Charter for Change:

# From commitments to action

Progress Report 2018-2019

Charter 4 CHANGE

Charter4CHANGE

This report was compiled by the C4C reporting and coordination groups on behalf of the C4C signatories. The information has mainly been anonymised, except for some highlighted examples of the work of individual signatories.

The content of this report is a summary of inputs from the C4C signatories and does not necessarily reflect the views and positions of individual signatories.

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Cover caption: **Mariam Tawfeeq Matlaq is a plumber from Zarqa town, north of Amman. She has three daughters and a son. Mariam has been a plumber for five years. Mariam is one of several women who has been trained and supported to become plumbers. The project is aimed at both host and refugee women in the area.**
Photo: Abbie Trayler-Smith/Oxfam, 2018

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# Introduction

This report synthesizes the financial and narrative data shared by 31 of the 35 Charter for Change (C4C) signatory organisations in their third year of progress reporting[1].

The C4C was initially presented at the World Humanitarian Summit's (WHS) Global Consultation in Geneva in October 2015, and officially launched at the WHS in Istanbul in May 2016. The majority of signatories signed up to the Charter by October 2015, and most started to work on organisational change initiatives post May 2016. With the continued success of the C4C initiative as a peer support and influencing network, additional signatories and endorsers have been signed up since May 2016 and are now participants in the C4C initiative.

Each chapter of the report aims to address similar aspects, incl. progress, challenges, good practices, and emerging learnings in relation to making progress and next steps. It is structured in chapters according to the eight C4C commitments as follows:

- Commitments 1 and 3 on financial flows and tracking
- Commitments 2 on partnerships
- Commitment 4 on recruitment
- Commitment 5 on advocacy
- Commitment 6 on equality
- Commitment 7 on capacity support
- Commitment 8 on communications
- Special report on C4C and the Sulawesi Response
- Annex 1: List of C4C signatories
- Annex 2: List of the C4C endorsers

In addition to financial and narrative reporting, C4C signatories were asked to self-rate their compliance with each of the eight commitments on a scale from 0 (non-compliant) to 5 (fully compliant). This allowed the report writers to measure progress since the previous year.

**Figure 1:** Average compliance of the C4C signatories

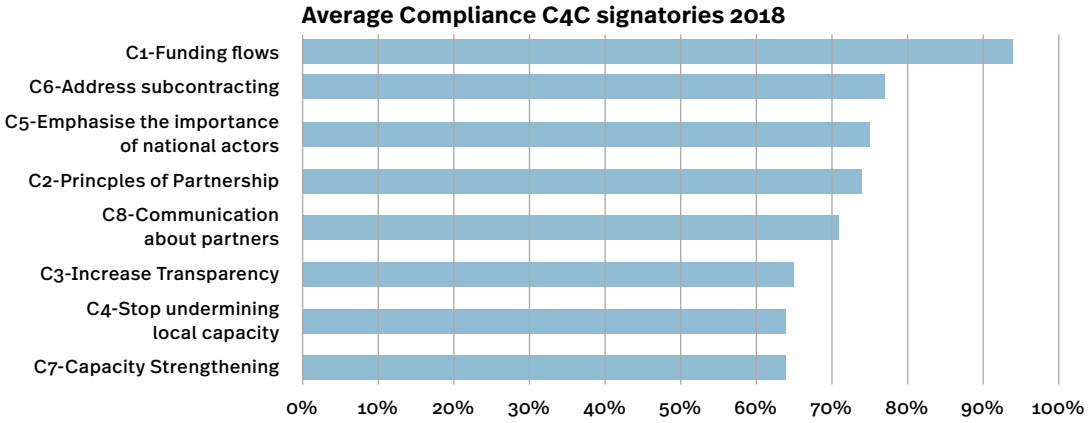



**Figure 2:** Average progress on C4C commitments since last year

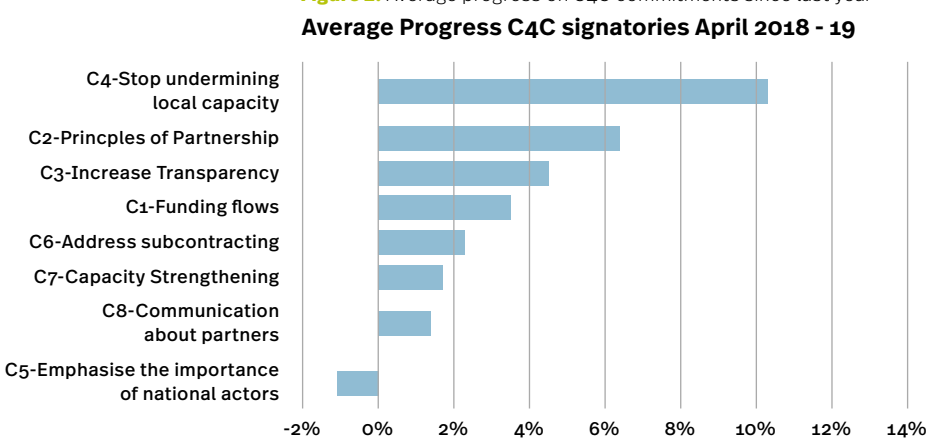



**Figure 1** shows how the signatories collectively rated their current (April 2019) compliance with the eight commitments.

**Figure 2** details the collective progress made towards meeting the commitments between the second and the third year of reporting – again as per the signatories' own reporting.

This year's Annual Report shares the status of signatories' compliance against the Charter for Change commitments at the set target date of 2018 – 2 years after the WHS. The averaged compliance data shows that overall the C4C initiative, and the signatories that have committed to change their ways of working, have not yet achieved the desired level of compliancy by end 2018.

Biggest gains over the two year period have been made in adapting organisational information systems and information sharing practices to contribute to increased transparency and accountability of investments channelled to national actors via international intermediaries (commitment 3: transparency). This commitment saw the lowest level of compliance at the start of the C4C initiative, but has seen an increase of 30% over the last two years. Despite this progress, the transparency commitment remains among the lowest complied-with at the time of reporting, indicating that great strides have yet to be made to ensure that genuine transparency of funding flows is achieved.

The highest level of compliance over the course of the C4C initiative to date is the % funding transferred to local and national NGO partners. With average compliance already above 80% at the start of the initiative, the average compliance at the time of reporting was 94%, indicating that the vast majority of the signatories channel 20% or more to local and national NGOs.

As the Charter for Change initiative has recognized from the onset, there is more to the ask for greater funding than just more money. Research by a member of the C4C network, conducted in 2018, confirmed that the *terms of the funding relationship* and the *quality of the funding*, are found to be equally, if not more important than the quantity or direct or indirect nature of the funding[2]. In fact, some NNGOs reported that better direct communication and access to international donors and humanitarian decision-making spaces were more important than increasing direct funding. This was echoed by representatives from C4C endorser organisations that participated in the 2018 C4C Annual Meeting in Oslo, where actual operationalization of the Principles of Partnership at country level (commitment 2), as well as the inclusion of overhead and capacity strengthening allocations in contract budgets, were felt to be important areas that C4C signatories need to make progress on.

When looking at progress against these commitments over the course of the C4C initiative to date, we see that progress in 2018 has stagnated on the inclusion of overheads and capacity strengthening resources, and compliance with this commitment is second lowest overall. And, although progress against the commitment on adhering to the Principles of Partnership (commitment 2) appears steady over the course of the years, C4C endorsers, through the 2018 C4C endorsers' survey as well as through the Annual Meeting, continue to stress that C4C's potential is hampered by being insufficiently known at country level and that sub-contracting and direct implementation by signatories continues to be widespread particularly during sudden onset disasters. Signatories' self-reporting and endorsers' monitoring of signatories' progress both indicate that, despite the high level of compliance with the commitment to transfer a minimum 20% of funding to partner organizations, much more needs to happen to enhance both the terms of the funding relationship as well as the quality of the funding itself.

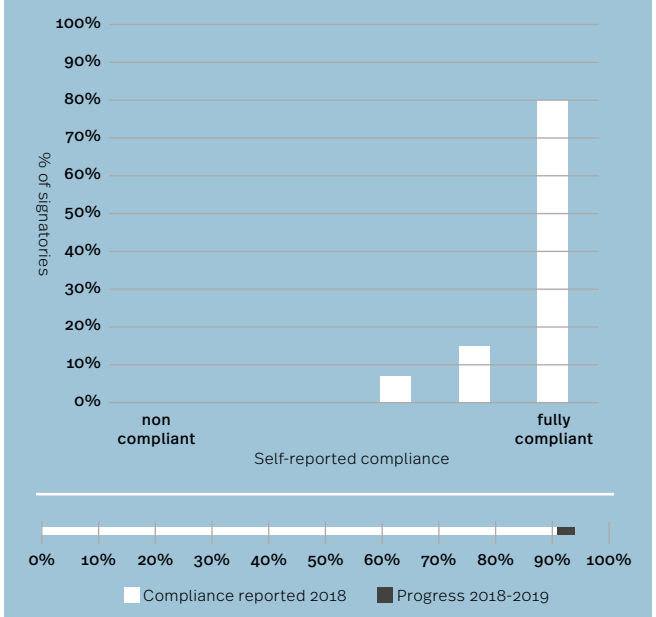
The following sections of the report provide more in-depth analysis of both the level of compliance against individual commitments as well as achievements, challenges and reflections on what has been learned over the course of 2018. Complemented by the special report on adherence to the Charter's commitments in the Sulawesi response that commenced in October 2018, we hope this report will contribute to further increasing the collective knowledge base on Localisation of Humanitarian Aid, as well as the accountability of the C4C initiative, and its signatories, to the commitments made at the World Humanitarian Summit.

