

Grand Bargain in 2020:
Annual Self Report – Narrative Summary

Name of Institution: Syria Relief

Point of Contact (please provide a name, title and email to enable the consultants to contact you for an interview):
Mazen Alhousseiny, Organisational Development Manager,
m.husseiny@syriarelief.org.uk

Date of Submission:

(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?

Syria Relief continued supporting local NGOs and promoting for the localisation commitment. In addition to the capacity development activities e.g. training, coaching, mentoring and consultancies on three levels: Technical, Operational and Organisational; and direct funding to local NGOs to ensure that the strengthening activities made were well achieved. About 40 non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and community-based organisations (CBOs) including 450 aid workers from the Syrian context were targeted with those training sessions. Additionally Syria Relief is playing a great role to advocate for the localisation. The advocacy efforts are done through participation in national, regional and global foras and networks highlighting the needs for more localisation from INGOs, UN bodies and donor governments and throughout research that shows the impact of localisation within the targeted context to empower the voice of Syrians. In addition to awareness that Syria Relief has made to local NGOs through conducting a number of sessions and webinars on the importance of localisation and the partnerships principles e.g. “the change management and future of Syrian NGOs working from Turkey”, “Localisation within the Syrian Context”. Those sessions were attended by about 70 participants from INGOs and Local NGOs.

Additionally, Syria Relief is not only responding to the urgent needs of the vulnerable people inside Syria and neighbouring countries, but we are shifting to the next level of response, no longer providing just the essential humanitarian assistance such as distribution of aid (food, water, tents and non-food items) but we are providing more medium-term early recovery support e.g. static health/WASH facilities, schools, and other longer duration services.

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.

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

Women empowerment is one of the focus areas Syria Relief has committed within its strategic planning. It is reflected through the types of programmes that we are implementing to some of the most vulnerable groups in the communities including women. Syria Relief continued participating in the clusters' gender planning events. Syria Relief is striving to ensure that, throughout the project cycle, gender equality is reflected. Gender is always mainstreamed to allow women and girls to participate more in our interventions.

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.

Syria Relief is a strong believer in the triple nexus. Throughout our interventions we integrate the humanitarian with the development activities. This is done by shifting the types of support provided for some stabilised communities from emergency responses to more resilient and long-term development. Particularly with education, Syria Relief is now supporting more than 306 schools in north of Syria that makes Syria Relief as the biggest NGO focus on education within the Syrian context. The support varied from school to school but mainly we rehabilitate and maintain the learning space and school with providing the essential furniture and equipment needed. Then we conduct the crucial training topics for the teachers and covers the monthly stipends with the monthly running costs for the facilities. Later on we help in the establishment of the parents/teachers' associations and other community engagement initiatives to ensure the communities ownership for such important projects. Lastly, we provide the in-kind commodities i.e. distribution teachers and students kits and printed books, light meals and psychosocial support activities. The main donors are FCDO through Chemonics, Norwegian MFA through War Child, and ECHO through Save the Children as well as UNICEF.

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.

In the last 4 years, Syria Relief played an important role by advocating for the localisation and the partnerships principles. Syria Relief established a separate unit for developing the capacities of local CBOs/institutes to ensure they have the essential capacities for more localisation. Those activities were divided between individual capacity enhancement i.e. training on Managerial and operational topics e.g. Project Management, Partnerships Management, Proposals Development, Reports writing, management skills, etc technical trainings e.g. HEST, SPHERE and organisational capacity enhancement i.e. development of

policies, procedures, systems for finance, supply chain, project management, in addition to other consultations and workshops

Additionally, Syria Relief has promoted the increase of cash and voucher methodology for implementation through developing its systems to the highest standards so that targeted communities will benefit more from the flexibility of the support provided compared with the in-kind traditional methodology. For the Food security and NFI sectors, Syria Relief implemented about 17 million USD as cash/voucher modality while about 1 million USD as in-kind during 2020. The cash/voucher modality was divided as follows: around 11 million USD were cash and the rest were restricted vouchers. For the other sectors i.e. health, nutrition, WASH and education they were all implemented as in-kind modality due to the lack of infrastructure and absence of services.

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 3rd & 5th work streams might be the most successful commitments among the Grand Bargain signatories. As it can be clearly seen that cash-based programming has increased incredibly compared with the responses before 2016. Additionally the needs assessments are more harmonised among the participating members under the leadership of OCHA to avoid duplication of efforts and ensure quality of reporting.

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 2nd, 7th, 8th work streams that focus on more localisation and enhancing quality funding. We believe that there was limited multiyear funding provided to local NGOs compared with the funds donated from donors to INGOs/UN. Additionally the amount of direct funding to local NGOs still not reached its target which is 25%.

Although donors committed to transfer more funds to local NGOs still the barriers to do this have not been eliminated. Donors still prefer to work with few globally known INGOs and UN rather than giving the opportunity to direct funding Local NGOs. They justify this with the limited capacity that they have to manage many smaller grants rather than few larger ones.

Additionally, INGOs and UN prefer to divide the multiyear funds that they receive to shorted grants to local NGOs to ensure close controlling of the grants management. Knowing that this create issues for Local NGOs as they need to plan well for the sustainability of the services provided to their communities.

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?

For Syria Relief, there was no risk affecting the organisation while implementing the core commitment of the Grand Bargain as some of the commitments were really thought about before 2016 but Grand Bargain gave us the courage to move forward with start implementing them.

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

NA