

HOW **CHANGE** HAPPENS IN THE HUMANITARIAN SECTOR

HUMANITARIAN
ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT
EDITION 2018

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FOREWORD

Modern warfare is generally more protracted, more fragmented and more urbanised than at any other time in recent history – with catastrophic, far-reaching humanitarian consequences that can last for generations. Beyond the devastating loss of life and livelihoods, we see failing infrastructure and public services, chronic hardship and poverty, long-term psychological suffering and displacement on a massive scale – reversing previous development gains. At the same time, international humanitarian response in general is beset by internal weaknesses and external challenges to such an extent that many organisations are increasingly paralysed, if not absent altogether, in conflict zones where the needs are greatest. The increasing assertiveness of states and their insistence on sovereignty, the politicisation of aid, the proliferation and diversification of new actors, security issues, new technologies, the drive towards a common approach to emergency relief and development and the localisation of aid are among the key factors shaping the evolving humanitarian ecosystem. While the localisation agenda has been most successful in terms of disaster risk reduction, preparedness and response – local actors are invariably the first to respond in emergencies – it is gaining ground in situations of protracted conflict too.

The ‘new normal’ of protracted, largely urban conflict naturally still requires humanitarian action to save lives and meet short-term needs, but also, increasingly, to sustain basic services and infrastructure in fragile environments, to provide different types of community support and to contribute to longer-term socio-economic development. While this calls for a more holistic approach – with more creative planning and financing – neutral, impartial and independent humanitarian action remains indispensable for the ICRC to respond to actual needs, ensure proximity to the people at the centre of the response, and engage with all parties, particularly in the most constrained and complex situations of armed conflict. In order to achieve this, we need to be pragmatic and innovative. We need to maximise the enormous opportunities offered by digitalisation, whilst also managing the risks associated with data protection and privacy. We need to continuously explore how to better connect with increasingly diverse stakeholders and potential partners with the aim of co-creating innovative approaches to humanitarian action. And we need to invest more in our own staff, ensuring their diversity and inclusion in order to better connect with – and serve – affected people. Ultimately we need to ensure that the people we serve play a more central role in identifying their needs and formulating the best responses.

The CHS has been a major source of inspiration for the ICRC’s approach to ensuring accountability for affected people. Indeed, the nine commitments in the CHS are largely reflected in the ICRC’s own core set of elements, driving the quality of programmes. While the actions of field staff ultimately ensure accountability, these need to be underpinned by efficient, effective and transparent systems and processes. The ICRC has designed these systems and processes to be verifiable, allowing for strengths and weaknesses to be identified and for progress to be assessed.

The humanitarian sector is facing increasingly larger, longer and complex emergencies with increasing needs. There is pressure to achieve more with less and a need to be more effective. The expectations of crisis-affected people for the quality of our work is legitimate. Change on many of the issues covered in this publication is long overdue and by now urgent. In a world that keeps changing and evolving, we also need as humanitarians to adapt and evolve. This publication gives us vital insights into how we can make this happen more deliberately and successfully.



Yves Daccord
Director-General,
International Committee
of the Red Cross (ICRC),
Switzerland

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Yves Daccord'.

FOREWORD

In the Baringo County in Kenya, we face regular disasters. When a disaster occurs, a quick response to avoid loss of life is one of our main concerns. Fortunately, our long-term relationship with ActionAid and the knowledge that we have progressively gained through the disaster management committee helps to communicate rapidly with aid actors and to collectively address our needs. The key role of the community in responding to disasters, especially women and girls, has become more and more effective. This is recognised by local government officials and aid workers because of our determination, since 2007, for the promotion of our rights.



Amina Labarakwe
Member of the Tangelbei
Women's Network –
Churo Chapter, Tangelbei
in Baringo County, Kenya

After my participation in the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016, we faced two disasters in our community that demonstrated, once again, the challenges that we had brought to the summit and that we as a community consistently face. The response to these disasters has been more prompt than before. Whilst the immediate response is fundamental, we also need – but lack – consistent support to rebuild our destroyed livelihoods.

We support all initiatives by humanitarian actors to improve their response to the crises that affect us, especially accountability towards both the community and donors. We are truly ready and engaged to ensure that our contributions help make these initiatives a success.



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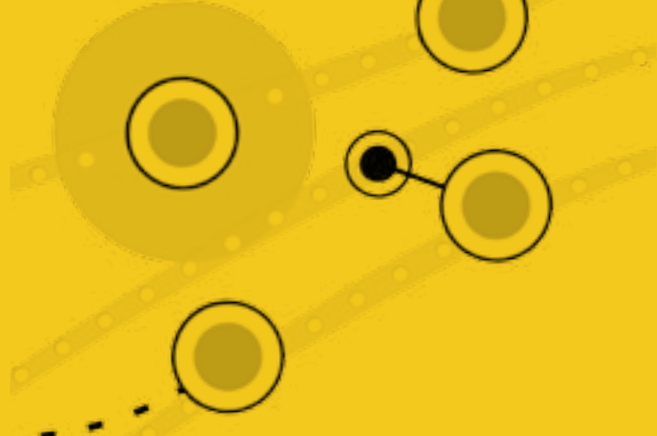
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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ADRRN	Asian Disaster Reduction and Response Network	IHL	International Humanitarian Law
ALNAP	Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance	INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations	IOM	International Organization for Migration
C4C	Charter For Change	JEEAR	Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda
CAR	Central African Republic	MDG	Millennium Development Goals
CDAC	Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities	MENA	Middle East and North Africa
CERAH	Geneva Centre for Education and Research in Humanitarian Action	NEAR	Network for Empowered Aid Response
CHS	Core Humanitarian Standard	NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
CTP	Cash Transfer Programming	NNGO	National Non-Governmental Organisation
DPKO	Department of Peacekeeping Operations	OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo	OECD/DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee
ECB	Emergency Capacity Building project	OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
ECHO	European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations	PACT	Platform for Action, Commitments and Transformation
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation	PDRRN	People Disaster Risk Reduction Network
GAM	Gender and Age Marker	PSEA	Protection against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
GHD	Good Humanitarian Donorship	RCRC	Red Cross and Red Crescent
HAP	Humanitarian Accountability Partnership	SCHR	Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response
HAR	Humanitarian Accountability Report	SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
HC	Humanitarian Coordinator	SEA	Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team	SHA	Swiss Humanitarian Aid
HPN	Humanitarian Practice Network	SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
HQAI	Humanitarian Quality and Accountability Initiative	TEC	Tsunami Evaluation Coalition
HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan	UN	United Nations
IASC	Inter Agency Standing Committee	UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
IASC AAP/PSEA TT	Inter Agency Standing Committee Task Team on Accountability to Affected Populations and Protection Against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.	UNCRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
IASC HFTT	Inter Agency Standing Committee Task Team on Humanitarian Financing	UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
IATI	International Aid Transparency Initiative	UNSG	Secretary-General of the United Nations
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross	USAID	United States Agency for International Development
IDP	Internally Displaced Person	WFP	World Food Programme
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent	WHS	World Humanitarian Summit

THE AUTHORS



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Lois has worked for over 20 years in the humanitarian field. She has undertaken a broad range of field-based and headquarters positions mainly for the ICRC, giving her an understanding of humanitarian issues from both policy and operational perspectives. As an independent consultant (working for different UN agencies, NGOs and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement) Lois has managed and provided technical inputs into a varied range of humanitarian assistance and protection programmes for conflict and disaster-affected populations in a number of complex environments including in the Balkans; the north and south Caucasus; the Middle East; Afghanistan; Asia and throughout Africa.

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The 2018 Humanitarian Accountability report is published by the CHS Alliance. However, all views and opinions expressed in this publication are the sole responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the CHS Alliance, thematic experts or peer reviewers.

01

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT

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*"We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking
we used when we created them."*

Einstein

This edition of the Humanitarian Accountability Report (HAR 2018) focuses on the topic of change: change within humanitarian organisations, and change in the humanitarian system as a whole.

Change has always been a central concern for the HAR. The Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP) – which produced this report from 2005 until 2013, was established to support change. It aimed to help member agencies, and the system as a whole, to become more accountable. The main purpose of the HAR was to assess and monitor changes and improvements in accountability and point out the challenges which remained. HAP's successor, the CHS Alliance (see Box 1.1), also exists to support the sector as it changes and evolves to improve its quality, accountability and effectiveness. Still promoting this evolution in humanitarian thinking and practice, the

CHS Alliance continues to publish the HAR, most recently with the HAR 2015¹ and this current version.

The CHS Alliance came into being at a time when there was a broad consensus that major change was required in humanitarian action. The process leading up to the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) in 2016 led to calls for change across the board. There was talk of the humanitarian system being 'broken', and a desire for 'transformational change'. Two years later, these changes are far from being achieved, but there is much work being done – around the so-called Grand Bargain, and in other areas – to try to deliver on the hopes and declarations made at the WHS. At the same time, scandals around safeguarding in a number of humanitarian organisations are a potent reminder that, in some areas, there is still a long way to go.

¹ CHS Alliance (2015) On the Road to Istanbul: How can the World Humanitarian Summit make humanitarian response more effective? *Humanitarian Accountability Report*, Geneva: CHS Alliance.
<https://www.chsalliance.org/files/files/CHS-Alliance-HAR-2015.pdf>.

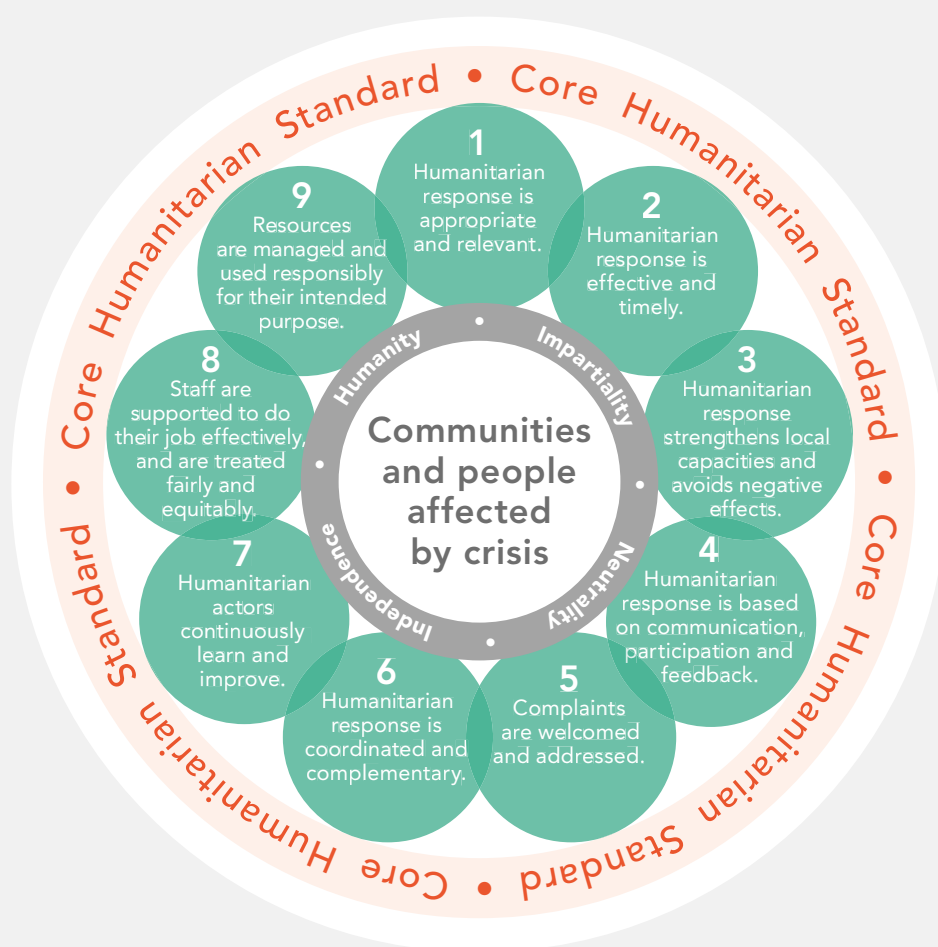
BOX 1.1: THE CHS ALLIANCE AND CHS VERIFICATION DATA

The CHS Alliance (www.chsalliance.org) is a membership organisation. It aims to promote the Core Humanitarian Standard (<https://corehumanitarianstandard.org>) and improve the effectiveness and impact of assistance to people and communities vulnerable to risk and affected by disaster, conflict or poverty, by working with humanitarian and development actors on quality, accountability and people management initiatives.

To measure and support the improvement efforts of the organisations committed to the CHS, the Alliance created a verification framework which sets out indicators for the requirements (Key Actions and Organisational Responsibilities) under each CHS Commitment and guided questions to inform each of those indicators. The indicators in the Verification

Framework are taken directly from the requirements of the Nine CHS Commitments, so that the 36 Key Actions and the 26 Organisational Responsibilities in the CHS have been turned into 62 indicators.

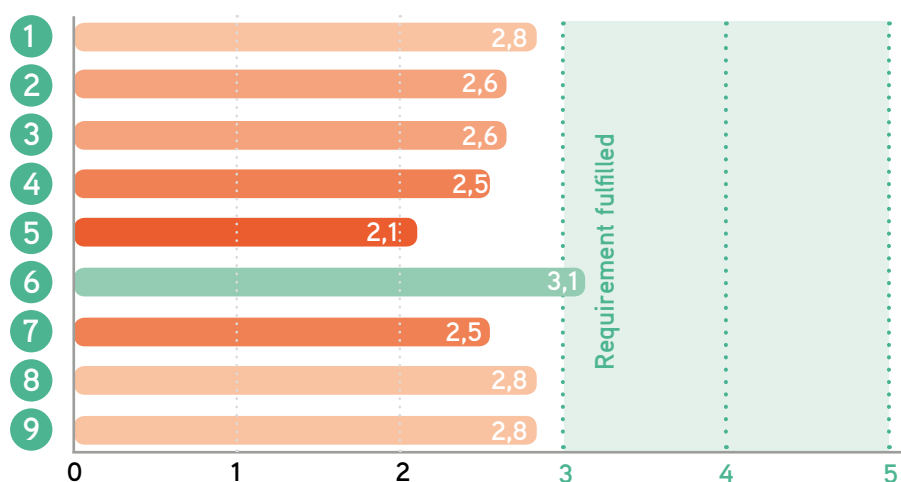
The dashboards below illustrate the average performance of only 43 evaluations, whose scores have been validated either through the external audit process currently conducted by the Humanitarian Quality and Accountability Initiative (HQAI) (17 certifications and 4 independent verifications), or through the quality check of the self-assessments and peer reviews made available by the CHS Alliance (20 self-assessments and one peer review) between June 2015 and July 2018.



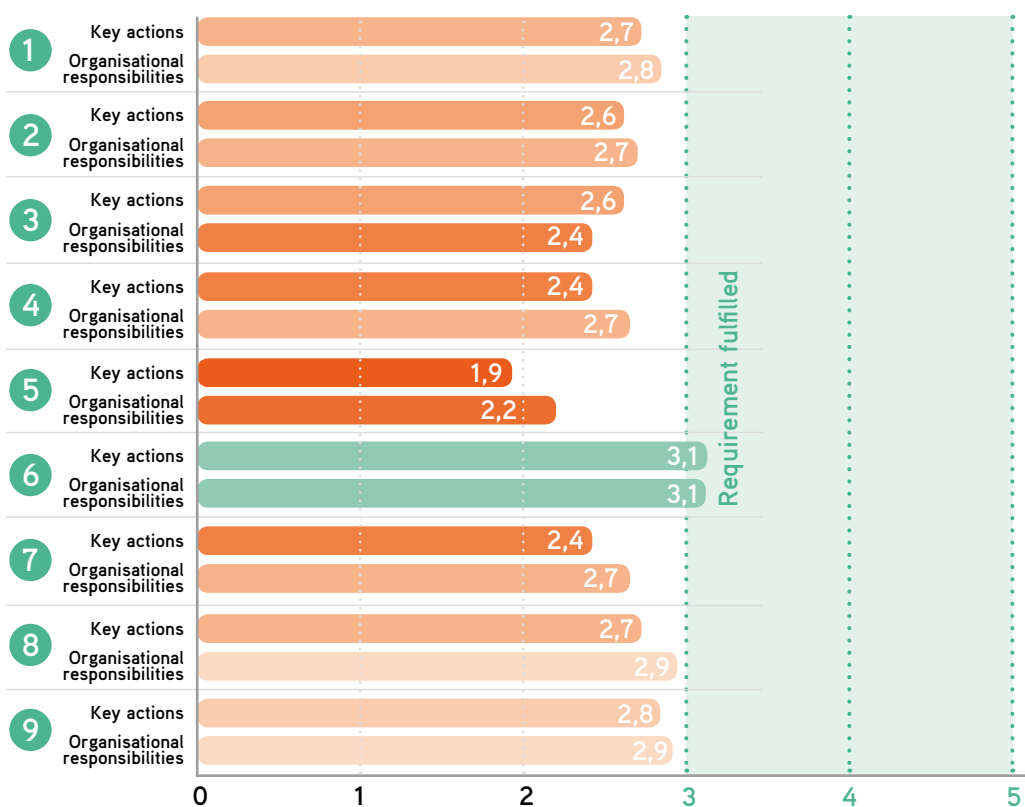
The analysis of the aggregated data from the verification database (see <https://www.chsalliance.org/what-we-do/verification/chs-verification-data>) shows the global performance trends of the organisations that undertook verification against the set of CHS indicators. The main elements of these trends are as follows. The three commitments where the performance is the lowest are (starting from the lowest): Commitment 5 (complaints mechanisms), Commitment 4 (communication with communities), and Commitment 7 (learning from experience). For these three commitments, an analysis of the indicators demonstrated that those linked to the key actions generally scored lowest. We interpreted that as follows:

where the guidance, policies, procedures, etc. exist, their translation into action is still a challenge for the sector. The PSEA index is the weakest out of the three presented (Localisation, Gender and Diversity, PSEA). The two weakest indicators are: Key Action 5.1. (Communities and people affected by crisis are consulted on the design, implementation, and monitoring of complaints handling processes); and Organisational Responsibility 5.6 (Communities and people affected by crisis are fully aware of the expected behaviour of humanitarian staff, including organisational commitments made on the protection against sexual exploitation and abuse).

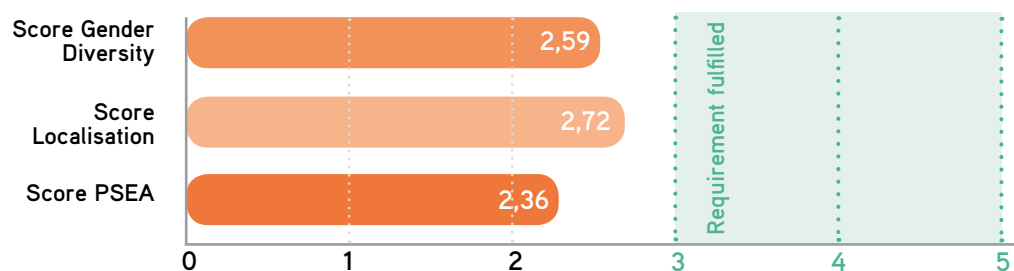
AVERAGE SCORE BY COMMITMENT



AVERAGE SCORE BY COMMITMENT AND TYPE OF INDICATORS

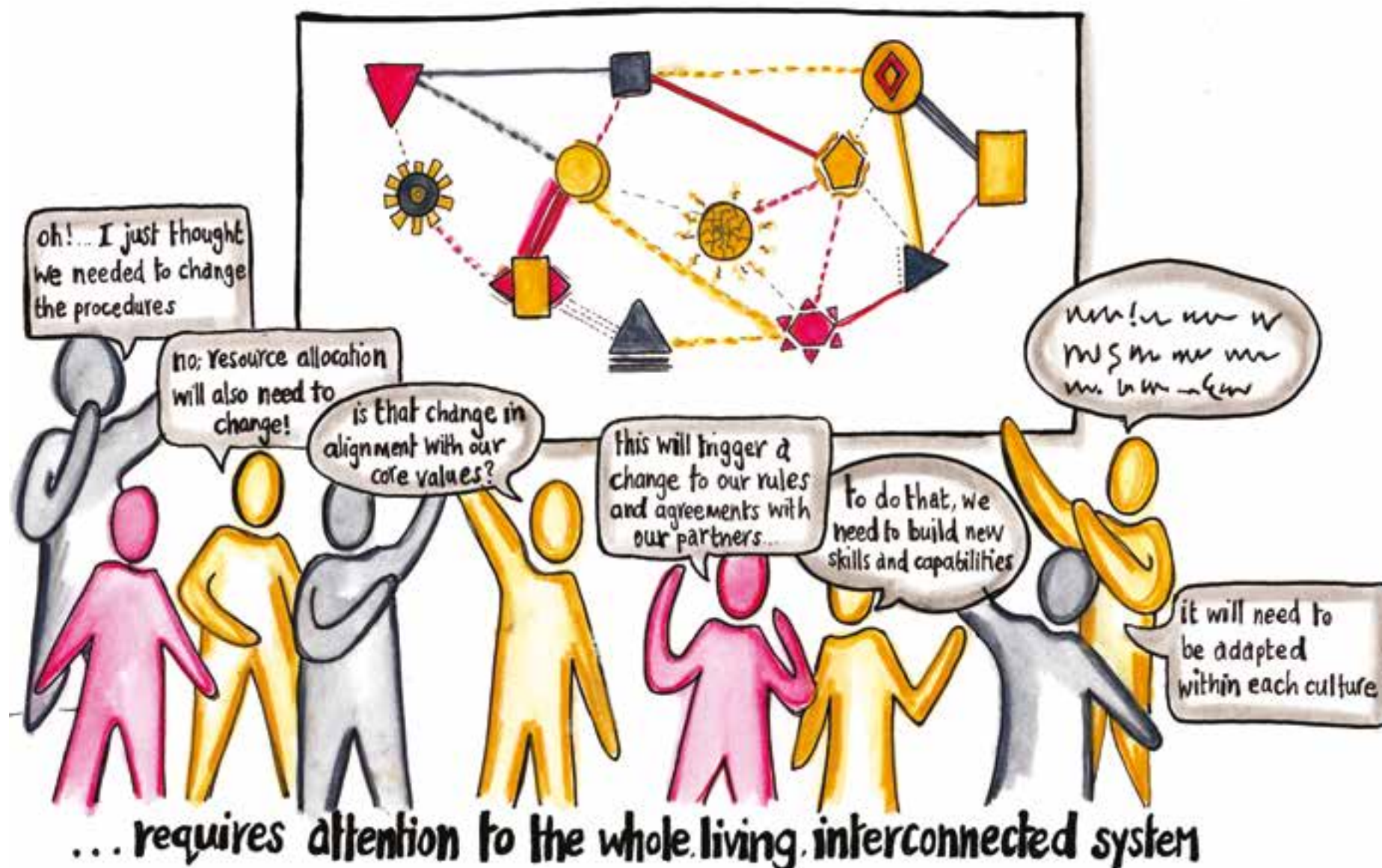


INDEX SCORES



Source: CHS Alliance

Change in the humanitarian sector...



Stepping back a little, there are a number of reasons to suggest that changes to the humanitarian system are both necessary and inevitable. In the first place, in the past 15 years there have been many reform efforts within the humanitarian sector, with different degrees of success. The Good Humanitarian Donorship initiative, the Humanitarian Reform process, the Transformative Agenda and, more recently, the Grand Bargain all started with ambitious agendas. Only few, however, have managed to fully deliver on their objectives and, as a result, many of the issues humanitarians are trying to change today were already part of reform agendas 15 or 20 years ago. Addressing the lack of resources, being more inclusive of gender, age and disability, tackling sexual exploitation and abuse, being more participatory, simplifying and harmonising donor reporting requirements, making evidence-based decisions, and linking relief and development programming are only a few examples.

The humanitarian sector is a highly complex interconnected system with many elements, characteristics and dimensions. For example, there are numerous interconnected actors (recipients, donors, governments, the United Nations, the Red Cross and Red Crescent movement/ICRC, NGOs, humanitarian staff, development staff, peacekeepers, community-based organisations, emerging actors, the private sector, diaspora, faith-based organisations, etc.). There are a growing variety of technical sectors (food security, livelihood, health, water and sanitation, mental health, etc.). Add to this a multiplicity of initiatives, a diversity of cultural environments, different natures of crises (natural disaster, conflict, protracted crisis, etc.) and so on. Change in the humanitarian sector needs to take all of these elements into account (see illustration 1).

Added to these are new challenges which have emerged (or become visible) more recently: urban disasters; increased numbers of people needing assistance and protection in areas that are hard to reach; the danger of a global pandemic. And finally, there are the dangers – and the possibilities – of the future: climate change; technological advance; changes in the global balance of power. Whether these make humanitarian action easier or more difficult to achieve, they will undoubtedly lead to change. We can probably expect the ‘who?’ ‘what?’ ‘where?’ ‘when?’ and ‘how?’ of humanitarian activities to look significantly different in ten years time, with associated changes to funding, structures, governance, personnel and ways of working.

The question, then, is not whether change will happen – it is virtually inevitable and is already happening. The question is whether these changes, once made, will enhance principled, accountable, high-quality humanitarian action. Will they make preparedness, relief and protection activities more effective? Will they lead to an increased respect for humanity and the voices of crisis-affected people? Will they lead further towards assistance that is provided exclusively on the basis of need, and not determined by political or religious affiliation? Where aid is done badly, will the changes to the system make it easier to hold humanitarians to account?

If we measured change in the humanitarian sector over the past 20 years against these criteria, we would probably conclude that the humanitarian system has not, until now, done very well. In preparation for its 31st Annual meeting in 2017, ALNAP² interviewed a number of humanitarian practitioners and academics, and asked ‘how good is the humanitarian system at change?’ This resulted in four general conclusions.

- The first was that the system has introduced important technical improvements in a number of areas, such as early warning, logistics, pooled funds and cash.
- The second was that the more fundamental cultural and structural changes which affected people and humanitarians want (or say they want) have mostly not happened. There is still a long way to go with localisation, accountability, preparedness, and a host of other areas.
- The third was that important changes have happened – increased bureaucracy and ‘bunkerisation’ – but that they have been essentially negative and have taken us further from the humanitarian ideal.
- And the fourth was that, overall, changes have happened to the humanitarian system, but that the system has not been guided by these changes³.

This failure to make change happen does not reflect a lack of desire for change. The humanitarian system is crammed with meetings, initiatives and activities aimed at change and improvement. But it might suggest that interest and energy are not focused in the right places. For the most part, these meetings concentrate on what should change, and how the system should be different. They spend very little, if any, time on trying to understand how change happens, or does not, and how humanitarians can support it. The

² Active Learning Network on Accountability and Performance.

³ Knox Clarke, P. (2017) *Transforming change*. ALNAP Study. London: ALNAP/ODI.
<https://www.alnap.org/help-library/transforming-change>

destination is clear, but there is no map, and no route to get there with a clear agreement on the concepts, approaches and indicators.

And so, at a time when the World Humanitarian Summit and the Grand Bargain have offered the possibility of a 'once in a generation' change, and have identified a number

of areas where there is broad consensus that change is necessary, it is time for the humanitarian system to think more seriously about how change happens – not as a theoretical exercise, but as a critical step in ensuring that the world can meet the needs and priorities of people in crisis.

1.1. AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE REPORT

The overall aim of the HAR 2018 is to provide a better understanding of the way change happens in humanitarian organisations and, thus, across the humanitarian system as a whole, and to help humanitarian actors to be better prepared to lead these changes in the future (shifting from reaction to pro-action).

Specifically, the HAR 2018 aims to provide a clear understanding of:

- The triggers of change in humanitarian organisations and in the humanitarian system in the recent past
- The result of past efforts towards change
- The actions that effectively fostered change in humanitarian organisations, and the factors which make change difficult (enablers and dis-enablers)
- The concrete actions more likely to foster effective change in the future

To do so, the following six topics, in which significant commitments or efforts for change have been made in the last 20 years, were selected to be analysed in the context of change:

- Participation of crisis-affected people in the humanitarian decision-making process;
- The localisation agenda
- The alleviation of sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment and abuse
- Inclusive humanitarian response
- Cash transfer programming
- Simplification and harmonisation of reporting requirements.

Through an analysis of the six topics, the lessons we can learn from the past will be identified: the initiatives, attitudes, what has worked and what has not worked, in bringing intentional change to the humanitarian sector. And attempts will be made to establish what the main drivers of effective and transformative change in the humanitarian system will be in the future.

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1.2. METHODOLOGY

1.2.1. Process

This report is primarily based on the experience of people involved in key initiatives for change in the humanitarian sector for several years. The writing

process was conceived so as to involve as broad a range as possible of those spearheading change in the sector (see Chart below).

CHART 1.1: PARTICIPANTS INVOLVED IN THE WRITING PROCESS OF THE HAR 2018

Publication editor (CHS Alliance)	Discussion facilitator/ chapter authors	Thematic experts	Peer reviewers
Coordinate the whole publication and ensure the coherence between different contributions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate discussions between the thematic experts Draft the chapter Revise the chapter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 to 4 per chapter (covering a diversity of the following: policy/operational, national/international, gender balanced, etc.) Provide contributions/key information based on their experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approx. 6 per chapter (covering a diversity of humanitarian contexts and type of response) Provide insight, feedback and suggestions

Source: CHS Alliance

1.2.2. Main tools

TIMELINE AND MATURITY ASSESSMENT

To take stock of what happened in the past, the authors used timelines to show the significant actions or initiatives (events, reforms, publications, concepts, innovation, commitments, standards, etc.) undertaken in the recent past to foster change. They then used a maturity assessment framework to show how far the change had progressed for each topic.

The maturity assessment includes an analysis of the following elements:

- Movement/Buy in shows how far people have accepted the need for, and are willing to participate in, change (for instance, clarity of changes proposed, necessity of the proposed changes, both positive and negative impact of the status quo/changes).

- Direction shows how much change has actually taken place in thinking and practice as measured by indicators, including definitions of concepts, commitments and objectives; concrete actions taken (creation of positions related to this topic, presence of the topic in standard training/induction, emergence of related standards and guidelines, programming changes, case studies); and the assessment and measurement of progress.
- Environment shows enabling and dis-enabling factors for change such as: funding, cultural norms or organisational behaviours; partnership agreements/ grant conditionality; technological developments; and policy and legislative enablers and constraints.

Four levels were proposed for the maturity assessment: 1: Weak; 2: Moderate; 3: Strong; and 4: Excellent. The chart below shows brief descriptions of each level.

CHART 1.2: SAMPLE FOR THE MATURITY ASSESSMENT

	01 WEAK	02 MODERATE	03 STRONG	04 EXCELLENT
MOVEMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › No agreement that change is necessary › No awareness of negative impact of current state of play › No or limited senior level commitments to change current situation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Partial agreement that change is necessary › Limited awareness of negative impact of current state of play › Some senior level commitments to change current situation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Most stakeholders believe change is necessary › Significant evidence of negative impact of current state of play › Significant senior level commitments to change current situation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › All stakeholders believe change is necessary › Strong evidence of negative impact of current state of play › Consensus at senior level on necessity to change current situation
DIRECTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Commitments to actions are vague › Absence of common language, definitions and ability to measure › No examples of successful change › Not clear what success looks like 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Commitments to actions are vague › Language broadly adopted, but definitions differ, measurement lacking › Anecdotal examples of successful change › Only vague what success looks like 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Commitments to actions are specific › Language and definitions are common. Some ability to measure progress › Several examples of successful change › Clarity on what success looks like 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Commitments to actions are SMART › Language, definitions and actions needed are all clear › There are many examples of successful change and broad understanding of what success looks like.
ENVIRONMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Processes & systems not conducive to change (culture, systems) › No leadership for action › No requirements to demonstrate progress or rewards for doing so 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Some processes & systems not conducive to change (culture, systems) › Limited leadership, issue seen as separate file › Marginal requirements to demonstrate progress or rewards for doing so 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Processes & systems not preventing change (culture, systems) › Senior leadership on issue, seen as part of strategy › Requirements to demonstrate progress, limited accountability for results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Processes & systems support change (culture, systems) › Action on issue part of organisational culture › Requirements to demonstrate progress and accountability for results

Source: Adapted from switch framework⁴

CHANGE MODELS

This report builds on research and discussions conducted by ALNAP around their 31st Annual Meeting ‘Changing Humanitarian Action?’⁵. In particular, the research design for the report incorporated two important elements of ALNAP’s work.

The first element was a consideration of the basic assumptions that people make about organisational or system change.⁶ The way people try to change organisations depends on their understanding of what an organisation is, and how it works. So, if people think of organisations as, say, machines, they will try to change them in the same way they would try to change a machine. While if organisations are thought of as communities, people will try to change them as if they were trying to change a community. Therefore, the way an organisation is conceived in the mind of the person looking to change it is profoundly important to the way the

change process is designed and implemented. Reviewing published and ‘grey’ literature about the humanitarian system, and in particular about change in the humanitarian system, we found **six distinct models**: six ways that humanitarians think about their organisations, and about the system as a whole. These are shown in Box 1.2.

The authors of this report have taken this idea one step further, and have tried to identify which mental model, or combination of models, have been used in each of the change processes they have reviewed, and how this has affected the process. This is important, because it allows us to better understand the relationship between underlying assumptions about change and the success of change processes, and because it can help us to identify which assumptions about change are prevalent in the humanitarian system, and which need to be more widely considered. The analysis could also reveal new elements that are not considered in the change models above but that play very important roles in the humanitarian sector.

⁴ Heath C. Heath D. (2010), *Switch, How to change things when change is hard*, New York

⁵ For more information on the meeting, visit

<https://www.alnap.org/upcoming-events/annual-meetings/31st-annual-meeting-changing-humanitarian-action>

⁶ The idea that people design change programmes according to assumptions based on their idea of what an organisation is, has been considered by a number of authors, most notably Gareth Morgan in *Images of Organisation* (2006).

BOX 1.2: CHANGE MODELS

Each model is indicated by a colour, making it easier to demonstrate a correspondence between the change models and the ingredients of successful change (see Box 1.3).

1. Machine model

This approach – which is common in many sectors, and which forms the basis for much traditional ‘change management’ – assumes that the organisation or the system is like a machine: a structure which takes inputs and transforms them into outputs. Change processes that use this model often owe a debt to engineering. They generally have clear plans, and focus mainly on structural changes, or changes to business processes (both of which can be shown in diagrammatic form). They often focus on changing the organisation one part at a time. The language of change is mechanical – “levers for change”, “re-engineering” and “cascading” often feature in this approach.

In this report, we refer to machine model change efforts that are focused on a declaration of principles, the elaboration of standards and tools, and the publication of reports.

2. Market model

This model – based on private sector assumptions – sees the humanitarian system primarily as a marketplace within which humanitarian organisations compete with one another. Here, change occurs as a result of natural competitive forces: ‘creative destruction’, whereby the organisations that can provide the most effective goods and services prosper and grow, while those which don’t lose customers and die. People who subscribe to this model may talk about ‘market share’, ‘comparative advantage’ and ‘added value’. Change processes influenced by this model often focus on processes of innovation – the creation of new products or approaches that are better suited to the demands of humanitarian actors and crisis-affected people.

In this report, we refer to market model change efforts that lead to the creation of new entities, positions, and innovations.

3. Political model

This is also a model of competition, but one in which humanitarian organisations are engaged in constant political competition to enhance their power or status. Unlike the market model, income is generally not seen to come from crisis-affected people, but from donors. As a result, it is relationships with donors, rather than the quality of services, which benefits the organisation. Radical change can be difficult in this model: while one powerful organisation may displace another, smaller and less powerful organisations find it difficult to compete. However, change is possible – and can be achieved by political means: by making alliances, exploiting differences between rivals and identifying and using opportunities to enhance power and status.

In this report, we refer to political model change efforts that are instigated by donors or influential actors in the sector.

4. Society model

From this perspective, organisations are primarily social structures: societies or communities. As a result, change is thought of in social terms – an emphasis is put on culture and on leadership. When people talk of a need for ‘culture change’, they are often referring to this model: ‘town hall meetings’ and ‘stakeholders’ are also elements of many programmes that have roots in an ‘organisation-as-society’ model. Unsurprisingly, some organisational change approaches based on this model are similar to those used in social and political development activities.

In this report, we refer to society model change efforts involving multi-stakeholder initiatives, events where collective reflection and actions have taken place and communities of practice.

5. Mind model

The ‘organisation as mind’ model draws parallels between the organisation and the human mind and tends to see organisational change as a process of learning. While other models draw on engineering, political science, anthropology or sociology to explain change, this model is heavily influenced by psychology and much emphasis is put on the factors that enable and the factors that constrain, organisational learning and change. As a result, this model highlights a number of psychological processes – in particular, resistance to change.

In this report, we refer to mind model change efforts that focus on learning processes, capacity-building, training and culture change.

6. Ecosystem model

Finally, this model sees organisations (or parts of a single organisation) as living elements in an ecosystem which is made up of other organisations (or parts of the organisation): as animals in a jungle, or fish on a coral reef. The different elements have a certain amount of freedom to act and use this freedom to adapt their behaviour depending on the actions of other organisations. Because all of the elements are acting and reacting all the time, this leads to complicated webs of action-response-new action impacting the entire system. As a result, it is impossible to predict how the system as a whole will behave in the future: how a reef will change in response to the introduction of a new organism, or how the humanitarian system will respond to a new initiative. Complex adaptive systems are ‘non-linear’ and unpredictable. Change that takes a complex system approach will tend to look at the whole organisation and its surroundings. It will generally not rely on planning, but will often be iterative, relying on a process of trials, monitoring, and implementing what works.

In this report, we refer to ecosystem model change efforts with regards to systemic approaches that are multi-pronged trying to affect causes as well as with regards to evaluation and review processes, and pilot projects.

Source: Adapted from ALNAP’s “Transforming change”⁷

⁷ Knox Clarke, P. (2017) *Transforming change*. ALNAP Study. London: ALNAP/ODI. <https://www.alnap.org/help-library/transforming-change>



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FIVE INGREDIENTS FOR SUCCESSFUL CHANGE

The second element of the ALNAP work that features in this report is the **‘Five ingredients for successful change’** (see Box 1.3). This element follows on from the change models in Box 1.2. While all of the models reflect some aspects of the humanitarian system, none of them reflect it all: they are all incomplete. So, theoretically, if we want to understand how to support successful change, we have to combine all of the models and see the system from its structural, cultural, emotional, economic and political perspectives consecutively and adopt a more systemic and holistic approach.

The five ingredients for successful change are the result of this combination. They outline what we would expect to be required for change to be successful. This is achieved by taking the insights from all the models listed in Box 1.2 and merging them into a single list. And these ingredients are more than just theory. The literature

review that preceded the ALNAP meeting, and the cases presented at the meeting itself, showed that when people use these five ingredients, the change process is more likely to be successful.

In this report, the authors have used, and interrogated,⁸ these five ingredients, especially while proposing actions for the future.

Below we outline the ‘five ingredients for successful change’ that were used in the design of this report.

These five ingredients are not ‘magic bullets’, or a simple step-by-step guide to change management. Every process is different and will require different quantities of each ingredient. There are also many more approaches that have been shown to support effective change. However, these five achieved widespread support among the diverse range of actors involved in change in the humanitarian sector.

⁸ Attempting to ascertain if they have been used, if they have supported successful attempts at change (or if they have had no results or negative results), and if there are other ingredients which are not on the list but which might be equally or more important.

BOX 1.3: THE FIVE INGREDIENTS FOR SUCCESSFUL CHANGE

This section merges together the most relevant aspects of the models listed in Box 1.2 and proposes a combination of these aspects in order to lead to successful change. The colour of each action below matches the model from which it is taken in Box 1.2.

MAKING CHANGE ABOUT PEOPLE

Be constantly alert to people's emotions and behaviour.



a. Listen. Sometimes, people will resist change because they don't believe they are being heard. Trying to find and listen to people affected by the change can lower resistance and reveal vital information about why things aren't working.



b. Motivate. Why would people want to change? Change processes are often hard work, and frustrating. People need to know why they should make this effort – and they need to know, as the process unfolds, that it is 'working', and that their efforts count.



c. Facilitate. Tweak the environment so that the right behaviour becomes a little bit easier and the wrong behaviour a little bit harder. And get rid of old processes, so people don't have to do the same thing twice!



d. Demonstrate. The best approaches demonstrate the 'new ways' of working, rather than copying the old – powerfully demonstrating that change is possible. After all, you don't change things by doing them the same way you have in the past.

BRINGING STAKEHOLDERS TOGETHER

Successful programmes bring a wide range of people together from across the system/organisation at the beginning of the process and then again more regularly, as the change takes place.



e. Think about who (including the types of roles in the humanitarian system such as donors, headquarters staff, field staff, national/international actors, etc.) will have to do things differently when the change is complete.



f. Invite these people or groups to participate in the process (help design; provide advice; take the lead on certain elements).



g. As the process evolves, keep an eye out for new groups who are being affected by it or could hinder it, and consider how to bring them in.

CLARIFYING THE BOUNDARIES

Clarify the basic outline of the change – what will be different? What is the outcome meant to be?



h. Clarify the goal of the change agenda.



i. Clarify the nature and extent of the change required to achieve this goal (how big a change is this? what do you expect to change and what do you expect to stay the same?).



j. Clarify key roles in the change process: who does what (the roles for all the stakeholders including the role of crisis-affected people)?



k. Review the goal, extent and roles of the change process as you proceed.

PRIORITY ON ACTION - LEARNING BY DOING

Focus energies on making (and supporting) changes and learning and communicating what works.



l. Focus energies and attention on action: on supporting things that are working.



m. Be pragmatic. Often external events will provide you with opportunities to gain more support for the change and accelerate the process. Use them.



n. Keep track of the results of these actions, and share experiences of what is working, and what is not, across the organisation and system. As change 'ripples out', and more people are involved, it becomes even more important to have a way of capturing and sharing experience.



o. Promote innovation, pilot the innovation, summarise learning from the innovations and scale up if appropriate.

PROMOTING WHAT WORKS

Look for examples of success – and base your change on them.



p. Look carefully for situations in your organisation or in the humanitarian system where outcomes similar to the ones you have defined are already being achieved.



q. Find out more about these programmes or processes. What do they do? How do they work? What challenges do they face?



r. Think about how you can support the change agenda to address these challenges more successfully, and copy them in other parts of the organisation.

Source: ALNAP and CHS Alliance



Using the above tools and methodology, this report intends to consider the six issues in humanitarian response around which the demand for change has been greatest (as listed earlier in this report on page 14). Following a consideration of the history and reality of change with regards to each issue, the impact of each will be assessed under the following headings:

- **What happened in the recent past?** This section highlights the relevant reforms, commitments, publications, declarations, developments of concepts or standards, innovations, events, and so on that have influenced change in the humanitarian sector.
- **Where are we now?** This section demonstrates where the humanitarian sector is now in terms of progress on each of the specific issues. Where possible, it also compares the current status with expected progress towards objectives. This section also includes an assessment of the issue through the lens of change maturity.

- **What has worked and what has not – and why?**

This section aims to take stock of the strengths, and failings, of the ways in which the humanitarian sector as a whole has instituted change around each of the key issues addressed. Also identified and considered will be factors that have supported progress (enablers) and the constraints or challenges (dis-enablers). As far as is possible, analysis will be supported by evidence both from organisations and from across the sector as a whole.

- **What do we think we can do now?** This section aims to propose concrete pathways forward for meaningful change in the humanitarian sector, while also considering the current barriers and challenges that need to be overcome in order for such pathways to be viable. Such considerations will take into account the five ingredients for a successful change framework.



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02

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PARTICIPATION OF CRISIS- AFFECTED PEOPLE IN HUMANITARIAN DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES





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2.1. INTRODUCTION

Countless evaluations and publications, the participants in the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS), and crisis-affected people themselves have said for years that those who live with and through crises should be at the centre of humanitarian action. Commitments have been made to 'new ways of working' to meaningfully engage the broad array of actors involved in and affected by humanitarian action to make it more relevant, appropriate, effective, efficient and accountable. The right to dignity – to be treated with respect and to have a say in the decisions which affect one's life – remains a core humanitarian principle.

At the same time, the lack of a voice and choice in local and national institutions and decision-making processes is often a driver of tension, conflict and humanitarian crises. Many experiencing humanitarian

crises feel left out or forgotten, not just by their governments but also by humanitarian actors. This breeds mistrust and disillusionment not just with their own governments and national and local organisations, but also with the international community and its institutions.⁹

While the numbers of people affected by crises and the range of actors engaged in humanitarian action has increased over the last few years, often the same institutions and actors continue to make the decisions. Despite the rhetoric and long-standing commitments to change, people affected by crises continue to be far from the centres of power, and not engaged in making the decisions which greatly affect their lives (see the score of the commitment 4 of CHS in Box 1.1, Chart 2.1, and Illustration 2).

⁹ See Ground Truth Solutions (2018) *The Grand Bargain: Perspectives from the Field*. Vienna: Ground Truth Solutions. <http://groundtruthsolutions.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/GTS-Grand-Bargain-briefing-note-June-2018.pdf>

CHART 2.1: PERCEPTIONS OF CRISIS-AFFECTED PEOPLE ON THE WAY THEIR OPINIONS ARE INCORPORATED INTO HUMANITARIAN DECISION-MAKING

Ground Truth Solutions collected data from 9,793 respondents from 9 different countries between 2016 and 2018. In each country they asked crisis-affected people about their perceptions of various performance dimensions for the humanitarian response (see the y-axis below). In each country the perceptions were ranked so that the performance dimension crisis-affected people felt most positive about received a 1, the second most positive performance dimension received a 2, and so on. As can be seen below, the performance dimensions were ranked similarly across countries.

Do you feel safe in your place of residence?	2	1		3	1	3	1	1	1
Do you feel treated with respect by the aid providers?	1	2	1	2	3	1	2	2	
Do you feel welcomed by the host community?		3			2	4		3	2
Do you think that aid reaches the people who need it the most?	3		5	4	6	6	5	5	3
Do you feel informed about the aid that is available to you?	8	5	6	1	7	2	4	7	4
If you made a complaint do you feel you would get a response?					5	5		4	6
Overall, is life improving for people in your situation?	6		3	7	4	8	3		5
Does the aid you receive cover your most important needs?	4	4	2	5	8	7	8	6	8
Do the aid providers take your opinion into account?	7		4	6	9	10	6		7
Do you feel the support you receive helps you to become more self-reliant?	5			8	10	9	7		9
	Afghanistan	Austria	Dominica	Haiti	Iraq	Lebanon	Somalia	Turkey	Uganda

The conclusions drawn from the data are the following:

- Crisis-affected people feel treated with respect by aid workers
- Crisis-affected people feel safe in their place of residence
- **The participation revolution remains elusive**
- Aid does not prepare crisis-affected people to live without support in the future

Source: Ground Truth Solutions' Humanitarian Voice Index (2018)

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Recognising the failure of most actors in the humanitarian system to consistently and systematically engage those affected by crises directly in decision-making processes, the participants at the WHS and the signatories of the Grand Bargain committed to “leave no one behind” and to engender:

“a participation revolution: include people receiving aid in making the decisions which affect their lives...[to] create an environment of greater trust, transparency and accountability.”¹⁰

This chapter will lay out what has been done, where the humanitarian sector is today, and what lessons can be drawn from how changes in participation in decision-making structures and processes were pursued in the past. It will then suggest what more needs to be done to ensure that the “participation revolution” succeeds in giving those affected by humanitarian action a real stake in making decisions which affect their lives and the options available to them.

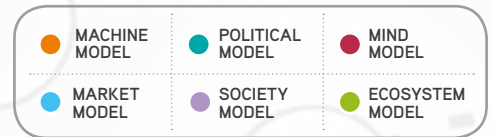
¹⁰ The Agenda for Humanity (2016). For more information, visit: <https://www.agendaforhumanity.org/initiatives/3861>

Participation in decision-making processes




ILLUSTRATION 2

BOX 2.1: TIMELINE OF MAJOR INITIATIVES, REPORTS, GUIDANCE AND ORGANISATIONS FOCUSED ON INCREASING THE PARTICIPATION OF AFFECTED PEOPLE IN HUMANITARIAN ACTION.




1996–1999 ▼



1996

-  Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda (JEEAR) highlights that the participation of crisis-affected people, and accountability to them, are important components of quality in humanitarian assistance.

1997




-  ALNAP Project is established to focus on supporting learning and accountability within the humanitarian sector.


1998


-  First Sphere Handbook emphasises participation as an underlying principle across all technical standards.
-  The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement are agreed, with an obligation for all governments to consult with displaced people and to facilitate their participation in the decisions that affect their lives.

2000–2010 ▼


2003


-  Good Humanitarian Donorship initiative is established and the Principles and Good Practice are endorsed by 17 donors. Principle 7 states: “Request implementing humanitarian organisations to ensure, to the greatest extent possible, adequate involvement of beneficiaries in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of humanitarian assistance.”
-  Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP) is launched and quality and accountability standards begin development through engagement with many humanitarian agencies and affected people.
-  ALNAP and Groupe URD publish Participation by crisis-affected populations in humanitarian action: a handbook for practitioners.

 The HAP Standard in Accountability and Quality Management and its corresponding certification scheme are launched.


 The Tsunami Evaluation Coalition (TEC) report recommends increased participation by and accountability to people affected by crises.


2007


 The Listening Project is started in response to increased attention to accountability to affected communities in the wake of the Southeast Asian tsunami in late 2004.

 The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness is signed at the 2nd High Level forum on Aid Effectiveness, committing signatories (mostly governments) to increasing local ownership and mutual accountability between donors and aid recipient countries, among other ways to make aid more effective.


2005

 The Quality COMPASS is developed by Groupe URD, organised around the COMPASS Rose framework, with 12 quality criteria, several of which relate to participation and accountability.

