

Multistakeholder Pledge: Advancing Localization in Displacement and Statelessness Responses



Call to Collective Action

This multistakeholder pledge aims to advance localization, identify opportunities, and address some of the challenges that **local and national actors*** face when responding to displacement and statelessness situations. These challenges relate to funding, participation in decision-making, two-way capacity-sharing, and recognition.

This pledge is also aligned to the [Global Compact on Refugees \(GCR\)](#) and complements Grand Bargain commitments on localization¹. Advancing the localization agenda² is a priority of many stakeholders engaged with the GCR, including the need to recognize the expertise and crucial role of local and national actors. These actors are often the first responders in large-scale refugee situations and have significant impact in responses to displacement and statelessness. They ensure that assistance and protection are needs-based, community, culture and faith sensitive, and also contribute to sustainable solutions in the longer term.

By signing up to commitments of this multistakeholder pledge, signatories stress the importance of advancing localization when responding to situations of displacement and statelessness in development and peace efforts, as well as in humanitarian interventions.

Multistakeholder Pledge Objective and Components

The Multistakeholder Pledge on Advancing Localization commits to *enhance the capacity and ownership of local and national actors, and to develop stronger and more equitable partnerships with them, fostering contextually relevant, efficient, effective and sustainable solutions that will improve the lives of refugees, other displaced and stateless persons.*

To support this objective, stakeholders can make commitments towards one or several of the components of this pledge (see annex 1 for more concrete sample commitments):

Policy			
Commit to support and promote efforts of all relevant actors, from local to international, in collectively advancing locally-led action in displacement and statelessness responses, including through fulfilling localization commitments outlined in this pledge.			
Thematic	Cross-cutting		
	Partnerships Invest in transformative change when it comes to partnerships and power dynamics to advance effective and sustainable localization in displacement and statelessness responses.		
	Decision-making Promote and facilitate safe, inclusive, meaningful and equitable participation of local and national actors in decision-making processes and structures.	Capacity-sharing Enhance capacity-sharing, including by promoting local knowledge and mutual learning between local and national actors and other stakeholders.	Funding Significantly improve the accessibility, quality, quantity and tracking of funding to local and national actors.

¹The commitments of this multistakeholder pledge are in line with commitments made under the [Grand Bargain](#) (commitment 2 on localization).

²The Global Compact on Refugees emphasizes the importance of multi-stakeholder and partnership approaches, particularly including local actors and displacement-affected populations in responses. The Compact also recognizes the role of local authorities and other local actors often as first responders in large-scale refugee situations. The role of civil society organizations in assessing community strengths and needs is highlighted, with reference to inclusive and accessible planning and programme implementation, as well as capacity development and the importance of engaging directly with forcibly displaced and stateless populations.

* Definition of local and national actors

For the purpose of this pledge, the term “local and national actors” refers primarily to local and national actors working in displacement and statelessness responses who deserve increased recognition, such as local, sub-national and national Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs) and other Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), as well as National Red Cross or Red Crescent Societies. This includes organizations led by forcibly displaced or stateless persons, women, youth, persons with disabilities, LGBTIQ+ persons and host communities.

Other related pledges (see reference below) focus more on the strengthened role of local authorities and academia, that can contribute to advancing localization in displacement and statelessness responses.



The co-creation process

This Multistakeholder Pledge has been co-convened by UNHCR and ICVA. As an enabling pledge, it contributes to the implementation of all four GCRs objectives³, and builds on the High-Level Officials Meeting⁴, [global](#) and [regional](#) NGO consultations conducted in 2021 and 2022, as well as Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), Grand Bargain and other localization initiatives.

The co-creation process was guided by a Reference Group composed of 20 members⁵, representing diverse stakeholders, including organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons. Additional nine stakeholders⁶, elected through an inclusive process, contributed to the elaboration of commitments through three Working Groups⁷. The work was reviewed by the Advisory Board to the UNHCR Task Team on Engagement and Partnership with Organizations led by Displaced and Stateless Persons, and UNHCR NGO Reference Group and other NGOs, and the Age, Gender and Diversity (AGD) Group of Friends.

