

## Workshop on Grand Bargain commitments: towards an interlinked approach

Facilitated by the Dutch Relief Alliance and KUNO, the platform for Humanitarian Knowledge Exchange in the Netherlands

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At Save the Children, Den Haag

A DRA/KUNO collaboration

### Background

The DRA sees the Grand Bargain commitments as part of the long term development of the Humanitarian sector.

Grand Bargain themes are key commitments of the DRA 2018-2021 and the DRA already actively promotes **Localisation, Cash and Transparency** in its Joint Response designs. The DRA is also committed to responding to the **Participation Revolution, Joint Needs assessments** and **Reduced Management Costs** and the DRA 2018-2021 will enable MoFA to deliver on commitment #7, **Multi-year Funding and Planning**.

However, there is a **risk that Grand Bargain commitments are progressed as distinct activities and not integrated with each other**: there is a need to explore the connection and create synergy between the commitments and to **involve the people affected by crises and the local partners** in exploring how they understand the Grand Bargain commitments which in itself **will contribute to the Participation Revolution**.

KUNO, **platform for Humanitarian Knowledge Exchange in the Netherlands**, is committed to facilitating processes of reflection, exploring innovative possibilities and bringing together the expertise and experiences of NGOs (DRA-members & non-DRA members), the Global South and others, such as academics, civil servants, the private sector and diaspora organizations.

This DRA / KUNO workshop aims to identify the connections between some of the Grand Bargain themes to enable INGOs and other actors to integrate them into proposal and project design.

## **Grand Bargain Objectives for the DRA 2018-2021**

*Introduction by Geoff Andrews, (ZOA) Chair of the DRA*

***The revised strategy of the DRA makes commitments to Grand Bargain objectives, specifically cash, localisation, participation revolution & transparency. Each of these is identified under one of the 4 strategic priorities of the DRA Strategy 2018-2021,***

In the DRA Strategy 2018-2021, there will be specific budgets Protracted Crisis Joint Responses, Acute Crisis Joint Responses and Grand Bargain/ Innovation projects. In October-November 2017, DRA members together with local partners will come together in in-country workshops to design the 2017 Protracted Crisis JRs and to integrate into the designs the DRA's Strategic Priorities.

## **Making the Grand Bargain a reality**

*Jeremy Rempel, Coordinator, Less Paper More Aid (ICVA)*

It is important to collaborate across workstreams, since they are overlapping. Since agencies don't have the bandwidth to focus on everything at the same time, it is good to see and understand the linkages and create a road map.

The challenge is to move forward from commitment to implementation by not waiting for consensus and to make progress where possible, without having all the answers. *A key way to do this, is to conduct pilots.*

The Grand Bargain Secretariat hosted a workshop about how to combine the different work streams and how to better collaborate. (see PowerPoint Annex 3). Different proposals have been formulated to organize the 10 workstreams into more coherent groupings: Donor conditions (commitments 1, 4, 7, 8, 9) & Local Programmatic (commitments 2, 3, 5, 6, 10) (see slides). These are different ways to making progress to move forward, to strengthen local capacities.

The ICVA engagement is across 4 themes:

1. Harmonized and Simplified Reporting: Reporting pilot underway in Iraq, Myanmar, Somalia
2. Transparency. Engagement with Netherlands, DI (Development Initiatives –main organization contracted by MoFA to work on the transparency component of the Grand Bargain) & Facilitate communications between donors, NGOs on the way forward)
3. Frontline Responders (Localization) Facilitate discussion on definitions and on markers
4. Donor Conditions Task Force. Engage NGOs on strategic direction for Grand Bargain, broader donor conditions issues (risk, UN harmonization, etc.)

The highest level goal is to better serve affected people affected by crises.

There is a global level discussion on how to define a local actor. DRA defines a local actor as: Local leadership, governance and decision making. The DRA has set ambitious targets for the next four years. Can we upscale this to a global level, eg having a representation of local NGOs in the different fora?

ICVA sees localisation and the engagement of UN actors as one of the most challenging issues. UN is becoming more and more engaged and have been volunteering to pilot projects. However, major donor governments have not engaged yet.

## Grand Bargain from a field perspective

### *Heleen Berends – Field Coordinator of the Syria Jordan JR*

A lot of work has already been done prior to the Grand Bargain, many organisations are already implementing the commitments made there.

#### **Transparency**

Local partners not aware. Willingness of INGOs to share data and assessment reports, however local partners are less willing due to a perceived security risks. JR Members are encouraging Local partners to be more open.

#### **Joint need assessment**

Some partners collaborating but members could do more. More geographical focus will help. At present the INGOs are designing the assessments, the local partners gather the data which is analysed by the INGOs.

#### **Participation Revolution**

There is participation in the clusters and other coordination structures. Downward accountability via complaints system. Tools have been developed for needs assessment and feedback. Dorcas created an app for beneficiary feedback.