 The Emergency Capacity-Building (ECB) project commences and leads to the development of “The Good Enough Guide: Impact Measurement and Accountability in Emergencies” and other tools to build the capacity of humanitarian staff.

 JEEAR’s second assessment is published, stating that the initial report has had an impact on accountability, standards, and professionalism, and notes that the sector has achieved much through HAP, ALNAP, and the Sphere Project.

2004

 People in Aid launch the “Code of Good Practice in the Management and Support of Aid Personnel.”


2003 (continued) ▲

2009


 Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities (CDAC) is founded to improve communications with and engagement of crisis-affected communities. It is now a network of more than 30 humanitarian, media development, social innovation, technology and telecommunication organisations.


2010–2018 ▼

2010


 The Haiti earthquake is followed by the cholera crisis created by UN peacekeepers. Despite the individual and collective communication platforms and feedback mechanisms, affected people felt there was poor participation and accountability by humanitarian agencies.

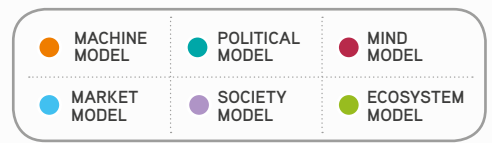
2011

 The Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation and the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States were endorsed at the 4th High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan, Korea in 2011. It committed donors to support nationally-owned and led development plans and governments in fragile states (many of whom are recipients of humanitarian assistance) to inclusive planning processes.

 The Transformative Agenda is agreed by the IASC principals, with a focus on improved leadership, coordination and accountability. The IASC agreed to incorporate the Commitments on Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) into its policies and operational guidelines and to promote them within the clusters, humanitarian country teams and partners. One commitment focused in particular on participation, stating: “Enable affected populations to play an active role in the decision-making processes that affect them through the establishment of clear guidelines and practices to engage them appropriately and ensure that the most marginalised and affected are represented and have influence.”

2012

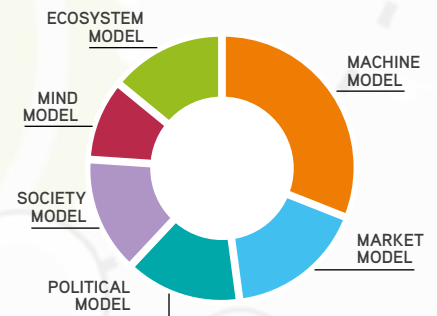
 OECD report Towards Better Humanitarian Donorship, insists on the need to prioritise participation.



Source: CHS Alliance

Despite the best efforts of the authors and contributors, it remains challenging to produce a comprehensive census of all change initiatives across the humanitarian sector. This timeline should therefore not be considered as exhaustive or conclusive as they relate to the change models.

CHANGE MODELS' DISTRIBUTION



The revised Sphere Handbook will be published with the CHS substituting for the six core standards in previous versions.

IASC Revised Commitments on Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) Guidance Note for Principals and Senior Managers for both the organisational and collective levels is endorsed by the IASC AAP/PSEA Task Team.

Groupe URD publish a revised Quality & Accountability COMPASS which provides a series of recommendations, processes and tools that have been specifically designed to help international aid projects implement the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) in all sectors, contexts and operational zones.

2018 (continued)

2015 (continued)

The Nepal Inter-Agency Common Feedback Project is started, based on the model developed for the Nepal Earthquake response, and integrated in the IASC Emergency Response Preparedness (ERP) agreements for Nepal.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is adopted at the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit, with goal 16 focused on participation, stating: "Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels."

The Humanitarian Quality Assurance Initiative (HQAI) is set up following the launch of the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) to provide accessible, high-quality verification and certification services to NGOs seeking third party assessment of their performance against the CHS.

2016

World Humanitarian Summit held in Istanbul, Turkey. The Agenda for Humanity and Grand Bargain are launched, including a "Participation Revolution" workstream which brings together donors and operational humanitarian agencies. Numerous stakeholders committed to adopting the Core Humanitarian Standard and to further the implementation of the IASC AAP commitments.

2017

The Participation Revolution Grand Bargain workstream recommendations to promote effective participation of crisis-affected people in humanitarian decisions and incentivise participation as a way of working, are agreed.

The IASC AAP commitments are revised to align with the CHS and are fully endorsed.

2018

IASC AAP/PSEA Task Team and CDAC Network publish a summary of key AAP Tools, Guidance and Case Studies.

People in Aid and the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP) merged to become the CHS Alliance.

2015

As part of post-Typhoon Haiyan and disaster preparedness initiatives in 2014, the Community of Practice (CoP) on Community Engagement is created in the Philippines.

OECD/DAC report "Imagining More Effective Humanitarian Aid: A Donor Perspective" highlights the importance of humanitarian aid being demand-driven, noting that programmes should enable affected or at-risk people to make their own choices about how to deal with shocks, as well as the need for additional accountability, including to crisis-affected communities by promoting accountability and feedback loops.

Publication of "Closing the Loop" case studies and practical guidance on effective feedback mechanisms in humanitarian contexts by ALNAP and CDA.

The Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) is launched, replacing HAP and the People in Aid standards, and the standards are integrated into the Sphere handbook.

The IASC Task Force on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) is combined with the IASC AAP Task Force, forming the IASC AAP/PSEA Task Team.

2014

Time to Listen: Hearing People on the Receiving End of International Aid is launched by CDA's Listening Project, summarising the findings from conversations with nearly 6,000 people in aid recipient countries who felt their voices were not heard in most aid decision-making processes.

Ground Truth Solutions is founded to independently gather feedback from crisis-affected people to share with humanitarian agencies and the sector at large.

IASC Task Force on Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) is established to support the implementation of the AAP commitments across the humanitarian sector.

2012 (continued)

2.2. WHAT HAS HAPPENED IN THE RECENT PAST?

In the last 10–15 years, progress has been made in improving affected people's access to information about crises and humanitarian organisations, two-way communication between humanitarian organisations and affected people, and community engagement by humanitarian organisations. In some organisations and humanitarian responses, feedback mechanisms and complaints and response systems have been established to enable accountability, more relevant and effective responses, and to influence programming decisions.

As noted in the timeline [see Box 2.1 above], many initiatives and networks such as ALNAP, Sphere, People in Aid, HAP,¹¹ CDAC, the CHS Alliance, and the IASC Task Force on Accountability to Affected Populations have been created to push the humanitarian sector towards its goal of greater participation. The Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS) was developed with a wide array of humanitarian organisations and the commitments in the Grand Bargain are meant to promote the use of the CHS as well as the implementation of the IASC Commitments to Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP), which are now aligned with the CHS.

The CHS and IASC define the participation as **“enabling crisis-affected people to play an active role in the decision-making processes that affect them. It is achieved through the establishment of clear guidelines and practices to engage them appropriately and ensure that the most marginalised and worst affected are represented and have influence.”**¹² The “Participation Revolution” workstream of the Grand Bargain agreed on this definition.

These initiatives, networks and many individual organisations, have tried to fulfil the commitment to participation of affected people by creating frameworks, standards, guidelines, training programmes, case studies, and learning documents to improve policies and practices. Projects, resources and staff have been dedicated to improving communications, community engagement and

feedback from, and accountability to, people affected by crises, particularly international and local organisations, and some UN agencies and donors. Working groups, common platforms and coordinators have been established at the country level in many recent humanitarian responses to improve communication and enable greater participation.¹³

The theme of the 2014 ALNAP annual meeting was “Engagement of Crisis-Affected People in Humanitarian Action.” Most of the discussions focused on how to improve the ways that affected people are engaged by humanitarian actors, with an acknowledgement of the different reasons as to why it is important and challenging. Participants agreed that the language around participation has evolved over time, with different concepts and approaches being used by different humanitarian actors. As noted in the report on the ALNAP meeting, “for some humanitarian agencies (particularly multi-mandate organisations) ‘participation’ is seen as an approach to ensure that people affected by crisis have the power to influence their situation and the decisions and humanitarian activities affecting them. Some humanitarian agencies see participation as a means to an end, while a few see it as an end in itself. In this interpretation, participation is essentially about power, and specifically about power over decision-making.”¹⁴

In consultations, meetings and publications, placing crisis-affected people at the centre of humanitarian action was a very common theme in the lead-up to the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit. The Agenda for Humanity and the Grand Bargain commitments both prioritised participation of crisis-affected people. The members of the Participation Revolution workstream agreed that “effective ‘participation’ of people affected by humanitarian crises puts the needs and interests of those people at the core of humanitarian decision-making, by actively engaging them through decision-making processes.” The workstream has seven commitments for donors and aid organisations to uphold, both at individual and collective levels, and emphasises the need

¹¹ People in Aid and HAP merged in 2015 to become the CHS Alliance.

¹² CHS Alliance, The Sphere Project, Groupe URD (2015) *CHS Guidance Notes and Indicators*, p. 39. <https://corehumanitarianstandard.org/resources/chs-guidance-notes-and-indicators>

IASC AAP Framework. https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/legacy_files/AAP%20Operational%20Framework%20Final%20Revision.pdf

¹³ Metcalfe-Hough, V. and Poole, L. with Bailey, S. and Belanger, J. (2018) *Grand Bargain Annual Independent Report*. London: ODI/HPG. <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resource-documents/12256.pdf>

¹⁴ Brown, B. and Donini, A. (2014) *Rhetoric or Reality? Putting Affected People at the Centre of Humanitarian Action*. London: ALNAP/ODI, p. 13. <https://www.alnap.org/system/files/content/resource/files/main/alnap-rhetoric-or-reality-study.pdf>

to incentivise changes. However, the commitments are not particularly new – providing information, seeking and responding to feedback, adapting programmes, and

using crisis-affected people's inputs for decision-making processes that are still largely owned and dominated by international humanitarian actors and their partners.

2.3. WHERE ARE WE NOW?

There are a growing number of humanitarian organisations demonstrating their commitment to engaging crisis-affected people and to using the CHS. These organisations are working towards obtaining more input and feedback from people affected by crises to inform their decision-making. The Grand Bargain Annual Independent Report 2018 noted that over 75% of reporting organisations had reported taking action in the Participation Revolution workstream.¹⁵

However, despite the plethora of commitments, initiatives, standards and collaboration in the past few years, there has been little progress on enabling direct and meaningful participation by (rather than consultation of) affected people in decision-making structures and processes. The many frameworks, processes, mechanisms, guidelines

and initiatives have not dealt with changing the power dynamics and governance structures in the humanitarian system to truly enable affected people to have a real voice and choice. Reports and case studies show that affected people are still not engaged in the decision-making processes in the continuing humanitarian responses in Bangladesh and Myanmar, South Sudan, Yemen, Somalia and many other places.¹⁶

The Maturity Assessment Framework described in Chapter One is a way to assess progress in the humanitarian sector on the commitment to encourage participation by affected people in decision-making processes. Based on a literature review and discussions with practitioners engaged in the participation revolution, what follows is an outline of the sector's progress thus far.

CHART 2.2: MATURITY ASSESSMENT – WHERE WE ARE NOW IN THE PARTICIPATION REVOLUTION

	01 WEAK	02 MODERATE	03 STRONG	04 EXCELLENT
MOVEMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › No agreement that change is necessary › No awareness of negative impact of current state of play › No or limited senior level commitments to change current situation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Partial agreement that change is necessary › Limited awareness of negative impact of current state of play › Some senior level commitments to change current situation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Most stakeholders believe change is necessary › Significant evidence of negative impact of current state of play › Significant senior level commitments to change current situation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › All stakeholders believe change is necessary › Strong evidence of negative impact of current state of play › Consensus at senior level on necessity to change current situation
DIRECTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Commitments to actions are vague › Absence of common language, definitions and ability to measure › No examples of successful change › Not clear what success looks like 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Commitments to actions are vague › Language broadly adopted, but definitions differ, measurement lacking › Anecdotal examples of successful change › Only vague what success looks like 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Commitments to actions are specific › Language and definitions are common. Some ability to measure progress › Several examples of successful change › Clarity on what success looks like 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Commitments to actions are SMART › Language, definitions and actions needed are all clear › There are many examples of successful change and broad understanding of what success looks like.
ENVIRONMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Processes & systems not conducive to change (culture, systems) › No leadership for action › No requirements to demonstrate progress or rewards for doing so 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Some processes & systems not conducive to change (culture, systems) › Limited leadership, issue seen as separate file › Marginal requirements to demonstrate progress or rewards for doing so 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Processes & systems not preventing change (culture, systems) › Senior leadership on issue, seen as part of strategy › Requirements to demonstrate progress, limited accountability for results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Processes & systems support change (culture, systems) › Action on issue part of organisational culture › Requirements to demonstrate progress and accountability for results

Source: CHS Alliance

¹⁵ Metcalfe-Hough, V. and Poole, L. with Bailey, S. and Belanger, J. (2018) *Grand Bargain Annual Independent Report*. London: ODI/HPG. <https://www.odi.org/publications/11135-grand-bargain-annual-independent-report-2018>

¹⁶ See <http://groundtruthsolutions.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/GTS-Grand-Bargain-briefing-note-June-2018.pdf> <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resource-documents/12256.pdf>

2.3.1. STRONG MOVEMENT/ BUY-IN FOR CHANGE

The calls for change and the commitments to participation of crisis-affected people in all aspects of humanitarian action have been loud and strong for many years. There are countless evaluations, case studies, and reports which highlight the demand and need for this change. Local, national, regional, and global initiatives on AAP, Communication with Communities (CwC), feedback mechanisms, and community engagement have been created to enable greater participation by affected people in humanitarian responses. Representatives from all major stakeholder groups participated in the World Humanitarian Summit and committed to making changes to the way humanitarian aid is conceived and provided. Signatories to the Grand Bargain promote the use of the CHS and IASC AAP commitments, while also making specific recommendations to address some of the systematic, structural and operational barriers and to incentivise greater participation in decision-making processes. In the latest monitoring report on the Grand Bargain, “many signatories, particularly aid organisations, felt that this workstream had the potential to be truly transformational in terms of ensuring more effective and efficient aid responses.”¹⁷

2.3.2. MODERATE COMMITMENT/ DIRECTION FOR CHANGE

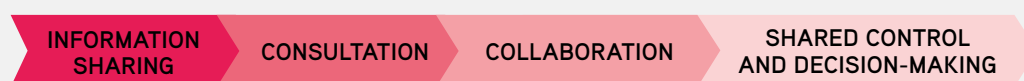
Over the years there have been many commitments related to improving participation, though most are not specific about how to enable crisis-affected people to participate in decision-making processes, beyond seeking their input and feedback on services and programmes that have largely been determined by donors and humanitarian agencies. Given that many past commitments have been

vague and that progress has been slow, the SCHR, which represents some of the largest humanitarian agencies and co-chairs the Grand Bargain Participation Revolution workstream, set a specific goal in 2016 that, “In five years time, participation of people affected by crisis in humanitarian response decisions that concern them has become a concrete reality. SCHR will make this happen by demonstrating and communicating best practice, strategies and approaches.”¹⁸

There are many definitions of, and approaches to, participation among humanitarian actors, and these differences have resulted in limited progress. The definition adopted by the Participation Revolution workstream goes further than past definitions and explicitly commits humanitarians to engaging crisis-affected people “throughout decision-making processes.”¹⁹ While participation has been incorporated as a cross-cutting theme in policies and practices,²⁰ it has not yet become a direct outcome that can be measured.

There are successful examples of improving access to information, two-way communications, community engagement and feedback mechanisms in policies and practices. While these are all means to enable participation of, and accountability to, crisis-affected people, there are few examples of such people participating in humanitarian decision-making processes and structures.²¹ Humanitarian actors have not yet agreed on ways to share and distribute decision-making power differently – and what this would look like in practice. This is a challenge even for multi-mandate organisations who explicitly aim to empower local people and organisations. However, there are now open discussions on what successful change might look like. For instance, the SCHR sets out a “participation continuum” which aspires to shared control and decision-making (see Chart 2.3 below²²).

CHART 2.3: PARTICIPATION CONTINUUM



Source: SCHR

¹⁷ Metcalfe-Hough, V. and Poole, L. with Bailey, S. and Belanger, J. (2018) *Grand Bargain Annual Independent Report*. London: ODI/HPG, p. 49. <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resource-documents/12256.pdf>.

¹⁸ SCHR (2017) *Peer Review on Participation: Report of Findings*. Geneva: SCHR, p. 1. <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/57ffc65ed482e9b6838607bc/t/5aa27bdb652dea8074fe0431/1520597982090/201712+Findings+SCHR+Peer+review+on+Participation+.pdf>

¹⁹ https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/final_participation_revolution_workstream_recommendaions.pdf.

²⁰ Derzsi-Horvath, A., Steets, J., and Ruppert, L. (2017) *Independent Grand Bargain Report*, p. 62. Berlin: Global Public Policy Institute. <http://www.gppi.net/publications/humanitarian-action/article/independent-grand-bargain-report>

²¹ See Brown, D., and Donini, A. (2018) *Real-Time Response Review of the DEC Emergency Appeal for People Fleeing Myanmar*. Geneva: HERE Geneva: https://www.dec.org.uk/sites/default/files/PDFS/dec_rohingya_crisis_appeal_response_review_report270318.pdf

²² SCHR (2017) *Peer Review on Participation: Report of Findings*. Geneva: SCHR, p. 1. <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/57ffc65ed482e9b6838607bc/t/5aa27bdb652dea8074fe0431/1520597982090/201712+Findings+SCHR+Peer+review+on+Participation+.pdf>

2.3.3. MODERATE FAVOURABLE ENVIRONMENT FOR CHANGE

Since this change is fundamentally about who has power and a voice in decision-making processes, it requires difficult and significant changes at the heart of the humanitarian aid system which is not very conducive to change. “Institutional resistance to change, operational constraints, the complex integration of localization processes, the fear of devolving power and decision-making – especially in areas affected by conflict and violence...All of these continue to prevent effective and meaningful engagement and accountability between affected people and humanitarians. This needs to change, and most of the people we spoke with want it to change.”²³

Recent aggregated verification data from the implementation of the Core Humanitarian Standard shows that many organisations are weakest in implementing the commitments on participation and complaints mechanisms.²⁴ While there are positive examples of improved practices, particularly among international NGOs, strong leadership and strategies

for addressing the power dynamics are lacking. Though it is seen as a cross-cutting issue, participation often does not have a ‘champion’ within leadership and governance structures. Consequently, it is everyone’s and no one’s responsibility.

There is an emphasis on innovation and deploying new technologies to enable participation. However, new methods are being tested by the biggest humanitarian actors in the context of a culture of risk-aversion and strong resistance to changes in the business model and ways of working. The Grand Bargain workstream recommendations acknowledge the need to incentivise changes and call for donors to require humanitarian organisations to demonstrate that they are using crisis-affected people’s input and feedback to inform their programming decisions. However, beyond making these recommendations, there seem to be few carrots or sticks in the humanitarian system that can be used to incentivise donors and humanitarian organisations to truly change their approach and decision-making processes at both individual and collective levels to enable meaningful participation of affected people.

2.4. WHAT SEEMS TO HAVE WORKED AND WHAT HAS NOT – AND WHY?

The analysis of the way change has taken place with regards to participation of crisis-affected people in humanitarian decision-making processes has, as in the other chapters, been undertaken with reference to the change models as described in chapter 1 of this report. The factors that enable or constrain change are also analysed.

2.4.1. CHANGE EFFORTS COMPARED TO CHANGE MODELS

Machine model

When analysing the ways different stakeholders are trying to make changes as explained in chapter 1, it seems that the humanitarian system has instinctively approached participation from a technical perspective and acted like a machine. Changes have most often been initiated

from the top-down, and the high-level commitments to improve participation have led to the development of frameworks, policies, standards, guidance, procedures, training programmes and tools that have been tested and rolled out by organisations from the headquarters to the field.

Political Model

Confronting interests and power dynamics, which is the crux of the issue when looking at who participates in making the decisions, is uncomfortable for many humanitarians.²⁵ In the political economy of the humanitarian system, the status quo is comfortable for the dominant actors and there is formidable resistance to change in many of the large institutions which are expected to lead the participation revolution. While the push for change is coming from the

²³ ICRC and Harvard Humanitarian Initiative (2018) *Engaging with people affected by armed conflicts and other situations of violence*. <https://www.icrc.org/en/document/engaging-people-caught-conflict-icrc-hhi-launch-joint-discussion-paper>.

²⁴ See Commitments 4 and 5 in Box 1.1 and <https://www.chsalliance.org/what-we-do/verification/chs-verification-data>.

²⁵ For a good analysis of power dynamics and who would win and lose – and how – if commitments to AAP were fully implemented see: Steets, J., Binder, A., Derzsi-Horvath, A., Kruger, S., Ruppert, L. (2016) *Drivers and Inhibitors of Change in the Humanitarian System*. Berlin: Global Public Policy Institute. https://www.gppi.net/fileadmin/user_upload/media/pub/2016/Steets__Binder__Horvath__Krueger__Ruppert__2016__Drivers_and_Inhibitors_of_Change_in_the_Humanitarian_System.pdf

ground up and many on the front line want to see more participation, those who control the purse strings seem less interested in relinquishing or even sharing power and control.²⁶ Even national and local humanitarian organisations fighting to ensure implementation of the commitments to localisation are finding it hard to get a seat at the table, much less those affected by the crises.

Just as in many of the societies in which humanitarian crises take place, the norms, structures, and cultures of the humanitarian system and the individual organisations contained within it are threatened by the idea of sharing or giving up power and influence. “Those with the greatest power to affect reforms are often not those with the strongest interest in their success...donors are consistently one of the most powerful stakeholder groups. But the proposed reforms are only partially in line with their self-interests or, in the case of accountability to affected populations, even run counter to them.”²⁷

Mind Model

Less attention has been paid to the grease that is needed to make the machine work, especially the facilitation, communication, negotiation and problem-solving skills of aid workers and donors to enable and facilitate participation by crisis-affected people in decision-making processes. There is growing acknowledgement of the need for these ‘soft skills’ and some CHS Alliance members have found the People First Impact Method useful in changing the way they engage with communities and to build on what is already working.²⁸

Ecosystem Model

Their interests may vary, but most humanitarian actors are worried about making big changes to the system and what it will mean for them and their future. To make more progress on enabling participation in the future, it will be necessary to take a more holistic and systemic approach to look at the causes and effects of funding, staffing, language, use of technology, logistics and other aspects of humanitarian programmes that are affected by the mechanistic and

political nature of the humanitarian system.

In the Philippines, when humanitarian organisations engaged people affected by typhoons in deciding where and how to rebuild their houses, they learned that they had to change their management and communication approaches. Instead of having different projects, staff and processes for shelter, WASH and livelihoods, they created area teams that could work with communities on all sectoral decisions.²⁹ Throughout the process, they were looking at participation as a cross-cutting issue and learnt by doing.

While these change models (as explained in chapter 1) can be helpful in trying to understand the assumptions underlying the attempts at change to date and the challenges which remain, there are other factors which can enable and hinder participation. What follows are some key enablers of change to build on, and dis-enablers which remain to be overcome, to fulfil the commitment to participation by affected people in humanitarian decision-making processes.

2.4.2. ENABLERS OF CHANGE

Local people, staff and organisations. Crisis-affected people and organisations are demanding change and are eager to participate in decision-making processes to improve their situation and that of their communities and countries. Many are aware of their human rights and have benefited from education and capacity strengthening efforts by international and national humanitarian and development actors. Local and national individuals, governments and organisations are the first to respond to crises and have the knowledge, cultural understanding, linguistic capabilities, and access to crisis-affected populations that international actors often lack – and they will be there long after international actors leave. As noted in the SCHR peer review on participation: “the ability to have direct communication with affected people in their local language and based on an in-depth understanding of their cultural and social norms is essential.”³⁰

²⁶ 97% of humanitarians who responded to a survey by IRC perceived client’s (crisis-affected peoples’) perspectives to be very important to informing project design. See: IRC (2017), *Designing for a Change in Perspective: Embracing Client Perspectives in Humanitarian Project Design*. London: International Rescue Committee, p. 9. <https://www.rescue.org/sites/default/files/document/2183/designingforachangeinperspectivewebcopy.pdf>

Steets, J., Binder, A., Derzsi-Horvath, A., Kruger, S., Ruppert, L. (2016) *Drivers and Inhibitors of Change in the Humanitarian System*. Berlin: Global Public Policy Institute. https://www.gppi.net/fileadmin/user_upload/media/pub/2016/Steets_Binder_Horvath_Krueger_Ruppert_2016_Drivers_and_Inhibitors_of_Change_in_the_Humanitarian_System.pdf

²⁷ Steets, J., Binder, A., Derzsi-Horvath, A., Kruger, S., Ruppert, L. (2016) *Drivers and Inhibitors of Change in the Humanitarian System*. Berlin: Global Public Policy Institute. https://www.gppi.net/fileadmin/user_upload/media/pub/2016/Steets_Binder_Horvath_Krueger_Ruppert_2016_Drivers_and_Inhibitors_of_Change_in_the_Humanitarian_System.pdf

²⁸ See www.p-fim.org and <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/P-FIM%20-%20Case%20Study.pdf>

²⁹ Presentation at 2014 ALNAP Annual meeting: <https://www.alnap.org/events/annual-meetings/29th-annual-meeting-engagement-of-crisis-affected-people-in-humanitarian>

³⁰ SCHR (2017) *Peer Review on Participation: Report of Findings*. Geneva: SCHR. <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/57ffc65ed482e9b6838607bc/t/5aa27bdb652dea8074fe0431/1520597982090/201712+Findings+SCHR+Peer+review+on+Participation+.pdf>

Examples, guidance and forums for sharing experiences and ideas. As noted above, numerous frameworks, tools, forums and other resources have been developed to improve communication and accountability, and these can be drawn on to enable affected people to directly participate in decision-making processes. Humanitarian actors have access to tools to help them better understand the local media landscapes and preferred communication methods of crisis-affected people which can be shared with, and used by, affected people themselves. There are examples and guidance on how to establish complaint and feedback mechanisms and how to use that information in decision-making processes. And there are countless resources and examples of how to enable and facilitate participation by the development sector that can be adapted by humanitarian actors.

Those affected by crises and the increasing number of **local and national actors** responding to them **have knowledge, ideas, capacity and agency** that can be valued alongside the funding and political influence of international actors as sources of power and influence in decision-making processes. However, it should be noted that the push for localisation should not be seen as a substitute for fulfilling the commitment to the participation of affected people in decision-making structures, given that many of the same power dynamics exist between national and local organisations and crisis-affected communities.

Protracted crises and multi-year funding mechanisms are forcing donors and humanitarian agencies to think and programme for the longer term, with more of a development mindset and adaptive management approach that could enable more participation. Being present for longer and not being in such a rush to respond creates opportunities for humanitarians to assess local power dynamics, to experiment and learn how to support inclusive decision-making processes. Given that most humanitarian crises today are protracted, humanitarian organisations recognise that they need to invest in establishing meaningful relationships with crisis-affected people and other local stakeholders to work for more durable solutions. People from crisis-affected situations also point out that the status quo has been upset in their communities and that this creates new opportunities to change the power dynamics and structures to enable them to have a greater say in the decisions which affect their lives.³¹

Access to information and social media by people affected by crises is creating innovative opportunities for humanitarians to not just understand their perspectives, but also to enable greater participation. The focus on two-



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way communication and the promotion of The International Aid Transparency Index (IATI) and other transparency mechanisms should provide more information to crisis-affected people and all humanitarian actors to help them both inform their decisions and to improve accountability. Crisis-affected people in many places have the means to take their demands to the publics who fund humanitarian action if humanitarian actors do not respond to their feedback and allow them to be part of the problem-solving process, though few currently do for fear of losing the assistance they need.

Linkages to other change agendas. Progress on the Grand Bargain and Agenda for Humanity commitments to inclusion, increase transparency and multi-year funding, reduce duplication, management costs, and reporting requirements, to the use of cash, to localisation and enhancing engagement between humanitarian and development actors could all help enable the participation revolution. While there are questions about sequencing, there is agreement that progress on the other workstreams should free up time and resources to enable greater participation of crisis-affected people in decision-making. For instance in the Participation Revolution workstream, one of the recommendations for donors who require project or programme-specific reporting, is to “reduce

³¹ Brown, D., Donini, A. (2014), and Cechvala, S. (2017) *Mainstreaming of Accountability to Communities: An Operational Case Study*. Nairobi: Kenya Red Cross Society. <https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2018/05/M-AtC-A4-EN-LR.pdf>

output and outcome reporting, so that agencies can put more efforts into including feedback of affected people as a measure of their performance.”³² While it can be argued that participation is a cross-cutting theme, it is important that there is a specific focus on it in reform efforts to push the needle further towards real and measurable change.

2.4.3. DIS-ENABLERS TO CHANGE

Weak incentives to change. The demand for participation in decision-making structures and processes is largely coming from people who do not have the power to incentivise it. Most operational agencies say that it is something that donors and humanitarian coordinators need to demand, fund and incentivise, as well as model, in their own decision-making processes. This is particularly true in contexts where the governments may also feel threatened by the promotion of participatory practices, and where humanitarians are more concerned about maintaining access than changing the ways they work.

Power structures. There is a need to acknowledge the paternalistic structures that underpin the systems of power and influence in the humanitarian system as part of the international order created in the last century. Those who have the most power in the system are reluctant to open ‘the club’ in which decisions are made to new members and perspectives which would fundamentally challenge the status quo. Though the number of actors has increased and diversified over the last 20 years, and the humanitarian system has undergone several rounds of reform, the power dynamics and inequalities between aid providers and affected people persist. While there are many practitioners and organisations working to increase participation, and progress has been made, there is no agreement among humanitarian actors about how far they are willing to go in terms of sharing or relinquishing the power they hold to enable greater participation of crisis-affected people in decision-making structures and processes.³³

Business model and market forces. Affected people perceive that responders to crises compete for funding from donors, who do not put a high value on the level or quality of their participation. While there is high demand

for more participation by the consumers (affected people) of humanitarian aid, the funders (donors) and suppliers (UN agencies, international and national NGOs, and contractors) continue to struggle to use just the limited input and feedback that they are gathering in their current decision-making processes. In many cases, the pressure to deliver on time and on budget trumps the commitment to listen to what people are already doing and what they need and want, much less to involve them in the decision-making process.³⁴ Many donors also question the return on investment in terms of humanitarian outcomes in the existing limited forms of participation, and they have not been willing to invest in experimentation and rigorous impact evaluations.

Silos and specialisations. Participation is seen by many as an “add-on” and a project-based activity, not a cross-cutting priority which is salient to all aspects of programming and operations.³⁵ The tendency in the humanitarian sector when a new agenda is created is to hire new people with specific technical backgrounds. However, the listening, facilitation, problem-solving and mediation skills needed to enable greater participation are not valued as highly as technical or project management expertise in staff and partner recruiting, training, retention and promotion. Most international humanitarian staff have limited understanding of local cultures and social structures, and they are not trained to facilitate political and power-based discussions and processes at the local level. Many humanitarian training programmes do not offer or emphasise community-driven development approaches and participatory methods.³⁶ There is also little emphasis on what is required by crisis-affected people to enable them to play a key role in decision-making processes (such as access, trust, translation services, an understanding of humanitarian structures, etc.).

Mindsets. There is not enough acknowledgement and awareness of the unconscious biases that affect the attitudes, behaviours and actions of different humanitarian actors.³⁷ Humanitarians (particularly internationals) do not see themselves as community organisers, facilitators, and brokers, but as doers who are there to solve problems deploying solutions that have largely been pre-determined.

³² See Recommendations that promote effective participation of people affected by crisis in humanitarian decisions and incentivize participation as a way of working for GB signatories, IASC (2017). https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/final_participation_revolution_workstream_recommendations.pdf

³³ 97% See for example, SCHR (2017) *Peer Review on Participation: Report of Findings*. Geneva: SCHR. <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/57ffc65ed482e9b6838607bc/t/5aa27bdb652dea8074fe0431/1520597982090/201712+Findings+SCHR+Peer+review+on+Participation+.pdf>.

³⁴ Anderson, M. B., Dayna B., and Isabella J. (2012) *Time to Listen: Hearing People on the Receiving End of International Aid* and Bond (2017) *Beneficiary Feedback: how we hinder and enable good practice*. London: Bond. <https://www.cdacollaborative.org/publication/time-to-listen-hearing-people-on-the-receiving-end-of-international-aid/>

³⁵ <http://groundtruthsolutions.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/GTS-Grand-Bargain-briefing-note-June-2018.pdf>, p. 8.

³⁶ Anderson, M. B., Dayna B., and Isabella J. (2012) *Time to Listen: Hearing People on the Receiving End of International Aid* and Bond (2017) *Beneficiary Feedback: how we hinder and enable good practice*. London: Bond. <https://www.cdacollaborative.org/publication/time-to-listen-hearing-people-on-the-receiving-end-of-international-aid/>

³⁷ See Disaster Ready modules on unconscious bias: <https://www.disasterready.org>

Though the Grand Bargain noted the need to change the humanitarian mindset, many aid workers feel that their intentions and efforts to save lives should not be questioned, and that this takes priority over their attempts to be participatory.

Different definitions, goals and measurements of success. There are various definitions and approaches to participation but no common vision or indicators for what effective participation in decision-making would look like.³⁸ While the CHS and AAP commitments have indicators relating to participation, more needs to be done to measure the quality, quantity and outcomes of participation by crisis-affected people in decision-making processes. Given the different approaches to participation, much more clarity is needed to develop some standard indicators that can be tailored to different contexts to enable progress on this goal to be measured. The lack of evidence has been a roadblock for some donors and organisations who need to prove that investments in participatory processes improve efficiency, as well as the effectiveness of humanitarian aid.

Short-term funding and project timeframes. In humanitarian programmes, decisions often have to be made quickly; ensuring crisis-affected people are able to participate in the process takes time. Gaining their trust and enabling them to participate in a real – not symbolic – way is challenging, particularly in places where people are not aware of their rights and may not have had opportunities to participate in local decision-making processes in the past. With short-term, project-based funding it is difficult for humanitarian agencies to make long-term investments in training, mentoring, and translation services, and to have a seamless connection from participation in emergency response efforts to recovery and development programmes and interventions.

Lack of access to crisis-affected populations. In some humanitarian contexts, international actors have limited access to the most vulnerable and often do not have long-term relationships with, or trust, in local partners to engage representatives of all those affected (different ethnicities, gender, age, socio-economic status, political affiliations, abilities, etc). Without the means to monitor either the process or exactly who is involved in

complex contexts, donors and operational agencies are less willing to invest in even basic forms of participation, much less in decision-making processes.

There is an **opaque understanding of how decisions are made** within humanitarian organisations, UN agencies and donors, as well as in coordination structures. As noted in a paper on the use of feedback, “what is clear from field-based case studies is that the decision-making process is rarely transparent to the frontline staff, let alone local communities and stakeholders.”³⁹ This lack of transparency makes it difficult for staff and partners to know how to support the participation of crisis-affected people and local organisations. Knowing how decisions are made is not just a challenge in international organisations, but also in local and national institutions and organisations that may be even less inclusive and transparent.

Leadership. Participation is often seen as a technical issue and a responsibility of monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning (MEAL) and programme staff, rather than requiring a change in how humanitarian aid is conceptualised and in the ways agencies and their staff operate. To truly change decision-making processes requires leadership and responsibility at all levels of organisations. For example, the Kenya Red Cross engaged board members and regional staff in their process of establishing feedback mechanisms, and the board played a key role “in addressing issues that were coming up through the mechanism. Having leadership support has a trickle effect in that the issue becomes a strategic and organisational priority, which means that staff are allocated time and space to work on this, and partners are financed to do this.”⁴⁰

Some donors are disappointed that after offering different funding modalities and allowing for programme adaptation, they are not seeing more creative proposals from humanitarian agencies, but **rather continued resistance to change**. Even in multi-mandate organisations with unrestricted funding, many still fall back on the model of results-based management and restricted approaches to programme management due to organisational cultures and a lack of senior leadership to working differently.

38 SCHR (2017) *Peer Review on Participation: Report of Findings*. Geneva: SCHR. P. 1. <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/57ffc65ed482e9b6838607bc/t/5aa27bdb652dea8074fe0431/1520597982090/201712+Findings+SCHR+Peer+review+on+Participation+.pdf>. Steets, J., Binder, A., Derzsi-Horvath, A., Kruger, S., Ruppert, L. (2016) *Drivers and Inhibitors of Change in the Humanitarian System*. Berlin: Global Public Policy Institute. https://www.gppi.net/fileadmin/user_upload/media/pub/2016/Steets_Binder_Horvath_Krueger_Ruppert_2016_Drivers_and_Inhibitors_of_Change_in_the_Humanitarian_System.pdf

Recommendations that promote effective participation of people affected by crisis in humanitarian decisions and incentivize participation as a way of working for GB signatories, IASC (2017).

https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/final_participation_revolution_workstream_reccomendations.pdf

39 BOND (2017) *Beneficiary Feedback: how we hinder and enable good practice*. London: BOND, P. 11: <https://www.bond.org.uk/resources/beneficiary-feedback-how-we-hinder-and-enable-good-practice>

40 See <http://www.cdacnetwork.org/i/20180523113838-80p5y/> Cechvala, S. (2017) *Mainstreaming of Accountability to Communities: An Operational Case Study*. Nairobi: Kenya Red Cross Society. <https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2018/05/M-AtC-A4-EN-LR.pdf>

Concerns about reinforcing tensions and upholding humanitarian principles. International humanitarian actors worry that “participation of local groups in decisions related to the allocation of aid could increase local tensions and conflict with humanitarian principles,”⁴¹ further destabilising not just the humanitarian ecosystem but the societies in which they operate. They have a fear of including the wrong people, individuals or groups who may not represent the interests of the most vulnerable or who may not be impartial and able to live up to humanitarian principles. Many international humanitarian actors are also concerned that engaging with governments and other local structures, particularly those that are perceived as politically biased and/or corrupt, could politicise their actions and inhibit their ability to maintain impartiality.

Competing priorities and tensions between pushing for more participation by government, local organisations and/or affected people. Within the Grand Bargain and other reforms of the aid system, there is not yet a sense of priority or sequencing among the various commitments, and there appears to be more momentum to work on localisation, rather than participation of crisis-affected people in decision-making. As with other new initiatives and priorities, the Agenda for Humanity and the Grand Bargain commitments have also created additional time and reporting commitments that could further reduce the possibility of engaging directly with affected people (see more on this in the chapter 7 on reporting requirements).

2.5. WHAT DO WE THINK WE CAN DO NOW?

After acknowledging the stage that the humanitarian sector has reached today, the assumptions that have influenced attempts at change in the past and what may enable and hinder change, what can be done differently? Applying the five ingredients for successful change as explained in chapter 1, what follows are some suggestions for accelerating and therefore truly revolutionising how humanitarians approach and ensure participation by crisis-affected people in decision-making processes.

2.5.1. MAKING CHANGE ABOUT PEOPLE

Humanitarian donors and agencies need to focus on better understanding implicit biases, emotional intelligence, and cognitive and psychological barriers to change by both humanitarians and crisis-affected people.⁴² Changing decision-making structures and processes can be disempowering to those who are used to making the decisions and it is critical to acknowledge their feelings and the challenges they face in order to address them. It can be equally intimidating and challenging for crisis-affected people who are new to long-standing processes

and structures, and who feel they have less power and influence to speak up and fully own their seat at the table – particularly if they fear losing the humanitarian assistance they need.

For the participation revolution to gain more momentum, donors and humanitarian agencies have to address the prevailing mindsets and mental models which hinder change. This necessitates training, coaching and support to management and staff in all organisations and at all levels to develop and strengthen the skills needed to facilitate direct, meaningful participation by crisis-affected people. As noted in the Grand Bargain and CHS commitments, donors and aid agencies have to invest in leadership, problem-solving, management and collaboration skills and to value them in staffing and funding decisions.

To improve the environment for change, managers need to model participatory decision-making processes with staff, volunteers and partners. This will enable leaders to see their organisations’ internal enablers and dis-enablers and to create an environment of trust and safety so that their staff and partners can then do the same with crisis-affected people.⁴³ As noted in a recent

⁴¹ Steets, J., Binder, A., Derzsi-Horvath, A., Kruger, S., Ruppert, L. (2016) *Drivers and Inhibitors of Change in the Humanitarian System*. Berlin: Global Public Policy Institute. https://www.gppi.net/fileadmin/user_upload/media/pub/2016/Steets_Binder_Horvath_Krueger_Ruppert_2016_Drivers_and_Inhibitors_of_Change_in_the_Humanitarian_System.pdf

⁴² See for example Disaster Ready videos on unconscious bias and emotional intelligence. Green, D. (2016) *How Change Happens* Oxford. Oxfam. <https://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/how-change-happens-581366>

⁴³ This reflects a recommendation from staff in the KRCS case for internal feedback mechanisms that engage more stakeholders than just communities. See for example: Cechvala, S. (2017) *Mainstreaming of Accountability to Communities: An Operational Case Study*. Nairobi: Kenya Red Cross Society. p33. <https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2018/05/M-AtC-A4-EN-LR.pdf>



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study on participatory project design: “for teams at the front line to be responsive to the needs and perspectives of their clients, they need to feel that their own views and perspectives are also taken into account in informing the decisions and actions taken by the agency they are working for.”⁴⁴

To address the pressures staff are under and to create an environment conducive to change, it is important to take time to pause and reflect as individuals, within teams, programmes, offices, organisations and consortia. Humanitarians don’t always feel comfortable acknowledging their failures or the status and impact they have in the societies in which they work – and they often don’t have much time to do so. Change is hard and there needs to be a safe environment to experiment, reflect and learn with – not just from – crisis-affected people.

To address some of the power dynamics and to incentivise change, humanitarians need to consider the levels of trust and participation within organisations, between organisations and most importantly between humanitarian organisations and crisis-affected communities. There has been some monitoring of levels of trust in a number of contexts which has demonstrated the value of third-party monitoring of perceptions of those affected by crises – and the need for more focus on building trust to enable participation. As humanitarian actors and those affected by crises get to know one another and engage in the difficult process of making

decisions together in challenging situations, the levels of mutual trust and understanding should increase and this is one important indicator that can be measured in determining how well the system is enabling the participation revolution.

2.5.2. BRINGING STAKEHOLDERS TOGETHER

Bottom-up. To address the resistance to changes instituted from the top-down, donors and humanitarian agencies could start from the ground up, at the level of each response with crisis-affected people to understand the power dynamics, contextual, organisational, systemic and psychological enablers and dis-enablers, and to find ways to overcome them together. Humanitarian donors and agencies in specific areas or regions could work together with local government bodies, community-based groups, and others to undertake this analysis and to find creative ways to enable more meaningful participation in decision-making processes. The co-creation process should include a range of frontline stakeholders – organisational leadership, staff, partners, volunteers, local leaders, women, youth, elders, etc. – to address concerns about who participates and in what ways. As previously noted, political analysis and skilled facilitation will likely be needed to manage the competing interests and tensions in what will be a continuing process as new ways of working are created, tested, evaluated and refined. This may require funding from donors for collective and participatory processes,

⁴⁴ IRC (2017), *Designing for a Change in Perspective: Embracing Client Perspectives in Humanitarian Project Design*. London: International Rescue Committee, p. 15. <https://www.rescue.org/sites/default/files/document/2183/designingforachangeinperspectivewebcopy.pdf>

as well as more investment by humanitarian agencies in training and recruitment of staff and partners with skills in listening, facilitation, power and systems analysis and community development. Organisations who have been involved in the common feedback platforms in the Philippines, Nepal and other locations could share and build on their experiences to push for direct participation of crisis-affected people in decision-making processes.

Top-down. Senior leaders at the headquarters, cluster and inter-organisational levels of donors and humanitarian agencies should be brought together to openly address the humanitarian business model and incentive structures which need to change to enable greater participation (the latter of which has been suggested by the Participation Revolution workstream). Through the Grand Bargain and other initiatives, some conversations are taking place on a conceptual level largely among those currently holding most of the power and influence in the system, and it is imperative to broaden the conversation to include national and local humanitarian actors who are also fighting for a seat at the table (see the Localisation chapter for more on this).

Middle out. To address the siloes, specialisation and mindset dis-enablers mentioned above, it could be helpful to create and encourage peer-to-peer and organisational exchanges and networking, between and among local, national and international humanitarian, development and peacebuilding organisations and staff. Learning from one another about their core principles, approaches, and ways of working could provide ideas and examples that humanitarians could apply in their work and promote more connection between these actors and the communities that they work with (this would also be a way of reinforcing the closing of the humanitarian-development nexus Grand Bargain commitment).

2.5.3. CLARIFYING THE BOUNDARIES

The Grand Bargain workstream participants, the CHS Alliance and other champions of participation **should focus like a laser on enabling direct, meaningful participation of crisis-affected people in decision-making processes.** Prioritising the participation of crisis-affected people in decision-making will likely have positive effects on improving other forms of community engagement (information provision, communications, consultations, feedback mechanisms, accountability mechanisms, etc.) included in the CHS and Grand Bargain commitments.

To address the need to prove the value of investing in participatory processes, more attention needs to be paid to **measuring the short and long-term outcomes** of ensuring not only that the voices of crisis-affected people are heard by those making decisions, but that they truly have a voice at the table where the decisions are being made.

To specifically **make decision-making processes more transparent and accessible**, donors and humanitarian agencies should map and analyse these processes to better understand who is involved, what factors are weighed when making decisions, and which decisions are made on a regular basis, ad hoc and only periodically. In any organisation and coordination structure there will be some sensitive decision-making processes which may not be conducive to direct participation by crisis-affected people (such as personnel decisions) but this analysis can identify other ways crisis-affected people can still have a voice (for instance in developing job descriptions, evaluating performance, feedback mechanisms, etc.). Doing and sharing this analysis can also help humanitarian actors be more accountable when it comes to fulfilling this commitment and providing evidence for why they are not able or willing to change their decision-making processes to include crisis-affected people.

To address concerns about representation and increasing tensions, humanitarian agencies need to analyse the power dynamics to understand and mitigate against reinforcing inequalities and those who may not use their voice and power for the common good. At global, national and local levels, it is important to understand who stands to gain and lose by making decision-making processes more transparent and inclusive, and to develop strategies to mitigate against unintended side effects and potential for increased tensions or conflict (for instance by using political economy and Do No Harm analytical frameworks).⁴⁵ This is most critical at the community and response level, but is also important in global fora to ensure that a broad range of voices and perspectives are included and that tensions are not increased among humanitarian actors.

It is important not to see participation as a silo and an issue requiring a technical fix, but as fundamental to everything humanitarians do. It is about changing how we work and needs to be considered in every step, every sector, every technical area and in every organisation engaged in humanitarian action. Changing

⁴⁵ Steets, J., Binder, A., Derzsi-Horvath, A., Kruger, S., Ruppert, L. (2016) *Drivers and Inhibitors of Change in the Humanitarian System*. Berlin: Global Public Policy Institute.
https://www.gppi.net/fileadmin/user_upload/media/pub/2016/Steets__Binder__Horvath__Krueger__Ruppert__2016__Drivers_and_Inhibitors_of_Change_in_the_Humanitarian_System.pdf

how people and organisations view those they aim to help not just as beneficiaries, but as agents of change, is fundamentally about shifting power and influence and will be a major paradigm shift with broad implications if done well.

2.5.4. PRIORITY ON ACTION - LEARNING BY DOING

To avoid the machine approach to change which has not worked well in the past, local, national and international humanitarian agencies should make changes at the levels closest to humanitarian responses. This should involve a range of people to determine how best to engage a broad representation of those affected by the crisis in decision-making processes. Humanitarians need to engage affected people in dialogue on the goals, dilemmas, fears, and challenges humanitarian organisations have about enabling more participation so that they can also be part of the problem-solving process. This may need to start at the project or programme level to enable humanitarians and affected people to experiment and learn together what works.

Since it is harder to change the status quo during humanitarian responses, donors and humanitarian agencies can start in new crises by piloting new ways of working, adapting as lessons are learned, and documenting what does and does not work.⁴⁶ Rather than reinforcing existing humanitarian structures, processes and ways of working, they can attempt new ways of involving those affected by the crisis from the very beginning in making the decisions. This may require exploring ways to work differently in advance of crises and hiring staff and selecting partners with facilitation and problem-solving skills who can work effectively with crisis-affected people from day one of an emergency.

To address the mindset and skill-set issues that have hindered progress to date, donors and humanitarian agencies can include funding for, and recruitment of, staff who are able to facilitate participation as well as to coach and mentor existing staff and partners across all technical and programmatic areas on how to be more participatory. For example, the ICRC is now including ‘client-/person-centric’ as a core competency in staff appraisals from 2018 onwards to embed participatory approaches in programme

practice.⁴⁷ Through learning by doing, the ICRC and other humanitarian organisations can help to identify where additional investments in skill development, capacity strengthening, mentoring, collaboration and facilitation are needed.

In contexts where participation may be more difficult or where there is greater resistance to change, funders need to create financial incentives to ensure that those affected by crises are meaningfully engaged in some way in decisions at every step of the process – and are satisfied with the performance and outcomes of humanitarian action. The Grand Bargain Participation Revolution workstream has started this by working to incentivise programme adaptation based on crisis-affected people’s feedback, and more than half of donors reported taking action on this in 2017.⁴⁸ For instance, “Canada and Sweden report that they provide core (and other types of flexible) funding for humanitarian organisations to enable them to decide their own priorities, including adjusting programmes in response to feedback from affected populations.”⁴⁹ Further progress on the use of this carrot should be tracked and highlighted to incentivise further changes that would enable direct, meaningful participation of crisis-affected people in decision-making processes.

