

Accelerating Grand Bargain beyond 2026 for advancing humanitarian action in Bangladesh

Introduction of Grand Bargain and BDCSO COAST

As we know, the Grand Bargain declaration was made in May 2016 at the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS), with commitments focused on quality funding, localization, aid transparency, and other key themes. A total of 71 (25 donor countries, 24 UN agencies and international organizations, 12 INGOs, 5 Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement entities, 5 Networks) are signatories to these commitments and submit annual progress reports each year¹. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) facilitates the progress of these commitments through a secretariat². This year, the Grand Bargain will mark its 10 years, with the possibility of ending and reforming in a different shape. But at Country levels, true localization of humanitarian aid has yet to be achieved.

Humanitarian activists across the globe are also discussing the future directions of the Grand Bargain. Emerging perspectives suggest the focus should emphasize the continuation of the Grand Bargain along with Quality Funding, Equitable Partnership, Locally-led response, Accountability and Aid Transparency. Several networks and groups are active in supporting these priorities. COAST Foundation, for instance, has initiated a popular country-wide effort, the BDCSO COAST, a signatory to the Grand Bargain, is hosting this seminar to share perspectives and priority areas from Bangladesh, with the aim of bringing these concerns and insights to the Grand Bargain Annual Meeting, 19–20 October 2026 in Geneva, and to the broader international discussion on the future of the Grand Bargain.

Evolution of the Grand Bargain: 2016–2026

1. The Grand Bargain was launched at the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016 as a comprehensive reform agenda to make humanitarian assistance more efficient, effective, transparent and accountable.³ It continued until 2021. Its original framework contained 51 commitments across 10 workstreams, including greater financial transparency, stronger support to local and national responders, increased use of cash,

reduced duplication and management costs, improved needs assessments, a “participation revolution” involving affected people in decision-making, multi-year funding, reduced earmarking, simplified reporting, and stronger humanitarian-development engagement.

2. The Grand Bargain 2.0 (2021–2023) represented a deliberate shift away from the extensive 2016 workstream structure towards a smaller number of politically important priorities. Its overall objective was to achieve better humanitarian outcomes through greater efficiency, effectiveness and accountability, with quality funding and localisation as the two enabling priorities. It also placed stronger emphasis on meaningful participation of affected people, local leadership and decision-making, recognising that the original 51 commitments had produced uneven progress. In other words, GB 2.0 was less about creating additional technical commitments and more about shifting resources, power and decision-making towards better-quality funding, local responders and affected communities⁴.
3. The Grand Bargain 3.0 (2023–2026) further streamlined the agenda and strengthened its political character. It identified four principal thematic priorities: quality funding, localisation, the participation revolution, and the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. It also introduced additional focus areas around anticipatory action and innovative financing, while moving away from the numerous technical workstreams towards political-level coordination, negotiation and collective action.

Key distinction of Grand Bargain, Grand Bargain 2.0 and 3.0

Thus, the key distinction is that 2016 focused on comprehensive system-wide reform; 2.0 focused on quality funding and localisation as enabling priorities; and 3.0 sought a more focused, politically driven

¹ <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/grand-bargain-official-website/grand-bargain-signatories>

² <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/grand-bargain>

³ <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/grand-bargain>

⁴ ODI: Think change[2]

agenda centred on quality funding, locally led humanitarian action, participation, and the nexus, while responding to emerging approaches such as anticipatory action and innovative financing⁵.

What's new when the Grand Bargain is ending?

A decade after its launch in 2016, the Grand Bargain is ending in 2026 and entering a new chapter! Grand Bargain Facilitation Group, joined by two NRG representatives, also highlighted the key issues still to be agreed, including the role of the National Reference Groups (NRGs), the balance between global political engagement and country-level accountability, the new accelerator function, resourcing, and complementarity with the Humanitarian Reset. Two decisions stand out:

