

BDCSO's journey and reflections after the Grand Bargain annual meeting 2025

A road towards a right humanitarian response



Grand Bargain Annual Meeting, 8-9 October, Geneva, Switzerland.

Introduction

COAST (<http://coastbd.net>) emerged/localized as an NGO in 1998 from a ten-year-old project of an international NGO. It was a project situated in the southern part of Bhola Island in Bangladesh. Now the working areas have expanded across the coastal districts in the country. Being born from an international to a local, its localization journey started from then.

What is BDCSO COAST

The BDCSO Process (<https://bd-cso-ngo.net>) in Bangladesh is a CSO/NGO Coordination Process, a network and a platform for civil society organizations (CSOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to work together. Established in 2017, its main goals are to strengthen public opinion, coordinate efforts at local, national and international levels, and advocate with the donors, intermediaries, UN agencies and government sector to establish a credible and effective partnership in development and humanitarian aid. The process is also focused

on promoting international commitments like the [Grand Bargain](#), which emphasizes localization, quality funding, and local leadership in humanitarian aid.

<https://bd-cso-ngo.net/humanitarian-actors-demand-donors-and-aid-organizations-mutual-accountability/>

<https://x.com/CoastFoundation/status/1861346504621072447>

BDCSO COAST, journey as a Grand Bargain Signatory

COAST is hosting the BDCSO Process's secretariat that became a signatory of the Grand Bargain (GB) in March 2025 with an aim to advance the Grand Bargain localization agenda in the country and abroad.

As a member of the A4EP

COAST is also a founding member of the Alliance for Empowering Partnership (A4EP), which is a global south network of local/national actors, and also a signatory of the Grand Bargain. BDCSO COAST, before being the independent signatory, this network has been actively engaging in the Grand Bargain movement with A4EP for the localization process and locally-led response (<https://a4ep.net>).

GB Self-reporting for 2025 and survey findings

As part of the 2025 yearly reporting process to track the progress of localization in the country, the network launched a survey for its local and national NGOs and networks to capture the real-time status of the Grand Bargain Agenda. The survey collected data for reporting from the period of 1 January to 31 December 2024. A total of 27 local and national humanitarian actors and networks in Bangladesh responded to the survey. Among them, 55.6% were local NGOs and 44.4% were national NGOs and networks. The survey reveals gaps in funding, localization, participation, gender responsiveness, risk-sharing, and anticipatory action. Please read the summary of the survey findings-

Key highlights of the survey

- In terms of **Quality Funding**, 14.8% of the survey respondents reported receiving no multi-year funding, while only 11.1% received more than 50% of their total funding as multi-year support
- Similarly, 14.8% reported no flexible funding, whereas 7.4% received over 50% of their funding as flexible grants, indicating limited scope for innovation and rapid response.
- Regarding **Localization**, 40.7% of respondents received no direct funding from non-state actors.
- Similarly, 48.1% reported no direct funding from state actors, showing fragmented and inconsistent local support.
- **Equitable partnership** funding was received fully by 22.2% of respondents, partially by 37%, and 40.7% reported no

such funding, reflecting the rarity of fair and collaborative agreements.

- For **Indirect Cost Recovery (ICR)**, 26% of respondents received full coverage, 37% partial, and 37% none, creating sustainability challenges for local NGOs.
- **Participation** of LNAs in coordination mechanisms was very limited, with only 7.4% respondents describing their involvement as supported by donors/intermediaries/INGOs very well.
- Similarly, 29.6% of respondents said their donors and intermediaries do not have policies for systematically engaging communities.
- Systematic **Community Feedback Mechanisms** were in place for 59.3% of respondents NGOs, yet 40% said their affected populations remained unreached by that system.
- **In terms of Gender**, Women-led organizations received minimal direct funding, with only 18.5% of respondents benefiting, covering 3.7–14.8% of their total humanitarian funding, often insufficient for meaningful project outcomes.
- **Risk-sharing** was largely absent, with 33.3% of respondents experiencing none, 51.9% said about some progress, and only 3.7% said significant progress, leaving local actors to bear operational, security, and legal risks.
- The donors/intermediaries are scaling up **Anticipatory Action** efforts, reported by 40.7% of respondents, with 40.7% said no, highlighting the need for expansion.