2.5.5. PROMOTING WHAT WORKS

Those engaged in the Participation Revolution workstream and pushing for greater participation (including the CHS Alliance) should look for and share more experiences of positive deviants – staff, processes, programmes, and approaches that are enabling affected people to participate in any kind of decision-making processes. These may be largely in protracted crises where access is more open (such as DRC or Kenya) or in preparation for, or responses to, natural disasters in places with representative governance structures (such as the Philippines and Nepal). It is also important to look for examples of local and international humanitarian agencies participating in locally-led decision-making processes and structures, for instance in disaster responses, and host communities for IDPs or refugee camps.

Humanitarian organisations need to seek out, participate in and support existing decision-making processes and structures in which crisis-affected people are already

⁴⁶ For example, see: Cechvala, S. (2017) *Mainstreaming of Accountability to Communities: An Operational Case Study*. Nairobi: Kenya Red Cross Society. p33. <https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2018/05/M-AtC-A4-EN-LR.pdf>

⁴⁷ Metcalfe-Hough, V. and Poole, L. with Bailey, S. and Belanger, J. (2018) *Grand Bargain Annual Independent Report*. London: ODI/HPG. p. 49. <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resource-documents/12256.pdf>

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, p. 51

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, p. 51

participating, such as community-based committees, local government structures, women's groups, disaster preparedness committees, camp councils, etc. It is important to apply the same analysis as suggested above to understand how decisions are made, by whom and in what ways humanitarians can participate or at least learn from existing local structures and processes while not losing their impartiality.

To address some of the biases and measurement concerns, more support should be given to third-party monitoring, including, and especially by, crisis-affected people themselves, on the quantity and quality of participation as well as the outcomes (beyond programme efficiency and effectiveness to include sense of agency, leadership of community-based initiatives, advocacy, civic engagement, etc.). The Grand Bargain Participation Workstream recommends independent and collective analysis of the views and perspectives of crisis-affected people to complement what organisations collect themselves. The Ground Truth Solutions and OECD project to track the impact of the Grand Bargain through the perspectives of

crisis-affected people in several continuing humanitarian contexts is a positive step in this direction. Donors have promised to fund these types of collective efforts and can further incentivise them by making funding decisions based on the satisfaction of crisis-affected people with their participation in decision-making processes (as suggested in the CHS performance indicators).

As noted in the Grand Bargain recommendations, more needs to be done to incentivise the participation of crisis-affected people. Some donors are now requiring partners to report on how they have used affected people's input and feedback and are allowing them to adapt their programming based on this feedback, while others have made commitments to do so as part of the Grand Bargain. The push for multi-year, multi-mandate funding and unearmarked funds is a good start to addressing several of the dis-enablers, but donors can do more to prioritise and invest in participation in decision-making processes across sectors and within the humanitarian architecture through pooled funds, humanitarian response plans and other cross-sectoral and multi-organisational modalities.

2.6. CONCLUSION

The humanitarian system has made incremental progress on improving the ways it engages with people affected by humanitarian action, but it continues to miss the mark on allowing them to participate directly in making the decisions which affect their lives. How humanitarian organisations see their mandates and use their resources and power – only to save lives, to sustain lives or to support the quality of those lives – will affect their assumptions about what is possible and their willingness to provide assistance with affected people, not just to them.

There are few crises now where humanitarian actors get in and get out quickly, so there are fewer excuses to not enable more participation of crisis-affected people. The old ways of working are being challenged and humanitarians are being asked to look inward to understand why the system, organisations and many of the people in them have been resistant to change. Those who believe in the power of participation are being challenged to engage in real conversations with those who are resistant to change about not just the moral, economic and political arguments for it, but also the tensions between enabling participation in decision-making and upholding long-held humanitarian principles.

To truly make progress, humanitarians must deliberately focus on what meaningful and effective participation in decision-making processes will look like – for them and for crisis-affected people – and just try new ways of working.

To address the attitudinal and structural barriers to change, they need to imagine what it would be like if they were the ones affected by crises and left out of making decisions that would affect their lives and communities – and how they would likely demand change. Each and every humanitarian actor should look at a minimum of one decision-making process they are involved in and imagine what it would look like with crisis-affected people around the table – and work to make that a reality. Humanitarians have to be willing to experiment with opening up the process, to not let only local organisations at the table, but also crisis-affected people themselves. To counter the mechanistic approach to change which hasn't worked well in the past, humanitarian donors and organisations have to find ways to engage with those affected by crises in solving problems, wrestling with the dilemmas, and making trade-offs among the many outcomes humanitarians and crisis-affected people desire to make progress on this commitment.

Finally, it is important to ask: if this is a participation revolution, who are the revolutionaries? Are humanitarian donors and organisations truly listening to the voices of the people at the centre of humanitarian action who are crying out for change? Is the system going to wait until those affected by crises are marching more in front of humanitarian compounds and using their voices on social media to demand change, or are they going to live up to the commitments they have been making for years to give them a real voice and choice now?



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03

THE LOCALISATION AGENDA

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3.1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of localisation has been one of the most talked-about aspects of the humanitarian reform process of the last few years. The term is now widespread in humanitarian discourse, having been a key focus at the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS). It has its own set of commitments which were publicly set in stone and agreed to by numerous international organisations in 2016. There is now also a small but distinct sector in the form of organisations which focus on advocating for or delivering localisation, including Local2Global, Charter4Change (C4C), the Global Mentoring Initiative and the Start Network. And there is a great deal of pressure and contributory work from national organisations and networks, whose advocacy and field work is ensuring that pressure for change is coming from outside the humanitarian establishment, not just within.

This chapter will explore what has driven change in the area of localisation, and what has limited progress and why.

3.1.1. DEFINITIONS

The term ‘localisation’ does not have a standard definition within humanitarian discourse – indeed, one of the key challenges in discussing this area is that different organisations hold different interpretations of what it means, and that these are still evolving. A 2016 study found that “Localisation is used across the sector to refer to everything from the practice of increasing numbers of local staff in international organisations, to the outsourcing of aid delivery to local partners, to the development of locally specific response models.”⁵⁰ National NGOs in particular also frequently challenge the term on the grounds that it is often presented primarily as a technical matter, not an issue of power and inequality.

The starting point for most discussions of localisation – especially at an international level – is now the approach and language of the Grand Bargain. Referring to the

⁵⁰ Hedlund, K. and Wall, I (2016) *Localisation and Locally Led Crisis Response: A Literature Review*. Local2Global. http://www.local2global.info/wp-content/uploads/L2GP_SDC_Lit_Review_LocallyLed_June_2016_final.pdf

concept of aid being “as local as possible, as international as necessary,” the post-Summit commitment declares that, “We engage with local and national responders in a spirit of partnership and aim to reinforce rather than replicate local and national capacities.”⁵¹ Crucially, this statement does not explicitly address the question of power and power imbalances, nor unpack what this statement means in practice. The power issue is being more explicitly addressed in subsequent discussions, initiatives and literature, examples being the *Shifting the Power Project and More than the Money*⁵², which states the underlying and uncomfortable truth that “localisation requires a shift in power relations between actors, both in terms of strategic decision making and control of resources”⁵³.



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3.1.2. A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE LOCALISATION AGENDA

The concept of localisation is not new: on the contrary, it has been at the heart of some agencies’ approach to humanitarian action for decades, beginning with post-colonial critiques in the 1960s. The Red Cross movement in particular is built on the principle of a local response to crisis. National Red Cross and Red Crescent societies “support the public authorities in their humanitarian tasks, according to the needs of the people of their respective countries”, only asking for international support when humanitarian needs cannot be met by national groups or those of other domestic partners.⁵⁴ Faith based organisations such as the ACT Alliance and Caritas also have a long history of working with and through national level faith-based institutions and networks⁵⁵.

The centrality of local responders, notably national authorities, is also written into many of the key documents that form the foundation of the current humanitarian system, including the General Assembly resolution 146/82 of 1991. Since 1994 the Red Cross Code of Conduct (which has over 400 signatory organisations) has emphasised the importance of working collaboratively with local organisations. The Principles of Partnership, endorsed by the Global Humanitarian Platform in 2007, underlines the point that international and local organisations both gain from their complementarity when they work together⁵⁶.

Evaluations of major responses, however, have long demonstrated a serious gap between such policies and principles and the reality in practice.

The Tsunami Evaluation Coalition (TEC) evaluation of the Indian Ocean Tsunami in 2005, notably called for “a fundamental reorientation in practice... that agencies cede power to the crisis-affected people and meet this problem by promoting distributed ownership with the community and different levels of [national] government owning different levels of the response.”⁵⁷ Five years later, following a major humanitarian reform process, the evaluation of the Haiti earthquake response in

⁵¹ The Grand Bargain: a shared commitment to better serve people in need. Post WHS statement, May 2016. https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Grand_Bargain_final_22_May_FINAL-2.pdf

⁵² from Groupe URD and Trócaire

⁵³ De Geoffrey, V and Grunewald, F (2017) *More than the Money: localisation in practice*, Groupe URD and Trócaire. <https://www.trocaire.org/resources/policyandadvocacy/more-than-the-money-localisation-practice>

⁵⁴ Principles and Rules for RCRC Humanitarian Assistance, 1.8

⁵⁵ This is not to say that IFRC does not face challenges with regard to localisation, nor that it is immune from criticism offered by national actors: on the contrary, it often is.

⁵⁶ Principles of Partnership: A Statement of Commitment. *Endorsed by the Global Humanitarian Platform, 2007*. <https://www.icvanetwork.org/system/files/versions/Principles%20of%20Partnership%20English.pdf>

⁵⁷ Schelper, E., Parakrama, A. and Patel, S (2006) *Impact of the Tsunami Response on Local and National Capacities*. Tsunami Evaluation Coalition. https://www.sida.se/contentassets/a4ff43a5202d468c9d3eb2a9dc547661/impact-of-the-tsunami-response-on-local-and-national-capacities_3142.pdf

2010 found again that there was “limited collaboration between international actors and national institutions”, that “Haitians felt their own initiatives were ignored” and “local NGOs underlined that they had often felt that they were not respected by international organisations⁵⁸.” In other words: little had changed. Similar findings emerge from analysis of the response to Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines in 2012⁵⁹.

3.1.3. CURRENT REFORM EFFORTS FOCUSED ON LOCALISATION

In order to highlight some of the key factors that have influenced the evolution of the localisation agenda, the timeline shown in Box 1 below has been developed.

In recent years the body of evidence around the significance of local responders in humanitarian crises has grown considerably. Notable publications include *Time to Listen* from the CDA’s Collaborative Learning Projects (2012), the case studies published by Local2Global in particular looking at South Sudan and Myanmar (Nargis response), and the synthesis report of the consultation process for the World Humanitarian Summit, published in 2015 under the title *Restoring Humanity*. Christian Aid’s *Making The World Humanitarian Summit Worth The Climb* paper, which called for 25% of humanitarian funding to go to local organisations,⁶⁰ quickly followed in 2015 by CAFOD’s *Funding at the Sharp End* was also critical about the lack of a serious discussion about the lack of funding for NGOs.⁶¹ Landmark advocacy documents focused on localisation have included *Missed Opportunities: The Case for Strengthening National and Local Partnership-Based Humanitarian Responses*⁶² (and the subsequent *Missed Again* report looking at partnerships in the

Haiyan response⁶³), and IFRC’s World Disasters Report 2015, which looked at local actors as key to humanitarian effectiveness. More recent detailed studies seeking to determine what localisation (with a strong emphasis on the views of local organisations) is in practical terms, include the START Network’s *The Start Network, The Start Fund and Localisation: current situation and future directions*.⁶⁴ More recent papers include the British Red Cross and the Humanitarian Leadership Academy’s collection of localisation success stories, published as *Local Humanitarian Action In Practice*.

There are now also a number of specific initiatives focused explicitly on supporting international agencies to deliver localisation, including the Charter4Change, the START Network and Local2Global. Some, like the *Shifting the Power* project, go far beyond the language of the Grand Bargain and explicitly emphasise the core challenge of the transfer of leadership, power and responsibility involved in realising localisation in practice⁶⁵. At the same time, local organisations have themselves mobilised to lobby for change. Central to this effort has been collaborative work, especially the formation of networks of local groups such as ADRRN (Asian Disaster Reduction and Response Network, which brings together 34 national NGOs from 16 countries in Asia) and NEAR (Network for Empowered Aid Response, a group of national NGOs primarily from Africa and Asia explicitly formed in 2015 to campaign for a stronger voice from local organisations), increasingly producing their own initiatives and published work (for example the Gulu Communiqué agreed by over 50 local organisations in Uganda with regards to work with refugees in 2017).⁶⁶

The localisation agenda found its strongest platform and expression to date at the WHS in 2016, where INGOs, UN agencies, donors and other actors came together to agree and commit to the Grand Bargain. The

58 Grunewald, F., Binder, A. and Georges, Y. (2010) *Inter-Agency Real Time Evaluation in Haiti: Three Months after the Earthquake*. Groupe URD. https://www.urd.org/IMG/pdf/Haiti-IASC_RTE_final_report_en.pdf

59 Featherstone, A. (2014) *Missed Again: Making space for partnership in the Typhoon Haiyan response*, Action Aid, CAFOD, Christian Aid, Oxfam, Tearfund. <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/missed-again-short-report-june-2014.pdf>

60 Nightingale, K. (2014) *Making The World Humanitarian Summit Worth The Climb*. Christian Aid. <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/resources/about-us/making-world-humanitarian-summit-worth-climb-2014>

61 Poole, L. (2014) *Funding at the Sharp End: Investing in national NGO response capacity*. Caritas and CAFOD. <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/CAFOD%20national%20ngo%20financing%20study%20July%202013%20%283%29.pdf>

62 Ramalingham, B., Gray, B. and Cerruit, G. (2013) *Missed Opportunities: The Case for Strengthening National and Local Partnership-Based Humanitarian Responses*. Christian Aid, CAFOD, Oxfam, Tearfund and Action Aid. <https://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/missed-opportunities-the-case-for-strengthening-national-and-local-partnership-302657>

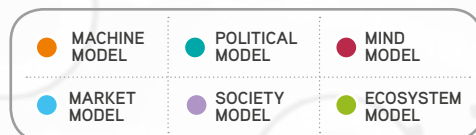
63 Featherstone, A. (2014) *Missed Again: Making space for partnership in the Typhoon Haiyan response*, Action Aid, CAFOD, Christian Aid, Oxfam, Tearfund. <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/missed-again-short-report-june-2014.pdf>

64 Patel, S. and Van Brabant, K. (2017) *The Start Fund, Start Network and Localisation: current situation and future directions*. Start Network. <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/start-fund-start-network-and-localisation-current-situation-and-future-directions-april>

65 Emmens, B. and Clayton, M. (2017) *Localisation of Aid: Are NGOs Walking the Talk? Shift the Power*. https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/WTT_FINAL.pdf

66 Uganda NGO Forum (2017) *Humanitarian Response and Local and National NGOS*. Gulu Communiqué. <http://ngoforum.or.ug/humanitarian-response-and-local-and-national-ngos-gulu-communique>

BOX 3.1: DELIVERING ON LOCALISATION - A TIMELINE



2002-2010 ▼

2002

- Founding of Asian Disaster Reduction and Response Network (ADRRN)
- A number of national organisations across Asia come together to form a network with the aim of creating a collective voice for local responders in the region.

2005

- IASC Humanitarian Response review.
- Cluster system established to enhance coordination of humanitarian response and meant that all stakeholders could be included in coordination mechanisms and NGOs could play co-lead roles.

2006

- Tsunami Evaluation Coalition Report calls for a “fundamental re-orientation...that agencies cede power”.
- OCHA established the Humanitarian Reform Support Unit and the Humanitarian Coordination Strengthening Project. Formalised effort to reach out beyond UN agencies and to encourage NGOs to become cluster co-leads.

ASEAN coordinates disaster response at a regional level.

CAFOD publishes *Funding at the Sharp End*.

Research reveals how little money is allocated to national NGOs.

Missed Opportunities Consortium established and publish first report. Evidence-based research demonstrated that humanitarian responses could be as effective or more effective working through partnerships with national/local actors.

2013

Time to Listen from the CDA's Collaborative Learning Projects (C).

2012

Publication of *Time to Listen*. First major publication looking at assistance from the perspective of local people.

2010

Global Humanitarian Platform established and the Principles of Partnership were agreed. At global leadership level actors agreed to work together and laid out principles for this.

2007

2014 ▼

Development Initiatives develops a matrix of national actors and tracks funding channelled through domestic NGOs in its 2014 Global Humanitarian Assistance Report.

Christian Aid's *Making The World Humanitarian Summit Worth The Climb* policy proposals for the WHS calls for 20% funding to national actors.

Creation of Network for Empowered Aid Response (NEAR).

2015

CAFOD, FAO and WVI publish *Future Humanitarian Financing: Looking Beyond the Crisis*.

The report becomes the ‘Sherpa document’ for the UN Secretary-General’s High-Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing, and makes a strong case for funding to be more efficiently channelled to local actors.

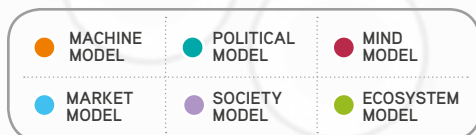
Nepal earthquake: government passes legislation requiring international responders to work with local partners. National government required local partnerships as a condition of presence, setting a precedent for L3 responses.

Charter for Change launched.

The Charter commits its INGO signatories to make eight changes in the ways they work with and relate to national and local NGO partners.

2010-2018 ▲

Source: CHS Alliance



Despite the best efforts of the authors and contributors, it remains challenging to produce a comprehensive census of all change initiatives across the humanitarian sector. This timeline should therefore not be considered as exhaustive or conclusive as they relate to the change models.

UNSG's High Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing Report *Too Important to Fail* is launched
Strong case made for more funding for local actors.
Grand Bargain proposed.

NEAR Network formed.

National actors come together to demand a seat at the table of global humanitarian policy-making.

2016

Pre-WHS policy publications from Oxfam, L2GP, ODI, IFRC (WDR) all stress the importance of focusing on the role and significance of local responders.

Created a real sense of consensus and momentum around the principle of localisation, which led to a critical tipping point regarding the idea of 25% of funding commitments.

Regional, thematic and sectoral consultations in the run up to the WHS held around the world. MENA consultation paper in particular.

IFRC's World Disasters Report 2015

Publication of *Restoring Humanity*: The synthesis report of the consultation process for the World Humanitarian Summit.

Publication of the case studies published by Local2Global in particular looking at South Sudan, Myanmar (Nargis response).

2015 (continued)

2016 (continued)

Grand Bargain launched at WHS. Workstream 2 on more funding and tools to local actors makes six strong commitments for signatories to achieve localisation including achieving 25% as directly as possible to national actors by 2020.

2017

IASC HFTT localisation marker working group finalise definitions of national actors.

START Network publishes *7 Dimensions of Localisation*. Key effort to expand localisation as a concept beyond the Grand Bargain and develop indicators.

First Grand Bargain annual report published by GPPI.

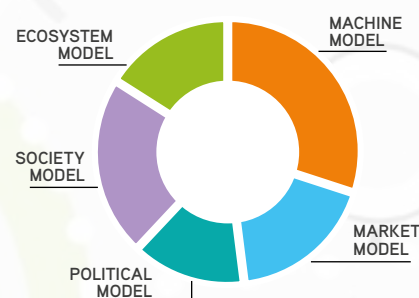
Publication of *Local Humanitarian Action in Practice, Case studies and Reflections of Local Humanitarian Actors* by HLA and Christian Aid.

Gulu Communiqué agreed by over 50 local organisations in Uganda with regard to work with refugees.

2018

COAST in Bangladesh publishes *First Responders Are Kept Far*.

CHANGE MODELS' DISTRIBUTION



Second Grand Bargain annual report published by ODI. Reports uneven progress across workstreams, and growing issues created by the lack of a clear common understanding to which signatories are working.

COAST in Bangladesh hosts high profile panel discussion on localization.

First time local organisations have publicly challenged international responders on delivery of their Grand Bargain commitments, which they feel are not being delivered.

2018 (continued)

localisation element of the Grand Bargain, considered by ICVA among others to be among the most significant⁶⁷, lays out a series of key commitments agreed to be necessary to deliver a localised approach to aid. The most tangible is commitment #4, which states that by 2020, signatories will have achieved a target of at least 25% of humanitarian funding to local and national responders, as “directly as possible”. Other commitments focus on multi-year support to develop the capacity of national responders, removing barriers that prevent partnerships between responders and local actors, and support to local coordination mechanisms. Signatories also agreed to develop and use a ‘Localisation Marker’ as a way of indicating whether commitments had been met. As ICVA reported in 2017, the workstream around the localisation marker has seen the most activity to date.⁶⁸

Yet there is much to suggest that this policy agenda is still failing to translate into much meaningful, tangible change at field level. What is emerging is a picture of numerous initiatives, varying levels of take-up within different organisations with different responses, but little in the way of coordinated, multi-agency/donor, systemic shift. In terms of measured change within organisations, the 2017 Progress Report summarising the continuing work within 23 of the 26 organisations signatories to the Charter for Change suggests that implementation of Grand Bargain commitments is still very much a work in progress. C4C principles are increasingly being written into response plans and becoming well known within organisations

(although primarily at the middle/senior management levels – much less so at country office level). Some commitments – funding to local partners – are receiving far more attention than others (such as the commitment not to undermine local staff capacity).⁶⁹ Evidence from local organisations, while in much shorter supply, suggests that for them, not enough has changed. The current response in Bangladesh, for example, is at the time of writing characterised by the all-too-familiar dynamics of angry local groups complaining of being ignored and marginalised, the vast majority of funding going to international actors, and a response that is undermining local capacities.⁷⁰ The most recent assessment of Grand Bargain progress, ODI’s Grand Bargain Independent Report, finds that progress in localisation has been mixed. While there has been progress on participation in coordination mechanisms, for example, the report finds that there is no sense of what agency-specific initiatives actually add up to. Particular problems identified include the number of discussions on localising responses that are taking place without the direct engagement of local actors, and the fact that although some agencies report that they are meeting the 25% target, their methodology is not clear. In the OECD/GTS perception surveys commissioned as part of the study, views among local organisations as to whether financial and capacity-building support was adequate, varied markedly⁷¹ (although most organisations did report they felt listened to and respected by their international counterparts).

3.2. CHANGE MATURITY ASSESSMENT FOR LOCALISATION

3.2.1. STRONG MOVEMENT/ BUY-IN FOR CHANGE

The principle that local actors should be supported, valued and treated as key partners in a humanitarian response has been an accepted consensus view across the humanitarian system for over two decades. The

discussion is rarely framed in terms of negative impact although local responders are increasingly making their dissatisfaction with the status quo, and its negative impact, known. The localisation agenda is still largely in the hands of a coalition of the willing, with a need for donors to step up to push this agenda with those organisations behind the curve.

⁶⁷ ICVA (2017) The Grand Bargain Explained: an ICVA Briefing Paper. <https://www.icvanetwork.org/resources/grand-bargain-explained-icva-briefing-paper-march-2017>

⁶⁸ Ibid

⁶⁹ Charter4Change (2017) *Charter4Change: From Commitments to Action. Progress Report 2016-17*. <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Charter4Change%20From%20commitments%20to%20action.pdf>

⁷⁰ Coast Trust (2018) *Fast Responders Are Kept Far! An Assessment on Localisation Practice in the Humanitarian Response for FDMN*. <http://coastbd.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Fast-Responders-Are-Kept-Far.pdf>

⁷¹ Metcalfe-Hough, V. and Poole, L with Bailey, S. and Belanger, J. (2018) *Grand Bargain Annual Independent Report*. London: ODI/HPG. <https://www.odi.org/publications/11135-grand-bargain-annual-independent-report-2018>

CHART 3.1: MATURITY ASSESSMENT – WHERE ARE WE TODAY WITH DELIVERING CHANGE IN LOCALISATION?

	01 WEAK	02 MODERATE	03 STRONG	04 EXCELLENT
MOVEMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › No agreement that change is necessary › No awareness of negative impact of current state of play › No or limited senior level commitments to change current situation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Partial agreement that change is necessary › Limited awareness of negative impact of current state of play › Some senior level commitments to change current situation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Most stakeholders believe change is necessary › Significant evidence of negative impact of current state of play › Significant senior level commitments to change current situation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › All stakeholders believe change is necessary › Strong evidence of negative impact of current state of play › Consensus at senior level on necessity to change current situation
DIRECTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Commitments to actions are vague › Absence of common language, definitions and ability to measure › No examples of successful change › Not clear what success looks like 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Commitments to actions are vague › Language broadly adopted, but definitions differ, measurement lacking › Anecdotal examples of successful change › Only vague what success looks like 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Commitments to actions are specific › Language and definitions are common. Some ability to measure progress › Several examples of successful change › Clarity on what success looks like 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Commitments to actions are SMART › Language, definitions and actions needed are all clear › There are many examples of successful change and broad understanding of what success looks like.
ENVIRONMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Processes & systems not conducive to change (culture, systems) › No leadership for action › No requirements to demonstrate progress or rewards for doing so 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Some processes & systems not conducive to change (culture, systems) › Limited leadership, issue seen as separate file › Marginal requirements to demonstrate progress or rewards for doing so 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Processes & systems not preventing change (culture, systems) › Senior leadership on issue, seen as part of strategy › Requirements to demonstrate progress, limited accountability for results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Processes & systems support change (culture, systems) › Action on issue part of organisational culture › Requirements to demonstrate progress and accountability for results

Source: CHS Alliance

3.2.2. MODERATE COMMITMENT/ DIRECTION FOR CHANGE

Despite the widespread consensus around localisation, there is no agreed definition with different agencies holding very different views of what it means (see illustration 3). The Grand Bargain saw organisations and donors sign up to concrete commitments on localisation, especially on increasing funding, but as the 2017 Annual Review notes, these have yet to translate into widely accepted and standardised operational guidance. Examples of successful change are usually operation or project-specific, and there is an insufficient evidence base for best practice to be defined. While specific inter-agency initiatives (e.g. the Start network) have proposed models, there is no consensus on what a baseline assessment of localisation looks like, nor any benchmarks.

3.2.3. MODERATE TO STRONG COMMITMENT/ DIRECTION FOR CHANGE

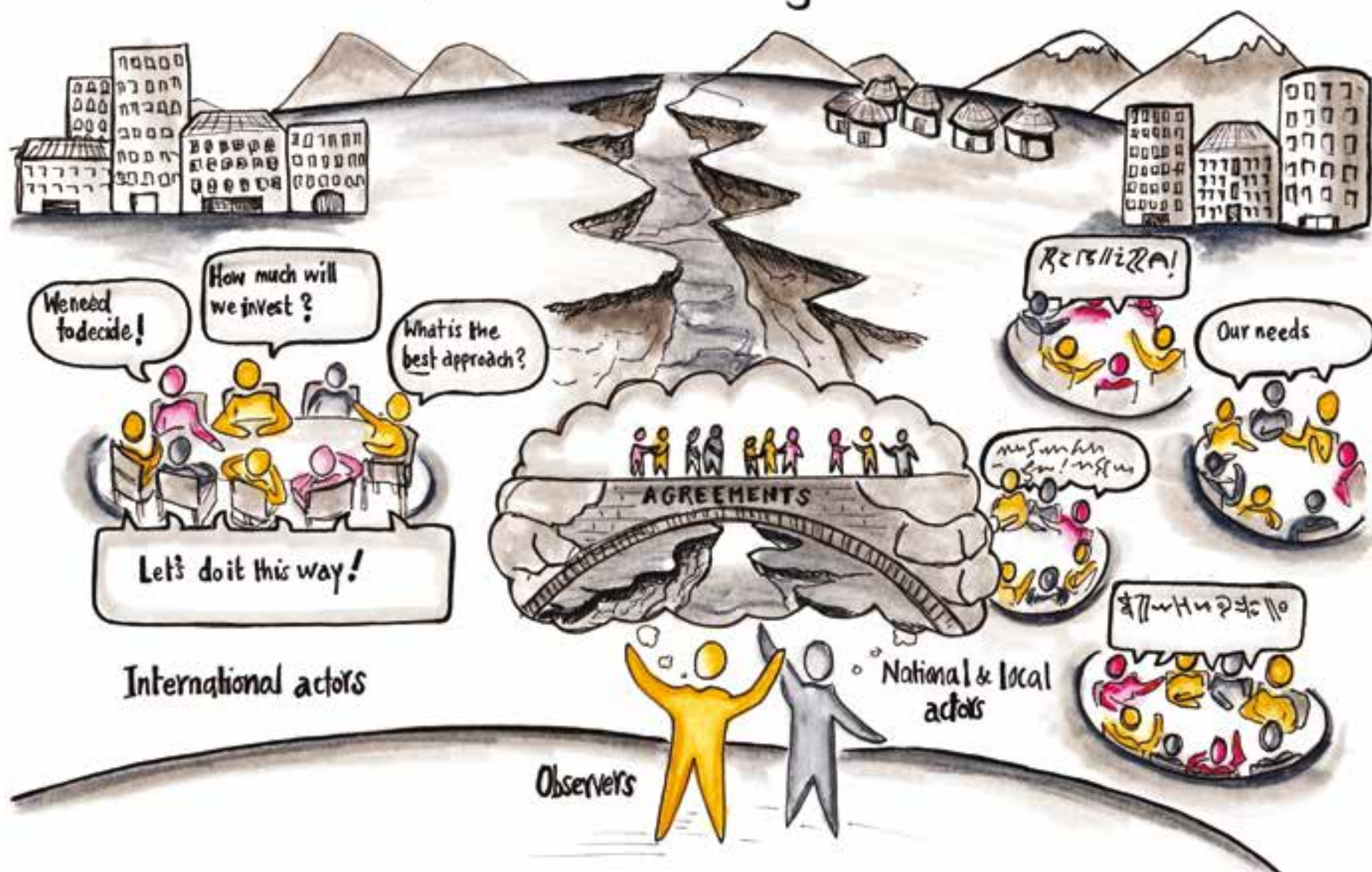
Change in this field is complex and ultimately requires organisations to consider shifting their entire organisational model and sense of themselves. Leadership has been

provided by the WHS (Grand Bargain) and those agencies that have adopted this agenda on their own initiative, and the IASC is also supporting the delivery of the Grand Bargain commitments. Donor incentives are limited (see CHS localisation index in Box 1.1): some countries (eg Sweden) now require INGOs to have local partners but there has been less action from others, including DFID and ECHO.

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Localisation agenda



3.3. WHAT HAS WORKED AND WHAT HAS NOT – AND WHY?

As discussed above, the fluidity around the concept of localisation means that quantifying change is difficult. In looking at change, it is critical to understand that there is no vision or definition of what a successfully localised response would look like, let alone how it would work.

The easiest and most obvious way to quantify change is to start with the humanitarian establishment, which has led on both the definition and challenges of localisation. This is the starting point not just of the policy conversation, but also the ways in which change is being understood and measured. This means looking primarily at the benchmarks and commitments established by the Grand Bargain, Charter4Change, and how signatory agencies are measuring their successes against those benchmarks.

In the current policy discourse and system, discussions around power and what localisation means in practice, and the benchmarks therein, have primarily – although not exclusively – focused on money. The stark fact that in 2015, less than 0.5% of current humanitarian spend went to local organisations, was central to the localisation discussions in the run up to the WHS, led by the High-Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing and to the core commitment of 25% of financing to go to local organisations by 2020.⁷²

So how is it that the humanitarian establishment can have been so institutionally committed to localisation in theory for so long, and yet – as the 2017-18 response in Bangladesh shows – still struggle to deliver even the basics in practice?

The analysis of the changes efforts and their challenges will help to answer this question.

3.3.1. CHANGE EFFORTS COMPARED TO CHANGE MODELS

Machine model

Since the Grand Bargain, the international humanitarian sector has focused on a model of change driven by the benchmarks formally agreed in Istanbul. From an organisational perspective, this is very much the machine

model of organisational change. Its effectiveness in this area is hard to assess, as the commitments are less than two years old.

Market model

It is clear that for international agencies, market share and funding are key drivers of their approach and decision-making. Perhaps not surprisingly, the case for localisation within large INGOs is often made in terms of the market advantage it is seen as offering. As the START network identifies, some organisations see localisation as offering a way to legitimise international responses in situations where direct involvement of internationals is complex.⁷³ They also argue that local actors are advantageous because they are cheaper and often more efficient, an argument that can be dangerously close to a way to justify using local organisations essentially as implementing bodies.

Such views on localisation are fundamentally at odds with the views of local organisations, who have long objected to being instrumentalised as implementing partners. The power imbalance between NNGOs and INGOs, however, has made countering this approach very difficult for NNGOs. But in recent years, however, at least two high profile emergencies have generated situations in which local organisations have significantly higher levels of both humanitarian access and operational capacity – Syria and Ukraine. With regard to driving engagement with local actors, Syria offers a particularly interesting case study in how political economy factors combine to drive change in practice (see Box 3.2).

In her 2017 study, Svoboda and colleagues found that collaboration had improved, resulting in a more coordinated approach to negotiating with armed groups, and common protocols on the application of humanitarian principles especially relating to access.⁷⁴ One piece of research found especially good working relationships between agencies working on the Turkish-Syrian border and interestingly noted that many partnerships resembled for-profit contractual agreements.⁷⁵

⁷² Els, C (2017) *Can Grand Bargain Signatories Reach The 25% Target by 2020?* Local2Global.

https://www.local2global.info/wp-content/uploads/L2GP_GrandBargainSignatories_commitment_full_Report_FINAL.pdf

⁷³ Patel, S. and Van Brabant, K (2017) *The Start Fund, The Start Network and Localisation: current situation and future directions*. Start Network. <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/start-fund-start-network-and-localisation-current-situation-and-future-directions-april>

⁷⁴ Svoboda, E., Barbelet, V. and Mosel, I. (2018) *Holding the Keys: Humanitarian access and Local Organisations*. London: ODI/HPG. <https://www.odi.org/publications/11023-holding-keys-humanitarian-access-and-local-organisations>

⁷⁵ Local2Global (2016) *Funding to Local and National Humanitarian Actors in Syria: between subcontracting and partnerships*. <https://www.local2global.info/research/the-humanitarian-economy/funding-syria>

BOX 3.2: THE ROLE OF LOCAL ORGANISATIONS IN THE HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE IN SYRIA

In Syria, a key 2015 study found that fully 70% of aid inside the country was being delivered by local organisations.⁷⁶ This situation arose partly because international organisations were being increasingly restricted in their capacity to operate inside the country. But it was also because Syrians themselves, inside and outside the country, consciously mobilised: leveraging private donations, diaspora networks and using digital technology to coordinate assistance. According to OCHA, 600-700 organisations have formed ranging from tiny informal groups to those with hundreds of staff and volunteers across numerous countries, with a budget of millions of dollars.

In a partial reversal of the normal power distributions in responses to emergencies, these groups have become desirable partners for professional humanitarian organisations, especially given the political pressure on agencies and the high profile of the Syrian crisis. As a result, international agencies have actively sought to work with local organisations. The humanitarian system has also tried to adapt: in 2013, OCHA established the Humanitarian Liaison Group in Amman specifically to bring together international organisations, Syrian diaspora groups, and local Syrian NGOs.

Political model

The 2018 independent report on the ground found that many donors continue to struggle with the practicalities of providing direct funding to small, local organisations. Instead, they have focused on supporting bodies capable of coping with large grants, notably consortia and pooled funds. Significantly, those organisations that reported to ODI that they were meeting the 25% benchmark also included pooled funds in this calculation, as well as financing that had passed through one intermediary.⁷⁷

While agencies find committing to localisation as a concept easy, they struggle much more with the reality, which involves handing over power – in multiple forms, including money, influence and decision-making capacity – to other organisations, in a sector in which they are used to having both control over resources and the dominant voice. It means taking financial and organisational risks that make many – individuals and organisations – very nervous. In

an environment in which donors place such emphasis on accountability and zero tolerance of any slip in standards, it is perhaps understandable that international agencies in particular should see such a risk in taking on responsibility for decision-making by partners. These risks often lead to hesitation, or withdrawal.

A final factor identified as key to driving change by those interviewed for this paper, is the role played by charismatic and forceful individuals. Key informants identified in particular individuals in powerful senior positions within UN and INGOs who had personally insisted, for example, that local organisations be invited to discussions, and included in country level coordination systems. Others pointed to the key role played by outspoken and articulate representatives from national NGOs such as Degan Ali from ADESO. The power of individuals choosing to leverage their position, or take public risks, was cited as key to arguments being heard and space opening up for discussion and engagement. Such impacts, however, tend to be localised and if not institutionalised are not replicated or maintained once the individual concerned has moved on.

Society model

The Charter4Change reports that of its 29 signatory organisations, most report that the Charter4Change is becoming better known in their organisations, and is being incorporated into international strategies, organisational responses and communications narratives. Others have used it as the basis of new partnership policies, and some have said that from their perspective, Charter4Change has helped strengthen work with partners. But full implementation is uneven, the data is not yet being gathered or presented in a consistent way (even with regard to financing) and is indicative only of the fact that there is no data as to the impact at field level, so assessing the success of the Grand Bargain prescriptions and Charter4Change as a catalyst for change is not yet really possible.⁷⁸ And like the PACT system established by the IASC to track and monitor action under the overall Grand Bargain, it depends on agencies self-reporting. There is no independent way of assessing progress. The most recent analysis of progress on the Grand Bargain, the Independent Annual Report produced by ODI, had similar findings.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Pantuliano, S. and Svoboda, E. (2015) *International and Local/Diaspora Actors in the Syria Response: A Diverging Set of Systems?* London: ODI. <https://www.odi.org/publications/8714-international-and-localdiaspora-actors-syria-response>

⁷⁷ Metcalfe-Hough, V. and Poole, L. with Bailey, S. and Belanger, J. (2018) *Grand Bargain Annual Independent Report*. London: ODI/HPG. <https://www.odi.org/publications/11135-grand-bargain-annual-independent-report-2018>

⁷⁸ Charter for Change (2017) *From Commitments to Action Progress report 2016-2017*. <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/charter-change-commitments-action-progress-report-2016-2017>

⁷⁹ Metcalfe-Hough, V. and Poole, L. with Bailey, S. and Belanger, J. (2018) *Grand Bargain Annual Independent Report*. London: ODI/HPG. <https://www.odi.org/publications/11135-grand-bargain-annual-independent-report-2018>

Mind model

At present, the discourse around localisation is profoundly shaped by the culture of the humanitarian establishment. This culture is clearly present in the language around localisation. The much-discussed concept of capacity-building, for example, is rooted in the assumption that the skills and expertise needed are held within international (usually Western) organisations, with the challenge being to transfer them to local actors. This is seen as a largely one-way process: the idea that locals might be equally capable of 'capacity-building' internationals, especially with regard to the key skills required to operate in their context, is almost never discussed. The Grand Bargain framing of localisation is far from universal: it is, for example, at odds with the view expressed by local organisations (for example in research carried out by the Australian Red Cross in the Pacific region) which has found that local groups actually tend to see localisation as about leadership and influence, and devolution of decision-making power.⁸⁰ Some contributors to this chapter also feel that the growing capacity of country-level actors and regional bodies, which has grown markedly in some parts of the world, is also both underestimated and neglected as an issue by international responders. This speaks again to the absence of analysis of the desirability for local actors to engage with international responders.

The question of the extent to which local organisations must change to be understood and accepted by the humanitarian establishment, discussed earlier, is also a deeply cultural one. Local NGOs whose staff and structures most resemble the culture of international groups are clearly easier to interact with for international actors. Organisations that have English as the office language, as well as individuals who speak English, have a marked advantage, as do those who are willing and able to travel to international conferences, attend meetings and have the confidence to speak. Those who have taken this approach, however, still report that it is necessary for them to be especially forceful and outspoken, and that agencies who are not comfortable with taking a very proactive approach are not heard. Organisations that do not have these characteristics, or are unwilling to adopt them in order to conform to international requirements, generally miss out currently. Often, they make this decision unilaterally and express

it by failing to engage at all. Others may have deep ideological reasons for not engaging with international actors, or feel that the risk of doing so is very great (especially in conflict environments).

Not only are many agencies apparently unable or unwilling to unpack their own assumptions institutionally, but this part of the aid sector is one that is constantly moving from crisis to crisis, addressing issues that are urgent and require immediate solutions. The culture is of a constant crisis situation in which they must act immediately, unilaterally if necessary. It is one that works profoundly against the necessity of stepping back and identifying and understanding local capacity first.

Ecosystem model

While agencies often cite technical (i.e. mechanical) reasons why localisation is difficult (financial arrangements etc.), there are insufficient analyses of attempts to address this through a mechanical approach to come to any conclusions. The available evidence suggests these mechanical limitations are often overstated in the first place.⁸¹ Equally, a 2016 review published by Local2Global found that for all the discussion of localisation, there was so little evaluated practical work that determining best practice was virtually impossible.⁸²

This may also account for the failure in some instances to learn from longstanding and successful relationships between international and local groups in the development sector.

3.3.2. ENABLING FACTORS FOR CHANGE

Adoption of international language and approach by national and local actors: Some national and local actors have also consciously appropriated the culture and approach of international actors to facilitated engagement, for example by forming networks. Since the founding of the Asian Disaster Reduction and Response Network (ADRRN) in 2002, local organisations have embraced the power of networks and collaborative working: individually they may struggle to have a voice but collectively they are finding it easier to make themselves heard. Elsewhere, local organisations have found that the language of policy and advocacy generated by the humanitarian system at HQ and global level can itself be a useful tool. In Bangladesh for example,

⁸⁰ Flint, J. and Lia, A. (2018) *Measuring Localisation: Intention to Impact – the localisation of humanitarian action in the Pacific*. Humanitarian Advisory Group. https://humanitarianadvisorygroup.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/HAG_Intention-to-impact_research-paper_FINAL-electronic_140218.pdf.

⁸¹ See case studies published by Local2Global on Myanmar, South Sudan and Afghanistan among others.

⁸² Hedlund, K. and Wall, I (2016) *Localisation and Locally Led Crisis Response: A Literature Review*. Local2Global. http://www.local2global.info/wp-content/uploads/L2GP_SDC_Lit_Review_LocallyLed_June_2016_final.pdf



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international organisations are now facing considerable resistance from local actors who feel marginalised by the international response to the Rohingya crisis. In response, local organisations have adopted the classic humanitarian approach of addressing an issue by commissioning research and evaluations and publishing the findings in a report. Bangladeshi NGO Coast's report *Fast Responders are Kept Afar*, published in March 2018, found that local organisations were not involved in strategic decision-making, INGOs were not investing in capacity-building, and that local organisations were suffering, as their staff were being poached and overhead costs not covered.⁸³

These actors are co-opting and using the language of the Grand Bargain and INGO-level institutional commitments to localisation and have organised several events to remind international responders of their commitments. On the eve of the launch of the UN's Joint Response Plan, the local actors responsible for the Cox's Bazaar displacement camp organised an event with several local organisations (including local government) entitled "Integrating the Grand Bargain Principles in the Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals (FDMN) Relief Response and facilitating Localization".⁸⁴ The event was also supported by several major INGOs including IOM, Oxfam and ICVA.

Will this strategy by local organisations to co-opt and use the language of the Grand Bargain, and the cultural approach of INGOs of driving change result in greater delivery of a meaningful localisation approach in the Bangladesh response? The initial indications suggest yes: donors are discussing support for a new NGO platform to be co-led by Coast and discussions at the March meeting seem to have been constructive. The view of experts is that the Bangladesh experience will be a key case study in future analyses of the actualisation of localisation.

Emergence of new actors/diversification of the actors: Increasingly, traditional humanitarians are often finding that they are now only one part of a response that involves many other actors, including the private sector, volunteer groups, and diaspora-based responders. The case of Syria, where the majority of assistance is provided through non-traditional actors, has already been cited. This dynamic varies considerably from emergency to emergency: it is much less evident in countries like CAR, which have far smaller/poorer diasporas and much less private sector capacity. But it is increasingly a factor and will become more so in the future.

Recent years have also been characterised by profound changes in the profile and capacity of what are often called "new" or "non-traditional" actors. Small organisa-

⁸³ Coast Trust (2018) *Fast Responders Are Kept Far! An Assessment on Localisation Practice in the Humanitarian Response for FDMN*. <http://coastbd.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Fast-Responders-Are-Kept-Far.pdf>

⁸⁴ Notes on Grand Bargain Seminar in Cox's Bazaar March 28th, 2018

tions with the right skills can now use online tools such as crowdsourcing to access private funding. This means that they are able to establish themselves and in some cases, reach levels of over \$1 million a year in funding without needing to engage with the international system. Remittances to Syria, for example, exceeded \$1.6 billion even before the conflict began.⁸⁵ Organisations in Europe formed by volunteers to respond to the refugee influx of 2015/16 used online funding and personal networks to build funding systems worth in some cases over \$1 million a year, empowering them to take on considerable humanitarian caseloads without reference to the formal humanitarian system at all.

This also applies on a macro scale. For example, many Asian governments during the economic crisis of the 1990s reduced their dependence in all ways on Western partners and this has been a key driver of development of national level disaster response capacity for the last 20 years.

Favourable technology environment: Finally, there are also some very interesting case studies and models of response emerging from the technology sector. Often these are based on models with which the current humanitarian system struggles: volunteer groups with no formal legal status, decentralised networks and the widespread use of social media for coordination purposes. Important alternative models for supporting locally-led responses include (from the tech sector) the incubation of the iHub movement across Africa. Major agencies are now beginning to engage with this approach, such as UNICEF's Innovation Lab approach to fostering local talent, but the discourse around such initiatives tends to be focused on innovation or technology rather than as an integral part of localisation.

3.3.3 HINDERING FACTORS AND CHALLENGES

Lack of agreement: Analysis of change around localisation is made much more complex by the lack of agreement on what localisation is and what it means in practice, and by the consequent lack of widely accepted benchmarks or baseline assessments (see Definitions). The lack of an agreed definition has also hampered progress in that it has disguised the deeper issues and dynamics involved. Indeed, many of the most significant

challenges in the change process have been surfaced through disagreements over definitions. For example, following the Grand Bargain commitment to a Localisation Marker, the Working Group set up to support delivery of the commitment required a lengthy process just to negotiate agreement over the terms "local/national actor" and "direct as possible funding".⁸⁶

Such differences are far from academic – they have become key stumbling blocks in the development of the localisation agenda post 2016. In discussions over the Grand Bargain's Localisation Marker, the definitions of local actor and direct funding have been passionately contested, with the local NGO consortium Network for Empowered Aid Response (NEAR) writing a public letter decrying the initial decision of the Grand Bargain co-convenors (IFRC and the Swiss government) to include affiliates of international organisations – in their view part of the problem not the solution – as locals in the definitions that will guide the financial decision-making of those implementing the pledges.⁸⁷ Some international organisations genuinely struggled to see why NNGOs should see their affiliates as existing in a different context to their own, despite them having access to global resources for fundraising, expertise and influence that few NNGOs can match.

Absence of consensus around benchmarks: To date, efforts to develop benchmarks and other ways of measuring change have been mixed. Firstly, there is no consensus: a study by the Humanitarian Advisory Group notes three global approaches to measurement and a further four at regional level.⁸⁸ At the global level, the ODI-led independent review process asks agencies to measure their efforts against specific elements of the Grand Bargain agreements (25% of funding to local actors, for example). As the 2017 assessment notes, however, this is hampered by some fundamental issues, among them the limitations of self-assessment and the fact that agencies do not share a common methodology for arriving at their conclusions (for example, calculating what constitutes funding to local actors). The Charter4Change similarly also relies on self-assessment. The START network has developed its Seven Dimensions framework which is now being accepted by other organisations and was used as the baseline for the Humanitarian Advisory Group's assessment of local leader-

⁸⁵ Local2Global (2016) *Funding to Local and National Humanitarian Actors in Syria: between subcontracting and partnerships*. <https://www.local2global.info/research/the-humanitarian-economy/funding-syria>

⁸⁶ Definitions Paper, IASC Humanitarian Funding Task Team, Localisation Marker Working group, 24th January 2018.

⁸⁷ <https://www.devex.com/news/dispute-over-grand-bargain-localization-commitments-boils-over-90603>

⁸⁸ Flint, J. and Lia, A. (2018) *Measuring Localisation: Intention to Impact – the localisation of humanitarian action in the Pacific*. Humanitarian Advisory Group. https://humanitarianadvisorygroup.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/HAG_Intention-to-impact_research-paper_FINAL-electronic_140218.pdf

ship in the Rohingya crisis.⁸⁹ However, just as the definition of localisation remains a polarising topic, so there is no consensus around benchmarks, indicators or other ways of measuring change. And it is notable that many of the benchmarks/assessment processes in place, especially at the global level, do not require the independent input of the local organisations involved.

Debate dominated by international actors rooted in the global North: Indicators and benchmarks are of course a self-limiting way of understanding both the nature of localisation and why change has been so limited to date. A meaningful discussion of change and localisation needs to look more widely at different attitudes towards localisation, and different ideas of success: in particular, local actors, many of whom feel that the current approaches are inadequate or focused on the wrong issues. It is also important to recognise that since much of the literature and analysis to date has been produced by international organisations rooted in the global North, by definition it tends to focus on their perspective: how they see challenges and experience relationships with local partners.⁹⁰ More recently some papers have worked to counter this, seeking explicitly to solicit and focus on the perspectives of local actors – notably the British Red Cross and Humanitarian Leadership Academy’s initiative in 2017 published as *Local Humanitarian Action in Practice*.⁹¹ Hence there is the focus on integrating principles of localisation and wrestling with the challenge of shifting power – for international organisations, this means abdicating or transferring power. As will be discussed, the challenge from a local perspective – far less researched or discussed – is often profoundly different. This chapter, therefore, has also been shaped by these dynamics: the paucity of analysis of what change looks like and has been achieved from a NNGO perspective compared to the tracking services around the Grand Bargain commitments.

