



Charter ⁴ CHANGE

Charter for Change:

Endorsers survey analysis report

November 2018

Charter4 CHANGE

This report was compiled by the C4C reporting and coordination groups based on a survey conducted among C4C endorsers and other local and national NGOs. The information has mainly been anonymised, except for some highlighted examples of the work of individual signatories.

The content of this report is a summary of inputs from the C4C signatories and does not necessarily reflect the views and positions of individual signatories.

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Summary

A survey conducted by the Charter4Change among the charter's endorsers in September 2018, show that endorsers (national & local organisations) report lower levels of perceived compliance with the eight commitments of the charter than the signatories' own self-rated compliance. The survey was completed by 74 respondents based in 22 different countries, of which 90% described themselves as local or national NGO and 75% as C4C endorsers. The perceived compliance between signatories and endorser survey respondents diverges most significantly for commitments 5,6 and 8 of the Charter, which emphasize the importance of local and national actors, subcontracting and representing partners' work in communications respectively.¹

Methodology

Charter4Change undertook the survey among its endorsers and other local and national humanitarian organizations in September 2018. C4C signatories shared the survey widely with their local and national partners. In total, the survey received 74 responses, of which 75% are C4C endorsers. The majority of the respondents identified their organizations as local NGO (54%), 36% as national NGO and the remainder (10%) classified themselves as "other". Within the category of 'other', most respondents described themselves as faith or church-based organization, one as regional NGO and another as national NGO network.

Respondents were advised that only one representative of their organization should fill in the survey. When asked 85% of the respondents indicated that their organization only responded once to the survey, 7% did not know whether they are the only one to respond, and the remainder stated they are not the only representative of their organization providing a response to the survey. Given the low number of organizations providing potentially more than one response, all of the responses were treated as independent data points.

1. See www.charter4change.org for full details

Figure 1: Country of origin of the survey responses.
Shows number of survey responses received from 22 countries/territories.

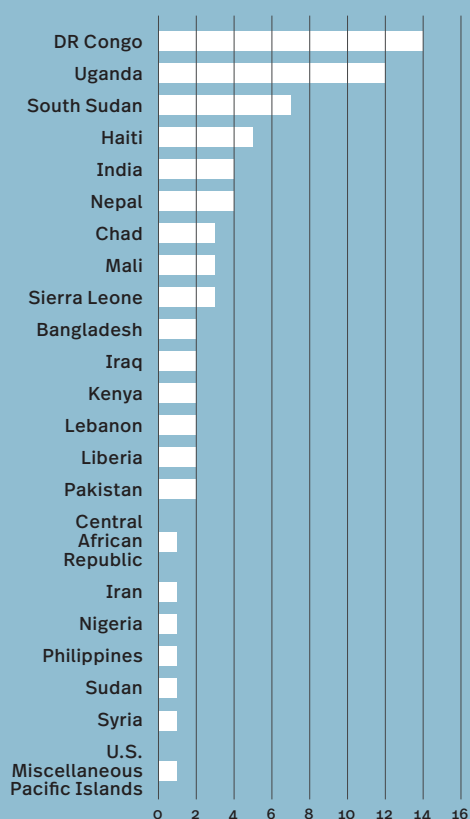
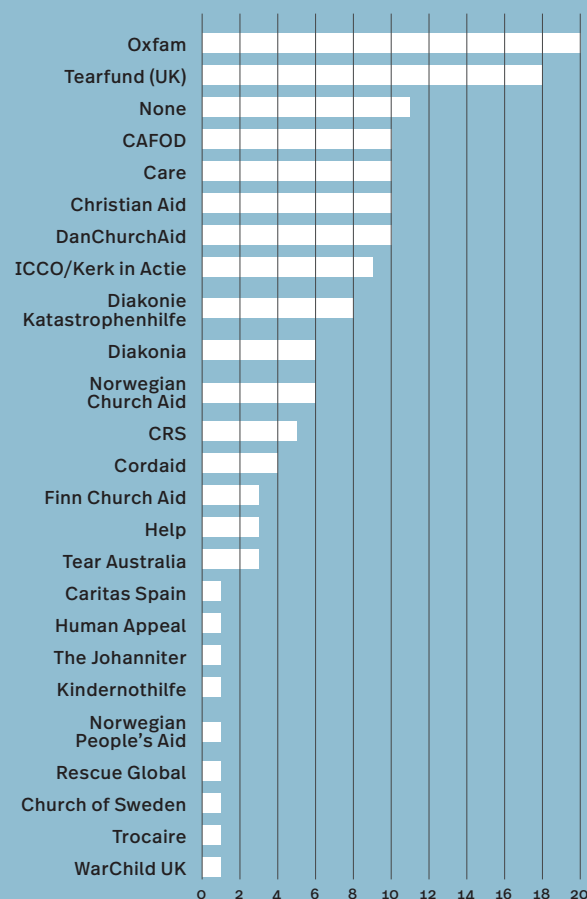