1. Jagan Chapagain, Secretary General of the IFRC, will serve as the Global Ambassador for the next phase of the Grand Bargain.
2. He will take on the role for an initial two-year term, renewable thereafter.
3. The platform will be called the Collective Action Platform for the Grand Bargain - CAP4GB after 2026 and will continue till to 2030.
4. The NRGs (National Reference Groups) should play a central role in the next phase, to help rebalance the process in terms of links between global HQ policy level and implementation at country level, and in terms of local actors having a deeper role in the next phase.
5. Three thematic priorities are named:
 - **Quality funding** i.e., flexible and multi-year funding; Flexible arrangements; Contribution to a wide range of UN, NGO and locally-led pooled funds; full-cost coverage, including Indirect Cost Recovery; Cash assistance (as distinct from in-kind assistance); Donor conditionalities and improved coordination on funding priorities.
 - **Localisation** i.e. LNA participation and decision-making; Channeling funding, including core contributions to LNAs, directly or through one intermediary - tracking funding, including to women-led organisations and women's rights organisations;
 - **Equitable partnership**, i.e., simplified requirements for LNAs and due diligence

passporting; Intermediary partnership quality; Adoption of risk-sharing principles and/or framework.

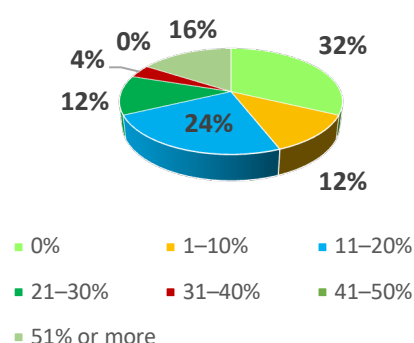
The framework and the priority issues will be shared with all Grand Bargain Signatories ahead of the Annual Meeting.

10 years have passed, what progress has been made in Bangladesh?

BDCSO is a network of local/national actors, a signatory of the Grand Bargain, and is hosted by COAST Foundation. We surveyed with our network members for Grand Bargain self-reporting in 2026. A total of 25 local/national NGOs and networks responded to the survey. We will put a few findings below that will help you to understand a basic scenario of localization progress in the country.

Of the total humanitarian funding received in 2025 by your local/national organization, how much % was multi-year (with a duration of 24 months or more) funding?

Figure: Multi-year humanitarian funding received in 2025 (%)



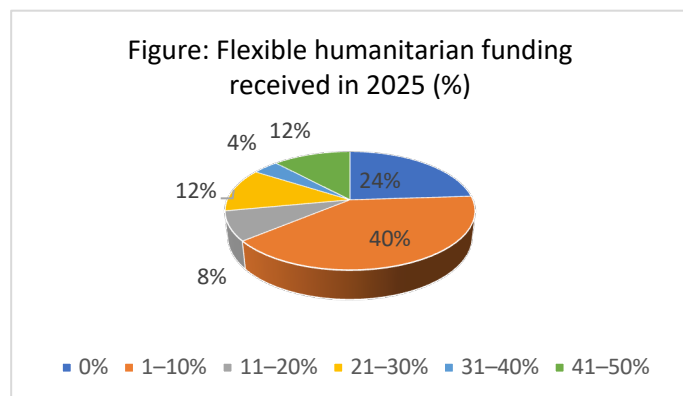
- 32% of respondents reported receiving 0% multi-year funding.
- 12% of respondents reported receiving 1-10% multi-year funding.
- 24% of respondents reported receiving 11-20% multi-year funding.
- 12% of respondents reported receiving 21-30% multi-year funding.
- 4% of respondents reported receiving 31-40% multi-year funding.
- 16% of respondents reported receiving 51% or more multi-year funding.

Major comments said that, due to the global funding crisis, funding opportunities have become extremely

⁵ ODI: Think change[3]

competitive. Donor organizations and INGOs have not sufficiently prioritized localization, and most still prefer partnering with international NGOs rather than directly engaging local or grassroots organizations.

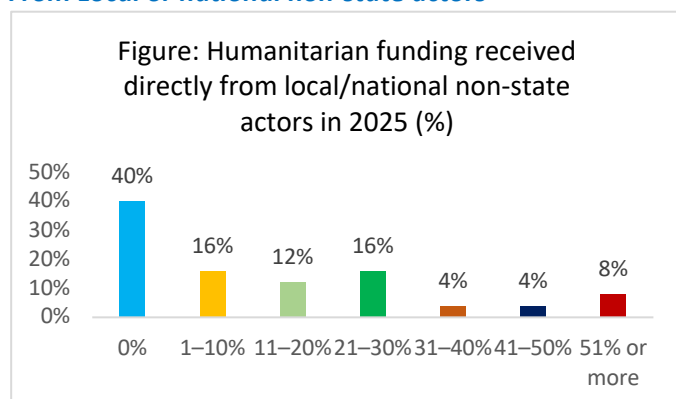
Of the total humanitarian funding received in 2025, how much % was flexible funding (*unearmarked, softly earmarked, earmarked, and tightly earmarked, e.g., Budget flexibility of at least 10%; Pre-financing or simplified release of funds; Simplified procedures for no-cost extensions and carryover, easy reporting, etc.*)?