Technical challenges in implementing the localisation agenda: Some of the technical challenges in implementing the localisation agenda, especially for donors, are of course great, such as the legal constraints on donors created by anti-terrorist legislation which make direct funding to or-

ganisations in countries like Yemen and Somalia extremely difficult. These need to be addressed.

There is also a clear tendency for the discussion around localisation to be framed as an either/or discussion: whether local or international organisations are better, a priori, rather than a more nuanced conversation about the practical advantages of being international (whether as an organisation or an individual) or local, in different contexts (differences in capacity to resist political pressure or maintain impartiality, for example). In practice, there is a role for both forms of organisation, as each can achieve things that the other cannot. But framing the localisation discussion as an either/or question inevitably leads to a sense of competition and generates understandable fear from all parties that they will be disadvantaged should they ‘lose’ the argument.

To a large extent, as a result, the policy and practice literature around localisation still reflects the preoccupation of international organisations with their own experiences, with a focus on the difficulties of partnering, monitoring and managing relationships with local organisations. This contributes to a subtle but significant sabotage of not just the narrative, but also practical attempts to introduce a localised approach at the field level.

Local organisations point out, for example, that failing to address practical matters such as the issue of funding core costs for local actors (not just project costs) is in effect setting up local organisations to fail.

Status quo/Inflexibility: Despite this shift in favour of local NGOs, however, research by Svoboda and others at ODI indicates that serious impediments to change remain – and that the experiences of local actors involving their international counterparts was not that different to those recorded in responses without the change dynamic. The inflexibility of INGOs and their inability to adapt to different ways of working with local partners – either in practical terms (holding meetings in English, for example) or cultural (many local organisations still feel they are seen as implementing partners) are also revealed.⁹² As of 2017, the amount of funding going directly to local organisations also remains minimal at 0.3%⁹³ and a 2016 study found that Syrian organisations were much less likely to receive funding for

⁸⁹ Humanitarian Advisory Group (2017) When The Rubber Hits The Road: Local leadership in the first 100 days of the Rohingya response. *Humanitarian Horizons Practice Paper Series*. Humanitarian Advisory Group. <https://humanitarianadvisorygroup.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/When-the-Rubber-Hits-the-Road-Localisation-Final-Electronic-1.pdf>

⁹⁰ Some initiatives, notably the START Network, have recognised this and worked to address it by soliciting and drawing explicitly on the views of local groups.

⁹¹ Sumaylo, K. K. (2017) *Local Humanitarian Action in Practice: Case Studies and Reflections of Local Humanitarian Actors*. The Humanitarian Leadership Academy. <https://www.humanitarianleadershipacademy.org/local-humanitarian-action-practice-case-studies-reflections-local-humanitarian-actors>

⁹² Svoboda, E., Barbelet, V. and Mosel, I. (2018) *Holding the Keys: Humanitarian access and Local Organisations*. London: ODI/HPG. <https://www.odi.org/publications/11023-holding-keys-humanitarian-access-and-local-organisations>

overheads.⁹⁴

Rick of losing identity for local agencies: For local agencies that do have the opportunity to engage with traditional humanitarian actors, a challenge quickly presents itself. In order to qualify for funding, as Svoboda notes, “local organisations are faced with a dilemma: change their structure to facilitate access to international funds,⁹⁵ but lose their flexibility and agility in the process, or stay small and nimble but continue to struggle for funds.” Many local organisations feel that in striving to meet the requirements of working with international partners, they run the risk of losing what made them effective in the first place. More than this, they also express concern about losing both their identity and their voice. These findings echo research undertaken in the Philippines after Typhoon Haiyan: that local organisations simply stopped trying to engage with international actors because it was too difficult and too compromising to do so. At present, there is little in the literature looking at how both political economies and the risk/benefit calculations that local organisations make when it comes to engaging with internationals – especially in situations of conflict – may inhibit the wider localisation agenda. Indeed, there is an assumption that all local organisations are positively disposed to working with internationals – and accessing international funding – that in many places may simply not be the case. This, obviously, is profoundly inhibiting to the change that international organisations committed to localisation wish to drive.

Lack of trust: The ways in which humanitarian organisations sabotage their own commitments to localisation are manifested in many ways in practice. Their struggle with being able to trust local organisations is one. Despite their public endorsement and praise for local organisations in principle, many INGOs still find it hard to trust their local counterparts in practice. They worry about misappropriation of funds, insufficient capacity to deliver, and

lack of control over how aid is delivered. The argument that local organisations are not as able to deliver aid in a principled manner is also another common complaint. This complaint was made especially forcefully and publicly by MSF in 2016⁹⁶ even though there is also evidence to show both that international organisations can also face challenges with regard to acting independently (especially in internationally funded conflicts) and that some local actors are more than up to the challenge of working in a principled way.⁹⁷ These arguments persist despite the literature showing clearly that local organisations can be as effective as internationals.⁹⁸ Citation of such barriers is often interpreted by local organisations as a deliberate effort to sabotage public commitments to localisation. Research by the Start Network in Bangladesh, for example, found that the perception of NNGOs was that citation of these constraints was primarily a way of retaining power.⁹⁹

The dynamic also cuts both ways: local organisations also report often finding it hard to trust international actors. For local actors, there can be many reasons for this lack of trust and willingness to engage, just as they are manifested in different ways. As reflected in Svoboda’s research, in Syria many local groups have stayed away from international responders on principle, considering especially those that were funded by parties to the conflict as compromised. In other responses, organisations have felt mistrusted by internationals: the IASC evaluation of the response to Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines found that often “NNGOS felt that they were not trusted (especially financially) by INGOs or UN agencies.”¹⁰⁰ As a result, during the Haiyan response, “generally speaking Filipino NGOs operated separately from the international NGO and the HCT system.”¹⁰¹ These factors in turn led local organisations to withdraw from engagement with international actors. Thus, the fears and concerns of local groups can also result in self-sabotage.

⁹³ Local2Global (2016) *Funding to Local and National Humanitarian Actors in Syria: between subcontracting and partnerships*. <https://www.local2global.info/research/the-humanitarian-economy/funding-syria>

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ Shenkenberg, E. (2016) The Challenges of Localised Humanitarian Aid in Armed Conflict, *Emergency Gap Series 03*. MSF. https://arhp.msf.es/sites/default/files/MSF_EGS03_The%20challenges%20of%20localised%20humanitarian%20aid%20in%20armed%20conflict_november%202016_0_0.pdf

⁹⁷ Svoboda, E., Barbelet, V. and Mosel, I. (2018) *Holding the Keys: Humanitarian access and Local Organisations*. London: ODI/HPG. <https://www.odi.org/publications/11023-holding-keys-humanitarian-access-and-local-organisations>

⁹⁸ Obrecht, A. (2014) ‘De-Internationalising’ Humanitarian Action: Rethinking the ‘Global-Local’ Relationship. Institut de Relations Internationales et Stratégique. http://www.iris-france.org/docs/kfm_docs/docs/obs_questions_humanitaires/eng-obshuma-obrecht-octobre2014.pdf

⁹⁹ Patel, S. and Van Brabant, K (2017) *The Start Fund, Start Network and Localisation: current situation and future directions*. Start Network. <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/start-fund-start-network-and-localisation-current-situation-and-future-directions-april>

¹⁰⁰ Hanley, T., Binas, R., Murray, J. and Tribunalo, B. (2014) *IASC Inter-Agency Evaluation of the Typhoon Haiyan Response*. IASC, p51. https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/evaluation_report_iahe_haiyan_december_2016.pdf

¹⁰¹ *Ibid* p51.

The failure to trust, leading to withdrawal or overly controlling attempts to manage risk, is deeply damaging. Not only does it inhibit engagement, but it also prevents organisations from conducting a less loaded discussion of their differences and thus a realistic assessment of the benefits and challenges of working together to overcome challenges. It is true, for example, that local organisations may be

more subject to political pressure or criminal manipulation than internationals – but a partnership with an international organisation could serve to help mitigate that risk.

3.4. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE DIRECTION FOR CHANGE

3.4.1. MAKING CHANGE ABOUT PEOPLE

Change is uncomfortable and being prepared to engage with that discomfort – on an individual and an institutional level – is vital. Creating the incentives for individuals to change their behaviour, especially when for international organisations change requires relinquishing control and fundamentally changing institutional relationships, is absolutely necessary for meaningful change. Change in localisation means engaging with lack of trust, and finding constructive ways to address challenges such as counter-terrorism legislation rather than treating them as reasons to side-step this agenda. It also means creating the space for agencies to be judged by others, including by their local partners.

3.4.2. BRINGING STAKEHOLDERS TOGETHER

Localisation is a complex field, in which change depends on very different types of organisations working together towards a common goal (which the independent ODI assessment of the Grand Bargain has found is largely absent from the Grand Bargain process).¹⁰² The WHS consultation process and the structure of the Grand Bargain have been designed to ensure that a wide range of voices were heard and were able to contribute to designing the commitments alongside localisation. The bringing together of a wide range of stakeholders is critical to delivering meaningful change, and this process needs to continue.

Perhaps most importantly, the humanitarian establishment needs to recognise the extent to which the current localisation agenda is shaped by the perspectives and needs of the international agencies who currently control almost all of

the money and most of the power. A truly localised agenda is not one that consults local agencies and then controls the process of synthesising and articulating the conclusions, leading to a top-down approach of compliance. If the sector fails to change sufficiently, change may well be forced upon it in a far less controlled manner. The nature of current responses suggests that this change may well come from dynamics outside the humanitarian establishment. Agencies that are willing to adapt to the new field realities, of the multiplicity of actors and the growing power of national organisations, will be better placed to survive the process of disruption than those that remain with a top-down controlling model.

3.4.3. CLARIFYING THE BOUNDARIES

The definitions of localisation, in particular, focused on what happens at field level and the extent to which local organisations feel that the quality and nature of their role has shifted, need to be as critical in determining success as formal compliance with C4C criteria. It is not enough for international organisations to consider that they have transferred power – be that financial, operational or decision-making. Those whom the agenda seeks to empower need to feel that there will be qualitative difference.

A clearer sense of what localisation is, and what it looks like in practice is also needed. There is far more to localisation in practice than just more money going to local actors. The lack of an articulated vision, especially one that does not explicitly address the shift in power required, will continue to make independent assessment of progress very difficult. It will also ensure that those who are only told that they need to do things differently, but not what that difference will look and feel like, will continue to struggle.

¹⁰² Metcalfe-Hough, V. and Poole, L. with Bailey, S. and Belanger, J. (2018) *Grand Bargain Annual Independent Report*. London: ODI/HPG. <https://www.odi.org/publications/11135-grand-bargain-annual-independent-report-2018>



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3.4.4. PRIORITY ON ACTION – LEARNING BY DOING

As expressed by some national and local actors, “goodwill is no longer enough and something new and concrete has to be done NOW” to avoid reports in the coming years acknowledging the “missed opportunity” of localisation.

All the actors are called to pilot concrete actions in the contexts where the enabling environment is the most favourable to give both the Grand Bargain and Charter4Change some chances of success. These actions should tackle the actual bottleneck of the localisation agenda (such as common definition, financial arrangements, recognition of added values of national and local actors, etc.) and build on the lessons learned from the existing initiatives such as the Shifting the Power project and More than the Money.

3.4.5. PROMOTING WHAT WORKS

The Grand Bargain specifically needs to find ways to adapt to the issues that have arisen through the implementation process that were not addressed as part of the original 2016 framework (for example, the issues

around transferring risk and risk displacement onto small organisations¹⁰³).

The evidence around successful localised work – data, case studies, even anecdotal experience – is growing, but is still far from adequate and primarily led by international organisations. It is not being identified and championed by local groups. Those case studies that do exist (the work of Local2Global) need more prominence, but innovative ways of capturing experiences of localisation should also be explored. From the available evidence, indications are that projects which explicitly address the question of power are most effective.¹⁰⁴

Agencies, especially international actors, also need to move away from the top-down compliance models of introducing localisation. Given the dominance of this model through processes driven by Charter4Change and the Grand Bargain, this needs to be a conscious choice. Identifying best practice field work within organisations – which may involve initiatives operating outside work institutionally designated as ‘localised’ – and nurturing are key. An important element will be moving beyond the current model of ‘partnerships’ and creating the space for local agencies to lead the localisation agenda.

¹⁰³ <https://www.urd.org/Aid-localisation-as-a-catalyst-for>

¹⁰⁴ Charter for Change (2017) *From Commitments to Action Progress report 2016-2017*. <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/charter-change-commitments-action-progress-report-2016-2017>

04

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ALLEVIATION OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE, AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND ABUSE





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4.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter looks at the origins and drivers of change and evolution in the field of identifying, preventing and responding to situations in which aid workers engage in sexual behaviour that is at best inappropriate and at worst explicitly criminal and abusive. This is a complex field, which originally began with a very specific focus on the sexual exploitation and abuse of recipients of aid by those providing assistance, often involving the explicit exchange of assistance for sexual favours. It has subsequently evolved to include issues around sexual behaviour with those affected by crisis (but not necessarily direct recipients of assistance) and in more recent developments has begun to consider the issue of sexual harassment and abuse within aid organisations, in which both perpetrator and survivor may be humanitarian staff.

Without question, 2018 has been a watershed year in the field of PSEA (Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse) and safeguarding. In February, a media

exposé triggered initially by reports of how the British NGO Oxfam handled a 2011 scandal in which several members of staff in Haiti, including the Country Director, were found to be paying sex workers, harassing staff and bullying whistleblowers, led to a series of revelations of incidents of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) at other organisations. Some of these, notably those concerning Save the Children UK, UN Women and UNAIDS, were focused on the harassment of employees by other employees, the treatment of whistleblowers and the unsatisfactory response of senior management to allegations of SEA.

These cases, the very public media storm that surrounded them and the serious consequences felt by the agencies in question – Oxfam has experienced a series of resignations and has had DFID funding suspended (leading to cuts of £16 million)¹⁰⁵ and the chairman of Save the Children has resigned – have triggered an unprecedented internal discussion within

¹⁰⁵ Hopkins, N (2018) 'Oxfam To Axe Jobs And Aid Programmes In 16m Cuts After Scandal'. *The Guardian*, 15 June 2018. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jun/15/oxfam-warns-staff-urgent-savings-16m-haiti-scandal>



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the aid sector on PSEA and safeguarding. This in turn has created an upheaval in the way the sector thinks about and responds to these issues, an upheaval that is still very much 'live' at the time of writing. A vast number of initiatives have been proposed and instigated, and a number of evaluations and research projects set up. In the USA, over 100 NGOs have so far signed a pledge drawn up by InterAction to create workplaces free from abuse.¹⁰⁶ No one involved in the sector doubts that this is a transformative moment for PSEA, harassment, and overall safeguarding for all organisations. However, the dust is very far from settled. It is not at all clear what will emerge from the current flurry of activity: which initiatives (if any) will bring real substantive change, and what indeed will change at all.

This chapter, therefore, will look at the question of change in the PSEA field primarily up until February 2018. With regard to changes after February 2018, it will seek to capture and synthesise the views of experts as to the significance of the numerous current initiatives and identify those that look like they might deliver the most sustainable and meaningful outcomes.

4.1.1. DEFINITIONS

The accepted definitions of Sexual Abuse and Exploitation are those provided by the Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC).

"Sexual Abuse" is actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, including inappropriate touching, by force or under unequal or coercive conditions;

"Sexual Exploitation" is any abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust for sexual purposes; this includes profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another.¹⁰⁷

Definitions formulated by other agencies tend to vary in phrasing only rather than content (for example, definitions used by UNICEF and Save the Children explicitly reference children as per their mandate).¹⁰⁸ All, however, are explicit about the significance of unequal power relations as being central to abuse.

¹⁰⁶ Costello, A (2018) 'NGO Leaders Sign Pledge To Show Commitment For Change' *Non-Profit Quarterly*, April 2018: <https://nonprofitquarterly.org/2018/04/05/ngo-leaders-sign-pledge-show-commitment-change>

¹⁰⁷ IASC (2002) *The definitions for both Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse are contained in the Report of the Inter Agency Standing Committee Task Force on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Humanitarian Crises*. NB this paper does not include a definition of sexual harassment. See also the United Nations Secretary-General's Bulletin, 'Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse' ST/SGB/2003/13, 9 October 2003: <https://undocs.org/ST/SGB/2003/13> [hereinafter Secretary-General's Bulletin on SEA (2003)].

¹⁰⁸ For example: "Sexual exploitation is the abuse of any position of vulnerability, differential power or trust for sexual purposes against a child; this includes profiting or gaining monetarily, socially, politically or for personal pleasure from any sexual interaction with a child," Save the Children, as quoted in: Martin, V. (2010) *Complaints Mechanisms and Handling of Exploitation and Abuse*. http://www.pseatackforce.org/uploads/tools/literaturereviewcomplaintsmechanismsandhandlingofexploitationandabuse_veronikamartinhapinternational_english.pdf

The terms ‘Sexual Exploitation and Abuse’ and ‘Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse’, which originated in the aid sector in 2002, refer to the abuse of recipients of assistance by providers. The Secretary-General’s Bulletin of 2003 makes it clear that these acts are unacceptable and constitute acts of serious misconduct.

More recently, and notably since the start of the #AidToo movement in February 2018, humanitarian organisations have begun using the term ‘safeguarding’ in discussions around sexual harassment, abuse and exploitation involving aid agencies. This language reflects the growing recognition that in addition to abuse of crisis-affected people, sexual harassment and abuse also occur within organisations and affect staff, and that this also needs to be recognised, understood and addressed. In a recent blogpost, the UK-based Overseas

Development Institute defined safeguarding as “all actions taken by organisations to protect their personnel from harm and from harming others”. They further elaborate that “safeguarding procedures and activities relate to harassment and abuse (including sexual harassment, abuse and violence).”¹⁰⁹ It is important to note that there is no universally accepted definition of ‘safeguarding’ and use of the word is currently both fluid and contested.

This paper will use ‘PSEA’ when referring to work regarding the abuse of crisis-affected populations and otherwise will use ‘safeguarding’ with reference to the ODI definition, i.e. referencing abuse of both crisis-affected people and staff. It notes that the relationship between PSEA and safeguarding is currently the subject of much discussion.

4.2. WHAT HAS HAPPENED IN THE RECENT PAST

In order to highlight some of the key factors that have influenced the evolution of PSEA in the humanitarian sector, the timeline shown in the Box 4.1 below has been developed. Key influential factors include organisational and global level commitments, publications, declarations, developments of concepts or standards, innovative action and critical events.

The origins of PSEA as a distinct area of work are widely considered to date from 2002. Specifically, research carried out in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone¹¹⁰ by UNHCR and Save the Children UK found that refugees – including children – were being systematically sexually exploited by staff from UN agencies, international and national NGOs as well as local security services and community leaders.¹¹¹ Girls aged 13-16 were the primary victims.¹¹² The abuse was primarily transactional: humanitarian workers traded food and relief items for

sexual favours, and medical care and medicines were given in return for sex. The report had a seismic impact on the sector, both internally and in the eyes of the wider public.

Significantly, these developments took place despite initial attempts to downplay the researchers’ findings. UNHCR publicly denied there was a serious problem, with then High Commissioner Ruud Lubbers saying that such issues were “very scarce”.¹¹³ Other organisations, however, recognised the seriousness of the issue and began to introduce mechanisms in response. The report thus catalysed change in the form of formal institutional recognition of the issue, and the need to respond both as agencies and as an aid community.

Globally, the report led to UN General Assembly resolution 57/465 which requested the Secretary-

¹⁰⁹ Hoppe, K. and Williamson, C (2018) *Safeguarding in humanitarian organisations: a practical look at prevention and response*. Humanitarian Practice Network. <https://odihpn.org/blog/safeguarding-humanitarian-organisations-practical-look-prevention-response>
Featherstone, A. (2014) *Missed Again: Making space for partnership in the Typhoon Haiyan response*, Action Aid, CAFOD, Christian Aid, Oxfam, Tearfund. <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/missed-again-short-report-june-2014.pdf>

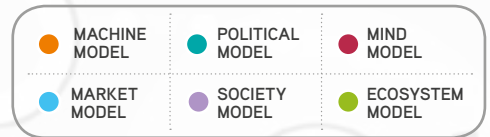
¹¹⁰ UNHCR, Save the Children (2002) *Note for Implementing and Operational Partners by UNHCR and Save the Children-UK on Sexual Violence and Exploitation: The Experience of Refugee Children in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone*. https://www.savethechildren.org.uk/content/dam/global/reports/health-and-nutrition/sexual_violence_and_exploitation_1.pdf

¹¹¹ UNHCR, Save the Children (2002) *Note for Implementing and Operational Partners by UNHCR and Save the Children-UK on Sexual Violence and Exploitation: The Experience of Refugee Children in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone*. NB this document was made publicly available for the first time in 2018 as part of the UK Government report into #AidToo. https://www.savethechildren.org.uk/content/dam/global/reports/health-and-nutrition/sexual_violence_and_exploitation_1.pdf

¹¹² A total of 67 individuals across 42 agencies charged with protecting refugees were identified as perpetrators.

¹¹³ Cited in: Naik, A. (2003) *The West Africa Sex Scandal Humanitarian Practice Network*. <https://odihpn.org/magazine/the-west-africa-sex-scandal/>

BOX 4.1: TIMELINE - DELIVERING ON PSEA



1992-2000 ▼

1992

The UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) receives complaints from Cambodians and NGOs that peacekeepers and civilians in UNTAC are exploiting local women and children and paying for sex.

2001-2010 ▼

2001

West Africa 'food for sex' scandal – note based on research by UNHCR/Save the Children. Never formally published. SEA is exposed as a key challenge both within the sector and wider public perception of aid work.

2002

The IASC Task Force on Protection from SEA in humanitarian crisis is formed.

2003

The UN Secretary-General issues a Bulletin: 'Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse'. Clearer definitions than in UN Staff Regulations and Rules, mandatory reporting of SEA, valid for all UN staff including in separately administered organs and agencies.

2004

Model complaints and investigations procedures is created.

2005

UN/NGO Task Force replaces IASC Task Force. UN declares a zero-tolerance policy.
'Building safer organisations' guidelines is published.
UN report is published prompting SG to admit UN peacekeepers and staff sexually abused or exploited war refugees in DRC, demonstrating the system is still broken and more needs to be done.
DPKO conduct and discipline units deployed.

Revelations about French soldiers in CAR is made public; creation of Code Blue – campaign to address PSEA in the UN. A high-profile dedicated campaign that uncovers serious problems in peacekeeping is created: UN specific.
Creation of Report the Abuse which brought Sexual Violence (SV) in humanitarian workplace into stronger view.
HAP and People In Aid merge to become the CHS Alliance.
Creation of Report the Abuse, which brought SV in humanitarian workplace into closer focus.

2015

IASC Task Force on AAP/PSEA is formed, and relationship between Accountability to Affected Populations and PSEA is cemented.
The Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) is launched, replacing the 2010 HAP Standard on Accountability and Quality Management, the Sphere Core Standards, and the People In Aid Code of Good Practice.

2014

IASC PSEA Minimum Operating Standards is published.

2012

Renewed website on PSEA launched.
Formation of IASC PSEA Taskforce.

2010

2010-2018 ▲

I Thought It Could Never Happen To Boys – major report looking at sexual abuse of men and boys – is published. *To Complain Or Not To Complain: Still The Question* is published by HAP, which drew attention to the centrality of reporting systems to PSEA work in practice.

2008

UN film To Serve with Pride is released.
Victim assistance strategy integrating a culture shift within UN agencies and Secretariat (esp. DPKO) and a well-needed PR exercise for the UN.

2007

2016 ▼

IASC PSEA Toolkit is published, including the Best Practice Guide and Global SOPs.
16 organisational HQs (UN and NGO) agree on protocols for SEA complaint referrals.
Publication of Tufts report on SV in humanitarian workplaces. This complemented work already being done and served as catalyst for proving that issue existed and was important.
UN Secretary-General appoints a Special Coordinator on improving the UN's response to sexual exploitation and abuse.

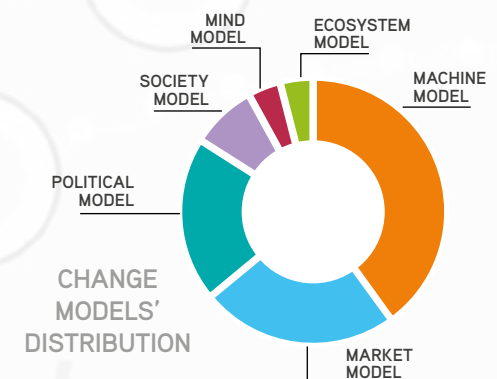
Good practices on SV in humanitarian workplaces is published; closure of Report the Abuse one day after the second anniversary of its founding.

2017

UN Secretary-General appoints an Advocate for the Rights of Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.
#MeToo campaign – putting a huge global spotlight on sexual harassment and the abuses women (and some men) deal with day-to-day.

2018

Oxfam is engulfed by PSEA scandal, with other UN agencies and NGOs coming under fire for also failing to report instances of PSEA. The updated *Sphere Handbook* is published and replaces the Sphere Core Standards with the CHS. Strengthens language on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual violence in the workplace.



Despite the best efforts of the authors and contributors, it remains challenging to produce a comprehensive census of all change initiatives across the humanitarian sector. This timeline should therefore not be considered as exhaustive or conclusive as they relate to the change models.

Source: CHS Alliance

General to take measures to prevent SEA in peacekeeping and humanitarian operations, and to hold to account any personnel who committed such acts. The Secretary-General issued a bulletin in 2003 introducing special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse. The bulletin included definitions of abuse, duties of staff in this regard including management at country level, guidance on referring to national authorities for criminal prosecution, and charged UN bodies with ensuring that partners committed to the same standards in writing.¹¹⁴ Specifically, from a humanitarian perspective, in July 2002 the IASC established a PSEA taskforce which published six core principles relating to PSEA, including that sexual exploitation and abuse were grounds for termination of contract.¹¹⁵ Meanwhile, further action was being taken by NGOs through ICVA (the International Council of Voluntary Agencies) which hosted the Building Safer Organisations project (BSO), a collaborative effort by a number of NGOs to develop capacity to receive and investigate SEA complaints. The initial approach focused on training materials and workshops. It was independently evaluated by the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children in 2006 in a study that concluded that it had been a "valuable tool for humanitarian agencies in strengthening their capacity to receive and investigate allegations of SEA."¹¹⁶ The project later transferred to HAP (2009) and continues through the CHS Alliance.

Despite such measures, however, subsequent research – usually by campaigning organisations such as Human Rights Watch – continued to expose cases in operations across the world. In February 2004 details were published of exploitation and abuse by UN peacekeeping personnel in the Democratic Republic of Congo. A subsequent 2005 investigation carried out by Refugees International found similar patterns of behaviour elsewhere, specifically in Liberia and Haiti.¹¹⁷ As a result, the UN Secretary-General commissioned the first comprehensive report into SEA within peacekeeping. The report's research and publication process was led by

Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al Hussein, Jordan's Permanent Representative at the UN and the newly appointed UN Special Advisor on PSEA. This became known as the Zeid report and was the first comprehensive study of the PSEA problem in peacekeeping. The report noted that reports of abuse in DRC specifically followed improvements in the complaints mechanism used by MONUC (UN Organisation Mission in DRC). A subsequent high-level UN meeting on eliminating sexual abuse led to the issuing of a Statement of Commitment Eliminating Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by UN and Non-UN Personnel (2006). This broadened the international commitment to fight SEA by establishing standards of conduct that are applicable to all personnel at all times, including when off duty and on leave.¹¹⁸ It is, of course, impossible to say what was happening in missions that were not investigated.

Why did the problem persist? The aid sector found a partial answer in a second landmark study, the first and most significant effort to date to assess the global state of SEA and PSEA initiatives. Explicitly designed to review actions on PSEA by humanitarian agencies and look at progress since 2002, and commissioned by the IASC in 2009,¹¹⁹ the methodology required that 14 agencies conduct a self-review of their policies. The study, published in 2010, found that although most agencies had policies in place, field implementation was patchy, directives from HQ to the field were unclear and – most significantly according to the authors – there was insufficient leadership from senior management. In other words, institutional changes had not yet resulted in substantive change at field level. Subsequent to this study, the IASC issued Minimum Operating Standards for PSEA (2012). These provided guidance and specific indicators on how organisations can set up internal structures to fulfil their PSEA commitments.¹²⁰ The study, however, did not seek to assess the ultimate impact of this work, i.e. develop a way to demonstrate the effectiveness of PSEA work on actual levels of SEA.

Around 2008 research and writing began to emerge that

¹¹⁴ Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. *United Nations Secretary-General's Bulletin, ST/SGB/2003/13*, 9 October 2003. <https://undocs.org/ST/SGB/2003/13>

¹¹⁵ IASC (2002) *Six Core Principles Relating to Sexual Exploitation And Abuse*. <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/product-categories/protection-sexual-abuse-and-exploitation>.

¹¹⁶ Lattu, K. (2006) Breaking the Code: Building Capacity to Investigate Sexual Abuse and Exploitation by Humanitarian Workers. *Evaluating ICVA's Building Safer Organisations Project*. Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children <https://www.womensrefugeecommission.org/resources/229-miscellaneous/52-breaking-the-code-building-capacity-to-investigate-sexual-abuse-and-exploitation-by-humanitarian-workers-evaluating-icva-s-building-safer-organisations-project>.

¹¹⁷ Martin, S. (2005) *Must Boys Be Boys? Ending Sexual Abuse in UN Peacekeeping Missions Refugees International*. http://www.pseataaskforce.org/uploads/tools/mustboysbeboysendingseainunpeacekeepingmissions_refugeesinternational_english.pdf

¹¹⁸ *Statement of Commitment on Eliminating Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by UN and Non-UN Personnel*. https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/legacy_files/LATEST%20Statement%20of%20Commitment_%20Final%20Corrected%20Text%20%20updated%20with%20signatories%202011.pdf

¹¹⁹ Reddick, M. (2010) *Global Review of Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by UN, NGO, IOM and IFRC Personnel*. IASC. https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/legacy_files/PSEA%20Global%20Review%20Overview%20Publication%2015%20Sept.pdf

¹²⁰ https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/3_minimum_operating_standards_mos-psea.pdf

explicitly sought to highlight and discuss sexual abuse and exploitation of boys and men, challenging the perception that PSEA was primarily a matter affecting women and girls. The paper *I Thought It Could Never Happen To Boys*, which draws on extensive research by the author Alastair Hilton in Cambodia, was among the first to discuss how abuse of males can be even more taboo and difficult to uncover than that of females.¹²¹

In 2015, a new approach emerged. A group of former UN staff and gender experts founded Code Blue, an advocacy campaign that addresses sexual abuse specifically at the hands of UN personnel, particularly peacekeepers. This was partly in response to the perceived institutional failure of the UN to respond to the scandal of French troops and cases of SEA in CAR, as publicly exposed by whistleblower Anders Kompass.¹²² The campaign seeks to end the specific impunity issues surrounding UN personnel, but increasingly also looks at the need to reform the UN's approach to sexual harassment, abuse and exploitation across all agencies.¹²³

A parallel track in the evolution of the sector concerns accountability. A notable finding of the 2002 study was that the abuse had gone undetected partly because there were no mechanisms through which those affected could safely report what was happening. A review of the literature relating to complaints mechanisms and the handling of exploitation and abuse published by HAP in 2010 found that the role and significance of complaints mechanisms only really became part of the discussion several years after 2010, and more as a result of wider advocacy efforts around downwards accountability. The first study to look explicitly at the role reporting mechanisms for those affected could and should play in PSEA, was Save the Children's report *No One To Turn To*, published in 2008, which identified the lack of complaints systems as a key factor in the reasons survivors did not come forward, and thus that PSEA remained under-reported.¹²⁴ Another study by HAP published in the same year directly attributed SEA as "a predictable result of a failure of accountability to beneficiaries of humanitarian aid."¹²⁵

These reports were both widely distributed and discussed. Yet a study in 2010 found that with few exceptions, "community-level awareness raising and complaints mechanisms are not in place."¹²⁶ This report, a key IASC publication based on global research, argued that the role of complaints mechanisms, as the only way to begin understanding the scale of the problem, as well as a way to address cases, must be central to PSEA thinking.¹²⁷ Today, there is a marked emphasis on complaints systems and the synergy with the wider accountability to crisis-affected people in the field, now that the IASC PSEA and AAP Task Teams have merged.

One final important observation is that until recently, work around sexual exploitation and abuse by humanitarians has been perceived relating exclusively to interactions between aid workers and the direct beneficiaries of their assistance, not to abuse of staff. This gap was highlighted by the 2010 Global Review of PSEA, which led to the establishment of IASC co-champions in the workplace (views on the impact of this initiative are mixed). Meanwhile, those working proactively on exposing abuses of staff across the humanitarian world (i.e. not just the UN), and advocating for change, found that few agencies were willing to listen or engage. An effort to get staff welfare, including sexual abuse, on the agenda of the WHS failed. An NGO founded specifically in 2015 to address sexual mistreatment of staff, Report the Abuse, folded in August 2017 for lack of funding.¹²⁸ Following the media exposure of 2018, notably the cases that have come to light at Save the Children (harassment by senior staff in their London office) and UNAIDS (continuing controversy over half a dozen allegations of harassment made since 2013 against the agency's then Deputy Executive Director) abuse within aid organisations is now being widely discussed.

In addition to the high-level efforts outlined above, there has also been a great deal of activity within individual agencies. Indeed, efforts to drive change to date are primarily in the hands of individual agencies, supported and guided by bodies such as the IASC Task Team and the CHS Alliance. While most agencies have had at least some basic policies

121 Hilton, A. World Vision and Hagar, (2008) *I Thought It Could Never Happen To Boys: Sexual abuse and Exploitation of Boys in Cambodia – An Exploratory Study*. http://www.first-step-cambodia.org/fileadmin/user_upload/SPEAKING_TRUTH_edited_final_20-3-08.pdf

122 <http://www.codebluecampaign.com/spotlight-car>

123 www.codebluecampaign.com

124 Csaky, C. (2008) *No One To Turn To: The Under Reporting of Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by Aid Workers and Peace Keepers*. Save the Children UK. <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/library/no-one-turn-under-reporting-child-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse-aid-workers-and-peacekeepers>

125 Lattu, K. (2008) *To Complain Or Not To Complain: Still the Question-Consultations with Humanitarian Aid Beneficiaries on Their Perceptions of Efforts to Prevent and Respond to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse*. HAP, p. 52. http://www.pseataaskforce.org/uploads/tools/tocomplainornottocomplainstillthequestion_hapinternational_english.pdf

126 Reddick, M. (2010) *Global Review of Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by UN, NGO, IOM and IFRC Personnel*. IASC. https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/legacy_files/PSEA%20Global%20Review%20Overview%20Publication%2015%20Sept.pdf

127 Ibid.

128 Edwards, S. (2017) *Advocacy NGO Shining A Light On Abuse Of Aid Workers Set To Close*. Devex. <https://www.devex.com/news/advocacy-ngo-shining-a-light-on-sexual-assault-of-aid-workers-set-to-close-90847>

on PSEA for two decades now, agencies that have put notable efforts into developing and mainstreaming ways of identifying, reporting and responding to allegations of abuse include Oxfam and WFP. Work being developed by organisations is harder to explore as much of it is undertaken internally, with little available to outsiders. Despite the efforts to provide standardised good practice, initiatives at agency level vary considerably in both approach and the extent to which they are resourced and prioritised (they range from Codes of Conduct, reporting mechanisms, investigation mechanisms, protocols on whistleblower retaliation).¹²⁹ For an overview of key initiatives to date at agency level (within IASC member agencies at least), see the IASC's new summary of Good Practice.¹³⁰

International finance institutions including development banks are not immune to SEA. Following a public SEA scandal in 2015 set against the backdrop of a transport project in Uganda, where contractors exploited and impregnated minors, the World Bank set up an independent, external Task Force to prevent SEA. In 2017, the Task Force¹³¹ published an 80-page report¹³² with recommendations covering risk assessments, ethical codes for all partners, cooperation with local communities and the establishment of funds to cover costs for survivor assistance and training of staff. Concern has also been expressed about the extent to which other actors – donors, diplomats, private sector partners and contractors – are also held to account.¹³³

BOX 4.2: MAIN POST #AIDTOO PSEA AND SAFEGUARDING INITIATIVES WITH POTENTIAL

Agency	Project	What is the potential?
DFID	Safeguarding Summits scheduled for 18 October 2018	Two parallel meetings: one for international agencies (convened by DFID) and one for UK agencies (convened by the Charities Commission) will be hosted to tackle the complex and technically challenging problem of handling inter-agency safeguarding, particularly preventing predators from entering and remaining within the system. Expected to create foundations for multiple inter-agency actions ¹³⁴ .
Oxfam	Independent Commission	The objective is to dive deeper into the experiences of those affected by PSEA and SHA, including creating independent confidential panels of survivors who can comment on and engage with the Commission as an integral part of its work. The only initiative that is seeking survivor feedback as an integral part of its approach.
ICRC	Disclosure during recruitment ¹³⁵	A new system requires candidates to agree to and provide the contact details for five previous employers as a condition of employment. It is simple and avoids some legal HR complexity by placing the onus on the candidate to provide information.
WFP	Reform process including removing time-bound limitations on reporting and piloting women only trainings. ¹³⁶	Organisational commitment to recognising and dealing with historic cases, and institutionally strengthened protection of survivors/whistleblowers. Part of an ongoing reform process that has been in development for years.
UN Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Working Group	UN SEA tracker ¹³⁷	A UN wide system to identify and flag abusers. If successful, will help harmonise HR disclosures between agencies and thus prevent abusers from securing employment within the UN system. Currently under development. NB the IASC PSEA/AAP WG is also looking into a system that will also incorporate other IASC agencies including INGOs. In the UK, BOND are also looking at the inter-agency challenge regarding preventing the re-hiring of those who harass and abuse.

Source: CHS Alliance

¹²⁹ IASC (2018) *Summary of IASC Good Practices: Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment and Abuse of Aid Workers*. https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/session_1_-_summary_-_good_practices_on_psea_and_sha-31_may_2018-principals_meeting.pdf

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/482251502095751999/Working-together-to-prevent-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse-recommendations-for-World-Bank-investment-projects>

¹³² <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/482251502095751999/pdf/117972-WP-PUBLIC-recommendations.pdf>

¹³³ Ratcliffe, R (2018) 'Sexual Abuse By Aid Contractors May Be Going Under The Radar' *The Guardian*, 6 August 2018. <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2018/aug/06/sexual-abuse-by-private-aid-contractors-going-under-the-radar-experts-warn>

¹³⁴ <https://www.civilsociety.co.uk/news/charity-commission-to-hold-summit-on-safeguarding-in-uk.html>

¹³⁵ https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/session_1_-_psea-sha_-_preventing_transgressors_moving_through_the_sector-31_may_2018-principals_meeting.pdf

¹³⁶ <https://www.wfp.org/news/news-release/wfp-statement-new-actions-combat-sexual-harassment>

¹³⁷ https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/session_1_-_psea-sha_-_preventing_transgressors_moving_through_the_sector-31_may_2018-principals_meeting.pdf

4.3. CHANGE MATURITY ASSESSMENT

CHART 4.1: MATURITY ASSESSMENT -WHERE ARE WE TODAY IN THE PROCESS AIMING TO PUT AN END TO SEA AND SHA?

	01 WEAK	02 MODERATE	03 STRONG	04 EXCELLENT
MOVEMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › No agreement that change is necessary › No awareness of negative impact of current state of play › No or limited senior level commitments to change current situation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Partial agreement that change is necessary › Limited awareness of negative impact of current state of play › Some senior level commitments to change current situation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Most stakeholders believe change is necessary › Significant evidence of negative impact of current state of play › Significant senior level commitments to change current situation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › All stakeholders believe change is necessary › Strong evidence of negative impact of current state of play › Consensus at senior level on necessity to change current situation
DIRECTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Commitments to actions are vague › Absence of common language, definitions and ability to measure › No examples of successful change / No consensus on best practice › Not clear what success looks like 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Commitments to actions are vague › Language broadly adopted, but definitions differ, measurement lacking › Anecdotal examples of successful change › Only vague what success looks like 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Commitments to actions are specific › Language and definitions are clear. Some ability to measure progress › Several examples of successful change › Clarity on what success looks like 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Commitments to actions are SMART › Language, definitions and actions needed are all clear › There are many examples of successful change and broad understanding of what success looks like.
ENVIRONMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Processes & systems not conducive to change (culture, systems) › No leadership for action › No requirements to demonstrate progress or rewards for doing so 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Some processes & systems not conducive to change (culture, systems) › Limited leadership, issue seen as separate file › Marginal requirements to demonstrate progress or rewards for doing so 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Processes & systems not preventing change (culture, systems) › Senior leadership on issue, seen as part of strategy › Requirements to demonstrate progress, limited accountability for results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Processes & systems support change (culture, systems) › Action on issue part of organisational culture › Requirements to demonstrate progress and accountability for results

Source: CHS Alliance

4.3.1. STRONG MOVEMENT/ BUY-IN FOR CHANGE

Since 2002 there has been consensus across the humanitarian sector that SEA is completely unacceptable and must not be tolerated. Most organisations have codes of conduct which make this clear, and the commitment to PSEA in principle is shared across the sector. Definitions still vary. But the available evidence suggests that these codes of conduct and other measures have not led to the wide-spread behavioural and cultural change required, nor – in the case of most agencies – have they led to sufficiently powerful structures and systems for identifying, investigating and responding to cases

or the required level of internal leadership from senior management. Since the scandals of 2018, significant commitments and investments have been made, with many agencies prioritising safeguarding as never before. But whether this will be sustained, or lead to new approaches and substantive change, remains to be seen.

4.3.2. MODERATE COMMITMENT/ DIRECTION FOR CHANGE

There is clear consensus around the definition of SEA. SEA (and thus PSEA) has primarily been understood as relating to sexual exploitation and abuse involving crisis-affected people. Only recently have agencies been forced to consider

publicly and collectively the idea that their own staff may also be subject to abusive behaviour by other members of staff. The shift from language around SEA to that of 'safeguarding' is a reflection of the increasing recognition (notably post #AidToo) that the behaviour involved in SEA is not limited purely to affected communities and is a much wider issue involving abuse of power within organisations, as well as externally. This has led to the current discussion about direction, approach and vision and the nature of the change needed.

As several reports have identified, however, there is no clear 'problem statement' or consensus on approach: is the objective to stamp out behaviour, to prevent cases or to ensure they are identified and responded to when they occur? The track record of most agencies on identifying and punishing perpetrators is patchy at best. As research in 2017 identified, identifying best practice in the form of independently proven approaches to SEA is very challenging: the sector tends to focus instead on a consensus approach to agreement of what constitutes best practice, which in turn is primarily focused on issues of organisational structure and compliance. There is also now growing debate about whether the current compliance-orientated approach with its focus on operational modes of conduct and training is sufficient or the best way forward. There is also no consensus on assessment criteria or impact indicators. Several of the post-February 2018 initiatives involve independent and holistic evaluations of current approaches (see for example Oxfam's commission

which will draw on a wide range of expertise and has been given scope to rethink, if necessary, the fundamentals of the current approach).

4.3.3. MODERATE ENVIRONMENT FOR CHANGE

This is hard to assess at present. PSEA experts have long complained of the lack of prioritisation and institutional commitment. This has now changed dramatically. The high-profile crises discussed extensively in the media in February 2018 have sent shockwaves across the sector, leaving senior management teams scrambling to review PSEA/safeguarding approaches, figures and cases. Safeguarding is currently high on the agenda of donors as a result, including private donors (notably to NGOs). The high prioritisation of safeguarding (including PSEA) is now seen as critical, yet many agencies are still determining what an effective safeguarding system should look like. A coherent response has yet to emerge from the many discussions, either within agencies or on an inter-agency basis (increasingly required by donors, notably DFID). Many agencies are in a period of reflection, introspection and research, and are considering and developing new approaches. On a positive note the complexity and deep-rootedness of the behaviours and power dynamics that create SEA are now being openly acknowledged and discussed, and appropriately resourced, with a concurrent discussion on the best approach and strategy with regard to safeguarding.



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4.4. WHAT HAS WORKED, WHAT HAS NOT – AND WHY?

Assessment of change per se in the PSEA/safeguarding sector is extremely difficult. Key issues include identifying a benchmark (numbers of reported cases? Existence of organisational tools such as codes of conduct, complaints mechanisms etc? Financial investment in PSEA by donors? Attitudinal change among staff?), and the availability of reliable data. Numerous studies have concluded that safeguarding breaches are almost certainly chronically under reported, whether they relate to beneficiaries,¹³⁸ or to staff.¹³⁹ A 2017 Redress report refers to two studies in Haiti and Somalia where only 10% of SEA survivors had been reported.¹⁴⁰ A Human Rights Watch investigation into SEA in Somalia found that of the 21 women interviewed, only two had filed reports: they feared stigma, reprisals from family and police and Al-Shabaab. They also did not believe the authorities would be willing or able to take action.¹⁴¹

This difficulty is reflected in the efforts of the humanitarian sector to assess the process of change itself, and the collective choice to focus on indicators around institutional policy-making and organisational compliance levels (codes of conduct, training, establishment of hotlines, etc.) rather than tackle the far more complex issue of trying to understand whether incidents are decreasing as a result, or not, and why. The most significant tools that have been developed include the PSEA element of the Core Humanitarian Standard: the CHS Alliance's full members are required to carry out verification against the full CHS and to report on progress (see CHS PSEA index in Box 1.1). The CHS Alliance offers help to agencies as they work to improve. The system offers four options of verification namely self-assessment, peer review, independent verification and certification.¹⁴² The benchmarks also focus very much on the compliance approach: the introduction

of policies, systems and standards.¹⁴³

The challenge of measuring change is rooted partly in the lack of consensus around the nature of the problem. As one key study in 2010 – after eight years of dedicated PSEA work within the sector – put it: “do we believe we have a problem and can we agree on what the problem is? Is it the persistent existence of sexual exploitation or is it the fact that despite all our work we continue to fail in addressing it?”¹⁴⁴ Eight years later, while few disagree that there is a problem, these challenges still remain and are again being rethought in the context of #AidToo and emerging safeguarding issues. The question of measuring impact, especially as regards evaluating success in the creation of safer workplaces with fewer incidents of SEA, remains complex and largely unanswered (a challenge far from unique to the aid sector). It is easy to measure the number of training programmes delivered and institutional commitments to codes of conduct, harder to quantify how that impacts on the experience of crisis-affected people and staff.

The analysis of the way change has taken place with regards to PSEA has, as in the other chapters, been undertaken with reference to the change models as described in chapter 1 of this report.

Machine approach

From the beginning in 2002, the approach taken to PSEA by individual agencies and the humanitarian system as a whole has been very “machine”: top-down, compliance-orientated and driven by headquarters'. This is not accidental: experts working at the time recall a sense that this was an issue that could be fixed if rules were designed, explained and distributed.

¹³⁸ Lattu, K. (2008) *To Complain Or Not To Complain: Still the Question-Consultations with Humanitarian Aid Beneficiaries on Their Perceptions of Efforts to Prevent and Respond to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse*. HAP. http://www.pseatactforce.org/uploads/tools/tocomplainornottocomplainstillthequestion_hapinternational_english.pdf

¹³⁹ Nobert, M (2017) *Humanitarian Experiences with Sexual Violence: Compilation of two years of Report the Abuse data collection*. Report the Abuse. <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/humanitarian-experiences-sexual-violence-compilation-two-years-report-abuse-data>

¹⁴⁰ <https://redress.org/news/new-report-un-response-to-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse-by-peacekeepers-must-do-much-more-to-enable-victims-to-access-reparation-support-and-assistance/>

¹⁴¹ Human Rights Watch (2014) *The Power These Men Have Over Us: Sexual exploitation and Abuse by African Union Forces in Somalia*. <https://www.hrw.org/report/2014/09/08/power-these-men-have-over-us/sexual-exploitation-and-abuse-african-union-forces>

¹⁴² The self-assessment aspect was particularly criticised by the recent report of the UK Parliament's International Development Committee into sexual exploitation and abuse in the aid sector.

¹⁴³ Davey, C. and Taylor, L. H (2017) *PSEA Implementation Quick Reference Handbook*. CHS Alliance. <https://www.chsalliance.org/what-we-do/psea/psea-handbook>

¹⁴⁴ Reddick, M. (2010) *Global Review of Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by UN, NGO, IOM and IFRC Personnel*. IASC. https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/legacy_files/PSEA%20Global%20Review%20Overview%20Publication%2015%20Sept.pdf

The 2002 Plan of Action produced by the IASC Taskforce on PSEA focused very much on a top-down, structural, compliance orientated approach, with a response model built around training, codes of conduct (including dissemination), and mechanisms for reporting, investigative and disciplinary processes. Agencies were charged with taking responsibility for “implementing necessary management changes”.¹⁴⁵ To a large extent, this is still the case: the IASC model, for example, still focuses on developing policies and standards and communicating these to staff through training.¹⁴⁶

This approach puts a great deal of focus on rolling out rules and policies, and assumes that once employees know the rules and understand they are mandatory, then the behaviour will cease. Other assumptions made at the time with regard to this approach were that agencies would be able to self-regulate and did not need input either from those affected at the bottom or from donors at the top, to generate change.

Without question there is a need for an operational, compliance-based approach that addresses the need for the right policies and mechanics to be in place within organisations as they seek to tackle SEA. Clearly, better organisational systems and structures are needed in many organisations especially in terms of human resources (HR) (Oxfam, for example, was found to have re-hired, just weeks later, one of the staff members fired in Haiti¹⁴⁷), response protocols, investigative processes and institutional support to whistleblowers and survivors of abuse. And marked gaps regarding process – notably around HR – remain in many agencies and are clearly a matter of organisational procedure.

