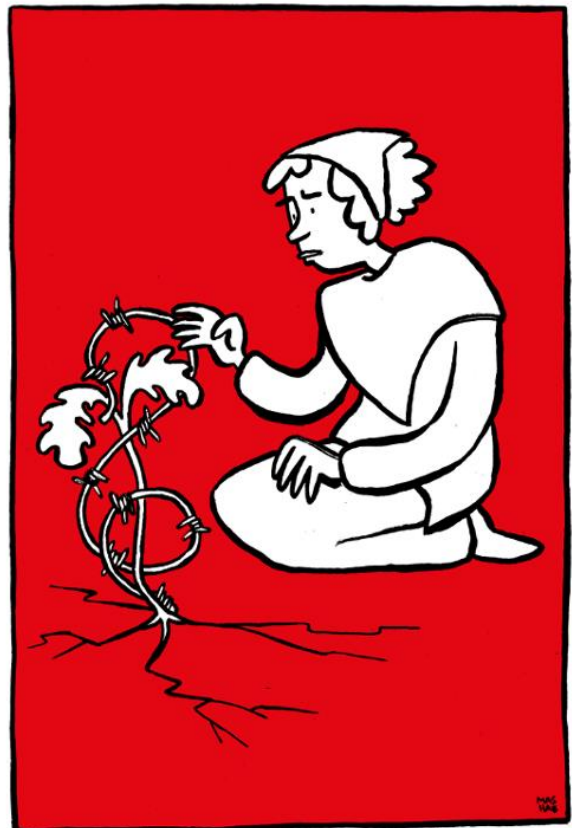


Dutch Review of the Grand Bargain Annual Meeting

The Global Humanitarian Assistance Report

12 July 2018





KUNO is an initiative of ten NGOs and five knowledge institutes from the Dutch humanitarian sector. KUNO's goal is to strengthen the humanitarian sector in the Netherlands. KUNO is a platform for joint learning, reflection and debate. We organize expert meetings, working sessions for professionals, webinars, training and public debates. All of our events are cross-sectoral and organized in cooperation with our partners.

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Cover: cartoons made for KUNO by the Dutch artist MasHab.

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1. Introduction

Current positions on all commitments of the Grand Bargain were discussed intensively with relevant global actors at the Annual Meeting of the Grand Bargain, during ECOSOC in New York in June 2018. During this meeting, Development Initiatives also presented its new Global Humanitarian Assistance Report. On July 12, 2018, KUNO and PHA* organized the Dutch presentation of the Global Humanitarian Assistance Report, followed by a 'debriefing' on the Grand Bargain Annual Meeting and a constructive debate on global humanitarian trends and modern humanitarian challenges for both the Dutch government and other Dutch humanitarian actors.

Speakers:

- = Chris Degnan, Crisis and Humanitarian Lead at Development Initiatives
- = Björn Hofmann, humanitarian advisor at the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Dutch Sous-Sherpa at the Grand Bargain Annual Meeting.
- = Hero Anwar Birzwa, programme director REACH Iraq.
- = Evert van Bodegom, Coordinator Disaster Management Team ICCO – Kerk in Actie.
- = Thea Hilhorst, professor Humanitarian Aid and Reconstruction at the International Institute of Social Studies (Erasmus University).

The meeting was facilitated by Peter Heintze, coordinator of KUNO.

This report reflects the major topics that were discussed during this meeting.

* KUNO is the Platform for Humanitarian Knowledge Exchange in the Netherlands, an initiative of ten NGOs and five knowledge institutes in the Netherlands, supported by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. PHA is the Platform for Humanitarian Action, an informal network of Dutch humanitarian organizations.

2. Dutch presentation of the Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2018

Chris Degnan, Development Initiatives

The findings of Development Initiatives show continuous growth in the funds of international humanitarian assistance to 27.3 billion US\$ in 2017 (figure 2.1)[†]. However, these rises have slowed down. Whether this pattern continues is unclear.

