

2020 Charter4Change Endorsers Survey Report

8/12/2020

"C4C is grateful to all those organisations who gave their time to complete the survey and those who helped with the analysis and drafting of the report, we hope we have done justice to the information that was provided".

The Charter4Change Secretariat is currently being hosted by [Humanitarian Aid International](#) in India.
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Introduction:

The 2020 Charter4Change Endorser's Survey marks the third time that national and local organisations have been asked to reflect on the progress of their international NGO partners during the 4 years since the Charter was launched in 2016. The first two surveys in 2018 and 2019 underscored endorser organisations' increasing role within the Charter4Change and their ambition to ensure that the international NGO signatories fulfilled their commitments to put meaningful localisation into practice at the country level.

Summary:

The 2020 Charter4Change endorser's survey elicited a broad range of responses, both geographically and in terms of type of organisation and relationships with C4C signatory INGOs. In general, respondents were slightly more critical of the progress of their international partners' in implementing the C4C commitments than the signatories themselves were in their 2020 reporting; - something that is not surprising. Despite their frustrations, local and national NGOs are broadly supportive of efforts for change by the international community, if a little exasperated by the slowness of the pace of change. Respondents want the Charter4Change to continue beyond its original 2020 deadline, with the majority saying it should continue until international organisations live up to their commitments.

Methodology:

96 organisations responded to the endorser's survey from 22 countries. 87 were completed in the English version from 19 countries and 9 in French from 3 countries. 61% of the English-speaking respondents described their organisation as local, and 39% as national. 4 describe themselves as church or faith based, one as an ethical health organisation. For the French surveys it was 33% local and 66% national, including one research institute. 74% of the English-speaking respondents reported that they are C4C endorser organisations and 78% of the French speaking organisation had endorsed the Charter. The vast majority in both sets of survey responses, 82%, are doing both humanitarian and development work.

The scope of the survey was slightly broader than the previous endorser survey which was undertaken in 2018 and 2019. The 2020 survey included more detailed questions on the quality of partnerships, which provided some interesting responses. The survey was undertaken with a relatively short turnaround time, and this, combined with the fact that many national and local organisations are working within a context of complicated coronavirus pandemic conditions, may have meant that some organisations were unable to participate.

Whilst the survey provided some interesting data there are number of limitations to point out: Because of the length of the survey, it was decided to ask for less qualitative comments and reflections. The majority of questions were quantitative in nature. As a result there is less nuance or insight into how localisation commitments are being implemented and a level of the richness and flavour is missing. Secondly respondents were not asked to list their C4C signatory partner INGOs. Consequently, it is impossible to know from the data whether for example the good practices are widespread across organisations or whether the data refers to only a small cluster of INGOs (or indeed the same organisation which might have several local partners). Organisations which completed the survey were asked whether they were endorser of the Charter. Roughly 20-25% (French-English responses) were from organisations which had not endorsed the Charter. The limits of the data analysis mean that it is not possible to identify which organisations gave what responses, something that could skew the validity of the data when it comes to interpreting how far INGO signatories are compliant. Furthermore, not all respondents answered every question, and it is impossible to know which type of organisation answered which question. For some questions only around half or just above half of the respondents answered. As a result, it is tricky to draw meaningful conclusions from some answers which have relatively small sample sizes.

Countries, partners and type of partnership relationship:

1/3 of the English-speaking respondents partnered with just one C4C organisation over the last 2 years, another 1/3 with none. Only 19 out of 80 partnered with more than 2, but of those, several had 4, 5, or 6 C4C signatory partners. For the French speaking respondents 6 of the 9 had not partnered with a C4C signatory organisation in