It is certainly the view of experts consulted for this paper that the limits of the existing mechanical, compliance-based approach have become clear over the years with the persistent reoccurrence of scandals and incidents. Within the UN and specifically the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), the failures of the

PSEA approach set out in the Zeid report have been laid bare through subsequent scandals, notably the abuse of refugees by peacekeepers in CAR in 2013 and 2014. Despite the emphasis on introducing reporting systems, studies and indications show that the majority of those affected by safeguarding issues choose not to use them, instead staying quiet through fear of repercussions and a lack of faith that their perpetrators will be appropriately pursued.^{148 149} A study of ICVA members and their complaint systems for those impacted by SEA found that while all had such systems, none were functioning properly.¹⁵⁰ Is the issue that systems to prevent SEA are sometimes badly implemented or insufficient, or is the entire machine-based approach to PSEA necessary but not sufficient? In which case does the humanitarian sector need to focus on an approach to change beyond the current model which emphasises a top-down, compliance-orientated model?

Moving beyond a machine-based compliance model is a challenge (assuming, as many experts now do, that it is necessary): the centrality of codes of conduct, training, and an operational approach to PSEA were evident in the response to the #AidToo revelations of February 2018. It was striking that agencies in the firing line responded by announcing initiatives very much based on a top-down model built around enforcing compliance. Oxfam, for example, published an action plan in response which primarily emphasised the reinforcement of existing approaches and systems, with a strong emphasis on training and “reinforcing a culture of zero tolerance”.¹⁵¹ The comments of many of those who have spoken out since February 2018, especially survivors who did come forward, have been highly critical of the way their cases were treated by agencies.¹⁵² Post #AidToo, the environment may now be such that funding/support for these deeper questions around moving to a less machine-based approach can now be asked: indeed initiatives such as the Oxfam Commission are explicitly designed to do so.

¹⁴⁵ Levine, I and Bowden, M. (2002) ‘Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in humanitarian crises: the humanitarian community’s response’. *Forced Migration Review*, issue 15. <http://www.fmreview.org/displaced-children-and-adolescents/levine-bowden.html>

¹⁴⁶ IASC (2018) *Summary of IASC Good Practices: Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment and Abuse of Aid Workers*. https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/session_1_-_summary_-_good_practices_on_psea_and_ssa-31_may_2018-principals_meeting.pdf

¹⁴⁷ O’Neill, S. Waterfield, B and Haddou, L. (2018) Oxfam sex scandal: Aid Worker Sacked In Oxfam Scandal Rehired Weeks Later. *The Times*, 15 February 2018. <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/shamed-aid-chief-hurt-by-oxfam-sex-scandal-32qsw303>

¹⁴⁸ Lattu, K. (2008) *To Complain Or Not To Complain: Still the Question-Consultations with Humanitarian Aid Beneficiaries on Their Perceptions of Efforts to Prevent and Respond to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse*. HAP. http://www.pseataaskforce.org/uploads/tools/tocomplainornottocomplainstillthequestion_hapinternational_english.pdf

¹⁴⁹ Nobert, M (2017) *Humanitarian Experiences with Sexual Violence: Compilation of two years of Report the Abuse data collection*. Report the Abuse. <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/humanitarian-experiences-sexual-violence-compilation-two-years-report-abuse-data>

¹⁵⁰ ICVA paper not yet formally published.

¹⁵¹ Oxfam (2018) *How We’re Planning To Stamp Out Abuse. Action plan*. <https://www.oxfam.org.uk/february-2018-immediate-response-actions-sexual-misconduct>

¹⁵² Moore, J (2018) UN Cases Read Like ‘Manual In How Not To Investigate Sexual Assault’. *New York Times*, 29 June 2018. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/29/world/united-nations-sexual-assault.html>



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Market model

The high public profile of the initial, somewhat sanitised¹⁵³ 2002 report, which was widely published and discussed in the media, undoubtedly contributed to the impetus within agencies to tackle the problem. While there was a great deal of genuine shock and disgust at what had occurred, agencies were also concerned with protecting their reputations with donors and the public and needed to be seen to be acting. In the words of one expert interviewed for this paper, this created a competition between organisations to show they were doing something: primarily introducing codes of conduct, training programmes and setting up investigations.

There was (and still is) an issue, however, that some forms of action had the potential to create further issues

of perception around reputational risk. The concern that improved complaint and reporting mechanisms might lead to an escalation of reported cases, creating the impression of an escalation of the problem overall, existed then as it does now within the current #AidToo discussions.

This serves as a restraining factor in the public discussion of such data, and potentially in institutional efforts to measure and publish findings. There is certainly evidence to suggest that improved complaint and reporting mechanisms lead to an increase in reported cases.¹⁵⁴ In terms of public perception, agencies that have sought to go public about the cases they have uncovered and investigated have also faced public perception challenges. As part of their response to #AidToo, several organisations sought to get ahead of the media by announcing their numbers to date.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵³ The full report, except for names of involved persons, was published for the first time by the UK International Development Committee in July 2018. <https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/international-development-committee/news-parliament-2017/sexual-exploitation-report-publication-17-19/>

¹⁵⁴ For example, The UN's Department of Peacekeeping Operations, received allegations against 24 personnel in 2003. In 2004, after the introduction of complaint and reporting mechanisms in DRC and actions in other countries, the department received 105 allegations in total. 45% of these related to those under 18. Source: Al Hussein, Z. (2005) *A Comprehensive Strategy To Eliminate Future Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in UN Peacekeeping Operations*. United Nations. Commonly referred to as the Zeid report.

¹⁵⁵ Plan International (2018) *Our Commitment to Stamping Out Abuse and Exploitation*. Press release. <https://plan-international.org/news/2018-02-21-our-commitment-stamp-out-abuse-and-exploitation>
See also statements from Care and MSF among others.

Frequently, these figures were reported as “agency admits to sexual exploitation”. The extent to which fear of the “Oxfam effect” inhibits institutional willingness to discuss SEA frankly, in particular supporting survivors who speak out, is hard to gauge. Fear of public condemnation, however, was certainly cited as a factor by experts interviewed for this chapter.

The public exposure and the market in a crudest sense – several agencies including Oxfam have lost significant amounts of money from institutional and private donors – certainly have forced the prioritisation of PSEA and safeguarding issues for agencies, donors and the wider humanitarian sector. But it is far from clear if prioritisation driven in this way is actually effective when it comes to effecting meaningful change, or whether it encourages actions which are superficially impressive such as public declarations of zero tolerance but which have negligible impact on the day-to-day behaviour of staff, especially at field level. Some commentators are certainly convinced that agencies are acting more to protect their reputations rather than actual people.¹⁵⁶ Factors such as the treatment of whistleblowers, which are hard to evaluate overall, but as indicated through a number of high-profile cases such as Anders Kompass at the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)¹⁵⁷ and the institutional behaviour evidenced when cases come to light, can be very far from the public rhetoric around support for survivors and commitment to investigation. Furthermore, some senior aid officials have gone as far as to say that the competitive nature of NGOs overall is responsible for increasing the risk of SEA cases, as the desire to be present and visible in a high-profile crisis leads to a de-emphasis on proper screening, training and management of staff.¹⁵⁸

There has also been much speculation that the market forces that drive NGOs are also actively undermining current efforts to create the inter-agency systems needed to identify and exclude perpetrators, or any collective approach to handing investigations or independently monitoring performance around PSEA. The lack of public solidarity with Oxfam from other aid organisations during the crisis in February 2018, for example, was striking.¹⁵⁹ There has certainly been speculation within the sector that this was partly to avoid

being tarred with the same brush, thus risking associated reputational damage, but also because the withdrawal of funding from Oxfam meant that funds were potentially now available for other organisations. Indeed, as funding has been reallocated from Oxfam and other agencies considered to have SEA challenges, other NGOs have benefited. This in turn de-incentivises collective thinking, action and responsibility.

Why is it that institutional reforms and the theoretical introduction of a zero-tolerance culture have not yet produced the results once assumed?

Political model

Another factor is the dynamic of power, a central challenge for agencies who seek to bring goods and services to those who have neither. Aid workers are in a position of power over affected populations, even if only at the most basic level that they have something the other group needs. Obviously, this power can be used for good (this being the basic premise of humanitarian response) but it is also open to exploitation. Addressing this is extremely complex, since asymmetric power dynamics are inherent in humanitarian work. Issues of power are also inherent in any office environment, since organisations are necessarily hierarchical, and individuals in senior management have power over those lower down the chain – power that is open to abuse. The potential for abuse is therefore always present. Often, such abuse is gendered, as men are over-represented at decision-making levels in nearly all organisations and parliaments¹⁶⁰ and in all governments.

An additional factor widely seen as key to driving meaningful change is the significance of individuals in senior management explicitly making this a priority. The IASC’s global review in 2010 found that “the most critical gap in organisational support to PSEA is that of visible senior management leadership to actively promote PSEA policies and to proactively support PSEA activity, while holding field managers accountable for implementation.” Conversely, it is clear from the cases recently exposed by the media that individuals can also play a key role in impeding successful exposure and investigation of PSEA cases. For example, Save the Children UK is currently

¹⁵⁶ Bruce-Raeburn, A (2018) *Without Systemic Change, Safeguarding Will Only Keep INGOs Safe, Not People*. Devex. <https://www.devex.com/news/opinion-without-systemic-change-safeguarding-will-only-keep-ingos-safe-not-people-92854>

¹⁵⁷ Anyadike, O (2016) *Top Whistleblower Resigns Citing Impunity and Lack of Accountability*. IRIN. <https://www.irinnews.org/news/2016/06/07/exclusive-top-un-whistleblower-resigns-citing-impunity-and-lack-accountability>

¹⁵⁸ O’Neill, S. (2018) Oxfam Puts Safety First, Says Ex Safety Chief. *The Times* 24 April. <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/oxfam-puts-pr-first-says-ex-safety-chief-c2ssswlp2>

¹⁵⁹ Anecdotal evidence suggests there was considerable sympathy and support behind the scenes.

¹⁶⁰ <http://archive.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>

under investigation by the Charities Commission for the mishandling of reports of sexual misconduct against senior members of staff by the Board and trustees of the charity.¹⁶¹

Mind model

Culture is a critical element on multiple levels. Firstly, organisational culture: the number of accounts of aid environments, especially but far from exclusively at field level, as places where sexual harassment (especially of staff) is routine, where perpetrators are known but not investigated let alone punished, is overwhelming.¹⁶² Data is hard to come by, and most evidence is anecdotal, but it is very consistent: many perpetrators do not come forward, fearing for their reputations and jobs. Perpetrators move from mission to mission, unidentified and unpunished. Investigations are sometimes not pursued. Research in 2017, for example, found that 87% of aid workers surveyed knew someone who had experienced sexual violence at work, only 56% of those who experienced abuse or harassment in the workplace reported it and of those, only 17% were satisfied with the way their report was handled.¹⁶³ This culture appears to have been largely unaffected by the many years of campaigns. As one interviewee put it, “there is a complete disconnect between what organisations think they are, how others see them and how the evidence suggests they really are”.

Another key challenge is the complexities found in the cultural contexts in which aid agencies work which may differ profoundly from the cultural values held institutionally by the agency in question. These range from increased barriers to reporting – and risks – for locals (the shame associated with sexual activity, even if forced by another, can be devastating for women in conservative countries such as Afghanistan), to legal issues. Many countries have non-existent or inadequate legal codes relating to sexual misdemeanours, to the extent that they have a functioning legal system at all. In some places, sexual abuse is even normalised or expected as the dues of a man attaining power. Staff

attitudes may be deeply ingrained, and difficult to change through codes of conduct or a short training programme. Cultural complexities around language (there may be literally no words for sexual abuse in local languages), race and sexuality compound this challenge. This is all particularly important in the cases of affected populations and local staff (about whose experiences almost nothing is known at present).

A further aspect of humanitarian culture that specifically inhibits tackling abuse within agencies is the powerful beliefs that humanitarians, and thus many abuse survivors, hold about the significance and importance of the work of their organisation. Survivors often fear that by speaking up, especially in any public sense, they will be damaging the organisation to which they often feel a very deep loyalty and causing damage that will ultimately result in withdrawal of services from crisis-affected people if the agency subsequently loses funding. This is a powerful disincentive. Similarly, those working with affected people report that they also may discourage reporting for fear of bringing shame on the community, and jeopardising the provision of resources.

It is important to note that there is a significant difference in organisational culture between the UN and NGOs. This has many dimensions: the nature and mandate of agencies, institutional approaches to HR and PSEA, but it has been particularly apparent since February 2018. Work continues: UNICEF has commissioned an independent review of policies and systems involving PSEA, for example, and is piloting a new system for those affected to report cases,¹⁶⁴ but a clear vision of an overall UN systemic response (insofar as this is possible) has yet to emerge. The particular complexities around addressing safeguarding cases and current shortcomings within the UN were recently explored in a detailed article in the New York Times.¹⁶⁵ The challenge of bringing together the inter-agency responses of NGOs and UN agencies, and overcoming the differences in culture and technical challenges, is one of many currently facing the IASC – especially in the context of proposals to track predators and share information about investigations.

There is the evidence – often anecdotal, occasionally

161 161 Charity Commission (2018) *Charity Commission Opens Statutory Inquiry into Save the Children Fund*. Press release. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/charity-commission-opens-statutory-inquiry-into-the-save-the-children-fund>

162 Einbinder, N (2018) Amid Allegations Of Abuse, Aid Workers Describe Culture of Sexual Misconduct. *PBS*, 16 August. <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/amid-allegations-of-abuse-aid-workers-describe-culture-of-sexual-misconduct>

163 Nobert, M (2017) *Humanitarian Experiences with Sexual Violence: Compilation of two years of Report the Abuse data collection*. Report the Abuse. <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/humanitarian-experiences-sexual-violence-compilation-two-years-report-abuse-data>

164 IASC (2018) *Summary of IASC Good Practices: Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment and Abuse of Aid Workers*. https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/session_1_-_summary_-_good_practices_on_psea_and_sha-31_may_2018-principals_meeting.pdf

165 Moore, J (2018) UN Cases Read Like ‘Manual In How Not To Investigate Sexual Assault’. *New York Times*, 29 June 2018. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/29/world/united-nations-sexual-assault.html>

captured in independent evaluations, that there is an organisational culture within some humanitarian agencies whose instinct is also to marginalise, ignore, downplay or actively undermine reports of SEA when they occur, and often those who seek to report them. For example, Oxfam's former Head of Safeguarding talked publicly about how she felt the organisation was unwilling to listen or act on cases and concerns¹⁶⁶ (the organisation subsequently admitted that senior management failed both survivors and whistleblowers).¹⁶⁷ The case of Anders Kompass, suspended and investigated by OHCHR for going public with reports of sexual abuse in CAR, is another.¹⁶⁸

Why is there such an apparent gap between the considerable and dedicated efforts of PSEA experts and many genuine efforts within the sector to tackle the problem over the last 15 years, and the experience of survivors? The psychology of sexual abuse and exploitation is profoundly complex, and this is not the place to explore the dynamics of sexual abuse, response to trauma (individually and collectively) nor to the psychology of organisations. But some observations are key in understanding the extent to which the aid sector has collectively failed to recognise either the extent or the nature of the problem. Firstly, there is a basic assumption, held by aid workers about themselves, that humanitarians are inherently good people, who care deeply about addressing the needs of the vulnerable. This inhibits on multiple levels: neither agencies nor staff like to think their colleagues are abusive. Agencies also count on the perception that aid workers are 'good people' for fundraising and reputational purposes. Secondly, the extent to which men specifically are able to convince themselves – especially with regard to sex workers – that they are doing nothing wrong, has been researched in the context of peacekeeping by Madeleine Rees and others.¹⁶⁹ Additionally, there is evidence of enabling environments in some country offices and even headquarters (particularly the failure to investigate allegations or punish perpetrators), of leadership whose starting point can seem to be extending understanding to the abuser. Of one staff member, on his final warning for behaviour towards women, a senior Oxfam staff member wrote in an email that "I'm not judging Ralph



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– he has a desire that seemingly needs to be filled.”¹⁷⁰ This suggests a possible psychologically normalising effect of spending time in an environment where abusive behaviour is apparently tolerated and condoned.

Finally, there is the point that abusive behaviour is rooted in power relationships, and challenging abuse therefore means challenging power. While this can and often does seem an overwhelming challenge to the beneficiary population, it also makes reporting abuse for staffers a daunting process. And resistance – from individuals and the system is, according to one expert consulted for this paper, inevitable: “People like the power systems and the structures and the sense that they are doing good, and they don't like having any of that challenged because it is destabilising and uncomfortable and forces them to behave differently”. As discussed earlier, it can also jeopardise the wider work of the agency. Even within agencies, challenging power and ways of

¹⁶⁶ 'Oxfam scandal: Helen Evans Channel 4 interview, full transcript' *The Spectator*, 13 February 2018. <https://blogs.spectator.co.uk/2018/02/full-transcript-helen-evans-channel-4-interview-on-the-oxfam-scandal>

¹⁶⁷ 'Charity Watchdog to Launch Oxfam Inquiry' *BBC*, 13 February 2018. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-43041230>

¹⁶⁸ Laville, S. (2018) 'UN Whistleblower Who Exposed Sexual Abuse by Peacekeepers Is Exonerated' *The Guardian*, 18 January: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jan/18/un-whistleblower-who-exposed-sexual-abuse-by-peacekeepers-is-exonerated>

¹⁶⁹ Zenck, E. (2010) *Construction of peacekeeper's masculinity in the discourse on misogynist, racist and homophobic violence performed during UN missions*. <https://dspace.library.uu.nl/bitstream/handle/1874/179171/Zenck%20MA%20thesis%20final.pdf%3Bsequence=1>

¹⁷⁰ O'Neill, S (2018) Oxfam chief: I'm Not Judging Ralph – He Has A Desire To Fill. *The Times*, 16 March. <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/oxfam-chief-i-m-not-judging-raph-he-has-a-desire-to-fill-zrxdxw79h>

working is disruptive and uncomfortable, and forces acknowledgements and conversations that are not in areas on which agencies or individuals like to focus. It can be easier to remain in denial of a problem, and to interpret no reports or incidents as indications that there is no problem rather (as the recent UK parliamentary report into PSEA suggests), starting from the assumption that SEA is apparent in every operation and situation regardless of available reports.

Ecosystem model

The culture framework, however, also provides the most obvious example of how change can be driven by shifts within wider societal culture, especially in the western countries in which most international aid agencies are based. The #MeToo movement, which exploded in 2017, has generated a conversation about sexual harassment and abuse that is, in its frankness and power, like nothing that has come before it. Although initially focused on the film industry, #MeToo quickly impacted numerous other sectors, until in February 2018 issues within the aid sector became public. The scandals that came to define this period – Oxfam, Save the Children and UNAIDS in particular – were historic: it was the #MeToo movement that made them a story. #AidToo has focused on the experiences of aid staff as well as beneficiaries, and for the first time places these behaviours on a continuum. Led by the voices – and anger – of survivors, the fire turned on aid agencies has concerned their reaction and management of cases, rather than the fact they happen at all. #MeToo and #AidToo are powerful examples of how a wider cultural shift can generate dramatic change. In this case, DFID withdrew funding from one agency (Oxfam) and suspended aid to another (Save the Children). Public support, on which NGOs depend financially far more than UN agencies (making them much more vulnerable to these trends) was also withdrawn.

Why did the #AidToo scandals and stories seem to catch the sector so much by surprise? It is not as if they had not been warned: specialist groups like the Headington Institute had been warning of a problem for years, and the specialist group Report the Abuse published data indicating the extent and severity of abuse of aid workers by colleagues in 2017. Some agencies took unilateral action, but there was little public discussion or interagency effort, and certainly little indication that

any cases would generate the public reaction they did. This points also to the critical role played by the wider cultural environment: the #MeToo movement shifted public perception about the significance and acceptability of sexual abuse in a way that suddenly meant media stories on subjects that had largely been ignored when previously covered, were headline news.

Other drivers of change

There are some other specific factors to consider when looking at the successes and failures in terms of delivering on PSEA. One is that those driving change often feel they are not just up against the inherent challenges in any system, but against forces that actively seek to prevent and undermine exposure and marginalise, silence and discredit those who would speak out. It is clear from the experiences of Kompass and other whistleblowers that one reason why change has not taken place is because in some instances, it has been inhibited by the response to specific cases. This can be seen through the treatment of whistleblowers, the efforts to evade investigation (Save the Children have admitted to the UK parliament that they spent in the region of £100,000 on lawyers' letters threatening journalists who wrote about the SEA scandal in their London offices),¹⁷¹ the failure to investigate (MINUSCA, the UN mission in CAR, was found to have failed significantly in this regard by an independent review) and attempts to downplay or cover up findings. The tendency to deny, marginalise and cover up reports of the problem has been apparent from the very beginning of PSEA work.

As the independent investigation into the peacekeeping scandal in CAR notes: "these repeated failures to respond to the allegations are, in the Panel's view, indicative of a broader problem of fragmentation. The end result was a gross institutional failure to respond to the allegations in a meaningful way."¹⁷²

Part of the reason why the humanitarian system has collectively failed to address the issue of sexual abuse in the workplace, the harassment – and worse – of aid workers by their colleagues, is because of the collective refusal to admit the extent and complexity of the problem. No agency or system can begin a process of change when they do not even recognise the need to do so. While some agencies have been judged by experts to have taken some very positive steps over the past few

¹⁷¹ O'Neill, S (2018) Save the Children "Spent £100,000 To Shut Down Sex Story. *The Times* 23 May. <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/save-the-children-spent-100-000-to-shut-down-sex-story-r3bpl9fm7>

¹⁷² Deschamps, M., Jallow, H. and Sooka, Y. (2015) *Taking Action on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by Peacekeepers: Report of an Independent Review of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by International Peacekeeping Forces in Central African Republic*. United Nations. <http://www.un.org/News/dh/infocus/centafricrepub/Independent-Review-Report.pdf>

years – Oxfam, Concern, WFP and local Bangladeshi NGO Coast were all cited by experts interviewed for this paper – aside from the IASC Task Team and the CHS Alliance, there has been limited willingness to acknowledge and discuss this problem, especially in hearing the voices of survivors, until the media exposure of February 2018.

A further example of the underlying complexities of PSEA work is the extent to which abusive behaviour is

gendered. The vast majority of perpetrators are male, while nearly all victims are women, young people and children. Until organisations end the sexist culture that underpins power abuse, such as SEA and sexual harassment, and follow through on ensuring gender balance at all levels, including at the top, delivering the kind of transformation of behaviour and fundamental shift in norms will be difficult.

4.5. CONCLUSION: NEXT STEPS FOR CHANGE

The process of eliminating SEA from the institutions and staff of humanitarian agencies has, so far, proved to be a much longer and more complex process than those originally involved envisaged. As HAP noted in 2008, consultations with those affected “underscore that our global expectations of how long meaningful change would take, how much it would cost and what would be involved were unrealistic.”¹⁷³

That process still continues and has been given added impetus by the #AidToo movement. It is too soon to judge whether the current energy, funding, commitment and sense of urgency generated by #AidToo will lead to the kind of transformational change that many now think is still needed. In order for it to do so, efforts do not only need to increase, they may need to change in approach and direction.

4.5.1. MAKING CHANGE ABOUT PEOPLE

There is also considerable evidence that the approach needs to change. The top-down, machine based, institutional compliance model is necessary, but not sufficient, to drive the much-needed changes in behaviour to ensure vulnerable people are not abused in the first place.

Institutionally, key aspects do need to change, in human resource, in incident management, in investigative processes and in survivor support in particular. But while this might improve management of cases it will not prevent them. Rather than reinforce the existing

approach of codes of conduct and training, individual agencies and the sector as a whole need to find ways to tackle the underlying behavioural drivers and culture that lead to abuse.

One reason survivors give for not reporting is the lack of assistance and possibilities for redress.¹⁷⁴ A concrete step toward a survivor-centred approach is for aid organisations to map existing legal, health, psycho-social, police, safe house and financial/livelihoods services that may be necessary for anyone who has experienced sexual abuse and harassment. Aid organisations need to ensure that such services are appropriate, available and well-functioning as soon as they arrive in a local community. Additional funding is often necessary to be able to provide a survivor-centred approach in practice.

Protection for whistleblowers and affected people wishing to report is essential. For most, the decision to stay silent is an entirely rational consequence of assessing the risks and trauma involved in coming forward, risks to their careers, their reputations, their families and even their lives, especially when perpetrators are seen to be treated with such impunity while whistleblowers are marginalised at best and attacked at worst. It is very telling that research suggests the vast majority of those who come forward are disappointed by their agencies’ response (according to one study, only 17% of those who reported felt their complaint was handled appropriately).¹⁷⁵ Listening to those who know abuse best because they have experienced it, and their thoughts on what needs to change and what would empower them

¹⁷³ Lattu, K. (2008) *To Complain Or Not To Complain: Still the Question-Consultations with Humanitarian Aid Beneficiaries on Their Perceptions of Efforts to Prevent and Respond to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse*. HAP. P. 3. http://www.pseataaskforce.org/uploads/tools/tocomplainornottocomplainstillthequestion_hapinternational_english.pdf

Lattu, K. (2008) *To Complain Or Not To Complain: Still the Question- Consultations with Humanitarian Aid Beneficiaries on Their*

¹⁷⁴ <https://redress.org/news/new-report-un-response-to-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse-by-peacekeepers-must-do-much-more-to-enable-victims-to-access-reparation-support-and-assistance/>

¹⁷⁵ Nobert, M. (2016) *Prevention, Policy and Procedure Checklist: Responding to Sexual Violence in Humanitarian and Development Settings*. Report The Abuse. <https://www.eisf.eu/library/prevention-policy-and-procedure-checklist-responding-to-sexual-violence-in-humanitarian-and-development-settings>

to come forward will enable the humanitarian system to begin to grasp the true scale and nature of the problem which at present is not really known.

Missing in particular are the voices of national staff and those who identify as LGBTQ+.

The role of conversation/spaces in which those in power, especially men, are able to challenge their own behaviours and conceptions of abuse and explore what it means to be an ally are also under-explored.

The limiting of opportunities for the perpetration of abuse, i.e. situations in which vulnerability is not addressed and perpetrators can attack, is an issue that needs attention, as does the issue of impunity, which perpetrators are widely assumed to enjoy). The potential for opportunistic exploitation must be eliminated. Agencies also need to create an environment in which the risk/benefit analysis for those who have been abused is much more likely to result in people coming forward. They need confidence that they will be believed and supported, and that their complaint will be thoroughly investigated and that perpetrators will face due process.

At the same time, the expectations of those coming forward need to be managed: sometimes what agencies can do in terms of investigating alleged perpetrators and punishing those found to be guilty is limited. There needs to be much more clarity about the role of agencies, and the role of the legal process in such situations.

4.5.2. BRINGING STAKEHOLDERS TOGETHER

To achieve change, the humanitarian establishment as a whole needs to move away from a very HQ-led and compliance-orientated approach and make a conscious effort to put crisis-affected people at the centre: listen to survivors – and not just the ones who have already come forward – and to act on what is said, and integrate their experience into the policy and response systems of the future (see illustration 4). This particularly applies to understanding the experience of national staff, whose voices are currently almost entirely absent from research or discussions.

Define and design an inter-agency approach to the problem of identifying and excluding predators. This challenge has been laid down to the British sector by

DFID, which issued a statement in February calling on all agencies to “step up and do more” and urged collective working, announcing a dedicated taskforce that would work across the sector to ensure progress¹⁷⁶.

4.5.3. CLARIFYING THE BOUNDARIES

The problem needs to be defined for there to be an appropriate strategic response. With PSEA, this needs to start at a very basic level. With regard to what is needed, the challenge of the 2010 report is still very real: Can we agree on what the problem is? Is it that SEA happens at all, or that we are bad at handling it when it does? Is the point to stop people being abused, or to get better at handling situations in which abuse happens (given human nature, the complex environments in which we work and the impossibility of guaranteeing 100% prevention)? Are we in the business of protecting people, and trying to change, or of protecting organisations? And is there a way of summarising these problem analyses and objectives into a coherent problem statement and objective? Collective recognition that – as the recent UK Government report into PSEA put it – the problem is structural and systemic, rather than a question of isolated individual aberrations, is also important.¹⁷⁷

Following this, a collective discussion and agreement is needed on what meaningful change looks like and how it can be measured. As one contributor put it, “we need to ask why what we are doing is not working. What is stopping us tackling this?”

A clearer examination of perpetrator behaviour would also contribute to the discussion. Recent cases have included a wide spectrum of abuse, from problematic (albeit not always technically illegal) behaviour such as engagement with sex workers, through to systematic abuse perpetrated by predatory individuals, some paedophiles who were clearly using humanitarian activities as cover (for example, the Joel Davies case),¹⁷⁸ or were drawn to the sector due to the opportunities to make contact with vulnerable people. Understanding in more complexity and specificity the nature of the problem(s) faced by aid agencies (drawing on research in other sectors that work with vulnerable people) would enable more nuanced approaches.

¹⁷⁶ Statement From International Development Secretary On Oxfam and UK Action To Tackle Sexual Exploitation In The Aid Sector. Presse release. UK Department for International Development, 12 February 2018. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/statement-from-international-development-secretary-on-oxfam-and-uk-action-to-tackle-sexual-exploitation-in-the-aid-sector>

¹⁷⁷ Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in the Aid Sector. UK Parliament International Development Committee report. House of Commons, July 2018. p23. <http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/international-development-committee/sexual-exploitation-and-abuse-in-the-aid-sector/oral/86718.pdf>

¹⁷⁸ Handranan, L. (Dr) (2018) Joel Davies arrest: Humanitarian cover for predators? Medium.com, 2 July. <https://medium.com/@LoriHandrahan2/joel-davis-arrest-humanitarian-cover-for-predators-375092a144e2>

Sexual violence in the humanitarian sector



We all have a role to play!

Donors need to move away from a punitive approach and become active supporters and change agents, not just critics.

Agencies need to define collectively what success looks like (with support from donors). Is it an end to behaviour categorised as abusive? Is it a system that successfully identifies and punishes perpetrators? Is it one that focuses on meeting the needs of those affected? How much do agencies need to address and ameliorate the massive power dynamics inherent in aid work? And what do those who are involved day-to-day in dealing with SEA cases – survivors, HR staff, team leaders – think a successful system looks like? An evidence-based answer to this question is a major challenge, but is urgently needed.

4.5.4. PRIORITY ON ACTION - LEARNING BY DOING

As discussed above, a radical rethink of the way we approach PSEA, especially the assumption that codes of conduct, training and efficient reporting systems are sufficient, is needed. What might an approach focused on behaviour and attitudinal change look like? What would survivors design if they were in charge of the process? In particular how can agencies actively work to encourage

reporting and discourage abusive behaviour, providing better incentives and disincentives, respectively?

4.5.5. PROMOTING WHAT WORKS

Further research is needed simply to identify what works, bearing in mind that impact is likely to be seen over a timeframe of years.

A discussion is also needed over the key question: has an institutional approach struggled to generate change because it has only ever been partially implemented? Or because it is fundamentally not an effective approach to generating change in this sector? The answer is likely to lie somewhere between these extremes, but challenging the tendency of the PSEA sector to default to compliance models, and to admit that success has been at best incomplete, is the only way to make progress.

Agencies need to be realistic about how long and how thorough any change process needs to be. The work of WFP, currently attracting praise, was years in the planning. The funding, the design and delivery, and the extent and nature of the impact will be necessarily hard to assess for some time. In driving real change in PSEA, agencies still have a much more complex and profound challenge ahead of them than many seem yet ready to acknowledge.



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05

INCLUSIVE HUMANITARIAN ACTION

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5.1. INTRODUCTION

The number of people affected and displaced by conflict and natural disasters is increasing every year.¹⁷⁹ If humanitarian assistance is to be impartial – providing assistance on the basis of need alone – it must be tailored according to the needs, rights and experiences of affected people. Considerations must therefore include gender (male and female), age (children, youth, the elderly), disability¹⁸⁰ and other potential forms of marginalisation (such as ethnic groups and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people). This chapter examines the strategies that have been used to help humanitarians to understand how they must consider the rights and dignity of all categories of the affected population and to do so in technically appropriate and coordinated ways, in order to appropriately determine priorities.

The implementation of inclusive humanitarian action is fundamental to ensuring fulfilment of the core principles of humanity and impartiality.

Although there has been progress in terms of a recognition that humanitarian crises affect each individual differently depending upon their age, gender, disability and other characteristics, this has not yet translated into system-wide and consistently-applied inclusive action. The need to move away from the ‘one size fits all’ approach at all stages of the project cycle, remains. This approach has frequently seen women and adolescent girls – and even more so, older people and persons with disabilities – overlooked during preparedness, assessment, response and follow-up processes. This has heightened the existing additional barriers they face to accessing the humanitarian protection and assistance that they need.

Undoubtedly, all humanitarian organisations would agree that no one should be excluded from humanitarian action, either deliberately or inadvertently. Yet there is still limited capacity (including capacity to understand and to overcome aid workers’ unconscious biases) among humanitarian actors to address this.

¹⁷⁹ The scope of affected countries can be seen in IDMC’s report <http://www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2017>

¹⁸⁰ Disability is a result of the interaction between an individual’s impairments and barriers in the physical and social environment. The UN CRPD (Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities) describes persons with disabilities as including those who “have long-term physical, mental, intellectual and sensory impairments, which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.”

1949–1989 ▼

1949

The rights of different categories of civilians during conflict are enshrined in the Fourth Geneva Convention. Geneva Convention IV also encourages parties to conflict to ensure the physical safety of pregnant women and mothers of young children, and the establishment of safety zones for them.

1989

UNHCR appoints a Senior Coordinator for Refugee Women.

1990–1999

1990

UNHCR publishes protection guidelines.

1991

UN Principles for Older Persons is published.

1993

United Nations Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities is adopted.

1994

Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Disaster Relief prioritising humanity and impartiality in humanitarian responses, is published.

1995

Reproductive Health Response in Conflict Consortium is formed (promoting reproductive health rights, respect and responsibility for all).

1997

UN Office of Special Advisor on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women is created.

1998

IASC Task Force on Gender and Humanitarian Assistance created.

1999

27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent – ICRC pledges to assess and address the specific needs of women and girls more effectively in its programmes, and to promote the respect that must be accorded to them, with a particular focus on sexual violence.

International Disability Alliance (IDA) is created.

The World Disasters Report focuses on discrimination, calling on communities, governments and agencies to work harder to identify the most vulnerable and to work together to ensure that their specific needs are addressed in an emergency.

2007

UN Convention for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, article 11 makes specific reference to the safety and protection of persons with disabilities in conflict and emergency situations.

IASC Reference Group on Gender in Humanitarian Action (Gender Reference Group/Gender RG/GRG) is created, supporting the integration of gender equality and women's empowerment in the humanitarian action system, coordinated by the IASC.

IASC Gender Policy is adopted.

IASC Gender Handbook for Humanitarian Actions Women, Girls, Boys & Men: Different needs – Equal Opportunities is published.

2006

HPN Network Paper 53 focuses on protecting and assisting older people in emergencies.

UN SCR 1612 is adopted, which outlines the grave violations against boys and girls and conditions for listing countries with the Security Council. It establishes the UN-led Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) on Children and Armed Conflict and its operational country-level Task Forces.

Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues is established.

2005

The Sphere Project Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards includes cross-cutting themes.

2004

The Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing is adopted.

Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court recognises the military recruitment and use of children in conflict, as a war crime.

2002

Creation takes place of Washington Group on Disability Statistics.

2001

HelpAge International publish Older People in Disasters and Humanitarian Crises: Guidelines for Best Practice.

UNHCR Policy on Older Refugees is published.

UNSCR 1325 is adopted which addresses not only the impact of war on women, but also the pivotal role women should and do play in conflict management, conflict resolution, and sustainable peace. The first Resolution to link women to the peace and security agenda.

2000

2000–2010 ▲

2007 (continued)

The IASC Principals creates the IASC GenCap Project to support humanitarians undertaking gender equality programming.

An international panel of experts in international human rights law and sexual orientation and gender identity outline the Yogyakarta Principles: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. All human rights are universal, interdependent, indivisible and interrelated. Sexual orientation and gender identity are integral to every person's dignity and humanity and must not be the basis for discrimination or abuse."

2008

IASC briefing paper on Humanitarian Action and Older Persons is published.

2009

UN SCR 1882 strengthens the Monitoring Rights Mechanism (MRM) by expanding the 'trigger' violations. Killing and maiming and rape and sexual violence against girls and boys by armed forces or groups are new triggers, under SCR 1612 Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism.

UNSCR 1888 establishes Women Protection Advisors.

EU Gender Review report is published.

UNDP Gender Marker is launched.

IASC Gender Marker is piloted.

CARE International Gender Policy is launched.

2010–2018 ▼

2010

WHO launches Community Based Rehabilitation Guidelines to ensure the inclusion of those with disabilities.

UN Women created from the amalgamation of UNIFEM and offices focused on women to promote gender equality.

UNHCR Executive Committee adopts Conclusion on Refugees with Disabilities and other Persons with Disabilities Protected and Assisted by UNHCR.

2011

IASC launches its gender marker to promote gender equality as part of the Consolidated Appeals Process.

UNHCR Age, Gender and Diversity Policy is published.

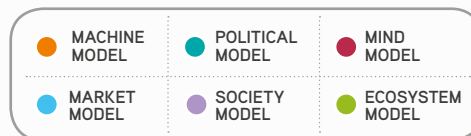
HelpAge International Guidance on including older people in emergency shelter programmes is published.

Gender, age (children, older people) and persons with disabilities are re-emphasised in the revised Sphere Handbook cross-cutting themes.

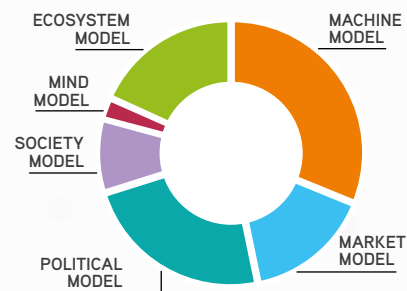
OECD Evaluation of the Haiti earthquake response highlights an inclusion bias towards the most visible and accessible.

UK International Development Equality Act

Despite the best efforts of the authors and contributors, it remains challenging to produce a comprehensive census of all change initiatives across the humanitarian sector. This timeline should therefore not be considered as exhaustive or conclusive as they relate to the change models.



CHANGE MODELS' DISTRIBUTION



passed placing a duty on the UK government to consider ways in which development and humanitarian funding will build gender equality in the countries receiving aid.

The IASC GenCap Project launches the 'Gender in Humanitarian Action' training course.

Humanitarians review the IASC Gender Marker and request that it is revised to broaden the gender analysis by including age, improving the reliability of coding and adding a monitoring phase.

CARE pilots its gender marker in selected contexts.

The Core Humanitarian Standard is launched with a focus on people-centred humanitarian assistance.

ECHO launches the Gender-Age Marker as a quality and accountability tool to foster, assess, promote and track EU-funded humanitarian interventions' sensitivity to gender and age.

UN Independent Expert is appointed on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons.

2014

First International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement resolution on Promoting Disability Inclusion in the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is adopted.

The UN undertakes its first global survey of persons living with disabilities about how they cope with disasters, which illustrates why they die or are injured in disproportionate numbers in disasters.

Sweden and the UK launch the Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies (Call to Action), a multi-stakeholder initiative aiming to fundamentally transform the way gender-based violence (GBV) is addressed in humanitarian emergencies.

HelpAge report shows that less than 1% of projects submitted for funding for OCHA CAP for 2012 included one or more activities for older people.

2013

Minimum Inter-Agency Standards for Protection Mainstreaming emphasise inclusive participation and prioritising the most vulnerable.

HelpAge International publishes sector-specific guidelines and training resources on including older people in emergencies.

2012

HelpAge and Handicap International study highlights that the humanitarian system overlooks the needs of older people and those with disabilities.

OCHA and CARE-supported study by Tufts University highlights the benefits of disaggregating data by sex and age. It finds almost no documented cases of lead agencies collating data disaggregated by sex and age.

2011 (continued)

2014 (continued)

Sustainable Development Goals are formally agreed. Two are of particular significance in this context: SDG 5 – achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. SDG 10 – reduce inequality within and among countries.

Special Rapporteur on Rights of Persons with Disabilities created.

2015

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 is published and includes gender, age, disability and cultural perspectives.

CBM Inclusive Humanitarian Action advocacy and guidance Briefing Paper is published.

ADCAP launches a pilot version of Minimum Standards for Age and Disability Inclusion in Humanitarian Action.

Age and Disability Technical Working Group is formed under the Protection Cluster.

IFRC, CBM and Handicap International publish guidance on disability-inclusive shelter and settlements in emergencies.

IASC GenCap Project reviews the use of the IASC Gender Marker. While approximately half of projects identify and address gendered needs, the projects primarily focus on the needs of women, to the exclusion, to some extent, of girls and specifically boys and men.

UN entities call on states to act urgently to end violence and discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) adults, adolescents and children.

Resolution on SGBV in armed conflict and disasters passed at the International Movement of Red Cross and Red Crescent.

2016

As part of the WHS, the Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action is formed.

The revised IASC Gender Marker (Gender and Age Marker) is piloted in Jordan, Yemen, CAR and by WFP in DRC and Myanmar. Tested by Global Clusters and ECHO.

Cluster Lead Agencies sign up to the WHS Grand Bargain commitment to ensure a people-centred approach in their activities. Responsibility three proposes: leave no one behind.

Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action is endorsed at the WHS.

Framework on integrated people-centred health services is adopted by Member States at the World Health Summit.

RedR launches its 'Age, Gender and Disability' course.

CBM publishes Active Participation: Key to Inclusion Testimonies of Humanitarians with Disabilities.

Gender with Age Marker is released by IASC.

Humanitarian inclusive standards for older people and people with disabilities are published by the Age and Disability Consortium as part of the ADCAP programme.

ADCAP Good Practice Guide: embedding inclusion of older people and people with disabilities in humanitarian policy and practice is published.

The Women's Refugee Commission launches toolkit to include protection from gender-based violence into CTP.

2018

All minimum standards of global clusters now refer to gender as a key component.

UNICEF's Guidance on Including children with disabilities in humanitarian action is published.

The revised IASC Gender Policy is endorsed.

Additional principles and state obligations on the application of international human rights law in relation to sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics is to complement the Yogyakarta principles.

Revision of the IASC Gender Handbook with global clusters.

The revised IASC Gender Marker (Gender with Age Marker) is piloted in a number of places including by the Early Recovery Clusters in Pakistan and Haiti. In Ukraine the GAM is applied to all project proposals submitted in the HRP and in Cox's Bazar (Bangladesh) ten agencies applied the GAM to their proposals.

The Global Protection Cluster begins to pilot the Protection Mainstreaming Toolkit.

CBM launches the smartphone app 'Humanitarian Hands-on Tool' (HHoT), which provides step-by-step guidance on how to implement an inclusive emergency response.

The Call to Action Road Map 2016-2020 is launched.

IFRC launches its Gender and Diversity Organisational Assessment Tool to support National Societies with their commitments to gender and diversity and to provide practical guidance.

IASC endorses a time-bound task team on the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action.

2017

5.2. WHAT HAS HAPPENED IN THE RECENT PAST

In order to highlight some of the key factors that have influenced change in relation to inclusive humanitarian action, the timeline on the previous pages has been developed. Key influential factors include organisational and global level commitments (including resolutions and charters), publications, declarations and the development of standards.

Historically, humanitarian action has been focused primarily on the state of the response with a focus on initial and early interventions. However, in part due to the result of the increasingly protracted nature of crises, new challenges have been highlighted. Recognition that crises may affect population groups differently depending upon their gender, age and disability was possibly first formally acknowledged in relation to conflict and highlighted in the Geneva Conventions of 1929 (focusing on female prisoners of war). This was expanded to civilians in the 1949 Conventions. However, it took some decades before more comprehensive action to ensuring the inclusion of all people in humanitarian responses was put in place. Led by UNHCR, this began with an initial focus on ensuring the inclusion of women and girls, with the appointment of a Senior Coordinator for Refugee Women in 1989, followed by the publication of protection guidelines in 1990. Throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, the focus remained on gender with the development of different agency guidelines and more global commitments to promote gender equality.

More recently, the need to concretely and proactively include people who have been identified as most at risk during disaster, such as older people, people with disabilities, children and people with diverse gender profiles, has been recognised. These groups have been identified as being more exposed to risks, including the risk of discrimination in relation to humanitarian assistance and protection, whilst also facing significant barriers to being able to access such support and assistance. Full inclusion and protection of affected communities emerged as a major gap in the humanitarian system at the WHS in 2016. At the same time, the capacity of local organisations to prepare for and respond to humanitarian crises was prioritised by the sector.

Gender and Age

An important change in terms of more formal requirements to report on inclusion came in the mid/late 2000s with the introduction of gender markers

to be included in agency programming and led by agencies themselves (with CARE International providing a good example of this). This was expanded to age markers some years later, in line with increased donor requirements to highlight inclusive action in this regard. UNDP's initial gender marker, created in 2009, required UN managers to rate projects against a four-point scale indicating its contribution towards the achievement of gender equality. In 2009, the IASC GenCap Project piloted interagency gender markers. The IASC Gender Marker was applied to all consolidated humanitarian appeals from 2011 (all organisations applied the marker submitted to and collated by OCHA for the Humanitarian Coordinator). This went beyond the UNDP gender marker in that it included INGOs, NNGOs, CBOs and UN bodies. The marker aimed to help both individual agencies and clusters, as well as the country operation, to assess the extent to which gender was being included in project designs.

Concern grew that project designers made commitments regarding gender equality without checking actual implementation. At the same time, the desire to broaden the gender analysis by adding age and other forms of diversity and actual inclusion in response, was supported by the introduction of rating all the actions that had been undertaken. The mid-2000s saw the rise of gender markers that were more nuanced and better targeted to the diverse needs of populations. In 2014, ECHO introduced its gender-age marker which requires gender and age implications to be considered at the design, monitoring and review phases of the project funding cycle. CARE updated its gender marker in 2016 to span design and implementation phases, as well as humanitarian and development work (scale of transformative/responsive/sensitive/ harmful). In 2018, the IASC Gender with Age Marker (GAM) was endorsed by the IASC Principals and introduced to humanitarian operations. The GAM is applied to the design and implementation phases, examines the use of gender and age, measures programming relevance, is linked to protection mainstreaming and accountability to affected populations (AAP), and reports whether the programming is sensitive, responsive/transformative, or not applicable.

The areas of inclusion that are covered in the different markers highlight the change that has been made over time and which bodies (donors, operational agencies, coordinating bodies) have driven and influenced the

change. While there may be confusion about the number of gender markers that have been developed, it should be noted that all of the markers ultimately seek to identify and reward projects that support and contribute gender equality. Each entity differs in scope of influence: individual agencies have significant control over their own practices through policies and management; donors have influence over policies (significant) and reach (moderate) through funding; and the interagency processes have significant reach across service providers. Consequently, the markers vary according to the interests of those involved as well as their capacity to review the markers and projects.

People with disabilities

The progress made on ensuring greater reflection on inclusion and accountability in relation to ensuring gender equality in humanitarian responses has led the way for progress on broader inclusive humanitarian action.

Ensuring the inclusion of people with disabilities in humanitarian action had at its starting point national efforts in this area. A key turning point in relation to ensuring that the rights of persons with disabilities were acknowledged and addressed was the 2006 UN Convention for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). The Convention has shifted the discourse on disability so that it is now focused on the rights of persons with disabilities in the context of humanitarian action. Traditionally, persons with disabilities in humanitarian responses have been viewed from a medical perspective, often seen as having medical needs as a consequence of disaster.¹⁸¹ Whilst the CRPD has had a critical influence in ensuring that persons with disabilities were not just viewed as recipients of humanitarian assistance but also important agents of change, there still remains some way to go to ensuring that they are no longer seen merely as passive recipients of aid but as a vulnerable population. As with gender, more concrete actions to ensure greater inclusion in humanitarian action came some ten years after the Convention, with the creation of the IASC Task Team on the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action in 2017. During that ten-year period, significant research was undertaken which produced data to help support the recognition of the need for the inclusion of persons with disabilities from a human rights perspective in humanitarian action discussions. In addition, older people with disability often find it difficult to receive basic medical support for non-communicable illnesses.

¹⁸¹ An attitude that had also been observed in relation to gender, with an initial focus on gender-based violence in emergency response.

¹⁸² <http://humanitariananddisabilitycharter.org>

¹⁸³ <http://inclusioncharter.org>

Total inclusion

However, clear steps to further the inclusion of persons with disabilities, older people and young people, at all stages of the project cycle, are not yet in place across the system. (see illustration 5).

