

Grand Bargain in 2019:

Annual Self Report – Narrative Summary

Name of Institution: Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Point of Contact: Lara Franzen, Assistant Director, Humanitarian Reform and Performance Section, lara.franzen@dfat.gov.au

**Date of Submission:
3 March 2020**

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 2019?

- Australia progressed its localisation agenda across the spectrum of its humanitarian action. In the Pacific, for example, we work with national disaster management offices and other local actors to support national leadership and reinforce national response systems and structures.
- Accountability to affected populations remains at the heart of Australia's humanitarian action, in particular in the Pacific where Australian Humanitarian Partnership (AHP) partners utilise community consultation and feedback systems to inform programming.
- We continue to enhance quality funding and implement multi-year strategies in response to protracted crises, including in Bangladesh and Jordan, where the stability of multi-year funding has increased both the efficiency and effectiveness of our partners.

Question 2: Please explain how the outcomes/results have or will lead to long-term institutional changes in policy and/or practice.

Supporting the Grand Bargain commitment to be as local as possible and as international as necessary, Australia recognises the primary role for national and local governments and civil society in leadership and decision-making in support of principled humanitarian action where this produces the best possible outcome for affected communities. We consider a mix of approaches to advance localisation across our humanitarian action, which involves the flexibility to respond to local priorities across a range of humanitarian environments.

In the Pacific, Australian NGOs partner with local and national partners in the design, planning and ongoing implementation of their work. Through Disaster READY, they provide long-term organisational and technical training and local partners benefit from technical support through the shared services component at the country level, which focuses on gender equality, disability inclusion and child protection. These localisation efforts in the Pacific are critical to building the longer-term capacity and capabilities of local governments, NGOs and civil society to prepare for and respond to disasters.

Australia's localisation efforts enhance and are complementary to our commitment to increasing accountability to affected populations. To drive the participation revolution in Australia's humanitarian action, AHP partners have supported accountability to affected populations by implementing, among other activities: direct mechanisms for community members to provide feedback, input and complaints to AHP projects; consultations and communications for host governments; the use of local partners to implement projects; and the production of project materials in local languages, along with hiring local people.

We recognise that there remain significant barriers to accountability in humanitarian action, in particular for women and girls, people with a disability and members of other marginalised groups. To this end, Australia is committed to advocating for meaningful participation for affected populations. As part of our response to the Rohingya crisis in Bangladesh, we have requested that partners make meaningful and reportable progress on accountability to affected populations and ensure they work to enhance the decision-making power of

communities, and adapt programs in line with their decisions. We anticipate that these longer-term, reportable requirements for partners will gradually shift their policies and operations to make their actions more accountable.

Australia is committed to enhanced quality funding and we continue to adjust our humanitarian contributions to be predictable (multi-year) and flexible (un-earmarked) where possible. Australia's multi-year commitments have enabled partners to increase program effectiveness through greater cost efficiency; recruitment and retention of quality local and international staff; systems and capacity building; strengthened and sustainable public services; and longer-term humanitarian programming. Our focus on multi-year funding has also had a multiplier effect in catalysing other donors and consortiums to invest in quality longer-term programming, and created strong and advantageous relationships when working with local and national governments.

In 2019, Australia had multi-year strategies in place in Bangladesh, Lebanon and Jordan. An independent evaluation of our multi-year humanitarian response package for the Syria crisis found that multi-year funding increased both the efficiency and effectiveness of humanitarian activities.

Question 3: 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?

Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls remains a key priority for Australia's humanitarian policy and programming. At the World Humanitarian Summit, the Australian Government committed to: supporting local women-led groups to participate meaningfully in humanitarian action; ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive health services; and contributing to a coordinated global approach to prevent and respond to gender-based violence in crises.

Australia's humanitarian action aims to identify and respond to the different experiences, needs, abilities and priorities of women, girls, boys and men in a crisis. Australia has prioritised the inclusion and protection of women and girls, and people with disabilities in its response to the Rohingya crisis. We support women and child friendly spaces that provide protection, health, and counselling services; help UNFPA midwives to screen more than half a million women; and work with IOM to establish livelihoods support and cash for work opportunities for women.

Australia's humanitarian assistance package in Bangladesh also supported the deployment of six gender and protection civilian specialists to fill critical gaps at the response-level. The specialists were placed in lead agencies such as WFP, UNFPA, WFP, UNHCR and UNICEF to encourage a coordinated and complementary response.

Australia's support to local women's leadership groups throughout Asia and the Pacific prioritises women's rights during crises, at a time when women and girls can be at their most vulnerable. Our support to the Women in Emergency Network

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

(WENet) in the Philippines – a network of 30 local women’s organisations – culminated in a Womenitarian Summit held in April 2019, which is driving institutional change in disaster risk management and emergency response practices in the Philippines.

Australia also supports innovative gender and protection actors – such as Edge Effect, the Women’s Refugee Commission and Geneva Call – to identify gaps in the existing humanitarian system and create collaborative, innovative solutions.

Question 4: How has the humanitarian-development nexus been strategically mainstreamed in your institutional implementation of the Grand Bargain commitments?

In 2019, Australia adopted the *OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) Nexus Recommendation*. At the Global Refugee Forum in December 2019, Australia also supported a common position from the International Network on Conflict and Fragility outlining donor best practice to implement a nexus approach for refugee situations. The position highlights actions like: leveraging development financing to support durable solutions for refugees; including displaced people and host communities in national development plans; and funding for social cohesion activities.

Australia’s role as a donor is evolving with the needs of our region and our partners. In the Philippines, for example, Australia continued to be a flexible and responsive partner to the peace process in Muslim Mindanao, supporting public consultations and information campaigns in the lead-up to the January 2019 plebiscite on the Bangsamoro Organic Law. Australia also increased support for those affected by the Marawi conflict, providing both humanitarian assistance and livelihood support as well as supporting reconstruction efforts. This assistance complements long-term peace and stability activities in the area to prevent violent extremism.

Australia’s multi-year humanitarian response packages for protracted crises include approaches to promote self-reliance and build resilience for both affected people and host communities. Australia’s response to the Rohingya crisis involves working with partners in Bangladesh and Myanmar to address immediate humanitarian needs, as well as provide longer-term support. In Myanmar’s southeast, Australia funds the Myanmar Education Consortium (MEC) through the development program, and supports Education in Emergencies in Thai refugee camps. We also work to strengthen collaboration with the Myanmar Ministry of Education and ethnic education providers to better align services.

Under our Regional Humanitarian Strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan, Australia committed to provide AUD \$65 million over three years (2017 – 2020) to support humanitarian needs in both countries, with a focus on refugees, returnees and host communities. Our funding is multi-year and un-earmarked, enabling partners to flexibly respond to urgent humanitarian needs as well as building the long-term resilience of communities. Australian assistance is provided through a range of modalities – cash, food, livelihoods training, and services – and partners have reported that the use of multi-year funding has resulted in tangible improvements in their ability to plan and deliver long-term outcomes.

