

Grand Bargain in 2021:
Annual Self Report – Narrative Summary

Name of Institution: The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

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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?

In view of strengthening the role of local actors, the ICRC continued its efforts to reinforce and structure its work with International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (hereafter the Movement) partners to increase **multi-year investment in the organizational development of National Societies (NS)** responding to crises. The ICRC continued to engage with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) on the **National Society Investment Alliance (NSIA)**, which nonetheless remains underfunded. Together with its Movement partners, the ICRC helped strengthen the capacities of NSs in the areas of finance and branch and volunteer development, and started to explore new areas to support, including first aid, restoring family links and resource mobilization. The ICRC has also deepened its engagement in security management and crisis communication, as part of the **Safer Access Framework**.

The ICRC is committed to adapting its internal systems and ways of working to ensure that NS capacity-strengthening is mainstreamed across the institution. The **Inclusive Response Approach** aims to promote practice and a shift in mindset towards a humanitarian response that is more inclusive of Movement partners, especially the NSs in countries where the ICRC operates. This evolving approach is now implemented in close to 20 countries, resulting in improved planning and coordination with NSs and greater consideration of their capacity-building needs. The ICRC and the IFRC have also worked to further the **Strengthening Movement Coordination and Cooperation (SMCC)** initiative, to better use collective assets and reduce costs in emergency operations. In 2021, the SMCC initiative continued to shape the collective endeavour of Movement components in contexts such as Ethiopia, Haiti and Afghanistan. The Movement also issued a coordinated appeal to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Finally, technical departments (e.g. Protection, Health, Water and Habitat) within the ICRC are mobilized to support NS services and operations more sustainably and systemically.

The ICRC has further rolled out action plans on reinforcing **Accountability to Affected People (AAP)**, which now exist in 16 delegations. The action plans were accompanied by training for some 650 staff members in 2021. In addition, the ICRC has scaled up beneficiary feedback channels through its Community Contact Centers. By the end of 2021, 11 ICRC delegations had operational contact centres, through which people were able to provide feedback on ICRC programmes or seek information on existing services. The ICRC received a total of more than 60,000 calls through these centres, which are documented in a central customer relationship management system that allows for the tracking of cases and the type of requests received, as well as analysis of the requests and feedback received based on sex, age or disability. Following the adoption of the **Vision 2030 on Disability** in 2020, a work plan was formulated, and implementation started in 2021. More than 200 staff were trained and 15 working groups were formed to devise delegation-level action plans that complement existing AAP action plans. One of the actions under way relates to accelerating the development of partnerships with local organizations of persons with disability to enable their constituents to participate in different ICRC programmes. At the Movement level, the ICRC worked with the IFRC to update and release the [Movement guide on Community Engagement and Accountability](#).

The ICRC stepped up its efforts and investments in building its capacities to use **Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA)**, both in overall volume and in wider application where it is deemed the best response option. This included increased use of CVA across departments to achieve shelter, health, and protection outcomes, as well as the promotion of CVA as a way to not only respond to needs but also to prevent negative coping strategies, particularly for persons at risk such as victims/survivors of sexual violence.

To attract more **quality funding**, the ICRC continued to provide donors with evidence-based narratives on the importance of flexible funding to the organization and engaged in policy dialogue with its major donors on quality funding. The ICRC reported on the use of the flexible contributions it had received and acknowledged the alternative ways through which its major donors had made quality funding available to the ICRC. The ICRC also started to publish its financial data to the IATI platform in an automated manner, to enhance **transparency** and increase the availability of its data.