- 24% of local/ national respondents reported receiving 0% flexible funding.
- 40% of respondents reported receiving 1-10%.
- 8% of respondents reported receiving 11-20%.
- 12% of respondents reported receiving 21-30%.
- 4% of respondents reported receiving 31-40%.
- 12% of respondents reported receiving 41-50%.

(A) How much % of humanitarian funding did your local/national NGO receive directly in 2025?

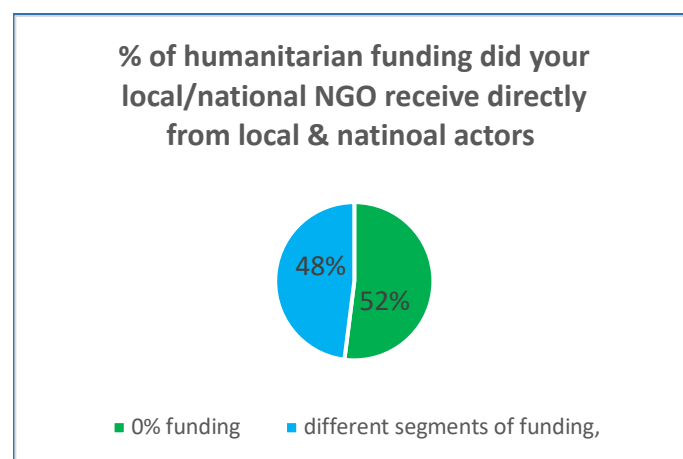
From Local or national non-state actors-



- 40% of respondents reported receiving 0% funding directly from non-state actors.
- 16% of respondents reported receiving 1-10% funding.
- 12% of respondents reported receiving 11-20%.

- 16% of respondents reported receiving 21-30% funding.
- 4% of respondents reported receiving 31-40%.
- 4% of respondents reported receiving 11-50% and
- 8% of respondents reported receiving 51% and more funding.

(B) How much % of humanitarian funding did your local/national NGO receive directly in 2025?
From local or national actors



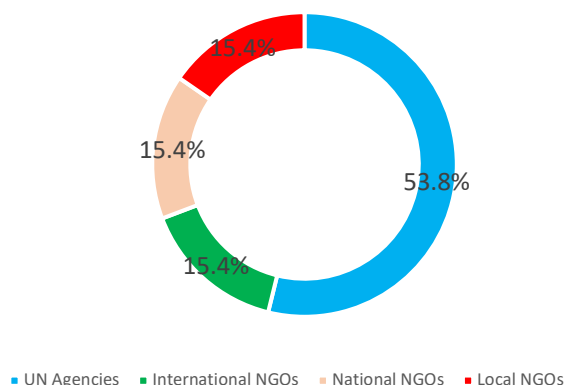
- Likewise, 52% of respondents reported receiving 0% of funding from local or national actors.
- 48% of respondents received different segments of funding, but their percentages are low.

Comments said that donor organisations look for NGOs that are prominent and financially sound. For this reason, they always avoided grassroots-level local NGOs. Responders also said that localization should not be just a term, but an implementation.

Progress in the Rohingya Response in Cox's Bazar

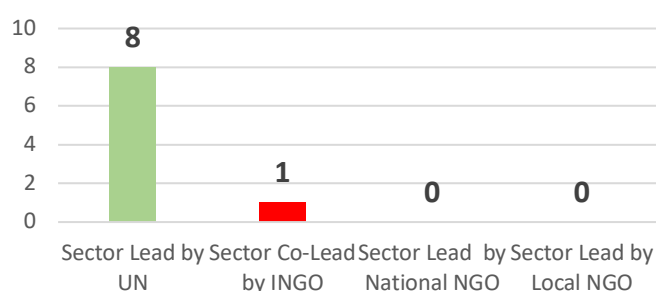
COAST and Cox's Bazar CSO-NGO Forum (CCNF) conducted a research and found that the Rohingya Coordination Team (RCT) serves as the strategic coordination, decision-making, and oversight forum for the overall Rohingya refugee response in Bangladesh. The RCT comprises seven UN agencies, two International NGOs, two National NGOs, and two Local NGOs. The study found that UN Agencies hold the majority representation (53.8%), indicating that the coordination and decision-making structure of the Rohingya response continues to be predominantly led by international actors. In contrast, International NGOs, National NGOs, and Local NGOs each represent only 15.4% of the total composition.