#### **Cash Programming**

Widely used Syria JR. Could be expanded and standardized, and improved by involving strong local partner.

#### **Localization**

All partners work through local partners. Each organisation engages with their local partner in a different way. It may be helpful to look at this from JR level. There are several partners with whom **capacity building** is planned.

### *Lina Alsafi Field Coordinator of the Yemen JR*

JR members should ensure that local partners know about the Grand Bargain commitments. There is a commitment to engage local partners and the community more in discussions. **Transparency** and localisation are being progressed but the DRA commitment to localisation was not known.

In the process of working on a 4-year plan. Financial commitments for innovation is a challenge.

(The DRA is developing Key Result Indicators for the JRs)

### *Fatma Wakil Field Coordinator of the Somaliland/Puntland & Nigeria JR*

Fatma is based in Nairobi, and has been involved in the SSPJR 1 and 2. **Gender and Localization** were stronger in SSPJR2. There was a lot of dialogue with the Dutch partners, however not with the local organisations. The added value budget was useful for exploring themes such as resilience and gender, harmonisation of tools. However, in Somalia, there is no dialogue, due to lack of trust. If the local partners are just subcontractors, there is no real partnership. When the Acute JRs only last 6 months, it

does not give us much room to discuss these topics. When we get more room in the budget for this, we can start to bring these issues up.

## ***Johnson Lafortune Field Coordinator of the CARJR3***

Cash, localisation and LRRD are in the JR design. However, it feels top down. Local partners are not aware of the GB commitments. Collaborative impact was discussed in the MTR and there is interest in Cash, localisation, and capacity building of local partners especially in hard to reach locations. During the JR, a member had to withdraw but a local actor was able to continue.

### **Accountability**

A tool is being developed for use by all JR members.

### **Joint needs assessments**

Being planned for CAR JR4

### **Cash**

Very limited opportunity especially in conflict areas. Few financial institutions

## ***Anton van Wijk Field Coordinator of the Ukraine JR***

There were **capacity building** and trainings in which we invited different local organisations to join; also with the funding from a longer term grant from ECHO.

### **Transparency**

Only happening in NL

### **Cash**

Large part of JR design which was new to members and enabled members to learn from each other. The JR harmonised the approach and shared this with Cash WG. Members conducted a joint baseline and checked how the money was spent.

## ***Kees Jan Hooglander, Syria JR***

Local partners were involved in design workshop in 2016 which resulted in very positive feedback.

## ***Martine Bergwerff, S.Sudan JR***

Local partners were involved in 2016 design workshops

## ***Sam de Greve, Nigeria JR***

In the MTR, INGOs and local partners committed to collaborate. The NJR4 will have a greater geographical focus to enhance collaboration.

## Connecting the GB commitments

*Plenary session: experience of Dutch actors on connecting Grand Bargain commitments*

All DRA members affirmed that they are all fully committed to the Grand Bargain as a whole package, most of them are already signatories of the Grand Bargain commitments.

Working together with local responders and focusing on strategic locations will enable the DRA to deliver humanitarian aid in a more effective, timely and relevant manner.

### **Outcome of break out groups:**

Q1: What are the **implications for project design** of **Localisation** on Cash, Transparency, Participation Revolution, Joint Needs Assessments, Reduced Management costs and multi-year funding?

Q2: What are the **implications for project design** of the **Participation Revolution** on Localisation, Cash, Transparency, Joint Needs Assessments, Reduced Management costs and multi-year funding?

## **Localisation**

### **General comments on Localisation**

- Localisation is context specific, different approaches are required by different contexts.
- Ensure Humanitarian Principles are adhered to in all operations run by local partners
- Delegate responsibility to local partners but don't overwhelm them
- Allow room for the local organisations to fulfil their own (different) mandates and not be constrained by the INGO mandate
- Local organisations don't want to be vetted by INGOs, they want to be respected and to be part of negotiations/discussions.
- In an acute crisis INGOS often start to implement themselves and only later work through local organisations/institutions.
- Working with local actors partners is either high when there are capable local partner or low/absent when capable partners cannot be found. Rarely is partner participation neither high nor low.
- Local actors include institutions, governments, communities, organisations, businesses, hospitals/clinics, banks, shops.
- Tracking financial burn rate of local partners can be problematic.
- Including local actors gives dignity to local communities and governments.
- What local actors do and what donors want is sometimes different. We need to ensure there is more understanding locally of donor language and requirements
- Are local actors interested in capacity building e.g. in IATI, Cash? To what extent are we pushing them to a position they don't feel comfortable with

### **Lessons learned on Cash**

- When local markets do not have food stuffs available, cash is not appropriate. Market assessments to be done
- Cash may not be possible when access is restricted
- Cash contributes to the local economy by providing opportunity for local traders)

- risks include:
  - financial loss by distributing traders and recipients
  - Conflict over beneficiary selection
- Cash may increase risk to beneficiaries

## **Implications of Localisation on Cash Programming**

- Include local actors in beneficiary selection
- Local structures are used for cash distributions eg Ukraine post service, Nigerian traders
- In South Sudan the local partner organisations have been trained in Cash: are they ready and capable of handling large sums of cash?

