

GRAND BARGAIN

Funding in Palestine: Between Slogans and Implementation

A Study on the Reality of Implementing the Commitments of the Grand Bargain in Palestine



Palestinian Non-Governmental Organizations Network (PNGO)

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Forward

We at the Palestinian NGOs Network (PNGO) are pleased and honoured to present this research study, which is considered the first of its kind on the reality of the implementation of the Grand Bargain commitments in Palestine.

The study aims to clarify the concepts of the Grand Bargain, its origins, and subsequent reviews, as well as to assess the current state of its implementation in Palestine. Through this study, the Network seeks to shed light on the commitments made by the signatories to the Grand Bargain and the extent of their fulfilment. Additionally, it examines the challenges faced by NGOs and other relevant humanitarian actors, providing an opportunity to study these challenges in depth and explore ways to address them, with the aim of fostering an enabling environment for civil society work in Palestine.

The study also explores the available opportunities that can be leveraged to enhance the implementation of the Grand Bargain commitments in Palestine, identifying the expected requirements from donors and NGOs to achieve this goal. It aspires to promote the practical application of the Grand Bargain commitments and raise awareness of its principles among Palestinian NGOs and civil society organizations.

PNGO offers this study to humanitarian workers and all interested parties, hoping it will serve as a valuable resource to improve the quality of humanitarian work and the response capacities of local and civil society organizations. PNGO also calls upon all Grand Bargain signatories to fulfil their commitments in order to advance and reinforce the localization of humanitarian response.

This study was issued as part of the "Strategic Partnership II" project, implemented by the Palestinian NGO Network in partnership with ActionAid Palestine and funded by the Danish government.

We extend our sincere thanks to all PNGO members, the various sectors within the Network, donors, UN agencies, and local actors for their significant contributions through participation in surveys, interviews, and workshops, which enriched and enhanced the value of this study.

In conclusion, we would like to extend our deep thanks to the Roadmap consulting team, represented by Messrs. Walid Al-Nabahin and Zakaria Al-Salot, for their dedicated efforts in preparing this valuable research.

Palestinian NGOs Network (PNGO)

Summary

Through this study, the Palestinian Non-Governmental Organizations Network (PNGO) aims to shed light on the commitments associated with the Grand Bargain, the extent of their implementation, and their impact on the Palestinian context. The study also seeks to identify the challenges affecting the application of these commitments and explore ways to address them in order to foster an enabling environment for National Non-Governmental Organizations (NNGOs) work in Palestine.

The research began in August 2023 but was interrupted due to the genocidal war on Gaza. It was later resumed in June 2024, providing a unique perspective that reflects the situation before and during the war in both the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data to highlight different aspects of the Grand Bargain commitments. It relies on the localization framework to assess how donors have upheld their commitments upon signing the Grand Bargain. A survey was conducted among NNGOs in the West Bank and Gaza, alongside in-depth interviews with representatives of NNGOs, international organizations, and some of the donors who are signatories to the Grand Bargain.

The study concludes that the implementation of the Grand Bargain in the Palestinian context remains weak and requires substantial efforts in collaboration with donors and international organizations to ensure adherence to their commitments and translate them from mere slogans into practical and effective action.

In this regard, the study presents a set of recommendations aimed at addressing the various dimensions of the Grand Bargain, providing practical steps to guide donors, international organizations, and NNGOs in maximizing the benefits of the initiative. The key recommendations include:

- Supporting NNGOs and enhancing their resilience as a fundamental condition for countering conditional funding.
- Strengthening donor accountability mechanisms based on the commitments of the Grand Bargain, ensuring accountability at both the national and representative levels of NNGOs.
- Establishing a regulatory framework with the authority to review the funding mechanisms and conditions imposed on NNGOs.
- Enhancing active elements within Palestinian civil society to foster localization efforts.
- In light of the genocidal war on Gaza and the escalating Israeli occupation, there is an urgent need to restore the capacities, resources, and roles of NNGOs in community-based work.
- Developing and designing interventions based on a realistic assessment of needs, ensuring they are responsive in the short, medium, and long term.
- Identifying and analyzing risks related to community work across different sectors and strengthening NNGO efforts in addressing them.

Study Background

Since the launch of the Grand Bargain in 2016, and with its horizontal and vertical expansion, the global civil society community has shown increasing interest in its implications. Many have looked forward to its promised outcomes and expected impacts in improving the humanitarian sector, serving as a mechanism to bridge the funding gap, enhance humanitarian efforts, and support localization.

The Grand Bargain has expanded horizontally through the increase in donors and international organizations adopting and signing onto it. It has also expanded vertically with the introduction of commitments, the formation of reference and subcommittees, and the development of policy frameworks. Additionally, the first review was conducted, leading to adjustments in some of its pathways to ensure more practical and measurable implementation.

Despite these developments, a central question remains: "What impact has the Grand Bargain had on humanitarian funding?" In the complex Palestinian context, this question becomes even more specific: "To what extent have donor commitments under the Grand Bargain influenced humanitarian funding in Palestine? And how does the intricate Palestinian reality affect the implementation of the Grand Bargain?"

As Terry Boullata from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) states¹:

"Following the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit, donors agreed that 25% of humanitarian funding should be channeled through National Non-Governmental Organizations (NNGOs). However, no report clearly indicates the extent to which donors have adhered to this commitment."

Given this ambiguity, the Palestinian Non-Governmental Organizations Network (PNGO) took on the responsibility of investigating these critical questions. This initiative represents a pioneering and constructive effort to assess the landscape of civil society work, identify enabling factors, and explore obstacles affecting the sector. The aim is to devise practical solutions to mitigate these challenges and, where possible, eliminate them.

This effort aligns with PNGO's vision as an umbrella organization for NNGOs, striving to develop and structure the NNGO Work Environment in Palestine in a way that serves the national agenda. It also extends PNGO's ongoing work over the years in analyzing and assessing the reality of the NNGO work, identifying key challenges, and formulating policies that lead to concrete interventions to address these issues.

¹ Personal Interview with Ms. Terry Boullata – Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) – Conducted on September 14, 2023

To achieve these objectives, PNGO partnered with ActionAid – Palestine to examine the implementation of the Grand Bargain commitments, assess the extent to which donors operating in Palestine adhere to the agreement, and analyze how it is being practically applied. Additionally, the study aimed to identify barriers and challenges hindering implementation, explore the underlying causes, and develop effective solutions to address them.

Study Methodology

The advisory team adopted the Mixed Methods Research (MMR) approach, which is a procedural design that enables the collection and analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data in a comprehensive manner. This approach ensures triangulation of various data sources more efficiently. The team gathered qualitative and quantitative data to cover different aspects of the Grand Bargain, including its impacts, opportunities, challenges, and constraints, to achieve the study's objectives. Qualitative data played a key role in guiding the analysis and drawing conclusions.

The methodology included the development of a theoretical framework to conceptualize the Grand Bargain and its realities within the Palestinian context. This framework was reviewed and approved in collaboration with PNGO and its partners. Based on this framework, data collection and analysis tools were designed accordingly.

Given the difficulty in measuring donor compliance with the Grand Bargain commitments, NEAR Network developed a Localisation Performance Measurement Framework² to assess donors' adherence to the localization standard. The research team found this framework highly relevant to the study's objectives, making it a useful tool for evaluating, even at a general level, the extent to which donors comply with the principles and commitments of the Grand Bargain. The NEAR framework is built on a set of factors directly derived from the Grand Bargain's commitments and provisions. It outlines various indicators that cover multiple aspects of each commitment, providing a clear and measurable picture of the extent to which these commitments are applied in practice. This makes the framework a valuable tool that helps identify gaps in donor implementation while also highlighting strengths that reflect the intended impact and spirit of the Grand Bargain.

The framework assesses six key dimensions, which are:

1. Partnerships
2. Funding
3. Organizational Capacity
4. Coordination and Integration
5. Policy, Influence, and Visibility
6. Participation

The research team adopted these same six dimensions and their related components to assess the extent of compliance with the Grand Bargain's principles and commitments in the organizations under study. These dimensions were integrated into both the survey questions and the presentation and discussion of the study's findings.

Data Collection

The research team conducted a review of relevant literature, relying on a tailored survey designed specifically for the study's objectives. Additionally, 10 in-depth individual interviews were conducted with a diverse group of experts, specialists, and representatives of relevant

² NEAR Network – [Localisation Performance Measurement Framework](#)

organizations. To provide a more realistic depiction, the research team also incorporated case studies that highlight the experiences of certain organizations with donors and funding policies. These cases illustrate the actual dynamics on the ground and offer insights into real-world interactions. The survey was distributed to a list of NNGOs operating in the Gaza Strip, totalling approximately 350 organizations. However, the response rate was low, with only 12% of organizations participating.

Study Challenges

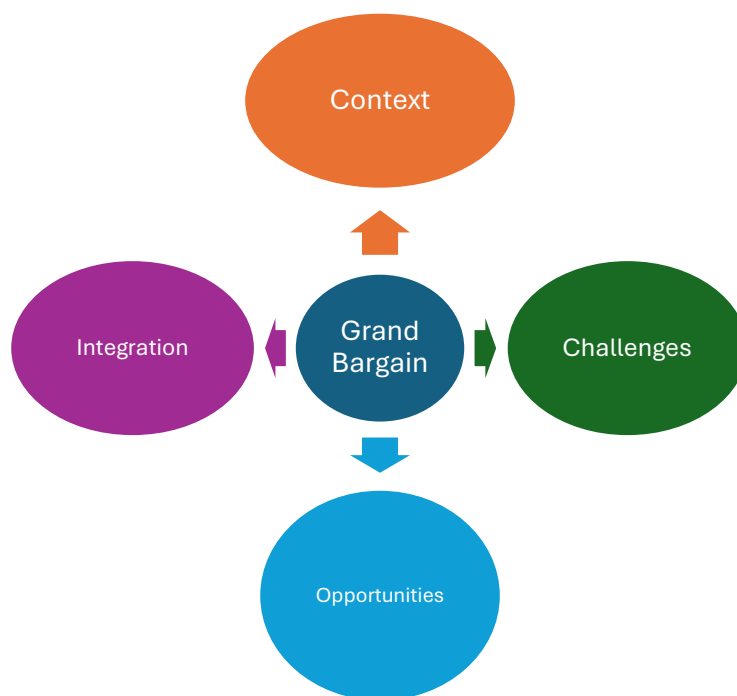
- The data collection process began in September 2023, with the survey disseminated through electronic communication channels. Responses from National Non-Governmental Organizations (NNGOs) were gathered throughout September and early October. However, the process was interrupted by the outbreak of the war on Gaza in October and was only resumed in June 2024 during the ongoing war. At that point, the research team continued conducting interviews and case studies, but had to rely on the survey responses collected before the war, as completing the survey during the war was not feasible. Notably, the survey was distributed just two weeks before the assault on Gaza began, which provided the study with a unique perspective—survey responses reflected the pre-war situation, while interviews captured insights from the wartime reality.
- Given that most of the qualitative data was collected during the war, the research team faced significant challenges in conducting in-depth interviews with experts and specialists, particularly those inside Gaza, where communication was severely disrupted.
- Due to the relatively recent introduction of the Grand Bargain, obtaining reliable sources and information on its implementation in Palestine was challenging.
- For the same reason (the novelty of the Grand Bargain), the research team noted a general lack of awareness among the NNGOs included in the study. In most cases, organizations had only a superficial understanding of the Grand Bargain's existence but lacked in-depth knowledge of its commitments, let alone a critical perspective on its implementation.
- The sensitivity of funding issues among both NNGOs and donors, as well as the delicate nature of partnerships between them, influenced the depth of responses and the quality of data collected. This impacted the study's ability to obtain critical insights into the Funding landscape in Palestine. Additionally, Israel's intensified aggression on Gaza and the West Bank, along with its terrorist designations of humanitarian organizations—including UNRWA, created an atmosphere of heightened sensitivity. This made international organizations especially cautious in discussing such topics.
- The difficulty in accessing signatory institutions that are committed to the Grand Bargain limited the study's ability to assess the extent of their adherence to its commitments and to identify the challenges they face in Palestine specifically.
- The shifts in donor policies and priorities observed during the genocidal war on Gaza were notable and deeply felt by many local organizations. These shifts may have altered

NNGOs' perspectives and approaches toward donors, potentially affecting how they view funding mechanisms. As a result, the study's findings—particularly from the pre-war survey—may not fully reflect the evolving realities in donor attitudes and funding policies.

Theoretical Framework

This study is built upon a conceptual presentation of the Grand Bargain, examining its origins, the reviews and revisions it has undergone, and exploring the contexts surrounding its implementation—particularly in Palestine. It investigates the challenges faced by both signatory donors and NNGOs in applying the commitments of the Grand Bargain.

Additionally, the study seeks to identify opportunities that can be leveraged to enhance the implementation of the Grand Bargain's commitments in Palestine. This includes determining the requirements expected from donors and NNGOs to facilitate this process effectively. Furthermore, the study explores the practical alignment of the Grand Bargain's implementation with localization principles and the Triple Nexus approach, as understood within the localized framework.



The Reality of Funding

With the persistent and chronic crises affecting the world, the need for humanitarian funding continues to grow, particularly in disaster-stricken areas across the globe.

The Difference between Humanitarian and Development Funding

Humanitarian funding refers to financial resources provided in response to humanitarian crises, such as natural disasters (earthquakes, floods, famines) or armed conflicts. Its primary goal is to save lives, alleviate suffering, and protect the dignity of those affected. This includes ensuring access to basic needs such as food, shelter, healthcare, water, sanitation, and protection.

On the other hand, development funding is financial support dedicated to development efforts, aiming to enhance various aspects of life, eliminate the root causes of the problems facing humanity, and improve existing conditions by providing more effective and environmentally adaptable solutions.

Although both types of funding aim to improve people's lives, there are fundamental differences between them. One of the most significant differences is the urgent nature of humanitarian funding, which cannot be delayed and is typically implemented within short- or medium-term timeframes. In contrast, development funding operates over a longer timeframe, which is both available and necessary for achieving sustainable change. Additionally, humanitarian funding focuses on providing basic needs such as water and food, while development funding addresses capacity-building, coordination enhancement, and income support.

In summary, humanitarian funding can be likened to "putting out a fire", as it focuses on immediate crisis response. In contrast, development funding is similar to "building a house", as it aims to create sustainable, long-term change.

Despite the fundamental differences between humanitarian and development funding, it is important to recognize their increasing overlap. Acknowledging this interconnection, governments and organizations have adopted the humanitarian-development nexus, which considers effective humanitarian response as a critical step toward achieving sustainable development. For this reason, there have been growing efforts to strengthen cooperation and coordination between humanitarian and development actors. As awareness of the interconnection between humanitarian and development work has increased, and with the continuation of protracted or chronic crises, the need for peace building has also emerged. Peace building plays a crucial role in reducing human suffering, given the scale of crises caused by wars and their consequences, such as displacement and poverty, which are at the root of humanitarian challenges.

From this perspective, governments and humanitarian organizations began discussing the Triple Nexus, which integrates humanitarian action, development efforts, and peace building. While it is unclear when and where this concept first emerged, it gained significant attention

when United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres called for "sustaining peace" to be recognized as a third pillar alongside humanitarian and development efforts³.

Sources of Funding

Humanitarian funding comes from a variety of sources, which can be categorized into several main groups:

- **Governments:** Governments are the largest source of humanitarian funding, providing financial contributions to international organizations and NGOs, as well as offering direct aid to affected countries. The United States is the largest humanitarian donor, contributing 40.8%⁴ of global humanitarian funding in 2024, followed by the European Union (9%) and Germany (5.9%).
- **International Organizations:** International organizations such as the United Nations and the World Bank play a crucial role in mobilizing and distributing humanitarian funding. Key UN mechanisms for funding humanitarian efforts include, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), and Country-based Humanitarian Appeals.
- **Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and National Non-Governmental Organizations (NNGOs):** NGOs are major players in delivering humanitarian assistance. Organizations such as Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors without Borders), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and Oxfam actively provide humanitarian aid worldwide. These organizations receive funding from a diverse range of sources, including Individual donations, Government grants, Funding from private foundations.
- **Private Sector:** The private sector's role in humanitarian funding is growing, with companies contributing through direct donations, Partnerships with humanitarian organizations, and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs. Private sector contributions can include money, goods, services, and expertise.
- **Individuals:** Individuals play a vital role in humanitarian funding by making direct donations to humanitarian organizations, contributing through online fundraising platforms, or participating in charity campaigns. Additionally, Islamic funding mechanisms, such as Zakat and Sadaqah, serve as significant sources of humanitarian aid in many Muslim-majority countries, further supporting relief efforts worldwide.