Seeing that 2018 was the target date for the C4C to be met, the Oslo Annual Meeting included discussions on What Next. Signatories and endorsers both agreed that the initiative was successful in driving change – both at policy and at organizational change levels – and therefore needed to continue beyond the original target date. A few critical changes were suggested to ensure that C4C remains relevant and influential post 2018, including changes to the charter text and commitments (effective as of April 2019) as well as to the governance of the initiative, including:

- Adjusting the target date to 2020;
- Increasing the funding passed to national actors to 25% (in line with Grand Bargain);
- Reword Commitment 4 on recruitment/compensation to focus on implementing fair recruitment policies and alternatives to recruiting local and national NGO staff such as secondments, mentoring and supporting national surge initiatives;
- Making the submission of an annual report a requirement for all signatories;
- Reviewing the membership of the C4C coordination group to include more endorser representatives, and last but certainly not least, to further Walk the Talk of localization,
- Moving the C4C secretariat from a C4C signatory organization to a southern-based endorser organization.

**Commitment 1: Increase direct funding to southern-based NGOs for humanitarian action.** In 2015, when C4C was initiated, only 0.2% of humanitarian aid is channelled directly to national non-governmental actors (NGOs and CSOs) for humanitarian work – a total of USD 46.6 million out of USD 24.5 billion. We commit through advocacy and policy work to influence North American and European donors (including institutional donors, foundations and private sector) to encourage them to increase the year on year percentage of their humanitarian funding going to southern-based NGOs. We commit that by May 2018 at least 20% of our own humanitarian funding will be passed to southern-based NGOs. We commit to introduce our NGO partners to our own direct donors with the aim of them accessing direct funding.

**Figure 3:**
Average compliance and progress on commitment 1




# Commitments 1: Increase direct funding to southern-based NGOs for humanitarian action & 3: Increase transparency around resource transfers to southern-based national and local NGOs

Overall, the C4C signatories have increased the reported funding to national and local NGOs in 2018 compared to previous years' reporting. The number of organizations that reported data on total humanitarian expenditure and subsequent funding flows to local and national NGOs increased from 20 to 25 signatories in 2018. In addition, a number of signatories were only able to provide data for their combined development and humanitarian activities.

**Taken together, the total reported humanitarian expenditure of the 25 signatories that provided data for 2018 amounted to $1.2 billion (similar to 2017). Of this 21.3% (or $255 million) was channeled to local and national NGOs. These amounts indicate an increase in the share of C4C's signatories funding, which was passed on to local humanitarian actors compared to the previous years (18.4% in 2016 and 19.7% in 2017).**

The increase from 2017 to 2018 in terms of actual funding flowing to local actors amounts to $15 million. This increase may reflect several different factors including: better and more complete reporting, slightly decreased overall humanitarian expenditures, as well as fluctuations in the percentages of funding going to local actors by the individual signatories. The most important factor influencing the calculations appears to be the increase in reporting, as the number of reporting organisations increased from 20 to 25.

Taken together, these three factors - an increase of $39 million due to more reporting, a decrease of $19 million due to less available funding and a decrease of $6 million due to smaller funding shares going to local actors - resulted in the net increase of $15 million compared to last year.

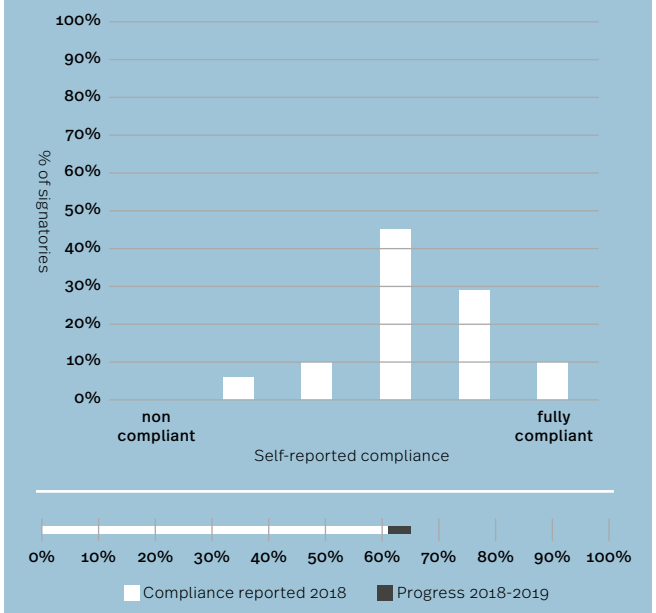
Similar to last year's C4C annual progress report, signatories' compliance with commitment 1 were assessed using a linear rating scale (0=0%, 1 0-5%, 2= 5-10%, 3=10-15%, 4=15-20%, 5>20% of total humanitarian expenditure transferred to local and national NGOs). In Figure 3, compliance with commitment 1 for all reporting signatories is shown. As last year, the data indicates that none of the signatories are entirely non-compliant and **the vast majority of the signatories report that they channel 20% or more to local and national NGOs**. While one signatory reported funding flows of less than 10% last year, this year all signatories reported channeling more than 10% of their funding to local and national NGOs.

The signatories' self-reporting on Commitment 3 (transparency - see Figure 4) did not see as much progress as reported last year. The average compliance of the signatories amounts to 3.3 (65%) on the 0-5 scale, which indicates some progress compared to last year's reporting. However, in the context of the eight commitments, only commitments 4 and 7 were rated lower in this year's self-reporting.

**Commitment 3: Increase transparency around resource transfers to southern-based national and local NGOs.**

A significant change in approaches towards transparency is needed in order to build trust, accountability and efficiency of investments channelled to national actors via international intermediaries. We commit to document the types of organisation we cooperate with in humanitarian response and to publish these figures (or percentages) in our public accounts using a recognised categorisation such as the GHA in realtime and to the IATI standard.

**Figure 4:**
Average compliance and progress on commitment 3




## Challenges

Similar to last year's reporting, tracking progress on the 20% target remains a methodological challenge. The overall percentage (21.3% in 2018) remains sensitive to the reporting of a few large C4C signatories. Not all of these have systems in place that allow them to systemically track flows to local actors across the organizations and alliances.

Therefore, some of the data provided might not be representative of these organizations and alliances as a whole. Such data was excluded from the compliance rating but included in the total humanitarian expenses of all the C4C signatories and the corresponding total funding going to local actors. Therefore, one-on-one comparisons of C4C 2016, 2017 and 2018 data remains problematic. The caution expressed in the 2018 progress report, that reliable trends on increases and decreases of funding allocated to local actors can only be extracted from the data after a few years of tracking funds also holds true for this year's data.

While smaller signatories (in terms of their total humanitarian expenditures) face less difficulties in providing data on funding flows to local actors, several of them report challenges with implementing IATI reporting. These challenges include a lack of resources to put in place financial systems that allow for reporting according to the IATI standard. Nonetheless, at least one quarter of the signatories already reports all or some of their projects according to the IATI standards and several are looking into increasing the coverage of their IATI data or intend to begin reporting to IATI altogether. **Currently only four signatories indicate that they publish data on funding flows to local and national NGOs as part of their publicly available annual financial reports or on their websites.**

## Learning and next steps

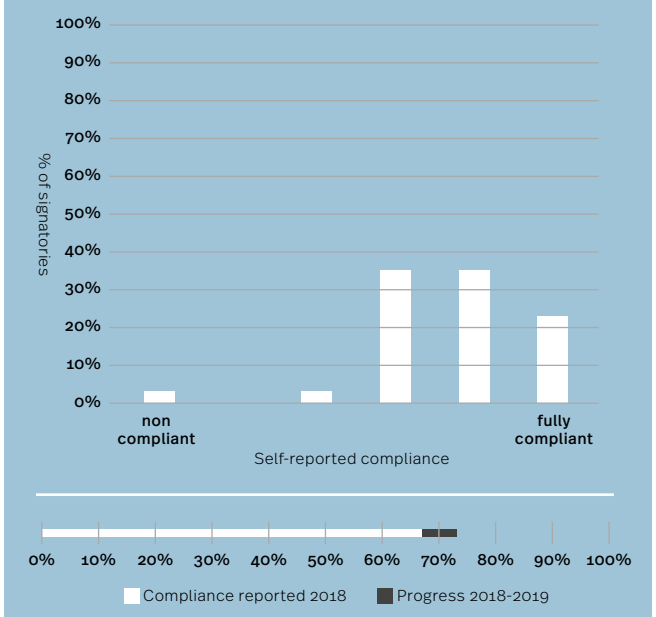
C4C signatories aim to continue to improve the scope and quality of the available data during the next year. Signatories have mainly identified two areas where they would like to increase the transparency related to funding transfers.

A number of signatories reported the implementation of new software tools that allows for easier extraction of data on funds going to local actors. In addition, at least five signatories are working to utilize their existing systems better. Others mention the need for better internal dialogue with their finance department to obtain the necessary information. With these various steps, signatories aim to provide more detailed information on funding flows, including funds spent on capacity strengthening.

Several signatories, which are already able to provide financial data as outlined in the C4C commitments, expressed plans to increase the use of this data on their website and annual reports in order to make it available to a wider audience.

**Commitment 2: Partnership.**
We endorse, and have signed on to, the Principles of Partnership (Equality, Transparency, Results-oriented Approach, Responsibility and Complementarity) introduced by the Global Humanitarian Platform in 2007.

**Figure 5:**
**Average compliance and progress on commitment 2**




# Commitment 2: Partnership

The Principles of Partnership (PoP)[3] were developed and adopted by the Global Humanitarian Platform (GHP) in 2007 as an attempt to acknowledge gaps within the humanitarian reform process, which included neglecting the role of local and national humanitarian response capacity. By signing the Charter for Change, C4C signatories endorse these Principle of Partnership, being: equality, transparency, results-oriented approach, responsibility and complementarity. Not all C4C signatories originally signed on to the Humanitarian Principles of Partnership, however reporting from these signatories emphasizes that they largely adhere to these principles as expressed in similar values and principles in their own organizational guiding documents. Some signatories reported that in 2018 they assigned staff to work on furthering partnerships, something which they did not do in the previous reporting period. Quality in partnerships with local and national organisations appears to be playing a more prominent role in most of the signatory organisations and, although there are challenges, much effort and energy has been put into furthering the role of national and local partners. It is also encouraging to note that a few signatories reported having seen an increase in donors' willingness to use contingency funding to allow local and national NGO to manage their own funds.

