

Workstream 6 – Participation Revolution 2021 Strategy Update

Introduction:

Ahead of the Grand Bargain Annual Meeting 2021, the Signatories endorsed the Framework and the annexes for the Grand Bargain 2.0. In addition to existing workstreams, a new structure element was introduced – political caucuses, which will be focusing on specific strategic issues in an ad hoc manner, with clear objectives and a limited timeframe.

Following the Annual Meeting Workstream 6 determined that it has a continued role to support the achievement of the strategic objective and the enabling priorities of the Grand Bargain 2.0, alongside other forums, including IASC Results Group 2 and proposed caucuses. **This completed template updates, incorporates and replaces the earlier evolution strategy Rev2 from March 2021**, and maps the remaining political challenges, and the technical support needed to overcome them.

This contributes to the updated Grand Bargain 2.0 structure, with a clear overview of Workstream 6's work in support of the political objectives, and which elements will be continued by other relevant forums, in particular, IASC Results Group 2.

1) WORKSTREAM STRATEGY UPDATE

Based on the March 2021 review of the Workstream's work over the past five years as documented in our recent 2020 annual self-report, which is updated in this document based on the new Grand Bargain 2.0 Framework agreed in June 2021, the co-convenors continue to believe that the work of the Participation Workstream is directly relevant to the agreed Strategic Priority of Grand Bargain 2.0 and its two Enabling Priorities, all of which speak to the need for greater accountability in humanitarian action.

The remit of the Workstream is most directly linked to Enabling Priority 2 which references the core of the Workstream's goals in enhancing "*the participation of affected communities in addressing humanitarian needs.*" There are also direct links to other workstreams, most notably Workstream 7/8 on Quality Funding and Workstream 2 on Localization. Localization demands that communities and affected persons themselves be more involved in the design of responses and integrated directly into the decision-making process. While quality funding is, by necessity, based on a close understanding of the needs of communities, this can only be achieved through active collaboration with local communities in the design and prioritization of responses. Quality funding also enables the protection of communities and individual beneficiaries against SEA, by underwriting adequate complaint and feedback mechanisms, and appropriate responses to complaints.

Several of the proposed Shared Strategic Objectives (SSO) under consideration, most notably SSO 2 on data-driven transparency, SSO 7 on the quality of partnerships, and SSO 8 on demand-driven humanitarian partnerships are crucial to the success of the workstream's

goals of increased community engagement and effective participation of affected communities in decision-making about humanitarian programming that impacts their lives.

There is a broad recognition among Participation Workstream participants that the pending, unfinished [Grand Bargain commitments](#) in this area¹, in particular, commitments to build “a coordinated approach for community engagement and participation supported by a common platform for sharing and analysing data” and “build(ing) systematic links between feedback and corrective action to adjust programming”, are fundamentally institutional and structural, not technical.

The remaining obstacles to effective participation are most often linked to overcoming power imbalances among different humanitarian actors and between humanitarian actors and affected communities. There has been too much attention on frameworks, processes and so-called ‘accountability activities’ and not enough on how to translate effectively the output of those changes into tangible results based on community input.

Workstream	Decision	Justification	Proposed areas of work in GB 2.0
Workstream 6 (Participation revolution)	CONTINUATION	The work of the Participation Workstream is directly relevant to the proposed Strategic Priority of Grand Bargain 2.0 and its two Enabling Priorities, all of which speak to the need for greater accountability in humanitarian action	<p>Refocus on local responders by working through newly established National Reference Groups (NRG).</p> <p>Conduct a mapping exercise to define problem set NRGs need to address and monitor progress</p> <p>Further explore how to address identified “communication gaps” among humanitarian workers, especially front-line workers²</p> <p>Identify workable actions that reinforce commitment by donors to support efforts to integrate CCE/AAP and, in the context of public health emergencies, RCCE.³</p>

¹ <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/a-participation-revolution-include-people-receiving-aid-in-making-the-decisions-which-affect-their-lives>

² For example, front line workers are often unaware of, or insufficiently empowered to utilise, donor requirements and flexibilities to allow adaptation of programming in response to constituent perception and feedback.

³ Donors can do this by providing adequate and flexible funding, by politically supporting the integration of CCE/AAP and, in the context of public health emergencies, RCCE into the implementation of the humanitarian program cycle (HPC) through explicit requirements for partners to report on how they have adapted their programs and approaches to input from affected people. This would be facilitated by improved alignment among donor requirements vis-à-vis partners with regard to engagement with communities. Donors should also agree on how to support monitoring of HC performance on responsiveness to community input, for example, through an annual reporting on HRP implementation and follow-up on peer to peer (P2P) recommendations. This could be a topic for discussion within the caucus on quality funding and localization proposed in the Eminent Persons letter of 26 July 2021.