Volume of Humanitarian Funding

Determining an exact figure for global humanitarian funding is challenging due to the vast number of donors and organizations involved in aid distribution. There is no single centralized entity that consolidates all humanitarian funding data. However, several key sources provide estimates:

³ UN Secretary-General António Guterres – December 201

⁴ Financial Tracking Service – OCHA 2024

- **United Nations Financial Tracking Service (FTS):** This service tracks reported humanitarian funding on a voluntary basis. According to FTS data, registered humanitarian funding amounted to approximately \$36.52 billion in 2023⁵.
- **Global Humanitarian Assistance (GHA) Report:** This annual report analyzes trends in humanitarian aid. According to its findings, total international humanitarian assistance reached \$43.4 billion in 2023⁶.

There is a significant discrepancy between the figures reported by these leading sources, highlighting the complexity of tracking humanitarian funding. This is largely due to the intricate flow of donations, where funds move from individual contributors to international organizations and charitable foundations, which then redistribute the resources to implementing agencies. Nevertheless, the key takeaway from these figures is that humanitarian funding is substantial, yet despite its magnitude, it remains insufficient to meet actual needs, with a persistent and significant funding gap.

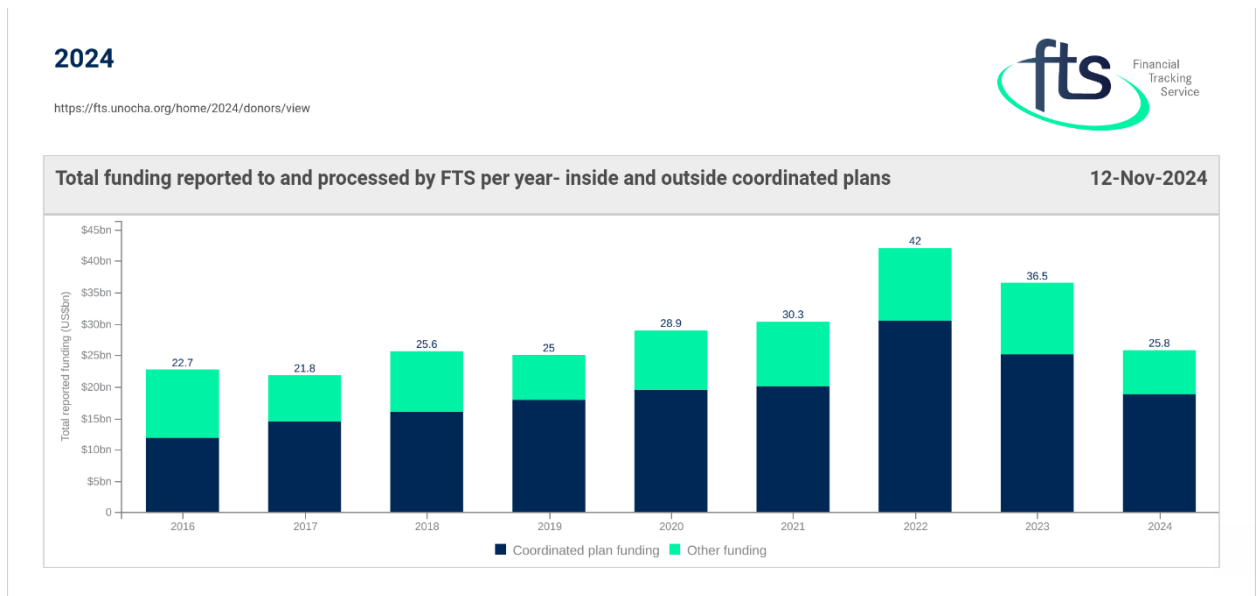


FIGURE 1 - GLOBAL HUMANITARIAN FUNDING IN PREVIOUS YEARS – SOURCE: FTS

The graph (Figure 1) illustrates the global humanitarian funding volume as recorded by the United Nations Financial Tracking Service (FTS) between 2016 and 2024. It generally depicts a steady increase in global funding. This clearly indicates:

- **The worsening of humanitarian crises:** The continuous rise in required funding reflects the escalation of humanitarian crises worldwide, whether due to armed conflicts, natural disasters, or climate change.
- **An increasing number of people in need of assistance:** As crises intensify, the number of individuals requiring life-saving humanitarian aid continues to grow.

⁵ Financial Tracking Service – OCHA 2023

⁶ GHA – Falling Short? Humanitarian Funding and Reform 2024

- **The rising cost of delivering aid:** The cost of humanitarian assistance has been affected by various factors, including inflation, rising fuel prices, and the complexity of supply chains.

The Funding Gap

The funding gap in humanitarian work refers to the difference between the required funding to meet humanitarian needs and the actual funding available. In other words, it represents the amount of money humanitarian organizations need to effectively respond to crises but do not receive.

For example, in 2023, the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) for the Syrian crisis required \$4.6 billion, but only \$2 billion was received, leaving a funding gap exceeding \$2.6 billion. Similarly, the Global Humanitarian Assistance Report⁷ highlighted that humanitarian funding declined in 2023, failing to reach millions of people in need worldwide. While total humanitarian funding in 2023 reached a record \$43 billion, the funding gap—representing the shortfall between required and available funding—exceeded \$32 billion.

Additionally, according to OCHA⁸, the humanitarian funding requirement for 2024 is estimated at \$48.65 billion to assist approximately 187.8 million people worldwide. However, by the end of May 2024, the available humanitarian funding was only \$7.85 billion, covering just 16% of the total required amount.

The growing funding gap was one of the main drivers behind the launch of the Grand Bargain. In 2016, the United Nations Secretary-General formed a committee of nine experts to develop solutions to the widening humanitarian funding gap⁹. The committee identified three interrelated pillars for improving humanitarian Funding: reducing humanitarian needs, mobilizing additional funding, enhancing the efficiency of humanitarian assistance.

Funding Disparity

Funding disparity refers to the unequal distribution of humanitarian funding among different crises or geographic regions, where some crises receive significantly more funding than others. This imbalance is a critical issue, as it contradicts one of the core principles of humanitarian work—neutrality and equal treatment of all affected populations without discrimination¹⁰. In simple terms, funding disparity means that some crises receive disproportionately large amounts of funding, even when other crises may be more severe or require urgent assistance.

Funding disparity remains one of the key challenges in humanitarian Funding across different times and locations. For instance, despite the Syrian crisis lasting for over a decade and causing immense humanitarian suffering, funding for humanitarian response in Syria has significantly declined in recent years.

⁷ GHA – Falling Short? Humanitarian Funding and Reform 2024

⁸ OCHA - [Global Humanitarian Overview 2024, May Update \(Snapshot as of 31 May 2024\)](#)

⁹ High-Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing Report to the Secretary-General “Too Important to fail- addressing the financial gap” -2016

¹⁰ [UNHCR](#)

The Yemen crisis, one of the world's largest humanitarian emergencies, receives relatively significant funding. However, this funding remains far below actual needs. In 2021, Yemen received only 12% of total global humanitarian funding. Additionally, many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa received less than 1% of total humanitarian funding.

On the other hand, the Ukraine crisis, which began in 2022, gained significant global attention and received an enormous amount of funding within a short period. According to the Global Humanitarian Assistance Report (2022¹¹), only 10 countries received more than 60% of total global humanitarian funding.

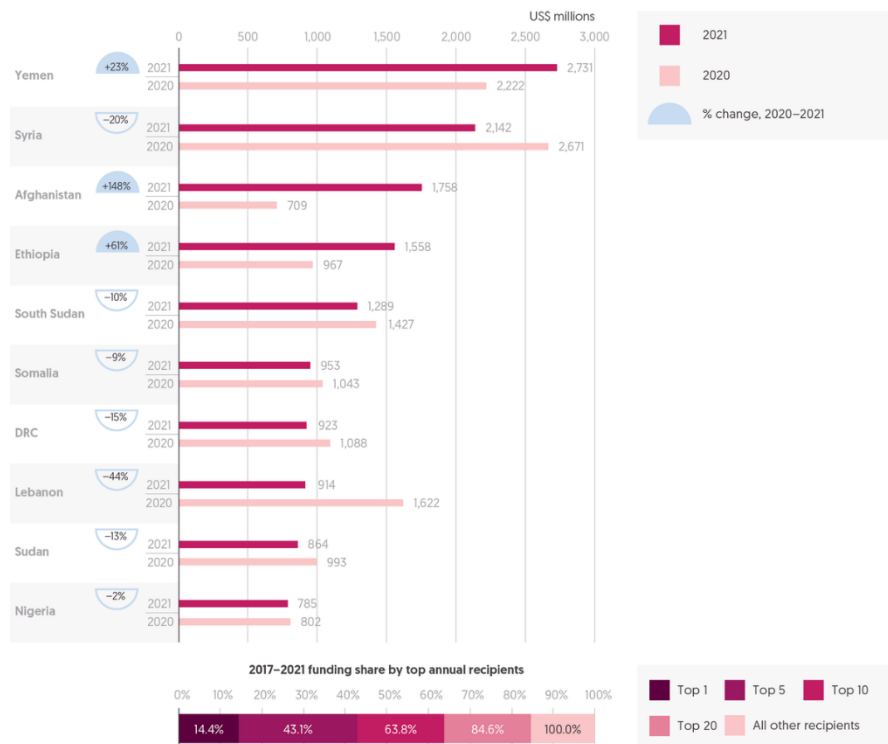


FIGURE 2- TOP COUNTRIES RECEIVING AID IN 2020 AND 2021

The causes of funding disparities vary, ranging from the level of media attention—which in turn attracts greater interest from governments, institutions, and individuals—to political priorities, geographic location, and the perceived impact and effectiveness of crisis response efforts. Funding disparities also have a significant impact on the severity of human suffering, either exacerbating or alleviating it. They affect the principle of equality among crises and their victims, as well as the level of trust between affected communities and donors.

¹¹ Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2022: Chapter 4 Recipients and delivery of humanitarian funding

Funding in Palestine

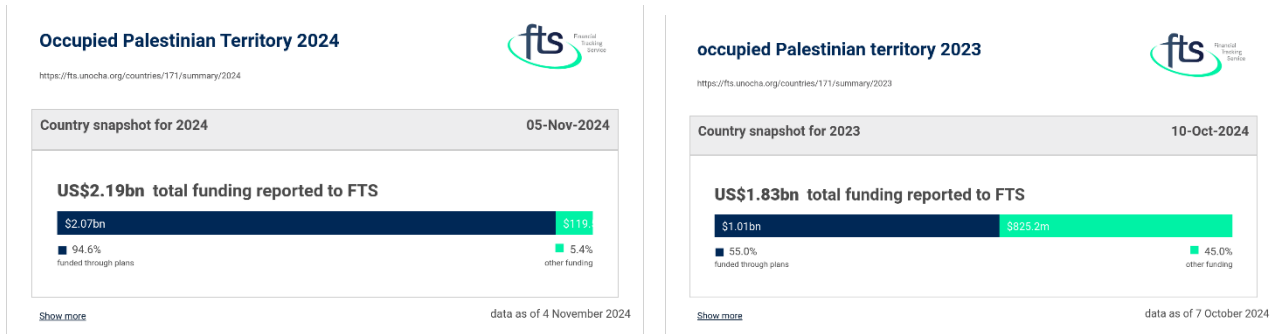


FIGURE 3 - HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR PALESTINE IN 2023 AND 2024 – SOURCE: FTS

According to OCHA's Financial Tracking Service (FTS) statistics, Palestine received a total of \$1.83 billion in humanitarian funding in 2023, compared to \$2.19 billion in 2024 (as of the end of October). To put this funding into perspective, the total humanitarian funding for Palestine in 2023 was approximately one-third of the Palestinian Authority's general budget, which stood at around \$5.83 billion for that year.

Over the past years, funding has slightly increased between 2017 and 2019, but it has risen unprecedentedly from 2021 to 2024. This increase can be attributed to the crises that emerged during these years, including the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, followed by the Israeli aggression on Gaza in 2021, and most recently, the ongoing genocide in Gaza, which began in the last quarter of 2023 and continues into 2024.

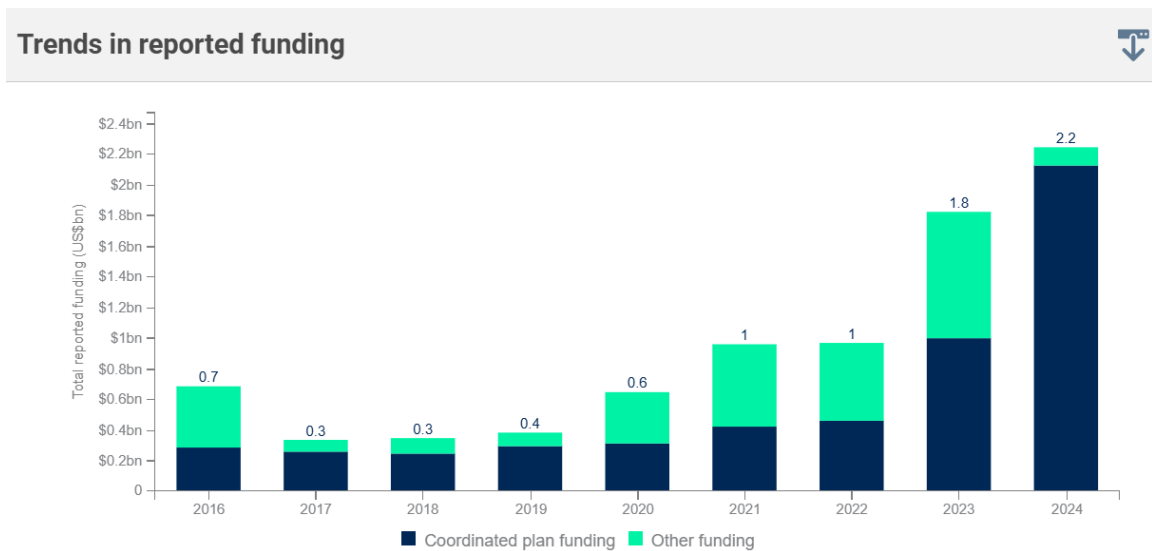


FIGURE 4 - FUNDING PROVIDED TO PALESTINE IN THE PAST YEARS - SOURCE FTS

The figure below illustrates how humanitarian funding in Palestine is allocated across different sectors. Food security receives the largest share, accounting for 38.2% of total funding, followed by the health sector, which receives 14.3%¹².

The United States is the largest donor to Palestine, contributing over 28% of total

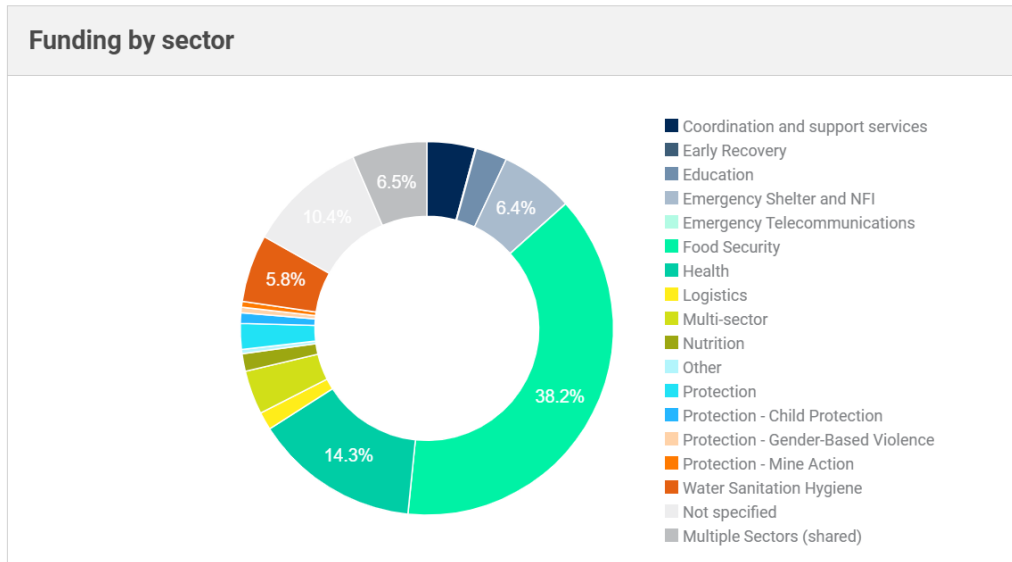


FIGURE 5 - FUNDING DISTRIBUTION ACROSS SECTORS – SOURCE: FTS

humanitarian funding. The European Commission ranks second, providing 26% of the funding, followed by the United Arab Emirates, which contributes 10.6% of the total funding¹³.

