

Grand Bargain in 2020:
Annual Self Report – Narrative Summary

Name of Institution: Christian Aid

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Grand Bargain in 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 2020?

1) Participation revolution: Christian Aid (CA) has continued its investment into accountability, community engagement and safeguarding. The restructuring of the organisation in 2020 created a new Programme Quality and Operations Division where the accountability team was joined by a team of 3 safeguarding officers, strengthening our programme support. The new global digital feedback system COMPASS has been rolled out in 12 countries. The system has the capacity to systematically collect and store feedback offline and then integrate the feedback with the online case management system. COMPASS was made mandatory for Disaster Emergency Committee (DEC) COVID-19 appeal in 2020. In response to this, COMPASS was adapted and expanded. Country teams began to hear feedback and rumours directly from communities related to COVID across the world. Some country teams changed their approaches, and some began to build trust and see a change in how communities responded to their work. The roll out of COMPASS was supported by the development and standardisation of CA's community-based approach to accountability. Each country teams engaged with their communities to identify the preferred ways of establishing two-way communication. A learning review was conducted at the end of 2020 on COMPASS to improve the system. All these improvements were also consolidated in the launch of the Programme Quality Handbook, which is aligned to the Grand Bargain (GB). It defines CA's programme minimum standards to further strengthen our programmes and community engagement.

2) Localisation: In collaboration with Action Aid, CAFOD, CARE, Oxfam and Tearfund, in Myanmar, Nepal, Nigeria and South Sudan, we have extended of one year with internal funds of ECHO-funded [Accelerating Localisation Through Partnerships \(ALTP\)](#) programme. This project worked to support local NGO networks to raise their voice in the humanitarian system in their countries; it undertook research to identify best practice in partnership between local and international actors from the lens of local actors. In this period, strong successes accomplished in Myanmar (platform of NNGO very active in the localisation arena) and Nigeria (Government adopted a localisation framework). CA has moved further to review, improve and roll out its Partnership Operational Capacity and Risk Assessment (POCRA) which is now fully aligned to CHS. Additionally, CA's direct implementation decision-making matrix was piloted, which affirms default principle as working with partners. Finally, the organisation has changed its policy on indirect costs and decided to share 50% of indirect costs from donors with its partners.

3) Participation/cash/localisation/nexus: As we highlighted in last year's GB self-reporting, it remains a major priority of our humanitarian work to work alongside ACT Alliance. ACT Church of Sweden, DCA, Local2Global Protection and multiple local NGO partners to roll out, learn from and advocate Survivor and Community Led Response (SCLR) approaches. In 2020, we have expanded our

SCLR work in Myanmar (with partners GLAD and BBS), Gaza (with CFTA), Kenya (with CIFA/IREMO) and Haiti (with SJM). We have worked with Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP) to add group cash grants into the portfolio of guidelines of cash programming and secured funds from ECHO HIP in Myanmar in a localisation preparedness project influenced by SCLR approaches.

Question 2: 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.

In Afghanistan, CA responded to the impacts of COVID-19 through funding from the DEC. Thanks to this project, CA and its partners have seen significant positive outcomes on the level of women's awareness on health and hygiene. CA partners conducted extensive health and hygiene, and Gender-Based Violence (GBV) promotion training and awareness raising to communities. Men in particular are more aware of health and hygiene issues and as a result have become more involved in taking care of the family. Thanks to the hygiene kits that were distributed, women were using more soap and the whole family benefited as a result.

Regarding livelihoods, women farmers saw a significant improvement in their lives. Women were supported with agricultural packages and training to support the development of kitchen gardens. As a result of this intervention, women were able to sell their products at the market and increase the quantity of vegetables. They increased their income and provided healthy food for the family.

Messages and information on GBV prevention reached women in the community through radio programmes and via posters translated into easy to read format/local languages. Female community volunteers also went to door-to-door to talk to all women and identified those who needed support. Those identified were able to access psychosocial support via toll free phone lines which were set up. Trained health educators also provided face-to-face psychosocial support to GBV survivors. Men were also identified for psychosocial support.

In the capital city Kabul, GBV awareness raising had a significant impact on the lives of women. After the lockdown had ended, the men in the family were reluctant to allow their girls to go back to their education. Thanks to the increased awareness on GBV and because of the training provided to communities, women were able to engage in healthy discussions and convince the men in the families that the girls should go back to school.

Question 3: How has the humanitarian-development nexus been strategically mainstreamed in your institutional implementation of the

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

Grand Bargain commitments? Please explain how your institution has linked commitments 10.1 - 10.5 with other commitments from other workstreams.

With the financial support of Irish Aid, CA operates an integrated humanitarian-development approach across several of its interventions, including in Myanmar, Burundi, DRC and South Sudan. Building on [Participatory and Vulnerability Needs Assessments \(PVCA\)](#), and with a strong focus on localisation, CA responses provide a combination of immediate assistance to urgent needs, such as access to WASH services and NFI, alongside long-term and sustainable resilience strengthening to future shocks. The participatory nature of CA's work supports a whole-of-society approach to tackle common threats to stability. This is done by developing joint Community Action Plans (CAPs), which ensure that targeted communities develop their own responses by jointly identifying common threats. Furthermore, this approach allows CA to identify internal sources of resilience within communities, and to build on them instead of setting up externally imposed systems.

In addition to this, a strong focus on conflict prevention is infused across all activities, using the tool [Integrating Conflict Prevention into Resilience programming \(ICPR\)](#). This allows for programming to be tailored so as to minimise any unintended consequences of creating tensions within the communities who we work with, while at the same time looking to maximise positive interaction and healthy interdependencies.

