

CAFOD statement for the Grand Bargain Annual Review Meeting 2022

CAFOD highlights the following three priorities for the Grand Bargain Annual Review Meeting and the process over the coming year:

[1] The new Caucus on Direct Funding to Local Actors should strengthen and scale up support to country-level consortia and pooled funding instruments which promote local leadership as the most practical way to reach 25% and fund capacity-strengthening. Why? Because both in terms of reaching the 25% target of funding to local actors, and on the commitment to increase support for institutional capacity-strengthening, then we have seen the most innovative and effective support being channelled through country-level mechanisms and consortia in which national NGOs play a lead or a co-lead role. Of critical importance is that we need to see increased support for a more diverse ecosystem of pooled funds at the country level. The UN country-based humanitarian pooled funds support short-term emergency response, but can only be accessed by a small number of local NGOs that have reached a relatively high level of donor compliance. So more support for country-level consortia and pooled funds that invest longer-term in capacity-strengthening on preparedness, resilience and anticipatory action is much needed.

[2] All donors, UN agencies and INGOs should commit to act on proposals coming from the Intermediaries Caucus to strengthen their accountability for delivering on quality partnerships. Negotiations in the Caucus on Intermediaries have apparently been tough at times. The issues are much more complex than other more technical agendas under the Grand Bargain so it's not surprising its taking time to agree proposals which all signatories might endorse on strengthening the accountability of intermediaries for their approach to partnership and localisation. CAFOD facilitated analysis for Charter4Change of a survey of some 135 INGO country offices, and 18 INGO global headquarters on these issues, which will be published this week. This unequivocally points to the need for donors to act on the Intermediaries recommendations. Numerous INGOs reported how weak or inconsistent the current approach to accountability for partnership quality is, and how donor change on this could drive wider change in the humanitarian sector. We heard last week that ECHO is already planning a consultation on precisely how to strengthen their approach to accountability for quality partnerships in the coming months. So the Caucus is already having an influence! That's great and we hope to see the Annual Meeting and the next steps will see more donors and other signatories build on this.

[3] Donors need to engage with the National Reference Groups at the country level to help translate the global Grand Bargain theory into practice. Over the past year, CAFOD worked with local NGO partners in Colombia, South Sudan, Myanmar, Philippines and Syria to pilot country level dialogues on localisation under the Grand Bargain. The next phase of the process involves establishing what's being called 'National Reference Groups' to build the dialogue with a more diverse range of national NGOs on ways forward. CAFOD believes that for these to be successful, we need to see donors engage in a proactive and supportive fashion. Ideally in each context, we need to see at least one donor step up to lead on convening donor engagement with the process and bringing ideas from it to the in-country donor coordination process. Donors already meet and coordinate on policy in each context, but this is often intransparent and does not frequently engage with national NGOs. We would like to see the National Reference Groups become an entry-point for shifting this. Donors hold the purse strings and influence over other Grand Bargain signatories. Let's see this happen now at the country level!