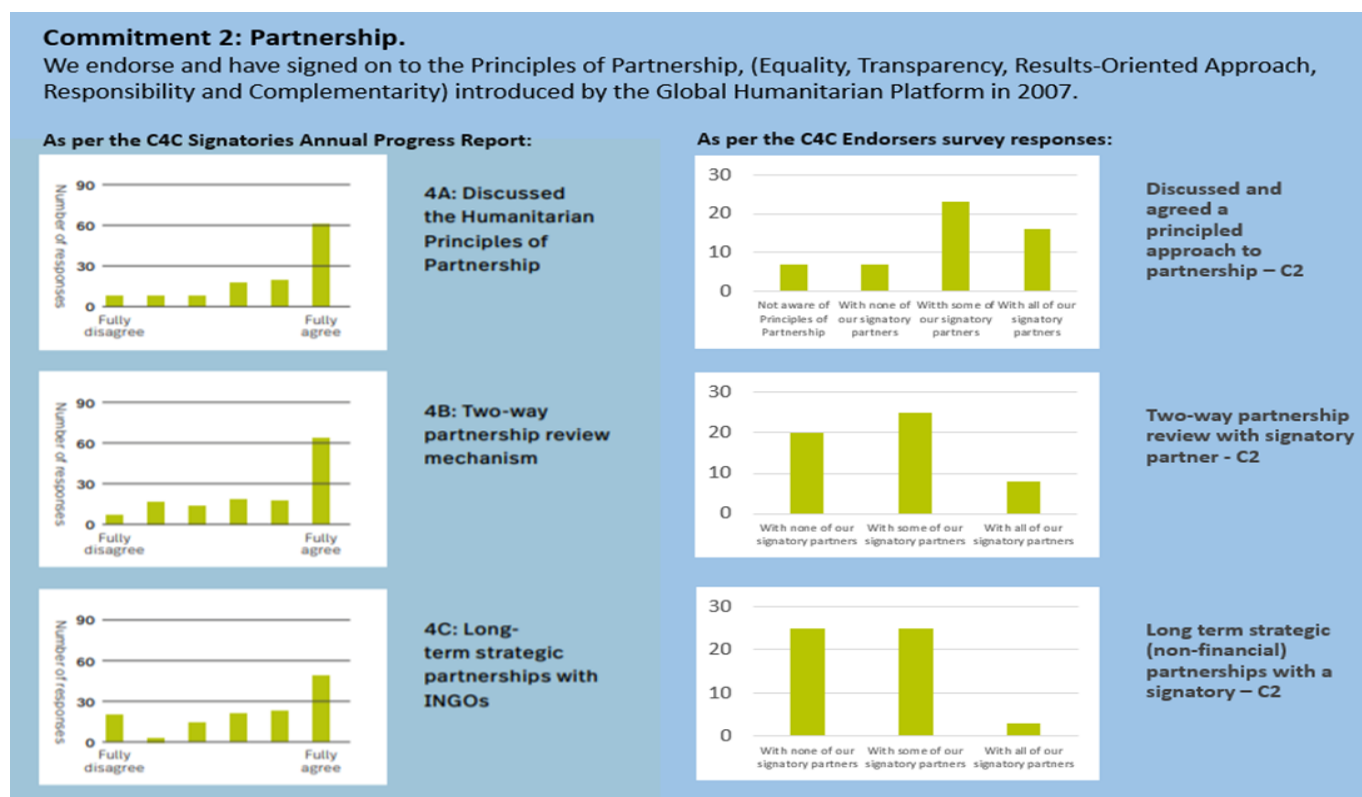
the last 2 years. Unlike the previous surveys, respondents were not asked to name their C4C partners. Surveys were completed by organisations in 22 countries, - coincidentally the same number as in 2018, - (although they were not all the same countries as previously) but there was a much even spread of respondents across the countries, with the exception of Yemen, which this year had more than double the number of respondents than the next highest country

There was a roughly even spread (1/3 of respondents) between these answers to best describe the relationship with their C4C partner:

- Project(s) where your organization is the applicant and the implementer, and the signatory organization is the donor
- Project(s) where the signatory is the applicant, and your organization is the implementer
- We have multi-year funding partnership, not only one-time project partnership

Quality of partnerships:

There was an even spread of those who do and don't have strategic partnerships their INGO partner, although on a positive note the majority agreed that partners explicitly discussed and agreed a principled approach to partnership during establishment of a partnership. This echoes the signatory survey which found that just over half reported that their relationships with partners are more usually ad hoc or project based rather than being long-term and strategic.

