

# ANNUAL MEMBER 20 SURVEY 21

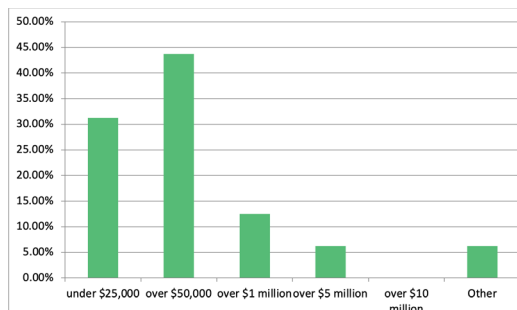
Alliance for Empowering Partnership is a network of local and national organisations and global activists that are advocating for more just and equitable aid system. It provides a platform for information dissemination, sharing experiences, evidence, good practice and learning. Each member leads advocacy at country level and at global level they collaborate where possible and contribute to on-going research and debates, and develop consulted and commonly agreed positions and advocacy strategies around the global agenda of 'localisation' 'participation revolution' and 'transparency'.

A4EP became a signatory to the Grand Bargain in September 2019. The members of A4EP have been taking part in various Grand Bargain workstreams to ensure that local voices are heard and able to influence the policy and practices to make progress on localisation commitments.

A4EP carried out a survey with its members to find out the status of localisation commitments in the context where they work and from their organisational perspective. This information will inform the annual report to the Grand Bargain secretariat and help A4EP to identify the barriers and solutions going forward. It also assists in identifying the focus of A4EP advocacy campaign and engagement with the Grand Bargain signatories and other stakeholders. Out of 22 members, 16 members from 14 countries from Asia, Africa, Middle East and Europe completed the survey. Six members identify themselves as National NGOs, 5 as local NGOs and 3 as women led/ Women rights organisations and 2 as other types of organisations (research/ social enterprise). Altogether of 16 organisations 50% are led by women executive directors. The representation in International Convening Committee which provides strategic direction for A4EP advocacy is equal with 50% male and 50% Female leaders.

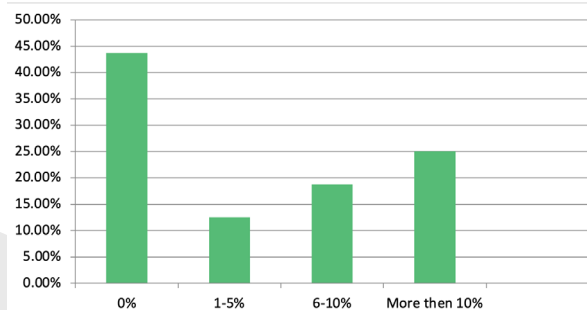
## Funding and Financing

Over 30% receive under \$25k, with 43% receiving between 25k to \$1m and the rest receiving larger amounts.



What is an approximate total volume (USD value) transferred to you through cash, excluding overhead/ support costs?

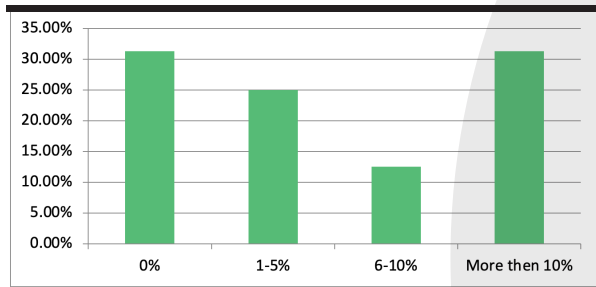
Increasing direct funding to local and national organisations is a key commitment of the Grand Bargain. The target was set at 25% as directly as possible.



% direct funding received from institutional donors for humanitarian response (without intermediary partners)

43% confirmed that they did not get direct funding from institutional donors, 10% who received between 1-5% funding directly from institutional donors. 25% confirmed that they received more than 10% of funding directly from donors. With 18% confirming that they received 6-10% of funding directly from institutional donors. This figures includes accessing pooled funds. 62% of the respondents confirmed that the county based pooled fund exists in their country context compared to 38% who replied no. Interestingly, 54% confirmed that they could not access the pooled fund with 46% accessing the pooled fund. The biggest issues identified by the members was that pooled funds only existed in conflict setting and complex emergencies. They are not operational during natural disasters. Huge obstacles exist in accessing pooled funds as they have to compete with INGOs and the UN agencies.