Below sections discuss more of the trends identified in the reporting from the signatories, highlighting good examples as well as challenges.

### Successes and good examples of empowering local responders

Various initiatives have been taken to understand more about how to empower local and national partners and how to disseminate this learning across and within organisations. One of the larger signatories revised the overall approach for their confederation's humanitarian work in which complementarity and collaboration with local actors is a key element. At an operational level the same signatory translated the Principles of Partnerships, Charter for Change and Grand Bargain into an innovative governance model for response management and decision-making in the case of the response to the Sulawesi earthquake and tsunami emergency.

Medium and smaller sized signatories in particular reported that, on an operational level, they have increased their efforts to structurally involve local partner staff in activities such as community meetings with affected communities and beneficiary targeting, as well as holding joint activity

orientation meetings with partner staff and overall activity implementation. As part of this more strategic engagement, these signatories are encouraging their partners to consistently assign the same staff members to the project activities to maintain continuity and institutional memory and contribute to their continued strengthening of individual and organizational capacity.

Some members of the ACT Alliance[4] have formed a working group focusing on the harmonization of partnership tools to decrease the administrative burden on local partners. There have been some joint capacity building initiatives, but the reporting indicates that the most critical factor is better listening to the local partners' understanding of the context and needs as well as adapting the humanitarian response strategy to the capacities and sector expertise that the local partners bring to the table.

A few of the larger signatories reported that they have been able to attract funding for initiatives that bring together other international, national, and local actors to create platforms and spaces for national and local actors to take on leadership roles. For example, through the ECHO funded "Accelerating Localisation through Partnerships" project[5], a consortium of six large INGOs (five of which are C4C signatories) cooperate to accelerate localisation through partnerships by building an evidence base of partnership practices which are most and least conducive to localisation according to local and national humanitarian actors in Myanmar, Nepal, Nigeria and South Sudan.

Other trends seen in the reporting period are that signatories have continued to ensure greater representation of local partners at international events, and have supported partnerships between local partners/members and community based groups working with marginalised populations to strengthen respectful partnering among different actors in humanitarian programmes.

### Key challenges and blockers

Although signatories report that much effort and willingness is being put into organizational and technical strengthening of local partners, as well as translating the Principles of Partnership into humanitarian operations, as one signatory reports *"the spirit of the organisation's partnership policy [and the Humanitarian Principles of Partnership] is not always realized"*. Along the same lines another signatory reports that *"behavior change inside the organisation is*

**Good practices reported by signatories:**

- transfer unearmarked funding and budget margins directly to local and national partners to use these funding resources in accordance with their own assessment of need, not requiring prior consultation with the INGO signatory
- Sign separate MoUs with local and national partners (next to response funding contracts) to support capacity strengthening activities
- Establish a management/governance platform for an emergency response with representatives from the INGO and local/national partners. The platform can have decision-making power over, e.g. response strategy, funding allocation, changes of sectors or delivery models, resolution of differences of opinions among partners, as well as representation to government authorities and/or donors

*slower than desired".* This is evidenced by the reality that decision-making is too frequently imposed upon local actors and sufficient efforts to ensure that the terms of projects and activities are jointly determined are lacking.

Public policy commitments play an important role in triggering strategic conversations and internal research. As reported by one signatory:
*'The findings and recommendations on how to shift towards a more localized response, in line with Grand Bargain, Charter for Change and WHS commitments, will not only inform our ways of working in the countries concerned but also feed into organizational discussions about our operational model'*

Signatories also report that set-backs are often related to donor funding modalities and related risk management, resulting in partnership theory and practice not always being in sync, and with ways of working becoming more transactional. Consistent implementation of partnership principles is often challenged by signatories' internal as well as sectoral culture of 'containment and control' which leads to a tendency to do more sub-contracting. Signatories report that in some contexts local and/or national organizations' systems are not sufficiently in place to manage funding and various kinds of risk. Capacity strengthening prior to an emergency allows for mitigation of this risk, however, in many cases donors are unwilling to fund such programming.

It was also noted that local actors are at times reluctant to work in partnerships and/or receive capacity strengthening support. Another issue reported is that if there are few national actors responding to an emergency, many international organizations may try to work with the same local organization thus reinforcing a culture of competition and sub-contracting rather than collaboration and transparent partnership.

Not all signatories have a local or regional presence in the countries in which they have programs. While this does enable an enhanced role for local partners, it also makes signatories more distant to their partners. In 2018, one signatory conducted an evaluation of their operations in areas where they do not have a direct presence. One of the conclusions was that it is optimal to work closer to local partners in order to efficiently address areas of priorities and capacity. Proposed solutions included joint staffing plans (sharing staff between the signatory and the INGO while jointly contributing to salaries and wage costs), and capacity strengthening plans that consider the priorities of the local partner as well as those of the sector or C4C signatory organization for purposes of the humanitarian response.

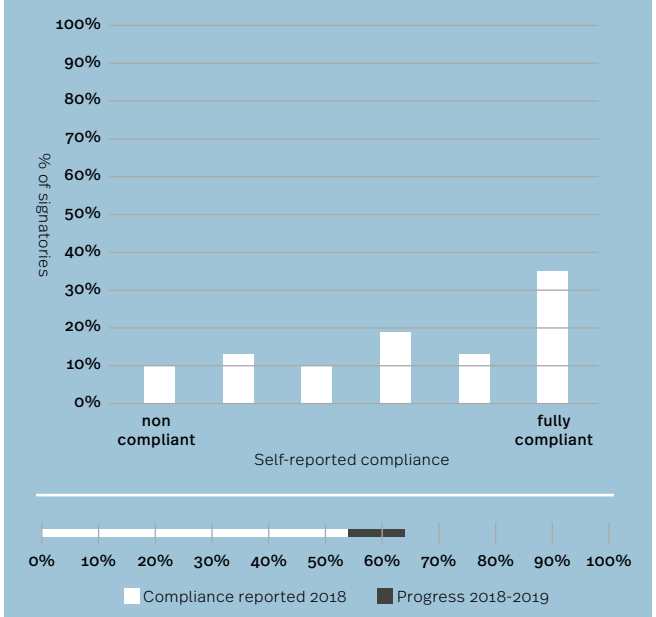
### Next steps

Signatories reported that in order to move the commitment on partnership forward, the following issues are critical to keep pursuing:

- Improve humanitarian partnership strategies and approaches at national and global levels
- Continue efforts to acquire (more) contingency funding from institutional donors which local responders can apply to devise their own solutions and pre-invest to address identified gaps
- Continue to stress the need for local actor, and local system, capacity strengthening prior to emergency toward donors
- Improve complaints and feedback mechanisms in relation to the Principles of Partnership as well as better dissemination of learning

**Commitment 4: Stop undermining local capacity.** We will identify and implement fair compensation for local organisations for the loss of skilled staff if and when we contract a local organisation's staff involved in humanitarian action within 6 months of the start of a humanitarian crisis or during a protracted crisis, for example along the lines of paying a recruitment fee of 10% of the first 6 month's salary.

**Figure 6:**
**Average compliance and progress on commitment 4**




# Commitment 4: Stop undermining local capacity

This commitment is key to ensuring that the signatories take systematic steps to ensure that they have strategies in place to not undermine the capacity of local organisations by hiring away their best staff. In the 2018 C4C Annual Report, this commitment had the lowest compliance rate of all the C4C commitments. In the 2019 reporting however, *this commitment saw the highest level of progress of all commitments*, namely an increased level of compliance of 10% points, indicating that a significant amount of attention was paid to making progress on this commitment by signatories.

## Progress

Overall progress on this commitment over the years remains slow, and despite the increase, this commitment, together with commitment 7 remains the least complied with. Progress appears to be especially slow around policy, tools and tracking systematic cross-organisational progress within signatory organisations. However, signatories do report trying to find different ways to help local organisations to retain and maintain their staff. For some signatories recruiting local staff is not a problem as they do not have direct operations. For others this commitment is not a priority and they are focusing on making progress in other areas.

Four signatories out of the 27 who responded to this commitment, mentioned they had an ethical recruitment policy in place. One provided evidence on how they are tracking this commitment and two reported that they are adhering to the policy, four agencies did not respond to the question at all. A couple of signatories mentioned that they have integrated this commitment into their existing policies and guidelines and made staff aware of their responsibilities. Seven signatories mentioned that they have not made progress on policy and tools, a further five reported they are planning on developing the guidance during the next year. One mentioned that recruitment issues are handled

**Good practice examples:**

- CRS has a commitment to supporting local and national actors in building and improving their HR systems and structures to help attract and keep high quality employees. This includes, provision of competitive salaries and benefits in programming budgets and assisting organizations in developing an indirect cost recovery system so they can request support costs in programming budgets to help cover staff salaries in between projects.

- NCA's HR Department has continued to make local staff responsible for recruitment aware of issues through current operation manuals, in person discussions, and key focal points of contact in the head office. They have diminished the risk of undermining local capacities by including this commitment in their ethical codes in the recruitment routines in NCA's emergencies operations manual and in training discussions with NCA's local and emergency staff.

at the field level and is not dictated by specific policy or procedures from headquarters. Some signatories who only work with partners felt that this commitment did not apply to them as they do not recruit or have very few staff at national level. The federated and large agencies reported that there is variable progress in advancing work on ethical recruitment. However, their strategic direction on partnering with, and reinforcing local and national actors' capacities, is increasingly informing strategic approaches and working modalities across the confederation.