Figure 2: Survey Respondents' C4C signatory partners
Shows number of survey responses that have worked with the various C4C signatories. Signatories not shown were not identified as previous/existing partners by any of the 74 respondents. Due to significant differences in the response rates by individual endorser as well as non-endorser organisations, this data does not reflect the number of local and national partners to the respective signatories.



Countries and Signatories covered

In total, the 74 responses originated from 22 different countries or territories (see figure 1). The majority of the responses, however, came from organizations based in just four countries (DRC, Uganda, South Sudan and Haiti). Note that in some of these countries several C4C signatories have been involved in localization-focused initiatives, such as ELNHA², Shifting the Power³, Missed Opportunities⁴, which could explain that a higher number of endorsers based in these countries participated in the survey.

In addition to providing this geographical data, respondents identified the C4C signatories with which they had or have had partnerships within the last two years. On average, the respondents indicated having worked with 2.3 C4C signatory partners. The majority of the respondents' signatory partners is focused on a small group of organizations. Respondents partnering with just five C4C signatories constitute more than 50% of the total respondents. Due to significant differences in the response rates by individual endorser as well as non-endorser organisations, this data does not reflect the number of local and national partners to the respective signatories. Not all of the respondents have actually worked with C4C signatories, 9 of the 74 indicated not having worked with any of the C4C signatories.

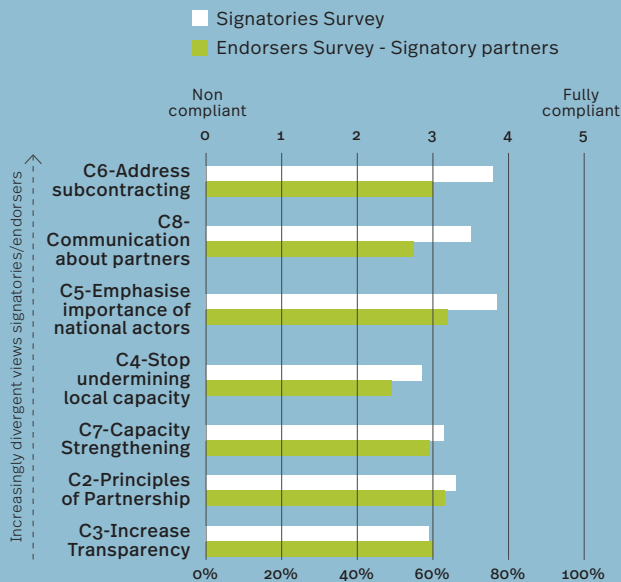
2. <https://www.oxfamnovib.nl/donors-partners/about-oxfam/projects-and-programs/elnha.html>

3. <https://startnetwork.org/start-engage/shifting-the-power>

4. <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/sites/default/files/2016-03/missed-opportunities-report-2012.pdf>

Figure 3: Self-rate Compliance – Signatories vs Endorsers perspective

Compares the survey responses of the C4C endorsers and the signatories on their self-rated compliance towards the C4C Commitments.