Increasing multi-year funding is one of the key commitments of the Grand Bargain. When asked about receiving multi-year funding, 30% responded getting no multiyear funding, 25% got 1-5% of the funds that were multi-year, 12% confirmed that 6-10% of their funds were multiyear and 31% confirmed that more than 10% of the funds provided were multi-year.

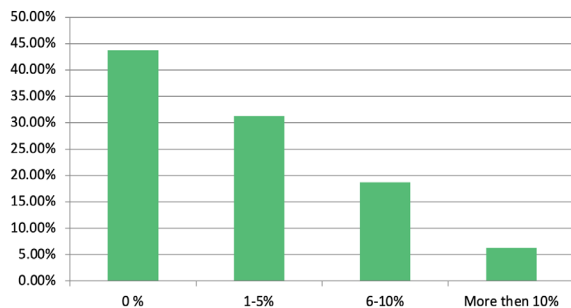


*% of humanitarian funds provided by donors or received by your organisation that are multi-year?*

The members were also asked about un-earmarked or softly earmarked funding. 31% of the respondents confirmed that they had no funds that were un-earmarked or softly earmarked compared to over 37% who said that 1-5% of the funds they received was un-earmarked or softly earmarked, with more than 18% receiving more than 10% of their funds that were un-earmarked or softly earmarked.

### Capacity Strengthening Support

In the Grand Bargain there is a commitment to institutional capacity strengthening support to local and national organisations. 43% confirmed that they did not get any multi-year institutional capacity strengthening support from the funding partner. 31% stated they had 1-5% of funding agreements that incorporated multi-year capacity strengthening support with 18% stating 6-10% of funding agreements incorporated multi-year capacity strengthening and 6% stating more 10% of the funding agreements incorporated multi-year funding. These partners tend to be foundations or longer-term INGO partners.

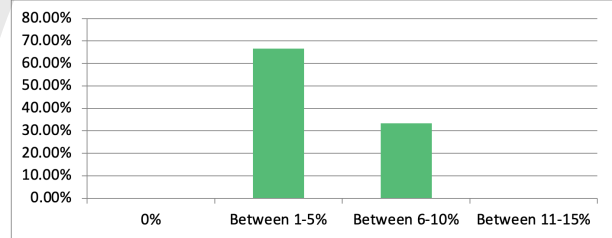


*% of partnership or funding agreement that incorporates multi-year institutional capacity strengthening support for your organisation?*

### Overhead costs

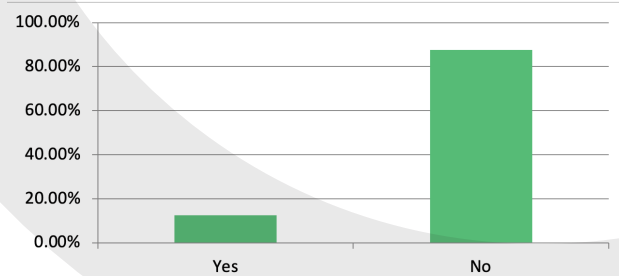
Only 12% of the respondents confirmed that they receive overhead costs on all contracts with 80% receiving overhead costs on some of the contracts and 6% not getting overhead costs at all. 67% of those get between 1-5% overhead, whereas 33% get between 6-10% over costs,

with none getting over this amount.



*If you received overhead costs, what % were they?*

Tracking of funds is a key part of transparency and accountability. Members were asked if they were using IATI data and accessing IATI compatible data planforms and tools in order to enable evidence-informed decision-making, greater accountability and learning.