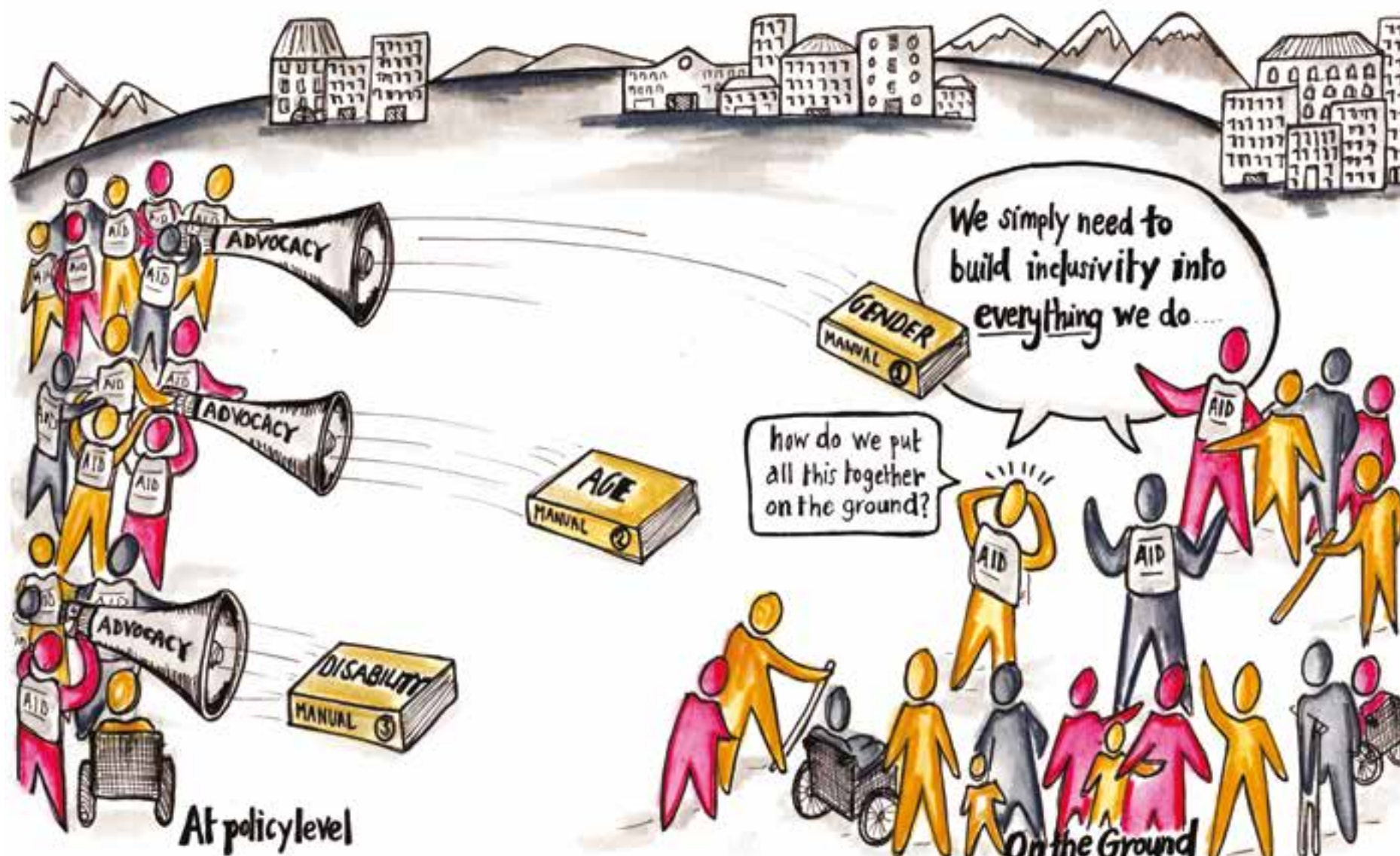
Supported by DFID and OFDA, ADCAP was a three-year project running from 2014-2017 which saw the development of the Minimum Standards for Age and Disability Inclusion (revised in 2018 and renamed the Humanitarian Inclusion Standards). At the end of this project many of the review group and the ADCAP Consortium became actively engaged in the IASC Task Team, building on the learning from their work. The main challenges in terms of ensuring inclusion were the gaps in the fuller participation of people with disabilities of all ages throughout the project cycle.

The WHS provided the opportunity to bring together different stakeholders to address the need for greater efforts at inclusion. The WHS also saw the important step of endorsing the 2016 Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action¹⁸² as well as the Inclusion Charter.¹⁸³ With gender equality and empowerment as overarching themes and with the aim of achieving change in order to ensure that the rights of women and girls are systematically acknowledged and addressed and that their role in decision-making is promoted, some 446 commitments were made at the WHS in support of the High-Level Leaders' Roundtable on Women and Girls. Although not specifically highlighted, Core Responsibility 3: *Leave No One Behind* went some way to addressing the inclusion of all persons at risk of multiple discrimination.

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An inclusive response



5.3. INCLUSIVE RESPONSE MATURITY ASSESSMENT

The Maturity Assessment Framework described in the “Background to the Report” is a way to assess the stage the humanitarian sector has reached in terms of making progress on the commitment to inclusive response. Based on a literature review and discussions with practitioners engaged with crisis-affected people impacted by different risk factors and forms of discrimination, what follows is

a summary of the progress the sector has made to date. As the efforts for inclusion of different categories of crisis-affected people have followed slightly different patterns, three different maturity assessments are respectively proposed for work related to addressing the inclusion of gender diversity, age diversity, and people with disabilities into humanitarian action.

CHART 5.1: MATURITY ASSESSMENT – GENDER

	01 WEAK	02 MODERATE	03 STRONG	04 EXCELLENT
MOVEMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › No agreement that change is necessary › No awareness of negative impact of current state of play › No or limited senior level commitments to change current situation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Partial agreement that change is necessary › Limited awareness of negative impact of current state of play › Some senior level commitments to change current situation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Most stakeholders believe change is necessary › Significant evidence of negative impact of current state of play › Significant senior level commitments to change current situation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › All stakeholders believe change is necessary › Strong evidence of negative impact of current state of play › Consensus at senior level on necessity to change current situation
DIRECTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Commitments to actions are vague › Absence of common language, definitions and ability to measure › No examples of successful change / No consensus on best practice › Not clear what success looks like 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Commitments to actions are vague › Language broadly adopted, but definitions differ, measurement lacking › Anecdotal examples of successful change › Only vague what success looks like 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Commitments to actions are specific › Language and definitions are clear. Some ability to measure progress › Several examples of successful change › Clarity on what success looks like 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Commitments to actions are SMART › Language, definitions and actions needed are all clear › There are many examples of successful change and broad understanding of what success looks like.
ENVIRONMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Processes & systems not conducive to change (culture, systems) › No leadership for action › No requirements to demonstrate progress or rewards for doing so 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Some processes & systems not conducive to change (culture, systems) › Limited leadership, issue seen as separate file › Marginal requirements to demonstrate progress or rewards for doing so 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Processes & systems not preventing change (culture, systems) › Senior leadership on issue, seen as part of strategy › Requirements to demonstrate progress, limited accountability for results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Processes & systems support change (culture, systems) › Action on issue part of organisational culture › Requirements to demonstrate progress and accountability for results

Source: CHS Alliance

CHART 5.2: MATURITY ASSESSMENT - AGE

	01 WEAK	02 MODERATE	03 STRONG	04 EXCELLENT
MOVEMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › No agreement that change is necessary › No awareness of negative impact of current state of play › No or limited senior level commitments to change current situation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Partial agreement that change is necessary › Limited awareness of negative impact of current state of play › Some senior level commitments to change current situation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Most stakeholders believe change is necessary › Significant evidence of negative impact of current state of play › Significant senior level commitments to change current situation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › All stakeholders believe change is necessary › Strong evidence of negative impact of current state of play › Consensus at senior level on necessity to change current situation
DIRECTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Commitments to actions are vague › Absence of common language, definitions and ability to measure › No examples of successful change / No consensus on best practice › Not clear what success looks like 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Commitments to actions are vague › Language broadly adopted, but definitions differ, measurement lacking › Anecdotal examples of successful change › Only vague what success looks like 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Commitments to actions are specific › Language and definitions are clear. Some ability to measure progress › Several examples of successful change › Clarity on what success looks like 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Commitments to actions are SMART › Language, definitions and actions needed are all clear › There are many examples of successful change and broad understanding of what success looks like.
ENVIRONMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Processes & systems not conducive to change (culture, systems) › No leadership for action › No requirements to demonstrate progress or rewards for doing so 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Some processes & systems not conducive to change (culture, systems) › Limited leadership, issue seen as separate file › Marginal requirements to demonstrate progress or rewards for doing so 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Processes & systems not preventing change (culture, systems) › Senior leadership on issue, seen as part of strategy › Requirements to demonstrate progress, limited accountability for results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Processes & systems support change (culture, systems) › Action on issue part of organisational culture › Requirements to demonstrate progress and accountability for results

Source: CHS Alliance

CHART 5.3: MATURITY ASSESSMENT - PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

	01 WEAK	02 MODERATE	03 STRONG	04 EXCELLENT
MOVEMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › No agreement that change is necessary › No awareness of negative impact of current state of play › No or limited senior level commitments to change current situation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Partial agreement that change is necessary › Limited awareness of negative impact of current state of play › Some senior level commitments to change current situation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Most stakeholders believe change is necessary › Significant evidence of negative impact of current state of play › Significant senior level commitments to change current situation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › All stakeholders believe change is necessary › Strong evidence of negative impact of current state of play › Consensus at senior level on necessity to change current situation
DIRECTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Commitments to actions are vague › Absence of common language, definitions and ability to measure › No examples of successful change / No consensus on best practice › Not clear what success looks like 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Commitments to actions are vague › Language broadly adopted, but definitions differ, measurement lacking › Anecdotal examples of successful change › Only vague what success looks like 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Some commitments are specific › Language and definitions are clear. Some ability to measure progress › Several examples of successful change › Clarity on what success looks like 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Commitments to actions are SMART › Language, definitions and actions needed are all clear › There are many examples of successful change and broad understanding of what success looks like.
ENVIRONMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Processes & systems not conducive to change (culture, systems) › No leadership for action › No requirements to demonstrate progress or rewards for doing so 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Some processes & systems not conducive to change (culture, systems) › Limited leadership, issue seen as separate file › Marginal requirements to demonstrate progress or rewards for doing so 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Processes & systems not preventing change (culture, systems) › Senior leadership on issue, seen as part of strategy › Requirements to demonstrate progress, limited accountability for results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Processes & systems support change (culture, systems) › Action on issue part of organisational culture › Requirements to demonstrate progress and accountability for results

Source: CHS Alliance

5.3.1. STRONG TO MODERATE MOVEMENT/ BUY-IN FOR CHANGE

Most stakeholders believe that change is necessary. Indeed, there are commitments to approaches for change to ensure more inclusive humanitarian action because evidence has demonstrated the negative impact on crisis-affected people of the lack of inclusivity. Commitments to change come from a diversity of actors – both donors and implementing organisations – but the population groups for which concerted efforts are needed to ensure inclusion are all siloed.

5.3.2. MODERATE TO STRONG COMMITMENT/ DIRECTION FOR CHANGE

There has been an improvement in relation to clarity of language, but definitions remain contested and not all staff within the sector have been made aware of the importance

of inclusive action or actively ensuring inclusion in strategies, policies and programme design. In spite of this, there are examples of positive change and an understanding of what success looks like across the sector as seen in the commitments made at the WHS, for example.

5.3.3. MODERATE TO STRONG ENVIRONMENT FOR CHANGE

Processes and systems are not conducive to change and although there is some leadership on the issue of inclusion, specifically from some donors and operating agencies, there is no all-encompassing leadership, with inclusion often being “tagged on” to existing approaches or treated as a separate issue. There is, however, willingness to link this issue to strategies and programming, but there are limited requirements (and capacity) to demonstrate results or rewards for doing so. Data is often not disaggregated based on age, gender or disability.

5.4. WHAT HAS WORKED AND WHAT HAS NOT AND WHY?

The analysis of the way change has taken place with regards to inclusion has, as in the other chapters, been undertaken with reference to the change models as described in chapter 1 of this report. The factors that enable or constrain change for an inclusive humanitarian response are also analysed.

5.4.1. CHANGE EFFORTS COMPARED TO CHANGE MODELS

Machine model

The last decade has seen an increase in top-down management approaches, with organisational headquarters increasingly dictating the focus and operations of field offices. For many organisations, high-level approval for operations and initiatives is a requirement to proceed. This has been echoed across the UN, with a number of key initiatives enacted at the global level, including: the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in 2000 which highlighted the role of women in issues such as conflict management; the 2006 Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) which made specific reference to persons with disabilities in conflict and emergency situations; and, specific to the humanitarian sector and used as a tool to promote inclusion in humanitarian response, the Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in 2016. However, the focus of the CRPD on rights as well as needs, has limited its impact on the humanitarian sector, which tends to be primarily concerned with the needs of crisis-affected people only.

The vertical, top-down approach has certainly been evident in relation to senior level commitments. Organisational policies have been necessary – for individuals, organisations and the system as a whole – in order to ensure change in the processes that guarantee inclusion.

Policy making and committing to agreed standards at the global level requires simultaneous action at the field and programme level. However, the follow-up of action taken to implement policies, commitments and standards at the individual level has generally not been sufficient to demonstrate that such commitments and standards have been implemented effectively. Humanitarian field staff have consistently failed to prioritise inclusive needs assessments into the response, often due to a lack of capacity. At the same time, this absence of information from the ground has carried the risk that those senior key-decision makers may fail to fully comprehend the rights, needs and priorities of excluded groups. Overall, this means that the extent to which policies and commitments have influenced practice in the field is unknown, because of the inability of headquarters or secretariats to enforce change on the ground.

The distance in this regard between headquarters’ and field workers has the potential to be compensated by the availability of practical tools. These can be used in the field and can therefore effectively translate organisational commitments into practical action (see the ecosystem model below for further information).

Society model

More so than with other areas of inclusion upon which humanitarian organisations have focused in recent years, gender equality has often generated significant media attention. Consequently, individuals and organisations have become motivated to pursue change (or in some cases not) and to forge enhanced and increased equality in humanitarian strategies and responses. Important examples of the priority given to gender equality in the humanitarian system include the WHS Call to Action and the SDGs.¹⁸⁴ At the WHS, one of the seven high-level leaders' roundtables focused on women's empowerment in humanitarian action and on better addressing the gender impact of crises. This marked a shift from a previous focus on women as victims of disaster and merely aid beneficiaries, to also viewing them as agents of humanitarian action. Whilst Core Responsibility 3 of the WHS has a gender focus, it had a broader inclusion angle, calling for an increase in the inclusion and voices of marginalised groups, such as persons with disabilities and young people in humanitarian action.¹⁸⁵

The advocacy work of the International Disability Alliance (IDA) has been supplemented by a number of organisations such as the ADCAP consortium¹⁸⁶, Help Age, Humanity and Inclusion, CBM, Plan International, the Women's Refugee Commission, IRC, IASC GenCap Project, CARE International, UN agencies, Oxfam and donors. They have worked both together and separately to highlight gaps and advocate for change across the sector to ensure that issues relating to gender, age and disability do not exclude persons with disabilities in need and ensure inclusion throughout the project cycle.

In an attempt to promote system-wide but sector-specific change in thinking, the Global Protection Cluster's approach to protection mainstreaming is one of the clear and positive attempts to try and ensure that crisis-affected people are at the centre of humanitarian action. The approach aims to ensure that the different needs and capacities, as well as any exposure to risks of affected populations are considered at all stages of a humanitarian response. Grounded in the Global Protection Cluster's protection mainstreaming of the four key principles of prioritising safety and dignity and avoiding causing harm whilst ensuring meaningful access, accountability, participation and empowerment, the guidance focuses on age, gender, diversity, child protection, gender-based violence, mental health and psychosocial support, disability and HIV/AIDS. The CHS commitments have been equally influential in promoting inclusion. In

the wake of obtaining CHS certification, organisations are now re-evaluating their organisational practices through the lens of various CHS commitments and development-required improvement plans – a key driver of improvement in inclusion practices.

Political model

In relation to gender, experts are often highly knowledgeable and passionate, and have framed discussions in a way that attempts to ensure the best means of understanding the current situation and the changes that need to be made. However, the process of discussion can take time. This is particularly true in organisations that do not have a focus on a specific segment of target populations. Often there is just one person attempting to promote cross-institutional change in order to ensure systematically-applied approaches to inclusion, which historically have not been in place. However, some change has been brought about in an unplanned way simply because of the shared values and culture held by key individuals who have had a personal connection or exposure to issues around inclusion. This exposure has proven to be critical in terms of harnessing high-level commitments, both within humanitarian organisations, as well as within the sector as a whole.

A key driver of change and awareness in relation to inclusion is consistent advocacy work. The International Disability Alliance (1999), with its unique voice representing persons with disabilities, has been critical in advocating for the rights of persons with disabilities.¹⁸⁷

Organisation and donor "markers" and the development of toolkits have helped to ensure that inclusive approaches are adopted at all stages of the project cycle. For some organisations, including major donors, the establishment of policies and guidelines have helped to undertake capacity-building initiatives such as associated training.

Market Model

Some agencies have stated their desire to 'take the lead' in relation to inclusion. However, this approach was challenged after the launch of the Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action (the Charter) which has seen increased collaboration amongst agencies. Combined with other global commitments and frameworks such as the Sendai Framework (2005-2015), the MDGs and the SDGs, this provides evidence of the agreement between different humanitarian actors about the centrality of persons

¹⁸⁴ SDG 5 focuses on gender equality and SDG 10 encompasses broader equality and inclusion for marginalised groups.

¹⁸⁵ Of all 32 WHS core commitments, the commitment to ensure that humanitarian programming is gender-responsive, received the third highest number of endorsements. Significant commitments were generated to combat structural and behavioural barriers to gender inequality, ensure women and girls' empowerment and secure their rights, and align funding and programming to gender equality principles. Financial support to women's groups was pledged by several member states and other stakeholders.

¹⁸⁶ CBM, DisasterReady.org, Handicap International, HelpAge International, IFRC, Oxford Brookes University and RedR UK.

¹⁸⁷ The IDA represents more than 1 billion people with disabilities and advocates at the UN for a more inclusive global environment for persons with disabilities and their organisations.



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with disabilities in humanitarian action and ensures a solid foundation for continued change. It is, however, worth noting that there is often a subtle unspoken tension between the different components and proponents of inclusion – both at sectoral and agency level. For example, in addition to the Charter, the WHS also saw the launch of an all-inclusive “Inclusion Charter” which was signed-up to by over 30 international and national agencies.

With resources scarce and increased donor attention being given to more inclusive humanitarian action (for example with the creation of the aforementioned markers), competition around accessing funds is apparent in many country operations. Inequality in terms of the type and size of organisation plays an important role in this competition. At the same time, competition for funding is linked to competition for profiling, which has led to a certain lack of will amongst agencies to share and be transparent. Organisational profiling, however, is inevitable, particularly with organisations that have specific missions or objectives. Some of the potential risks inherent with increased competition have been:

- An undermining of transformative approaches to humanitarian programming as agencies compete with one another for funds rather than coming together to promote change or working towards the common good. In fact, mechanisms are seen to be in place which favour those who have previously received funding in relation to inclusive action. As such, some organisations have grown as they have accessed funds. This has allowed them to create space for themselves and has created a positive cycle. Bringing in new people and new organisations with different perspectives which might have significant impact, has therefore been difficult. The larger and/or better-funded organisations are sometimes blocking the space for new, possibly more innovative and creative organisations. The power dynamics of larger or older

organisations ‘needing’ to maintain their position have not necessarily been conducive to change.

- There is however a lack of transparency by some agencies who profess to be implementing inclusive approaches to programming, as well as connectedness with affected populations, but not sharing evidence or data on this. Using a self-assessment process for which agencies rate themselves for various age, gender and diversity inclusion markers has perhaps undermined the credibility of these markers as they have allowed organisations to award themselves subjective scores in a highly competitive environment. This has not been helped by the lack of systems in place to track the share of funding going towards responses that have clearly adopted inclusive approaches.

In their efforts to drive change in relation to the inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action some organisations have introduced innovative approaches, such as the ‘twin-track’ approach. This method has been promoted by well-established and long-standing organisations, with CBM being a leader. It focuses on a combination of mainstreaming and empowerment, as follows:

- Disability-specific – supporting and empowering people with disabilities, their families and representative organisations through increasing their access to support services, healthcare, education, livelihoods and social activities, as well as through political empowerment.
- Mainstreaming disability – working to identify and overcome barriers in society that persons with disabilities face, e.g. physical accessibility, communication, social attitudes, legislation, and including persons with disabilities in all aspects of the project cycle.

In addition, a third track, promoting the rights of persons with disabilities at the policy level, is also adopted by some organisations.

This has seen the creation of new entities or initiatives such as:

- The Washington Group on Disability Statistics, set up in 2001 in order to facilitate the comparison of data on disability between different nation-states. A joint project has been established to support the use of these statistics in humanitarian action as, to date,¹⁸⁸ consistent and clear collection of gender, age and disability-related disaggregated data through all stages of the project cycle is still lacking. This initiative helped to address the growing demand for data (disaggregated data on disability) and to better understand the overall situation. In fact, one change, possibly highlighted since the introduction of the markers, has seen an increased interest in data on persons with disabilities and disaggregated data on gender and age in humanitarian action. In relation to data collection on persons with disabilities, work to improve statistics within the UN system has been underway for nearly two decades.
- Establishment of a sector-specific gender focal point network or gender taskforce to advise the humanitarian coordinators creates important analyses and flows of information about what is working and what is not. The gender focal points have been able to help cluster members examine how to improve gender equality in humanitarian programming, which has had a positive impact from a technical and practical perspective. The focal points have been able to advise senior managers sitting on the Humanitarian Country Team.

Mind model

The role of culture in the humanitarian system is considered to be key in terms of facilitating change in relation to the inclusion agenda. There are no swift approaches to changing organisational culture as the process is long term. Cultural change is most effective when organisations are staffed by people on a long-term basis. With culture often being linked to internal organisational practices, the need for developing and sustaining a culture of inclusion remains critical. Despite advocacy work, and the development of standards and organisations committing themselves to these standards, momentum for change and visible change

itself have been relatively recent. This has probably been due to cultural inertia in the form of resistance to change. CARE International has drawn up a Gender, Equity and Diversity model to provoke cultural change (see Box 5.2).

BOX 5.2: CARE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE ON CULTURAL CHANGE

CARE International provides a positive example of cultural change in relation to inclusion, with the establishment of its Gender, Equity and Diversity model. This model is a strand of organisational self-analysis that runs through CARE's programming. With an initial focus on its own programmes, since 1998 CARE has dedicated full-time staff to the development of a curriculum and the facilitation of training for building staff capacity on gender, equity and diversity. The training is now offered to partner and other organisations. CARE has developed gender-related strategies for integration of gender equality across its programmes, as well as introducing a gender marker and creating staff positions that are dedicated agents for change.

Source: CARE International

Several capacity-reinforcement initiatives, created by exploiting the opportunities for organisation and donor "markers," toolkits and the establishment of policies and guidelines, have helped to foster a greater awareness about inclusion. Examples of capacity reinforcement initiatives include training of focal points for gender (see Enabling Factors below), and capacity-reinforcement of local organisations, including human resource development to support both aspects of the twin-track approach (see market model).

Ecosystem model

In relation to the inclusion of persons with disabilities, a significant effort was placed into the identification of good practice at national level, in order to develop guidelines on how to ensure inclusion. This strategy has led to the highly effective adaptation of the practice in the field. For example, the IFRC's Gender and Diversity Organisational Assessment Tool published in 2017¹⁸⁹ and the revised ADCAP Minimum Standards for Age and Disability Inclusion publication (now called Humanitarian Inclusion Standards for older people and people with disabilities) launched in 2018,¹⁹⁰ have been

¹⁸⁸ <https://humanity-inclusion.org.uk/en/disability-statistics-in-humanitarian-action>

¹⁸⁹ IFRC (2017) *Gender and Diversity Organisational Assessment Tool and Toolkit*. <http://www.ifrc.org/Global/Photos/Secretariat/Gender/Book%20GDO%20assessment%20toolkit%20LR.pdf>

This has been designed to support Red Cross/Crescent National Societies to fulfil commitments (made in 2015) on gender and diversity and includes practical guidance to conduct and to follow up on a gender and diversity organisational assessment. The toolkit helps National Societies to assess their performance on gender and diversity in the areas of political will and commitment; organisational culture; resources and capacity; programme delivery and implementation; and accountability.

IFRC Minimum Standard Commitments: IFRC (2015) *Minimum standard commitments to gender and diversity in emergency programming, Pilot Version*. Geneva: International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. <http://www.ifrc.org/Global/Photos/Secretariat/201505/Gender%20Diversity%20MSCs%20Emergency%20Programming%20HR3.pdf>

¹⁹⁰ First piloted in 2015: https://www.cbm.org/article/downloads/54741/Humanitarian_inclusion_standards_for_older_people_and_people_with_disabi....pdf

developed for use by all practitioners involved in humanitarian response with the expectation that the inclusion of people with disabilities and older people is feasible at every stage of the response and in every sector and context.

5.4.2. ENABLING FACTORS FOR CHANGE

There are a number of factors that have facilitated change in terms of ensuring inclusive approaches to humanitarian action. Some of the key factors are highlighted below.

Legislation and global agreements: Globally agreed and endorsed legislation and frameworks, such as the CRPD, have facilitated change at different levels. Ensuring inclusive action was highlighted in the MDGs (from a gender perspective) and more broadly in the SDGs. This ensured high visibility in the sector and led agencies to address the issue more systematically than in the past (particularly in relation to persons with disabilities).

Combination of high-level commitments and availability of practical tools: Whilst policy and commitments (senior level support) have played a key role in relation to inclusion, on their own these have only generated certain levels of change. The development of practical tools, combined with policy commitments, has been critical in terms of pursuing change at field level. As with other areas of humanitarian action, tool development has frequently been led by practitioners with specific interests and similar value systems.

Favourable technological environment: The era of technological advances has enabled the development of practical tools such as the smartphone application created by CBM (the Humanitarian Hands-On Tool) in 2017 which provides step-by-step guidance on how to implement an inclusive emergency response.¹⁹¹ In today's world where access to technology is widespread, the application has facilitated access to multiple levels of information. This has not only provided extensive opportunities to ensure that the voices of crisis-affected people are heard but also facilitated an awareness of the diversity of those voices.

Availability of focal points in the field, especially for gender: Gender mainstreaming has been facilitated through the establishment of gender focal points at organisational, country and network level. Training of focal points, who are linked to the clusters by the IASC, and attendance at regular network meetings where learning through trial-by-error is encouraged and successes are shared, has facilitated inclusive action.

Increased knowledge: Humanitarians have increased their understanding of gender equality programming

through participating in training, connecting into networks and learning from practical actions.

Robust and convergent advocacy initiatives: The simultaneous efforts by a variety of individuals and organisations have generated a cumulative awareness of the importance of inclusive action. Over time this has sensitised people within organisations to take steps to implement change, including at a personal level.

Opportunity to measure progress (Marker creation): A number of different markers have been put in place to ensure inclusive action in humanitarian responses. This has facilitated change as the markers (reviewed by organisations, clusters, humanitarian coordinators and donors) have required humanitarian organisations to show the degree of inclusivity in their humanitarian responses.

5.4.3. HINDERING FACTORS AND CHALLENGES

The following elements have been identified as the most important hindering factors and remaining challenges for effective change as regards the inclusive response in humanitarian contexts.

IHL: Particularly in relation to persons with disabilities, there remains a lack of understanding over the importance of a human rights-based approach to disability, relying still on reference to international humanitarian law (IHL). IHL has tended to focus on persons with disabilities as recipients of humanitarian support rather than ensuring their inclusion at all stages of humanitarian action. Similarly, from a gender perspective, IHL has tended to focus on women in relation to their vulnerability and victimhood. There are, however, progressive moves being made to address these issues, with significant debate, research and gender-related panel discussions on the gender-blindness of IHL and specific positions created in a number of organisations to ensure enhanced inclusivity and mainstreaming of responsibilities in this regard.

Resistance to change: One of the barriers to change is linked to the presence of individuals within humanitarian organisations who doubt or question the importance of inclusion, or struggle to address it because of competing organisational priorities. Such attitudes have succeeded in derailing projects and progress. There is an up-side to this in that others who are more open to change align against the doubters and can often, in the long-run, enable change.

¹⁹¹ The first of its kind, the downloadable web-based tool breaks down disability-inclusive humanitarian action into individual task cards which explain the basic "how to" details.

Siloed approach: Continued siloed analyses of inclusion are barriers to progression. In fact, different workstreams (Gender and Age, people with disabilities, etc.) working on inclusion target different type of people. A collective body of work on inclusion, targeting all categories of people, is not yet in place.

Limited resources: Whilst commitments have been made, ensuring that humanitarian agencies are able to act on those commitments, this requires financial support – and this is often insufficient. Change has been hindered partly as a result of the lack of funding available to:

- Support commitments to inclusion.
- Ensure that the inclusion of age, gender and persons with disabilities in humanitarian action are mainstreamed.

- Ensure that inclusion is seen as the responsibility of all humanitarian agencies and not just of organisations representing specific groups.

Limited Knowledge and capacity management: Ensuring that inclusive humanitarian action is embedded within organisational culture as well as across the humanitarian system is critical for ensuring sustainable change. Whilst knowledge about inclusion is increasing globally, with high staff turnover and staff recruitment frequently taking place in the midst of a crisis, effecting cultural change remains challenging. There is also a need to ensure that older people and persons with disabilities know their rights, as a lack of knowledge about basic rights is a key barrier that hinders inclusion and meaningful participation.

5.5. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE DIRECTION FOR CHANGE

The last two decades have seen some progress towards ensuring the delivery of inclusive humanitarian action. Progress has, however, taken time. Initiatives to meet the rights and needs of all those in need of humanitarian protection and assistance and to ensure their full participation at all stages of humanitarian response require significant further effort in order to ensure that no one is left behind.

5.5.1. MAKING CHANGE ABOUT PEOPLE

The requirements for organisational change and the transformation of mindsets remain key barriers. It is not necessarily that bad faith is acting as a barrier to change, rather that there is an absence of understanding on how to proactively effect change at different levels – within the minds of individuals, across organisations, and throughout the humanitarian system.

There is a need to dedicate sufficient resources – human and financial – to:

- Analyse the challenges that the programme staff at different levels (headquarters and field) are facing to implement concrete inclusive actions and to support them in addressing these challenges.
- Embed the inclusion aspects within the strategies, workplans and measurement systems of the organisations and networks (for example, clusters) to ensure increased inclusive humanitarian action in a way that, even with staff turnover (whether at the bottom, top or somewhere in the middle), the established systems are able to ensure longer term impact.

5.5.2. BRINGING STAKEHOLDERS TOGETHER

A key reason for awareness and change in relation to inclusion has been due to consistent advocacy work by a number of

organisations. Working both separately and collectively, they have made consistent efforts to highlight gaps and advocate for change throughout the humanitarian sector. Their work has ensured that there is at least agreement on the intent by humanitarian organisations to adopt inclusive approaches to responding to humanitarian crises. The future development of action to reinforce inclusion in the humanitarian sector will need to consider and enable all the different actors (governments, humanitarian donors, humanitarian actors, etc.) at each different level (global and local) to play their roles. Key to this is addressing the capacity gap, which requires both the direct involvement of local organisations in disaster contexts and greater investment in those organisations.

Creating more spaces for collective work on inclusion to develop common tools and methods for the inclusion of all categories of marginalised groups is vital. This is especially important given the fact that practitioners at field level do not have time to jump from one theme to another.

Change has required a flow of information in both directions. There is a need for high-level stakeholders (donors and organisational headquarters) to develop and commit to policies and standards regarding inclusion and actions on the ground, such as an understanding of the distinct needs of the crisis-affected people, in order to design appropriate humanitarian responses. Moreover, tool development, often initiated at the grassroots level, needs support at both senior management and global levels, in the form of policies and frameworks. In future, actions on the ground will need to be reinforced. For example, individual agencies, as well as agencies collectively (in a cluster, country operation or network), need to shift into more transformative ways of managing resources. This should include an identification of the needs, roles and dynamics of crisis-affected people whilst also tailoring specific activities to meet those

elements. Running parallel to this, a means of monitoring the benefits and problems with the approach, along with levels of satisfaction, should also be created. This should shape responses that are flexible and agile according to what is needed. This is a move away from the current, top-down approach to one that is more transformative.

Resource investment also needs to be focused on locally-led organisations, such as those representing people with disabilities. Facilitating the inclusion of these organisations at all stages of the project cycle is an important step in preparing for and responding to humanitarian crises. Linking to the localisation commitments made in the Grand Bargain, there remains a need to build the capacity of these local organisations to help ensure their sustainability, so that they can advance from being a resource during moments of crisis, to an actor during recovery, rehabilitation and preparedness for future crises.

5.5.3. CLARIFYING THE BOUNDARIES

The existence of examples of positive change and the commitments made at the WHS, as well as some standards, have helped to ascertain what success looks like across the sector regarding inclusive response.

However, although a number of tools have been developed to help ensure inclusive action, there still remains insufficiently substantive references on how to do this, particularly in relation to persons with disabilities and older people. An enhanced toolkit to ensure that humanitarian agencies implement programmes that are inclusive from all angles is still required.

There is no accountability framework across the system to ensure the inclusion of people with disabilities at all stages of a humanitarian intervention. Such a framework could centre around the creation of a monitoring system that follows both implementation of the Humanitarian inclusion standards for older people and people with disabilities and the WHS commitments. The reporting process on the WHS commitments is the first step towards this but further engagement is required.

Whilst there are some levels of disaggregation of data emanating from assessment processes and implementation monitoring, the availability of aggregated data in the humanitarian sector globally is still limited. There is an initial lack of information in relation to where different groups are located, what they do and the extent to which humanitarian action is addressing their needs. There is a need for clear, consistently collected and analysed disaggregated data at all stages of the project cycle. Without this it remains difficult to credibly assess exactly what further change is needed. Increased donor support and strengthened collaborative effort across the system is required to address this. One step in this process could be to establish a monitoring system based

on the Humanitarian Inclusion Standard and to better integrate inclusion in the Sphere standards and WHS commitments.

5.5.4. PRIORITY ON ACTION – LEARNING BY DOING

Power-holders such as states are often vocally committed and outspoken on issues relating to inclusion, such as gender equality. When looking at UNSCR 1325 and the 2013 *Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies*,¹⁹² at times there appears to be a disconnect between what is said by those who hold power and what they actually do. At the same time, whilst humanitarian organisations increasingly have policies or commitments geared towards increased inclusion, inequality and exclusion continues.

Without skilled and knowledgeable personnel to ensure quality implementation, inclusive action risks being forgotten or turned into a tick-box exercise. Actions observed in the past such as creating a specific staff position, having active focal point networks in the field, etc. need to be consolidated and reinforced in the future.

With policies, standards and procedures in place, concrete actions in the field need to be reinforced. The existing practical guides could help to expand the implementation of concrete inclusive humanitarian action.

5.5.5. PROMOTING WHAT WORKS

A long list of successful advocacy initiatives conducted individually or collectively are in place. The identification and analysis of good practices in the field has led to the development of practical tools. These successful actions need to be promoted. Since high level policies, standards, markers, commitments etc. have mostly been acquired, the promotion of champions will open new doors and enable further inclusive approaches. There is definitely a need for champions and leaders to demonstrate their competency in this area.

In order to overcome the current siloed approach to inclusive action, which often sees organisations dedicating different resources to age, gender, and disability, the work undertaken in relation to protection mainstreaming could be mirrored to avoid further siloing. Building upon the CHS commitments is another way to break these barriers.

The Sphere Humanitarian Standards Partnership (HSP) helps to develop activities for and between HSP actors and provides a platform to promote inclusion with and through them. This approach helps to accommodate the different available guidelines and to ensure that they are correctly addressed and placed into full perspective at all levels.

¹⁹² The Call to Action is a multi-stakeholder initiative aiming to fundamentally transform the way gender-based violence (GBV) is addressed in humanitarian emergencies.

06

CASH TRANSFER PROGRAMMING

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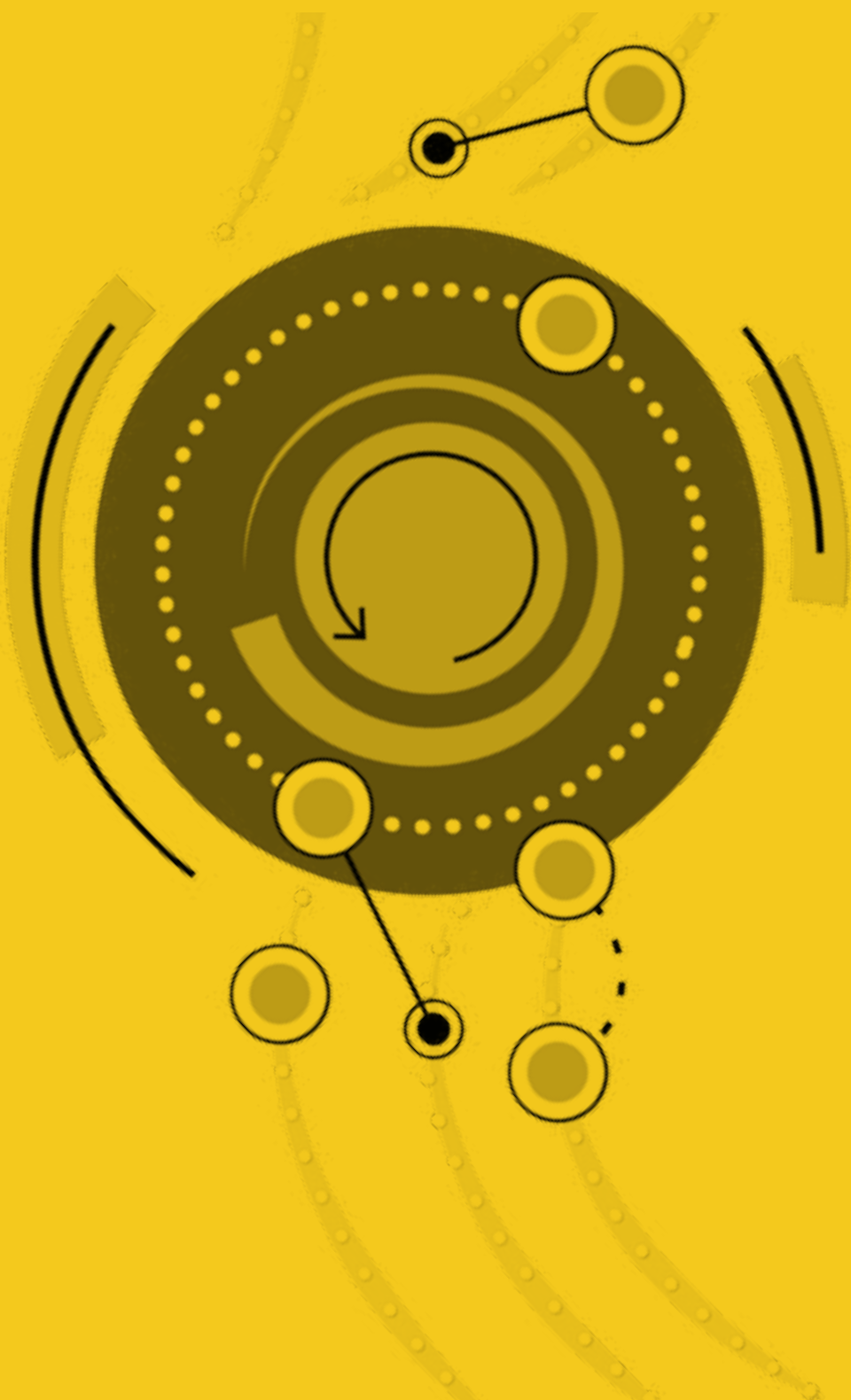
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6.1. INTRODUCTION

The last two decades have seen significant change in humanitarian cash transfer programming (CTP).¹⁹³ Initially spearheaded by a small group of individuals, humanitarian organisations and donors in the 1990s and early 2000s, the last ten years have seen an enormous gain in momentum across the sector in terms of promoting and implementing CTP. This was formally acknowledged by the UN Secretary-General in 2016 with a call for CTP to be the default method of support for crisis-affected people, where markets and operational contexts permit.¹⁹⁴

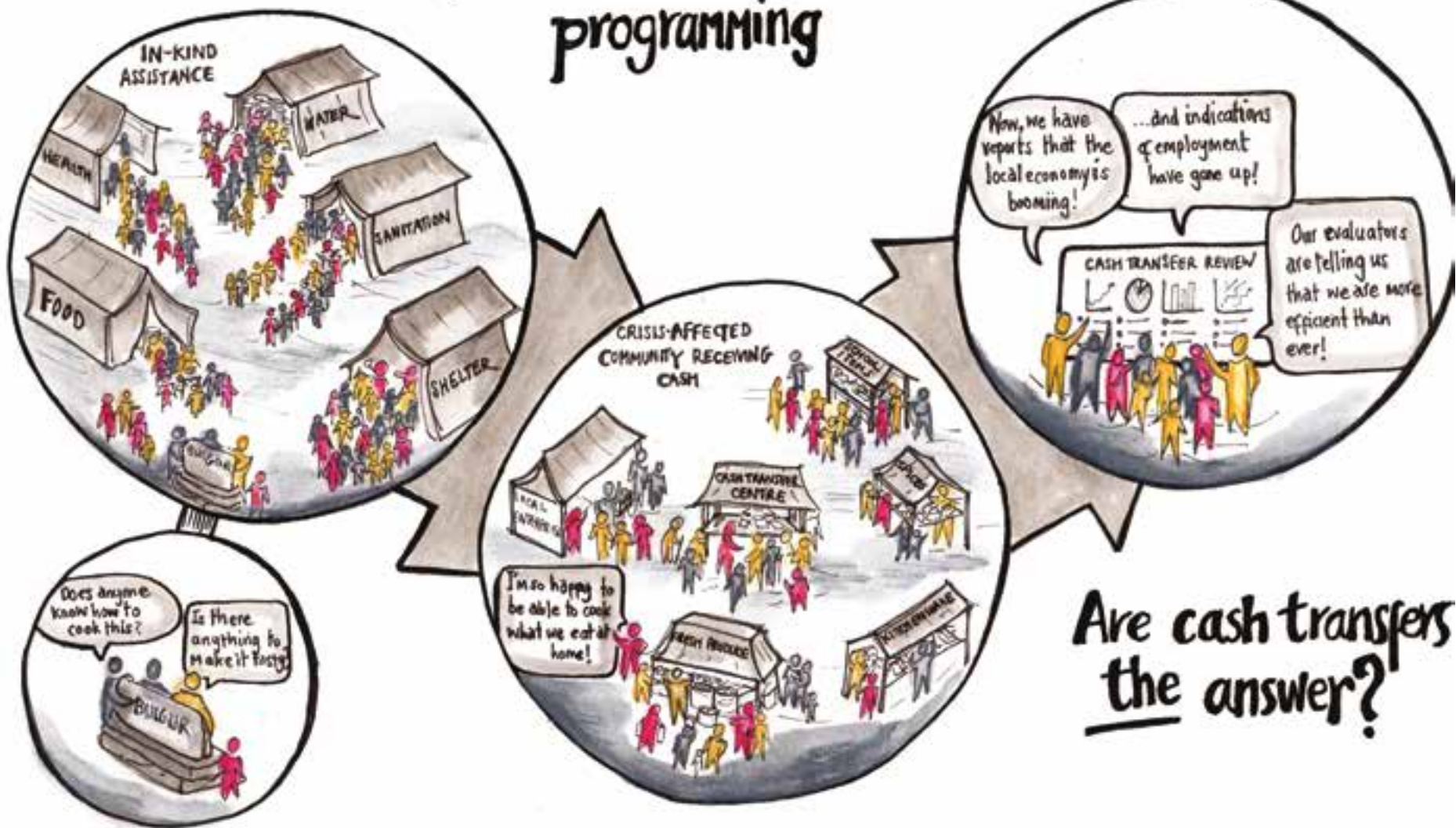
In a world where humanitarian need grows each year in terms of numbers affected by conflict and disaster as well as in relation to the increase in geographic locations and the protracted nature of crises, humanitarian organisations have been continuously and increasingly

highlighting the effectiveness of CTP as a response modality when situations allow. Practice has shown that this form of assistance has enabled operational organisations to provide populations in need with humanitarian assistance at scale, and at times at a speed, that is often not possible when providing in-kind assistance. In addition, CTP brings flexibility, dignity and choice that allows recipients to meet their self-prioritised needs with increased efficiency whilst also simultaneously having a positive impact on local markets. The increased use of CTP has in part been facilitated by the ability to use technology to deliver cash, as well as to monitor to whom it goes and what it is used for. This thereby ensures much needed evidence on CTP effects on crisis-affected people and accountability (see Illustration 6).

¹⁹³ Different organisations use different terminology. CTP will be used throughout this chapter with the following definition from the Cash Learning Partnership “CTP refers to all programmes where cash (or vouchers for goods or services) are directly provided to beneficiaries. In the context of humanitarian assistance, the term is used to refer to the provision of cash transfers or vouchers given to individuals, household or community recipients; not to governments or other state actors. CTP covers all modalities of cash-based assistance, including vouchers. This excludes remittances and microfinance in humanitarian interventions (although microfinance and money transfer institutions may be used for the actual delivery of cash). The term can be used interchangeably with Cash Based Interventions, Cash Based Assistance, and Cash and Voucher Programming.”

¹⁹⁴ <https://www.unocha.org/publication/one-humanity-shared-responsibility-report-secretary-general-world-humanitarian-summit>

Rapid evolution of cash transfer programming



The important role played by international remittances, including at times of crisis, should be noted here. Whilst remittances tend to go unrecorded they often far outweigh the monetary value of all humanitarian assistance. Recent years have also seen an increased involvement by international, national and local actors, including private sector bodies, in the implementation of CTP.

This chapter considers how change has come about in relation to cash and voucher programming specifically in humanitarian contexts. It does not focus on development or longer-term programming, nor on some of the areas where progress continues to be made, such as CTP in relation to social safety net programming.

6.2. WHAT HAS HAPPENED IN THE RECENT PAST

In order to highlight some of the key factors that have influenced the evolution of CTP in the humanitarian sector, the timeline shown in Box 6.1 below has been developed.¹⁹⁵ Key influential factors include organisational and global level commitments, publications, declarations, developments of concepts or standards, innovative action and critical events.

Humanitarian organisations have been implementing cash-based responses in situations of conflict and disaster for many decades. The 1990s saw some larger agencies (such as UNHCR, UNICEF and the ICRC) implementing CTP in a variety of settings although often with conditions attached or in the form of vouchers (limiting the way in which transfers could be utilised). The role of local organisations in implementing CTP has always been central. These initiatives, which were often led by individuals within humanitarian agencies who had understood the benefits of CTP for those they were assisting, were supported by a small number of donors, with the Swiss Development Corporation (SDC) showing early support. Further donor engagement, which was critical in allowing humanitarian organisations to implement CTP, was broadened in 1999 with the new Food Aid Convention which reduced in-kind food pledges and included cash-based pledges.

The early 2000s saw the start of focused research into CTP, looking at associated risks and effectiveness, in part due to increased donor interest, particularly by ECHO. By 2005 there was cross-sector acknowledgement on the use of cash to effectively meet humanitarian needs and this was underscored in an ODI study on the response to the Indian Ocean Tsunami which highlighted the lost opportunities in terms of multi-sector CTP.¹⁹⁶ This latter issue has only been addressed across the sector some ten years later, in part because there has been a focus on the perceived risks associated with the provision of cash (risks that have been proven to remain no greater than with in-kind assistance). But the issue has also been addressed only recently both

because agency-specific sectoral mandates have hindered progress in this regard, and because of the consistent effort needed to manage this degree of change in over-stretched international agencies.

Different organisations have developed their own CTP guidelines since the mid-2000s and today there is a wide range of guidance covering CTP in general. There is also guidance on specific issues such as protection and shelter, and focusing on different target groups such as IDPs, women and children.

With evidence showing the benefits of CTP for affected populations and broader communities, not least in relation to their dignity, the last decade has seen a push by operational agencies to implement CTP at scale. This has required donor support, senior leadership buy-in and a need for organisations to develop systems and capacities that have allowed for a switch from the provision of primarily commodity-based assistance to CTP. Change here has taken time but with some of the larger agencies such as WFP, UNHCR, and the IFRC taking the lead, smaller organisations have followed. Change has been uneven across agencies and has led to a certain amount of repositioning, with some organisations vying for key roles.

Operational change on the ground has to an extent been followed by the introduction of organisational policies and strategies to support further progress and this has been combined with key organisational and global commitments, the most prominent of which was seen in the WHS Grand Bargain. This saw an entire commitment dedicated to the increased use, monitoring and coordination of cash-based programming.

From an operational perspective CTP is being implemented at a time of great technological advances. The use of

¹⁹⁵ Whilst important, the timeline does not include developments in relation to market assessment and analysis as progression in this area is considered to benefit all forms of humanitarian assistance and not just the delivery of cash and vouchers.

¹⁹⁶ <https://www.odi.org/publications/291-learning-cash-responses-tsunami-case-studies>

BOX 6.1: TIMELINE ON THE USE OF CASH IN HUMANITARIAN CRISES

1870–1979 ▼

1870

Red Cross staff and volunteers provide those affected by the Franco-Prussian war with cash assistance programming. Until 1871.

