

**Grand Bargain in 2018:**  
**Annual Self Report – Narrative Summary**

**Name of Institution:** Network for Empowered Aid Response (NEAR)

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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?**

In 2018, NEAR (Network for Empowered Aid Response) embarked on **a series of research projects** that aimed to garner evidence to showcase the positive contribution of local and national organisations in the humanitarian sector. This research also supported the development of the **NEAR Localisation Performance Measurement Framework (LPMF)**, to evidence progress towards achieving localisation commitments set by the Grand Bargain.

In line with GB commitments and aligned to its [2018 – 2020 Strategic Plan ‘Giving People Voice and Ownership’](#), NEAR commissioned and disseminated a traceability study with ODI to assess the flow of funds from donors to local actors. Two case studies were conducted in Somalia and South Sudan. The two countries were selected because of the amount of humanitarian funding flowing into these countries. Through this research, NEAR and ODI developed a methodology which can be used in other humanitarian contexts. It was finalized in September 2018 and officially disseminated through various online outlets in October 2018.

NEAR also researched and disseminated a Financial Strategy ‘Turning Rhetoric into Resources: Transforming the Financing of Civil Society in the Global South’ [and Funding to Local Humanitarian Actors; South Sudan and Somalia Case Studies](#). The research papers and policy documents contribute significantly by informing the GB signatories on how to direct and improve quality funding for national and local actors.

NEAR’s Localization Performance Measurement Framework (LPMF) was developed for the entire ecosystem inclusive of Local/National Actors, INGOs, UN Agencies, Donors and Academia/Researchers & Evaluators. It looks at six localisation components which are: a) partnerships; b) funding; c) capacity; d) coordination and complementarity; e) policy, influence and visibility and f) participation. Several stakeholders were consulted and considered these areas as most relevant.

While the LPMF has been designed to be used as a tool to monitor progress of localization amongst four target groups (Donors, UN/INGO, Local and National Actors and Researchers), the first phase only allowed NEAR to initiate conversations amongst its members and the international community. Ultimately, it took the NEAR network over a year to establish an agreed upon framework amongst more than 75 stakeholders and begin to bridge the gap between the international community and their local actor counterparts. While efforts have been made to ensure that it is consistent with the structure of the Grand Bargain (GB) commitments, some minor changes in emphasis and prioritisation have been made where it is felt that these will improve clarity and avoid confusion.

The development of the LPMF has been guided by the objective of delivering a tool that is clear, practical, and that can assist in strengthening the evidence base for

localisation and advance a common understanding of the progress that is being made as well as identifying areas of weakness.

One other major achievement was the Leadership Forum held in Nairobi in April 2018, which brought together 35 top management representatives of local actors from 5 countries. It was a unique and welcomed opportunity for NEAR members to exchange on common issues faced by local actors in the Global South particularly in the areas of governance, leadership, resource mobilization, advocacy, strategic planning, and sustainability.

The event proved to have a high impact on the attendees, sparking inspiration to take ownership of the localization agenda and the importance of their role in the humanitarian sector with a clear understanding of the influence they can have by uniting and empowering each other. This peer learning experience showed how local NGOs have much to learn and benefit from one another. Similarly, locally based peer events were organized towards the end of 2018, which enabled the creation of local consortiums that will continue the culture of collaboration and mutual support.

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

A great majority of actors within the humanitarian ecosystem from the donor, to international agencies, local actors and local governments still do not have the systems in place to either monitor or shift their practices towards localization. The LPMF presents an opportunity to discuss the “how” localization will work.

There is great role which is missing within the sector, which is the bridge between the international community and the Global South. NEAR’s various initiatives have helped identify a much needed role to bring back the conversation around the localization of aid, and ensuring all actors are focused on supporting the affected communities.

Through strong advocacy efforts, NEAR has become the leading voice for local and national actors in the Global South. The establishment of NEAR led to 83 local and national organizations actively coordinating and more than 60 actively participating in inter-agency coordination mechanisms.

It is also important to note that many local actors from the Global South contacted by NEAR had none to limited awareness on localization and the Grand-Bargain commitments. NEAR has given them a greater understanding of the ongoing international discussions and a willingness to engage further in their own context and become “active agents for aid localization”. As per an external evaluation conducted on NEAR performance, NEAR activities “helped to both explain and serve the localization agenda”.

**Question 3: How has your institution contributed to the advancement of gender equality and women’s empowerment 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)**

Through its activities, NEAR conducted organizational assessments of 25 local actors in 5 countries. As a result, some of these local actors increased the female representation of their Board membership/governance and/or developed a Gender and Social Inclusion Policy. Thus NEAR was able to contribute to the advancement of gender equality by influencing and capacitating its members.

NEAR signed an MoU with Women Deliver, which is a global advocacy organization that works to generate political commitment and financial investment for fulfilling Millennium Development Goal 5 - reducing maternal mortality and achieving universal access to reproductive health. The aim of the MoU is to ensure that NEAR's advocacy, capacity building, and research are all gender-sensitive, all for the purpose of achieving better health, rights, and well-being outcomes for girls and women in humanitarian settings.

**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.

Through the alternative financing studies conducted by NEAR, pooled funding designs strongly reflect how local actors are primarily interested in establishing a more robust, sustainable, multi-purpose funding mechanism instead of reproducing existing humanitarian response focused funds such as the Humanitarian Relief Funds. Alternative financing mechanisms serve the purpose of closing the gap between humanitarian and development funding.

NEAR has also compiled a series of case studies precisely to highlight the humanitarian-development nexus, sharing success stories and challenges faced by local actors responding to humanitarian emergencies as well as in development settings. The importance of locally-led response in disaster preparedness, disaster risk reduction, and climate change has also been highlighted.

The case studies were collected in six different contexts with a variety of local actors. They were published online through a series titled "Dispatches From the Field". They include:

India: a) Community-Based Cyclone Management; b) Urban Resilience and Risk Reduction

Liberia: a) CHI and how local action stopped Ebola; b) Local approaches to education in emergencies

Syria: a) Evacuations of cities under attack; b) Keeping children disease free in conflict: The Syria Immunisation Group

Haiti: a) Towards inclusive localised humanitarian action; b) The Haitian Community Foundation and locally channelled funding for hurricane response

Kenya: a) Building resilience through local ownership; b) Community resilience in an urban informal settlement: The Kenyan Red Cross 'Roadmap to Resilience' in Lunga Lunga

Guatemala: a) Mitigating drought and climate change in Guatemala; b) Localising Disaster Response: COCIGER and the Volcan de Fuego, Guatemala

Most cases depict the need for local actors to be supported in improving their partnerships with international actors, demonstrating their added value and comparative advantage due to their familiarity with the context and accessing direct funding to ensure sustainability of their valuable work.