Self-rate Compliance – Signatories vs Endorsers perspective

In May 2018, C4C published its annual report, including data on self-rated compliance for all the eight commitments of the charter. The endorsers survey includes the same questions, asking endorsers for their perception as to what extent signatories comply with the charter's commitment (the compliance was rated in grades from 0= non-compliant to 5=fully-complaint).

The self-rated compliance by both signatories and endorsers is shown in figure 3. The figure contains two types of responses, the data by the signatories (a) as presented in the C4C annual report, and (b) data by organizations that partnered with signatories.

The data shows that perception of signatories and endorsers

differ. On average and for most of the commitments, the signatories' perception of compliance is higher than the perceived compliance reported by the endorsers⁵.

For the subsequent discussion signatories' results (white bars in figure 3) will be compared with endorsers survey respondents that actually worked with signatory partners (green bars). On average, the endorser survey respondents perceive signatories to be less compliant - by more than 10% points - than how the signatories perceive their own compliance.

5. Note that commitments 1 is not shown as funding levels have been rated on actual financial data by signatories, therefore no financial data was sourced during the endorsers survey.

Endorsers' general views of the Charter

Endorsers who took the time to complete the C4C survey are unsurprisingly keen on the Charter and recognise its potential, but mainly see its potential as unrealised. *'We were pleased with the contents of the charter and the commitments of the organisations, but we are waiting for these commitments to materialize'* was a view echoed by a number of endorsers. Another comment, which is echoed by many respondents to the survey notes: *'We have the honor to express our satisfaction for this charter that we support 100% and have the determination to go all the way with this. We ask for good support as we want to continue to conduct good advocacy for the good of our national organizations and local authorities. We want to be involved in decision-making bodies and, above all, we ask our partners to promote programmes to strengthen our capabilities to make us more than capable of providing quality services to communities facing different challenges'*. Several noted that there is a disjuncture

between the commitment to localisation in INGO Head offices and how staff behave in their country programmes, that there is a need for internal advocacy within C4C signatory organisations to live up to their commitments and that field staff need to be made more aware of the Charter4Change commitments which their organisation has signed up to.

From the responses of several endorsers it is clear that many do not know enough about the Charter, who the signatories are and what the commitments mean for local actors. Others note that often staff of signatory organisations in country do not themselves know enough about the Charter and as a result they cannot inform their partners. As one respondent wrote: *'I have the impression that even the field staff of these organizations are not aware of the Charter and are sometimes surprised to see the name of their organizations on the list of signatories'*.

This is lack of knowledge about the commitments, both by signatory organisation staff, particularly at field level, and by endorsers is a serious block to the Charter achieving its true potential to localise humanitarian aid.

On the other hand, many endorsers expressed a keen interest to know more about the Charter, their role in it, and how they can work better with the INGO signatory partners to help them fulfil their commitments to change. *'We would like more information on the Charter for Change'* was a repeated refrain throughout the endorsers' comments. The comment: *'We are aware that its effective implementation would give more power to local organizations for shared results'* reflects that of many endorsers who see the potential of the Charter for delivering better outcomes for people living in crisis.