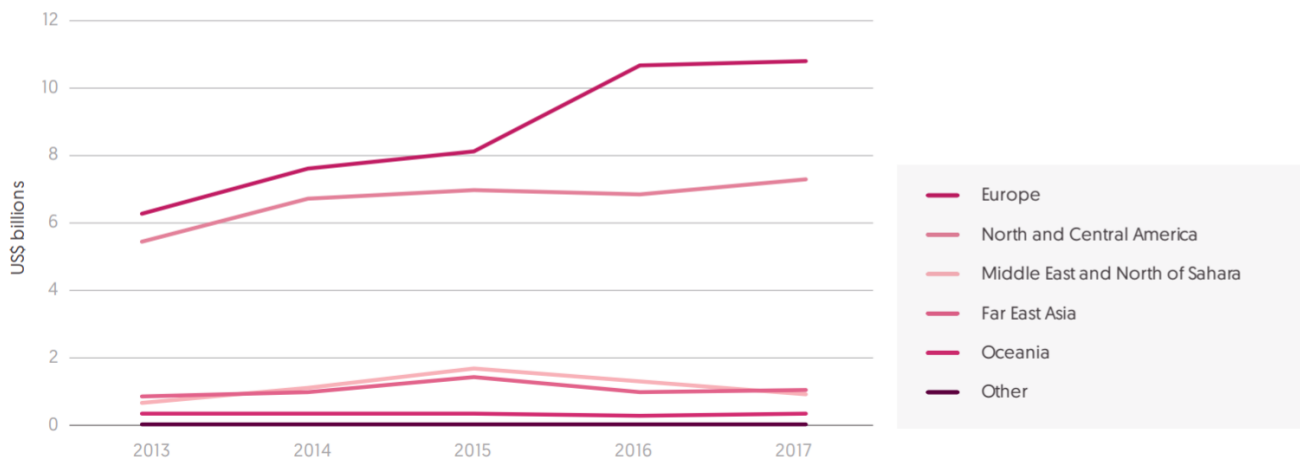
Figure 2.1
International humanitarian assistance, 2013–2017



Also, in 2017 the number of people in need grew to 201 million people in 134 countries. The shortfall, the proportion of requirements unmet against UN appeals, was 41%. Furthermore, figure 3.2 indicates that the majority of funding is coming from a more concentrated group of donors, especially Europe and North and Central America. Another finding is that the countries that received the largest volumes of assistance in 2015 continue to be the largest recipients of humanitarian assistance in 2016: 60% of all assistance was channelled to 10 countries. Syria and Yemen were the biggest receivers in 2017 (resp. 14% and 8%). During the presentation and subsequent discussion, Chris Degnan highlighted three aspects: localization, cash and earmarking.

[†] All figures and charts are derived from the GHA-Report by Development Initiatives.

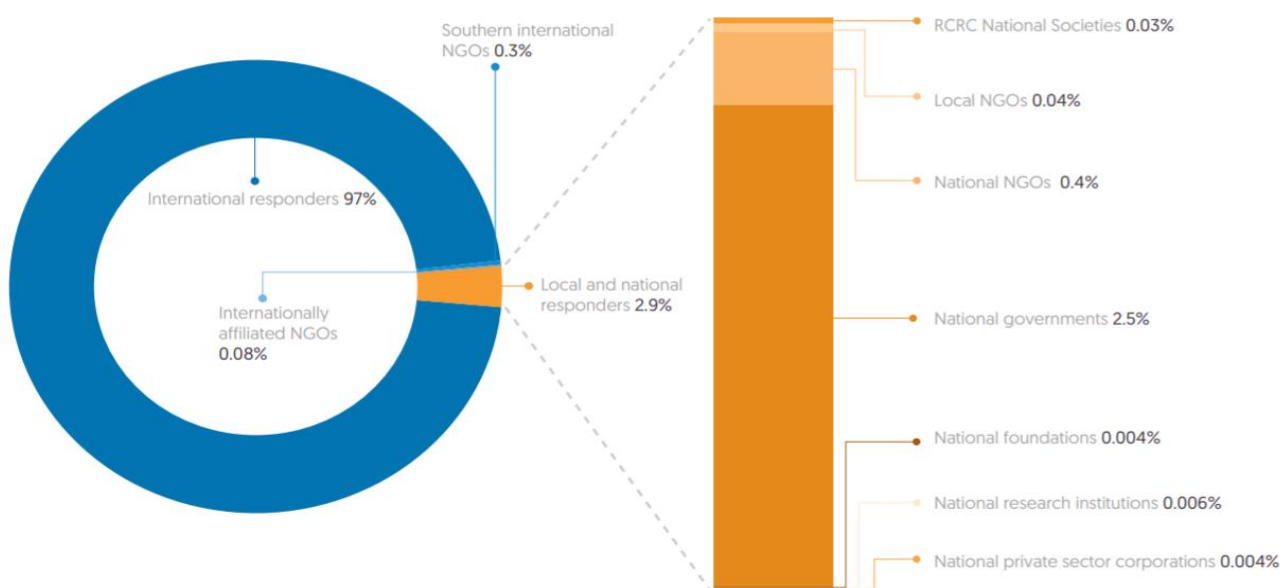
Figure 3.2
International humanitarian assistance from governments by donor region, 2013–2017



