

Leveraging Progress with Grand Bargain 3.0: building on successes through increased accountability, participation and streamlined action

CRS welcomes continuation of multi-stakeholder collaboration to address growing global humanitarian challenges through the recent endorsement of Grand Bargain 3.0. We appreciate the new framework's continued focus on its three key pillars, localization, quality funding and participation, while also taking a more intentional approach towards addressing anticipatory action, multi-sector collaboration, and innovative financing mechanisms.

To attain the goals set forth over the next three years of the Grand Bargain, CRS calls on the Secretariat and Signatories to prioritize the following policy proposals.

A. Codify accountability through a uniform, clear and fair process for reporting on progress of caucus outcomes and a standard, fair definition of local.

Currently, varying methodologies are being used by Signatories to calculate target results, causing difficulty in assessing progress and obscuring the overall picture of the funding realities on the ground. To ensure greater transparency and public accountability, clear guidance and rules must be clearly required and adopted on how to measure and report on localization commitments, including clarity on sources of funding being measured, as well as use of similar terms.

For accurate reporting, all Signatories must also align their internal definitions for local/national actors to the global standard set forth through the IASC definition adopted by the Grand Bargain Localization Workstream. Clearly defining which institutions are local is critical to ensure local organizations can access necessary funding to advance their work and missions and to ensure transparency of aid funding for benchmarking and accountability to localization target. Therefore, CRS urges Signatories to tighten and protect the definition of local entity with stricter and more honest governance, accountability, and ownership requirements. To ensure an organization is truly majority controlled by citizens or lawful permanent residents of such country, the definition of local entity should be aligned to the standard set by the Grand Bargain.

B. Increase local leadership of the localization agenda through greater consultation of local actors on localization priorities and actions.

Local leaders and their institutions must be integral to the leadership and advancement of the Grand Bargain's localization efforts. This should include continued efforts to build on the National Reference Groups (NRGs) and similar country-level dialogues to promote a context-specific approach to localization effort, increasing the numbers of national/local actors that have a seat at the table in framing the localization agenda and facilitating the process, and prioritizing consultation with local actors as a decisive test for what issues are prioritized.

C. Pilot the risk sharing framework.

The recently released Risk Sharing Framework provides a powerful opportunity for humanitarian stakeholders to operationalize the principles of equitable risk sharing and support for local actors. The Grand Bargain should prioritize piloting its use in countries where there is an active NRG or where there are significant local actors on the front line responding.

D. Ensure efficiency and continuity of the Grand Bargain process.

From Workstream to Community of Practice: CRS supports the continuation of the Grand Bargain Localization Workstream through creation of a ‘Community of Practice’. The workstream’s efforts have been instrumental in capturing and disseminating best practices leading to advancement in localization. It has also worked to ensure engagement of local actors in Grand Bargain dialogs and connections with country-level networks and platforms to broaden local actors’ participation. Continuation of the localization workstream through a Community of Practice will be paramount in guaranteeing active participation of local actors and a continuation of dialogue between local and international actors at both the global and country-level.

E. Alignment: The past few years have been an active period of development for localization, nexus, cash and other related initiatives covering overlapping or shared areas of work (i.e. IASC Task Force 5 for Local leadership). To ensure effectiveness and efficiency, the Grand Bargain must align, integrate, and support coordination with these other relevant initiatives. Clarifying how these different but related initiatives will align and integrate would help support Signatories and other humanitarian actors’ commitment to these issues.

As the Grand Bargain moves into this new phase, it must build on its assets, leverage the progress made to date, and take these critical actions to make meaningful progress in the future.

CRS' Grand Bargain Commitments and Recent Progress

In 2022, CRS continued to champion the localization agenda,

- Supporting local actors in mobilizing approximately \$81.2M in direct funding from donors,
- Investing \$20.6M in capacity sharing initiatives globally which included implementation of 7 stand-alone humanitarian capacity sharing projects engaging 117 local actors in 65 countries,
- Advocating for inclusion of language to advance locally led development and humanitarian response in the FY2023 United States Congressional appropriations bills in both the House and Senate.

CRS increased its cash and voucher assistance (CVA) programming from \$80.2 million in FY21 to 183.8 million in FY22 with \$11.354M of the CVA transfers being transferred by local sub-recipient partners globally.

CRS continued to participate in the InterAction Risk Leadership cohort, as well as the Risk Sharing Platform organized by the Netherlands, ICRC, and InterAction and took direct actions to enhance risk sharing with local actors establishing a process for conducting participatory, country-level risk assessments to better mitigate risks for program participants. CRS/local partners completed 5 of these assessments and developed corresponding action plans to be implemented collaboratively with local actors.

In the next 3 years CRS is committed to continuing these efforts by:

- Developing a roadmap for reaching the 25% funding target by the end of 2026 and publishing the roadmap by the end of 2023. This will include further investment of CRS private resources to expand its EMPOWER humanitarian capacity sharing approach globally.
- Prioritizing implementation of the Intermediaries Caucus commitments including the finalization and publishing of an ICR policy for local actors, increasing visibility of local actors' work through an Equity Storytelling initiative led by CRS' Communications department, and reporting on the number of local/national actors represented in program/project steering committees, with demonstrated participation in planning and decision-making.
- Piloting the application of the Risk Sharing Framework in countries where there are a significant number of local actors on the front line responding.
- Working to influence policymakers, donors, and other aid stakeholders to support a more locally led and locally owned system of humanitarian assistance.