

Grand Bargain in 2018:
Annual Self Report – Narrative Summary

Name of Institution: United States Government (USG)

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Date of Submission:

Introduction

The United States Government (USG) remains committed to the Grand Bargain and the need to realize significant results in the field. For this reason, the USG joined the Facilitation Group 2018-2019 rotation to ensure that the Grand Bargain yields the necessary results. As the world's largest humanitarian donor, the USG is instituting its own reforms to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the delivery of its assistance. In June 2018, the White House announced the Optimization of Humanitarian Assistance, which will better align aid and advocacy from the State Department's Bureau for Population, Refugees, and Migration and USAID's Offices of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) and Food for Peace (FFP). In July 2018, the Administration submitted a Congressional Notification to merge FFP and OFDA to become USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance, thus streamlining and producing greater efficiencies in how the USG delivers humanitarian assistance. This merger was approved in January 2019. While these actions are not specifically within the Grand Bargain, it is a demonstration of the USG's commitment to aid effectiveness.

While these internal shifts are in process, the USG views that the Grand Bargain writ-large has not resulted in all the necessary changes to improve aid effectiveness. In particular, the USG continues to prioritize joint needs assessment, the reduction of management costs and duplication, and relief to development coherence. The USG reiterated its top three priorities for the GB in executive board meetings across UN humanitarian agencies throughout last year, emphasizing our focus on improving efficiency, effectiveness, and reform. We continue to regularly and positively engage with UN agencies that have endorsed the Grand Bargain on its implementation through bilateral engagements, monitoring and evaluation in the field, amongst other efforts. As the USG has stated since the Grand Bargain was endorsed, implementing agencies must make significant progress on their commitments before the USG is able to make additional changes beyond what is outlined in this report. The USG will continue to support those changes which have resulted in increased effectiveness and efficiencies.

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?

i) Support for improved joint needs assessments

The USG continued to prioritize improved joint needs assessments that underpin prioritized humanitarian response plans and appeals in public statements, governing boards, and other fora as necessary for improved efficiency and effectiveness. This includes support to OCHA and other organizations, such as REACH IOM, that build comprehensive data collection and analysis that helps inform and feed into joint needs assessments and evidence-based decision-making for more prioritized programming. In 2018, the USG also became an active participant in the Grand Bargain Joint Needs Assessment workstream and is identifying further opportunities to advance this issue, both through engagement at the global level as well in country. New internal needs assessment guidance and tools for staff have been developed that incorporate a commitment to coordinated needs assessments. The Assessment & Analysis guidance and tools developed in 2018 will be augmented by new internal USAID Assessment and Analysis policy and training scheduled for delivery in 2019.

ii) Increased support for local and national responders

The USG has a long history of working with local and national actors to prepare for and respond to disasters and is fundamentally committed to building the capacity of local and national responders for disaster risk reduction and humanitarian response. Local and national actors are effective partners as they are often the first to respond, are embedded in communities that allow for a more sustainable response – before, during, and after a crisis, and can contribute to joint needs assessments and planning. In the long-term, having capable, accountable local and national responders will reduce reliance on more costly international partners and organizations. However, institutional capacity strengthening remains a critical first step before significant funding can be directly implemented by national actors; this will inform the USG localization strategy for 2019 and beyond.

The USG supports increased multi-year programming, as appropriate, and works with the UN and other international organization partners to improve the capacity of local partners to prepare for and respond to humanitarian crises. This increase in multi-year funding was piloted with a select number of mostly NGO partners who were able to articulate and link funding requests to multi-year planning, and had the capacity, and capability to adhere to essential criteria including accountability. This approach not only supported more flexible delivery in the field, but it also reduced internal grant making time. In these cases, more staff time could then be focused on monitoring and program adjustments, as needed. In FY 2018, the USG supported institutional capacity building for local and national responders in Sudan, South Sudan, and Ethiopia, among others.

As an example, in 2018 the USG initiated support for an NGO consortium in Sudan under the title RISING (Recovery in Sudan for Improved Nutrition and Growth). The consortium comprises six international NGOs, each working through between three and ten local NGOs and addressing each NGO's ability to respond to a local crisis, before the arrival of international actors.