Commitments with slightly divergent views on compliance

For some of the C4C commitments, commitment 3 – increased transparency, commitment 2 – Principles of Partnership and commitment 7 – capacity strengthening and support for administrative costs, signatories and endorser survey respondents only differ marginally (less than 4% points). In terms of transparency, endorser survey respondents rate the signatories' compliance better than the signatories themselves. One possible explanation is that signatories (at HQ level) focus more on getting IATI data published, which was not a data type that endorser survey respondents highlighted. The C4C signatories' transparency is seen more favorably compared to other partners of the survey respondents as more than 60% of the respondents agree or strongly agree that signatories are more transparent than other partners. Nonetheless, the endorser's perceived average compliance with commitment 3 is 60%, indicating room for improvement. A number of endorser noted that transparency is at the core of partnership and most felt that although their partners are making efforts to improve transparency there is still a long way to go. This perceived lack of transparency, especially around financial issues, such as budgets, donor grants and costs erodes trust. For example, transparency around what percentage of donor funding stays with the INGO; and although the national NGO partner knows how much they themselves as an organisation receive several commented that they do not know what overall percentage of funding, or of a particular grant, is passed to local actors. However, a number of endorser did acknowledge that their partners are making efforts to be more transparent and share information in a timely and open way. Some felt transparency should be more automatic and that information should be shared routinely rather than at the request of an INGO's partner.

Others noted that there continues to be a problem of lack of transparency on how INGOs write their budgets and spend their grants, particularly the overheads, which are not shared with partners. Some respondents noted that C4C could potentially provide a platform to build transparency in partnerships.

There is a lot to be done around transparency. Actions by the C4C signatories should espouse transparency. We should be informed of any backend changes other than being simply asked to cut back budgets without clear rationale. Cutbacks should also be done equitably with the C4C signatories providing and sharing their own cutbacks. This way it doesn't seem like its only we the partners being asked to cut back.

We know the money passed through to us, but not the overall percentage this represents

We are informed of new opportunities, areas of work and resources allocated and required templates to meet donors' requirements.

Our partner is always making effort to link up with other partners especially in respect to call for proposals.

Competition around calls for proposals between INGOs and NNGOs continues to be tough

For Commitment 7, 67% of the respondents reported that they had received funding for capacity strengthening

and 81% confirmed receiving other means of support for strengthening their capacity (for example accompaniment and training), indicating that providing support in-kind rather than actual funding is more frequent among C4C signatories. When provided the opportunity to describe their experiences with C4C signatories, several endorser noted that capacity building of national and local organisations is key to the aid delivery as well as to the success of any partnership. Endorser reported mixed experiences of capacity support from their C4C INGO partners. Some noted that capacity support had been long term and that their organisation had benefited from both workshop trainings as well as secondments and exchange programmes and that levels of support for capacity building had increased over the last 2 years. Others felt they had received no or almost no support and that their INGO partners were not sufficiently committed to enhancing the capacity of their NGO partners. Several were highly appreciative of the support they had received from the Start Network, DEPP, Shifting the Power Project which supported them both with capacity strengthening as well as accessing country level funding from the humanitarian funds. Some felt that capacity building is not centred enough on their own organisational needs nor builds on the existing knowledge and expertise of staff, rather it is based on what the INGO partner wishes to deliver, and several reiterated the point that to be most useful capacity building should always start from an organisational self-assessment.

There is little progress on providing long-term funding with overhead costs.

The capacity building varies from partner to partner

as some is in-house capacity building while others is manifested by exchange visits. There is a need for demand driven capacity building informed by capacity assessments of individual organisations.

The C4C partners are at varying levels of providing this support. Whereas some have exceeded expectations others are yet to catch up.

Programmes will be better if the partners' capacity is strengthened.

The funds allocated to capacity building for our organisations have greatly diminished if we take [case of] the administration fees. The concept of support for the strengthening of our headquarters has practically disappeared, as have longer-term trainings such as one month to 45 days. Refresher trainings are also underfunded.

The capacity building programme from our partner has lasted almost 2 years and it has lifted our organisation to another level, such as in aligning all our policies to sector-wide standards.

We wish the C4C signatory partners would increase their support for our operational and organisational capacities.

The survey respondents show a high level of familiarity with the Principles of Partnership, which form the second commitment of the Charter. Almost 90% stated they are familiar with these principles. However, the endorsers'

responses are also very variable with positive and negative experiences reported in almost every aspect of partnership.