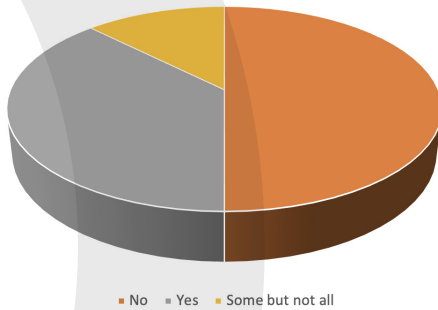


*Are you using IATI data and accessing IATI compatible data planforms and tools?*

Only 12% of the respondents use IATI compared to 88% who do not. Of those who use IATI 80% said they did not find it easily comprehensible and they did not find donors reporting regularly on the IATI. Majority of 68% are not using common reporting template as the standard for reporting, with 22% who use common reporting template. 37% of the respondents use UN partner portal, whereas 63% do not have partnership with the UN agencies. Some have a deliberate policy of not accepting funding from the UN.

The issue of commitment to equitable partnership has been discussed for the last 27 years and since 2016 has been more avidly discussed. A4EP has been advocating for equitable partnership since its inception. We enquired whether dialogue to improve partnership modality, following principles of partnership has taken place with the international partners. 50% of the respondents said there had been no dialogue, with 36% confirming that dialogue is taking place and 14% confirming that dialogue has taken place with some but not all partners.

**Only 12% of the respondents use IATI**



#### *Dialogue to improve partnership modality*

All of them report mixed results, in some cases improving partnership and other cases demand for better partnership has resulted in being side-lined with subtle retaliation where the contracts have not been renewed. The A4EP members who are vocal on localisation issues have also reported being side-lined from country level discussions or from funding opportunities. A4EP have been encouraging the members to take active part in coordination platforms.

### The key achievements in 2021

Members of A4EP are actively advocating in various forums at country, regional and international levels. Below are some of the key forums where A4EP members have participated.

### Grand Bargain work streams

A4EP members have been playing an active role in influencing the GB discussions since its inception in 2018. In 2021, A4EP took active part in the discussions and provided inputs into GB 2.0, producing position papers, holding webinars and collaborating with KUNO, CHA, Venro, Charter4Change, George Washington University, ODI and other actors. A4EP members were present in Grand Bargain work streams on Localisation, Participation Revolution and Transparency. The concern of A4EP members were that only 2 year commitment will not be sufficient to make progress on implementation of the GB commitments. A4EP had suggested to think longer term to 2030 and turn the commitments into humanitarian goals and align them with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR) and Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

Nine A4EP members took part in the Grand Bargain annual meeting. In November 2021, A4EP members were invited to be part of the GB caucuses on Role of Intermediaries and Cash Coordination. This involves carrying

out consultation with the wider constituency of local and national actors and providing feedback into the caucus discussions. These are ongoing processes and the outcomes will be shared with the local and national actors. A4EP is coordinating with NEAR network on joint positioning where possible. A4EP is also learning from this experience to take up the role in the Facilitation Group in September 2022. In most of the processes of the Grand Bargain local actors are outnumbered, with international signatories dominating the discourse and influence over discussions and decisions, perpetuating the power imbalance.

A4EP with its member ECOWEB initiated a multi-stakeholder country level dialogue in the Philippines in partnership with OCHA and Oxfam Philippines with strong support from the UNRC. This initiative has achieved some recognitions, provided spaces for raising views and perspectives. However, more concrete actions for change in the system and practices still to be seen. It is recognised that long advocacy is required. It has provided a momentum for local CSOs solidarity movement to push further the localisation agenda.



*Communities affected of crisis in the Philippines expressing their views and perspectives about Localisation of Humanitarian Aid using scorecard on the Seven Dimensions of Localisation. This is part of the of Localisation dialogue process in 2021 co-facilitated by ECOWEB, A4EP, OXFAM and OCHA.*

### OCHA Pooled Fund - Platform Advisory Group

One woman leader from A4EP ICC was selected to represent local actors, through application and selection process, with another member providing backup support in the NGO Dialogue Platform Advisory Group of OCHA Pooled Funds, through application and selection

process, where donors, OCHA, UN agencies and NGOs meet to discuss the progress of the pooled funds globally. A4EP has been participating in the review and revision of the global guidelines. It provides an opportunity to influence the policy setting for pooled funds to ensure localisation is front and centre of the agenda. It also provides direct access to donors to gauge their commitments to ensure more access for local actors to the pooled funds. It is also an opportunity to share the real experiences of local actors and identify the barriers and suggest improvements. However, the discussion do become a bit technical and sometimes difficult to follow. The turnaround time for documents is very short especially in light of all the other work that needs to happen.