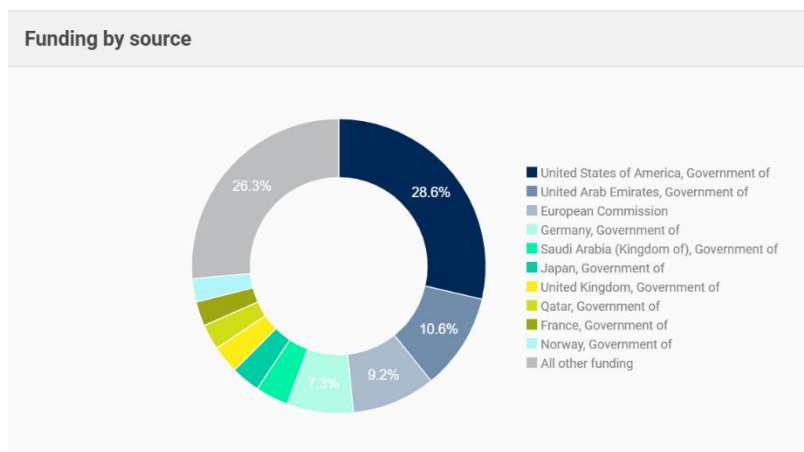


FIGURE 6 - SOURCES OF FUNDING IN PALESTINE - SOURCE FTS

About the Grand Bargain

The Grand Bargain is a comprehensive agreement between major donors, UN agencies, and humanitarian organizations, aimed at reforming humanitarian financing mechanisms and maximizing the impact of humanitarian assistance. It was developed during the 2016 World

¹² FTS 2024

¹³ FTS 2024

Humanitarian Summit and represents an international commitment to enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of humanitarian work by addressing key concerns such as funding, coordination, and aid localization.

The Grand Bargain is an attempt by its signatories to reform traditional humanitarian practices, which often fail to meet the growing and complex needs of affected populations. It serves as a clear acknowledgment of the multiple shortcomings in the humanitarian system, particularly in humanitarian financing, which has long struggled to provide sustainable solutions to worsening crises. This recognition acted as a catalyst for urgent change, leading to the launch of the Grand Bargain.

The Grand Bargain was developed based on a report prepared by a committee formed by the United Nations Secretary-General in 2016 to propose solutions for the growing financial gap in humanitarian funding. The committee produced its key report titled "*Too important to fail*"¹⁴, which introduced the concept of the Grand Bargain.

The report was structured into three chapters:

1. Reducing Needs: A Shared Responsibility
2. Broadening and Deepening the Resource Base for Humanitarian Action
3. Improving Delivery: The Grand Bargain on Efficiency

As stated in "*The Grand Bargain Explained*", prepared by the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA¹⁵), the rationale behind the Grand Bargain is that "if donors and agencies make changes such as reducing earmarked funding and increasing transparency in spending, aid delivery will become more efficient, thereby freeing up human and financial resources for the benefit of affected populations."¹⁶

As of the date of this study, 68 entities had signed the agreement, including: 25 states, 27 charitable organizations, 12 United Nations agencies, two Red Cross and Red Crescent bodies, and two intergovernmental coordination bodies. Signing the agreement is considered a moral commitment for the signatories. According to the official webpage of the Grand Bargain, the platform aims to enhance the implementation of its commitments. Signatories also agree to the commitments as a framework for integrating them into their operations. Compliance is tracked through annual self-reports, where signatories detail their efforts in implementing these commitments.

The Commitments of the Grand Bargain

The purpose of this section is not to examine the Grand Bargain in exhaustive detail but rather to provide a clear understanding of its structure and commitments. This is essential because the study primarily assesses the implementation of the Grand Bargain in Palestine, which cannot be fully evaluated without sufficient knowledge of its content and commitments.

¹⁴ High-Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing Report to the Secretary-General "Too Important to fail- addressing the financial gap" -2016

¹⁵ ICVA – Grand Bargain explanation – a brief paper

¹⁶ The Grand Bargain –A Shared Commitment to Better Serve People in Need - 2016

The Grand Bargain agreement includes ten main work streams, under which 51 commitments fall. These commitments cover aspects of humanitarian funding, including enhancing localization, strengthening transparency and accountability, increasing support for local actors, improving coordination, and promoting collaboration between humanitarian and development actors.

Presented below are the key commitments established by the Grand Bargain in 2016¹⁶:

1. Transparency
2. Increased support and funding for local organizations
3. Greater use and improved coordination of cash-based programming (cash assistance)
4. Reduction of administrative costs
5. Enhancing joint and impartial needs assessments
6. Engaging affected individuals and communities in decisions that impact them
7. Expanding multi-year collaboration, planning, and financing for humanitarian interventions
8. Reducing earmarked funding
9. Harmonizing and simplifying reporting requirements
10. Strengthening the nexus between humanitarian and development actors

The First Review of the Grand Bargain

Five years after its launch in 2016, the signatories conducted a review of the Grand Bargain in 2021, resulting in the launch of [Grand Bargain 2.0](#)¹⁷. The findings from a survey¹⁸ of local actors conducted by the NEAR Network (Network for Empowered Aid Response) in January 2023 indicate that the signatories made collective progress in key areas, including:

- Increased provision of flexible and multi-year funding by institutional donors.
- Empowering local and national actors to take on greater leadership and influence decision-making processes.
- Investment in institutional capacities.
- More coordination between actors, leading to greater predictability.

Despite this progress, the Grand Bargain's potential to address political barriers to change has not yet been realized, as:

- There has been no substantial progress towards increased demand, and the response remains supply-driven.
- There continues to be a failure to significantly increase funding for local and national actors.
- The quality of funding remains insufficient to enable the gradual change needed in efficiency and effectiveness.

Despite the clear response highlighted in the report, experts have emphasized that Palestinian organizations remain excluded from the scene, and no tangible changes have occurred on the

¹⁷ IASC - [Grand Bargain 2.0](#)

¹⁸ The Grand Bargain 2022 - Independent Review

ground as a result of the agreement. This is due to the lack of international participation in the ongoing discussions on the matter¹⁹, in addition to the unique political reality of the Palestinian territories.

The Grand Bargain review report states²⁰ that Grand Bargain 2.0 focused on two "enabling priorities": quality funding and localization (participation). The first priority aims to create a critical mass of funding that would lead to an effective and efficient response, ensuring transparency and accountability. Meanwhile, the second priority seeks to provide more support for the leadership of local institutions, developing their capacities, and involving affected communities in addressing humanitarian needs.

Additionally, the Grand Bargain 2.0 framework paved the way for how signatories can achieve the Grand Bargain's goals and priorities through four main pillars:

1. Flexibility, Predictability, Transparency, and Funding Tracking.
2. Equal and Principled Partnerships.
3. Accountability and Inclusivity.
4. Priorities in Action and Coordination.

Additionally, National Reference Groups²¹ were launched with the goal of linking global discussions to those within national and local contexts in humanitarian responses. These groups form advisory forums at the national level and provide a consultative space for humanitarian stakeholders. They are led by local and national actors, ensuring that the perspectives and needs of those directly affected by crises are central to decision-making and response strategies. This approach helps make global humanitarian efforts more relevant and responsive to local realities²².

¹⁹ Alix Masson, Advocacy coordinator, NEAR network, interview 9.08.2023

²⁰ Metcalfe-Hough, V., Fenton, W., Saez, P. and Spencer, A. (2021) *The Grand Bargain in 2021: an independent review*. HPG commissioned report. London: ODI (www.odi.org/en/publications/the-grand-bargain-in-2021-an-independent-review).

²¹ IASC - [National Reference Groups](#)

²² The Grand Bargain – National Reference Groups – Guidance Note 2022

GRAND BARGAIN 2.0

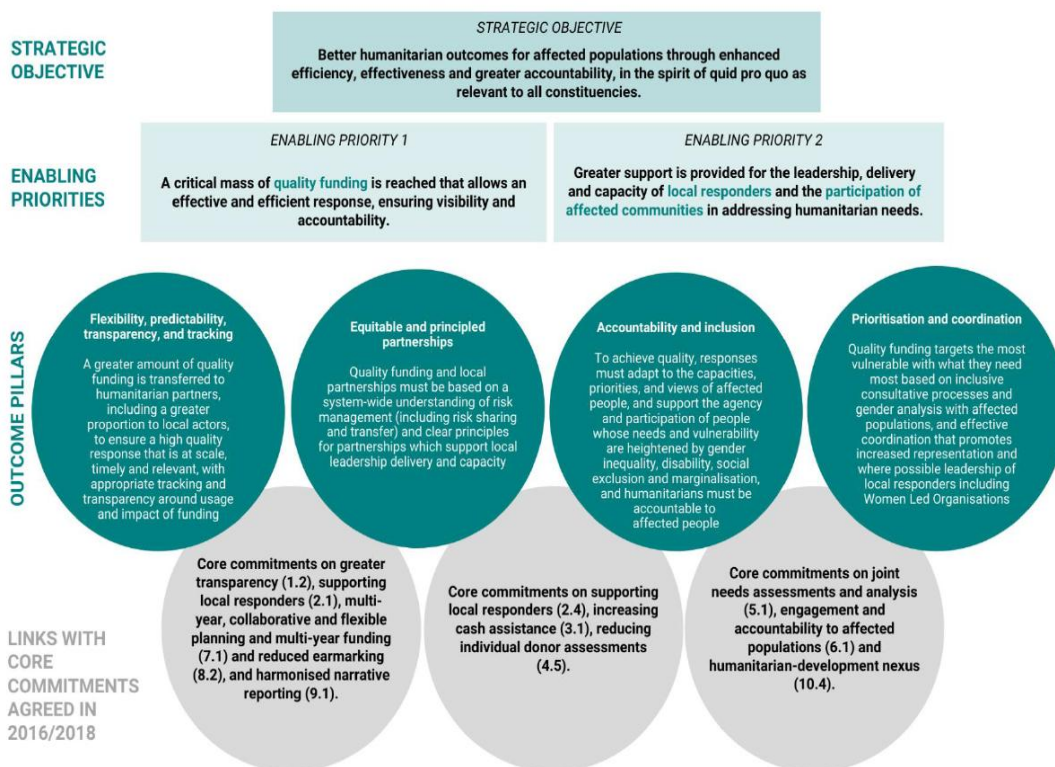


FIGURE 7: THE GRAND BARGAIN 2.0

Observation on the Grand Bargain

In the 2022 review report of the Grand Bargain²³, it was noted that "although the Grand Bargain framework was comprehensive enough to reflect the complexity of the humanitarian financing system, the vast scope of the Grand Bargain was problematic. Even the major institutions that signed the agreement were unable to engage in more than 10 areas or issues outlined in the Bargain." This was a key motivation for the Grand Bargain review process, aimed at narrowing the focus of the agreement's priorities.

In another report by the NEAR Network, several challenges²⁴ facing local and national institutions in relation to the Grand Bargain were highlighted, with key issues being:

- **The Need to Reframe the Process for Better Aid Delivery:** There is a need to realign the Grand Bargain with the priorities set by local and national institutions, bridging the gap between humanitarian, development, and peace building efforts. This would help ensure that aid is more effective and contextually appropriate.

²³ Metcalfe-Hough, V., Fenton, W., Saez, P. and Spencer, A. (2021) *The Grand Bargain in 2021: an independent review*. HPG commissioned report. London: ODI (www.odi.org/en/publications/the-grand-bargain-in-2021-an-independent-review).

²⁴ NEAR - [Reflecting on the Grand Bargain after six years and on the way forward 2023](#)

- **The Grand Bargain Has Yet to Make a Tangible Impact on Local Actors and Communities:** Despite progress in implementing the Grand Bargain, the impact remains insufficient and not as visible or effective as expected by local and national institutions, particularly in conflict-affected countries.
- **Weak or Non-Existent Accountability for Signatories:** There are no binding obligations for the signatories of the Grand Bargain, and the commitments made are ethical without being tied to a reporting mechanism that tracks how those commitments are translated into real-world actions. This leads to a lack of accountability and weak oversight of signatories' actions.
- **The Process Favors International Institutions:** Since the majority of actors involved in the Grand Bargain are international organizations and intermediaries, this creates a power imbalance in the humanitarian system. It gives more influence and power to these international institutions, allowing them to shape the direction of the Grand Bargain and determine its future trajectory, rather than local or national actors.

The Grand Bargain in Palestine

With the ongoing humanitarian crisis in the Palestinian territories, the Grand Bargain provides a valuable framework for addressing the complexities and challenges faced by both affected populations and humanitarian actors. By emphasizing localization, reducing funding conditions, and enhancing coordination, the principles and commitments of the Grand Bargain hold significant potential to meet the unique needs and aspirations of the Palestinian people. While the path to sustainable development and lasting peace remains arduous, the Grand Bargain offers a roadmap for driving positive change and strengthening humanitarian efforts within the Palestinian context.

However, the gap between commitment and reality is substantial. Translating the promising commitments of the Grand Bargain into actual funding for Palestinian civil society organizations faces numerous challenges, most notably the Israeli occupation. This situation is exacerbated by significant shortcomings in the actions of the donor community.

A 2022 IASC report on the global implementation of the Grand Bargain²⁵ shows progress in Palestine only in the area of localization. However, other areas, such as quality funding and the use of cash programming (e.g., cash assistance programs in Ukraine), have seen more notable progress in different regions. This highlights a discrepancy in how different contexts are addressing the Grand Bargain's commitments, with Palestine facing distinct political and operational challenges that hinder the full realization of these principles.