For details of the survey findings, please find the report at <https://coastbd.net/implement-the-agenda-advance-localisation-at-country-level/>

BDCSO's international seminar on GB 3.0

The network organized a seminar where humanitarian actors called for the effective implementation of the Grand Bargain commitments in Bangladesh, emphasizing the localization of aid, quality funding for local/national actors, and accountability to affected populations. They stressed that achieving

this requires a coordinated plan among the UN, INGOs, and local actors, while questioning the practice of some INGO branches registering as local NGOs, contradicting the spirit of the localization agenda. The call was made at an international seminar ahead of the World Humanitarian Day titled “Accelerating Grand Bargain 3.0 for Advancing Humanitarian Action in Bangladesh,” on 19 August 2025 in Dhaka, organized by COAST Foundation, BDCSO Process, and Cox’s Bazar CSO-NGO Forum. The event brought together representatives from donor countries, the Grand Bargain Secretariat and signatories, humanitarian experts, and practitioners from national and international organizations.

Distinguished speakers included Matilda Svensson, First Secretary, Embassy of Sweden in Bangladesh; Shaheen Aman from MJF; Bjorn Hofmann, Senior Advisor of the Grand Bargain Secretariat in Switzerland; Gawhar Nayeem Warha from Disaster Forum; Sudhansu S. Singh from Humanitarian Aid International in India; Abdul Awal from NRDS; Sharif Jamil from Waterkeepers; Nuzhat Jabin from Christian Aid; Jasim Uddin from ADAB; Nasir Uddin from IRB; Mehedi Hasan Shishir from IFRC and Dulon Joseph Gomes from World Vision.



Key demands included: ensuring at least 25% direct funding to local actors, providing multi-year and flexible funding, fostering equitable partnerships instead of subcontracting, applying accountability and transparency equally to donors and implementers, channeling resources to local leadership, and clearly defining the roles of UN, INGOs, and local partners to enable truly locally-led implementation.

Please find the details of the event, including press and media coverage: <https://bd-cso->

ngo.net/humanitarian-actors-demand-localization-of-aid-in-humanitarian-response/

Participation in the Grand Bargain Annual Meeting

I, as a representative of the BDCSO COAST, participated in the Grand Bargain Annual Meeting in Geneva, scheduled for 8-9 October 2025. I highlighted several recommendations that derived from the survey we conducted before the GB self-reporting, and also from the seminar on the Grand Bargain 3.0 that we organized in Bangladesh.



Key recommendations we shared

- Recognize the capacities of local actors, stop questioning their ability.
- Ensure at least 25% direct funding.
- Establish a dedicated pooled fund exclusively for local actors.
- Provide ICR at a flat rate of 10% for all partners.
- Introduce a simplified and harmonized reporting system.
- Implement a due diligence passporting system.
- Address funding barriers through locally-led response.
- Scale up Anticipatory Action (AA).
- Clearly define the roles of intermediaries and local actors in implementation.
- Require INGOs to mobilize resources from their country of origin, not from local funding pools.
- A continuation of the Grand Bargain 4.0.
- I would also like to highlight one thing here that C4C may take it forward, e.g, the GB Implementing Agenda for 2024, 25 &

26. Our country seems not to be much aware of it, let alone a coordinated implementation plan. I assume other southern countries are also experiencing such. C4C can push it forward with GB signatories to make a country-level coordinated plan for the implementation agenda.

During one-to-one discussion

- We stressed a common definition of localization at the country level.
- A pooled fund dedicated only to Local NGOs.
- Pre-funding modalities that allow the local partners to respond immediately to the affected people with a nod from the intermediary/donor, etc. Regular projects will come later on.
- 25% Direct funding to LNGOs, not the country office branches that take local organizations.
- Investing in local organizations beyond the traditional project approach, etc.

Please find a video on those demands-

https://www.linkedin.com/posts/coastbd_grandbargain-localisation-un-activity-7383455691849547776-q0TM?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop&rcm=ACoAAEx8zZYBQDkNtkOstszzON-DpdHezu9AtH8

Our commitments

BDCSO COAST is committed to advancing the localization of aid and locally-led humanitarian response in the country and elsewhere in the global south, and is committed to campaigning the issue at local, national, and international levels to achieve the goal.

Support from the Charter 4 Change— C4C

BDCSO COAST expresses its sincere gratitude to the Charter for Change (C4C) Secretariat for supporting Md. Iqbal Uddin's participation in the Grand Bargain Annual Meeting. We look forward to strengthening our collaboration with the C4C Secretariat, signatories, and endorsers to advance a locally led and sustainable humanitarian response.



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