### Raising awareness of localisation commitments

Last year A4EP embarked on producing an animation video to raise awareness about localisation commitments. This was a request from the members in the last GB survey. The aim of the video is to raise awareness at country and regional level but also provide perspectives from the local level, as many materials are from the international perspectives. The video was produced in collaboration with A4EP members reflecting on what localisation means from local perspectives using seven country examples using the seven dimensions.

### Engaging with donors

At the end of 2021, GMI, COAST Trust and a bilateral donor kicked off a series of learning sessions exploring the relationships with local and national actors as well as power relations at large in the international sector. The learning journey is co-created, designed to jointly explore, together with local actors and intermediaries, what localisation means for policy and programming; what the role of a (bilateral) donor is and should be; and how to improve the partnerships. More importantly: how a donor can improve listening to local and national partners and how to move towards a more inclusive way of working. These learning sessions on how to turn the localisation commitment into practice are mandatory for everyone within the Department to follow, from policy officers to management support and finance people. Local female and male leaders from A4EP and the wider local/national CSO community from different parts of the world share their experiences and advice. International agencies and other donors are also invited to share their



*HRSS protection staff assisting flood affected family in Panyijiar, South Sudan*

experiences. The journey will continue until September 2022.

### County level advocacy

Many A4EP members were involved in country level networks and have initiated advocacy activities. Many participated in C4C meeting at country and global level.

- One member is part of National Humanitarian Network Pakistan and has been actively advocating for localisation and influencing in various forums including a member of the Grand Bargain localisation workstream, START board, hub development, Humanitarian Country Team.
- Another member of South Sudan sits in the HCT as a representative of local organisation, however, there is not huge amount of progress in term of funding for local organisation or women led/women rights organisation. Member for IASC for Protection policy review which is mostly dominated by the global north. Nothing much is coming in term of practical work. We have a lot on papers but implementation is dragging.
- A4EP member is co-chair of Charter for Change Uganda, Chairperson of the Western Uganda local actors platform and vice chair of National platform for local and National Humanitarian Actors.
- A4EP members are member of Clusters at country level but find it hard to navigate the politics played by the big agencies.
- A4EP member in Bangladesh is part of the country level CSO solidarity movement and advocating for localisation and member of OPAG.



A learning center for Rohingya refugee children at the camp in Cox's Bazar. this center is run by COAST, Bangladesh

- A4EP in Jordan has formed Jordan National NGO Forum (JONAF) and leading localisation discussions in Jordan and co-chair of localisation task team and other coordination mechanisms.
- A4EP member is leading discussions on localisation in the Philippines and leading discussions around CSO pooled fund.
- As A4EP members joined Grand Bargain which provided a huge opportunity to take up advocacy issues globally. Also, part of localisation working group, GB NGOs consultation group

Being part of A4EP provides access to other necessary networks. Timely, access to information from A4EP facilitates us to work better. Ability to work with/ learn from & share experiences.

### Key barriers in the localisation process identified by members

#### Lack of knowledge/ information of local actors on global commitments

Many local actors do not have information about

the global commitments. The GB and C4C signatories have not institutionalised and shared their commitments with their country offices and partners at country level. There is a need to simplify and de-jargonised some document for local/national NGOs to understand.

#### Non-adherence to localisation commitments

There has been very little to slow progress on GB and C4C localisation commitments. Questions are being raised about the seriousness of the GB signatories to implement localisation commitment as there is a lack of systematic, concrete and accountable measures. Country level evidence show that signatories of GB and C4C have an ad hoc approach and are not equally adhering to their commitments across all geographical areas of their presence. They are not practicing principles of equitable partnerships.

#### Lack of transparency and accountability

There is a lack of accountability for the commitments on the part of the international organisations. Lack of transparency from some agency in term of partnership agreement. There is too much politics in country based pooled



*HAI responded to Kerala flood response and supported 1000 families with distribution of non-food items, dry ration kits and hygiene kits at flood affected districts of Kerala*

funds where local partners are being sidelined and UN agencies and INGOs are given priority. The humanitarian architecture is very unregulated.