Two signatories mentioned that they invest core funding, and multi annual funding into national partners to allow them to plan and offer longer term contracts to their staff. A couple of signatories mentioned that they provide capacity building for their local partners to develop the right incentive structure to build capacity and to maintain qualified staff. One mentioned that they do not go out of their way to recruit LNGOs staff but they do not have a fair compensation policy in place if it did happen.

Some signatories have their own roster of personnel and by updating and maintaining their emergency and internal rosters, they are able to train the roster members in order to make them aware of the commitments of avoiding undermining local capacity. These personnel are responsible for hiring and recruiting in actual humanitarian responses. Some mentioned that they are embedding staff with their local partner to provide surge capacity and mentoring.

### Key challenges

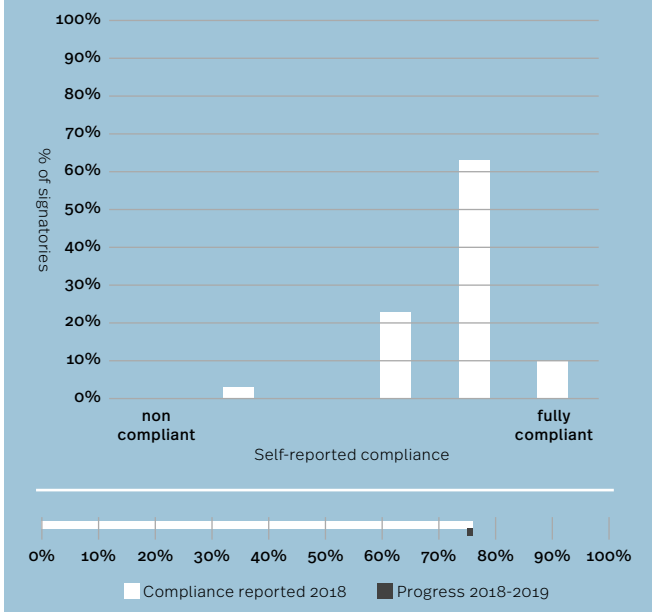
Overall the challenge appears to be that there are other priorities for some signatory organisations and so this commitment has been deprioritised. One signatory mentioned the challenge of finding qualified technical people for the type of roles with which they are mostly involved. Many are still working on more systematic policy. In larger federated organisations progress is slow, due to the need for action to be taken by multiple individual organisations within the federation.

### Next steps

Some organisations are developing additional guidance to support their country office HR practitioners in reaffirming the commitment to not undermining local capacity with tips to support rapid scale-up in collaboration with others. Other organisations are looking at different models by which to achieve the same aim.

**Commitment 5: Emphasise the importance of national actors.**
We will undertake to advocate to donors to make working through national actors part of their criteria for assessing framework partners and calls for project proposals.

**Figure 7:**
**Average compliance and progress on commitment 5**




# Commitment 5: Emphasise the importance of national actors

Signatories continue to advocate in global level forums including the Grand Bargain and through the IASC, at country level UN and institutional donor fora, and with their national governments on the important role of national actors in leading humanitarian response and accessing humanitarian funding. In support of key advocacy messages, over the course of 2018 signatories have also invested in strengthening evidence-based documentation and research showcasing the added value and role of local actors in humanitarian response.

Some donors (Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark, Belgium, Sweden) have also demonstrated willingness to support greater number of partnerships in emergency contexts and have themselves been advocating for greater local and national access to UN-led pooled funding.

> *"There is no one who could better relay what we are enduring than the local women themselves. It is us who need to speak about what we're living through; for us to be at the heart of change and to take our destiny into our hands."*
> Dynamique des Femmes Juristes (DFJ), a network of women lawyers in the DRC Congo who participated in the Call to Action meeting in Brussels 2018

**Progress**

Interestingly, despite the activities and progress mentioned by signatories in their reporting against this commitment, the actual self-assessment of compliance with this commitment over the previous year showed *a reduction in compliance as compared to 2018 reporting*. While it still remains the 3rd most complied with commitment, according to their self-assessments this year, it appears that some signatories have not further increased their compliance, and with some signatories actually decreasing their rating of their performance. This stagnation, or slight regression, could be explained by the challenges that came forward from the signatories' reporting which is presented further below.

Some signatories report that they are making incremental progress evidenced by a greater number of country offices strengthening their advocacy work with donors – including in Yemen, in some countries in Latin America, and some countries in Africa, as well as in new emergency response contexts such as Burkina Faso. This work has resulted in additional pressure on donors and more budget for ongoing emergencies reinforcing partners' financial systems and technical capacity.

Progress is also reported towards an increase in the representation of local humanitarian organisations in the coordination structures in countries. Projects like

**Using the C4C Annual Meeting as an advocacy oppertunity:**

Given the 3rd annual C4C meeting was held in Oslo in December 2018, the C4C network engaged the Norwegian government and Norway-based INGOs in a forum on localization. The session underlined the importance of being able to directly speak to donors, explain some of the challenges and suggest solutions. The de-facto limited access that most national NGOs have to the OCHA-managed country-based pooled fund in Nigeria was underscored, as well as the need for progressive donors like Norway to influence their peers in policy forums such as Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD) to move forward to deliver concrete progress on localisation. National actors also emphasized the fact that even donors with in-country staff often do not see and understand the key role many local and national organisations play in the delivery

the 'Bridging the Gap'[6] (South Sudan) and 'Accelerating Localisation through Partnerships'[7] (multi-country) have been promoting best practice, learnings and recommendations to donors in collaboration with local and national NGOs, resulting in increased understanding, trust, coordination, and collaboration between partners, as well as knowledge on localization processes.

Other signatories report of an increase in engagement from their government (e.g. Sweden, Denmark) seeking the feedback and opinion of the signatories of the Charter for Change network on issues related to core funding, localization and transparency. Overall signatories' home donor governments have expressed increased appreciation and acceptance of the gains of working with and through local partners in humanitarian aid. The Dutch Relief Alliance (DRA) for example, has included Localisation as one of four key priorities in the DRA's 2017-2021 strategic plan, and the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign affairs sees the channeling of its funding through the DRA as one of the key vehicles through which it is contributing to strengthening the role and capacity of local responders.

### Challenges

Some of the key challenges to further progress as reported by signatories relate to 1) lack of internal coordination and resources within signatory organisations to strengthen country-based advocacy efforts on localisation, access to funding, transparency, etc.; 2) the relative prioritization of localization asks against what is considered more pressing advocacy issues, including political solutions to crises, 3) the continued reluctance of UN and some INGOs to shift response models significantly, and 4) the institutional, legal and systemic barriers of big donors to translate commitments into practice and directly fund local responders.

In addition, the gap between policy and practice remain another significant barrier to better promote the localisation agenda. Despite strong policy commitment by some donors there is still a reluctancy to change practice in a meaningful way - i.e. funding streams are still very rigid, and emergency funding regulations and time frames require INGO capacity which in practice exclude local actors. Most donors have significant funds but decreasing staff numbers which also incentivises them toward concentrating funds in the hands of a few large agencies (UN and INGOs) at the cost of a more diverse humanitarian ecosystem.

Finally, one signatory has observed that national politics – and the cooptation of localization language amongst local politicians – can have a counter-productive effect and result in threats to the support for localization.

### Good practices

National level campaign initiatives have been supported more systematically in various countries such as Uganda, Bangladesh, and increasingly in Iraq which has generated discussion, in country and elsewhere, on increasing the number and quality of partnerships, as well as ensuring greater access to funding for local actors. Local advocacy efforts have also resulted in developing advocacy strategies with local partners as well as bringing local voices to global arenas such as at the ICVA annual meeting, events hosted by VOICE, in UN General Assembly meetings and in donor events in Brussel, Geneva, Dublin, Copenhagen and New York, e.g. the Syria Conference in Brussels in 2018.

Related to these efforts national partners are also reported having taken a more active role in participating in cluster and coordination systems, to increase their voice and profiles vis-à-vis donors at country-level.

Some signatories also report that participation in the 2018 Grand Bargain demonstrator missions to Bangladesh and Iraq, and in the OCHA annual review of localisation

self-reporting against World Humanitarian Summit commitments, provided important avenues for engaging with and influencing donors.

Mentoring of local actors by international actors is mentioned as an effective way to enable local and national responders to better coordinate cluster work and facilitate response. An example is the CRS EMPOWER project, implemented during 2018-2019, which supports 13 partner organisations in 11 countries to, amongst others, 'Strengthen platforms to facilitate networking among emergency response stakeholders, and create joint, coordinated efforts'. Beyond capacity strengthening projects, it is networks, such as the START network, that have provided a unique platform for local actors to tap into funding, and be introduced to in-country coordination mechanisms and relevant donor agencies. Signatories have successfully supported local partners to become members of these networks while also supporting networks based in the global north such as the Dutch Relief Agency to integrate localization into its strategy.

### Key learnings

There is a strong sentiment among signatories that advocacy efforts at country-level and global levels have resulted in increased awareness and understanding of localisation and have promoted good practices, learnings and recommendations to donors, in collaboration with local and national NGOs.

Some donor governments (eg Denmark and Germany) have developed administrative guidelines to support localisation, e.g. the German MoFA now asks its strategic partners to transfer part of the agreed overhead costs directly to their local partners. In the Latin America region, there has been a strong push from donors to include local partners in proposals, and in some cases, it has been mandatory to do so. Donors are increasingly interested in strengthening the capacity of local and national responders, however, as stated by one signatory, "localisation requires local actors to professionalise to the requirements of the international system which often means that these actors have to fundamentally change the ways they work and may push them into siloed thinking – we have to be alert to this development".