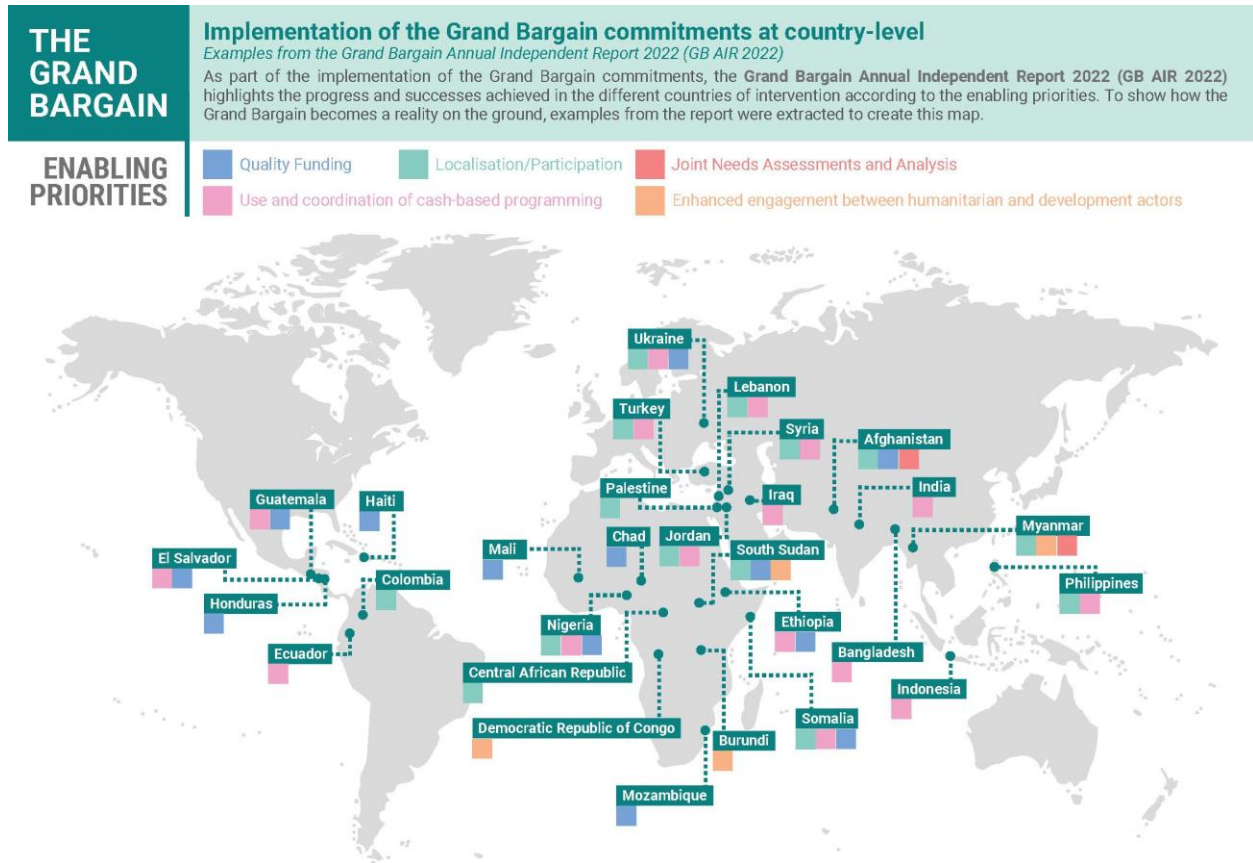


FIGURE 8 - THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GRAND BARGAIN WORLDWIDE - 2022

In this study, the research team identified several actions taken in Palestine within the framework of implementing the Grand Bargain. The only clear action specifically related to the Grand Bargain was the establishment of a joint task force focused on localization. However, there were other measures that could be directly or indirectly attributed to the Grand Bargain. One such example is the requirement for local organizations to participate in securing funding from the Humanitarian Support Fund managed by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). Additionally, Palestinian NGOs are represented in the project selection committee for the fund's grant awards. Further details on this subject will be provided in the following pages.

²⁵ IASC - [Map of the implementation of the Grand Bargain commitments at country-level 2022](#)

The Reality of the Grand Bargain in Palestine

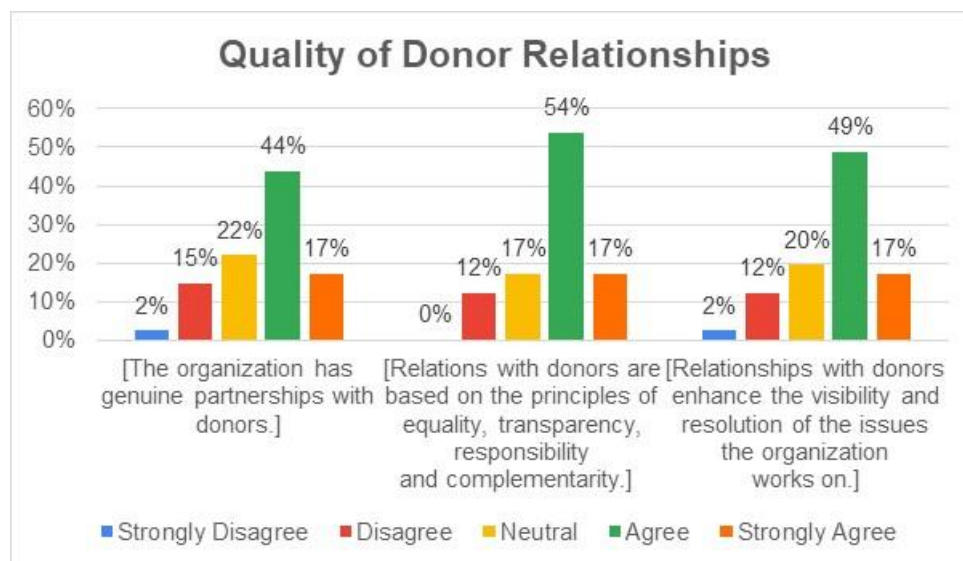
Based on the local adaptation measurement framework developed by the NEAR Network²⁶, this study will present and discuss the findings to highlight the various dimensions encompassed by the principles and commitments of the Grand Bargain.

1. Partnerships with Donors

The change that the Grand Bargain aims for is to create genuine and effective partnerships between donors on one side and local civil society organizations on the other. This shift moves away from a subcontracting model and moves closer to a true partnership between balanced parties, focused on achieving the highest interests of the target populations within the framework of national agendas.

1.1 Quality of Relationships

The Grand Bargain aspires to build high-quality relationships in which local actors are empowered with responsibilities that align with their role. These partnerships are guided by principles of equality, transparency, accountability, and complementarity.

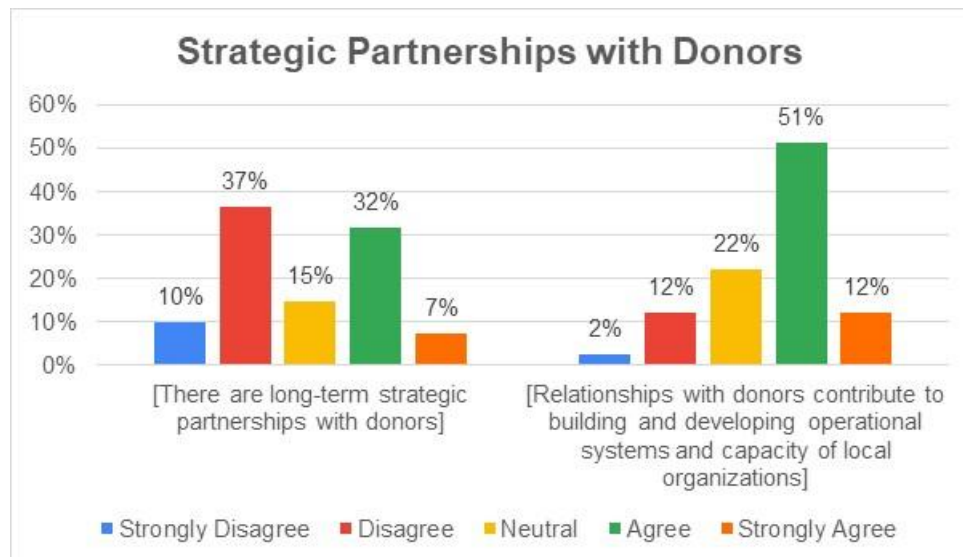


The survey results indicated that National NGOs view their partnership relationships with donors positively and consider them to be genuine partnerships based on equality. According to the findings, 66% of organizations believe that their relationship with donors helps highlight and resolve the issues they work on. Additionally, 71% of organizations see their relationship with donors as being based on the principles of equality and transparency. Furthermore, 61% of organizations expressed that their relationship with donors is a true partnership.

²⁶ NEAR Network - [Local Adaptation Performance Measurement Framework](#)

1.2 Strategic Partnership

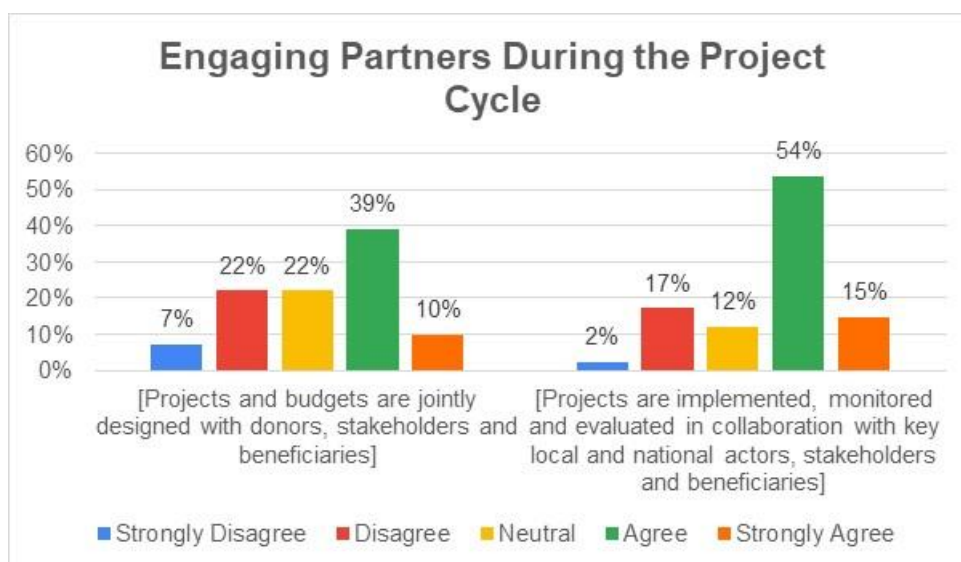
Genuine partnerships with donors should be reflected in the form of long-term strategic partnerships. These partnerships should contribute to building systems and processes that align with the ambitions and goals of local organizations.



The responding organizations unanimously agreed that partnerships with donors help build institutional capacities. However, they lack sustainability and long-term continuity, which are essential for achieving genuine capacity building and development. The survey results revealed that 63% of organizations support the notion that their relationships with donors contribute to building and developing institutional capacities. As for the existence of strategic partnerships, the survey findings indicated that only 39% of organizations have long-term strategic partnerships with.

1. Engaging Organizations in Projects

One of the key aspects of achieving this goal is ensuring that projects and budgets are jointly designed, implemented, monitored, and evaluated in collaboration with local stakeholders. Organizations indicated that the level of partnership with donors in project implementation and monitoring is high. However, the situation is less promising when it comes to project design and budgeting. The survey results revealed that 69% of organizations stated that implemented projects are monitored and evaluated in collaboration with stakeholders and relevant actors. In contrast, only 49% of organizations reported that projects are jointly designed and their budgets developed in partnership with donors and stakeholders.



Conclusion

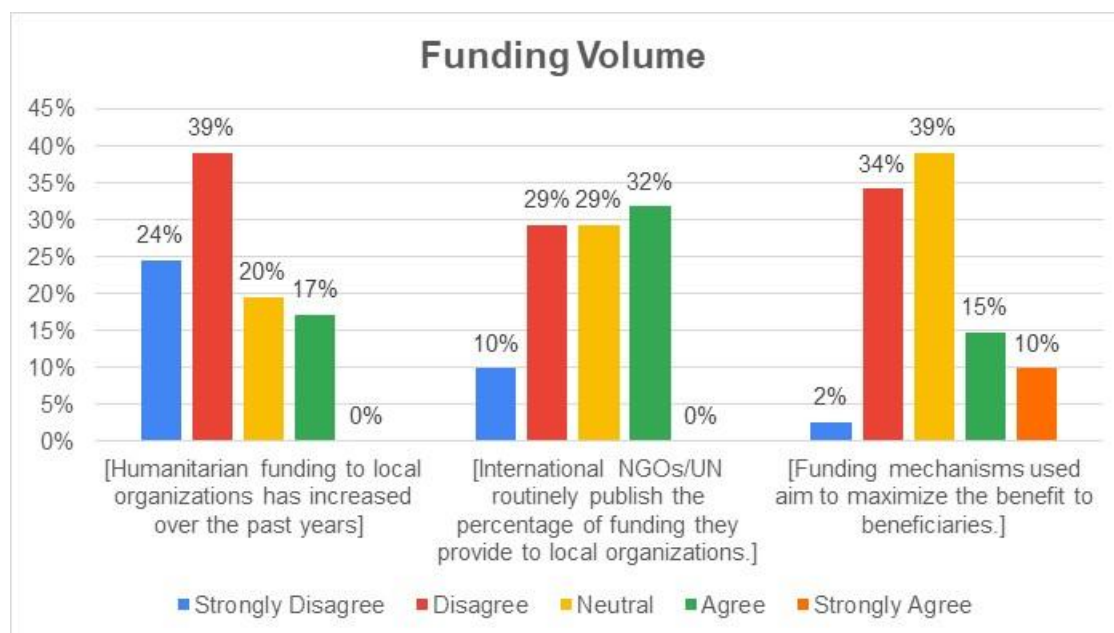
Based on the above findings, it can be concluded that the level of partnerships between donors and Palestinian National NGOs is moderate at best.

c	Criterion	Weak	Moderate	Excellent
1	Partnerships		✓	
1.1	Type of Relationships			✓
1.2	Transition from Project-Based Partnerships to Strategic Partnerships		✓	
1.3	Involvement of Stakeholders Throughout the Project Cycle		✓	

2. Funding

Funding is one of the most important aspects of the partnership between NGOs and the donor community. The nature, size, and conditions of funding serve as key indicators that reflect the quality, significance, and effectiveness of the partnership in achieving its intended goals. The Grand Bargain has emphasized that the funding environment should support and promote localization, enabling a more effective and appropriate humanitarian response.

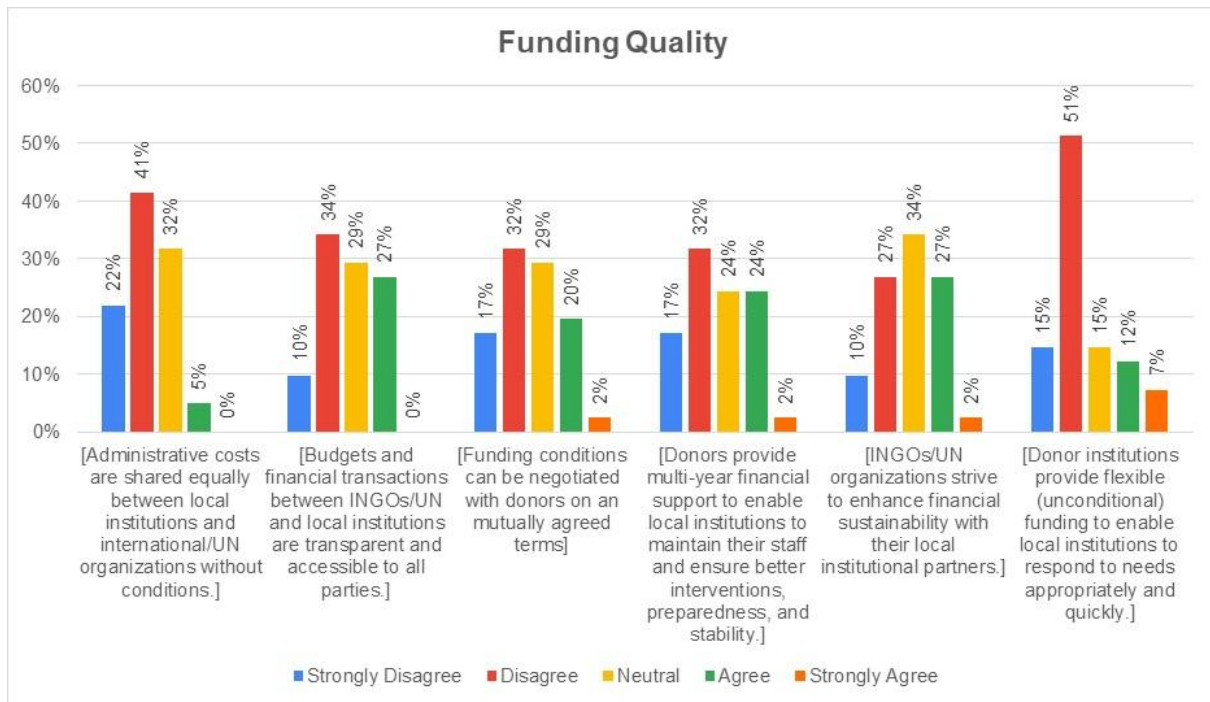
2.1 Funding Volume



The primary driver behind the Grand Bargain is the funding gap. Therefore, increasing funding volume within the commitments of the Grand Bargain is considered one of its most important components. Consequently, the donor community is expected to increase funding for NGOs and work towards closing the funding gap as much as possible. In general, organizations believe that funding volume is insufficient to achieve the desired benefits for beneficiaries. In this regard, only 17% of organizations reported that humanitarian funding for national organizations has increased in recent years, while 63% stated otherwise. Additionally, only 25% of organizations indicated that the current funding mechanisms aim to maximize benefits for target groups, compared to 36% of organizations that disagreed. Regarding the publication of funding statistics, 32% of organizations believe that donors publish statistics that clarify the proportion of funding allocated to local organizations, whereas 39% of organizations think otherwise.