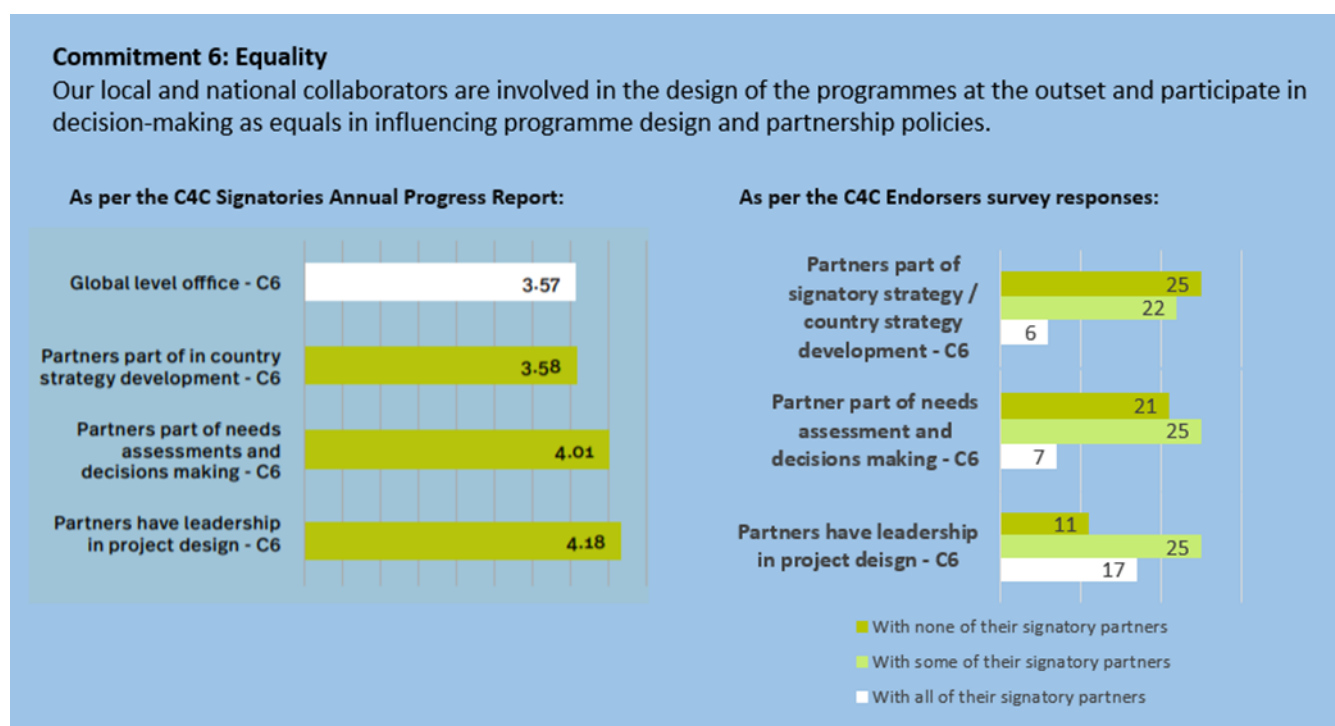


On a less positive note, one third of those who answered had not had a partnership review with their INGO partner. Although 2/3rds said their INGO partner had a feedback mechanism in place, a full one third did not know if they existed. In the signatory report some country offices agreed on clear communication mechanisms through which partners can make suggestions. However there remains a need to improve and be more systematic in dealing with suggestions that have been made. Partners have asked for closer cooperation and clearer partnership policies. Partners specifically asked signatories for more transparency in communication around partnership selection processes, to improve internal communications in daily collaborative work and to improve the response time in case of information requests.

Half of respondents had not taken part in a strategy review/development with any of their signatory partners, although just over a third had been participated in a strategy review or strategy development process with one

of their partners, and 13% had done it with all their signatory partners. One respondent highlighted the good practice of a C4C signatory which held a partners' meeting in March 2020 where all the INGOs' key staff and country offices had been involved together with all partner organisations.

More worryingly, 41% of respondents had not participated in a needs assessment or decision making processes with their INGO partners while designing and developing humanitarian projects and interventions. Although most felt they had taken a leadership role in a joint activity or project design with some (45%) or all (10%) of their partners. There was a similar response as to whether organisational development of the local/national organisation has been a core objective of partners.



59% of respondents reported that they had felt able to raise concerns or make suggestions to their signatory partners on how they could improve, and encouragingly 60% of those said that their INGO partner had taken forward their suggestions or concerns. 80% of the country offices that responded confirmed that partners suggested how to improve their partnerships.

A number of respondents pointed to the importance of key staff within signatory partners who are committed to localisation and drive it forward within their organisations, although the organisational procedures continue to be slow in many international partners, particularly in the disbursement of funds, during emergency response.

Funding Issues:

Matched funds / technical support to help local partners approach donors was reported as very low, with only 5 respondents saying they had had help with this. There was an even split of 50/50 as to whether the L/NNGO had been introduced to a donor by their INGO partner, and 2/3rds had received no support to help them to apply for particularly complicated donor grants.

