

Grand Bargain in 2021:
Annual Self Report – Narrative Summary

Name of Institution:

NEAR (Network for Empowered Aid Response)

Point of Contact (please provide a name, title and email to enable the consultants to contact you for an interview):

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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?

The most significant aspect of NEAR's work related to the Grand Bargain in 2021 is the achievement and ongoing effort of serving in the Facilitation Group. As the first Global South Signatory to serve in this role, NEAR has created new mechanisms to ensure the consistent and meaningful engagement of Global South-based LNNGOs. This includes building a Global South Grand Bargain listserv to share information and solicit feedback on a regular basis. For more in-depth engagement, NEAR also created and convenes a monthly Grand Bargain Local Leaders meeting, which is akin to the Grand Bargain's donor, UN, and NGO constituency meetings. In these ways, NEAR can make substantive contributions to the Grand Bargain Facilitation Group, based on the perspectives and experiences of a diverse community of Global South-based local and national non-state actors.

NEAR ensures the consistent representation of Global South-based local and national non-state actors in the new caucuses launched under the Grand Bargain 2.0 framework. For the Cash Coordination caucus, NEAR collaborated with the Cash and Learning Partnership (CaLP) to create a process to identify and nominate a Global South LNNGO representative to actively participate in the caucus. On the Role of Intermediaries caucus, NEAR identified a member of its Leadership Council to join that caucus. When the Quality Funding caucus launches, NEAR will also identify an appropriate Global South LNNGO representative to participate in the caucus. For each of these caucuses, NEAR Secretariat staff provide support, as needed, to the selected representatives, ensuring that their engagement in the caucuses reflects NEAR and its members' policy perspectives. Through this effort, the Grand Bargain's three caucuses includes the active and substantive participation of local and national actors and benefit from these perspectives in the caucuses search for political solutions.

NEAR collaborated with OCHA in the conceptualization and development of guidance around the creation of National Reference Groups (NRGs). Through consultations with NEAR members and partners, NEAR laid the groundwork for the establishment of NRGs in humanitarian crisis contexts in 2022, which are an important component of the Grand Bargain 2.0's ambition to ensure discussions and actions are realized at the national level.

In addition, outside of NEAR's direct engagement in the Grand Bargain, the network's efforts in innovative financing and influencing, detailed in the Excel spreadsheet and below, contribute to achieving the Grand Bargain commitments.

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](#).)

NEAR has developed a localised funding program that provides practical, progressive, and authentic solutions, driven and designed by local and national actors. Historically amongst both humanitarian and development ecosystems, we found the missing piece to be the absence of a coordinated vision and agenda for change from local and national actors themselves.

NEAR's innovative funding program does just this: NEAR incubates innovative financing models that are driven by local leadership, that shift the balance of power from Northern donors to Southern actors and the communities they represent, and that establishes a different level of ambition for local and national actors in preparing for, responding to and building resilience against crises.

To this end, in 2021, NEAR has completed the design and operationalization of a new fund in Somalia which will provide flexible, unrestricted grants to communities and local actors. In West Africa, NEAR partnered with Star Ghana to explore local resource mobilization and make grants to community-prioritized initiatives.

Most recently, NEAR received a grant from the Hilton Foundation to launch the NEAR Change Fund. This fund will provide rapid response grants to local actors leading emergency and disaster response in the Global South. Our work with Hilton Foundation, alongside other grantees, is also contributing to greater knowledge of key Grand Bargain commitments within their donor community (foundations).

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 a network dedicated to local leadership in humanitarian action, all of our efforts are well aligned with Enabling Priority 2. NEAR works to increase local influence on decision-making at the national, regional, and international levels through advocacy, networking, and communication. Using evidence-based research to guide our advocacy agenda and create specific advocacy campaigns, NEAR has worked to influence international institutions and processes, INGOs, regional bodies, and government donors. We push for policy changes that promote new ideas and a different balance of power where local and national actors have a powerful voice and agency to determine how to best respond to the needs in their communities.

One essential space where NEAR supports the leadership and capacity of local and national actors is in the Grand Bargain workstreams, caucuses and Facilitation Group. This has been detailed above.

In addition, NEAR co-chairs the Advocacy Task Force of the Global Protection Cluster (GPC) and as such, has operationalized the GPC's commitment to galvanize the participation of local

and national protection leaders in the global humanitarian leadership. This translated in 2021 into more equitable and innovative partnerships with NGOs co-leading national Protection Clusters and 18% of protection funding being directed to local and national actors. In addition, the GPC has guided coordination groups to encourage and support local and national actors to participate in key coordination mechanisms, including in the development and implementation of humanitarian protection strategies (e.g. Protection Cluster Strategies, Humanitarian Needs Overview and Humanitarian Response Plan, HCT Protection Strategies). The Excel spreadsheet details additional specific localization-focused activities NEAR championed through its work with the GPC.

In the IASC Results Group 1, NEAR organized extensive consultations with local and national actors to influence the development of its *Guidance on Strengthening Participation, Representation and Leadership of Local and National Actors in IASC Humanitarian Coordination Mechanisms*. This guidance support efforts to strengthen the meaningful participation, representation, and leadership of local and national humanitarian actors within IASC humanitarian coordination structures.

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? (Please outline specific initiatives or changes in practice and their outcomes/results). Please refer to the Guidelines for definitions of Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment, which are included in this self-report template package.

This is not applicable to NEAR.

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.

NEAR’s members uniquely represent the “nexus” as they all work on the ground at national levels, where the distinctions between peacebuilding, humanitarian and development assistance do not exist.

Question 6: Has your institution taken any steps towards improving risk sharing with its partners? If so, please describe how. (*For ease of reference,*

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

please see a set of actions to enhance risk sharing as suggested in the Netherlands and the ICRC [Statement on risk sharing](#).)²

NEAR represents our members in the Grand Bargain Risk-Sharing Platform and as such, draws signatories' attention to the experiences of local and national actors who generally take on significant safety and security risks while delivering humanitarian assistance on the frontlines. At the same time, NEAR works to challenge the perception that partnerships with local and national NGOs present risk of corruption and financial risk.

² 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.