2.2 Funding Quality

The NEAR Network defines funding quality as financing that provides support to actors to deliver a rapid and highly efficient response. Providing funding for the operational costs of local organizations and sharing overhead costs between international and local organizations is considered a fundamental aspect of funding quality. Additionally, the duration of funding is a key factor in ensuring sustained and adequate responses, allowing local organizations to achieve a clear and lasting impact.



Organizations generally reported that the quality of funding they receive is poor. This assessment is based on indicators related to participation in administrative costs, financial transparency, discussions on funding conditions, funding duration and flexibility, and the sustainability of partnerships. Only 5% of organizations stated that administrative costs are shared between local and international organizations without conditions, while 63% reported otherwise. Additionally, 27% of organizations stated that budgets and financial transactions between INGOs and local organizations are transparent to all parties. Regarding the discussion of funding conditions on equal terms, 22% of organizations reported that this is possible with donors, whereas 49% stated that it is not.

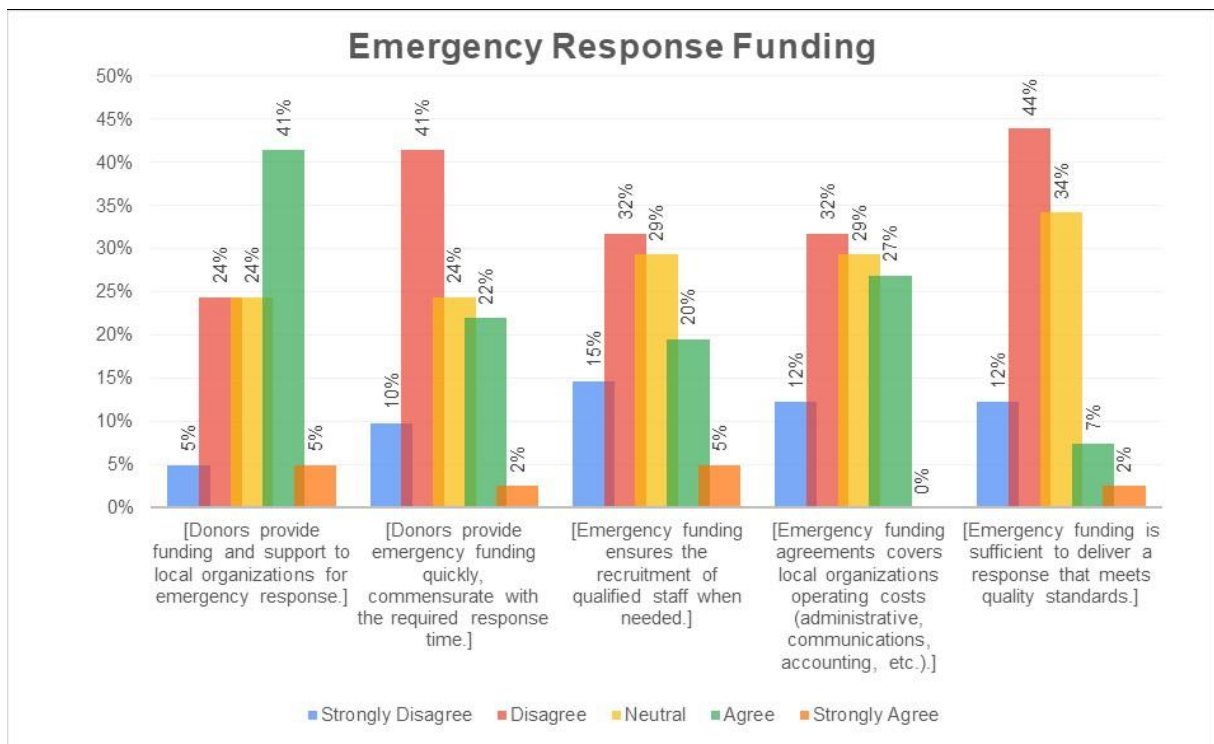
Additionally, 26% of organizations stated that donors provide multi-year support to enable organizations to maintain their interventions and ensure stability, while 49% reported that such support does not exist. Regarding donors' role in maintaining the financial sustainability of their local partners, 29% of organizations acknowledged its presence, whereas 37% stated otherwise. Finally, 19% of organizations reported that donors provide unrestricted funding to enable local organizations to respond to various needs, while 66% stated that this type of funding is not available.

2.3 Emergency Response Funding

Emergency response is one of the key indicators of the quality of NGO work and a primary measure of the success of funding in achieving its intended purpose—a rapid and appropriate response. One of the essential aspects of high-quality emergency response funding is the allocation of dedicated funding that can be activated in emergency situations with minimal requirements, ensuring flexibility and efficiency in utilizing this type of funding for a swift response. The survey results indicate that the situation is not ideal regarding emergency funding. There is no dedicated emergency funding, and when available, it is provided as a

response to emergencies rather than as a pre-allocated reserve that can be activated when needed. Moreover, when emergency funding is available, it is often insufficient or inadequate in terms of rapid allocation, covering staff salaries and administrative costs, and providing a comprehensive response.

46% of organizations reported that donors provide funding for emergency response, but only 24% of organizations stated that the availability of funding is quick or appropriate. Similarly, 25% of organizations reported that emergency funding ensures the hiring of staff to work on emergency response, while 47% of organizations stated otherwise. Regarding the coverage of administrative costs, 27% of organizations stated that emergency funding covers these costs, while 44% of organizations reported that the funding is insufficient to cover them. In conclusion, only 9% of organizations reported that emergency funding is sufficient to provide an adequate emergency response, whereas 56% of organizations stated that emergency funding is insufficient for that purpose.



Conclusion

Based on the above results, it is clear that funding, with its various conditions, does not meet the expectations of NGOs and falls short of the commitments of the Grand Bargain.

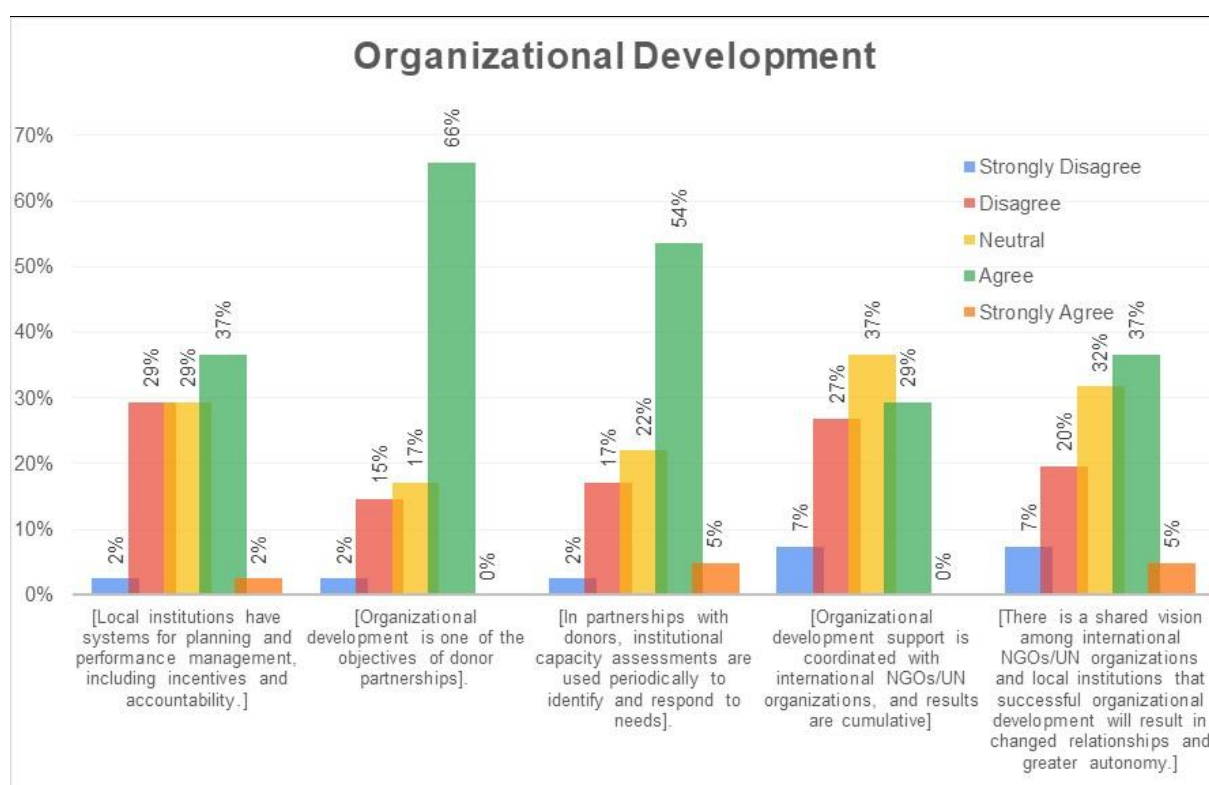
#	Criterion	Weak	Moderate	Excellent
2	Funding	✓		
2.1	Funding Volume	✓		
2.2	Funding Quality	✓		
2.3	Emergency Response Funding	✓		

3. Institutional Capacity

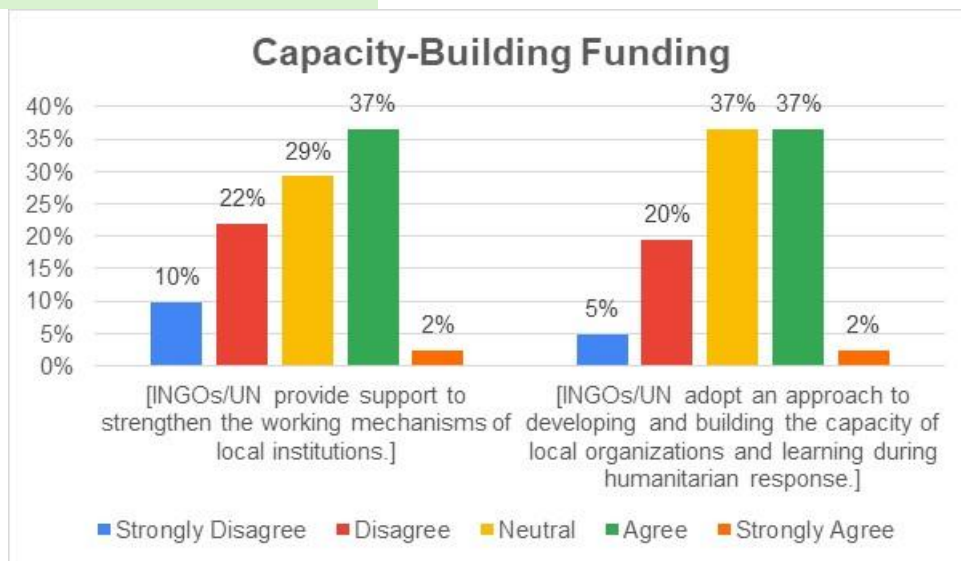
The Grand Bargain commitments aim to create a supportive environment that leads to highly capable and sustainable national organizations. At the same time, the Grand Bargain emphasizes the importance of recognizing and respecting the capacities of national organizations, ensuring that UN agencies, international organizations, and donors do not underestimate their abilities

3.1 Organizational Development

Organizational development is one of the most important goals of partnerships. The Grand Bargain commitments aim to create an environment that supports organizational development, leading to strong and effective institutions. Regarding the development of institutional capacities, the survey results indicate that organizational development plays a significant role in funding structures. In this regard, 39% of organizations reported the presence of planning and performance management systems in local institutions. Additionally, 66% of organizations stated that organizational capacity building is one of the main goals of funding and partnerships with donors. Moreover, 59% of organizations indicated that donors use institutional capacity assessments to identify their needs in organizational development. On a weaker scale, 29% of organizations reported that organizational capacity-building efforts are coordinated with international and UN organizations. Furthermore, 42% of organizations stated that there is a shared vision among international and UN organizations that organizational development will result in changes in relationships, leading to greater independence for local institutions.



3.2 Capacity-Building Funding



Regarding capacity-building funding, organizations indicated that international and UN agencies are committed to providing support for capacity development. 39% of organizations reported that international NGOs and UN agencies adopt an approach to developing and building the capacities of local organizations in humanitarian work. Similarly, 39% of organizations stated that international NGOs and UN agencies provide support to strengthen humanitarian work mechanisms in local institutions.

3.3 Quality Standards



Providing humanitarian standards that align with the local context (localized standards), training on their implementation, and integrating them into intervention programming are key aspects of the Grand Bargain's commitment to localization and strengthening the capacities of local organizations.

According to the survey results, organizations demonstrated a high level of interest in quality standards in humanitarian work. This is evident from the 69% of organizations that reported

using humanitarian standards tailored to the local context. Additionally, 59% of organizations stated that their staff have sufficient understanding of humanitarian principles and quality standards.

Conclusion

There is significant interest and investment from donors in capacity building, organizational development, and the application of humanitarian standards. However, this focus needs further development to become more localized and strategic, ensuring that it is based on clearly defined needs rather than undermining the capabilities of local organizations. Instead, it should build upon existing capacities, leveraging local experiences to shape knowledge and organizational mechanisms in a way that is more aligned with and suitable for the Palestinian context.

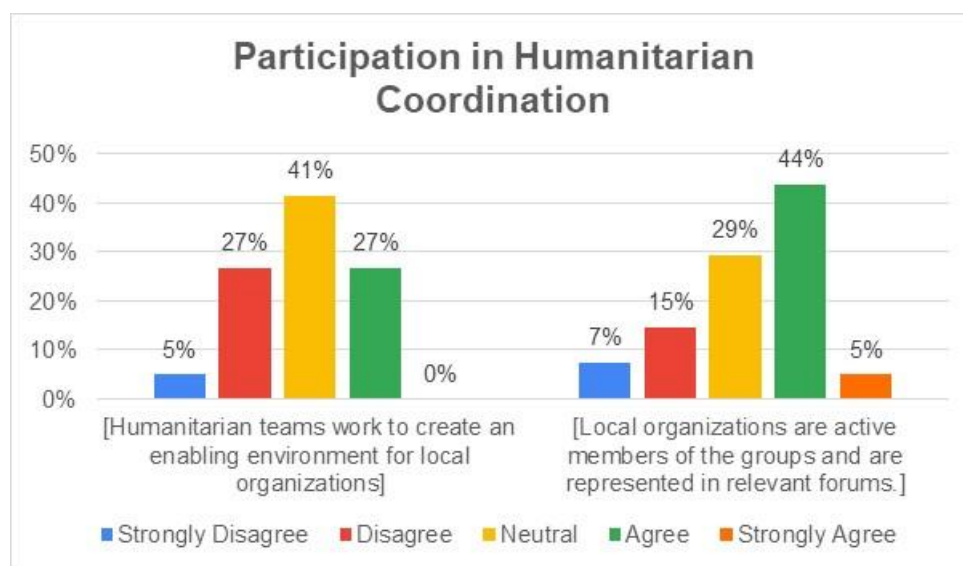
#	Criterion	Weak	Moderate	Excellent
3	Capacity		✓	
3.1	Organizational Development		✓	
3.2	Capacity-Building Funding		✓	
3.3	Quality Standards			✓

4. Coordination and Integration:

One of the Grand Bargain's objectives is to foster better leadership in humanitarian work, ensuring an enhanced role for local actors.