In September 2018, the USG provided targeted funding to the International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC) Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF), which provides rapid emergency funding directly to National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, enabling them to respond quickly to disasters and crises. One of gaps identified is the varying/disparate capacities of national societies to effectively respond to humanitarian crises. The USG also specifically supported Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement's National Society Investment Mechanism (NISM) to help deliver multi-year institutional strengthening support for National Societies to become more sustainable, accountable, transparent, and deliver more effective humanitarian action

iii) Improvements in tracking

In FY 2018, the USG operationalized a number of internal financial tracking improvements in localization and cash. For localization, the USG developed and implemented a new marker for tracking local and national actors in its internal humanitarian data system. The marker is aligned with definitions for categories of funding flows approved by the workstream. The USG launched indicators to track the transfer value of cash and of vouchers separately; improvements to these systems will continue into 2019.

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

The USG draws widely from its experiences to inform more standardized policies and uses evidence of efficiencies to inform future investments. The USG's experiences with multi-year financing in Latin America are informing policies on working with national actors and local implementers in Yemen. In Yemen, the USG is programming 18-month awards for the majority of humanitarian response NGO partners. As outlined above, this approach supported more flexible delivery in the field, and as a result, more staff time could then focus on monitoring and program adjustments, as needed.

The USG is incorporating lessons learned into its policies in other areas, as well. The results of investments in technology and reporting systems in 2018 have been encouraging as the USG looks at practices that will improve funding efficiency. For example, the USG invested \$4 million in the World Food Programme's biometric beneficiary identity and benefit management system, SCOPE, in South Sudan. As a result of this investment, beneficiary numbers reduced as double-registrations were eliminated. This success encourages the USG to consider future opportunities to improve efficiency with technology.

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).

The USG works with partners to contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment in humanitarian settings starting with gender sensitive program design requirements. Across its emergency and development interventions, the USG requires partners to address how their programs will take gender considerations into account. For example, the USG requires partners to submit a gender analysis and demonstrate use of participatory program design, implementation, and monitoring, with feedback mechanisms involving women and girls. USG partners must also describe how, in each project, staff and beneficiaries are made aware of the organizational code of conduct on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse and ways to safely report incidents. USG teams specifically focused on gender issues also meet with new partners to review their emergency award applications and ensure the unique local needs and contributions of women and girls are taken into account. By requiring partners to include gender analyses and use participatory design processes, USG-funded humanitarian response programming can more meaningfully respond to the needs of women and girls, a first step to gender equality and empowerment.

The USG also provides funding to numerous programs specifically targeting gender and gender-based violence issues. For example, State/PRM funded UNICEF to roll-out the IASC Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Guidelines, which speaks to developing common standards on GBV and also funds NGOs for capacity building and partnership (including grants) to local women's organizations to support their empowerment and leadership.

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

Question 4: How has the humanitarian-development nexus been strategically mainstreamed in your institutional implementation of the Grand Bargain commitments?

The USG continues to develop, evaluate, and increase programming for resilience, livelihoods, and disaster risk reduction to mitigate and reduce recurring humanitarian crises. In addition, the USG engages in dialogue with key development partners at the country level to support the nexus approach, including through support for efforts to improve coordination of joint analysis and planning processes. For example, the USG, through USAID, increasingly looks to support humanitarian cash programs intentionally designed to complement national social safety net programs. To advance the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), the USG, via State/PRM's contributions to refugee responses and through diplomatic engagements, has garnered tangible humanitarian-development nexus/relief-to-development coherence (RDC) commitments from host countries and development actors. The elements of the CRRF provide a more systematic and sustainable response that benefits both refugees and host communities and considers longer-term solutions at the outset. At least fifteen countries are currently implementing the CRRF, with multiple others informally implementing many of its elements.

In 2018, the USG indicated its commitment to mainstreaming the nexus in its activities with its support for the development of the OECD-DAC recommendation on Humanitarian-Development-Peace nexus (approved February 2019). As an "adherent" to the recommendation, the USG recognizes the role conflict plays in many humanitarian emergencies and the challenges of post-conflict and other fragile settings. The recommendation provides a set of common principles to guide donors and other stakeholders.

The USG has been a major proponent of multilateral development bank engagement in refugee settings. The USG was a core member of the interagency team that developed the World Bank's Global Concessional Financing Facility and the IDA-18 Regional Sub-Window for Refugees and Host Communities (RSW) and is engaging substantively in the development of the IDA 18 RSW eligibility criteria, advocating successfully for the inclusion of an adequate protection framework in the criteria for support under the RSW. The USG will continue to seek opportunities to strengthen and mainstream the nexus.