



Walking the Talk: Inclusion and Accountability

The Alliance for Empowering Partnerships (A4EP) is a network of organisations committed to rebalancing the humanitarian architecture and practices to enable locally-led responses. This position paper is a contribution to discussions during the ECOSOC meeting and side events from June 24-27 June, in Geneva. It has four attention points.

- 1. Scale up inclusion and participation.** National and Local actors and affected communities from aid receiving countries, that are intended to benefit from the IASC and Grand Bargain work are still underrepresented in their structures. A process that aims at a participation revolution and reinforcement rather than replacement of local and national actors in humanitarian practices, cannot succeed if it excludes their effective participation in the process, or feels content with merely token participation. Currently, signatories, Sherpas and work stream conveners are all from the Global North. More actively reaching out to and inclusion of ASEAN, BIMSTEC, the African Union and other national/ regional groups and non-traditional donors can also strengthen the South-South and Triangular cooperation.

Following the good example of Charter 4 Change, A4EP recommends that national and local actors become endorser of the Grand Bargain, have equal representation in all the work streams of the Grand Bargain and right to participate in its decision-making, as these decisions have impact on them. Resources should be allocated to ensure their participation in the processes both regionally and globally. The selection criteria should be developed by local/ national actors and the selection process should be democratic and not controlled by a few international actors.

- 2. Scale up progress on implementation and accountability of GB commitments.** Several of the Grand Bargain commitments aim at strengthening local responders and affected populations. Three years after the World Humanitarian Summit, the large majority of local/national actors and communities do not know about these commitments. There are few examples of signatories proactively informing their staff and partners about the localisation commitments made by their head offices and providing instructions on what that means in terms of changed practices.

A4EP encourages all signatories to scale up their efforts to disseminate information and think more strategically on delivering on commitments beyond 2020. Using the “Seven Dimensions” framework for localisation, developed for the Start Network and already being used by more organisations, GB signatories, with participation of local actors and affected communities, can and must develop a structured road map and action plan to accelerate participation and localisation at a system-wide and country level , with miles stones, so they can be held accountable for the progress made. The signatories also need to ensure the same is carried out at organisational and operational level.

- 3. There is insufficient visibility of local level actors.** A great deal of resources are raised and invested in visits to the demonstrator countries, regional conferences and other localisation research. There is little visibility of the local and national actors who take part in these processes or indeed what the reports are ultimately used for and how they will benefit from their participation. We appreciate UN Resident Coordinator and her team in Bangladesh taking initiatives for Localization Task Force to prepare a road map on localization for the Rohingya response based on the recommendations from such a Grand Bargain demonstrator team visit held September 2018. We urge other countries to follow the examples.

Meanwhile very little funding is available to local actors who want to organise their own localisation campaign and for locally-led research. One exception is Oxfam’s support of countywide consultations carried out by COAST Trust in Bangladesh and finally where an alliance called “Bangladeshi CSO NGO Coordination Process” has emerged and their expectation and the accountability charter that will be presented on July 6 in Dhaka, Bangladesh in a NGO conference. Supporting and resourcing local and national networks to carry out their own campaign and research will increase the capacity at national level and will generate evidence for advocacy, accountability and improved practice.

4. Shrinking space for funding and increased due diligence requirements. The GB signatories have made little progress in providing more and quality funding to local and national actors as directly as possible. While INGOs and the UN already access the funding from Northern donor administrations and publics, there is increasing and aggressive fundraising by GB and C4C signatories in emerging economies of global South, leading to shrinking space for local and national home grown organisations to fundraise in their own countries. An example of this can be seen in Bangladesh and India where INGOs and UN agencies are raising significant funds now. National offices of INGOs claim to be national organisations and are capturing not only the fundraising space but also the coordination mechanism, at national as well as grass root level. In Rohingya response in Bangladesh, local organizations are getting hardly any space in local coordination mechanism, INGOs are competing with Local NGOs for fundraising especially from UN agencies. There are UN agencies who give around 90 % of their funding to INGOs. This is not in accordance with the solidarity purpose for which they were originally created. A4EP calls for a stop to these harmful practices. The signatories should instead assist the local/national actors to strengthen their fundraising in their own countries and create pool funds which only national and local organisations can access.

The due-diligence and reporting requirements continue to be a huge burden on resources of local and national actors. The donors need to lead in reviewing and harmonising these requirements. They should also increase indirect cost allocations, so that national and local actors can afford the systems and staff that are required to be good stewards of the resources entrusted to them.

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