

**Grand Bargain in 2021:
Annual Self Report – Narrative Summary**

Name of Institution: UNICEF

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

**Name: Ms. Segolene Adam,
Chief, Humanitarian Policy Section, EMOPS
Email: seadam@unicef.org**

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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?

UNICEF further improved on operationalizing its commitment to transparency and accurate reporting on **humanitarian financing**, through OCHA's Financial Tracking System (FTS) and other real-time external platforms. In particular, the Global humanitarian thematic funding live platform reports latest allocation data with the list of major donors who contributed to flexible humanitarian funding through the Global Humanitarian Thematic Fund to UNICEF. The COVID-19 Donors and Partners page also contains contribution amounts to UNICEF's HAC ACT-A and COVID-19 response. (See also Question 2). UNICEF also started publishing humanitarian data on its Transparency Portal (<https://open.unicef.org>). A dedicated Humanitarian page (<https://open.unicef.org/program-fund-humanitarian?year=2019>) shows details of humanitarian expense, emergency levels and HAC Appeals by country and year.

UNICEF continued to promote the use of the UN Partner Portal, and as a result, **local partners**, including first-time partners, were able to partner successfully with UNICEF in a fair and transparent selection process in 2021. More than 20,000 CSOs had registered on the UN Partner Portal, with roughly three-quarters of them being local and national actors. UNICEF transferred 29.3% of the humanitarian funding to local and national civil society partners, with 8% awarded to women-led local and national civil society organizations. (see also Question 3)

UNICEF transferred USD 350 million through its **humanitarian cash transfer** programs reaching 2.7 million households. Additionally, 6.7 million households were reached through UNICEF technical assistance to existing national social protection systems. UNICEF participated in the cash coordination caucus facilitated by NRC under the guidance of the Eminent Person Jan Egeland. Through these contributions the cash coordination caucus agreed on a model to achieve a predictable transparent and accountable cash coordination mechanism.

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](#).)

In 2021, UNICEF introduced systematic changes in its **financial system** to strengthen the monitoring, tracking and reporting of all funds dedicated to humanitarian responses, including from non-emergency resource partners budgets.

UNICEF continued to produce reports that enhanced the **visibility of flexible funding**. UNICEF preliminary financial data indicate that **humanitarian funding commitments** reached \$2.96 billion in 2021, representing a 37 per cent increase in absolute terms from the previous year. Aligned with the overall increase in funding, **quality resources** also grew in 2021. According to provisional figures, thematic (flexible) humanitarian funding reached \$410m in 2021 (vs \$202m in 2020), or 14% of overall commitments (compared with concerning levels below 10% in previous years). This double fold increase was mainly due to the generous contributions from the private

sector (\$351m), mostly towards COVID-19 needs (ACT-A/COVAX response), while funding commitments from public partners reached \$59m (compared to \$36m in 2020). In addition, there was a slight increase in multi-year commitments in 2021 (\$418m in 2021 vs \$369m in 2020), still below previous years (\$513m in 2019) and decreasing as a proportion of overall humanitarian commitments (from 17% in 2020 to 14% in 2021). In 2021, UNICEF transferred 38% of humanitarian multi-year funding to implementing partners, compared to 36% in 2020. Up to 13 UNICEF Country Offices had some form of **Multi-Year Plans (MYP)** compared to 32 country offices in 2020.

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.

UNICEF developed and is rolling out a framework for strengthening institutional capacity of national and local actors for its education cluster and child protection area of responsibility partners. At institutional level, UNICEF has initiated a consultative process to develop a guidance note to support institutional capacity strengthening for local actors.

In 2021, UNICEF transferred \$2.5 billion to 9,400 implementing partners both for humanitarian and development programming, exceeding previous records in volume of funding. Within this broader picture environment, UNICEF continued to advance its commitment to transfer funds to **local partners** in humanitarian context: overall, 29.3% of humanitarian funds were transferred in cash to local partners. At the country level, 53% of all UNICEF country offices had at least 25% of their humanitarian funding transferred to local/national responders. With the co-leadership of Oxfam and within IASC Results Group 5 framework, UNICEF stepped up the process of mapping of partners current practices related indirect cost coverage.

UNICEF integrated its **accountability to affected populations** commitment into the COVID-19 pandemic response. UNICEF co-leads the Risk Communication and Community Engagement Collective Service for COVID-19, together with WHO and IFRC. The Service provides a platform for coordinating the approach to community engagement and accountability at the country level. It focuses on ensuring that the public health response is informed by data and analysis coming from communities, drawing from social sciences, community feedback mechanisms and other channels, such as social listening, to ensure that the voices of communities are heard and acted upon.