Localization

Chris Degnan argued that national and especially local actors are often the best to respond to local crisis. They understand the context they work in and can formulate a response quickly. As figure 4.7 shows, international responders receive 97% of direct funding, as reported to UN OCHA FTS, 2017 (this number was 85% in 2016). Of all local and national responders, national governments receive 2.5% of all direct

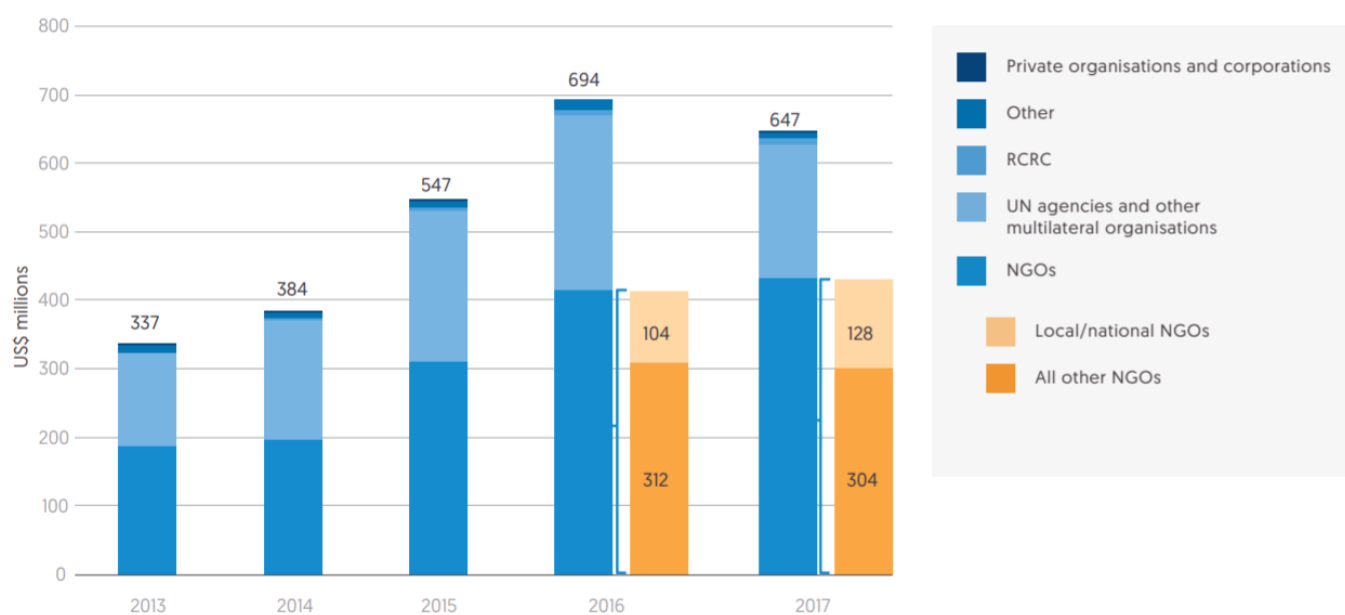
Figure 4.7
Direct funding to local and national responders reporting to UN OCHA FTS, 2017



funding, leaving 0.5% of direct funding for all other local and national responders, among them local NGOs, foundations and research institutions.