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

In order to unlock more quality funding across the sector, Signatories were encouraged to enhance the visibility of donor contributions and adopt a more holistic approach to quality funding. The ICRC initiated a dialogue with its donors on quality funding in order to identify ways to support counterparts in making the case for more flexible humanitarian funding. A dedicated Working Group (WG) was established to jointly develop an **advocacy framework** to support donors with relevant information and arguments, as well as plan high-level engagement with decision makers in their capitals. In line with this approach, the ICRC's senior leadership directly addressed donors' parliaments and other decision makers to explain and demonstrate the benefits of unearmarked funding. The WG also provided a space for the ICRC and its donors to openly discuss donors' need for **visibility and timely information** on the use of their flexible contributions. The ICRC will continue these discussions with its major donors in 2022 with the aim of jointly identifying solutions to address donors' needs while preserving the ICRC's ability to allocate funds based on needs. In addition to the ICRC's efforts to secure flexible funding, the organization continued to promote **alternative ways** to meet its needs for flexibility when donors are unable to further increase the amount of unearmarked contributions to the ICRC. Through dialogue with its donors, the organization promoted good practices to enhance the **quality, flexibility and timeliness** of their earmarked contributions.

Question 3: Briefly explain how the outcomes contribute to achieving the Grand Bargain 2.0 enabling priority 2 (localisation and participation).

To improve the quality of humanitarian responses, the views and priorities of affected communities must inform the design of programmes. The ICRC is committed to enhancing the **participation of affected communities** in its programmes and this is demonstrated by ongoing efforts at policy, systems, department, and delegation levels. In addition, inclusive participation of affected people in identifying priorities and designing responses are at the centre of ICRC's new **Outcome Based Approach**, which seeks to enhance the ICRC's multidisciplinary response. In order to further harmonize approaches between ICRC programmes, a set of standard AAP indicators was developed and introduced for the 2022 planning cycle, for use by selected departments.

The ICRC is also committed to supporting its local partners, the NSs that are at the front line of humanitarian responses. Through a variety of ongoing Movement processes and initiatives, the ICRC is contributing to **enhancing cooperation and coordination** among Movement components while also prioritizing efforts to help **strengthen the capacities of its partners**. The ICRC is promoting an inclusive approach to partnerships within the Movement, based on the idea that the NS in a given affected country must be at the center of the response. This has translated into the establishment of more coordination platforms and increased investment in NS development. As a result, several NSs improved their capacities to deliver humanitarian assistance through better management of their financial and human resources. Thanks to this support, NSs and their volunteers are better equipped to analyse the needs of the communities and assist them while respecting the Movement's Fundamental Principles.

Grand Bargain and cross-cutting issues

Question 4: How has your institution contributed to the advancement of gender equality and women’s empowerment¹ in humanitarian settings through its implementation of the Grand Bargain? What results/outcomes have been achieved in this regard?

The ICRC’s inclusive programming approach recognizes that gender intersects with other forms of identity, including age, disability, ethnicity, race, etc., to affect people’s experiences of armed conflict and the humanitarian response. In 2021, the ICRC completed a [review of inclusive programming in ICRC operations](#), the findings of which are now guiding its work on **inclusion within operations**. Focus areas included policy development, social power analyses, training, review of sectoral guidance, data disaggregation, and continuing connection to and synergies with the AAP and Vision 2030 agendas. In 2021, an ICRC roadmap for delivering on data disaggregation was developed, which is envisioned to be completed by 2024. Last year, over 400 ICRC staff were trained on inclusive programming, and 15 delegations initiated specific steps to improve inclusiveness in operations. The delegation in Niger, for example, included the use of sex-disaggregated data, leading to the identification of the under-representation of women in interventions. This allowed the concerned programmes to adapt the interventions to make them more accessible to and inclusive of women. Moreover, several departments of the ICRC have also continued or initiated efforts to advance how gender affects capacities and specific needs, requiring an adapted response.²

In view of the need to mitigate gendered harm in armed conflicts, the ICRC is mainstreaming a gender perspective across its legal work and analysis, including in its updates to the Commentaries on the Geneva Conventions.³ Based on this work, the ICRC engages with actors of influence to address gendered protection issues, such as equal access to health care for women, men, boys and girls. Finally, the ICRC continues its internal work of creating a more inclusive organization for the well-being of staff members and the best possible operational response. Increased gender equality is part of a broader ambition in addressing intersectional equity. In 2021, efforts in this field led to improved gender balance among managers with current proportions of 44% percent women and 56% men among managers. A significant amount of work was done to build a more inclusive culture, notably in the areas of learning and awareness as well as the collective crafting of a set of values to shape the evolution of internal culture.