On a similar note, signatories report that smaller local partner organisations are often struggling to meet stringent compliance requirements excluding them from funding from big international donors. Local partners have also expressed to signatories that donor websites do not provide adequate information on proposal processes and required documentation needed to submit, thus putting them at a disadvantage in the grant proposal process.

### Next steps

While donors continue to be interested in supporting creative ways to engage with local actors, there have been no further significant shifts in policy, openness to increased risk-sharing or direct funding to local responders. Increased pressure on donors to be transparent and account for how money is spent have made international donors more concerned with NGO's performance related to counter-terrorism, compliance, sanctions, anti-fraud and corruption. This runs counter to the Grand Bargain commitments and stifles the localisation agenda. C4C signatories will have to continue advocating for the added value of local and national responders and upholding donors on their commitments to the Grand Bargain.

At the country level, networked and organized local and national organisations, providing a collective voice, are essential to push for changes in the humanitarian system practices in their contexts. Signatories must increase their push to their country offices to advocate for the role of local and national responders vis-à-vis donors, and more structurally contribute to raising awareness on localisation.

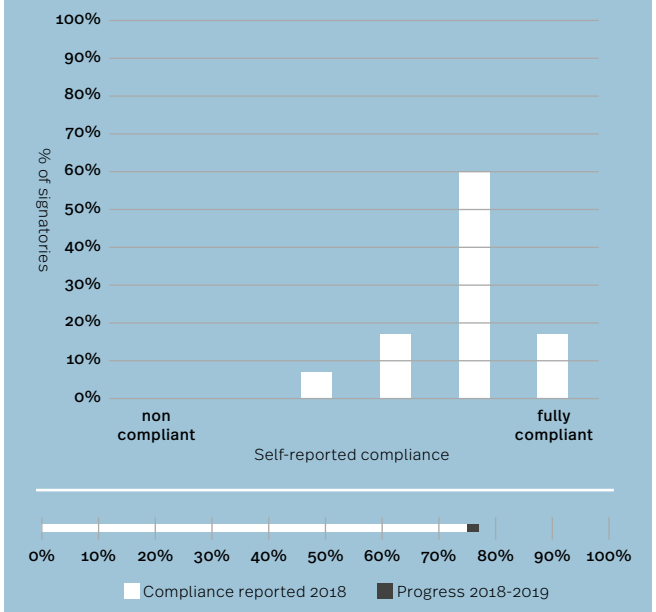
The Grand Bargain is still seen as an important opportunity for pushing for action and accelerating key localisation commitments. However, because it is not burdened by administrative requirements, the C4C process might be a lighter vehicle for driving the Grand Bargain commitments to the next level.

**Good practice spotlight:**

CARE deliberately puts civil society partners, particularly women's activists and humanitarians, in the front seat of global policy dialogues. A good example is the recent #Pledge4Yemen conference in Geneva where CARE's female experts represented CARE and secured direct access to global decision-makers. Their views and observations were also shared and covered on social media and mainstream media.

**Commitment 6: Equality.**
Our local and national collaborators are involved in the design of the programmes at the outset and participate in decision-making as equals in influencing programme design and partnership policies.

**Figure 8:**
**Average compliance and progress on commitment 6**




# Commitment 6: Equality

The progress towards addressing subcontracting in humanitarian programmes reported last year has been sustained within this reporting period. Commitment 6 scored second highest in terms of signatories compliance in the 2019 reporting. However, this increase was very marginal from last year, and the narrative reports mirrored this trend with little evidence of tangible progress achieved within the year – but – without deterioration, as one agency stated, *"same policies and challenges as during the last reporting periods"*.

Many signatories, especially the small to medium sized agencies, continue to report that the design and decision-making of projects are and have always been made at the local level by the local partner. This is a pre-existing model and an essential part of their response – their capacity and budget has meant that localized responses is the only way they can respond. For these agencies, the local *"partners write their own applications for funding and are the primary decision-makers when it comes to project design and implementation"*. Local agencies already have the main say in project implementation and design projects themselves, but in dialogue with and support from the INGO partner. This support is usually around international standards, project sustainability, or thematic focuses to align agencies. This is probably why more than half of the reporting agencies scored themselves as four out of five in adherence to this commitment, as one signatory wrote *"this is happening to some extent but can always be improved"*.

For other signatories, particularly larger agencies, action towards this often focuses on furthering concrete, global policies obligating the organisation to work through equitable forms of partnership. Such policies oblige the various parts of the agency to abide by revised approaches to working with partners and what partnership means to them; offering guidance, clear procedures and core principles of partnership relationships and project implementation. According to the 2019 self-reports, it is clear that all signatories have a strong commitment to addressing subcontracting at a global level, however some remain challenged to ensure adherence to the commitment at country level.

A large number of C4C signatories are members of global networks of faith-based actors, such as Caritas Internationalis and the ACT Alliance. For these signatories, national member organisations are the primary leaders and decision makers within their own countries. These wider networks act as powerful structures for distributing resources, consolidating requirements, and demarcating response roles within jurisdictions. *"Our national Member*

*Associations are independently governed organisations who feed into the governance of the overall Federation. They are not viewed as subcontractors".*

**Challenges**

Challenges do remain and inertias in eradicating these challenges might be indicative of why some agencies have scored themselves lower this year than the year previous. In particular, the time pressure of rapid onset large scale responses remain critical challenges for balancing the multiple priorities within a rapidly changing environment. Under these conditions, genuinely equitable partnering, and supporting local actors to lead, is vulnerable to sliding back towards subcontracting, as the following quote illustrates: *"tension remains between (international) surge teams' priority of conducting rapid assessments and drawing up initial response plans on the one hand, and diligent inclusion of partners in assessment and response design activities from the outset on the other".*

Within bigger bureaucracies, the longer communication chains between teams and associated delays has resulted in unilateral decisions being made *"on alterations of the budget in the face of time pressures to submit proposals".* This pressure of short time frames for funding proposals, or other donor requirements which limit adequate consultation and co-creation with partners, was echoed in a few agencies' reports, indicating a persistent blockage. This has also been highlighted in previous years and continues to challenge the localisation agenda.

**Examples of Good Practice**

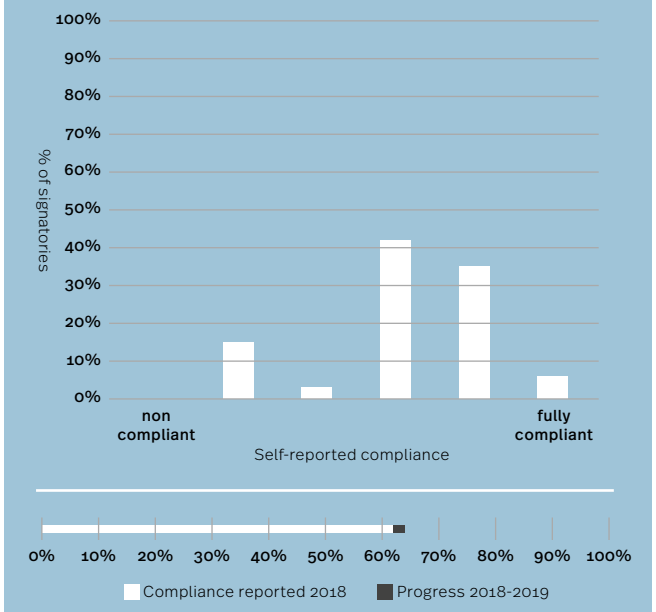
In spite of these challenges, signatories continue to actively assess how their organisations approach partnerships and encourage dialogue with partners, and increasingly seek feedback on this. Some agencies have reported ongoing internal reviews including surveys among their partners to better understand their perceptions of the relationships. Such exercises have been successful in identifying internal challenges, especially with inconsistencies in approaches, for example highlighting instances where one particular response of an organisation may have weaker partnerships with local actors than in other contexts. Identifying these nuances and incorporating partner perspectives in internal advocacy for change is critical in creating cultures that value and invest in equal partnerships, and go beyond simply having an organisational policy.

Specific actions that have improved equality in sharing decision making and influencing response projects have been as small as increased use of technologies (such as Skype and WhatsApp) to facilitate quick consultation on matters between INGOs and local partner organisations. More flexible approaches to communicating with partners has reduced the challenge of decisions being made at HQ or country office levels in time sensitive situations without consultation of partners due to distance and partners 'not being in the room'. Capacity strengthening activities, or the reevaluation of local actors' existing capacities, also appear to be influencing thinking and perceptions, as some signatories reported high levels of satisfaction with partners' capabilities.

Ideal cases that came forward in signatories' reporting are when critical activities, such as needs assessments or project design, are led by local partners with signatories' roles being to reinforce their partners' capacities as need, or to share their knowledge as inputs to the processes. These approaches provide pathways towards localization of aid whilst ensuring that standards and requirements are met. Signatories also reported examples from their 2018 programming where response work with long-term partners was evaluated as very effective, and reported that it was possible because of trust and accountability developed over a number of years. Finally, one signatory reported plans to better utilize skills and capabilities within their existing partnerships, including through facilitating sharing of technical expertise amongst local partners, through South-South exchanges, and a more localized surge team/technical roster.

**Commitment 7: Robust organisational support and capacity strengthening.**
We will support local actors to become robust organisations that continuously improve their role and share in the overall global humanitarian response. We undertake to pay adequate administrative support. A test of our seriousness in capacity building is that by May 2018 we will have allocated resources to support our partners in this. We will publish the percentages of our humanitarian budget which goes directly to partners for humanitarian capacity building by May 2018.

**Figure 9:**
**Average compliance and progress on commitment 7**




# Commitment 7: Robust organisational support and capacity strengthening

Overall, C4C signatories continue to invest in capacity strengthening of local and national organisations, however further progress towards meeting commitment 7's specific asks has been slow. Together with commitment 4 (Stop undermining local capacity) this commitment to support organizational development, including by paying administrative costs and availing resources for capacity strengthening, have the lowest reported compliance rates in 2019. Whereas last year's reporting showed quite some progress being made against this commitment (ca. 8% overall increase), over the past year this pace of progress unfortunately was not sustained.