### Power imbalance and attitudes and behaviours

Beyond all structural challenges to localisation (that are related to power imbalances, neo-colonialism, risks, etc), a very important barrier that needs to be overcome is practically the systematic linking of any discussion on localisation to capacity building. Another important barrier is the lack of coordinated voices on localisation at a country level. There is continued negative narratives about of local organizations as being corrupt and lacking accountability standards. What is disturbing is that even the local NGOs with high accountability standards are still treated as though they have no capacity. If fact the more you come out as a strong local organization, the more the INGOs isolate you from partnering with them. Intermediaries/country offices continue being the biggest barrier.

### Lack of access to decision making positions

In some places INGOs and Govt are the main hurdle and in other places UN is the main barrier. There is shrinking space for local and national organisations to access decision makers in country. Majority of the decision-making positions at cluster level is taken up by the UN and INGOs. Unhealthy competition between INGOs & National /Local NGO create a very competitive environment instead of promoting complementarity and collaboration.

### Funding and Financing

The macro policy and practice of international actors really impact local and national actors. Lack of trust from donors is a key barrier to access direct funding by local organisations. Short term project leads to lack of project sustainability and maintaining qualified staff and providing job security. Multi-year NGOs funding is crucial for sustainability and being able to practice duty of care to their staff. Flexible funding should also be advocated to make it more responsive to the needs of the people and communities and to also support needs of local partners for its needed institutional strengthening.

### Capacity building practices

Localization has become a “catchy phrase” among some INGOs who are using it to fundraise to implement localization projects. At the end of the day, they are doing so little to build the capacity of local organizations. They are not even providing needs-based capacity building but just providing blanket training to local organizations which does not add value. For example, a training on how to write a strategic plan is good for a starting organization but not for an organization that has existed for 20 years and implemented 5 or more strategic plans.

### What could be done to overcome Barriers

#### Strengthen local organizations

Strengthen local organizations through information sharing and updates on global commitments.

- Regular engagement with donors and international organizations on commitments.
- Supporting local organizations to take lead in country and at global level. Engagement with key stakeholders at all levels on the need to open spaces for local organizations participation.
- Donor funds for capacity building should be given to local organizations at the forefront of localization with the capacity to mobilize fellow local organizations and then seek out consultancy services from INGOs.
- The local organizations should drive the localization capacity building agenda and the INGOs come to support. Locally led action should be recognized, supported and facilitated in order to allow them for scaled operations.
- Strengthening the local leadership and role of local actors. Strengthening collaboration and partnership between the international and national organizations.
- Improving the local organization's capacity and skills by providing training and exchange of technical expertise among international and national organizations and to ensure that the relationship is complimentary.

### Evidence based advocacy

Advocacy at global and country level on equitable partnership, gathering information from the field to support advocacy. A4EP should continue advocating for this including having a mechanism for feedback from local actors that donors and intermediaries should facilitate. Advocacy for upholding accountable and meaningful partnership among the local, national and international organizations. Promoting and upholding the protection of rights and dignity of affected people who receive humanitarian assistance from various aid agencies.

### Donors monitoring

Donors should make localisation commitments and equitable partnership with local organisations a requirement in their agreements with intermediaries. Third party monitoring should be used to ensure adherence to principles of equitable partnership.

### Coordination

There is a need to support local coordination mechanisms and efforts and to ensure that



*A woman waits alongside the food package she just received under an emergency response and rehabilitation project supporting drought affected communities in Sindh, Pakistan.*

they are included and represented in country coordination meetings.

### Decolonise aid

More actively reflect on decolonisation of aid and advocating to international actors to stop raising funds in the global South which is leading to shrinking space and doing harm to local civil society. The neo colonial approach is leading to short-term programmes imposed from outside with the little or no involvement of local communities and their local institutions in decision-making processes that effect their lives and for longer term sustainability.

### Suggestions for future activities for A4EP

#### Engagement with donors

Create safe space for regular engagement of local organizations and institutional and other donors. This brings an opportunity to provide direct feedback on what is working and what needs improvement.