A possible resource channel for local responders is the UN-managed humanitarian country-based pooled funding. As figure 4.4 indicates, the UN allocated more funding towards local and national NGOs.

Figure 4.4
UN-managed humanitarian country-based pooled funding by recipient type, 2013–2017



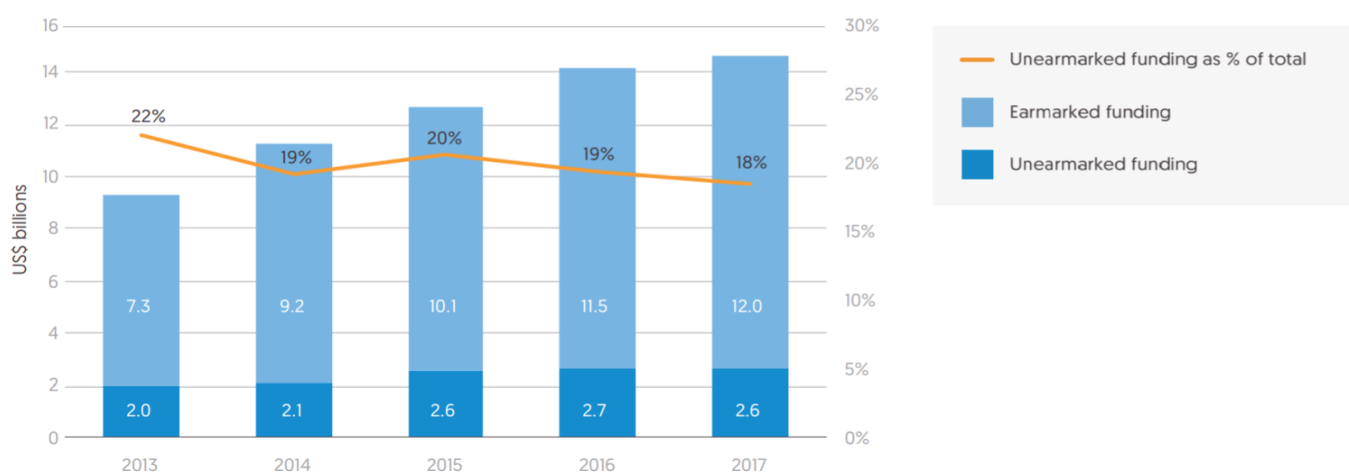
Cash-based transfers

Cash-based transfers were implemented as an answer to the question: how to meet needs best? Furthermore, it is an opportunity for provide choice to recipients in how to meet their individual needs, thus enabling some restoration of dignity as recipients of humanitarian assistance. Cash-based transfers are moving in a good direction with a rise of 40% from an estimated 2.0 billion US\$ in 2015 to an estimated 2.8 billion US\$ in 2016. Improvements in the tracking of cash-based transfer programming are being made in collaboration between donors and implementers; this will enable more transparent reporting of cash transfer flows in the humanitarian system.

Unearmarked funding

One of the goals in the Grand Bargain is to reduce the earmarking of donor contributions. Even though figure 4.8 indicates that unearmarked funding is increasing, this goal has many problems that bring challenges for donors and implementers alike. For example, in 2013, 2.0 billion US\$ was unearmarked, whereas in 2017 this number increased by 135% to 2.6 billion US\$. However, the earmarked funding increased by 164%, which has resulted in a relative decline of 4% in unearmarked funding. Thus, although unearmarked funding is growing, earmarked funds are growing at a faster rate.

Figure 4.8
Earmarked and unearmarked international humanitarian assistance and humanitarian-related contributions to nine UN agencies, 2013–2017



General dilemmas

A final aspect that was highlighted during the meeting on the Grand Bargain is multi-year funding. Chris Degnan pointed out that despite the fact that humanitarian assistance is growing, the total numbers of multi-year funding appeals have decreased in 2016 and 2017. Again, greater consensus on what constitutes multi-year funding, budgets and activities will enable better analysis of progress against this GB commitment. Furthermore, poverty, environmental vulnerability and fragility remain a complex mix for affected persons; significant numbers of persons are affected by all three elements.