1980–1989 ▼

1981

Amartya Sen's entitlement theory links lack of access to food as a cause of famine, underlying the rationale for the increase in cash-based humanitarian responses

1983

UNICEF provides cash for food assistance to 95,000 people affected by famine in Ethiopia (75% spent on food). Until 1985

1990–1999 ▼

1995

The first EU-funded cash project is implemented by the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in response to the Montserrat Volcano

1997

SDC publishes workbook on cash and voucher programmes

1998

Provision of cash grants for agricultural inputs is provided by the British Red Cross in response to Hurricane Mitch in Guatemala and Nicaragua

1999

Major donors approve the Food Aid Convention reducing provision of food in-kind, with the EU pledging 130m euros in cash

UNHCR provision of cash to 285,000 refugee families in Albania on a monthly basis (some payment delays)

First Cash Working Group established (Somalia)

2008

International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement publishes its Cash Transfer Programming Guidelines

WFP launch of official piloting phase for cash and vouchers

2007

SIDA develops a position paper on cash interventions

Oxfam publishes its Cash Transfer Programming in Emergencies

2006

Through implementing partners, the US government provides \$7.6 billion via pre-paid cards to those affected by Hurricane Katrina

The Pakistan government provides 267,000 earthquake-affected households with cash

An ODI study on the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami response highlights lost opportunities in terms of multi-sector cash transfer programming

2005

CaLP founded

CRS launches seed voucher fair Guidance

ICRC launches a large-scale voucher programme in the occupied Palestinian territories for 20,000 urban households

SDC establishes a dedicated unit – The Community of Practice on Cash

2002

ODI/HPN paper on cash transfers in emergencies highlights the history, benefits and risks of cash transfer programming

2001

2000–2009 ▲

2008 (continued)

USAID/OFDA Livelihoods and Markets Systems Programme Guidance support cash-based responses

ECHO develops Guidance for CTP

WFP includes the use of cash and vouchers in its five-year strategic plan

2010–2018 ▼

2010

Launch of one of the first large scale mobile money (via phone) responses, following the Haiti earthquake

DFID's Bilateral Aid Review commits to an increased use of cash transfers. Until 2011

WFP and IFPRI conduct impact studies in Yemen, East Timor, Niger, Ecuador and Uganda to compare the impact of food, cash and vouchers. Until 2012

Provision of cash transfers by smart cards (2 million cards issued) in Pakistan in collaboration with VISA

2011

As part of its ERC-funded programme, ECHO supports a number of cash and voucher programming projects in relation to cash and vouchers. These include a focus on institutional change and enhancing capacity (WFP; NRC; multi-purpose grants (Save the Children; OCHA; UNHCR; World Vision); cash and livelihoods as well as preparedness (Red Cross/Red Crescent and CaLP); food security in slow onset crises (Oxfam; Concern Worldwide; Save the Children) needs assessment and response analysis (Save the Children). Until 2018

Cash and Risk Conference aims to create a platform for field practitioners, research institutions and policy-makers to share learning and document good practices in CTP

Cash and vouchers minimum standard included in the Sphere Handbook

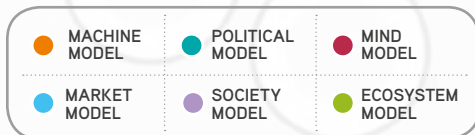
WFP ends its cash and voucher pilot phase stating that food-based interventions are no longer their default intervention

Use of the Ethiopian Productive Safety Net Programme to provide emergency cash transfers for 6.5 million beneficiaries

2012

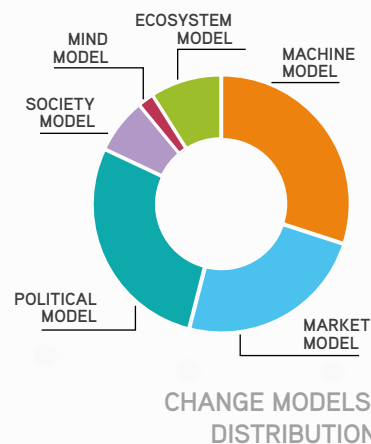
Governments agree the text for the Food Assistance Convention, replacing the 1999 Food Aid Convention

The IFRC launches the first public online awareness-raising course



Source: CHS Alliance

Despite the best efforts of the authors and contributors, it remains challenging to produce a comprehensive census of all change initiatives across the humanitarian sector. This timeline should therefore not be considered as exhaustive or conclusive as they relate to the change models.



The Electronic Cash Learning Network (ELAN) is launched with the aim of improving the impact of humanitarian cash transfers through the appropriate use of payment technology.

2015

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement publishes an online Cash in Emergencies Toolkit (replacing the 2007 guidelines)

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement forms an internal global Cash Peer Working Group to coordinate CTP

IRC publishes impact evaluation of the UNHCR component of the Lebanon e-cash programme – it is one of the few impact evaluations and first to calculate the multiplier effect of cash assistance to refugees on the local economy

USAID and NetHope publish a guide for USAID implementing partners to support shifting their payments to electronic.

CaLP publishes a report on coordination and humanitarian cash transfer

EU Enhanced Response Capacity project developed in order to improve capacity, coordination and evidence for multi-purpose cash grants and explore the protection risks, benefits and outcomes of cash-based interventions. Until 2015

Geneva Cash Working Group formed – chaired by OCHA and CaLP

2014

The Philippines Red Cross Society, supported by the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, provides cash assistance to 90,000 households affected by Typhoon Haiyan. Until 2014

DFID issues a Humanitarian Guidance Note for Cash Transfer Programming

DRC administers largest electronic cash transfer programme to date (+85,000 households) on behalf of UNHCR and ECHO partners

WFP launches large-scale e-voucher programme in Lebanon

CaLP launches the Cash Atlas to track CTP implementation globally

ECHO lifts the 100,000 Euro limit on unconditional cash grants

2013

2015 (continued)

The Swiss government funds a CaLP and OCHA event to assess lessons learned in relation to cash coordination

UNHCR launches Operational Guidance for Cash-Based Interventions in Displacement settings

Operational Guidance and Toolkit for Multipurpose Cash Grants launched, supported by ECHO

The High-Level Panel on Humanitarian Cash Transfers publishes recommendations for the future of CTP

2016

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement launches the Cash in Emergencies toolkit

The Jordan Common Cash Facility is launched by UNHCR to provide one cash payment platform for implementing agencies

As part of the WHS Grand Bargain, humanitarian agencies and donors commit to an increased use and coordination of CTP

The World Economic Forum, MasterCard and GSMA commit to lead initiatives on scaling up humanitarian payments in emergency situations.

CashCap created

The Good Humanitarian Donorship group establishes a cash work stream (as part of the Grand Bargain commitments)

UNHCR publishes its Policy on Cash Based Interventions

NRC produces Guidance for cash transfers in remote emergency programming

ECHO signs an agreement with WFP to support Syrian refugees in Turkey with monthly cash payments. The Emergency Social Safety Nets programme, run by WFP in conjunction with the Turkish Red Crescent and Turkish Government supports 1 million refugees with regular cash support.

UNHCR launches the Cash Delivery Mechanism Assessment Tool (CDMAT) to help assess the adequacy of cash delivery mechanisms

UNHCR publish "Multi-Purpose Cash and Sectoral Outcomes: A Review of Evidence and Learning"

MercyCorps due to launch its Payment Mechanisms Guidance to help humanitarian agencies assess locally available delivery mechanisms and providers

CaLP publishes an Agenda for Action in relation to gender and cash based assistance

WFP launches a gender toolkit

The Women's Refugee Commission launches toolkit to include protection from gender based violence into CTP

February Launch of the State of the World's Cash report - taking stock of global progress on CTP in humanitarian aid to date.

2018

OCHA's Financial Tracking Service introduces a marker for reporting whether funding contributions support CTP (without distinguishing between cash and vouchers)

ECHO Guidance Note on the delivery of cash transfers is updated

CaLP Global Cash Forum attended by 200 key cash actors and 500 online participants

UNHCR publishes its Basic Needs Approach guidance which includes multi-purpose cash as an option to ensure that refugee households are able to meet their basic needs.

ODI research highlights that there is no accurate, globally comparable data on the volume of assistance delivered in the form of cash and vouchers.

Food Security cluster produces guidance for coordinators on CTP

WFP starts piloting Building Blocks – blockchain technology

ECHO Guidance Note on the delivery of cash transfers published

2017

technology has allowed humanitarian organisations to move from the initial approach of providing paper money and vouchers to delivering via digital and phone-based systems including most recently the piloting of blockchain technology. This in turn has facilitated the programming of cash at scale whilst also potentially increasing the ability of implementing agencies to be accountable in terms of who is receiving the transfers. However, digital delivery channels are often weakest in areas of greatest need, and there is a need to work more strategically with financial service providers on digital preparedness.

An area which remains in need of resolving is how CTP fits into current humanitarian coordination systems and the humanitarian programme cycle. Whilst it is acknowledged that CTP is not in itself a sector, rather a modality for delivering humanitarian assistance relevant across all sectors, there is a lack of agreement about where in the system cash, and in particular multi-purpose cash, fits. With cash being by its nature cross-sectoral, there is currently no agreed way within the sector-based humanitarian system to deal with cash in coordination, assessments, response analysis, humanitarian planning processes, appeals, monitoring and reporting. This issue was recently

highlighted in the *State of the World's Cash* report.¹⁹⁷ The importance of coordination has seen the existence of a number of country-level cash coordination working groups (first seen in Somalia in 2008) and at Global level (created in 2014 and chaired by CaLP and OCHA) but clarity with regards to leadership by some of the larger UN agencies vying for position remains absent.¹⁹⁸

Change in relation to CTP continues to progress, with increased acceptance by host governments that this is an effective way of assisting those affected by humanitarian crises. Implementing agencies are also consistently developing new and improved ways of working. What remains absent is the ability to coherently assess how much humanitarian assistance is being programmed in-kind in comparison to CTP. This means that the humanitarian system is not in a position to report on its cash-related commitments made at the 2016 WHS and in the Grand Bargain. There is also a major need for stakeholders (including host governments and local actors) to continue investing in the capacities needed to deliver CTP. This issue was identified under the Grand Bargain cash workstream and CaLP and ECHO are now leading efforts to improve how CTP is tracked at the global level.

6.3. CTP CHANGE MATURITY ASSESSMENT

6.3.1. STRONG MOVEMENT/ BUY-IN FOR CHANGE

There has been continued movement and buy-in for CTP over the last two decades. However, this has started with practitioner push and some limited interest from donors. Today, more key donors are behind increasing CTP opportunities, but not all. In addition, a number of host governments remain reluctant to further embrace the provision of cash. There are some commitments to change, including those made at the WHS, although the Grand Bargain did not propose any major cash-based aid reform. These commitments are captured in CaLP's Global Framework for Action.¹⁹⁹

6.3.2. MODERATE TO STRONG COMMITMENT/DIRECTION FOR CHANGE

There has been an improvement in relation to clarity of language but definitions remain different between organisations. Whilst there has been an increase in organisational and donor policies, commitments and strategies in relation to CTP, this is not apparent across the board. Over the last 10-15 years there has been a greater focus on gathering evidence to highlight the successes of CTP, although most of this is on the food security and livelihoods sector, with less focus on other sectors such as health, education and protection. There are examples of positive change and an understanding of what success looks like across the sectors, but a lack of collective strategic thinking to develop a shared vision of success.

¹⁹⁷ CaLP (2018) *The State Of The World's Cash Report: Cash Transfer Programming In Humanitarian Aid*. <http://www.cashlearning.org/downloads/calp-sowc-report-web.pdf>

¹⁹⁸ Bailey, S. and Aggiss, R. (2016) *The politics of cash: a case study on humanitarian cash transfers in Ukraine*. London: ODI. <https://www.odi.org/publications/10715-politics-cash-case-study-humanitarian-cash-transfers-ukraine>

¹⁹⁹ <http://www.cashlearning.org/downloads/calp-framework-web.pdf>

CHART 6.1: MATURITY ASSESSMENT – WHERE WE ARE NOW WITH CASH TRANSFER PROGRAMMING?

	01 WEAK	02 MODERATE	03 STRONG	04 EXCELLENT
MOVEMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › No agreement that change is necessary › No awareness of negative impact of current state of play › No or limited senior level commitments to change current situation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Partial agreement that change is necessary › Limited awareness of negative impact of current state of play › Some senior level commitments to change current situation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Most stakeholders believe change is necessary › Significant evidence of negative impact of current state of play › Significant senior level commitments to change current situation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › All stakeholders believe change is necessary › Strong evidence of negative impact of current state of play › Consensus at senior level on necessity to change current situation
DIRECTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Commitments to actions are vague › Absence of common language, definitions and ability to measure › No examples of successful change / No consensus on best practice › Not clear what success looks like 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Some commitments to actions are vague › Language broadly adopted, but definitions differ, measurement lacking › Anecdotal examples of successful change › Only vague what success looks like 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Some commitments to actions are specific › Language and definitions are clear. Some ability to measure progress › Several examples of successful change › Clarity on what success looks like 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Commitments to actions are SMART › Language, definitions and actions needed are all clear › There are many examples of successful change and broad understanding of what success looks like.
ENVIRONMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Processes & systems not conducive to change (culture, systems) › No leadership for action › No requirements to demonstrate progress or rewards for doing so 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Some processes & systems not conducive to change (culture, systems) › Limited leadership, issue seen as separate file for some issues › Marginal requirements to demonstrate progress or rewards for doing so 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Processes & systems not preventing change (culture, systems) › Senior leadership on issue, seen as part of strategy for some issues › Requirements to demonstrate progress, limited accountability for results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Processes & systems support change (culture, systems) › Action on issue part of organisational culture › Requirements to demonstrate progress and accountability for results

Source: CHS Alliance

6.3.3. MODERATE FAVOURABLE ENVIRONMENT FOR CHANGE

The extent to which processes and systems are conducive to change varies greatly from organisation to organisation. For aid agencies, increasing the use of CTP has necessitated a significant change in tools, systems and practices to switch from the provision of in-kind support to cash-based assistance. Whilst some have invested large sums to facilitate this change, others have struggled with it. There is a lack of clear leadership on where CTP sits within the humanitarian system. This has been further highlighted in the last 5-10 years with the increased promotion and use of multi-purpose CTP, as UN agencies battle to take the lead. The use of multi-purpose cash has itself been the subject of debate as it is considered a tool with which to meet basic needs, but may simultaneously undermine more comprehensive programming. At the same time, practitioners continue to try and promote the message that “cash” is not a sector in itself, rather a means of providing assistance. Donors and organisations themselves have



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sought demonstrable progress in relation to mitigating the risks (real and perceived) of CTP, as well as an improvement in practice in the last decade – and this continues.

6.4. WHAT HAS WORKED AND WHAT HAS NOT – AND WHY?

The last 10-20 years have seen different aid agencies focusing significant effort into developing tools to support CTP. The shift from the default of providing commodity-based assistance to considering CTP in various forms (starting with cash in envelopes some 20 years ago, to digital transfers and the piloting of bitcoin technology today) is testament to the progress that has been made.

Elements of each of the seven models of change used as a reference in this report have been relevant in terms of influencing progress to date. At times, combined different change models have enabled change.

At the same time, CTP has sometimes been overshadowed by other strategic priorities which have stood in the way of the investment required for change to take place. Other factors that have inhibited change include:

- An unwillingness to relinquish some of the control historically perceived with the provision of humanitarian assistance.
- Some host governments have shown reluctance to consider the provision of humanitarian cash transfers on their territory.
- Whilst the food security and livelihoods sector have been at the forefront of testing CTP and engineering change, other sectors have been slower to embrace change with some still not convinced of its appropriateness.
- Resistance has also been seen in some contexts in which humanitarian operations have been continuing for years, where the provision of in-kind is so established that switching to cash transfers remains uncomfortable for some organisations.

6.4.1. CHANGE EFFORTS COMPARED TO CHANGE MODELS

Looking at the key changes and observations from recent years it is possible to identify which models have been most useful in terms of influencing change.

Market Model

The Grand Bargain commitments have certainly influenced the market approach and brought humanitarian agencies to the table. However, the commitments made through

this process have been unclear in terms of how they will translate into increased humanitarian aid funding for CTP – an important issue for operational organisations with no proposals for major cash-based aid reforms.

There remains a high level of competition in relation to leadership of humanitarian cash programme coordination both globally and at country level. Ukraine provides an example of this where, “... strategy and coordination became highly political, mandate-driven and largely removed from analysis on the best way to assist people. The lack of clear, global guidance on where cash transfers fit in humanitarian coordination and planning enabled agencies to contest arrangements that did not favour their institutional interests.”²⁰⁰ Whilst there has been progress in terms of uptake of CTP by humanitarian organisations in order to better meet recipient needs, in the case of Ukraine, the benefits for crisis-affected people were questioned in part due to the presence of competition.

The UN agencies combined occupy significant **market space** in terms of scale of CTP implementation, but in spite of their size have been relatively quick to adapt and change. A number of INGOs have been competing for space in the CTP “market” with organisations such as Oxfam being one of (if not the) first to produce CTP guidelines. Others are leading in areas of technology (through the Electronic Cash Transfers Learning Network for example)²⁰¹ and market assessments (International Rescue Committee), with still others forging change by taking CTP beyond the food security and livelihoods sector and into other areas such as shelter, WASH and health (e.g. Oxfam, NRC, Solidarités International, the IFRC).

In an effort to break down the approach of agencies building and protecting their market share, a number of efforts at collaboration have been made with the aim of increasing cost-effectiveness; combining agency strengths for the benefit of recipients; and reducing the risk of losing market space to bigger, potentially less agile, agencies. Examples include the Collaborative Cash Delivery Platform and some of the work undertaken through ECHO’s Enhanced Response Capacity projects.

Innovation and the ability to use technology has enabled larger scale and more rapidly implemented CTP.

Another change has been the increased role of private

²⁰⁰ Bailey, S. and Aggiss, R. (2016) *The politics of cash: a case study on humanitarian cash transfers in Ukraine*. London: ODI. <https://www.odi.org/publications/10715-politics-cash-case-study-humanitarian-cash-transfers-ukraine>

²⁰¹ A group convened by Mercy Corps in conjunction with Master Card Center for Inclusive Growth and Pay Pal – a positive example of humanitarian and private sector collaboration.

sector bodies in CTP. Initially involved primarily in the role of financial service provider (FSP), recent years have seen a change with private sector organisations seeking to establish strategic partnerships with humanitarian agencies. This change has been particularly visible in relation to the use of technology for transfer delivery (among other things) and has allowed for the implementation of CTP at speed, at scale (as for example seen through the regular delivery of cash transfers to more than 30,000 Syrian refugee families in Jordan; the ECHO-funded Syria/Turkey social safety nets programme; and the use of the Kenyan Mpesa system in response to drought), and in a potentially more accountable manner. This massive shift was not something that was foreseen or planned two decades ago, partly because the technology simply wasn't available then. This ability to provide humanitarian assistance predictably and at speed and scale is a massive transformation from the more traditional models of aid delivery.

Political Model

Donors have increasingly actively engaged in discussions on CTP, supported implementation and promoted innovation.

The last decade has seen an increased push by a number of donors for humanitarian agencies to implement CTP (or to state why they are not doing so). This in turn has required senior management to support a change in approach. This switch has necessitated some significant upheaval in terms of systems change but also a change of mindset. Some of the momentum for change has come from field-level practitioners and from those on the ground who have understood the benefits of cash. But it has been more the momentum from donors that has forced or encouraged a change in mindset at senior level.

With commitments made by strategic donors such as ECHO and DFID, their pledges and dedication to changing attitudes and endeavours in relation to CTP have been important drivers of change. Donor policy directives, particularly coming from ECHO and DFID but others too, such as SDC and USAID has allowed for change, highlighting the power relationships between donors and humanitarian agencies.

At the same time however, donors have put in place more stringent accountability requirements in relation to CTP than often seen with in-kind. This again highlights the power dynamics between donors and implementing organisations with some smaller and often more local organisations struggling to ensure that such due diligence requirements are met. Larger agencies such as UNHCR and WFP have mobilised the resources to respond to donor concerns through developing specific reporting systems and beneficiary and transfer management platforms (such as SCOPE). This highlights that the political economy model favours these larger organisations with the resources and capacity to install systems to meet accountability demands.

For all agencies, but particularly those at the local level, it is becoming increasingly difficult to meet both donor accountability and compliance demands, as well as to respond to the donor push for more efficient and effective ways of delivering aid (using CTP for example).

Senior leadership in operational organisations have actively supported the increased use of CTP and made formal commitments in this regard including, for example, through the Grand Bargain.

As highlighted in CaLP's Global Framework for Action,²⁰² a number of major commitments and recommendations were made by the sector to improve CTP in humanitarian responses in 2015 and 2016. Having such senior level sector-wide CTP commitments on the global agenda is certainly beneficial in terms of pursuing change but these commitments have only been made recently and ensuring system-wide (or even single organisational) change is not easy to track, and takes time.

Linked to the change noted above about an increase in senior leadership support for CTP is the policy-level decisions which have been taken to promote the implementation of CTP, including by most large globally operational organisations. This policy-level promotion has in turn facilitated necessary change at operational level. An example can be seen with WFP, which invested millions in its "Cash for Change" programme in the early/mid-2000s in order to ensure its ability to move away from the provision of purely food aid and incorporate cash and voucher programming. INGOs such as Oxfam were also leaders in terms of headquarters-led guideline development with more recent years seeing an increased interest and uptake by smaller INGOs.

Other organisations have put in place long term CTP-focused investment with the International Red Cross/Crescent Movement (RCRCM) proving a good example. The RCRCM has pursued a number of important initiatives in relation to CTP, including the development of a global strategy on cash. These efforts have helped to set a coherent global agenda, but with its federated structure, ensuring that individual Red Cross/Crescent National Societies within the IFRC adopt and apply globally-set strategies and approaches is challenging.

The shift in power dynamics between agencies and recipients with the provision of cash (particularly when unrestricted), has provided those in need with greater dignity and choice than provided by in-kind assistance.

When considering cash as a highly empowering commodity, the importance of power dynamics is brought to the fore. The levels of risk aversion, particularly linked to the change in organisational profile that has accompanied the shift from in-kind to cash and the associated influence and power relationships between implementing organisations

202 <http://www.cashlearning.org/downloads/calp-framework-web.pdf>



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and crisis-affected people has however been, and continues to be, a concern for some organisations. The traditional model of an aid intervention (provision of in-kind) whereby humanitarian organisations have been the service and commodity provider in times of crisis comes with a set of power dynamics which are challenged by the political economy model, particularly between agencies and recipients.

The frequent desire to implement CTP in a way that can have positive impacts in relation to the financial inclusion of the most vulnerable and thereby increasing their empowerment. This approach has often been targeted towards women who, in many societies, are not traditional heads of household and therefore not responsible for managing cash. The targeting of women by aid agencies (and donors) in such contexts is riddled with a number of power issues. Similarly, the use of debit cards, mobile technology and engaging previously financially excluded populations with financial services providers, whilst frequently beneficial, brings with it a new set of power dynamics that are often not considered by humanitarian agencies but which have the potential to bring about significant change.

Society Model

Increased sharing of experience, lesson learning and collaboration has been seen amongst stakeholders, thereby generating better quality and more effective approaches to CTP.

An increased willingness of some of the larger organisations, those that have the biggest market share, to be transparent in terms of sharing information has been observed in the last few years. New channels for information-sharing have been developed to facilitate this, such as dedicated cash (and markets) working groups and frequently used online discussion fora.

Mind Model

The development of a broad range of tools, primarily by practitioners, building from their own knowledge, experience, and desire to implement approaches that best meet needs, has been a key feature of the changes seen in relation to CTP, particularly in relation to its growth and more widespread use. However, leadership buy-in and investment has not always been in place and this is key to the tools being promoted within organisations and more broadly within the sector. The need for practitioners to be able to respond to the questions and concerns of senior management in relation to the risks associated with CTP (more so seemingly than other kinds of assistance) in order for organisations, particularly national NGOs (including Red Cross/Crescent National Societies) has often stood in the way of change. This shift from the more traditional forms of providing assistance (in-kind) to the use of cash has required an ambitious transition for some humanitarian agencies, particularly those at local level, as it has necessitated new ways of working. This has required

a change of mindset at a political and governance level which has often been slow in coming.

In addition, the *form* of cash that is provided is also important in terms of cultural aid transformation. For example, the provision of unrestricted or multipurpose cash (with the latter being increasingly promoted by some agencies in the last four to five years) has clear benefits for recipients in terms of dignity and choice. A number of humanitarian organisations are definitely supportive of this form of cash. However, others, including some of the larger organisations and sector-specific organisations, and some donors, still focus on the provision of vouchers (often electronic) which reduces flexibility and choice for affected populations.²⁰³ The culture of control which is challenged by the provision of unconditional cash still lingers in some organisations and individuals within the humanitarian system.

Considering the multi-dimensional concept, a number of organisations have not lent themselves well to aspects of CTP. Traditionally, the culture has been based on the patron/beneficiary dynamic – again, highlighting the relevance of power relationships linked to CTP and perhaps aid provision more generally. CTP has allowed a change in this structure by empowering recipients to take more control and make more decisions for themselves in a more dignified way. This “handing over” of decisions and control to affected communities has challenged longstanding organisational and system-wide aid culture.

Ecosystem Model

Operational decision-makers at all levels agree that CTP is an effective way to meet the diverse needs of crisis-affected people in a number of contexts.

Approaches to CTP have not necessarily taken place in a neatly organised way. As discussed at the WHS, the humanitarian system is made up of complex yet inter-connected elements, much like an ecosystem. Although individual organisations are not part of a large global strategy, this has not hampered large-scale change in relation to CTP. The increased interest in CTP can be seen for example in the growth of membership of the Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP)²⁰⁴. CaLP has built an active online discussion group of 5,000 individuals from some 150 organisations, a key step in establishing a multi-disciplinary community of practitioners. At the same time, CaLP has been central to ensuring change in relation to CTP through a variety of approaches including training and capacity-building of practitioners and organisations and promoting research and evidence around the effectiveness of CTP. Ensuring capacity-building and the institutionalisation of CTP has required understanding from key operational

decision-makers in different organisations and different parts of the humanitarian system, that CTP is an effective way to meet the needs of crisis-affected populations.

Whilst there has been increased support for CTP at senior leadership level within a number of humanitarian organisations, not all organisations have set objectives for change that can be monitored. Rather change has taken place in a more fluid and organic way, based on learning and practice and more in line with models that see the humanitarian system as a society in which values and culture are central or more in line with the ecosystem model.

Factors that have facilitated and hindered change in relation to CTP are well documented. Some of the most dominant and remaining factors are highlighted here.

6.4.2. ENABLING FACTORS

Practitioner promotion and advocacy: One reason that CTP has blossomed and grown is due to the dedication both of practitioners on the ground and in organisational headquarters, who believe that if a specific situation allows, the provision of cash transfers to those in need is more effective and more dignified than providing them with commodities. It is from this starting point that support for and the use of CTP in humanitarian action has thrived.

Donor influence: Strategic donors providing support and urging operating agencies to consider CTP has been a key influencing factor in terms of changing organisational attitudes towards CTP. At the same time, there is a lack of coherence around donor strategies with some promoting the use of multi-purpose unrestricted cash and others being more cautious and preferring the use of vouchers, often linked to foreign policy and accountability concerns.

Technology and innovation: Advances in technology and the willingness of some organisations to implement, and donors to fund, new ways of transferring cash to beneficiaries has been important in terms of enabling increased CTP. Deploying new technology has facilitated a move from the provision of money in paper form, to making electronic transfers. This has also provided enhanced accountability, reducing some of the risk-related concerns that have historically acted as a barrier to CTP. One factor that has allowed for the use of technological transfer methods, has been the prevalence of crises in middle-income countries. The increased involvement of private sector bodies such as banks, mobile phone operators and remittance companies has also facilitated the use of technology. However, there are risks associated with the use of technology, particularly in relation to data protection and the use of third-party service providers.

²⁰³ <https://www.odi.org/publications/10716-counting-cash-tracking-humanitarian-expenditure-cash-based-programming>

²⁰⁴ With an initial founding membership of five (in 2005), CaLP has seen extraordinary growth over the course of the last decade and now has more than 70 members.

Evidence and focus: Using research, often based on programming, humanitarian agencies have provided evidence to counter some of the claims made against the use of cash transfers. The establishment of CTP-specific positions (such as cash advisors and the creation of CashCap) and organisations (such as CaLP) has been critical here.

6.4.3. HINDERING FACTORS AND CHALLENGES

Risk focus: For a number of years, a shift in acceptance of CTP, particularly to scale it up, was hindered by a focus on some of the risks associated with this form of transfer modality. This slowed down reform. However, over time, evidence has shown that the risks associated with CTP are no more or less than those associated with the provision of in-kind assistance.

Competition on coordination: Whilst there is cooperation between agencies on technical issues, and a general willingness to share learning, a key barrier to change is the high level of competition in relation to coordination of CTP. Whilst this issue is of less interest to INGOs and NGOs that are not in the running for the role of coordination, it does ultimately affect their programming when there is an absence of agreement on which agency is responsible for

leading on critical country-level decisions such as cash transfer values. This is a significant and continuing barrier to change. High levels of competition here are stifling the change agenda and preventing systems-thinking which would ensure broader change.

Type and scale of humanitarian crises: The proliferation and protracted nature of humanitarian disasters and conflicts combined with a decline in funding, whilst difficult to predict, is likely to have an impact on CTP. This may take the form of an increase in this type of assistance in the interests of cost-efficiency, or conversely change may perhaps travel in the other direction, as agencies have less funding available to invest in continuously transforming systems.

Financial tracking: The establishment of financial tracking systems which do not differentiate between cash and vouchers is also considered a hindering factor in terms of change. This is because it is not possible to ascertain where the increase in cash transfer has really taken place and is a sign that the agenda is not being moved forward as quickly as it could. Whilst there has been pro-CTP change this is not yet translated into significantly increased levels of funding dedicated to CTP. In 2016 some 10.3% of total humanitarian assistance was provided to recipients in the form of cash transfers, whilst the previous year's total was just 7.8%.²⁰⁵ This is still relatively low.

6.5. FUTURE DIRECTION FOR CHANGE

As has been seen, there is no single tool, framework or approach to change that can guarantee success. As identified in ALNAP's "Five Ingredients of Successful Change", there is extensive evidence from humanitarian organisations that demonstrates that the following five ingredients are found in almost all successful change programmes.

Using these ingredients for change, some possible directions to foster change are suggested.

6.5.1. MAKING CHANGE ABOUT PEOPLE

The current push by donors and a number of agencies to provide CTP at scale is positive, but it also runs the risk of compromising effective programming. In order to ensure that meeting recipient needs is undertaken in the most effective way possible it is essential that the pursuit of large-scale CTP does not eclipse the provision of

humanitarian assistance in the most appropriate manner, recognising that this may require collaborative effort from a group of agencies each with a smaller skill-base, rather than a single and larger one.

Practitioners have played an important part in changing the sector's mindset and support for increased CTP. For practitioners, a system where values play a central role, particularly in ensuring that what is best for aid recipients is at the forefront of decision-making, has seen the development of practical tools to support increased CTP implementation. However, as noted above, the development of tools alone has not been sufficient to pursue change. With leadership buy-in and institutional support so critical, the pace of change has been relatively slow. Linear models requiring investment of significant resources to develop cash capability involving institutional change and organisational rewiring in order to be able to programme cash, have been essential.

²⁰⁵ CaLP (2018) *The State Of The World's Cash Report: Cash Transfer Programming In Humanitarian Aid*. <http://www.cashlearning.org/downloads/calp-sowc-report-web.pdf>

6.5.2. BRINGING STAKEHOLDERS TOGETHER

With an increase in uptake of CTP by humanitarian agencies, there needs to be further collaborative thinking by donors on the best way to direct their financial support for this. This includes collective donor clarity on how humanitarian organisations, particularly the smaller ones and local/national NGOs, can best meet donor accountability requirements whilst simultaneously responding to the donor push to ensure greater effectiveness (often, but not always, through CTP), the call for more localised aid and scaled programming. The thinking also needs to include a promotion of the need to ensure that response options must be flexible, so that the needs of crisis-affected populations can be addressed in the most effective way (which may not necessarily be through a cash intervention).

Building on the success of the Grand Bargain commitments in terms of bringing together a variety of different stakeholders, direction needs to be agreed for beyond 2020 to ensure that the pursuit of the commitments is maintained. As highlighted in the *State of the World's Cash report*²⁰⁶ this will include the need to continually monitor, sustain and refresh commitments over the next five years in order to keep CTP high on the agenda of key stakeholders, so that it can fulfil its potential. Linked to the approach of clarifying boundaries to ensure change, clear goals need to be agreed as to what the desired outcome of future commitments will be and which organisations and individuals are responsible for what.

Acknowledging that clarity on the lead for sector-wide cash coordination is unlikely to come soon, practical approaches to support increased collaboration on CTP will be important. This will require identifying approaches which could include ensuring predictable donor resourcing for country-level cash working groups that will vary according to context and which may increasingly include host government representatives.

6.5.3. CLARIFYING THE BOUNDARIES

In spite of efforts to gain an understanding of how much aid is being programmed as cash, as vouchers and in-kind assistance, there are still no clear organisational or sector-wide mechanisms to track this. Clarifying what needs to be included in such a mechanism and recognising that there are some activities that can never be replaced by cash (such as restoring family links or the provision of counselling) is an important initial step in this process.

6.5.4. PRIORITY ON ACTION - LEARNING BY DOING

With a history of focusing on the potential risks associated with the provision of cash transfers, there is a need to shift to a focus on its benefits. This is particularly the case in light of the reduction in available funding and the increase in the number and scale of humanitarian crises. This needs to include further emphasis on the positive self-reliance and dignity-related benefits that cash transfers provide for crisis-affected people, which is one of the key underlying principles of CTP.

6.5.5. PROMOTING WHAT WORKS

Practitioners with shared values have been critical in demonstrating the effectiveness of CTP, not least for recipients, with recipient dignity being a key driver. These practitioners have been central to the development of tools and the building of partnerships that have helped to ensure the growth and acceptance of CTP. Building on this, continued focus on capacity-strengthening of practitioners and organisations is necessary and this needs to be led and supported at the senior management level.

6.6. CONCLUSIONS

In the last decade there have been a number of significant changes in relation to CTP at a number of different levels. Building on evidence that has shown the effectiveness of CTP, not least in relation to dignity for recipients, change has been noted in the mindset of many of those who have been resistant to increasing the provision of cash, in operational agencies and donors alike.

Different models to effect change have been relied upon in order to institutionalise new processes. However, CTP is not always at the top of organisational agendas and often has to compete with other themes, particularly at field-level where the realities of implementation are apparent.

Although the market-oriented approach has allowed for change in terms of different agencies trying different approaches with a competitive push for quicker, improved quality programming, the

often-seen lack of sharing of information and competition to take the lead – particularly among UN agencies – is considered by many as inhibiting change. However, even the new consortium-based approaches have been blocked from pursuing change at times, as because of competition, implementing and testing new approaches has been obstructed by some agencies which have not been involved.

Whilst there are some positive examples of collaborative and coordinated efforts, the impression remains that, in terms of responding to humanitarian needs, operational agencies must jump on the cash train or risk losing their share of the market. This competitive approach potentially prevents humanitarian organisations from thinking about what the optimal transfer modality might be, as they are being pushed either towards providing cash or risk being pushed out completely.

206 Ibid.

07

SIMPLIFICATION AND HARMONISATION OF REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

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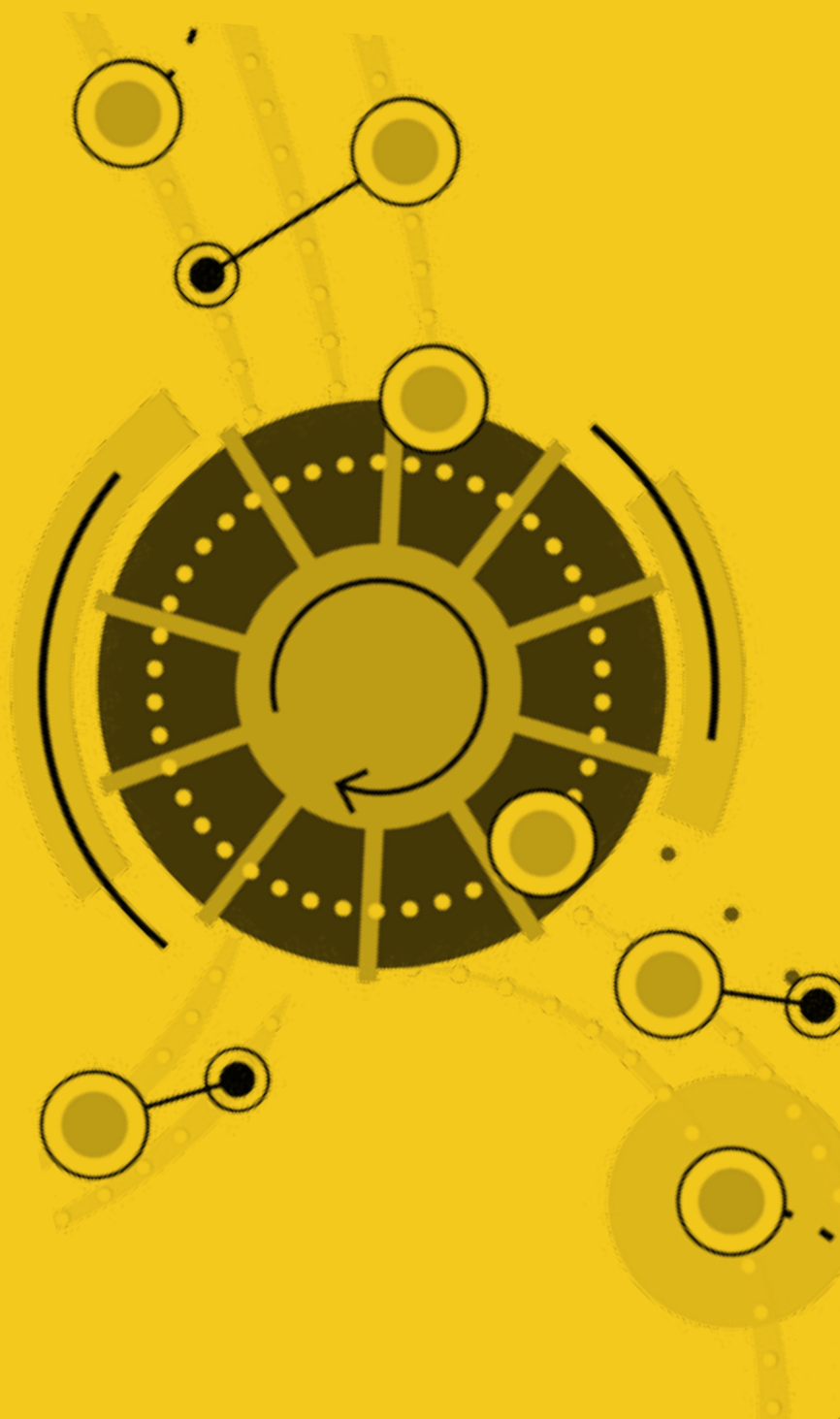
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7.1. INTRODUCTION

Harmonising and simplifying reporting requirements has been an issue of importance, particularly for operational humanitarian agencies, since the establishment of the Financial Tracking Service in 1992 and the Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD) initiative in 2003. In the last fifteen years, the volume, frequency, complexity and duplication of reporting – as well as demands for real-time information, transparency and accountability – have only increased. There are multiple layers of formal and informal reporting (within all humanitarian organisations and donors) between operational organisations and donors, between UN agencies and donors, between NGOs and UN agencies for funding and coordination, between local and international partners, and from all humanitarian actors to the public. The long list of reporting requirements for donors and humanitarian organisations includes many internal reporting lines, significant supporting documentation for both internal and external reports, and ad hoc and informal requests for information.

There are also various types of reports: narrative, financial, informal, ad hoc, sectoral, thematic, annual and more. The continued professionalisation of the humanitarian sector has had an unintended outcome of increasing reporting against technical and accountability standards, while different waves of reform and the cluster system have also led to an increase in the amount of time and resources humanitarian actors must dedicate to reporting. As discussed in the ALNAP paper on transforming change in humanitarian action: “New public management approaches (such as results-based management – RBM), which were ‘designed to...provide a basis for increased productivity and improved efficiency in the delivery of public services actually led to ‘a lot more paper and explanations and rationalisations’ so that ‘most humanitarian actors have to dedicate between 15 and 40% of their time to fill all the different forms, reports, and other paperwork.’”²⁰⁷

²⁰⁷ Knox Clarke, P. (2017) *Transforming Change*. ALNAP Study. London: ALNAP/ODI, p20.
<https://www.alnap.org/help-library/transforming-change>

The Grand Bargain agreed at the 2016 WHS was based on the common interests of donors, UN agencies, and NGOs to improve efficiency and transparency to ensure that resources committed by donors would go further in achieving positive outcomes for the increasing numbers of people affected by humanitarian crises. The specific Grand Bargain workstream on reporting focused on narrative reporting, with the objective that “programmatic reporting is substantive and qualitative while also lean enough to allow for the most efficient use of resources.”²⁰⁸ Signatories committed to:

- a. Simplifying and harmonising reporting requirements by the end of 2018 by reducing the volume required, jointly deciding on common terminology, identifying core

requirements and developing a common report structure.

- b. Investing in technology and reporting systems to enable better access to information.
- c. Enhancing the quality of reporting to better capture results, enabling learning and increase the efficiency of reporting.²⁰⁹

This chapter will lay out what has been done in the past, the stage the sector has reached today, what lessons can be drawn from how changes in reporting were pursued in the past, and what can be done to ensure that reporting can be simplified and harmonised while also being of high quality and useful to funders, implementers and crisis-affected people in improving the efficiency and effectiveness of humanitarian aid.

7.2. WHAT HAS HAPPENED IN THE RECENT PAST

Although simplifying procedures, standardising formats and harmonising the timing for formal reports has been on the humanitarian reform agenda for more than 15 years, little progress has been made until recently. In 2013, the GHD self-assessment noted that among GHD donors, 21 had committed to standardised formats for reporting on humanitarian grants and that: “this could be an interesting area for the GHD group to take up in the future. Standardizing reporting would provide a win-win opportunity; partners would be able to focus on providing quality information to all donors at once, potentially reducing their administrative burden, and donors would receive the information they need to demonstrate effective results.”²¹⁰

Parallel commitments by OECD-DAC donors (most of whom also fund humanitarian assistance) have been made at the High-Level Forums on Aid Effectiveness that began in Rome in 2003. As noted in the timeline in box 1, the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) was launched at the 3rd High Level Forum in 2008 to help donors and aid agencies live up to their commitments to transparency, to increase access to information, and to improve decision-making for

development cooperation – similar goals to those that humanitarian actors have made for streamlining reporting requirements. “Within the Grand Bargain, IATI is identified as the basis for a common standard for publishing data on humanitarian funding, and FTS is highlighted as a well-established, voluntary information platform for recording international humanitarian contributions.”²¹¹ Under the greater transparency Grand Bargain workstream, IATI and OCHA’s Financial Tracking Service aim to be interoperable and this could enable greater progress on harmonising reporting – if donors and aid agencies agree to use their formats and standards.

In the lead up to the WHS in 2016, there were numerous consultations, initiatives and reports which looked at a range of humanitarian financing, donor conditions and reporting issues. The formal and informal reporting requirements for NGOs were found to be more burdensome than those for UN agencies, IOM and the ICRC/IFRC, largely because NGOs receive more project-based funding and donors play a greater role in the governance of the UN agencies.²¹² The reporting requirements research included frequent and complex

²⁰⁸ See <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/harmonise-and-simplify-reporting-requirements/content/icva-phap-webinar-understanding-reporting-work>

²⁰⁹ See <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/harmonise-and-simplify-reporting-requirements>

²¹⁰ Good Humanitarian Donorship (2013) *10 Years On: How Are Donors Implementing the Good Humanitarian Donorship Principles?* (2013). P. 21. <https://www.ghdinitiative.org/assets/files/GHD-indicators-report-2012.pdf>

²¹¹ <http://devinit.org/post/improving-humanitarian-transparency-international-aid-transparency-initiative-iati-un-ocha-financial-tracking-service-fts/#>

formal financial and narrative reporting, ad hoc informal updates and information requests, as well as time-consuming and duplicative capacity assessments and audits.²¹³ Some of the key findings of the research showed that:²¹⁴

- NGOs had an average of 36 reporting deadlines per country per year, and for some it was as high as 80. If ad hoc requests for information are included, one NGO working in six countries estimated it would have to submit a report every 24 hours.
- Tailoring information to individualised donor templates and definitions takes a significant amount of time. One INGO calculated it could save 90,000 person-hours per year on financial reporting for its nine largest donors if those donors agreed on cost definitions, budgeting and procurement procedures, and accepted the same financial reporting template.²¹⁵
- The complexity of procedures and reporting requirements requires expertise and sophisticated administrative and financial management systems. This is challenging for all organisations, but particularly for smaller organisations and local actors, and significant resources that could go towards meeting needs are used instead to ensure compliance with all the different rules and regulations. One interviewee in a research on donor reporting requirements “commented that the system seems paradoxical, in that the smaller the partner organisation, the more reporting is required.”²¹⁶

The report of the UN Secretary-General’s High-Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing ²¹⁷ introduced the

Grand Bargain, which was agreed to at the WHS. Since then, some UN agencies and individual donors have taken steps to streamline their requirements and a few are exploring the use of a standardised reporting template and more flexible reporting guidelines.²¹⁸ ICVA and GPPi suggested common narrative reporting frameworks, and there was an agreement through the workstream and other related initiatives²¹⁹ to try an “8+3” template, with eight core questions and up to three additional questions agreed to by all donors involved in the pilot in each country. The pilot is currently underway in Myanmar, Iraq and Somalia with participation by UN agencies, donors and NGOs.²²⁰

In September 2017, co-conveners of the reporting requirements and the four other workstreams related to donor conditions – greater transparency, reduced duplication and management costs, multi-year funding and budgeting, and reducing earmarking – met to discuss collaboration and synergies to enable collective action. They made a “Commitment to Complementarity,”²²¹ which started with an initial mapping of the activities under each workstream to identify linkages, opportunities for collaboration and the need for sequencing to ensure implementation of all the Grand Bargain Commitments. This was an important step given that the issues related to reporting requirements are closely linked to these other areas of reform. Reporting requirements are also a significant issue that has come up in the localisation agenda. However, there has been very little involvement of national and local humanitarian actors in the discussions and planning thus far on simplifying and harmonising reporting commitments.

212 Caccavale, J., Haver, K, and Stoddard, A. (2016) *Donor Reporting Requirements Research*. London: Humanitarian Outcomes, p3: https://www.ghdinitiative.org/assets/files/Activities/Our%20Work/Research%20on%20donor%20reporting%20requirements_22%20Feb%20FINAL.pdf

213 Ibid.

Esland, C., Fabbri, P., Roselli, C. (2016) *Less Paper More Aid: Reporting, Partner Capacity Assessment and Audit*. Geneva: ICVA. https://lesspapermoreaid.org/documents/160511Less%20Paper%20More%20Aid%20-%20Final%20EN_FR_AR%20copy.pdf

214 See <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/harmonise-and-simplify-reporting-requirements/content/icva-phap-webinar-understanding-reporting-work>

Gaston, E. (2017) *Harmonizing Donor Reporting Berlin*. Global Public Policy Institute. http://www.gppi.net/fileadmin/user_upload/media/pub/2017/Gaston_2017_Harmonizing_Donor_Reporting.pdf

NRC (2016) *Keep it Simple: Rushing to Save Lives*. Norwegian Refugee Council

215 Ibid.

216 Caccavale, J., Haver, K, and Stoddard, A. (2016) *Donor Reporting Requirements Research*. London: Humanitarian Outcomes, p. 7: https://www.ghdinitiative.org/assets/files/Activities/Our%20Work/Research%20on%20donor%20reporting%20requirements_22%20Feb%20FINAL.pdf

217 Too Important to Fail—Addressing the Humanitarian Financing Gap. (2016) High-Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing Report to the Secretary-General. <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/grand-bargain-hosted-iasc/documents/too-important-fail-addressing-humanitarian-financing-gap-high>

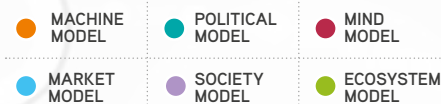
218 ICVA (2016) *Summary Report from Experts Workshop: Taking Forward the Grand Bargain Workstream on Simplified and Harmonized Reporting*. Geneva: ICVA. <https://www.icvanetwork.org/resources/experts-workshop-taking-forward-grand-bargain-workstream-simplified-and-harmonized>

219 Including the Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD) Initiative, IASC Humanitarian Financing Task Team and ICVA’s Donor Conditions Task Force.

220 <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/grand-bargain-hosted-iasc/documents/common-83-template-donors-version>

221 https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/a_commitment_to_complementarity_updated_11.2017_0.pdf

BOX 7.1: TIMELINE



1992-1999 ▼

1992

- The Financial Tracking Service (FTS) is established as a follow-up to UN General Assembly Resolution 46/182 – *Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations*. This resolution created a framework for humanitarian assistance and coordination, which remains the basis of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)'s mandate.

1997

- First Sphere Handbook is launched, which could be used for monitoring and reporting to improve the quality and accountability to donors, constituents and people affected by crises.

2000-2010 ▼

2003

- Good Humanitarian Donorship initiative (GHD) is established and the Principles and Good Practice were endorsed by 17 donors. Specific principles related to harmonising reporting are: 1) Request that implementing humanitarian organisations fully adhere to good practice and are committed to promoting accountability, efficiency and effectiveness in implementing humanitarian action; and 2) Ensure a high degree of accuracy, timeliness, and transparency in donor reporting on official humanitarian assistance spending and encourage the development of standardised formats for such reporting.

- The International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) is launched at the 3rd High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Accra to help donors live up to their commitments to transparency in the Accra Agenda for Action.

2008

- The HAP Standard in Accountability and Quality Management and its corresponding certification scheme are launched, emphasising financial transparency among other commitments to accountability.

2007

- Tsunami Evaluation Coalition (TEC) report raises issues related to funding and accountability that have linkages to the lack of simple and common reporting formats.

2006

- Humanitarian Reform Process begins. Among other things, the cluster system was created, with an expectation that humanitarian agencies would report to sectoral clusters at the country level and that results would be measured against a commonly-agreed monitoring and reporting framework.

- Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness is signed at the 2nd High Level forum on Aid Effectiveness. One of the key commitments was to harmonisation by donor countries, specifically to coordinate, simplify procedures and share information to avoid duplication.

2005

2011 ▲

2010-2018 ▼

The 4th High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan commits development actors (many of whom also fund humanitarian aid) to “implement a common open standard for electronic publication of timely, comprehensive and forward-looking information on resources provided through development cooperation,” that takes into account the statistical reporting of the OECD-DAC and work of IATI. There is also endorsement by donors and recipient governments of the New Deal on Fragile States, which called for the use of country-based systems, including for reporting.