Ten signatories out of 28 reported that they pay administrative support to their partners. The percentage of admin costs shared with the partners varies between 5-20% depending on whether the funds come from public or private funds. One signatory reported that in one location their partners have become more assertive in requiring a % of administrative costs as a pre-condition for entering into joint programming. Other signatories are supporting partners to raise funds through income generation activities.

There is very slow progress on publishing the percentage of humanitarian funding going directly to their partners for humanitarian capacity building because of lack of a tracking system. However, the majority of signatories reported that they provide some kind of capacity building support to their partners. Most of this support can be divided into three categories: organisational development, technical capacity and compliance with standards. One signatory is focusing on systems wide capacity. The majority of the capacity support was around compliance to their standards, followed by technical capacity around WASH, Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP), Protection etc. and lastly organisational development. Many signatories have raised funds for specific capacity strengthening projects which are of relatively short duration. This includes signatory agencies providing the technical support to partners.

**Good practice sporlight:**
Johanniter forwards a percentage of the indirect cost recovery that they receive from the German Federal Foreign Office to partner organisations. In addition, in 2018 a multi-country capacity development program for community-based organisations was initiated in Southeast Asia. Focus of the GROWTH program is on organisational development of CBOs to maintain their core values. In addition to the leadership capacities among middle management level, they also explore and support social entrepreneurship options to increase unrestricted funding.

To date there hasn't been a coordinated approach to capacity strengthening among C4C signatories, beyond the externally funded projects that a number of C4C signatories jointly implement[8]. Following from the 2018 C4C meeting, signatories and endorsers established a working group tasked with improving mutual learning and exchange of good practice examples. For regular capacity development support, each signatory agency had its own programme and budget, as well as their own tools for capacity assessment and accompaniment of partners.

### Challenges

Meaningful capacity strengthening requires planned, ongoing and consistent support, ideally in the form of multi-year projects designed to implement systematic and sustainable change at the country-level. This is not yet common or standardized practice within agencies or across signatories depending on the funding relationships and historical engagement in the partnerships and localization agenda. The key challenge reported by signatories is limited institutional funds from donors for capacity building.

Due to competing pressures resulting from the safe-guarding failures uncovered in 2018 agencies had to relocate funding, leading to lack of progress on administrative costs and allocation of funds for capacity strengthening. Another common blockage was an absence of organisational resolve to prioritise tracking the level of support to capacity building. Data /finance systems cannot provide consolidated data on the volume of local partner organization support and capacity building initiatives. Capacity building is often embedded in partner budgets, the details of which are not directly integrated into global databases and finance systems.

The level of support required calls for significant investment of private or unrestricted funds to ensure that support provided to local partners is flexible, demand driven, and provides support from multiple technical team members. Another key challenge to progress that has compromised the continuity and sustainability of support is high levels of staff turnover in both signatory and partner agencies.

**Good practice sporlight:**

In 2018 CRS integrated institutional capacity strengthening into 43 of its 196 active humanitarian projects. Through two stand-alone, multi-year capacity strengthening pilot programs (PEER and EMPOWER), CRS supported 51 organizations in 18 countries with self-assessments, organizational development planning, training, accompaniment, exchange visits and networking events. Based on preliminary year-end data for 2018, 22% of all CRS humanitarian projects active in FY18 included local/national partner capacity strengthening as a core component; 16% of these projects were more than one year in length.

### Learning

It is clear that local and national humanitarian actors should lead this agenda. There should be a move away from project-based capacity building, which is often short-term, fragmented and focused on specific skills required to implement the project, towards an approach which facilitates an understanding of the local humanitarian context, what is already there, what are the dynamics, and what are the enablers and blockers for local/national capacity to fulfil their potential and grow. Such approaches imply going beyond selected partners for a particular project or response, to supporting a networkof diverse local actors. A few signatories reported working at this level, including Oxfam's work on strengthening collective disaster management capacity of local actors, see the highlight box for more information. Humanitarian Response Grant Facilities (HRGF) are a key element of Oxfam's approach, a modality that enables consortia of local organisations to jointly access funding for humanitarian responses[9].

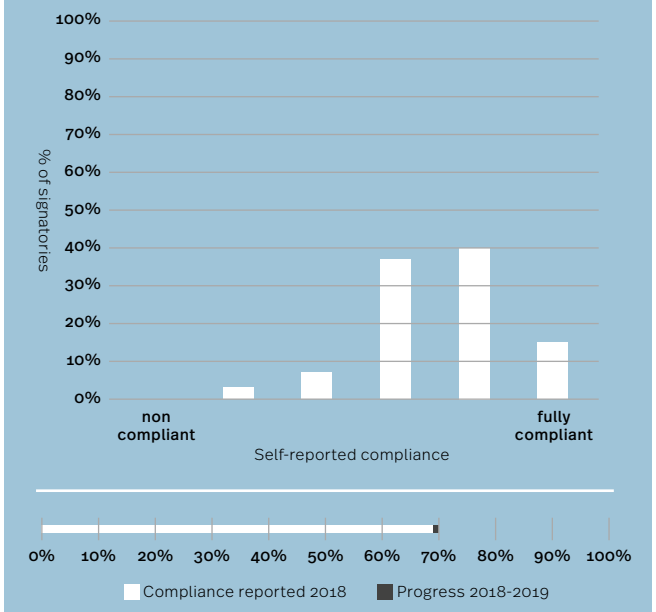
In order to address the internal inertias and financial disincentives which are hampering INGOs' progress in providing planned, ongoing and consistent support, donors should urgently create new funding models focusing on humanitarian capacity support. This would incentivise INGOs to play a technical support role and provide more effective support in order to reinforce local organisations' capacity.

**Good practice sporlight:**

In 2018, Oxfam continued to implement a number of sector-leading flagship programs designed to strengthen national and sub-national disaster management systems' capacities, most prominently in Uganda, DRC, Burundi, Tanzania, Lebanon, Iraq, and Bangladesh. The total approximate value of such targeted projects in 2018 amounted to appr. 5 million euros, and has generated proven modalities that have since been adopted and replicated elsewhere – especially the Humanitarian Response Grant Facility (HRGF) that enables access to response funding for local actors, and two main systems-based Capacity Assessment Approaches (Humanitarian Country Capacity Assessment (HUCOCA) and Taking the Lead (developed with BioForce).

**Commitment 8: Promoting the role of partners to the media and the public.**
In any communications to the international and national media and to the public we will promote the role of local actors and acknowledge the work that they carry out, and include them as spokespersons when security considerations permit.

**Figure 10:**
**Average compliance and progress on commitment 8**




# Commitment 8: Promoting the role of partners to the media and the public

During this reporting period, signatories indicated a slight increase in their compliance towards commitment 8, going from 68% last year to 70% in this reporting period. This 2% point increase stands in stark contrast with the 11% increase last year, which indicates that large strides were made over the 2017 period which signatories were only slightly able to improve on in 2018.

Notwithstanding this slow down, 26 out of 28 reporting signatories signaled the importance of highlighting the work of their partner organizations to the media and public and a majority mentioned improvements over this past year in the visibility of their partners in their communications materials including social media, print, website stories and reporting to donors.

Eight signatories identified that inclusion of partners in communications materials is an integral part of their organization's communications and advocacy policies. Of these eight, two signatories mentioned that the adoption of such policies has taken place this past year since the last C4C reporting period. Three signatories said they are in the process of developing and/or reviewing their existing communications and advocacy policies to ensure that acknowledgement of partners and the work that they do is systematically and explicitly mentioned in their communication materials.

Other signatories have not taken concrete action to increase compliance with this commitment, as thirteen signatories mentioned that partnership is rooted in their organizational culture/way of working, although they do not have clear guidance or explicit policies on inclusion of partners in communication materials. Finally, two signatories stated they have no specific practice or policy in place and that this commitment is not applicable to their work.

The increased use of social media to promote the work of local partners and C4C commitments over this past year was specifically highlighted by six reporting signatories. All six mentioned that local partners' work is highlighted on their organization's website with one organization launching a more professional Facebook page to better highlight their local partners. Several signatories stated that they tag local partners' Twitter, Facebook and/or websites in their social media posts and their partners' voices are shared through

**Examples of good practice:**

- Internal socialization of the commitment through presentations and discussions in relevant internal media and communications groups at global, regional and country levels, accompanied by internal C4C Media and Communications guidelines, which were endorsed by senior management

- Highlighting local partners on a signatory's website with a short profile and, where possible, provide a direct link in the profile to the local organization's social media site.

- Developing a single organizational policy identifying which 'stories' should be told, which includes a very clear commitment that the stories will highlight local partner organizations, feature their voices and name them alongside their international colleagues.

their organization's print magazines, videos from the field and website's humanitarian pages.

National media attention of local partner's work was successfully gained by several signatories with media outlets such as the Guardian (UK), the Mirror, the Tablet, ABC Australia's radio station (Pacific Beat), Norwegian national outlets and German national outlets, to name a few. Many signatories mentioned that their local offices tend to engage with local media outlets during an emergency and a few stated that representatives of their partner organizations often take the lead on all local communications. Four organizations specifically mentioned that they use local partners as spokespersons in their own media channels/products, such as Facebook, Twitter and in their own printed magazine as well as invite representatives of local actors to international events to communicate national humanitarian issues. Examples of international events include an event hosted by a signatory in NYC during the UN General Assembly meeting highlighting localization and the role of local actors in emergency response with panelists coming from a Bangladeshi local organization and a government official from the Ugandan government. Another example is a signatory facilitating a strong presence and voices from partner staff, project participants and leaders at global conferences on Syria and Yemen.