4.1 Participation in Humanitarian Coordination

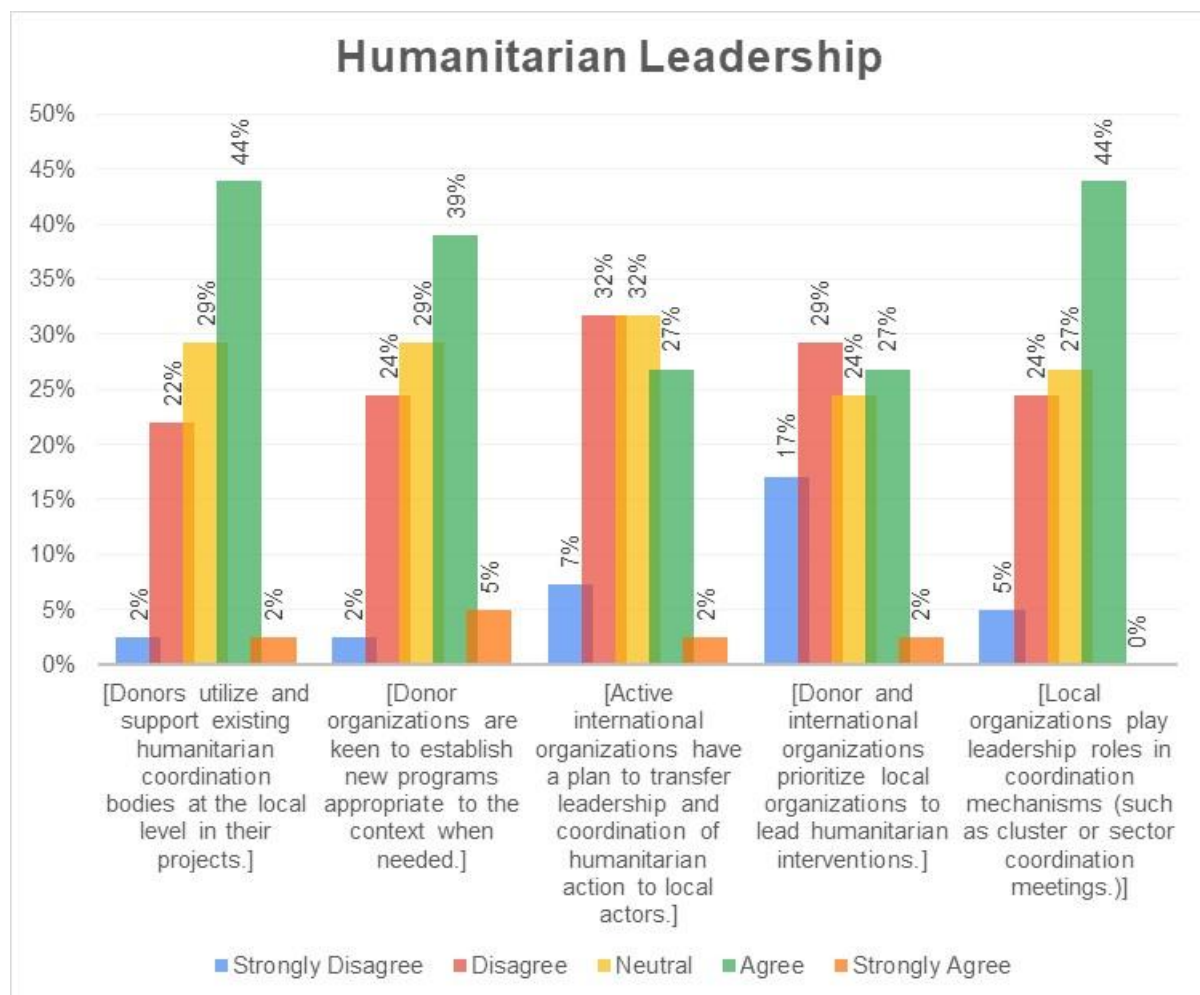
A key pillar of the Grand Bargain is ensuring that local and international humanitarian teams work collectively in a way that creates an enabling environment for local actors. This includes recognizing local actors as active members of humanitarian coordination groups and ensuring they are well represented.



Regarding the coordination and integration of humanitarian work, the results indicate varied perceptions among organizations regarding humanitarian coordination efforts. On one hand, 49% of local organizations stated that they are active members of humanitarian coordination groups (sectors and clusters) and have representation in relevant forums. On the other hand, only 27% of organizations believe that humanitarian teams operate in a way that provides an enabling environment for local organizations.

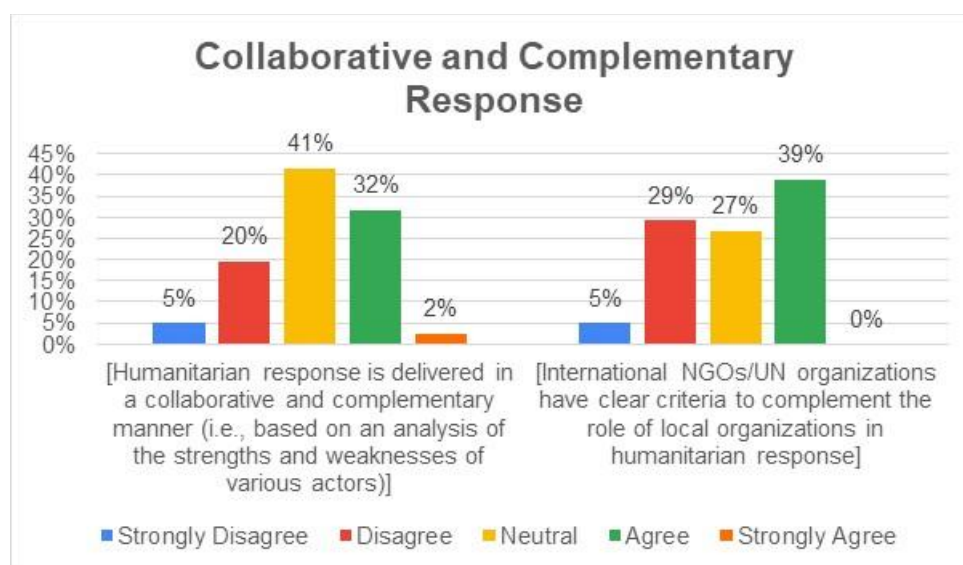
4.2 Humanitarian Leadership

The survey results regarding humanitarian leadership varied across different aspects. From a general perspective, organizations have a positive outlook on their role in leading humanitarian work within their communities. This is reflected in the fact that 46% of organizations believe that donor organizations consult and support coordination bodies, while 44% of local organizations stated that they play a leadership role in humanitarian coordination mechanisms and across sectors. Additionally, 44% of organizations believe that donors establish new programs suited to the context when needed. However, only 29% of organizations stated that international organizations have plans to transfer the leadership and coordination of humanitarian work to local organizations, and the same percentage believes that international organizations prioritize local organizations in leading humanitarian efforts, whereas 46% of organizations disagree with this statement.



4.3 Collaborative and Complementary Response

The survey results indicate that approximately one-third of organizations perceive coordination and complementarity between international/UN organizations and local institutions. 39% of organizations reported that international and UN organizations have clear standards for complementing the role of local institutions. Similarly, 34% of local organizations stated that humanitarian response is designed based on an analysis of strengths and weaknesses among different actors.



Conclusion

National organizations, international organizations, and donors have made significant progress in coordinating and integrating humanitarian work. However, the role of national organizations in leading this effort remains modest and requires further efforts. Moreover, the impact and reflection of the Grand Bargain commitments in this type of work remain limited and have not yet been realized as expected.

#	Criterion	weak	moderate	Excellent
4	Coordination and Integration		✓	
4.1	Participation in Humanitarian Coordination			✓
4.2	National and Local Actors in Humanitarian Leadership		✓	
4.3	Collaborative and Complementary Response		✓	

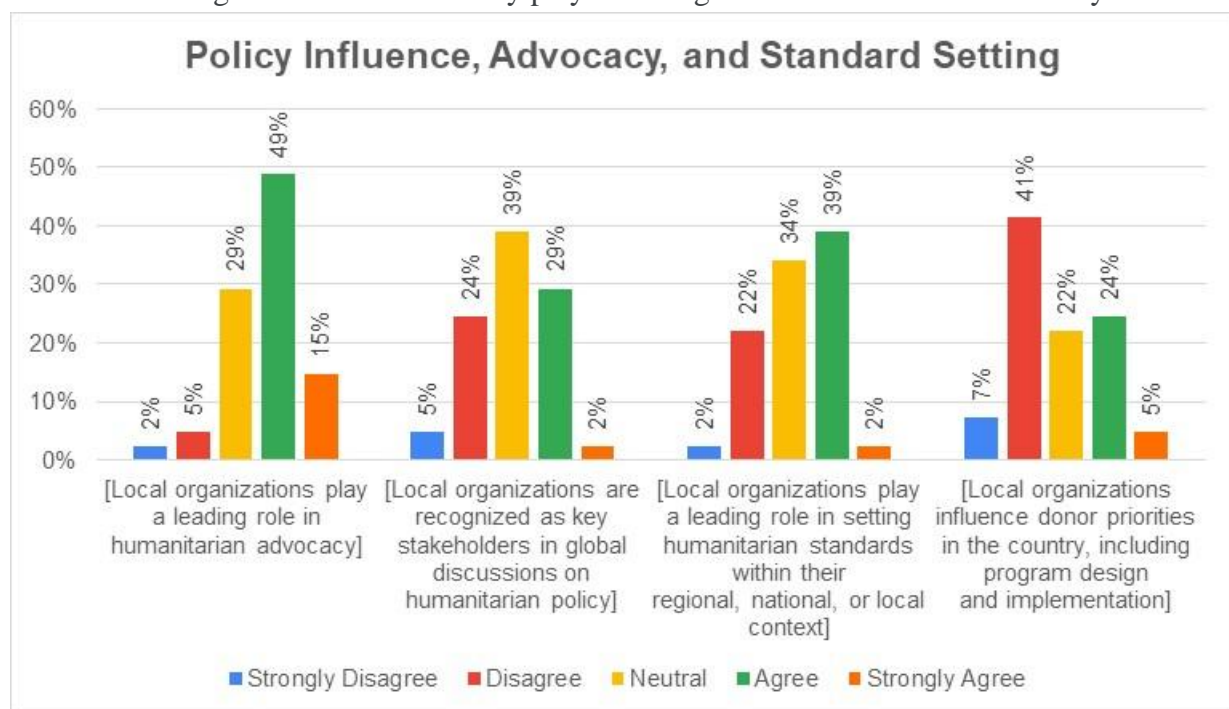
5. Public Policies, Influence, and Visibility

The Grand Bargain aims to increase the presence of local actors in international policy discussions, enhancing their visibility and contribution to humanitarian response.

5.1 Policy Influence

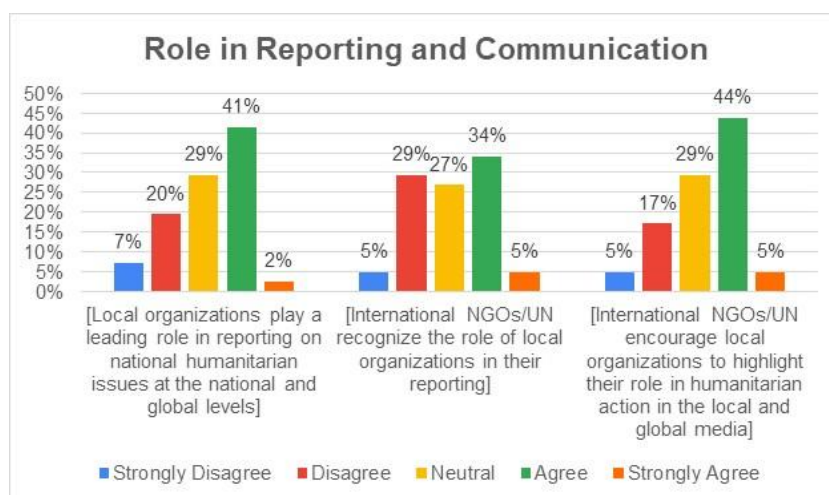
As part of the Grand Bargain commitments, National organizations are expected to play a greater role in humanitarian advocacy and policy influence in a way that serves the public interest. However, local organizations perceive their role in policy influence, advocacy, and setting humanitarian standards as modest. This is reflected in the following figures:

- 29% of organizations believe they have an influence on donor priorities, including the design and implementation of programs, while 48% disagree.
- 41% of organizations see themselves as leaders in setting humanitarian standards within their regional, national, or local contexts, whereas 24% do not.
- 31% of organizations believe they are recognized as relevant stakeholders in policy discussions on humanitarian issues, while 29% disagree.
- 64% of organizations believe they play a leading role in humanitarian advocacy.



5.2 Role in Reporting and Communications

In this context, reporting refers to the role of actors in documenting, reporting, and publishing issues related to humanitarian work. The Grand Bargain aims to enhance the capacity and influence of national organizations in this regard, ensuring that they have a clear impact on humanitarian issues, their formulation, and how they are communicated to relevant stakeholders.



National organizations perceive that they play a significant role in reporting and communications related to humanitarian work. 49% of organizations reported that international and UN organizations encourage them to take an active role in humanitarian work. Additionally, 39% of organizations stated that their role is recognized in international and UN reports. Furthermore, 43% of organizations believe they play a leading role in reporting and publishing humanitarian-related issues.

Conclusion

Although national organizations play a significant role in reporting and communications, their influence on policy-making and standard-setting remains limited. There is still a substantial opportunity for improvement in this regard.

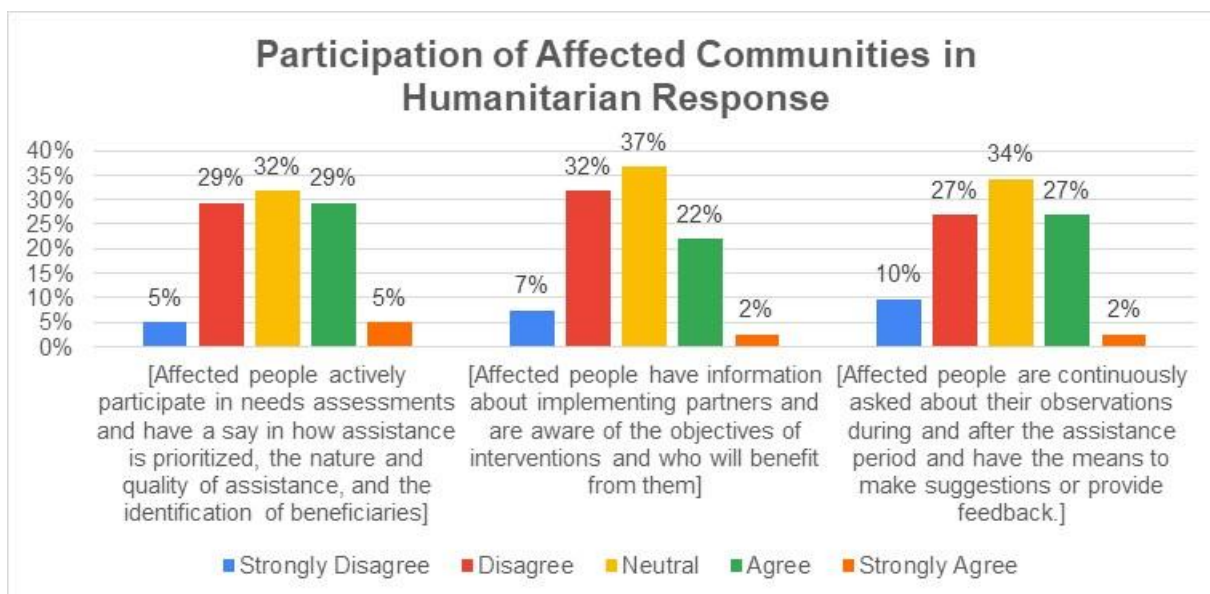
#	Criterion	weak	moderate	excellent
5	Policy, Influence, and Visibility	✓		
5.1	Impact on Policies, Advocacy, and Standard Setting	✓		
5.2	Transparency in Reporting and Communications		✓	

6. Participation

The Grand Bargain aims to increase the participation of affected individuals and communities in both designing and shaping the interventions offered to them, as well as influencing policies and the nature of humanitarian work that concerns them.

6.1 Participation of Affected Communities in Humanitarian Response

One of the most important ways to ensure the participation of affected individuals in humanitarian response is to guarantee that they have a voice that is both heard and influential in identifying their needs and shaping the interventions provided to them.



Overall, a quarter of organizations believe that affected individuals actively participate in humanitarian response. 29% of organizations reported that affected individuals are consulted for their feedback during and after the delivery of humanitarian interventions, whereas 37% of organizations disagree. Additionally, only 24% of organizations stated that affected individuals have information about the implementing organizations or the objectives and target groups of these interventions, while 39% of organizations disagree. Furthermore, 34% of organizations indicated that affected individuals actively participate in prioritizing aid distribution and determining beneficiaries, while an equal percentage of organizations disagree.