The Transformative Agenda is agreed by the IASC Principals, with a focus on improved leadership, coordination and accountability.

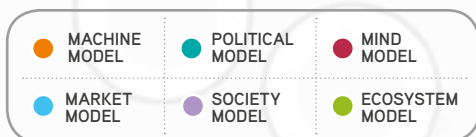
2013

The GHD self-assessment notes that among GHD donors, 21 had committed to standardised formats for reporting on humanitarian grants.

2014

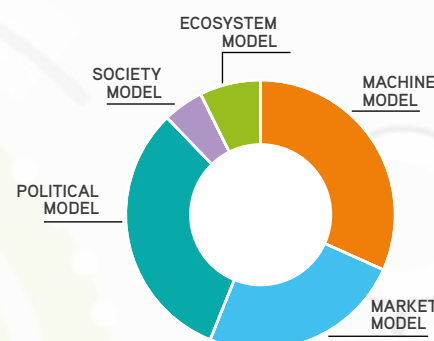
The Core Humanitarian Standard is launched with an increased focus on transparency and accountability to crisis-affected populations and raises expectations of members reporting against the standards.

Source: CHS Alliance



Despite the best efforts of the authors and contributors, it remains challenging to produce a comprehensive census of all change initiatives across the humanitarian sector. This timeline should therefore not be considered as exhaustive or conclusive as they relate to the change models.

CHANGE MODELS' DISTRIBUTION



High Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing publishes its report to the UN Secretary-General *Too important to fail—addressing the humanitarian financing gap*. This report introduced the Grand Bargain, which was agreed to at the WHS.

2016

VOICE publishes *Exploring EU Humanitarian Donors' Funding and Conditions for Working with NGOs: Building Evidence for Simplification*.

The Charter4Change is launched at the WHS Global Consultation in Geneva. This agreement sees 29 international NGOs agree to increase direct funding to southern-based organisations by 20 percent and to review financial tracking and reporting mechanisms.

ICVA publishes *A Comparison Review of UN Project Partnership Agreements for NGO Implementation of Humanitarian Projects*.

The IASC Humanitarian Financing Task Team publishes *Future Humanitarian Financing: Looking Beyond the Crisis* which is used as input for the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing and the World Humanitarian Summit.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is adopted at the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit, with goals and indicators to be reported on by member states and other actors contributing to development outcomes (many of whom also have humanitarian programmes).

2016 (continued)

Humanitarian Outcomes publishes *Donor Reporting Requirements Research*.

The IASC Humanitarian Financing Task Team publishes a report on donor conditions and their implications for humanitarian response, which includes a section on reporting.

ICVA's *Less Paper, More Aid* report is published highlighting the impacts of donor reporting requirements on NGOs and suggested a "framework for change." It was updated in September 2016.

World Humanitarian Summit held in Istanbul, Turkey. The Agenda for Humanity and Grand Bargain are launched, including a workstream dedicated to harmonised and simplified reporting.

The UK and Netherlands introduce the requirement that reporting to the IATI Standard is a condition for receiving funding.

UNHCR Humanitarian Performance Monitoring is tried in the Ebola crisis and has now become a framework that countries can adapt, based on the type of emergency.

Norwegian Refugee Council commissions the Boston Consulting Group to capture the impacts of different reporting requirements on its operations, summarised in a report *Keep it Simple: Rushing to Save Lives*.

The Humanitarian Data Centre is launched in The Hague Humanity Hub to increase the use and impact of data in humanitarian crises by offering services such as processing and visualising data, developing and promoting data policies and offering training in data skills.

Pilot projects for the "8+3" common reporting template in Iraq, Myanmar and Somalia involving eight donor governments, four UN donor agencies, four UN partner agencies, 16 INGOs, and numerous national NGOs with direct UN funding.

Global Public Policy Institute (GPPi) published the *Harmonizing Donor Reporting analysis* of 19 donor reporting templates and suggested a "10+3" common reporting template.

2017

2015

7.3. WHERE ARE WE NOW?

The Maturity Assessment Framework described in Chapter 1 is a way to assess the stage the humanitarian has reached in terms of making progress on the commitment to simplify and harmonise reporting requirements. Based

on background reading and discussions with experts and practitioners, the following shows an estimated score for progress on this long-standing commitment to date.

CHART 7.1: MATURITY ASSESSMENT – WHERE WE ARE NOW FOR THE REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

	01 WEAK	02 MODERATE	03 STRONG	04 EXCELLENT
MOVEMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › No agreement that change is necessary › No awareness of negative impact of current state of play › No or limited senior level commitments to change current situation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Partial agreement that change is necessary › Limited awareness of negative impact of current state of play › Some senior level commitments to change current situation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Most stakeholders believe change is necessary › Significant evidence of negative impact of current state of play › Significant senior level commitments to change current situation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › All stakeholders believe change is necessary › Strong evidence of negative impact of current state of play › Consensus at senior level on necessity to change current situation
DIRECTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Commitments to actions are vague › Absence of common language, definitions and ability to measure › No examples of successful change / No consensus on best practice › Not clear what success looks like 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Commitments to actions are vague › Language broadly adopted, but definitions differ, measurement lacking › Anecdotal examples of successful change › Only vague what success looks like 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Commitments to actions are specific › Language and definitions are clear. Some ability to measure progress › Several examples of successful change › Clarity on what success looks like 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Commitments to actions are SMART › Language, definitions and actions needed are all clear › There are many examples of successful change and broad understanding of what success looks like.
ENVIRONMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Processes & systems not conducive to change (culture, systems) › No leadership for action › No requirements to demonstrate progress or rewards for doing so 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Some processes & systems not conducive to change (culture, systems) › Limited leadership, issue seen as separate file › Marginal requirements to demonstrate progress or rewards for doing so 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Processes & systems not preventing change (culture, systems) › Senior leadership on issue, seen as part of strategy › Requirements to demonstrate progress, limited accountability for results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Processes & systems support change (culture, systems) › Action on issue part of organisational culture › Requirements to demonstrate progress and accountability for results

Source: CHS Alliance

7.3.1. MODERATE MOVEMENT/ BUY-IN FOR CHANGE

There are differences in stakeholders' views on the range of reporting issues to be addressed and there are significant legal and bureaucratic hurdles to be overcome (particularly with financial reporting), but there is broad agreement on the need for this change. Most donors acknowledge that their reporting requirements can be burdensome for their partners and that they don't use all of the information

they ask for, but they are also under increased domestic pressure to show more transparency and accountability, with a very low tolerance for risk.²²²

The discussions on these reforms have largely been between donors, UN agencies and INGOs, while most national and local actors who deal with the downstream effects of the reporting requirements have a low level of awareness of the reform efforts and have not had a seat at the table. Studies and reports by the UN, IASC, ICVA, NRC and others have shown the negative effects of reporting

²²² Caccavale, J., Haver, K. and Stoddard, A. (2016) *Donor Reporting Requirements Research*. London: Humanitarian Outcomes. https://www.ghdinitiative.org/assets/files/Activities/Our%20Work/Research%20on%20donor%20reporting%20requirements_22%20Feb%20FINAL.pdf

requirements on international actors, but little evidence has been analysed to show the significant effects on local and national NGOs who often have far less funding for the staffing and systems needed to meet demands. The top-down nature of the discussions thus far could also affect progress on the localisation agenda, for which donor requirements have been a significant issue.

While there are commitments on paper to change the current situation, there is still a long way to go in terms of seeing changes on the ground. Whilst the individual actions that some donors have taken and the 8+3 common reporting pilot projects are steps in the right direction, volume, frequency, quality and usage of reporting are issues that have yet to be fully addressed.

7.3.2. MODERATE TO STRONG COMMITMENT/DIRECTION FOR CHANGE

The commitments are reasonably specific, though most deal with narrative reports, not financial or other types of reporting, supporting documentation, and ad hoc information requests. There is a significant degree of similarity in the types of information that donors require, and the amount and level of reporting does not differ much based on the size of the grant or award, though there is often more monitoring and informal reporting solicited for larger or riskier projects and in higher-risk environments.²²³ Challenges remain though in using common indicators, standardising cost definitions and in harmonising reporting formats to address donor-specific and project-specific priorities and concerns.

Several donors have taken steps to reduce the volume and frequency of their financial reporting requirements, and to use common indicators. USAID has reduced the frequency of reporting for some projects and “ECHO reconstructed its financial reporting requirements in 2014 in an effort to reduce and simplify these for partners, consolidating multiple supporting documents into one general ledger.”²²⁴ The US and ECHO, the largest humanitarian donors “have standard indicator lists which have been influenced by the IASC cluster indicators registry but are not identical to them. These donors believe there is value in generating standardized data to improve comparability across organisations and to enhance accountability.”²²⁵

ECHO’s single form and the 8+3 common template pilot are practical steps in the right direction and will hopefully provide successful examples of what change could look like. Successful implementation of this commitment is expected to save money and significant amounts of staff



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time, which could be spent on working with crisis-affected people and partners to provide more effective assistance, and lead to higher quality reports that can be more useful for decision-making and learning.²²⁶ The CEO of the World Bank and Eminent Person for the Grand Bargain, Kristalina Georgieva, estimated that a billion dollars a year could be saved through reducing red tape and making reporting requirements more efficient.²²⁷

7.3.3. MODERATELY FAVOURABLE ENVIRONMENT FOR CHANGE

Each government donor has different domestic legislative, administrative, and financial requirements and priorities for reporting which make simplifying and harmonising reporting requirements with one another challenging. Donors, UN agencies and NGOs all have their own financial and information management systems, which have become increasingly more complex as more earmarks, supporting documentation, technical standards, and cross-cutting issues have been included in reporting requirements.

While there has been good leadership by ICVA and the German Federal Foreign Office through the Grand Bargain workstream, those who feel the biggest burden – staff and local actors on the front lines – have had little voice in the process. There are few rewards to donors to reduce reporting requirements, especially in the eyes of their legislatures and publics who demand accountability but may not understand the complex and risky contexts in which they are working.

²²³ Ibid, p. 9.

²²⁴ Ibid, p. 7.

²²⁵ Ibid, p. 11.

²²⁶ See https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/reporting_bonn_2_pager_1.pdf

²²⁷ <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2016/may/25/less-paperwork-bureaucracy-more-aid-in-humanitarian-work>

7.4. WHAT SEEMS TO HAVE WORKED AND WHAT HAS NOT – AND WHY?

The analysis of the way change has taken place with regards to simplification and harmonisation of the reporting requirements has, as in the other chapters, been undertaken with reference to the change models as described in chapter 1 of this report. The factors that enable or constrain change are also analysed.

7.4.1. CHANGE EFFORTS COMPARED TO CHANGE MODELS

Machine Model

Given that this is largely about changing business processes and systems, changes have largely been approached from the top down by seeking to create common reporting templates, rather than looking from the ground up at how the quality and usage of data in reports affects the reporting frameworks that are needed to show the outcomes and effectiveness of humanitarian action.

Market model

Therefore, it is important to consider the market forces at play, where partners have little leverage to push donors to change and there is not a strong market force to drive humanitarian actors together to work on it. The customers and consumers of humanitarian aid have significantly different interests and there are few incentives for donors to change beyond the quid quo pro agreement in the Grand Bargain. At the same time, increased competition between international actors has led to more focus on the effects of reporting on the international actors as intermediaries than on the effects on national and local actors and field staff on the frontlines. Local partners further down the aid supply chain who could benefit most from reduced reporting burdens have the least amount of market share and therefore influence in discussions. Not enough attention has been paid to how information in reports is valued and used and how it can foster learning. Simply put, the demand for upward accountability outweighs the demands to simplify and harmonise reporting requirements, which could increase the focus on downward accountability.

Political Model

Compared to some of the other changes discussed in this report, it might seem reasonably simple for donors to just come together and revise their reporting formats and tell their partners to use them. But it is simply not that easy – significant political considerations come into play as donors have many demands for information to balance and political will is needed to ensure success. Each donor has their own constituencies, laws, regulations, interests, and approaches to risks which are reflected in the way they manage and in the reporting requirements they have for their partners. Larger donors such as USAID, ECHO, and UN agencies tend to have the most requirements and, given the size of their budgets and the range of constituencies and interests they must manage, these get passed on to the majority of humanitarian agencies on the ground. While the reporting burden falls most heavily on frontline staff and organisations, in the current political structures of the humanitarian system, they often have the quietest voice and least input at the headquarters and global policy levels where collective changes are discussed and decisions are made.

There are also concerns that the largest and most bureaucratic donors will have a significant influence on the design of common frameworks to ensure that their political needs and interests are met, rather than trying to change their own systems and processes to enable greater simplification and harmonisation. To protect the humanitarian aid budgets that they have – particularly in the face of rising nationalism – most donors do not want to lower their standards for public accountability to satisfy what is largely seen to be a demand from their implementing partners.

Ecosystem model

It is possible that changes in reporting may be easier to undertake in the future given changes that are underway or hoped for in the wake of the WHS. Those pursuing complementary workstreams and agendas need to be mindful of how one change in the system will influence other changes and work to minimise negative effects from progress in one area that may set back progress in another one. Recent recommendations on prioritising and sequencing of commitments under the various workstreams should be heeded to ensure that the



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desired outcomes have lasting and positive effects on the humanitarian system.²²⁸

While these mental models are helpful in trying to understand the assumptions underlying the attempts at change to date and the challenges which remain, there are additional factors which enable and hinder simplified and harmonised reporting. Following are some key enablers to build on, and challenges which remain, to achieving more useful reporting for decision-making, learning and accountability.

7.4.2. ENABLERS OF CHANGE

Practical action and momentum for change. The Grand Bargain has created a positive momentum for change and the reporting workstream commitments provide specific and practical actions for signatories to implement individually and collectively. The common narrative reporting pilot spearheaded by ICVA has helped to attract new participants and is being leveraged into proposals for addressing financial reporting in a similar manner. The Charter for Change²²⁹, with over 30 INGO signatories and many national and local endorsers, has a positive focus on organisational changes to enable locally-led responses, including increasing the visibility of national and local partners in INGO reporting to and advocacy with donors.

Flexible and technical approach. The similarity in reporting requirements across donors and through

coordination mechanisms has enabled change discussions to be more technical than political. The development of the 8+3 common narrative reporting template could be seen as an example to apply to other types of reporting requirements which have yet to be tackled. For example, in the ongoing pilot, donors can agree to the maximum acceptable common questions and then require less from their partners, so long as their requirements are included in the template.

Complementary reforms. If fully implemented, the shift to multi-year planning, reduced management costs and earmarking, greater transparency, and localisation could positively affect the frequency, nature and content of reporting.²³⁰ Internal revisions to conditions and reporting requirements undertaken by individual donors in relation to these other commitments could create an opening for them to lead the way in collective efforts to harmonise formats and deal with duplication and frequency of reporting.

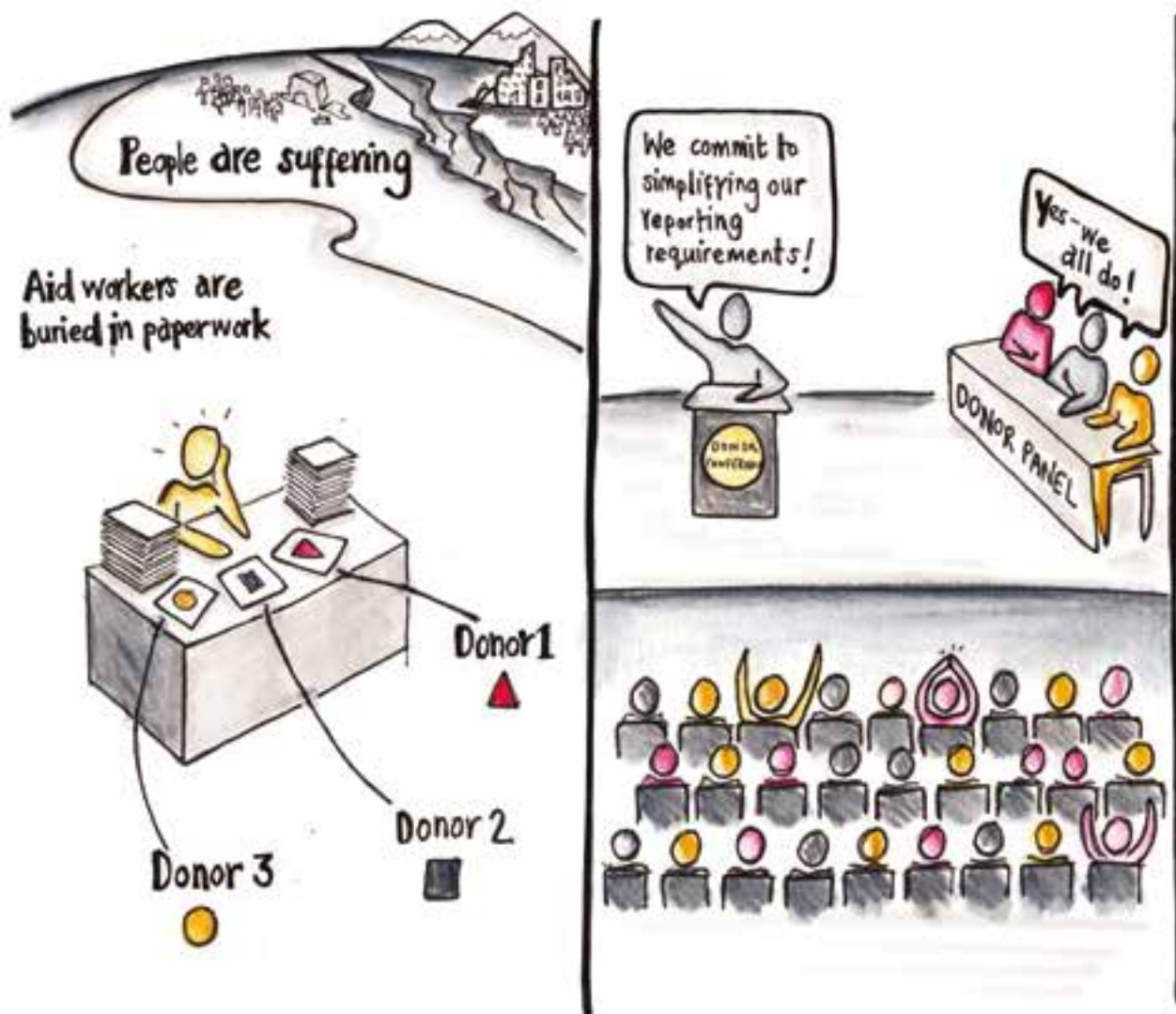
Technological solutions. Increased connectivity enables quick sharing and collation of information, and shared platforms can improve access to information for people all along the aid supply chain to improve their decision-making. Under the “Greater Transparency” workstream of the Grand Bargain, IATI and FTS aim to be interoperable and this could enable greater progress on harmonising reporting – if donors and aid agencies agree to use their formats and standards. New ways of managing and presenting data (such as dashboards,

²²⁸ Metcalfe-Hough, V. and Poole, L. with Bailey, S. and Belanger, J. (2018) *Grand Bargain Annual Independent Report*. London: ODI/HPG. <https://www.odi.org/publications/11135-grand-bargain-annual-independent-report-2018>

²²⁹ Charter for Change (2017) *From Commitments to Action Progress report 2016-2017*. <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/charter-change-commitments-action-progress-report-2016-2017>

²³⁰ ICVA (2016) *Summary Report from Experts Workshop: Taking Forward the Grand Bargain Workstream on Simplified and Harmonized Reporting*. Geneva: ICVA. <https://www.icvanetwork.org/resources/experts-workshop-taking-forward-grand-bargain-workstream-simplified-and-harmonized>

Simplify & harmonise reporting



Have we set the bar too high?



videos, online chats, webinars, etc.) can also inform better decision-making in real time and enable greater learning and accountability.

Lessons from development actors. There are examples that humanitarians could benefit from their development colleagues who face similar challenges and operate within the same systems with many of the same laws, regulation and constraints. Sharing lessons from both humanitarian and development country-pooled funding mechanisms and other initiatives to simplify and harmonise proposal formats, capacity assessments, partnership agreements and reporting, could be a useful starting point in tackling other types of requirements that take large amounts of time and lead to great inefficiencies. In addition to looking at ways to ensure reporting is simplified and harmonised within their systems and requirements, humanitarians could also learn more from how development actors work with their partners to gather and use evidence for improving advocacy, learning and decision-making.

7.4.3. DIS-ENABLERS TO CHANGE

Competing interests. As noted above, each donor has its own constituencies, laws, regulations, interests, and approaches to risks which are reflected both in the way they manage and in the reporting requirements they have for their partners. Often the demands and interests that donors must manage are competing and out of their control. While there are some things which donors can change if they have the political will, there are many procedures and requirements that would require significant changes in their government's systems and laws (see illustration 7).

Increased donor management of risks and requirements for coordination and accountability. The increasing focus on mitigating risks, coordinated responses and demonstrating accountability has led to an increase in the volume and complexity of reporting. Donors, UN agencies, NGOs, coordination mechanisms and reform initiatives have added to the reporting requirements without full consideration for what information is critical to inform good decision-making, learning, public accountability and effective coordination. There has not been a rationalisation, prioritisation and reengineering process to ensure reporting requirements reflect what donors and operational agencies need to know to meet the demands for accountability and transparency and to inform internal and external decision-making and learning.

Different types of information requested. Humanitarian organisations and coordination structures provide significant

contextual information to donors along with programme and financial information, particularly to ensure support for coordinated responses. Often additional requirements and requests for information are duplicative and ad hoc, requiring additional time and resources, but these types of reports have not been included significantly in the discussions so far on simplifying and harmonising reporting requirements.

Top-down, compliance-oriented approach. Although the 8+3 narrative reporting pilot has involved frontline staff in a few humanitarian contexts, the quality of reporting and use of information in reports still need to be addressed. For many frontline staff and local organisations, reporting is largely seen as a compliance requirement, and those working on the pilot note that more needs to be done to help them link the value of generating good data and reports to improved decision-making and learning internally in their organisations and externally with donors. Many national and local humanitarian actors are not even aware of the commitments and discussions on reporting requirements at the global level, though they have significant interests in reducing the reporting burdens they face.

Organisational cultures and mindsets. Significant changes are hard to accomplish in the organisational cultures and large bureaucracies of major humanitarian donors, UN agencies and large INGOs. The mindset of many who work in large bureaucracies is to maintain the status quo, avoid risk and resist change. Staff working for donors, in particular, have real fears of reducing reporting requirements for their partners in light of increased scrutiny of the aid sector by auditors, legislatures, the media and publics alike. GPPI's research noted that "a trend toward a more managerial approach to aid giving may be driving higher bilateral donor reporting demands. One donor characterized it as a divide in approach: while some donors see aid organisations as independent experts in aid delivery who can be trusted to carry out the projects themselves, other see them as "implementers" of aid portfolios they are managing."²³¹

Risk aversion. While they fund, and work in, some of the most unstable and difficult contexts in the world, donors' tolerance for risk is quite low.²³² As the policies and procedures of donors have grown and remain inflexible, the attitudes and approaches of their partners have also become more bureaucratic, and risk averse, distancing them even more from engaging with those affected by crises. Reporting is seen largely as an exercise in compliance, not as an opportunity for learning, and changing that would require a shift in attitudes as well as formats.

²³¹ Gaston, E. (2017) *Harmonizing Donor Reporting Berlin*. Global Public Policy Institute. p. 12. http://www.gppi.net/fileadmin/user_upload/media/pub/2017/Gaston_2017_Harmonizing_Donor_Reporting.pdf

²³² NRC (2016) *Keep it Simple: Rushing to Save Lives*. Norwegian Refugee Council.

7.5. WHAT DO WE THINK WE CAN DO NOW?

Taking the analysis above as a departure point and applying the five ingredients for change described in chapter 1, what could be done differently in the future to ensure that the changes to reporting requirements are successful and have a positive outcome on the quality and effectiveness of humanitarian action?

7.5.1. MAKING CHANGE ABOUT PEOPLE

For many people and organisations, reporting is seen as a compliance exercise, not as an opportunity to reflect, learn and adapt. If people all along the aid supply chain better understand why financial and narrative information is requested and how it can be used in strategic, funding, programmatic, staffing, and other decision-making processes, they could feel a greater sense of ownership in working to address some of the changes that are needed to make this commitment a reality. This means that **senior donors, UN agencies and humanitarian organisations need to be more transparent about who asks for information and how it is used in their decision-making processes, as well as by those who receive their reports.** Creating space for internal dialogue with staff and partners on the time it takes not only to meet the reporting requirements but also on using the information, can enable a better understanding of the challenges and more creative solutions to be found.

If the efforts to improve reporting add to the workload or complexity for staff, they are not likely to succeed. **Paying attention to the people involved in the changes, and to the pressures and fears they have, is important to ensure success.** Organisations involved in the current 8+3 pilots as well as those who are involved in other efforts to simplify and harmonise reporting should provide opportunities to staff and partners to give feedback on the changes and the effects on their work to mitigate against any negative side-effects and resistance to changes. It is also important to track the time that managers must spend overseeing the reporting process versus dealing with the issues of quality and effectiveness that the reports and their recipients may raise.

7.5.2. BRINGING STAKEHOLDERS TOGETHER

Efforts to simplify and harmonise reporting requirements should **include representatives of all the actors in the**

aid supply chain who are affected by the current reporting requirements – particularly national and local staff and organisations on the frontlines. In the short-term, this may make discussions more complex and slow down progress, but if this change is to have the desired effects on the efficiency and effectiveness of the humanitarian system envisioned in the Grand Bargain, then all those affected need to be engaged in some way. For instance:

- In the current 8+3 common template pilot, national and local partners of participating donors, UN agencies and INGOs could be more involved in implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
- National and local humanitarian actors could be made more aware of the global commitments on simplifying and harmonising reporting requirements and included in the workstream discussions and initiatives. Collaborating with the localisation workstream leadership and initiatives, as well as with national level NGO coordination bodies, are potential ways to increase awareness and engagement by local actors.
- Pooled funds and coordination structures at the country level could seek information on the reporting burdens for local actors and facilitate discussions among all actors involved in country-based responses to find creative solutions, including to informal information requests and in coordination structure reporting requirements.

Within humanitarian organisations and across donor government units and UN agencies that fund humanitarian aid, **a broader range of people need to be engaged to ensure that the information requested is useful for the multiple purposes of reporting: 1) decision-making, 2) learning and 3) accountability.** This means that proposal writers and reviewers, M&E staff, finance and administrative managers, programme managers and senior leadership should be engaged in the process of reviewing all the information needs and requests they make and have, what is included in reporting formats, how the information is used, how much time it takes to produce, at what point it is needed in decision-making processes, and how it helps learning internally and with those to whom they report. The range of people to be involved in the analysis and discussion will vary by organisation and by type of report (financial, narrative, ad hoc, sectoral, feedback, etc.) and people from all levels (HQ to field) could be involved in mapping

the information requests and process flows for report writing and usage. If undertaken internally and across all humanitarian donors and agencies, the competing interests and bigger changes which go beyond the scope of individual humanitarian actors can also be identified and brought into collective discussions and then translated into action to determine appropriate formats and timing for the various types of reports donors require.

7.5.3. CLARIFY THE BOUNDARIES

It is important to **clarify the goals and principles of simplification and harmonisation, and the trade-offs** between pursuing these two goals simultaneously. Donors, UN agencies and NGOs may have different views on the gains to be achieved and the trade-offs they must manage, though all are likely to agree that harmonising without also simplifying reporting requirements for all humanitarian actors will not necessarily lead to more efficiency and effectiveness.

While the current 8+3 pilots are important to continue, more work needs to be done on **piloting simpler**

financial reports and harmonising supporting documentation (timesheets, log books, procurement processes, etc.), particularly if the other goals of the Grand Bargain are to be achieved. This needs to be explored not just at the project level with frontline staff and partners, but also at the programme level in country teams and headquarters. If possible, this work could start in the existing 8+3 pilot countries before the end of 2018.

While a lot of work has been done to look at the technical aspects of what donors require, there is a need to **assess the political space for harmonising reporting, particularly financial reports**, given the different laws, systems and constituencies that donors and their partners need to manage. If there is little appetite or opportunity to make progress at this time, more focus could be put on truly changing the narrative and other reporting requirements in the hopes of setting an example for what can be done when there is more political will to change.

The five Grand Bargain workstreams that made the commitment to complementarity need to be supported to work together much more closely **to address the**

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financial and management issues that are critical to achieving the goal of increasing the efficiency and quality of humanitarian aid and its reporting.

- At a high level, this could be facilitated by the co-chairs of the workstreams working together more deliberately and frequently, possibly with external facilitation. They should also include representatives of national actors, including those who are working on the localisation workstream.
- At the field level, this could be supported by piloting changes for all workstreams in continuing humanitarian responses to learn from the ground up about the challenges and opportunities, in a practical exercise with local, national and international actors. It may be easier to do this in protracted crises where organisations and programmes have been operating for a long time and in which there may be less urgency and more space for dialogue and experimentation.

Simplifying and harmonising reporting should be seen not just as a compliance exercise, but as an opportunity to look at how to **align reports and requests for information with decision-making systems and processes**. Looking at both internal processes and external requests would enable donors and humanitarian organisations alike to identify patterns, timeframes, key events or prompts for reports and additional information that are predictable and that could potentially be simplified and harmonised.

- Donors, UN agencies and international and national NGOs need to map the processes and users of information from their reports and ad hoc information requests to better understand what is most critical to know and when. This could be started at the field or country response level and continue up to the reporting that donors must undertake for their legislatures and publics over time. While the reviews could be undertaken separately for financial and narrative reporting, understanding the differences and overlaps between the two could also help to identify more opportunities for simplification and harmonisation.
- For donors, this means looking not only at the standing requirements and timelines for reporting to legislatures, auditors and the public, but also the ad hoc requests for information they receive internally and from other parts of their governments. They should look at how they respond with information they already have on hand and the additional requests they make of their partners to identify the gaps as well as topics on which they need more information – or where they have more information than they can actually process and use. This would enable inclusion of information they often seek in an ad hoc manner in standardised reporting formats.

- For NGOs, this means examining the requirements and requests from all of their donors (governmental and private), and how their internal systems generate the information not only for reporting but also for internal decision-making. Senior managers could look more closely at the quality of the information their staff and systems produce and the patterns of ad hoc requests for information they receive and ask of their staff and partners. This will enable them to ascertain if there are changes their organisations need to make internally to ensure that their staff and systems are regularly gathering that information so that the burden is lightened on frontline staff and local partners to respond to predictable and ad hoc requests.
- Discussions and research should also look at what information is needed in different contexts given the different approaches and pressures in high-profile conflicts, protracted crises, disaster responses and recovery/reconstruction efforts. This would include what donors, coordination structures, governments, governance bodies, standards and certification bodies, auditors, and others typically request over the life of a humanitarian response from all actors (international and national).

While most discussions have focused on donor reporting requirements, there is a need to **look at simplifying and harmonising reporting to governing bodies, clusters and other coordination mechanisms as well as against various humanitarian standards and reforms** (including the Grand Bargain). For instance, organisations that report against the CHS standard could share experiences and ideas about how to incorporate this reporting in other reporting they undertake to donors, coordination mechanisms, and IATI.

7.5.4. PRIORITY ON ACTION - LEARNING BY DOING

While there are many reporting requirements that each donor and organisation must fulfil, **there is a need for more creativity in how information is reported and shared**. Though the predominant mode is through written reports, there are other modes such as videos, dashboards, presentations, in-person meetings, teleconferences, webinars, and others that could be used. Different modes could be experimented with in the same countries where the 8+3 pilots are taking place, given there is already willingness to try something new. Evaluations would need to be undertaken to determine what modes work most effectively for the different audiences and purposes of reports – to inform decision-making, facilitate learning and ensure accountability. This would help to make more progress on the second commitment in the workstream

to invest in new technologies to enable the sharing of information.

Different approaches should be tried in different humanitarian contexts given that management of risks and operations are handled in various ways.

- In protracted crises where donors may have longer term programming and may be used to managing ongoing risks, there may be more space to work with international, national and local partners to reduce the volume and frequency of reporting and to develop common templates and approaches to all types of reporting requirements.
- In preparation for responding to natural disasters, donors and partners could work in advance to identify what information is key to know (and when) to better inform decision-making (based on past experience) and to develop common templates for reporting that information in a simpler manner. It is often easier to experiment and test new approaches when organisations are not in the midst of a major crisis, so it may be easier to work together on tough issues when there is time and space.

7.5.5. PROMOTING WHAT WORKS

The ECHO single form and the 8+3 reporting template pilot supported by the Grand Bargain workstream are both good examples, and lessons from developing them need to be documented and shared to show how change is possible by the end of 2018. The steps taken to acquire technical and political buy-in could be applied to developing common financial reporting formats and in dealing with procurement, cost definitions, audits, and other reporting issues. As the five donor conditions workstreams noted, “it is important to highlight when Grand Bargain commitments are successfully implemented in the field and leverage these successes to encourage broader action in other workstreams.”²³³

Experiences with and lessons from different forms of partnerships and reporting requirements should be shared among donors and their partners. For instance, “some donors, including Australia, Denmark, New Zealand, and Norway, have agreements (or strategic partnerships) with certain NGOs, in which the officially required reporting is light but an ‘ongoing dialogue’ is maintained throughout implementation. This is done to ease the burden on the partner, while allowing the donor to follow up informally at

any time to request more information on a particular issue. Sweden emphasised that, for key NGOs with which they have strategic partnerships, they have reporting *guidelines* rather than requirements, and these guidelines are themselves shaped by continuous input from the NGOs.”²³⁴

Humanitarian donors and organisations should look at what their development counterparts have done to simplify and harmonise reporting and other requirements, increase transparency and mitigate risks as they have increased funding to governments and national and local actors over the last few years.

- There is a lot to learn from the ways UN agencies and development donors have harmonised approaches to capacity assessments, working with recipient government systems and using the IATI platform by their partners. In many places where humanitarian aid is provided, these processes and systems are already in use, so humanitarians do not have to start from scratch.
- How to mitigate risks, particularly of corruption, is a common issue as development donors provide more funding to national and local actors. Understanding the effectiveness of different measures that humanitarian and development donors and organisations have put in place will enable them to not only make progress on reporting, but also on the localisation agenda.
- Multi-mandate donors, UN agencies and NGOs need to jointly look at their entire systems which support humanitarian and development operations to ensure that lessons are shared and that changes to reduce humanitarian reporting will lead to more simplicity and coherence for the organisation as a whole, not more complexity.

The research to date on the effects of reporting requirements on international humanitarian actors has been important in galvanising change. To accomplish the goals of the Grand Bargain, it is important to **engage national and local actors in the process and gather evidence on the effects on them of the reporting requirements, as well as due diligence processes, capacity assessments, and audits.** This is a recurring theme in discussions on localisation and national actors are keen to participate in the analysis and development of simpler formats and tools. Experts and consultants who are familiar with the issues and who have undertaken this analysis with international actors could be engaged by donors, UN agencies and INGOs to work with their partners to further map the processes and how they use the reports and information that is requested of them.

²³³ https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/a_commitment_to_complementarity_updated_11.2017_0.pdf

²³⁴ Caccavale, J., Haver, K, and Stoddard, A. (2016) *Donor Reporting Requirements Research*. London: Humanitarian Outcomes. p. 7. https://www.ghdinitiative.org/assets/files/Activities/Our%20Work/Research%20on%20donor%20reporting%20requirements_22%20Feb%20FINAL.pdf

7.6. CONCLUSION

In the midst of the significant reporting pressures and deadlines, it can be easy for donors and humanitarians to lose sight of the ultimate purpose of reporting systems: to ensure that work is accomplished in a way that serves affected populations in an effective and efficient manner and that leads to positive outcomes. This goal is one that all humanitarians agree is important, and it forms the basis for the increased tempo of change and efforts to bring people together to pilot new approaches to simplification and harmonisation. The Grand Bargain has emphasised that saving time and reducing burdens of reporting are valuable so long as they support improved ability to meet the needs of people and to work with them to improve preparedness and responses to crises which are stretching the humanitarian system.

Amid the calls for greater efficiency, transparency and accountability, it is important not to lose sight of the goal of having useful information that can better inform decision-making by all those involved in humanitarian action. While the conversations to date have largely involved UN agencies, INGOs and donors, it is important to involve national and local actors that have the smallest amount of resources to deal with the range of requirements from their donors and their donor's donors. Examining this commitment through the lens of how to use data in reports more effectively – not just to prove compliance with regulations, but to facilitate learning and greater accountability – would lead to

greater impact, but will require more than technical fixes.

Improving reporting requirements should be one of the more straightforward challenges for humanitarian donors and organisations to address, given that the issue is not nearly as political or cultural as localisation and participation, though it does require political will to push for change. Making these changes does not strike at the heart of how the system has been set up and currently runs and does not call for a completely new business model (though that certainly could have a positive effect on this long-desired change!). While the current commitments to simplify and harmonise reporting are not the hardest to tackle among many that lead to inefficiencies, improved progress in this area could provide an opportunity to build momentum and chip away at some of the resistance to change in other areas.

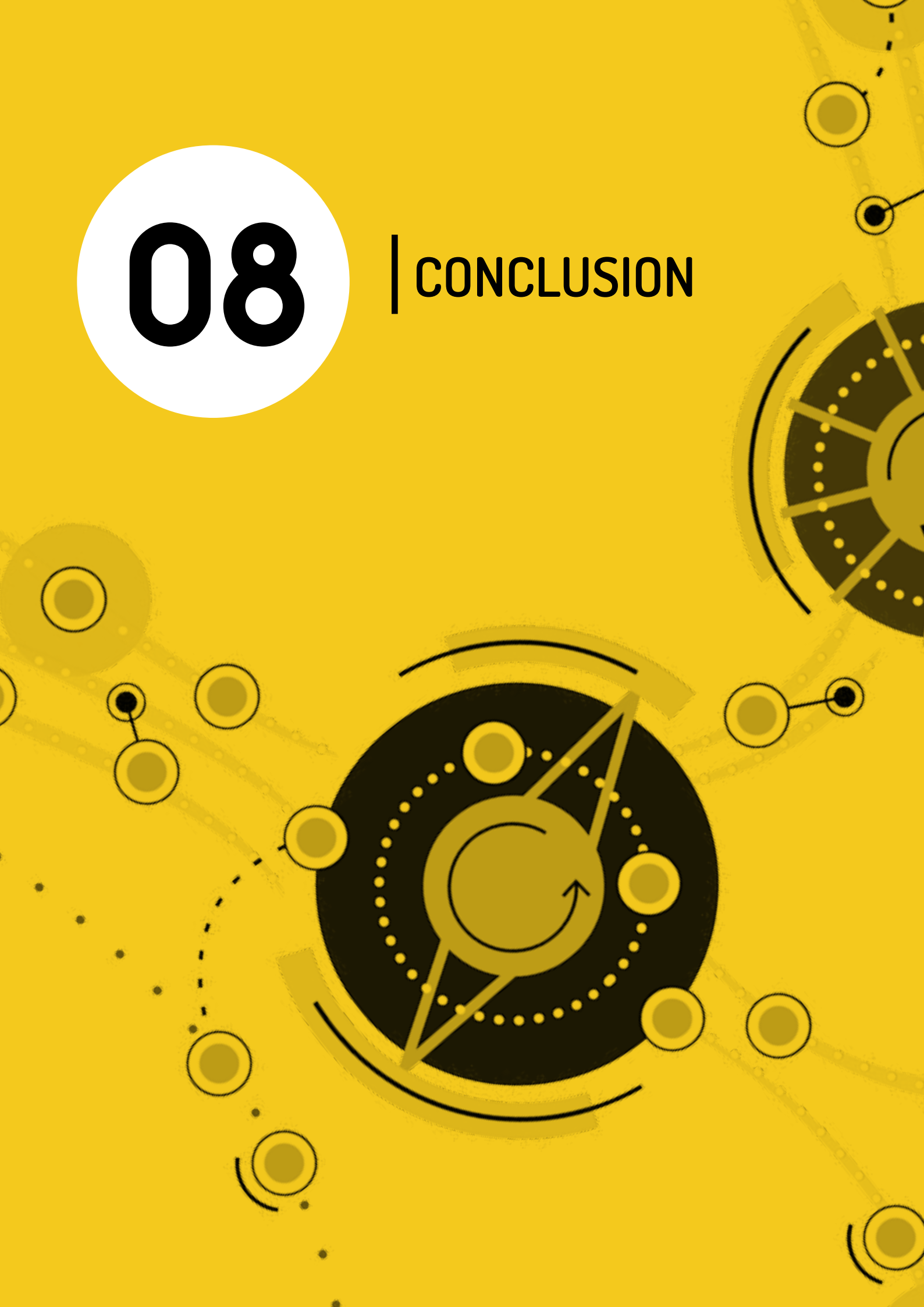
It is important to keep in mind that in the short term, the Grand Bargain and other global commitments are increasing the reporting burden for operational agencies, coordination bodies, and donors. There is a tension that needs to be addressed between simplifying and harmonising reporting, while also maintaining the indicators and structures to hold one another accountable for the commitments that have been made. Finding ways to balance these issues through the Grand Bargain and other reform processes could be a way to model the changes we want to see and learn from doing.



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This report examined the way change occurs in the humanitarian sector by considering six topics related to that change: the participation of crisis-affected people, the localisation agenda, the alleviation of sexual exploitation, harassment and abuse, inclusivity in humanitarian response, cash transfer programming, and the simplification and harmonisation of reporting requirements. An analysis of the change initiatives and the subsequent actions related to these six topics provides a broad picture of the state of change in the humanitarian sector, and the challenges and opportunities for the future. These topics are very different from one another, and the changes associated with them have followed different trajectories. However, some general trends are visible.

In all cases, there have been significant efforts to achieve change, over a period of many years. In most cases, the dominant approach to instigating changes has tended to be fairly mechanistic, focusing on the tangible elements of organisations – structures, standards and procedures. While this approach has had some success, it is also limited. Changes to the tangible elements of the system are probably necessary to achieve change, but they are not sufficient. A variety of other approaches, grounded in different understandings of how organisations work,

interact and evolve, have also proved successful, and point to alternative ways of supporting change.

In particular, the experience of change and resistance to change across these six topics suggests the following key lessons.

- **The humanitarian sector has the standards and policies it needs to be effective. Change occurs when humanitarians apply and learn from the standards to which they have committed.** The past few decades have seen a growing number of principles, codes of conduct, standards, and other instruments designed to improve the quality of work in the sector. Agreement on the necessity for such instruments to instigate change is widespread and growing; their application, however, still lags behind. Change takes place when commitment to the implementation of these instruments comes not simply from senior management, but also from donors and frontline practitioners: when the need for such instruments is accepted throughout the chain of command, and is not managed from the top down. Incentivising compliance to those instruments that have been commonly agreed and are widely used, has demonstrated greater effectiveness than systems of self-regulation.

- **It is people who drive change. Change occurs when people's motivations and capacities are understood and considered.** People, rather than organisations, are the drivers of change. For many topics addressed in this report, the actions of charismatic and forceful individuals in powerful positions within the UN and outspoken representatives from NGOs (both national and international) has been the key determinant in triggering or supporting change, especially when it comes to participation, localisation and inclusion. In addition, change is vastly accelerated by the presence of skilled and informed individuals throughout an organisation, but especially by those working on the ground. Change happens also when people from different agencies and sectors come together to create a common understanding of what is needed, and how it can be achieved.
- **Culture is a vector of change. Change takes place when humanitarians are open to new and different approaches, and embrace failure as an opportunity to learn and improve.** The humanitarian sector is characterised by entrenched working cultures, identities, and mindsets. Change requires a culture that is open to it. The increasing focus on facilitation, communication, negotiation and problem-solving skills in training and recruitment in the sector is encouraging.
- **Change occurs through small-scale, concrete actions that are continuously revised and adapted, rather than top-down, large-scale action plans.** Planning and rolling-out large-scale strategies is common in the humanitarian sector. However, it is pilot projects and small-scale actions that allow a diversity of actors to take concrete and sustainable steps towards change. Such steps offer evidence for learning, create space for adaptation, and form the bedrock of organisational or system-wide advances.
- **New technologies offer unprecedented opportunities. Change takes place when humanitarians use technology to better engage with each other and with crisis-affected people.** New technologies have enabled the development and dissemination of practical tools, created new avenues for communication and participation, and have facilitated better supply chain management. The groundswell of support for utilising new technologies in the pursuit of improved humanitarian action is deeply encouraging.
- **Change occurs when those working in the humanitarian sector transcend existing power dynamics and acknowledge diversity; it happens when humanitarians value the contributions of crisis-affected people and communities.** Humanitarian power dynamics are characterised by an imbalance of power between different groups of actors (for instance, between donors and grantees; between international actors with access to humanitarian funds and national/local actors seeking partnership with the international actors in order to access such funds; between aid workers and crisis-affected people). Open dialogue, shared learning, collective approaches and other such initiatives have demonstrated that change is most effective when undertaken in partnership with others. In particular, when the knowledge, ideas, capacities and the initiatives of crisis-affected people are valued, the trust and collaboration between these people and those that serve them fosters the optimal conditions for improvement.

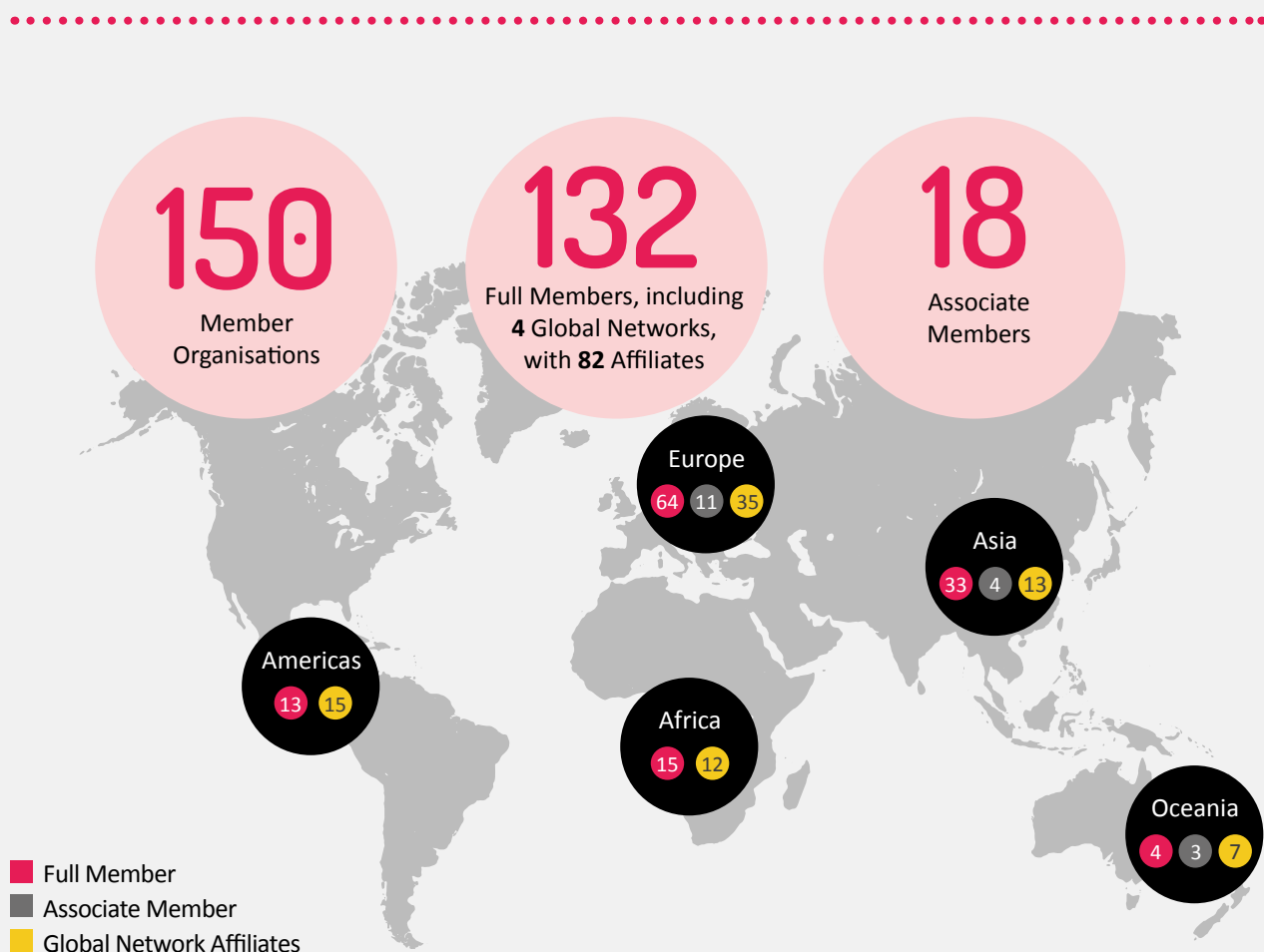
The CHS Alliance is a **membership organisation**, with members operating in more than 160 countries worldwide in the humanitarian and development sectors.

Our members share a commitment to the key role of **quality, accountability** and **people management**, and collectively demonstrate it to affected communities, staff and donors. Together, we form a **movement** that puts crisis-affected people and communities at the centre of our action.

The **Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS)** is at the heart of our mission. It sets out **Nine Commitments** to communities and people affected by crisis, stating what they

can expect from organisations and individuals delivering humanitarian assistance. The Standard connects many elements of the **Agenda for Humanity**, namely: people at the centre, the Grand Bargain – also referred to as localisation – the participation revolution, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals ‘Leave no one behind’, the New Way of Working and the ‘Nexus’. The copyright of the CHS is jointly held by the CHS Alliance, Groupe URD and Sphere.

The CHS Alliance was launched in June 2015. It is the result of a merger between HAP International and People in Aid. Bringing together more than two decades of experience in the application of standards and good practices, the merger came into force in May 2016.





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