To support sustainability of communications efforts, four signatories specifically discussed their capacity strengthening efforts with local partner staff to help reinforce their skills in capturing information, reporting, and telling the story for fundraising and awareness. This support also included capacity strengthening of local partners' skills in communication through videos, managing interviews with local media and how to be a spokesperson in the wake of a disaster.

### Challenges

Fewer challenges were mentioned by signatories this year in comparison to previous reporting years. Of these one of the key challenges most identified relates to the issue of fundraising. Several signatories discussed the delicate balance between the organizational need to showcase their own work to attract funding and the mission driven interest of highlighting the work of their local partners. The reality remains that it can be difficult to get full buy-in from all organizational staff around the localization agenda, particularly communications staff who are responsible for building their own organization's brand with supporters and donors. In addition, organizations are still dealing with the fact that their public donor base doesn't fully understand and appreciate the localization agenda and it can be challenging

to know how to communicate the localization nuances to them without losing their public donations.

> *"Local partners are named more frequently in reports on humanitarian engagement of KNH on website and in publications."*
> Kindernothilfe (KNH)

An additional challenge relates to difficulties confronted by local partners in being spokespeople for communications materials, interviews, media spots and/or engagements due to issues of security, time, language barriers, technological complications and lack of familiarity with relevant cultural nuances. A few organizations mentioned the issue of tight media deadlines, which doesn't always lend itself towards obtaining information/stories from local partners and/or preparing a partner spokesperson to meet with journalists or go on camera. Other signatories highlighted issues of security and political sensitivities, particularly in conflict zones, which restricts organizations' ability to source stories from local partners for publication. Finally, there is the challenge of language barriers between the signatories' target population for media and communications pieces/ events and that of their local organizations. As one organization mentioned, 'our main communications language is in German, which is very different from the language of our partner organizations in most countries around the world'.

**Key Learnings**

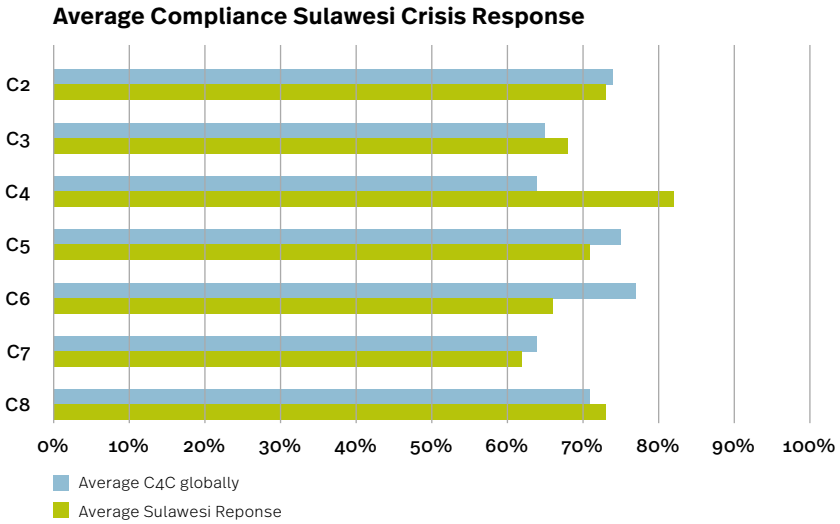
Interviews with local partners' staff and beneficiaries on videos, more so than any other communication tool, allows signatories to connect local actors and partners with relevant target groups globally. Such videos also help to highlight the importance of a more localized approach and have been successfully used by several signatories to highlight their local partner's work with individual and government donors. Videos area also an effective avenue for advocacy and outreach efforts.

In situations where security is a concern, a few organizations talked about the importance of identifying and only highlighting non-controversial stories around an emergency. This way, the local organization's work can still be highlighted to the international public and donors while ensuring local partner's security is not compromised.

Local actors are preferred spokespersons as they know the context best and will have a different perspective than international staff. Although a few organizations mentioned that while it can be difficult to use local actors with their national constituents due to language barriers, media with broad international coverage tend to be more open to the local perspective and interested in including them them as spokespersons.

> War Child's principle progress on this front is through the development of its Voicemore programme, in which we support groups of young people to act as advocates for change on issues that affect them. These young people, in their capacity as civil society advocates, were brought by War Child to CRC reporting events in Geneva and to advocate with the UN Special Rep on Children and Armed Conflict.

**Figure 11 :** C4C signatories' average compliance with the charter's commitments in the Sulawesi crisis response.




**Adherence to C4C commitments in major humanitarian responses:**

# Special report on C4C and the Sulawesi crisis response

## Context

A series of earthquakes struck Central Sulawesi in Indonesia on September 28, 2018. The strongest with a magnitude of 7.4 on the Richter Scale was followed by a tsunami. According to Indonesian government data more than 2,000 people are known to have died, with more than 1,350 missing and, as of late November 2018, over 130,000 people displaced. From the outset, the Indonesian government emphasised its lead role in the response and both local civil society groups and volunteers made critical contributions to life-saving efforts on the ground.

## Methodology

To contribute to wider learning about localisation in humanitarian response, Charter4Change included a survey in the 2019 Annual Reporting framework in order to gather insights on compliance against the eight commitments in the Charter4Change charter. The same survey was issued to a number of partner organisations with whom C4C signatories had responded in the Sulawesi emergency, asking for their candid perceptions as to their INGO partners' level of compliance with C4C commitments.

## Key findings

In addition to rating the compliance of international agencies against the Charter for Change commitments, both INGOs and local partners shared reflections on learning from the response so far. From this, the following key lessons emerged:

- **Need to rethink international agency models for emergency surge support.** The Indonesian government's strong emphasis on national coordination and implementation of the crisis response challenges international agencies to rethink their role. As a study by the Humanitarian Advisory Group and Pujiono Centre highlights, the Indonesian authorities *'set*

*limits on the types and quantity of assistance required from international organisations [...] In the immediate days and weeks following the disaster, internationals were stopped at the airport and asked to leave if they had not registered with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or their respective embassies'.*[10] Responses to our survey highlighted that international agencies best-placed to engage with this were those that had invested in longer-term presence and partnership with national and local actors. Amongst Charter4Change signatories, some agencies had invested in several years of building relationships with government and other local actors on disaster risk reduction, resilience and emergency preparedness. These agencies also prioritised engagement with government from the outset of the response, and designed programmes to explicitly address gaps in support for priorities identified by the government. This was seen as key to enabling their access to specific areas affected by the crisis. International agencies that depend on the deployment of foreign experts faced significant challenges. That said, even INGOs that had invested in longer-term partnerships found restrictions on foreign staff challenging for them to provide technical support to local partners' efforts on the ground. Another challenge was that smaller, local organisations struggled to participate simultaneously in coordination processes and frontline response programmes. If coordination processes sometimes present challenges for larger INGOs to navigate, then smaller local NGOs can find them all the more challenging.

- **Pre-crisis contingency planning with local actors was decisive for effective partnerships in the response.** Unsurprisingly, responses from both INGOs and local partners highlighted how longer-term investment in capacity-strengthening and relationship-building prior to the crisis were the most important factors determining whether or not international actors effectively supported local actors. Those agencies which had not previously engaged government authorities or local civil society partners in contingency planning and preparedness found establishing effective partnerships during the crisis response much harder.

- **The kinds of funding made available during the crisis did not help foster partnership approaches.** INGOs highlighted that, as the response unfolded, a lack of longer-term funding opportunities (ie. six months and over) made it hard to resource longer-term organisational support and capacity-building for local partners. This was corroborated by local partners, who highlighted that whilst significant donor funds flowed for the immediate life-saving needs, less funding was available for longer-term capacity-strengthening. Larger national organisations also flagged their own role in building the capacity of smaller local organisations, and how this had not received the recognition or resourcing it merited.

- **Innovative partnership models enabled joint decision-making, capacity-strengthening and a phased handover to local actors.** Some INGOs shared interesting examples of partnerships with local civil society and government prior to the crisis, which paid off in strengthening a locally-led response. For example, Oxfam and their local partner network Jejaring Mitra Kemanusiaan ( the 'Humanitarian Knowledge Hub') established what they termed 'a management platform' to foster joint decision-making, action plans and budgets. Local partners had existing expertise on gender, disability inclusion and child protection, which played a key role in the response from the outset. On other areas of the response, Oxfam staff played a more active role during the initial scale-up of activities. However, the platform involved the partners in decision-making on those activities and transferred responsibilities to them for technical input and programme implementation as their capacities were

**Members of the Indonesian response consortium ERCB (Emergency Response Capacity Building network) distributing relief items after the Sulawesi earthquake and tsunami in September 2018.**
Photo: Martin Dody/ERCB

built over successive phases of the response. Two local partners also acknowledged the importance of such technical and institutional capacity-building support from INGO partners.

- **International donor and aid agency approaches to compliance and due diligence obstruct localisation.** Another important area raised by several INGOs was the issue of risk-sharing with local partners. This relates to both compliance requirements arising from their own internal agency protocols, as well as requirements imposed on funding from institutional donors. Different agencies adopt different approaches. Some that had established partnerships with local actors prior to the crisis were able to exercise greater sharing of risk with local NGOs, and more flexibility in addressing due diligence and compliance. For example, CAFOD provided a waiver on financial and administrative capacity assessments for one local partner, which would have otherwise delayed support to their response by a month. The organisation's global programme management guidelines permit such a waiver in rapid on-set crises. Other signatories either lacked pre-existing local partners or the necessary flexibility in their funding and partnership guidelines, and so support to local partners faced delays as a consequence.

- **Raising the profile of local partners helps with programme quality and advocacy, as well as fundraising.** Several local partners emphasised how experience in Sulawesi highlights the critical importance of Commitment 8 on *'promoting the role of partners to the media and the public'*. Interestingly, they emphasised that giving profile to their work – both good practices and operational challenges they face – is important not just for fundraising purposes. It can also inform their programme quality efforts and discussions with donors and local authorities on operational issues faced.