			<p>Identify workable actions that reinforce and support political commitment by agencies at senior levels to prioritize the implementation of participation programming⁴</p> <p>Creation and funding of cross-cutting institutional arrangements, appropriate to local situations⁵</p>
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2) MAPPING: REMAINING POLITICAL CHALLENGES AND SUPPORT NEEDED

We have worked with Workstream thought leaders and members to identify the remaining challenges or work for your workstream at the political level and indicated below which outcome pillar that work contributes to.

Outcome pillar	Remaining workstream challenges/work at the political level:	Technical support/work needed to support the work at the political level identified in column 2:	Is the technical work identified in column 3 already carried out in a different fora / can it be transferred to a different forum – if yes, to which:
1. Flexibility, predictability, transparency, and tracking	Empowerment of front-line and local workers and partners, including women and women led organisations, to utilise <i>existing</i> donor and systemic flexibility to allow participation of affected people. Outputs may include	Active communication and promotion of existing flexibility by donors and others such as RC/HCs	Individual powerholders will communicate this through their own partnership mechanisms and line management.

⁴ Agencies can do this by incentivizing the incorporation of the priorities of affected people into humanitarian programming in a coordinated manner – both via individual agency efforts and through a commitment to listen and respond to feedback that is coming in at the response-wide level. This will require an element of culture change in how we work. This should avoid efforts to combine data from multiple agencies, which historically have never worked, but rather take a more common-sense, ‘good enough’ approach to ensuring agency-level programming is conducted accountably, with clients able to engage and provide feedback without duplication of similar mechanisms by multiple agencies. There should also be a willingness and a commitment from agency heads to make a concerted effort to change course should response-wide feedback indicate that this would improve results. This could be incorporated into the discussions of the caucus on quality funding and localization/accountability as proposed by the Eminent Person in his letter of 26 July 2021.

	specific high-level communications to partners and better understanding of donor frameworks.		
	Political acceptance of progress monitoring Outcome could be agreement among signatories, especially key donors, to integrate these indicators into existing CCE/AAP partner requirements.	Identify milestones and indicators to track and measure success of involvement of local voices in project design and development	This work will be completed within IASC Results Group 2, with the active participation of WS 6 members and co-convenors.
	Political recognition that participation may lead to less predictability in response	None	N/A
2. Equitable and principled partnerships	Effective utilisation of power held in donor roles to empower and enable front-line staff to utilise existing flexibility. Outcome: changes to partnership agreements	Clearer analysis of risks from perspective of different stakeholder groups.	Proposed caucus on quality funding for local and international actors while ensuring the accountability, transparency, and visibility (i.e., risks) required by donors.
3. Accountability and inclusion	Inclusion of affected people from the earliest stages of response design	Clear leadership responsibility for fulfilling commitments made on accountability	National Reference Groups
4. Prioritisation and coordination	Promote and advance issues related to risk and risk sharing identified as possible obstacles to greater localization; and	Clearer analysis of political blockages and perceived risks from perspective of different stakeholders.	Proposed caucus on quality funding for local and international actors while ensuring the accountability, transparency, and visibility (i.e., risks) required by donors.
	Better define the roles of intermediaries in ensuring greater participation of local actors in humanitarian response.	Better definition of roles different humanitarian actors play, and analysis of when different roles may be appropriate in a given context	Proposed Caucus on Intermediary roles.

ANNEX: OVERVIEW OF WORKSTREAM DECISIONS

Below is an overview of the decisions proposed by workstream Co-convenors in their exit/continuation strategies submitted to the Facilitation Group in March 2021.