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.

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

During the COVID-19 response, UNICEF worked closely with its sister United Nations agencies to develop a collective response to the gender-related impacts of the pandemic. This included guidance for use by all United Nations country teams to apply a gender lens in response plans, which serves as the basis for the allocation of gender-earmarked funds from the COVID-19 Multi-Partner Trust Fund. Six UNICEF offices received US\$20 million from this fund to integrate gender issues into their COVID-19 response plans. Within UNICEF, the COVID-19 response provided an opportunity to focus on improving the collection and reporting of gender-disaggregated data. For example, between June 2020 and February 2021, the percentage of UNICEF country offices reporting disaggregated data for the 11 situation report indicators relevant to gender increased from 10 per cent to 34 per cent.

Additionally, 15 countries offices received thematic funds to strengthen their engagement of local women-led civil society organizations and conduct rapid gender analysis to inform their humanitarian programming. In eight countries women-led civil society organizations established safe spaces that functioned as alternative learning and social centres for out-of-school adolescent girls or as shelters for female survivors of violence during the COVID-19 pandemic.

UNICEF leveraged its inter-agency leadership to support the roll-out of key guidance, including a) the first ever guidance for practitioners on how to adapt gender-based violence case management services to align with COVID-19 infection prevention and control efforts and b) a tip sheet on GBV risk mitigation in the context of COVID-19, based on the IASC GBV Guidelines. UNICEF has also developed a “Core Considerations” package for GBV prevention, response and risk mitigation in public health emergencies. An accompanying training package is underway and will be piloted in early 2022. UNICEF strengthened its reporting on **gender-based violence in emergencies** (GBViE) funding as part of the regular reporting to FTS. This reporting will be further reinforced in 2022.

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 the Strategic Plan 2022-2025, UNICEF has made a pivot towards a prevention approach with explicit commitments to advance Resilience and Peacebuilding as cross-cutting programming priorities. The plan includes a Change Strategy on Risk-informed Humanitarian and Development Nexus Programming which articulates how UNICEF’s work across all contexts will contribute to crisis prevention and preparedness, building strong, resilient systems and strengthening social cohesion.

To increase the organization-wide capacity for “**triple-nexus**” programming, UNICEF has launched an e-learning course for UNICEF and partners focusing on building skills around risk-informed, conflict sensitive programming and contributions to peacebuilding. UNICEF has updated its in-person/blended capacity-building package on conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding, supported United Nations-wide and country-specific trainings in nine countries and contributed to multi-partner capacity-building under the umbrella of various working groups. UNICEF has also begun to develop a multisectoral programme framework for its contribution to peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

There are currently two funding streams available to country offices to scale up **preparedness** efforts, and interest in and uptake of these funds has been high. The First Action Initiative, which helps country offices to rapidly increase their standing capacity to deliver an initial lifesaving response to a likely humanitarian emergency due to an imminent/high risk, has allocated \$3.9 million to 14 country offices. The Co-Funding Initiative, seed funding that supports investments by country offices and regional offices that enhance the preparedness of UNICEF, partners and Governments over the short, medium and long term, has allocated \$6.8 million to date to 21 country offices. The Co-Funding Initiative also helps to link development and humanitarian programming through preparedness and strengthens cooperation and coordination with government and other operational partners.

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](#).*)²

In line with the Humanitarian Review recommendations, UNICEF has developed an Organizational Risk Appetite statement (Dec 2021).

UNICEF is in general willing to accept risk required to increase initiatives that support the achievement of strategic goals, while ensuring effective systems are in place to pro-actively identify, manage and monitor those risks. UNICEF has overall a higher appetite for risks that enable its ability to deliver on its mandate for children and mission statement.

In humanitarian action in particular, UNICEF is willing to accept higher risks that would prevent the failure and/or a delay in saving lives, alleviating suffering, maintaining human dignity and protecting rights of children and their families affected by humanitarian situations.

However, UNICEF continues to be challenged by donor partners seeking to transfer risks to UNICEF, in particular in fragile and complex emergency situations. This entails heavy due diligence procedures and reporting requirements, as well as additional burden on staffing and systems that is not fully covered by project specific resources. In regular dialogue, UNICEF encourages donor partners to take measures to prevent or mitigate the unintended negative consequences affecting UNICEF's ability to assist and protect children, specifically for the most vulnerable. Unfortunately, this call is not always heard and too often falls short of reciprocal risk statements.

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.