- **Socialising the Charter4Change can inform practical partnership negotiations between international organisations and local partners.** Where INGO signatories had informed their local partners about their commitments under the Charter4Change, this helped to catalyse discussions between them on partnership approaches in practice. This suggests that looking forward, the Charter4Change coalition, both its INGO signatories and local NGO endorsers, should invest further in wider dissemination of the Charter in countries affected by (or vulnerable to) humanitarian crises.

# Annex 1:

**Signatories that reported:**

Asamblea de Cooperacion por la Paz
CAFOD
CARE
Caritas Danmark
Caritas Norway
Caritas Spain
Christian Aid
Cordaid
CRS
Dan Church Aid
Diakonia
Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe
Finn Church Aid
Help
Human Appeal
Humedica e.V Germany
ICCO
IPPF
Johanniter
Kindernothilfe
Norwegian People's Aid
NCA
Oxfam
SCIAF
ACT Svenska Kyrkan
Tear Australia
Tearfund
Terram Pacis
Trocaire
War Child
World Jewish Relief

**C4C signatories (by end 2018):**

# Annex 2: Non-INGO endorsers of the Charter for Change:

Access Development Services (Adeso)
ACT Alliance
Action Africa Help International (AAH-I)
Actions Pour la Promotion Agricole et Sanitaire
Action pour le Volontariat à Dubreka
Adamawa Peace Initiative
ADES
ADESO
Adilet
Adult Literacy Centre
Africa Peace Service Corps
Agile Internationale
Airavati
Akkar Network for Development
Amel Association
American University of Nigeria
Amity Public Safety Academy
Amity Volunteer Fire Brigade
AMUDECO
Anchalik Gram Unnayan Parishad (AGUP)
Anglican Development Services
Applied Research Institute
Ard El-Insan
ARDD Legal Aid
Arid Land Development Focus
Arysh
Asociacion Benposta Nacion de Muchachos
Association Congo amkeni asbl
Asociacion de Desarrollo Agricola y Microempresarial
Asociacion para la Educacion y el Desarrollo
Association des Acteurs de Développement
Association Tunisienne De Defense des droits de l'enfant
Astha Sansthan
ASVSS
Bader Charity Organisation
Balaod Mindanaw
Balay Rehabilitation Center
Bangladesh NGOs Network for Radio and Communication (BNNRC)
Barokupot Ganochetona Foundation
BENENFANCE
BOAD
CAF India
Calp
Caritas Bangladesh
Caritas Developpement Goma
Caritas Developpement Niger (CADEV)
Caritas Nepal
Caritas Sri Lanka
Caritas Ukraine
Caritas Uvira
CEDERU
CEFORD
Center for Disaster Preparedness Foundation
Center for Protection of Children
Center for Resilient Development
Center of Support of International Protection
Centre for Development and Disaster Management Support Service
Centre for Legal Empowerment
Centro de Promocion y Cultura
Centro Intereclesial de Estudios Teoligicos y Sociales
CEPROSSAN
Childreach International
Church of Uganda Teso Dioceses Planning and Development Office
Churches Action in Relief and Development
Church's Auxiliary for Social Action
Civil Society Empowerment Network (CEN)
CLMC
Coastal Association for Social Transformation Trust
CODEVAH
Collectif des Associations Feminines
Community Development Support Services
Community Initiative Facilitation and Assistance Ethiopia
Community Initiative for Prosperity and Advancement
Community World Service Asia
Concertacion Regional para la Gestion del Riesgo
Convention Pour Le Bien Etre Social
Coordination, Rehabilitation and Development Service
Corporacion Manigua
CPDEDRC
CRONGD/NK
CRUDAN
Dhaka Ahsania Mission
DIKO
Dynamique de Femmes Engagées pour un Environnement Sain et Durable
East Jerusalem YMCA - Women's Training Program
Eau Vie Envirronement
ECC MERU
EcoWEB
Embolden Alliances
Emergency Pastoralist Assistance Group - Kenya
Environment and Child Concern Organization Nepal (ECO-Nepal)
Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia
Forum Bangun Aceh
Forum for Awareness and Youth Activity (FAYA)
FONAHD RDC
Foundation for Rural Development

Friends of Lake Turkana
Fundacion Tierra de Paz
FUPRODI
GEPA
GHOLVI-ASBL
Grassroots Development Initiatives Foundation-Kenya
Groupe d'action de Paix
et de formation pour la Transformation
Hayata Destek (Support to Life)
Heal Africa
Health Link South Sudan
Help Channel Burundi
Human Health Aid Burundi
Human Rights Movement 'Bir Duino-Kyrgyzstan'
Humanitarian Aid International
Humanitarian Development Consortium
Humanite Plus
India Volunteers Network
Indonesian Society for Disaster Management
Indonesian Student Association for International Studies
INHURED International (Nepal)
Institut Bioforce
Institute for Social and Economic Development Assistance
Integrated Risk Management Associates
InterAid
Iranian Lifequality Improvement association
Jabalia Rehabilitation Society
Jindal School of International Affairs
Joint Learning Initiative on Faith & Local Communities
Joint Strategy Team
Jordan Hashemite Charitable Organisation
Jordan Health Aid Society International
Just Project International
Kapoeta Development Initiative
Kisima Peace and Development
Kitumaini: Association for the Development
of Health of the Mother and Infant (AK-SME)
Lawyers for Human Rights
Legal Resources Centre
Libyan Humanitarian Relief Agency
Lizadeel
Lotus Kenya Action for Development Organization
Lutheran World Service India Trust
Mavi Kalem Social Assistance and Charity Association
Mercy Malaysia
MIDEFEHOPS
Moroto Nakapiripirit Religious Leaders Initiative for Peace
NASSA
National Development Support Center
and Popular Participation
CENADEP
National Humanitarian Network
National Partnership of Children and Youth in Peacebuilding
North-East Affected Area Development Society (NEADS)
Nuba Relief Rehabilitation and Development Organization
OFADEC
Omarang Charity Association for Multipurpose
PACODEVI
Palestinian Vision Organisation (PalVision)
Partnership for Faith & Development
People's Disaster Risk Reduction Network Inc
PRISNA
Programme de Promotion des Soins de Santé Primaire
PRO-VIDA Asociacion Salvadorena de Ayuda Humanitaria
Public Foundation 'Bio Service'
Public Fund 'Mehr Shavkat'
Rakai Counsellors Association (RACA)
Ranaw Disaster Response and
Rehabilitation Assistance Center, Inc.
Rebuild Hope for Africa
Rehabilitation, Education and Community Health (REACH)
REDESO
Samudaik Kalyan Evam Vikas Sansthan
Sante et Developpement
Sawa for Development and Aid
Seeds India
Settlement Council of Australia
Shafak
Shaik Tahir Azzawi Charity Organization
Shaml Coalition
SHARP Pakistan Society for
Human Rights and Prisoners Aid
Shoola-Kol
SHSA
Signature Research Centre
Smile Again Africa Development Organization
Society Voice Foundation
SOCOAC
South Sudan Grassroots Initiative for Development
Syria Relief
START
STEWARDWOMEN
Strengthening Participatory Organisation
Transcultural Psychosocial Organisation (TPO) Uganda
Udyama
Ukraine NGO Forum
UNASO (Uganda Network of AIDS Service Organization)
Union Paysanne pour le Développement Rural Intégré
Volunteer Efforts for Development Concerns
Ydeborahs' Foundation
Wajir South Development Association
White Life
White Smile NGO
Women Aid Vision (WAV)
Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling (WCLAC)
Women Now for Development
Youth Empowerment Center
Youth Leadership Forum and Giving Back Movement
Zambia Relief and Development Foundation
Zanjireh Omid International Charity Institute
Zion Emergency and Disaster Rescue Unit

# Endnotes

1. Please refer to the end of this document for a full list of C4C signatories and endorsers.

2. **Money Talks:** A synthesis report assessing humanitarian funding flows to local actors in Bangladesh and Uganda; Oxfam and Development Initiatives, March 2018. See https://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/money-talks-a-synthesis-report-assessing-humanitarian-funding-flows-to-local-ac-620447

3. See https://www.icvanetwork.org/principles-partnership-statement-commitment

4. See https://actalliance.org/

5. For more information see https://www.christianaid.org.uk/about-us/programmes/accelerating-localisation-through-partnerships

6. The project is funded by the Belgian government from 2018-2019. The consortium consists of Joint Learning Initiative, Tearfund (UK + Belgium), Islamic Relief Worldwide and Leeds University, see https://www.redr.org.uk/News/December/Bridging-the-Gap for more information

7. The project is funded by ECHO, and implemented by Christian Aid, CAFOD, Tearfund, Care, Oxfam and ActionAid, see https://startnetwork.org/start-engage/financial-enablers

8. Such as the Financial Enablers project which ended in 2018, that was jointly implemented in the Philippines by Oxfam, Tearfund and Christian Aid

9. For more learnings from the ELNHA Humanitarian Response Grant Facility (HRGF), see https://www.oxfamnovib.nl/Files/rapporten/2018/ELNHA-Quality%20Funding%20modality%20LHL.pdf

10. 'Charting the new norm? Local leadership in the first 100 days of the Sulawesi earthquake response' Humanitarian Advisory Group and Pujiono Centre (March 2019) https://humanitarianadvisorygroup.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/HH_Sulawesi-Practice-Paper-4_FINAL_electronic_200319_v1.pdf

**Pablo Munoz cheers as he received a shelter kit in the Nhamatanda District, Mozambique following Cyclone Idai. The kits were distributed by Ajuda de Desenvolvimento de Povo para Povo, Moçambique (ADPP) - a local NGO network supported by C4C signatory World Jewish Relief.**
Photo: ADPP Mozambique 2019