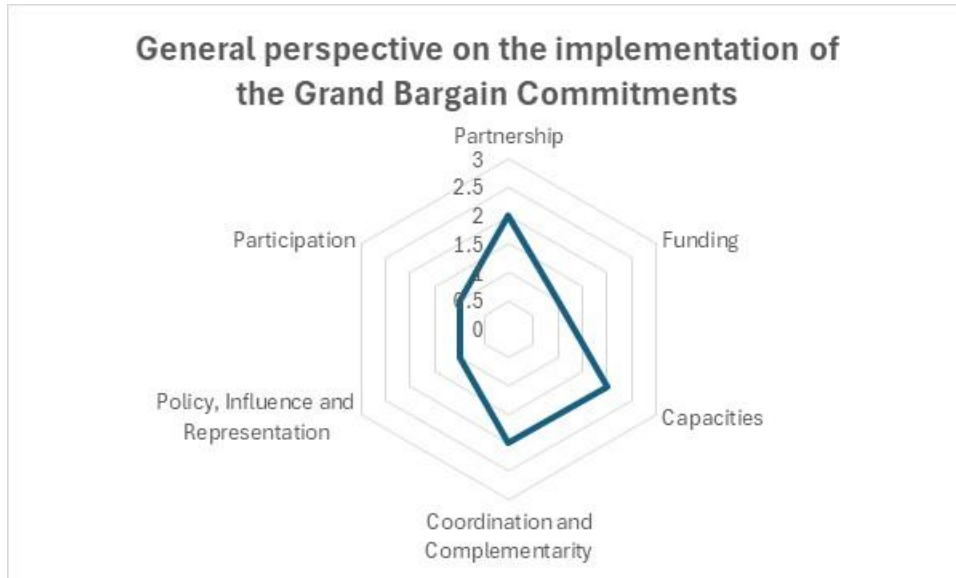
Conclusion

There is still much to be done regarding the participation of affected individuals and communities. Within the framework of the Grand Bargain, the practical impact of the commitments related to this issue remains unclear on the ground.

#	Criterion	weak	Moderate	Excellent
6	Participation	✓		
6.1	Community Participation in Humanitarian Response	✓		
6.2	Community Participation in Humanitarian Policy Development and Standard Setting	✓		

Overview

Overall, the implementation of the Grand Bargain commitments in Palestine is weak. The quality of funding, institutional influence, and participation remain low. Meanwhile, the nature of partnerships, organizational capacity, and coordination and integration in humanitarian work are moderate at best.



The reasons behind this weakness can be categorized as follows:

- **Factors Related to the Grand Bargain Itself:**

1. **Weak donor commitment to the Grand Bargain:** While some donors have committed to the Grand Bargain, their overall number remains small relative to the donor community. Additionally, this commitment is primarily ethical rather than mandatory, lacking binding accountability mechanisms.

1. **The Grand Bargain addresses operational mechanisms rather than root causes:** Although the framework proposed by the Grand Bargain is effective and holds the promise of positive change, it remains a working framework that primarily offers solutions related to implementation. However, funding challenges go beyond operational mechanisms and are deeply influenced by political and economic factors, which significantly affect the extent to which the Grand Bargain can be implemented. This is particularly true in the Palestinian context.

- **Factors related to the situation in Palestine:**

There is much to be said in this area. Therefore, we devote the next section to discussing the challenges facing the implementation of the Grand Bargain in the Palestinian context.

Challenges of the Grand Bargain in the Palestinian Context

Lack of Awareness about the Grand Bargain

A significant challenge is the lack of awareness among many national organizations in Palestine regarding the Grand Bargain. This lack of knowledge limits their ability to benefit from it, build upon its commitments, and hold donors accountable based on their obligations.

As Mr. Amjad Al-Shawa, Director of the Palestinian NGO Network, stated²⁷: "Organizations that develop their strategic plans must have knowledge of the Grand Bargain." The study team, through interviews and discussions conducted alongside the survey, observed a general lack of awareness about the Grand Bargain among local organizations.

Mr. Maher Daoudi states, "Not all local organizations are aware of the Grand Bargain or its commitments."²⁸ This was also confirmed by Ajyal Association for Creativity and Development in an interview with Mr. Abdullah Sharshara²⁹, who stated: "It is true that our knowledge of the Grand Bargain is limited. This applies not only to our organization but also widely to national organizations in the Gaza Strip."

This all confirms that the national civil society in Palestine lacks sufficient awareness of the Grand Bargain. Ignorance of the Grand Bargain as a whole also implies ignorance of its commitments.

Despite the fact that the commitments of the Grand Bargain serve as a strong foundation that national organizations could use to hold donors accountable for how they implement their commitments through grant agreements in Palestine, a lack of awareness prevents them from doing so. As a result, not knowing about the Grand Bargain means not holding donors accountable for their commitments—or at least not questioning them based on their commitment to the Grand Bargain—which ultimately leads to a lack of benefit from it.

"Not all local organizations are aware of the Grand Bargain".

—Terry Bullata, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

In contrast to the previous arguments, some perspectives—such as that of NEAR Network³⁰—suggest that "Local organizations' awareness of the Grand Bargain is not a prerequisite for its implementation. Instead, the implementation of the Grand Bargain should be an integral part of changing funding policies." It is certainly not required for national organizations to be fully aware of the Grand Bargain and its commitments. However, what we emphasize is that the absence of this awareness leads to a lack of accountability based on it, placing the full responsibility for implementation solely on donors. On the other hand, if national organizations were aware of the Grand Bargain commitments, they could adopt an accountability approach rooted in these commitments, which would ultimately give them greater leverage and influence.

²⁷ Personal Interview with Mr. Amjad Al-Shawa – Director of the Palestinian NGO Network – Conducted on August 3, 2023.

²⁸ Personal Interview with Mr. Maher Daoudi – Representative of the Consulate General of Sweden in Jerusalem – Conducted on October 2, 2023.

²⁹ Personal Interview with Mr. Abdullah Sharshara – Director of Ajyal Association for Creativity and Development – Conducted on September 29, 2024

³⁰ Personal Interview with Ms. Alix Masson – Advocacy Officer at NEAR Network – Conducted on August 9, 2023.

The Sensitivity of the Palestinian Context

Given Palestine's unique status as a country under Israeli occupation, donors generally exhibit a high level of sensitivity when dealing with this situation. This often results in unequal treatment and double standards when it comes to Palestinian affairs. The prolonged Israeli occupation spanning over seven decades, along with the preferential treatment Israel receives from donors in general—and from Palestine's largest donors, the United States and the European Union, in particular—has further reinforced this sensitivity. More precisely, this dynamic has created a space of influence for the Israeli occupation to interfere in donor policies and impose its will on them in various aspects.

Palestine differs significantly from many other countries and regions experiencing crises caused by natural disasters or recent and short-term political conflicts. What is happening in Palestine is a complex and ongoing crisis, primarily rooted in the Israeli occupation, compounded by internal Palestinian conflicts. Nothing highlights the sensitivity of the Palestinian situation more than the current reality, in which Israel is committing acts of genocide in Gaza, in full view of the world, without international institutions or governments being able to bring about any meaningful change. The impact of this sensitivity has reached such an extreme that even UN agencies and international organizations, backed by governments, are unable to impose their will on the Israeli occupation to allow minimal aid access to alleviate famine in Gaza—let alone put an end to the atrocities committed every moment against civilians.

"Donors were shocked by the war on Gaza; they requested a halt to activities, suspended project funding, and introduced new operational standards".

Abdullah Sharshara – Ajyal Association for Creativity and Development

The Anti-Terrorism Pledge document serves as a clear example of how the donor community aligns with Israeli policies at the expense of humanitarian service. The Anti-Terrorism Pledge, imposed by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), requires every organization receiving funding to sign a declaration that explicitly labels Palestinian resistance as terrorism and commits to upholding American values and principles in their work. Similarly, the European Union has also made signing an anti-terrorism commitment a prerequisite for Palestinian organizations to receive funding. These examples demonstrate the extent of donor sensitivity toward the Palestinian cause and their adoption of the Israeli narrative. This contradicts the fundamental principle of humanitarian work—neutrality—and undermines the spirit of the Grand Bargain, which aims to strengthen local efforts and empower national organizations to play an active role in humanitarian response.

During the ongoing genocidal war in Gaza, immense pressure has been placed on both national and international organizations. The general trend among international organizations has been to freeze or suspend their operations. As Jamil Swalmeh, Director of ActionAid Palestine, stated³¹:

"Most funding, especially during wartime, is more politically driven than development-oriented".

Bahia Amra – Medical Relief Society

"The war was a turning point in funding. It exposed many organizations and donors, as they either suspended or froze their funding."

At the same time, Israel actively works to suppress Palestinian civil society organizations and tarnish their image in front of donors—particularly the European Union. This is done through periodic reports issued by the Israeli watchdog NGO Monitor³², which accuses Palestinian organizations of ties to Palestinian factions, alleging their involvement in terrorism and its financing. Rather than rejecting these unfounded claims, donors often react by scrutinizing Palestinian organizations based on these reports, further exacerbating the challenges they face. The heightened sensitivity surrounding Palestine and the Palestinian cause has effectively granted Israel immunity from accountability, making it nearly impossible to address the root causes of the humanitarian crises in Palestine.

Impact of the Israeli Occupation

In addition to the sensitivity surrounding the Palestinian context, the Israeli occupation plays a repressive role against Palestinian civil society. Israel continues to shrink civic space and crack down on national organizations, aiming to restrict or completely halt their interventions. Perhaps the clearest example of this repression is the closure of six Palestinian organizations in October 2021³³. Israeli forces raided and shut down the offices of these six organizations, later permanently banning them and adding a seventh organization to the list.

What is particularly alarming is that many donors and funding institutions that had previously supported these organizations reacted by immediately halting funding, aligning with Israel's measures. Even though some donors eventually resumed relations after conducting investigations and finding Israel's so-called "evidence" to be insufficient, the situation for these organizations never fully returned to normal.

This highlights the extent to which donors comply with Israeli-imposed restrictions, contradicting humanitarian principles and severely undermining humanitarian efforts.

³¹ Personal Interview with Mr. Jamil Swalmeh – Director of ActionAid Palestine – Conducted on October 3, 2024.

³² The Palestinian Center for Policy Research and Studies - [Masarat](#): "Towards Effective Policies to Confront Politically Conditional Funding of Palestinian Civil Society Organizations"

³³ Al Jazeera – October 23, 2021

Even more astonishing is Israel's unprecedented move to pass legislation banning the operations of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA)³⁴ - a historic precedent against a UN agency. This demonstrates that Israel's influence extends beyond targeting national organizations to directly undermining UN institutions. Under such hostile conditions and Israel's increasing boldness in restricting civic space, it becomes impossible to talk about upholding the Grand Bargain commitments. When fundamental humanitarian principles are systematically violated, any related commitments or frameworks become meaningless. Therefore, the implementation of the Grand Bargain in this context is not only unrealistic but almost unimaginable.

Impact of the Palestinian Authority, Political Division, and Shrinking Civic Space

The internal political landscape in Palestine is fragmented and unstable. The existence of two separate governments with different policies and political orientations—each controlling a portion of the land—has significantly affected humanitarian work, particularly in areas such as funding and localization. Political changes in Palestine have been accompanied by shifts in the humanitarian landscape. For example, following the establishment of the Palestinian Authority in the early 1990s, donors focused their efforts on supporting the PA and its institutions. However, after the Palestinian political division in 2007, donors redirected their focus to national organizations, adopting a no-contact policy with the newly formed Hamas government in Gaza.

Beyond limiting engagement with the donor community, the political split also led to restrictions on national organizations, including curbing the right to establish associations and tightening control over national organizations in

"At a certain point, donors focused their efforts on the Palestinian Authority. However, the focus has now shifted back to national organizations, supporting them through international institutions".

Bahia Amra – Palestinian Medical Relief Society

both the West Bank and Gaza Strip. As a result, available funding for national organizations decreased, as many donors refrained from supporting organizations operating in Gaza. This period also saw an increased politicization of funding. Stricter funding conditions emerged, such as the Anti-Terrorism Pledge, pre-screening of beneficiary lists, and security vetting of staff and board members.

Within this challenging environment, national organizations faced mounting pressures that weakened their ability to negotiate with donors and establish equal partnerships. Many organizations became preoccupied with securing enough funding to cover operational costs, while also addressing urgent humanitarian crises—particularly in Gaza, which has endured repeated Israeli military offensives, including in 2008, 2009, 2012, 2014, 2018, 2021, and the ongoing genocidal war since 2023.

These circumstances have led to financially fragile national organizations that rely almost entirely on external funding. As a result, many have been forced to sign the Anti-Terrorism

³⁴ BBC News - [4 Nov, 2024](#)

Pledge and comply with unfair funding conditions that contradict principles of equitable partnership.

One example is how many grassroots organizations function as mere implementing arms of international organizations, with little involvement in intervention design or administrative cost-sharing. As Bahia Amra stated: *"Donor requirements are suffocating civil society and its ability to implement sustainable development"*³⁵. Ultimately, national organizations have been forced into a burdensome administrative role, diverting their focus from their core vision and mission.

Additionally, the presence of government entities that undermine the role of national organizations further restricts their ability to hold donors accountable or demand fair funding conditions.

Fragmentation of Palestinian Civil Society

It is impossible to discuss this issue without considering Palestine's political reality and its status as a territory under Israeli occupation. These circumstances have resulted in the geographical fragmentation of Palestine, with the West Bank and Gaza Strip physically disconnected. Additionally, the political landscape is divided, with the Palestinian Authority governing the West Bank, while Gaza remains under a de facto government. Beyond these divisions, civil society organizations (CSOs) face severe restrictions on their ability to operate freely. This includes obstacles to association formation, bureaucratic and legal barriers, and the introduction of multiple laws—particularly counter-terrorism and anti-money laundering regulations—which treat national organizations as suspect entities rather than legitimate humanitarian actors. These immense challenges have made it difficult for Palestinian NGOs to unite under a single umbrella, leading to multiple networks and alliances that lack the strength and influence necessary to advocate effectively for national organizations. As a result, these networks struggle to defend national NGOs' rights, negotiate equitable partnerships, or push back against donor-imposed funding conditions. A stark example of this lack of unity and financial vulnerability is the large number of national organizations forced to sign the Anti-Terrorism Pledge. Many had no alternative but to comply with these conditions due to their financial fragility or the absence of a collective stance among Palestinian NGOs.

"To influence donors effectively, organizations must adopt a unified stance and commit to it".

Jamil Swalmeh – Director of ActionAid Palestine

Weak Donor Commitment

While the Grand Bargain serves as a strong incentive to enhance humanitarian support, weak donor commitment remains a major challenge that cannot be overlooked. Despite the efforts

³⁵ Personal Interview with Ms. Bahia Amra – Medical Relief Society – Conducted on September 6, 2024.

made by donors in developing, signing, and pledging to uphold the Grand Bargain, this commitment remains largely unfulfilled in practice. The nature of these commitments plays a crucial role in their implementation. As Alix Masson³⁶ stated: "All Grand Bargain commitments are voluntary," which inherently weakens the motivation for compliance. Furthermore, the lack of accountability mechanisms reinforces the absence of effective implementation.

At a global level, even after seven years since the launch of the Grand Bargain, there is still a lack of meaningful progress in its implementation. For example, following the World Humanitarian Summit, donors and signatories agreed that at least 25% of humanitarian funding should go directly to national organizations. However, this target has not been met, in fact, the opposite has occurred³⁷. Statistics reveal that the percentage of direct funding to national organizations has actually declined compared to previous years.

This is further reinforced by Mr. Maher Daoudi, who stated: "There is no report that shows the extent to which organizations are committed to this crucial point in Palestine."³⁸ This highlights two key issues: weak donor commitment to the Grand Bargain and limited reporting and transparency regarding the actual steps taken to implement its commitments on the ground.