³ The GCR's four key objectives are to 1) Ease the pressures on host countries, 2) Enhance refugee self-reliance, 3) Expand access to third-country solutions, 4) Support conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity.

⁴ The HLOM 2021 recommendations highlighted the importance of advancing localization through 1) increased, sustained and flexible financial support for civil society organizations; 2) innovative approaches and strengthened partnerships for inclusion by engaging civil society actors; 3) investing in capacitating local civil society for integration, inclusion, solutions; 4) providing resources to local civil society partners to scale up and refine services and programmes; and 5) encouraging all-of-society collaboration for better dialogue with communities to inform policy, planning, programming in return and reintegration.

⁵ The Reference Group is composed of Member States (Canada, Denmark, the Netherlands and Uganda); international organizations (IFRC); UN agencies (FAO, UNICEF); international NGOs (Oxfam, InterAction, HIAS, BRAC, LWF, United Stateless, DRC), national NGOs (the Lotus Flower from the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, Somali NGO Consortium, Nahda Makers Organisation from Yemen, The National Congress of Ukrainians of Moldova, Unión Venezolana en Perú, and The Bondeko Refugee Livelihoods Centre from Uganda).

⁶ ADRA, Caritas Internationalis & Caritas South Africa, CHS Alliance, Cohere, Gargaar Relief Development Organization (GREDO) from Somalia, Islamic Relief Worldwide, Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, World Vision and Zamzam Foundation from Somalia.

⁷ Working Group co-leads: Funding: Oxfam, Nahda Makers Organisations (Yemen) and UNHCR; Inclusion in decision-making: HIAS and UNHCR; Capacity-sharing: The Grassroot Consortium (Nigeria) and UNHCR.

How to sign up

All stakeholders are invited to submit a commitment under this umbrella Multistakeholder Pledge. New commitments may be submitted at any time leading-up to and following the GRF 2023 at globalcompactrefugees.org or using the following QR code:



This [step-by-step guide](#) explains how to submit an individual commitment. When doing so, please ensure to indicate that your commitment is contributing to this Multistakeholder Pledge.

You are not required to choose all sample commitments of this multistakeholder pledge. You are free to select the ones you would like to commit your support to and to advance within the timeframe of this pledge, which is 2023-2027.

The commitments can be adapted to suit your needs and context as long as the underlying idea remains unchanged. When submitting a selection of commitments you will not be held accountable to deliver or report on other commitments of the pledge. You can also submit overarching commitments only.

Instead of making an individual commitment, it is also possible to match a commitment made by another stakeholder. More information can be found on the [GCR website](#).

Events at the GRF 2023

- **Friday 15 December from 3.00 to 4.30 pm at Palexpo:** Parallel High-level Event on Advancing Localization in Displacement and Statelessness Responses.
- **Thursday 14 December from 6.30 to 8 pm at the Ferme Sarasin:** Linked Event, Navigating Localization: The imperative for Locally Led Action in Displacement and Statelessness Responses.

Related multistakeholder pledges

- [Multistakeholder Pledge: Shifting Power – Advancing Localization of Research and Elevating the Voices of Host and Forcibly Displaced Communities Globally](#)
- [Multistakeholder Pledge: Call to Local Action and Solidarity in Secondary Cities & Local and Regional Governments](#)

Logos on the cover page correspond to reference group members. In addition, the following organizations contributed to the elaboration of sample commitments through the Working Groups:



Annex 1 - Sample Commitments

As part of this Multistakeholder Pledge, we (Country/Partner X) commit to: (select from sample commitments below, possibly adapt them to your needs or draft your proper commitments).

