

**Grand Bargain in 2020:**  
**Annual Self Report – Narrative Summary**

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(NB. Please limit your answer to no more than **5 pages in total** – anything over this word limit will not be considered by ODI in their analysis. Please respond to all of the questions below.)

### **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?**

The four-year programme of organisational investment in participation, localisation and needs assessment enabled Save the Children to pivot our response approach to COVID-19 and strengthen **participation, partnership with Local and National Actors (L/NAs) and needs assessment in the response.**

During the COVID-19 response, tailored guidance was provided to support country offices to continue to provide dialogue and feedback mechanisms despite operational challenges. COVID-19 required innovations to enable remote participation of children and wider communities in our work; one example was our [global study on the impact of COVID-19 on children](#), which influenced SC organisational and response strategy. Save the Children has also undertaken significant updates to guidance related to Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) including launching new guidance on [Feedback and Reporting Mechanisms](#) and [Information Sharing and Communication with Communities](#). These guidance documents place greater emphasis on accessibility and inclusivity for deprived and marginalised groups, and connections between AAP and safeguarding. Guidance documents have been shared with peer agencies through channels such as the CHS Alliance. Save the Children's Global Education Cluster Team recruited an Accountability to Children Specialist who initiated country-level engagement with Education Clusters and development of guidance and tools and produced new guidance and tools to integrate child participation in the existing GEC toolkit on how to conduct Joint Education Needs Assessments.

The internal Localisation Policy – developed in line with Grand Bargain commitments in 2019 – provided a framework to increase our engagement on localisation and coordination and institutional investment in capacity-strengthening initiatives for L/NAs. Save the Children supported the development of the [Guidance Note on the participation of local actors in coordination groups](#) drawing on experience from the Global Education Cluster and Child Protection Area of Responsibility (CPAoR) strategy on localisation and coordination and provided input into the guidance notes prepared by the Localisation Workstream. In addition, Save the Children supported the development and [launch of COVID-19 learning pathway](#) on the Kaya platform in coordination with the Humanitarian Leadership Academy (HLA). Capacity strengthening projects through HLA such as SEHP in Yemen and Sudan, low-tech Mobile Learning in five countries, a capacity-strengthening project with IDB and UNDP- reached over 600 organisations. 80 organisations participated in a cohort, developed a competency framework, and developed learning pathways that are currently being tested by the core group for

the HLA. The project with IDB and UNDP started in November. Over 25,000 users have accessed the learning programmes and content available in English, French, Spanish and Arabic. We included a formal indicator in our overall [response monitoring framework for the COVID-19 response](#) to track the overall allocation of funding to L/NAs. Quarterly reporting highlighted only 4% was allocated in the first quarter of the response but this increased to 13 % overall by the close out of the 2020 response.

Save the Children continued to engage as a core member on the Grand Bargain Joint Inter-sectoral Analysis Group (JIAG) to develop a comprehensive and methodologically sound approach to analyse the needs of crisis-affected people, which would provide a people-centred inter sectoral assessment of populations most in need and allocated senior level staff to join the JIAG steering committee. Internally, Save the Children developed an explanation guidance to clarify how staff can actively contribute to the JIAF process at country level as well as clarification and development of basic guidance and methodologies to support country offices to support the JIAF as part of their wider engagement in the HNO process. Save the Children established an internal Needs Assessment Task Team (NATT) and developed a workplan informed by recommendations from an internal review on Needs Assessment capability in 2019. The NATT provided technical support to country level staff during COVID 19 including capacity building for humanitarian staff and developing an online NA toolkit.

**Question 2: How has your institution contributed to the advancement of gender equality and women’s empowerment<sup>1</sup> 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.

Save the Children has an organisation-wide commitment for all programmes to be gender-sensitive and gender equality is a priority initiative of the Humanitarian Steering Group. We launched Humanitarian Gender and GBV Minimum Actions; embedded a Gender Equality Humanitarian Technical Working Group within the SC humanitarian architecture; included Gender Equality expertise within the Global Humanitarian Team and require that all priority responses conduct gender analysis and develop a Gender Action Plan that outlines actions for mainstreaming gender, and mitigating, preventing and responding to gender-based violence. The Head of Humanitarian Gender Equality reviews internal guidance relating to cash transfers, participation, needs assessment and localisation to ensure that gender is integrated in our approach.