3. Debriefing the Grand Bargain Annual Meeting

Björn Hofmann, Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Hero Anwar Birzw, REACH Iraq

Björn Hofmann was the Dutch Sous-Sherpa at the Grand Bargain Annual Meeting in New York. During the Annual Meeting, ODI presented the Annual Independent Report. The report recognized that considerable progress has been made in many areas, but progress has been patchy and uneven. The Grand Bargain process remains stymied, often due to political considerations. Other challenges are related to the diversity of practitioners and implementers and how to capture the progress in data. The meeting in New York focused specifically on these topics and how to adjust certain processes to touch upon these underlying challenges.

During the meeting in New York, several decisions were made. One of these decisions revolved around the need for greater political engagements. It was suggested that a group of high-level decision-makers from within the Grand Bargain community will potentially hold a high-level meeting. High-level political commitment and engagement are necessary to unblock bottlenecks that are hindering the achievement of the Grand Bargain commitments and move towards a more ambitious agenda. Additionally, improved governance is necessary through the empowerment of the Facilitation Group and the position of the Eminent Person, allowing it to set direction and take substantive decisions with the support of an adequately funded Secretariat.

Furthermore, Grand Bargain Eminent Person, Ms. Kristalina Georgieva, proposed to reduce complexity and bureaucracy (i.e. merge workstreams, prioritize commitments). However, one of the complications is to decide on what to prioritize. The eminent person also invited signatories and the Facilitation Group to reflect upon success criteria for the Grand Bargain to be able to answer the question if and when the Grand Bargain could close down. In retrospect, the Grand Bargain meeting in New York resulted in some proposals and action plans, which indicates an overall positive energy that will be taken up at a later moment.

Hero Anwar Birzw is programme director for REACH Iraq and joined the meeting in The Hague through Skype. During the ECOSOC meeting in New York she participated in the localization workstream for three days.

For Hero Anwar Birzw, the meeting in New York was a great opportunity, since it is difficult to get access to “high level places” in order to make the voices of the local NGOs heard. She has had the opportunity to speak with other NGOs. Although

details are context-specific, the concerns and needs of local NGOs in different countries are similar and progress is good for all local actors involved. Even though she felt she did not have the chance to speak to all high-level people, the “less high people” provided her with new connections in which she learned what is going on in other places. Even though it is only one step that does not change the whole story, Hero feels that it is at least a step in the right direction!

According to Hero, one of the core problems concerning localization is the fact that people are not fully aware of it. She argues that people often just “tick boxes” at headquarters. Instead, country officers should know more about it. A second problem concerns follow-up: no questions are asked about what local organizations have done. Finally, one problem revolves around an incorrect understanding of localization: Hero argues that it is often assumed that organizations “lose” money and therefore lose power.

What is needed, then, from INGOs is awareness, also among country officers of INGOs. Furthermore, a stronger equality in partnerships, starting with visibility: mentioning local organizations and the work they do in reports. But also the development of capacity on localization, which requires more than training. And trust is needed: local organizations need to feel equal and need to be heard. When you start from these things, then more direct funding can be applied.

5. Discussion

Evert van Bodegom, ICCO-Kerk in Actie

Thea Hilhorst, Professor Humanitarian Aid at the ISS

Evert van Bodegom highlighted that the Grand Bargain is unique and should be supported, with more focus on capacity development, joint/impartial need assessments and direct funding. Furthermore, the fierce discussion between people in the field and head offices should receive more attention, in which empowerment and the participation revolution should be central.

Thea Hilhorst opened the discussion about the capacity of local NGOs: rather than capacity building, it should be about the strengthening of local capacity.

Overall agreement among participants is that there is not an easy answer on how to proceed on localization: the topic is very context-specific. One major problem is that there is a question of national ownership, in which national governments delegate work to INGOs. In turn, these international partners delegate to local organizations, for example local partners. It is argued that these national governments should take their responsibility and that the only task for international, external partners is to assist and strengthen a national response. All in all, participants agreed that that merely focusing on local partners is not enough: more actors should be involved in the localization process. This makes the current state of the Grand Bargain too narrow.

Link to the GHA-Report: <http://devinit.org/post/global-humanitarian-assistance-report-2018/>

Link to the Chairs Summary of the Grand Bargain Annual Meeting:

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

Link to the Summary Note of the Grand Bargain Annual Meeting:

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