A. Policy-level commitment	
Support and promote efforts of all relevant actors, from local to international, in collectively advancing locally-led action in displacement and statelessness responses, including through fulfilling localization commitments outlined in this pledge.	
B. Partnerships (cross-cutting component)	
Key Commitment 1: Partnerships	
1.	Invest in transformative change when it comes to partnerships and power dynamics to advance effective and sustainable localization in displacement and statelessness responses, notably by:
Examples:	
1.1	Respecting and supporting existing or new local initiatives and mechanisms on coordination, capacity sharing and funding;
1.2	Establishing equitable and complementary longer-term strategic partnerships that build on partners' respective strengths and are in line with the goals of local and national actors and their communities;
1.3	Nurturing relations, mutual respect and accountability, and the application of the principles of partnership ⁸ to provide a space for transparent two-way information sharing and discussions to build trust, resulting in effective collaboration;
1.4	Sharing risks, responsibilities, and accountabilities among actors at different levels, i.e. local, sub-national, national, regional and international;
1.5	Using targeted communication to advocate for greater and systematic inclusion and equitable participation of local and national actors, while highlighting their crucial role in coordination systems, programs, and policies, and ensuring visibility and recognition of their work and role.
C. Inclusion and Participation in Decision-Making Processes (thematic component)	
Key Commitment 2: Operational Coordination	
2.	Strengthen safe, meaningful, equitable and inclusive participation of local and national actors in refugee coordination processes and structures, notably by:
Examples:	
2.1	Transferring leadership or co-leadership roles to local and national actors through a transparent and inclusive selection process and a smooth transition plan for the phasing out of international leadership;
2.2	Identifying and selecting members of coordination structures in a transparent and inclusive process, with balanced and relevant representation of local, national, (regional) and international actors representing diverse groups without discrimination;
2.3	Creating opportunities for mutual learning, for example through training and coaching on coordination and leadership for local and national actors, and training on local norms and customs for international actors, and for ensuring transparent, regular and mutual information sharing;
2.4	Making coordination structures and meetings accessible to all by reducing barriers related to resources, language, capacity, logistics, security and technology and allow for safe, meaningful and equitable participation.
Key Commitment 3: Programme design and implementation	
3.	Ensure meaningful participation of local and national actors at all stages of the inter-agency programme cycle, notably by:
Examples:	
3.1	Ensuring meaningful participation and contribution of local and national actors to strategic discussions throughout all stages of inter-agency programme design and implementation, e.g. the development of Refugee Response Plans (RRP) (needs assessment, definition of priorities, programme design, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning processes).

⁸ The [Principles of Partnership](#) (Equality, Transparency, Results-Oriented Approach, Responsibility and Complementarity) provide a framework for all actors in the humanitarian space – including governments, academia, the private sector and affected populations – in order to engage on a more equal, constructive and transparent setting.

Key Commitment 4: Policy Development	
4.	Promote the voices of local and national actors and ensure their priorities are reflected in policy making processes/fora, at global, regional and national/local levels, notably by:
Examples:	
4.1	Strengthening engagement and, where possible, leadership of local and national actors in the development of new policy documents and/or international and legal frameworks or changes or amendments to them;
4.2	Including local and national actors' representatives in delegations to policy making processes/fora, at global, regional and national levels;
4.3	Promoting a safe and enabling environment for local and national actors to contribute to policy making.
D. Two-way Capacity-Sharing (thematic component)	
Key Commitment 5: Collaboration and Coordination	
5.	Enhance collaboration and coordination regarding knowledge sharing initiatives among relevant local and national actors, notably by:
Examples:	
5.1	Mapping of capacity development needs and existing platforms, forums, and networks – or create and/or strengthen if deemed necessary - where humanitarian, development and peace actors, governments, and local institutions can come together to exchange knowledge, experiences, and best practices;
5.2	Organizing regular meetings and workshops with local and national actors to facilitate dialogue and joint decision-making on capacity sharing initiatives, fostering a coordinated approach and a sense of shared ownership and collaboration, following a culturally and contextually relevant approach;
5.3	Leveraging existing and informal communications channels/platforms to build trust between actors to underpin collaboration for capacity sharing;
5.4	Promoting the implementation of an accountability framework covering all parties involved in capacity strengthening through the establishment of an accountability matrix.
Key Commitment 6: Institutional Accompaniment and Knowledge Sharing	
6.	Foster collaboration, learning, and empowerment among humanitarian actors, but also with development and peace actors, to share capacity, promote inclusivity, and enhance local resilience, notably by:
Examples:	
6.1	Empowering local and national actors, especially organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless people, towards self-sufficiency and full NGO status through technical and financial support for legal registration and compliance, advocacy, monitoring, inclusive representation, and collaborative projects to enhance local resilience, fostering a more inclusive and effective ecosystem;
6.2	Developing demand-driven, tailored capacity strengthening programmes that focus on enhancing the skills and knowledge of local and national actors, based on existing capacities, in areas such as project management, humanitarian project cycle management, proposal writing, monitoring, reporting and evaluation, and humanitarian principles, among others;
6.3	Capitalizing on the valuable local knowledge and resources of local and national actors to deliver relevant capacity-strengthening initiatives for international actors on local context and approaches to underpin the «Do No Harm» principle.
Key Commitment 7: Awareness Raising and Monitoring and Evaluation	
7.	Raise awareness about successful inclusive, locally led knowledge-sharing initiatives and establish a framework for monitoring success, notably by:
Examples:	
7.1	Disseminating relevant capacity-sharing information about humanitarian, development and peace programmes, available resources, and best practices among local institutions, governments, and community members to facilitate access to capacity sharing opportunities;
7.2	Building a base of evidence on success stories arising from mutual learning opportunities between local and national actors and reframing the narrative that learning only occurs in one direction, from international to local actors;
7.3	Promoting capacity-sharing good practices in partnerships between international organizations, local and national NGOs, civil society, and community-based organizations;
7.4	Establishing mechanisms to monitor the progress of capacity strengthening efforts and evaluate their impact.