#### Equitable partnership

Take a lead on more equitable partnership discussions with donors, INGOS and networks and advocate for more concrete actions.

#### Decision Making

Giving space for local partners to sit at the globe table where decisions are made so that they can give their ideas.

#### Funding

Advocate for multi-year funding for local partners, in all kinds of humanitarian contexts, and some % on capacity building and system strengthening. Direct funding from donors to local partners instead of third party which in most cases the money does not even reach the local partners. Flexible funding should also be advocated to make it more responsive to the needs of the people and communities and to also support needs of local partners for its needed institutional strengthening. Direct funding for women led/ women rights organisation with not too many stringent condition attached.

#### In-country awareness

Create more awareness in-country on the localisation conversation happening at global

level. Mobilize support for members to enable country level advocacy engagement apart from global engagements.

#### Advocacy

Make a coordinated double stream of advocacy at a global level with country level advocacy (such as what was done in the Philippines). A4EP can advocate and take a strategic action in upholding accountable and meaningful partnership among the local, national and international organizations in humanitarian response and emphasis for a system which is programmatically accountable to the affected people by any crisis. There is a vital need of a new humanitarian system that is locally driven by local and grass root organizations, also risk-informed and needs-based. A4EP can take up advocacy at various level, so that locally led action is recognized, supported and facilitated in order to allow them scaled operations across all. A4EP can come up with strategic role and advocacy papers which can be a guide to all humanitarian organisations working on localisation.

A4EP can advocate that locally led actions are recognized, supported and facilitated at any level. A4EP can advocate and work for a new humanitarian system that is locally driven by local and grassroots organizations, also risk-informed and needs-based. Continuous campaign on crucial issues. Continuous dialogue with both local / national and international actors.

#### Strengthen local leadership

Should work to strengthen the local leadership and role of local actors. Addressing capacity building for the national / local organisations. Advocate for local organizations to have a leading role at the coordination and decision-making. Provide funding to NNGOs in support of the capacity building, liaison functions, and support participation in coordination structures. Strengthening the institutional capacity of NNGOs to enable them to more meaningfully engage in the international humanitarian architecture

#### Increase engagement with members

At present majority of the activities are carried out by few member volunteers who invest a lot of time to produce advocacy papers and contribute to international advocacy. A4EP members need to share more responsibility.

A4EP needs to expand and ensure more commitments from the members. Create more opportunities for more members to engage in different advocacy opportunities. Raise funds

for advocacy activities and for members' time compensation to carry out advocacy at regional and international advocacy forums. Review the structure in view of future needs.



A Community radio producer interviews farmer. COAST is operating two community radio in two coastal districts in Bangladesh

**“A4EP IS SMALL BUT VERY EFFECTIVE IN THE AREAS IT’S INVOLVED  
..... STAY SANE”**

#### A4EP Advocacy papers and resources

- A4EP Proposition for the Intermediaries Caucus
- We are an Alliance of Local & National Organization\_Intro
- We are an alliance of Local & National Organization\_Intro\_Arabic subtitles
- Localisation : What does it mean?
- Localisation : What does it mean? \_Arabic subtitles
- APPEAL TO GRAND BARGAIN AND C4C SIGNATORIES RESPONDING TO TYPHOON RAI
- Meal Framework for Localisation of Humanitarian Action in Jordan
- Localisation, racism and decolonisation: Hollow talk or real look in the mirror?
- September 29, 2021,
- Moving forward localisation of humanitarian action in the Philippines: Empowerment leads to better humanitarian outcomes, February – July 2021
- Walking side by side – not voices in the wilderness. Grand Bargain Statement from A4EP
- A model on cash coordination endorsed - Grand Bargain caucus outcome document



## COVER PHOTOS

**The first Cover:** Two-year old Muska peeks out from the “make-shift” home that her family has settled in at the Afghan market refugee camp in Peshawar, Pakistan, after fleeing the on-going crisis in their home-town back in Afghanistan.

**The Back Cover:** COAST installed WASH facilities at the Rohingya camps. Place: Balukhali Rohingya Camp, Cox’s Bazar, Bangladesh