Given the nature of the context in which CA operates, programmes fully integrate principles of conflict sensitivity from the outset. Internal guidance on how to translate conflict sensitivity into the everyday management of humanitarian projects was produced at the end of 2019 and will be rolled out through 2020 in each country.

Grand Bargain 2016-2020: Overall achievements and remaining gaps

Question 4: What are the 2-3 key achievements/areas of most progress by your institution since 2016? Please report on your institutional progress for the period 2016-2020, even if your institution did not become a signatory until after 2016.

1) Participatory revolution: CA was one of the first CHS certified organisations in 2016. After 5 years of re-certification, in 2020, CHS has been widely adopted in the organisation beyond humanitarian division. CHS organisation wide senior management meeting is held quarterly. It has invested in a global team of 3 accountability and 3 safeguarding advisors. Made annual training on the code of conduct to staff, volunteers and contractors mandatory. It was able to create a culture of Complaints and Feedback Mechanism (CFM) within country programme and partners. Developed and adopted a digital CFM (e.g. COMPASS) and rolled out in 12 countries where feedback and complaints received are systematically acted on. It has developed a standard Community-Based Approach to Accountability (CBAA), rolled out in 11 countries and consolidated all in the organisation Programme Quality Handbook.

2) Localisation: CA made several progresses in this commitment aligning different departments making localisation an organisational priority. Internally, it has increased the funding to local partners reaching 73%. It has reaffirmed the default principle of working with partners and made it clearer when direct implementation can be done. Reviewed POCRA, which is now fully aligned to CHS. Most importantly, CA took the bold decision to request country programmes to report against the Charter for Change commitments which helped keep localisation at the core of thinking. At the end of 2020, it took the step to share 50% of indirect costs with partners. Externally, in addition of being an active member of the GB localisation workstream, VOICE, ACT Alliance, Charter for Change and Local2Global Protection, and a promoter of the voice and agency of local actors, it led a several initiatives which transformed the localisation commitments into practice. The ECHO-funded ALTP programme moved localisation into practical framework which are utilised in 4 countries. The localisation agenda progressed significantly and offered the GB workstream useful and practical tools. As part of this, Local2Global Protection has developed, field tested and rolled out the cutting edge SCLR approach, which pushes localisation further down to crisis survivors by putting them in the driving seat of decision-making of relief interventions. Combined these two projects have shown how localisation can be effective in practical terms.

Question 5: What, in your institutional view, have been the main achievements of the Grand Bargain signatories, as a collective, since 2016? Please indicate specific commitments, thematic or cross-cutting issues or workstreams where you think most progress has been made collectively by signatories.

The localisation workstream has made energetic efforts to bring together GB constituents to identify how we can work together to further the GB localisation vision. This has led to useful concrete outputs like the country demonstrator missions, the regional and global conferences, the thematic guidance notes, the upcoming country dialogues.

There is continuing progress in popularising the use of cash, not wholly attributable to the GB but which the enthusiasm of the GB provides a favourable operating environment for. The platform the GB provides for donors, UN, Red Cross and NGOs to sit together, exchange perspectives and build closer rapport and mutual understanding is a unique and valuable way to enable different constituencies in the sector to arrive at coherent objectives, and work together, or at least better understand the differences we have.

Question 6: What has the Grand Bargain not been able to achieve in its five year tenure? What outstanding obstacles, gaps, areas of weakness still remain after five years, in terms of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of humanitarian action? Please indicate specific commitments, thematic or cross-cutting issues or workstreams where you think there remain key gaps or obstacles.

There is a long way to go to achieve the headline localisation commitment of 25%. The participation revolution work at macro level has not yet resulted in a system that is good at listening to the people we serve, putting them at the centre of their own response and recovery, and changing our programming to honour their voices. From where we sit, it is not obvious that there has been significant progress in the extent of funding that reaches us unearmarked or multi-year.

The GB suffers from a gap between rhetoric and reality, between policy and practice, where sometimes the fine words spoken in New York and Geneva do not correlate very closely with systemic and organisational practice in crisis-torn countries. There is a strong case for shifting the centre of gravity to country level, as the localisation workstream is endeavouring to achieve with its country dialogues. The GB lacks adequate representation of national and local actors which is incongruous with its localisation mantra.

Risk and the Grand Bargain

Question 7a: How has risk (financial, operational, reputational, etc) affected your institution's implementation of the core commitments since you became a signatory to the Grand Bargain?

Donor risk aversion. For example, donor nervousness about investing in local actors, about unearmarked funding and about simplified reporting has made it more difficult for us to deliver energetically on the field-facing commitments, not least in localisation.

Donors express a rhetorical commitment to localisation but do not put their money where their mouth is. For example, in order to deliver on the GB commitment to strengthen the institutional capacities of local responders, donor funds would have to be available to finance that investment. We find very few donors willing to either provide funding specifically for this, or unearmarked funding that can go toward this. Conflicting donor and Government agendas around sanctions and counterterrorism pull donors in a different direction than the GB, creating contradictions. A concrete example is that if donors tightly earmark project budgets and do not allow enough specific funding, or enough flexible funding to finance the appropriate security costs of our local partners working in dangerous environments like Northeast Nigeria, then we are exposing our local partners to security risks and passing the risk on to them.

Question 7b: How has your institution sought to mitigate or address these risks to enable implementation of the core commitments?

We have worked bilaterally with like-minded allies such as the Charter for Change, the ACT Alliance, the Start Network, the World Humanitarian Action Forum and Local2Global Protection to energetically advocate to our donors on these issues. We have sought to use funding we have been able to raise from our own supporters to fill gaps in donor willingness to invest in some of these areas.