E. Funding (thematic component)	
Key Commitment 8: Accessibility	
8.	Promote accessibility of funding for local and national actors through improved communications and proactively building connections, notably by:
Examples:	
8.1	Incorporating local and national actors into funding, partnership and localization strategies through proactive and frequent consultations and meetings with local and national actors by UN agencies, INGOs and donors, giving special attention to those led by forcibly displaced and stateless persons, and by increasing the representation and involvement of these organizations in forums, events and working groups;
8.2	Improving the UN Partner Portal for better access to relevant funding opportunities for local and national actors;
8.3	Providing clear instructions for funding applications with specific, transparent assessment criteria (funding applications being as straightforward as possible to complete) and providing constructive and detailed feedback to unsuccessful funding applications by local and national actors.
Key Commitment 9: Quality	
9.	Improve quality of funding for local and national actors through equal overheads and due diligence passports, notably by:
Examples:	
9.1	Providing equal overheads for all implementing partners, including local and national actors, with overheads claimed at the same rate in line with the IASC Guidance on the Provision of Overheads to Local and National Partners, and which should be transparent and communicated to all implementing actors;
9.2	Encouraging the use of or using collective due diligence passporting so that local and national actors do not need to undergo multiple and repetitive compliance processes with numerous donors (for example the UN Partner Portal); employing layered due diligence processes which tailor requirements to the level of risk associated with each organization; pre-vetting local and national actors in advance of funding; using fiscal sponsors – third party partners who receive funding on behalf of local and national actors unable to register in-country or open bank accounts.
Key Commitment 10: Quantity	
10.	Increase the quantity of funding to local and national actors, e.g. through the Grand Bargain commitment of 25%, notably by:
Examples:	
10.1	Delivering the Grand Bargain commitment of 25% of humanitarian funding to local and national actors;
10.2	Increasing funding to local and national actors, especially those that would otherwise be excluded from traditional funding mechanisms, and by prioritizing intermediaries ⁹ that are themselves organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless people or their networks.
Key Commitment 11: Tracking	
11.	More robust and transparent tracking of funding by reporting all funding to local and national actors through the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI), notably by:
Examples:	
11.1	Donors and intermediaries publishing all funding to local and national actors on publicly available platforms, mainly the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI), as outlined in the IASC Collective Monitoring and Accountability Framework endorsed by members of the Grand Bargain Caucus on Funding for Localization;
11.2	Including the names of organizations so that analysts can disaggregate by their definitions of organization type wherever possible, such as organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless people, refugee-led initiatives (RLI), youth-led organizations (YLO), women-led organizations (WLO), and women refugee-led organizations (WRLO).