## **Lessons learned on Transparency**

- Set up joint complaint mechanism and set standards of expectation e.g. on how did the beneficiaries receive their assistance in light of the Sphere standards?
- On and Off line accountability/transparency:
  - Ask for feedback informally
  - Feedback via the telephone voice mail box was found not to be effective
  - Share reviews between members/local organisations
  - In a multi-annual program, assessment (evaluation) can be done any time, not just at the end.
- Apps can be used for people to give feedback at any time and about the whole response.
- Costs can be reduced by avoiding duplication of transparency structures
- What data do you share and whom with?

## **Implications of Localisation on Transparency**

- Local organisations are not reporting in IATI: they need to be enabled and trained.
- Technical skills required: training for local partners in IATI
- Do we want to be transparent to local partners and the affected population? May not wise since there is a big difference in standard of living.

## **Lessons learned on Joint Needs assessments**

- Requires a good understanding of the context and society dynamics
- Joint assessment team should include technical staff to design the assessments
- Involving local partners may reduce the speed of implementing the assessment
- Info is already available within the partners/local actors.
- Assessment are often data driven, but talking to the affected population remains important

## **Implications of Localisation on Joint Need Assessment**

- Training of local partners on assessment design, data collection, data analysis
- Provision of tools (Smart phones, tablets) for data collection to local partners

## Implications of Localisation on Capacity Building

- Adopt an approachable and inclusive way of training by avoiding a superior attitude; sometimes capacity building is felt as condescending.
- Capacity building should be interactive, practical and useful
- Capacity building of local staff make them more attractive employees. How can local organisations retain trained staff? (Charter4Change proposed a fee is paid by the recruited to the employer)
- Themes for training should include:
  - Ability to apply for country based pooled funds
  - Cash programming
  - IATI compliance
  - DRR
  - Donor language and expectations
  - Humanitarian Standards (CHS)
- Train/involve local actors/responders in participation -> designing the JR together

## Participation Revolution

### Lessons learned on Participation Revolution

- Involve the affected population in meetings and field workshops -> Link communities in all parts of the cycle -> empowerment
- Share reports with beneficiaries

## Implications of Participation Revolution on Cash Programming

- Affected population must be consulted on
  - Is cash the best response modality?
  - Best modality for cash distribution
  - Amount of cash aid (via local Cash Working Group)
- Include accountability and feedback; does the affected population feel their basic needs are met?

## Implications of Participation Revolution on Joint Need Assessment

- Enable affected populations to raise their needs immediately and continuously during the project implementation.

### Closing remarks:

#### Christine Pirenne (MoFA)

*"We are only scratching the surface here. We are eager to see how the new priorities of the strategic plan will be played out. If this is changing the DRA position, rethink your own position for yourself. Change will come, when you take that step to change yourself."*

#### Jeremy Rempel

*"This whole discussion has been very refreshing. The important thing is to keep on discussing these issues and to keep pushing. Take action where you can and you will force through some of the bigger road blocks. Keep focussed on the ultimate goal that we are here to serve the people in need."*

## **Geoff Andrews**

*"We are picking up momentum in the DRA and in all of the organisations now. A big thank you is extended to all"*

## **Postscript**

The workshop demonstrated a much clearer understanding of the implications of Localisation than of the Participation Revolution which is less well defined on the Grand Bargain commitments. Most DRA members are working with local partners to the impact of localisation on other Grand Bargain commitments is better understood. Unpacking the implication of the Participation Revolution is work in progress.

As the DRA and other agencies progress Grand Bargain commitments, it is essential to see the 10 commitments as part of a whole which is to improve the efficiency effectiveness and relevance of humanitarian action and to improve the quality of the humanitarian assistance to people affected by crises.

In the DRA strategic period 2018-2021, Dutch NGOs will address the inter-connectedness of the Grand Bargain commitments and especially those in the power of the INGOs:

- How does localisation affect cash programming? What do INGOs need to do to enable local actors to use cash as a response modality? When is decision making transferred to the local actor?
- How does localisation affect joint needs assessments? What capacity building do local actors require? When is decision making transferred to the local actor?
- How does transparency impact localisation? How can local partners report in the IATI database?
- How can local actors increase the participation of people affected by crises?
- How does increased participation affect cash programming? Who else needs to be consulted and involved?
- How does increased participation affect joint needs assessments? Does increased participation enrich data collection or does it introduce new bias?

These and other questions need to be thought through, trials run, assumptions tested, risks taken to move the Grand Bargain forward.

## **Geoff Andrews**

DRA Committee Chair

November 2017