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.

In 2021, the ICRC continued to focus on addressing organizational readiness issues, which are key for its engagement with **development actors** in protracted conflicts. Concretely, dedicated resources were allocated to enhance the institution’s capacity to build and manage multi-year, multi-partner projects. This included the creation of new partnership adviser positions within technical department and units (Health, Economic security, Water and habitat) and regional management teams (Africa and the Middle East). The practice of staff exchanges continued and was expanded in 2021, with new secondments to/from Agence Française de Développement and the Islamic Development Bank.

The ICRC has also been prioritizing knowledge exchange and policy engagement with multilateral development banks and other development actors on a range of topics. The ICRC has been co-

¹ Refer to the IASC definitions of gender equality and women empowerment, available [here](#).

² For example, the Sexual Violence team highlights the increased risk of gendered violence during displacement and how gender norms during conflict exacerbate those risks. The Central Tracing Agency initiated a study in 2021 on gender and diversity dimensions of missing, separated, deceased persons, and their families. Draft findings with recommendations were submitted in December 2021.

³ A pledge at the 33rd International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent was made to accompany this work.

convening a Climate Change Group with the World Bank, bringing together multilateral development banks, humanitarian organizations and researchers to explore avenues to strengthen climate action in **fragile and conflict-affected settings** (FCV). The work of this group focuses on knowledge and practice development, and on addressing obstacles to climate finance in FCV settings. The ICRC also remains actively engaged in efforts to create a conducive environment for innovative finance in humanitarian settings. These efforts take shape for instance through the [Humanitarian and Resilience Investing Initiative](#) and research and policy initiatives. Lastly, the ICRC also engaged in a dialogue with the World Bank in the context of the IDA-20 replenishment process.

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

There is greater recognition within the ICRC and the Movement as a whole of the importance of building more **equal partnerships** in order to effectively address the broad range of needs faced by individuals and communities affected by armed conflict and other violence. In this respect, the Movement adopts a variety of approaches to partnerships that leverage the distinct mandates and comparative advantages of both its national and international components. This inherent complementarity allows for a **better sharing of risks** among partners. This is particularly pertinent in contexts where NS staff and their families may be exposed to greater risks for addressing sensitive issues or undertaking protection activities, whereas ICRC's international staff may enjoy a higher level of protection owing to a relative "distance" from the dynamics of a conflict⁵. On the other hand, NS branches may have privileged access to conflict-affected communities and thereby be better placed to spearhead the Movement's response to a crisis, thus alleviating other types of risks for the ICRC and Movement partners.

The Movement approach to partnership has continued towards more meaningful capacity-strengthening efforts, enhanced coordination mechanisms, and joint decision making at both the strategic and operational levels. In this spirit, the ICRC continued to invest in **strengthening the security management capacity of its local and international partners** through the development and sharing of methodologies and tools for risk assessments linked to operational security management. The ICRC also developed a Movement Security Support Framework and is increasingly promoting **inclusive risk assessment** with the aim of including its partners' perspectives while assessing risks in insecure environments. In several crisis settings, the ICRC supported the establishment of platforms where partners can exchange their security analyses, discuss risks and jointly identify mitigation measures.

At the multilateral level, the ICRC continued to co-lead with the Netherlands an initiative to foster a **multi-stakeholder dialogue on risk sharing**. Based on the outcomes of the experts' meeting convened in January 2021, the ICRC and the Netherlands shared a statement highlighting a set of key actions to enable a shift towards risk sharing. As a follow-up, the ICRC, the Netherlands and InterAction worked together to identify ways to advance a **new approach to risk management, one designed to enable and facilitate the delivery to people in need**. In a communication shared in November 2021, interested Signatories were invited to actively engage in the second phase of the initiative, which entails establishing a platform to bring together risk management experts and policy leads to (1) develop a framework to improve risk acceptance and enable risk sharing; (2) identify good practices and share learnings; (3) inform political discussions on localization and quality funding. Preparatory work was initiated in December 2021 with the aim of launching the **Risk Sharing Platform** in January 2022.

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.

⁵ For more information, see the [Case for complementarity](#) report.