⁹ The term “intermediaries” includes all organizations with an intermediary role, such as international NGOs (INGOs), UN agencies, international organizations, and national organizations based in affected countries (noting that in some instances, national NGOs (NNGOs) act as intermediaries for smaller refugee-led initiatives).

Annex 2: Guiding Principles

The following principles represent the beliefs and values underpinning the approaches and decision-making when advancing localization in displacement and statelessness responses:

Agency and Equality: Advancing localization involves making space for local communities and grassroots organizations to take leadership in identifying needs and designing appropriate solutions, being active participants and decision-makers. This recognizes local actors' agency and expertise, and their deeper understanding of the opportunities and challenges on the ground. Working with local actors in equitable partnerships fosters collaboration and joint decision-making, promoting equality and dignity in humanitarian efforts.

Accountability and Transparency: Accountability is a shared responsibility between donors and local and national actors. Donors have the right to expect transparency regarding how their funds are used and the impact of their support. Regular monitoring and evaluation processes are essential to provide donors with clear information on the progress and outcomes of initiatives. On the other hand, local and national actors must be accountable to their communities, sharing information on how donor funds are utilized, and the results achieved. Open communication and transparency build trust among all stakeholders and facilitate more effective partnerships.

Accurate Attribution of Work: Recognizing the work of local and national actors is essential for visibility and accountability. Work done by local and national actors should be accurately and adequately attributed to them. This visibility helps demonstrate their contributions and impact, making them more visible to donors and funding partners.

Adaptability and Flexibility: The dynamic nature, especially of humanitarian work, demands adaptability and flexibility in funding provisions. Local and national actors must respond quickly and effectively to rapidly changing and unpredictable needs and contexts. Rigid frameworks can hinder their ability to deliver timely aid and solutions. By including flexibility in budget lines, donors allow local and national actors to make real-time decisions without excessive bureaucratic hurdles. This enables creative problem-solving and demonstrates trust, as local staff can have more control over the use of funds in response to evolving circumstances.

Collaboration and Partnership: Collaboration is a fundamental aspect of localization, and it involves bringing together all stakeholders, incl. INGOs and local civil society organizations, to work collectively

towards common goals. These stakeholders can effectively address complex challenges by pooling their unique expertise and resources. Trust and respectful communication are essential in building strong partnerships that facilitate meaningful cooperation. This principle encourages capacity sharing, where both sides can learn from each other, participate in training programs, and share best practices. This creates a more inclusive and holistic approach to humanitarian, development and peace efforts, leveraging the strengths of different actors.

Inclusivity and Participation: Language is crucial in shaping perceptions and attitudes. For example, a language shift from «capacity building» to terms like «capacity sharing» or «capacity strengthening» is proposed. These alternatives acknowledge existing skills and resources, empowering entities to collaborate and reinforce their strengths. By using appropriate language, the active role of local and national actors in the development process is acknowledged. Local and national actors should be directly involved in decision-making processes, programme planning, and evaluation. Their insights and perspectives are valuable in ensuring that interventions are relevant, culturally sensitive, and effective.

Impact: Funding should be directed towards initiatives with long-term and sustainable impact on affected communities. While short-term aid is crucial for immediate crises, the focus should be on funding projects that allow communities to handle future challenges independently. This requires funding programs in a multi-year format, allowing for ongoing support and annual renewals based on performance and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Measuring impact based on depth rather than just breadth ensures that resources are allocated to maximize positive and meaningful change.

Sustainability: Local and national actors have in-depth knowledge of the cultural, social, and logistical landscape, which makes their interventions targeted and effective. They are widely accepted by the communities they serve, fostering trust and long-term cooperation. Additionally, local involvement builds capacity within the community, ensuring that the efforts are more resilient and adaptive even when international actors scale down their operations. Overall, the synergy between local, national, regional and global actors creates a more effective and enduring response to the challenges of displacement and statelessness.