56% reported that none of their signatory partners share information with them about their total humanitarian budget, although 44% reported that either some or all of their partners share information about their budgets with them. This is less than the 65% reported by signatories. This disparity may well be because of the small sample size but may also be an indication that national organisations are less satisfied with progress on this commitment than their international partners.

In the signatory country report partners suggested to enhance systems for grant transfers to improve lag time for funds transfer and ensure timely implementation. Suggestions also included asking signatories to provide

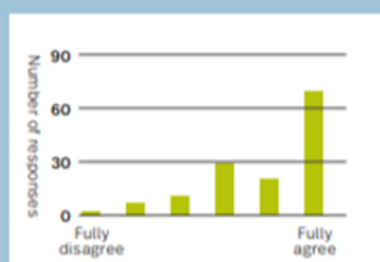
management fees to their partners as well as provision of support on costs they incur to develop proposals and budgets.

Capacity support and organisational strengthening:

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 2020 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 2020.

As per the C4C Signatories Annual Progress Report:



6A: Organisational development core objective of LNGO partnerships

As per the C4C Endorsers survey responses:

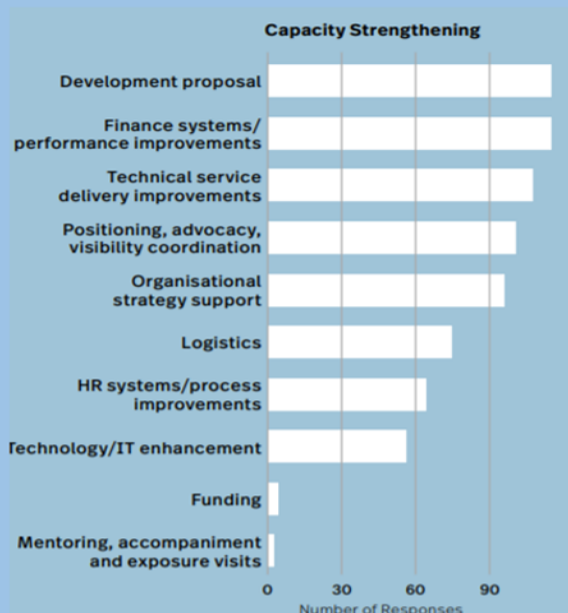


Organizational development core objective of partnership with signatory partners - C7

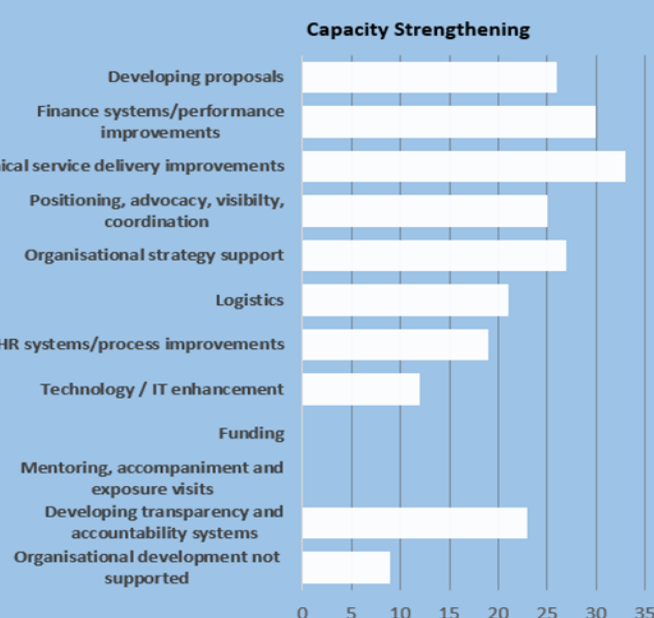
In an effort to understand the way that INGO partners work to support the organisational development of their local partners the survey asked a series of questions about how respondents had been supported.

17% said their organisational development has not been supported by any of their INGO partners. However, the majority reported support on a wide range of issues, most notably organisational strategy support (54%), technical services delivery improvements (67%), proposal development (56%), developing transparency and accountability systems (48%). It seems that INGO partners give much less support to their national partners in areas such as logistics (43%), and IT enhancements, and only 37% reported receiving support for HR systems and process improvements. Interestingly in the signatory report proposal development and finance system performance improvement was rated the highest out of all other support.