Workstream	Suggestion	Justification	Proposed areas of work in GB 2.0
Workstream 1 (<i>Greater Transparency</i>)	<p>CONTINUATION</p> <p><i>However: "The World Bank and the Netherlands have been leading this work for the last five years. We have invited others to take on a greater leadership role in moving forward."</i></p>	<p>The Workstream members are convinced that the vision of data-driven transparency, as outlined by the GB negotiators in 2016, continues to be essential in this process and should be a key element of the GB2.0.</p>	<p>More work is required to strengthen the complementarity of existing systems, leverage the advantages of them, make publication of open data and platform language easier, identify the best possible solutions to achieve traceability.</p> <p>The WS is convinced that sustained political leadership and prioritization of data will be necessary to ensure adequate data publication, including in IATI, and interoperability of systems to achieve this vision.</p>
Workstream 2 (<i>More support and funding tools for local and national responders</i>)	<p>CONTINUATION</p>	<p>A Localisation Workstream of technical focal points is still needed to support the political process and continue existing work. Workstream members unanimously feel that it should continue to exist in the new GB 2.0 structure. The technical level discussion will be needed to prepare the higher-level political process going forward and there is also technical-level work that should be continued. The Workstream should also</p>	<p>Quality of partnerships</p> <p>Links between localization and quality funding</p> <p>The needs of local women's rights and women-led organisations</p> <p>Other potential priority areas identified for further discussion</p>

		itself explore ways for it to be more inclusive of local actors going forward	
Workstream 3 (<i>Increase the use and coordination of cash-based programming</i>)	POTENTIAL CLOSURE	Much of the workstreams' activities can be moved to other forums, and there is scope to potentially close the workstream entirely. Despite this, there is a consensus that there remain key areas of work to address.	Issue of cash coordination Sub-workstream links to enabling priorities ('building local partnerships' and 'cash and social protection' sub-workstreams)
Workstream 4 (<i>Reduce duplication and management costs with periodic functional reviews</i>)	CLOSURE	GOJ/UNHCR have concluded that it is beyond the capacity of the workstream to follow-up effectively on commitment 4.5. The workstream believes that it would be best if the issue is handled by the future Eminent Person with support from ICRC/NL who are leading the risk-sharing discussions.	Commitment 4.5 (Make regular joint reviews and reduce individual donor assessments) requires follow-up in the GB 2.0
Workstream 5 (<i>Improve joint and impartial needs assessments</i>)	CONTINUATION	Despite strong progress, important challenges remain outstanding. Efforts and encouragements must continue to facilitate agencies' engagement in intersectoral needs analysis, while highlighting that increased focus on intersectoral analysis simultaneously offers important insights for individual sectors. Additional high-level support is lacking to enforce system wide changes, adopting reforms and allocating sufficient resources. The role of donors is also very important, in terms of supporting the process and rooting funding allocations on the results of the JIAF that inform	Strengthen and institutionalise the JIAF Funding joint needs analysis efforts; Meaningful commitment by all stakeholders, including cluster-lead agencies; Funding decisions aligned with the HPC; Participation of HCT and individual actors in HPC informed by the JIAF; Clearly articulated alignment between JIAF-informed HNOs and HRPs

		prioritised appeals in a demonstrable manner.	
Workstream 6 (<i>Participation revolution</i>)	CONTINUATION	The work of the Participation Workstream is directly relevant to the proposed Strategic Priority of Grand Bargain 2.0 and its two Enabling Priorities, all of which speak to the need for greater accountability in humanitarian action	<p>Recommitment by donors to support efforts to integrate CCE/AAP and RCCE in the context of public health emergencies</p> <p>A recommitment by agencies at senior levels to prioritize the implementation of participation programming</p> <p>Creation and funding of cross-cutting institutional arrangements, appropriate to local situations</p>
Workstream 7&8 (Enhance quality funding)	CLOSURE	<p>The workstream's current format would not allow for further progress to overcome the remaining political barriers, which are clearly linked to broader policy issues</p> <p>Work on quality funding will certainly continue through a more integrated approach</p> <p>More technical work will be required to enable quality funding to reach local actors: The IASC Results Group 5 is well placed to advance the technical work on cascading quality funding to frontline responders.</p>	<p>Adopting a more holistic understanding of quality funding to include the timeliness, flexibility and predictability of the full spectrum of funding at all levels;</p> <p>Achieving further progress on the original Grand Bargain commitments to reach critical mass and scale up best practices;</p> <p>Enhancing accountability and visibility, including through results reporting;</p> <p>Cascading quality funding and quality funding conditions to frontline responders, including local women's organisations.</p>

<p>Workstream 9 (<i>Harmonise and simplify reporting requirements</i>)</p>	<p>CONTINUATION</p>	<p>While technical work has been completed, the broader implementation of the harmonised and simplified 8+3 reporting template remains relevant for the enabling priorities of the Grand Bargain 2.0</p>	<p>Harmonization of other elements of the humanitarian project cycle such as proposal formats, financial reporting, or cost classifications as discussed in Workstream 4</p> <p>As the issue of quality funding is discussed in the Grand Bargain 2.0, further reporting issues might become apparent, e.g., regarding accountability and visibility</p>
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