued to guide the federations' response in 2021 with quarterly Oversight Group Meetings led by the Secretariat General and Head of the International Humanitarian and Resilience Team.

⁴ During the 2021 Annual meeting and in consultation leading up to this Signatories have expressed a strong interest in advancing the risk-sharing agenda. As communicated, the Netherlands, ICRC and InterAction are in the process of setting up a Risk Sharing Platform. This work will benefit greatly from an inventory of Signatories' risk-sharing practices.