As per the C4C Signatories Annual Progress Report:



As per the C4C Endorsers survey responses:



63% said that some, or all, of their partners had helped them to achieve financial sustainability. In the signatory report support with organisations development on funding scored the lowest. This may indicate misunderstanding about financial sustainability. On the other hand, 37% reported that their partners had not helped them in this regard.

Over 70% reported that either all or some of their partners are providing them with adequate administrative support. (although only 46 respondents answered each of these questions). Conversely 24% considered that their partners did not provide them with adequate support to cover administrative costs. In the signatory country survey, partners suggested the need for improvement in coordination and complementarity on "training offers" as there are so many capacity building activities that it impedes partners' work and thus becomes burdensome. This was also to ensure different international partners do not overlap or focus on similar needs and issues.

The majority of respondents (73%) agreed that their signatory partners follow ethical recruitment principles, and most said that poaching of staff is not happening. Although significantly 15% said that one of their staff had been recruited by a signatory organisation within the last 2 years during the first six months of a crisis. This compares to 20% in the signatory's survey who reported approaching local staff to work for them within 6 months of the outbreak of a crisis.

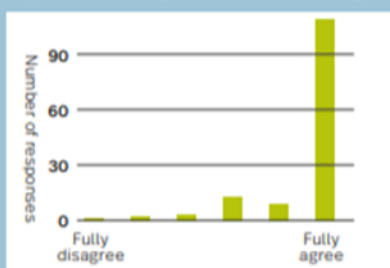
Visibility of national NGOs:

In terms of how well international NGOs represent their local and national partners in their own reports to donors there was a range of answers. A significant proportion (26%) said they don't have access to partner reports, (this could be for a variety of reasons: it may simply mean the respondent hasn't seen them, or it could indicate a deeper issue around INGOs not sharing this information/feedback with their local partners), whilst the majority (69%) said in some or all of their partner reports to donors their work had been credited. Only 2 of the 46 respondents to this question said their work had not been credited in their INGO partner reports to donors.

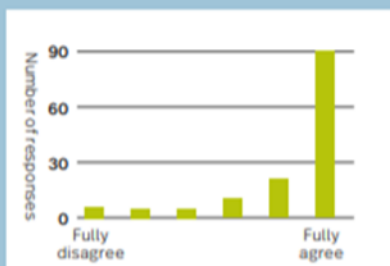
Commitment 8: Promoting the role of partners to the media and the public.

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

As per the C4C Signatories Annual Progress Report:



8A: Partners credited in donor reports



8B: Partners credited in communication through national media

As per the C4C Endorsers survey responses:



Partners credited in donor reports - C8



Partners credited in signatory's communication through national/global/social media and the public - C8

Responses were similar in terms of representation of local and national NGOs' work in signatories' social media and reporting to supporters: with 75% saying that some or all of their partners credit their role in communications on social media and to the public. This is consistent with signatory country level respondents' average which indicates that at country level compliance with promoting partners in in-country public

communication is the second most complied with practice. In fact, it ranges just after the practice of crediting partners in donor reports.

Accountability:

Over half of the 67 organisations which answered the question about the Charter of Accountability stated their organisation has signed it. (55% versus 44% which had not signed).

Over half the respondents to the survey (54%) reported that their INGO partners in country had not shared with them what they had signed up to in committing to implement the Charter4Change 8 commitments. This is a higher percentage than that reported in the 2020 signatories' country survey, which indicated that only 20% had not shared their C4C commitments with their local partners and 60% replied that partners had not suggested how to progress on C4C. The discrepancy may indicate a lack of accountability on the part of INGOs in openly sharing and discussing challenges with national and local partners.

Conversely when asked if the signatory country office is fully aware of the C4C commitments the responses of endorsers indicate a more complex picture, with a full spectrum of views: over 50% reported that their INGO signatory partner's country offices are either fully aware or aware to some extent to the C4C commitments, and 15% felt they are both aware and do adhere to the commitments. 10% felt that although there is awareness at the country programme level it is not a strategic direction for the organisation. 8% felt that despite awareness the INGO signatory partner in-country does not adhere to the commitments.

COVID19 and Charter for Change:

To understand how the situation dictated by COVID 19 influences the relation between endorsers and signatories, a separate section in the survey was devoted to this purpose. 83 endorsers responded to this section:

10.8% of the survey respondents reported they have received more funding from their signatory partners, while 22.89% reported that they have received more funding from non-signatory partners.