RCT Representation in 2026



UN-Led Sector Coordination: The Rohingya response coordination platform comprises eight major sectors, all led by UN agencies, with only one sector having an INGO as a sector co-lead. No sector is led by a national or local NGO. The Education Sector is led by UNICEF, with an international NGO serving as co-lead. The Food Security Sector is led by WFP, while the Health Sector is coordinated by WHO. The Livelihood and Skills Development Sector, as well as the Nutrition Sector, are both led by UNICEF. The Protection Sector is led by UNHCR, including its sub-sectors such as Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and Child Protection. Similarly, the WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) Sector and the Shelter/NFI Sector are also coordinated by UN agencies.

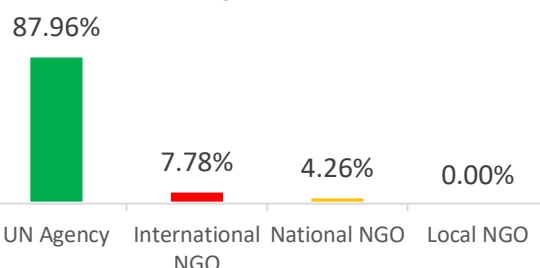
Sector Lead/Sector Co-Lead in Rohingya Response



No Fund for Local NGOs in Joint Response Plan (JRP)

2026: The JRP 2026 analysis shows that UN agencies have secured the lion's share of the funding for Rohingya response. Study findings show UN Agencies have secured 87.96% of the total JRP funding in 2026, against just 7.78% by International NGOs and 4.26% by National NGOs. Local NGOs have received no funding at all, demonstrating that local NGOs have little or no direct financial access through JRP channels.

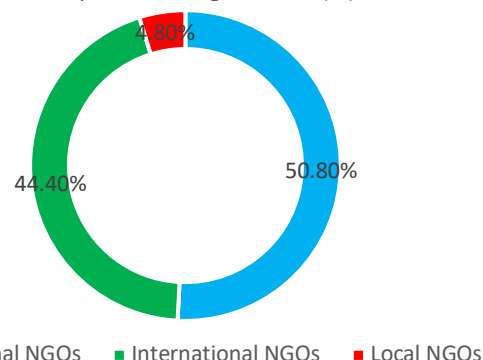
JRP Funding Share (%) in 2026



The findings also illustrate a significant gap between global localization commitments under the Grand Bargain and operational realities in the field. One of the core commitments of localization is to increase direct funding to local actors and strengthen their institutional leadership.

Funding received by the NGOs: In the three months from June to August 2025, a total of 63 projects were approved by the RRRC office in Rohingya camps. Of them,

Figure: Funding went to NGOs in Rohingya camps, June–August 2025 (%)



32 went to National NGOs, constituting nearly 51% of all approved projects. International NGOs took the second largest share, implementing 28 projects, or 44.4% of the total. But Local NGOs, which are typically small and originated in Cox's Bazar, have the smallest share. Only three projects, or just 4.8% of the total, went to them, although they have long been working in the area.

The data reveal a significant disparity between the number of projects and the volume of funding allocated to local NGOs.

Our recommendation

1. Introduce a definition of localization in the country and Rohingya context, along with a

time-bound localization strategy aligned with the Grand Bargain and Humanitarian Reset.

2. Strengthen localization process (Direct & 25%+ funding);
3. More Quality Funding (Direct, timely, need-based, flexible and multi-year);
4. Strengthen Local Leadership in humanitarian governance to at least 50% and strengthen Locally-led response;
5. Clear disaggregated roles of UN, INGOs for monitoring and facilitation, and Local NGOs for implementation;
6. Reform is needed for pooled funding mechanisms to ensure that more funds reach local organizations.
7. Promote the Local Intermediary model to reduce costs;
8. Equitable Partnership (Equal accountability for Intermediary and Partner);
9. Equal Overhead Cost and Risk Sharing.

10. Capacity strengthening should move beyond short-term training and include multi-year institutional support, organizational development, etc.



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