All were positive in noting that their C4C signatory partners were all committed to partnership approaches and one even wrote that 'the strategy of joint partnership is good and perfect'. Several noted that they benefited from equitable partnerships and were involved in all aspects from project design to evaluation, with processes that were both transparent and participatory, and that their INGO partners 'highly encourage partnership approaches'. Several respondents did report that their partners share their budgets, sources of funding and reports with them, as well as supporting them in financial management procedures, financial and narrative reporting, data collection and planning and noted that they also notify them of upcoming funding opportunities. Others noted that C4C signatories share policy documents and the latest reports with them. However, beneath this there are clearly areas where many of the INGO signatories fall short in the eyes of their partners: with some exceptions, budget elaboration is often not a shared process and sometimes in sudden-onset emergencies the approach of INGOs is sub-contracting rather than equal partnerships, one respondent commented that by and large in sudden on-set situations INGOs either respond directly themselves or sub-contract a local organisation.

A number of respondents emphasised the capacity support aspects of their relationship with their INGO partners and noted that this was an important aspect of partnership and something that was of real benefit to their organisation. Several respondents remarked that they could not see a

marked improvement in INGOs partnership working since the signing of the Charter4Change, and that although there is organisational commitment to partnership approaches by INGO leaders and Headquarters offices this does not always filter through to field based staff, so that the Charter and its commitments are not well known by INGO field staff who are working with partner organisations.

Signatories use us as buyers of their services and not as partners

The Principles of Partnership are not really respected. Certain information is not really accessible.'

Our partnership has continued the same as before the signing of the Charter4Change.'

Partners are not so transparent because in most cases they hold the biggest budget and just tell you this is what you are supposed to do with this amount,'

We would like to be directly involved in drafting partnership agreements. In almost all cases these are handed down to us to sign. We should also be given opportunity to hold the partner accountable on practices that infringe the spirit of partnership' I have the impression that even the field staff of some signatory organizations are not aware of the Charter and are sometimes surprised to see the name of their organizations on the list of signatories.

Commitments with more divergent views on compliance

For commitment 5 - emphasize importance of national actors, commitment 8 - communication about partners and commitment 6 - address subcontracting, the perception between the two groups differs by between 13 and 16 % points, indicating a higher level of disagreement on perceived compliance between C4C endorsers and signatories.

In particular, C4C signatories reported high levels of compliance with commitment 5 - emphasize importance of national actors – but this perception is not shared by the endorser survey respondents. One way of understanding this difference, is that possibly some of the C4C advocacy work on a HQ level has not (yet) affected the situation in terms of the in-country realities for local and national actors, as some of the donors only changed their policies recently – or may still be in-process. Nonetheless, many endorsers praised the efforts of their own partners to promote partnership approaches, with more than one noting that their partners had set up advocacy groups to influence donors. Oxfam's flagship ELNHA Project, funded by the IKEA foundation was referred to repeatedly. Several noted that once donors visit field sites, they understand better the importance of working through local actors. In some contexts, respondents noted that international

donors are now calling for local humanitarian actors to participate in country-level meetings and coordination bodies.

Our organisation is quite renowned as one of the very few local NGOs involved in humanitarian work. We believe this could be due to partnerships we have had with some of the C4C signatories.

On average, survey respondents rated signatories' compliance with commitment 6 – addressing subcontracting at 60 percent. When asked if they feel included in the program design, only 10% of the respondents disagreed, a large majority either agreed (54%) or strongly agreed (22%). Most endorsers used words and phrases like participatory, gets us involved, engaged, we feel included, we are greatly assisted. However, others recognise the reality of donor stipulations and made comments such as 'programmes are developed by the signatories and then passed on to local actors for implementation.'

We are not really involved in the design phase. That is carried out at a higher level and we just come in to support the implementation

We are not consulted or invited to participate in the development of any programme of humanitarian action.