**Question 3: 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.

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

We established an internal task team on the nexus to undertaken an internal review of policies, procedures and programme approaches. The task team undertook multi-country analysis and reviewed external policy frameworks including the outputs of the Grand Bargain workstream.

### **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.

Prior to signature of the Grand Bargain in 2017, Save the Children conducted an internal analysis to identify the change requirements required to operationalise the Grand Bargain commitments. We reviewed the overlap between Grand Bargain commitments and the findings of the HQAI review process on the Core Humanitarian Standard to identify change requirements. We prioritised institutional investment in localisation, participation and needs assessment. In addition, we identified and resourced specific change requirements required in our internal information management systems to improve transparency and reporting capability on the Grand Bargain commitments. This included the integration of IATI in our coding project and adaptation of our financial tracking systems to be able to report on the volume of cash and vouchers; percentage of overall funding allocated directly and indirectly to L/NAs.

The Grand Bargain commitments on localisation were used to frame internal reflection and development of a movement wide position on localisation. The policy reflects organisational policy commitment to complementarity, coordination, capacity-exchange and strengthening and providing indirect support costs. Following the endorsement of the Localisation Policy, the SCA Board endorsed a three-year change and transformation project to review our operational platform; partnerships and financing structures to implement the policy.

Save the Children has worked to strengthen its capacity in participation and AAP including development of guidance, training and inclusion of AAP and participation in humanitarian strategy, response monitoring and real-time reviews and recruited specialised surge staff with expertise in accountability and participation, who can deploy to support responses. A synthesis of SC Real-time Reviews has shown an increase in the proportion of responses with well-functioning Feedback and Reporting Mechanisms, as well as community awareness of these mechanisms. There was also an observed improvement across responses in the use of feedback analysis for informing decision-making. The synthesis found an increase in response adaptation based on child participation. This included the [inter-agency children's consultation in the Rohingya response](#) (which played a key role in informing the SC response and wider sector of children's needs) and efforts within the Indonesia response (which proactively

solicited the views of children to shape the recovery phase of the response with government and community leaders).

**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.

By 2020, signatories had invested collective and internal change management to institutionalise some of the Grand Bargain commitments. This provided a framework to quickly negotiate and agree rapid changes required to support the COVID-19 response in humanitarian contexts. From our perspective, the dialogue between signatories on harmonised reporting and quality funding in the Grand Bargain process accelerated agreement within the IASC Financing Task Team between UN Agencies and NGOs to agree flexibility required for the response. This had an immediate impact on our response and reduced complexity required in individual contract negotiation with individual UN Agencies. The Localisation workstream and commitments provided a baseline for the IASC to develop rapid guidance on Localisation for the COVID-19 response that defined how the Grand Bargain commitments should be taken forward in the overall response approach.

**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.

The cost - institutional staff-time and fiduciary - related to systems changes required to information management, financing and awards is high. To make changes internally, organisations – particularly NGOs with limited access to unrestricted funding – need to have certainty on the direction of change and the likelihood of commitments shifting from rhetorical to institutional policy.

The Grand Bargain commitments related to programme quality and accountability (e.g. participation, needs assessment, some aspects of localisation) cross-cut and segment with processes that operate under the IASC mandate. Aid organisations have taken forward commitments in relevant IASC forums which – from our perspective - has increased the likelihood of impact at country level. However, there is still some duplication of effort and organisations with limited staff time for representation and allocation of technical capacity to engage in processes happening in multiple fora.

## **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?**

In the first phase of the process, the primary risk was lack of clarity about the scope and definition of commitments and clarity on the decision-making process and timeline for change. As above, the cost associated with change had to be weighed against likelihood of impact and pace of translation of commitments into core institutional policy by all stakeholder groups.

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

We undertook an internal analysis of the commitments and identified workstreams where there were changes that could be made internally i.e. within our span of control and defined the cost in staff-time and additional resources required to operationalise the commitments. We did not formally sign-up to the Grand Bargain until we had CEO level approval to ensure there was sufficient institutional buy-in and understanding of the scope of change that would be required internally as a result of endorsing the Grand Bargain. We recruited a full-time Project Manager to oversee internal implementation of Grand Bargain commitments linked to the Core Humanitarian Standard for a two-year period. On localisation, we defined an organisational policy that referenced the Grand Bargain commitments to ensure that the internal policy and procedures were in line with – and reflected – expectations on Save the Children as a Grand Bargain signatory.