Fragmentation of Localization Efforts

Regarding actual measures taken in Palestine, Mr. Maher Daoudi³⁹, Representative of the Consulate General of Sweden in Jerusalem, stated that a Localization Task Force was established with the facilitation of OCHA, Sweden, and Canada.

This task force is led by UN agencies, which hold two seats, while the Palestinian NGO Network (PNGO) holds one seat. A clear framework, terms of reference, and an action plan were developed to define the roles and responsibilities of the participating entities. In April 2023, the task force formulated key points to enhance participation and localization for any government providing humanitarian aid to Palestine. These points included: risk-sharing, risk management, capacity strengthening, and localization of interventions.

Among the challenges in directing donors toward localization, Mr. Maher Daoudi⁴⁰ highlighted that the Localization Task Force, which was established as a result of the Grand Bargain commitments, has been working to guide donors in Palestine toward localization.

While some donors were interested in participating, they lacked the necessary resources, whereas others did not respond adequately. The Localization Task Force has enforced quality

³⁶ Personal Interview with Ms. Alix Masson – Advocacy Officer at NEAR Network – Conducted on August 9, 2023.

³⁷ "One of the goals was to increase direct funding to at least 25% for national organizations by 2020. However, instead of increasing, the percentage has actually declined since 2017". The New Humanitarian

³⁸ Personal Interview with Mr. Maher Daoudi – Representative of the Consulate General of Sweden in Jerusalem – Conducted on October 2, 2023.

³⁹ Personal Interview with Mr. Maher Daoudi – Representative of the Consulate General of Sweden in Jerusalem – Conducted on October 2, 2023.

⁴⁰ Personal Interview with Mr. Maher Daoudi – Representative of the Consulate General of Sweden in Jerusalem – Conducted on October 2, 2023.

assurance requirements and monitored the implementation of localization efforts. For instance, OCHA allocated 35% of its funding to local organizations, whereas in HSP, the localization rate (funding allocated to local organizations) was less than 5% in 2022.

Another challenge lies in the different interpretations of localization among donors. Mr. Maher Daoudi⁴¹ explained: *"The concept of localization among donor countries differs from that of PNGO or OCHA. For example, within Sweden's funding for a pilot program implemented in three countries, including Palestine, international organizations were selected instead of local ones. When asked about this, donors responded that most employees in these international organizations are local staff. However, this differs from our understanding of localization—or what is outlined in the Grand Bargain."*

"Local organizations must be represented by those who have the capability and competence".

Maher Daoudi – Representative of the Consulate General of Sweden in Jerusalem

Lack of Genuine Participation

It is essential to highlight a critical aspect of funding localization—decision-making must go hand in hand with funding. In an interview with NEAR Network⁴², Alix Masson explained: *"Years after the launch of the Grand Bargain, its greatest failure remains the lack of progress in local participation. Donors have not made sufficient efforts to establish National Reference Groups, which are a key tool in achieving genuine partnerships."* Similarly, Mr. Maher Daoudi emphasized⁴³ that even as more national organizations receive funding, they still lack decision-making power. He stressed that national organizations must have an equal opportunity to participate in decision-making and must possess "know-how competency" to navigate the system effectively. Moreover, they must have "a seat at the table" to ensure that the voices of national organizations from all areas of Palestine are heard and represented.

While funding plays a crucial role in supporting humanitarian efforts in Palestine, donors and international organizations lack a fundamental component—the deep-rooted community connection that national and local organizations possess. This depth within society is what gives humanitarian work its true value and impact, enabling real and lasting change. The strength of national and local organizations stems from their genuine understanding of Palestinian society, as they are an integral part of it. This allows them to accurately identify community needs and set national priorities. As Mr. Maher Daoudi put it: *"Funding is important, but there are other, even more crucial aspects—such as understanding the needs of*

⁴¹ Personal Interview with Mr. Maher Daoudi – Representative of the Consulate General of Sweden in Jerusalem – Conducted on October 2, 2023

⁴² Personal Interview with Ms. Alix Masson – Advocacy Officer at NEAR Network – Conducted on August 9, 2023.

⁴³ Personal Interview with Mr. Maher Daoudi – Representative of the Consulate General of Sweden in Jerusalem – Conducted on October 2, 2023

communities and defining the right priorities. This can only come from organizations with a local base, not from international organizations.⁴⁴

It is worth noting that international organizations that signed the Grand Bargain lack proper reporting on their commitment to its implementation. As Mr. Maher Daoudi stated: *"This does not help in understanding what these organizations have done to be active participants in the Grand Bargain⁴⁵."* Furthermore, Mr. Maher Daoudi⁴⁶ emphasized that for international organizations to truly embrace "Collective Ownership," it is essential to establish localized leadership for such partnerships. This would ensure that these efforts are directed in a way that serves the national agenda effectively.

"The participation of local and national actors in localization discussions is a critical factor in driving real change".

Alix Masson, NEAR Network

Exaggeration of Needs and Weak Funding

The nature of crises in Palestine necessitates increasing humanitarian funding. However, the reality presents a stark contrast. Over the past decade, funding has been steadily declining, particularly between 2016 and 2020. Although escalations in Gaza led to increased funding, the response remained far below the actual needs, leaving a significant funding gap. Amidst prolonged and severe crises, the scale of humanitarian needs has become overwhelming compared to the limited available funding, which barely covers essential humanitarian needs. This is particularly critical given the deteriorating economic conditions across Palestine, especially in Gaza, where prior to the ongoing genocide, 80% of the population depended on food aid provided by national organizations. Now, under the current genocidal war, the entire population of Gaza is fully reliant on food aid. However, due to severe shortages and Israel's complete blockade, famine-like conditions have emerged, putting countless lives at risk. Under these circumstances, national organizations struggle immensely to secure funding, which often covers only a fraction of the enormous humanitarian needs. This forces them to compromise on principles of partnership and quality funding, as these are considered a luxury they simply cannot afford in such dire conditions.

Meanwhile, donors continue imposing additional funding conditions—especially during the genocide—while national organizations, lacking accountability mechanisms or negotiating power, are left with no choice but to comply.

⁴⁴ Personal Interview with Mr. Maher Daoudi – Representative of the Consulate General of Sweden in Jerusalem – Conducted on October 2, 2023

⁴⁵ Personal Interview with Mr. Maher Daoudi – Representative of the Consulate General of Sweden in Jerusalem – Conducted on October 2, 2023

⁴⁶ Personal Interview with Mr. Maher Daoudi – Representative of the Consulate General of Sweden in Jerusalem – Conducted on October 2, 2023

Opportunities for the Grand Bargain in the Palestinian Context

Steps toward Localization

Despite being relatively recent, there have been efforts in the field of localization that can be considered steps in the right direction. One of the most significant steps is the Multi-Sectorial Needs Assessment (MSNA), which was launched to identify the root causes of existing needs in Palestine. This type of assessment was conducted in collaboration with a group of donors and carried out independently by REACH to provide clear data across various sectors, allowing all humanitarian actors to have a clearer understanding of the scale, nature, and causes of needs. However, as Mr. Maher Daoudi noted⁴⁷: "*While this type of analysis is very useful, it is also extremely costly and requires additional complementary tools.*"

In addition, the Palestinian NGO Network (PNGO) has been actively working on promoting localization as a concept, aiming to enhance awareness among national organizations and create a reality where they have greater participation and representation in decision-making. One of the key achievements in this regard has been PNGO's participation as a member of the selection committee for organizations receiving grants from the Humanitarian Fund, marking a step toward increasing national organizations' influence in funding decisions.

An Experienced Civil Society

The civil society in Palestine possesses extensive experience, honed through decades of humanitarian work, engagement with a diverse range of donors, and adaptation to various operational contexts. This level of expertise plays a crucial role in enhancing the overall quality of humanitarian efforts, contributing to sustained impact and improved efficiency in funding allocation. Furthermore, this experience strengthens planning and implementation processes, ensuring that desired outcomes are achieved effectively and efficiently. Such expertise represents a valuable asset and serves as a catalyst for establishing a model implementation of the Grand Bargain commitments, paving the way for genuine partnerships with Palestinian national organizations.

A Commitment to Change

One of the most critical factors for positive change is the belief in the necessity of change and the commitment to implementing it. In the Palestinian context, this belief is deeply rooted in the struggles faced by national organizations and the harsh realities they endure daily. This lived experience serves as a strong motivator for these organizations to adopt measures and approaches that foster an enabling environment for civil society and to build genuine partnerships with donors.

⁴⁷ Personal Interview with Mr. Maher Daoudi – Representative of the Consulate General of Sweden in Jerusalem – Conducted on October 2, 2023

Recommendations

❖ **Supporting National Organizations and Strengthening Their Resilience Against Conditional Funding.**

- To ensure the sustainability and resilience of national organizations against conditional funding, the following actions should be taken:
- Establish a support network for national organizations to enhance their financial capacity and achieve self-sufficiency, reducing their reliance on conditional funding.
- Review and amend existing laws and regulations, as well as their implementation mechanisms, to increase the ability of national organizations to launch income-generating projects, thereby reducing dependency on conditional funding.
- Adopt initiatives to build the capacity of national organizations in fundraising and financial management, enabling them to develop highly competitive project proposals.
- Raise awareness among national organizations about the Grand Bargain and its principles, equipping them with better knowledge of donor commitments and how to engage with them strategically.
- Encourage a clear and assertive approach in fundraising efforts, advocating for donors to align their funding with the commitments of the Grand Bargain.
- Actively lobby and pressure the donor community to ensure that national organizations have genuine representation as key stakeholders in decision-making, program development, and funding evaluations.
- Strengthen alliances and partnerships among national organizations, creating a unified front against conditional funding policies.
- Enhance partnerships between national organizations, donors, and international institutions, ensuring that relationships are built on equality, mutual benefit, and a shared commitment to community well-being.
- Facilitate the participation of national organizations in UN-led and international committees, ensuring they hold meaningful roles with real influence, enabling them to drive localization efforts effectively.

❖ **Focusing on Donor Accountability Based on Grand Bargain Commitments .This accountability should be implemented at the national and representative levels for civil society organizations through:**

- Establish a National Reference Committee on the Grand Bargain to monitor signatory donors, encourage their compliance, and hold them accountable whenever possible. This committee should be embedded within existing civil society coalitions and umbrella networks, serving as a structured mechanism for systematic donor accountability based on national priorities and Grand Bargain commitments.
- Develop and adopt a standardized reference guide to assess donor funding practices, which can serve as a foundation for evaluating donors and applying pressure to uphold the Grand Bargain principles.

- Conducting more in-depth studies and research on the funding of civil society organizations and their relationship with donors to explore the ways in which donors can be pressured to achieve a greater commitment to the principles of the Grand Bargain on one hand, and to identify the weaknesses of civil society organizations that force them to accept conditional funding or grants that do not align with the spirit and principles of the Grand Bargain on the other hand.
- Advocate for international organizations to take an active role in ensuring the implementation of Grand Bargain commitments, while also creating opportunities for national organizations in funding access, localization, and capacity building.
- Intensifying advocacy and influencing efforts to combat colonialist ideology and practices in humanitarian work, while promoting localization.
- Push to increase and raise the level of representation of local civil society organizations in cluster groups, and push for local institutions and cadres to lead and manage the coordination of the various clusters.

❖ **Establishing a framework with the authority to review funding mechanisms and conditions for national organizations through:**

- Ensuring active and representative participation of national organizations from all sectors within this framework.
- Creating a reference mechanism that aligns national priorities with Grand Bargain commitments and effectively communicates this framework to the donor community.
- Building on this step by developing a standardized metric to assess the extent to which different grant programs comply with Grand Bargain principles, ensuring that this metric becomes an integral part of grant and project evaluations.
- Establishing clear and effective communication channels with the donor community to review and address challenges or obstacles that hinder adherence to Grand Bargain principles, working collectively at a national level to resolve these issues.
- Strengthening the Localization Task Force as an effective mechanism to enhance the localization of grants and projects, while encouraging the task force to publish regular reports assessing donor compliance with localization and identifying key challenges and opportunities in the process.
- Integrated work with the efforts of the United Nations Development Program and consolidated efforts to promote capacity-building activities and interventions of local NGOs, support their resilience, and develop their capacities.

❖ **Working on strengthening key actors and enabling components within Palestinian civil society to promote localization through the following:**

- Establishing a clear and nationally agreed-upon concept within Palestinian civil society to serve as a reference for localization, outlining the commitments required from national organizations and the donor community to achieve localization effectively.
- Developing capacity-building programs for national organizations to enhance their localization practices across various sectors.
- Publishing periodic reports on localization practices, including successful (or unsuccessful) case studies within the Palestinian context, and identifying lessons learned from these experiences.

- Supporting local economies and national initiatives to reduce dependency on external financing.
- ❖ **In light of the ongoing genocide in Gaza and the intensification of Israeli aggression, we strongly recommend taking urgent and serious action to restore the capacity, resources, and role of national organizations in community work through the following:**
 - Prioritizing national organizations in reconstruction programs to ensure their rapid recovery, enabling them to resume or relaunch their vital and essential programs to support the Palestinian community suffering under genocide and occupation.
 - Launching advocacy campaigns to defend national organizations targeted by Israeli efforts to discredit, restrict, or shut them down in Palestine.
 - Facilitating the establishment and formation of civil society organizations and halting attempts to criminalize or politicize grassroots humanitarian initiatives.
 - Forming a national coalition to study and define national priorities in light of the ongoing genocide and its aftermath, aiming to unite efforts and establish a national reference framework for civil society work in these difficult circumstances.
 - Initiating a collective agreement (Charter of Honor) among national organizations to oppose unjust donor policies, particularly those that violate localization principles, infringe on beneficiaries' rights, or subject them to intrusive screening and review processes before receiving aid.
 - Supporting and revitalizing grassroots institutions, providing them with the necessary expertise and capabilities to continue their journey in responding to urgent humanitarian needs.
- ❖ **Developing and designing interventions based on a realistic assessment of needs, ensuring responsiveness across short-, medium-, and long-term scopes through the following:**
 - Increasing investment and support for cross-sectoral needs assessments, while enhancing the participation of national organizations in these efforts.
 - Designing and programming interventions based on the findings of cross-sectoral needs assessments, ensuring comprehensive and integrated responses rather than isolated, sector-specific solutions. These interventions should be led and implemented by national organizations.
 - Adopting and strengthening approaches that integrate humanitarian and development efforts to the greatest extent possible by creating mechanisms and reference frameworks that mandate the linkage between different dimensions—at a minimum, (the humanitarian-development nexus), or ideally, (the humanitarian-development-peace nexus).
 - Working to enhance an integrated ecosystem that benefits from and builds upon the diverse expertise of various civil society organizations, reducing reliance on external expertise, thus encouraging the “localization” of humanitarian work.

❖ **Enhancing the identification and assessment of risks associated with community work across various sectors, while strengthening the efforts of national organizations through the following:**

- Integrating risk assessment and identification as an essential part of needs assessments and project design processes.
- Regularly documenting risks and establishing mechanisms for response and mitigation to address them as effectively as possible.
- Promoting risk-sharing between national organizations, donors, and international institutions to reduce the burden on national organizations and enhance their resilience and adaptability in facing risks.
- Highlight the competition between NGOs themselves and the competition with international organizations for funding, competencies, and humanitarian leadership. In addition to providing practical frameworks to favor local NGOs and provide them with the resources and capacities that ensure their national leadership of humanitarian interventions.

In-Depth Interviews

#	Name	Position	Date
1.	Amjad Al-Shawa	Palestinian NGO Network (PNGO)	August 3, 2023
2.	Maher Daoudi	Consulate General of Sweden in Jerusalem	October 2, 2023
3.	Bahia Amra	Medical Relief Society	September 6, 2024
4.	Ahmad Ashour	Tamer Institute for Community Education	October 9, 2024
5.	Jamil Swalmeh	Director, ActionAid Palestine	October 3, 2024
6.	Jerjes Eleri	ActionAid	September 27, 2023
7.	Ahmad Dahman	Agricultural Relief	September 7, 2023
8.	Sabina Henschen & Terry Bullata	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)	September 14, 2023
9.	Abdullah Sharshara	Director, Ajyal Association for Creativity and Development	September 29, 2024
10.	Alix Masson	NEAR Network	August 9, 2023

May, 2025.

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