Some partners carry out the technical analysis of the projects before submitting them to the donor and many times they play the role of intermediaries. In reality the programmes which we are involved in are the ones we propose in draft form and they are finalised by our partner who puts them into the format required by the donor.

Equality is not yet acquired and the choice of partners to support depends on the affinities we have with the staff of the international partner.

Concerning commitment 8 – communicating about the work of their local and national partners – more than two thirds of the respondents expressed that signatories requested examples of some of the respondent organization's recent work (69%) and included these examples in their public communication. Subsequently, a slightly smaller number of respondents (61%) stated they were satisfied with the visibility provided to their organization, 39% disagreed

with this. This is reflected in the qualitative answers of the endorsers, a number of whom noted that they regularly provide stories to their INGO partners about their work and their achievements, but that they rarely get feedback so they hardly know which media outlets their work has been featured in and how prominently their organisation has been profiled or even mentioned. It was suggested that INGOs need to do more to create visibility platforms for the local NGOs. Endorsers recognised that their lack of profile in either their own national media or internationally stymies their chances of successfully accessing humanitarian funding.

Hardly anyone provides visibility to local partners in their media and communications.

Partners should be included as links to the INGO websites where readers can be exposed further to the work that each national NGO does.

Our visibility in Europe has increased a lot thanks to our partners.

*Our success stories are being shared by our partner
There is still a great deal to do*

For commitment 4, - recruitment and stop undermining capacity - signatories and endorsers perceived compliance differed by 8% points and for both groups this commitment is the lowest-rated of all commitments. However, when asked if signatories actually recruit staff from the endorser

organizations without their consent, only 4 respondents asserted that this had been the case over the last twelve months. In addition, one noted that this was entirely with the agreement of the national NGO employer who understood that it was a good career opportunity. Only one third of the respondent describe retaining staff during a humanitarian response as easy, most respondents describe it as difficult (43%) or very difficult (18%). Most of the challenges mentioned by the endorsers revolved around the difficulty of staff recruitment and retention because of the short-term nature of emergency projects and the low salaries national NGOs are able to pay in comparison to international organisations. None of the endorsers mentioned a case whereby INGOs partners had recruited their staff unfairly. On the other hand several noted that low wages understandably meant staff moved to higher paying (international) organisations.

The situation in relation to recruitment of staff is worse since the arrival of the international organisations. Local organisations do not have the resources to meet their salary levels.

As the first commitment of the Charter is focused on channeling 20% of a signatory's global humanitarian funding to local and national partners, endorsers were not asked to rate signatories' compliance with this commitment. But commitment 1 also asks the signatories to introduce their local partners to their own donors. According to the survey, only 40% of the respondents stated that they have been introduced to (back-)donors by signatories - 20% did not know and the remainder has not experienced such

any introduction to (back-)donors. Some attributed the lack of compliance on this to an increasingly competitive funding environment. From the comments by endorsers the most commonly reported circumstances when INGOs introduce their partners to their funders is once funding is already received and the discussion centres around project implementation rather than being about access to new or direct funding for the national/local NGO.

It is true that a few signatory organisations have told their donors about our work as part of the reporting for funds they have received. But there is a difference between that and really opening up the information flow to donors in a way which will make donors interested in funding us.

The Charter4Change signatories continue to be competitive for funding.

Our partner is always willing to recommend us to other partners and donors and this has opened doors for funding given our long term relationship from development to humanitarian work which the partner built our capacity in. Our partner values local partnerships and has championed this.

Way forward:

This survey of C4C endorsers and other local and national actors' was carried out to understand their perspective on the localisation process and their familiarity with the C4C and the localisation approach of its signatories. The survey findings have been helpful in providing useful insights on difference in perceptions on Northern and Southern actors. The findings also help all C4C stakeholders to understand where we could have done better and differently to strengthen the local response mechanism. These findings will provide the basis of discussions between C4C signatories and endorsers in order to formulate future strategy which has greater engagement of Southern actors and their shared ownership over the process.

November 2018