Calculation with several assumptions of those who reported that they have received more funding from non-signatories shows the following (note: We have 33 endorsers of the whole survey who do not have a relationship with any of the signatory partners, while 50 endorsers do).

- ☐ If the percentage is calculated by assuming only non-signatory partner endorsers responded- the 33 above respondents- then 57% of those reported more funding by the non- signatory partners.
- ☐ If the percentage is calculated by assuming only signatory partner endorsers responded- the 50 above respondents- then 38% of those reported more funding by the non- signatory partners.

In any case, more than double of the respondents reported that they have received more funding during the COVID 19 from non-signatory partners than of the signatories (10.8%).

If we consider the type of partnership, where around 79% indicated it is project based, those numbers **might** indicate that signatories invest more funding with their trusted strategic partners whom they have multiyear partnership, and/or they themselves have less funding opportunities. It is worth mentioning that only 6% of the respondents reported that they were introduced to donors by their signatory partners.

In relation to flexibility of funding reallocation and funding requirements unfortunately, only 7% of the respondents said it is more flexible and funding requirements are less.

A slightly higher percentage (13.25%) reported that signatory partners had provided additional support to cover extra COVID19 related costs, such as personal protective clothing (PPE) for frontline staff, and higher insurance and health care costs. This percentage can be confirmed by only 4.8% of the respondents reported that the risks were transferred to them by signatory partners. Disappointingly only 2 respondents reported that signatories had provided support for additional administration costs or continued to pay salaries in cases where projects were suspended due to COVID19. If we compare this with the 73.58% in the commitments section who reported that they receive adequate admin support, this might indicate a huge fall back during the COVID 19.

In general, there is a fall back in the perceptions and experiences of the endorsers with the signatories during the COVID 19 compared to those on the C4C commitments before COVID 19 (during the last 2 years), see some examples in the table below (percentages are extracted from the commitments section and the COVID 19 Section):

	During the last 2 years	During COVID 19
Endorsers have been introduced to any donor by their signatory partner	49%	6%
Endorsers have taken part in a partner signatory needs assessment and decision-making processes	60%	12%
Endorsers organization's work and role been credited in signatories' donors' reports	67.9%	0%
Endorsers organization's work and role been credited in signatory's communication to the national/global and social media and the public	73.9%	6%

Those considerable discrepancies of the reported numbers in the above table might indicate the situation of uncertainty and confusion dictated by the pandemic for both signatories and endorsers.

Future of C4C:

Respondents to the survey had a number of suggestions on how to enhance INGO performance in meeting their localisation commitments. Several suggested variations of setting up in-country co-chaired platforms of signatories and endorsers where progress towards achievement of the C4C commitments are discussed and promoted. Others commented on what could be summed up as 'advocacy without demonstrated action does not yield much'. Repeatedly the emphasis of comments and suggestions were on the need for variations on the theme of move from rhetoric to reality, undertake more effective and appropriate capacity support and better visibilise and include local actors to enable them to lead in the response.

The overwhelming majority (97%) of respondents want C4C to continue beyond its current end date of 2020, with most saying that there should not be a specific target end date, but that the Charter should continue until international NGOs fully comply with the 8 localisation commitments, they have signed up to implement. The majority of endorsers who participated in the survey consider that C4C is a platform that bridges the gap between INGOs and LNNGOs, encourages INGOs to improve their performance and delivery of localisation, and contributes towards changing attitudes of INGO staff in their international and country offices towards national and local NGOs. 55% also said that C4C provides hope that the current humanitarian system can change towards better enabling local leadership in humanitarian contexts.

Reflections of the C4C Endorsers Steering Group:

We recognise the very real and good faith efforts that many C4C INGO signatories have made in trying to change their business models to enable more equitable and locally led humanitarian response. Nevertheless, from the responses to our 2020 survey it is clear that this is uneven both across and within organisations. There is still a tendency for excellence to be in pockets where there are individuals or groups of staff who are committed to localisation, and consistent organisation-wide implementation is still lacking in many of the signatory INGOs. Great strides have been made, for example at the international level in advocating for change, but this is not reflected at the country level where real change in approaches to implementation are still more limited.

Overall, the 2020 C4C Endorser's survey produces a slightly more negative picture of C4C compliance than the signatories' own survey. Nevertheless, it should be recognised that there is also often an in-built tendency for funding recipients not to criticise their funders too strongly or too publicly. Although the answers are anonymised the old maxim of "don't bite the hand that feeds you" is still likely to be internalised.