

Grand Bargain in 2018:
Annual Self Report – Narrative Summary

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InterAction

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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 2018?

InterAction saw significant progress throughout the course of its recent 18-month USAID/OFDA funded study [NGOs and Risk: Managing Uncertainty in Local-International Partnerships](#) and additionally with InterAction's recent [CEO Pledge to Action on Preventing Sexual Abuse, Exploitation and Harassment by and of NGO Staff](#). These two initiatives demonstrate the importance of laying the groundwork for collective impact through a common evidence base from which recommendations and future targeted actions flow. InterAction's continued investment in developing an evidence base, shared understanding and collective learning around enterprise risk management is likely to have benefits that are not bound exclusively to a single workstream, but rather benefit many. For example, growing risk aversion among humanitarian actors, particularly related to fiduciary risks, is leading to increased compliance and reporting burdens, less flexible funding and disbursement mechanisms, and significant real and perceived legal risks that diminish operational presence and ultimately, program quality. Since 2016, InterAction has observed a marked increase in INGOs willingness to discuss the topic of risk more openly, promoting more opportunities for peer learning and information sharing that benefits organizational risk awareness and responsiveness across the sector.

InterAction's [2016 NGO and Risk study](#), and the most recent 2017-2019 research, laid the groundwork for further professionalization of NGO enterprise risk management systems and practices with the aim of developing a common understanding on risk, identifying best practices, and increasing public confidence in humanitarian delivery. Similarly, InterAction's [Pledge to Action Program](#) may further demonstrate that sustainable policy change is most likely realized when the conditions are right—when the cost of doing nothing outweighs the cost of change—leading to the right combination of leadership focus, dedicated financial resources, and working level staff commitment. Reflecting on this change logic has helped InterAction better understand where the greatest progress within the Grand Bargain has been achieved and why.

It is worth reflecting openly that neither the CEO Pledge nor NGOs and Risk are initiatives that originated within InterAction's Grand Bargain work, though they are areas of work that bear some connectivity to various commitments and are likely to prove helpful in advancing progress. Greater connectivity to Grand Bargain commitments can be shown through InterAction's ongoing engagement on UN/NGO partnerships and our work to publish humanitarian data (see below). However, these are also commitment areas where there are disincentives and progress has been limited (i.e multi-year financing or less earmarking) because key stakeholders are interested in and incentivized to maintain the status quo. For key humanitarian actors with the influence and resources to make change, incentives remain insufficient. One small way InterAction attempts to address this challenge is by taking a more proactive approach to considering Grand Bargain commitments in some of its proposal development and fundraising. To date, the commitments have been integrated to some degree into all of InterAction's active humanitarian funding agreements. This approach will not address institutional inertia among other Grand Bargain signatories, but it will help ensure Grand Bargain commitments and standards underpin several of InterAction's activities in the years to come.

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

In 2018, InterAction published all funding to IATI. InterAction remains committed to the fundamental principle of aid transparency. However, achieving this commitment was largely made possible by existing staff technical know-how and dedicated resources available within our development programs. Establishing IATI as “a permanent business function” as recommended on the IATI website is not an easy task and can entail significant costs. Substantial upgrades and optimizations to organizational management systems are often required to ensure publishing can be maintained. As it currently stands, even with InterAction’s relatively small number of projects, IATI’s complexity, the learning curve and administrative burden required to publish pose obstacles to sustainable and routine publishing, as well as enhancing the completeness and quality of our data.

A case for publishing to IATI cannot simply be grounded in donor compliance or because “it’s the right thing to do”. To gain the senior management backing and resources to establish publishing as a permanent business function, IATI data must demonstrate an organizational value as it relates to analysis, strategic decision making, and key business processes. Currently, there is a significant disincentive to publish as IATI data is not accessible in an easy and usable format and there are no tools for comparative analysis of all humanitarian funding flows by donor, partner, project, sector, crisis, or otherwise. For example, during the selection of field research locations for its 18-month [USAID/OFDA funded study NGOs and Risk](#), InterAction attempted to use IATI data to narrow field research areas from six countries to two based on a pre-defined criteria. The exercise proved impossible as the data was only accessible in XML formats which required significant time and technical skills to analyze. No trends analysis could thus be derived from IATI data to inform field research selection. InterAction anticipates that developing a business case for regular IATI publishing will be challenging, as generating business value as it relates to strategic response management, humanitarian analysis, and decision-making remains elusive within the current scope of IATI functions due to both the quality of available data and its accessibility, usability, and usefulness to humanitarian actors. Incentives to publish must be created. Incentives begin with a clear scoping and roadmap for humanitarian user needs research that captures all stakeholder needs. Second, sustainable resourcing for a collective and commonly shared data use platform that allows data to be searchable is required for usability and to inform strategic decision making for all humanitarian actors, from originating donor to frontline responder.

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? (please outline specific initiatives or changes in practice and their outcomes/results).

InterAction established a CEO Task Force on Preventing Sexual Abuse, Exploitation, and Harassment of and by NGO staff and held the first meeting in January 2018. The task force includes a greater balance of women leaders. In March 2018, InterAction led the development of the [CEO Pledge to Action](#) which outlines 15 commitments the CEO signatories agreed to implement. This effort resulted in 126 CEOs signing on to the

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

pledge. The pledge was also shared with relevant donors and organizations including the IASC and USAID.

In support of reinvigorated efforts to demonstrate zero-tolerance for PSEA and to improve its own compliance with standards, InterAction sought and achieved 100% staff graduation from the PSEA 101 online training course. InterAction also initiated the process to revise its membership standards which will include updates related to preventing SHA and SEA. The revision is currently underway. InterAction conducted four specific workshops and dialogue sessions on PSEA/SHA including one exclusively for women CEOs at our annual CEO retreat in December 2018. This has led to increased NGO board interest in the topic. For example, InterAction's Vice President of Humanitarian Policy and Practice was recently invited to attend an NGO's board meeting and guide board members through a simulation. This consistent and senior-level attention and the effort behind the [Pledge to Action resulted in a successful program proposal](#) which will support NGOs with the resources they require to advance change within their own organizations.

Question 4: 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.

InterAction and many of its members operate under a mixed-mandate model and we work to convene and organize NGOs around both humanitarian and development issues. There is increased recognition on the need to engage a wide array of actors particularly as it relates to protracted or forgotten crises. Practically, this means that InterAction's humanitarian team increasingly engages with and makes recommendations to actors that are more traditionally viewed as development actors. This includes more regular dialogue and better coordination with actors such as national security and defence-oriented policy thinkers in Washington DC to the inclusion of a broader range of stakeholder inputs into InterAction's field support missions. InterAction's [Results Based Protection program](#) and approach increasingly emphasizes the importance of engaging with a diverse set of actors to ensure outcome-oriented analysis and design. Additionally, there is a significant degree of collaboration both among NGO members and across InterAction's Global Development and Public Policy and Humanitarian teams around sharing information and analysis related to emerging regulatory challenges and USAID procurement reform.