

German-Australian Co-Chairmanship 2016-2018

Setting and Work Plan

The **work plan** agreed by GHD members at the outset of the Germany – Australia co-chairmanship was strongly informed by the outcomes of the **2016 World Humanitarian Summit** in Istanbul. The work plan's overall objective was to support donors in implementing their most recent commitments (which were largely already foreshadowed in the 2003 GHD principles). The operational best practices which have been established since then contributed as well to the work plan.

The GHD work 2016-2018 reflects **GHD's mandate** to support mutual learning and to encourage donor behavior that furthers principled humanitarian action. In addition to the plenary meetings and work stream sessions, we made use of a number of special thematic sessions, for instance on joint needs assessments.

Results of the Work Streams

Members agreed to establish the following **work streams**: (1) Humanitarian-Development Nexus, led by Japan and Denmark; (2) Localizing preparedness and response, led by Australia; (3) Reporting Requirements, led by Germany and the USA; (4) Multi-year Planning and Funding, led by Canada and the EU; (5) Earmarking, led by Sweden; (6) Cash Programming, led by Norway and the UK. Efforts were also made to engage in dialogue and outreach with external partners (co-chairs, Korea).

Each of the work streams represented an area in which evolving donor practice can improve humanitarian outcomes. The **work stream on cash**, co-led by the United Kingdom and Norway, had as its objective “...to provide clarity on the benefits and challenges related to the use of cash and to identify opportunities to support increased use of, and enhancing cooperation on, cash programming, where appropriate, and sharing learning on different models”. The co-leads have held two workshops open to all GHD members and several meetings amongst the work stream members. The co-leads' reports from both workshops are available at the GHD website. Based on a joint donor mission to Jordan and Lebanon in February 2018, a set of joint donor messages and approaches were developed, building on the ten key findings. Members of the work stream generally felt that cash is now generally accepted as an effective tool for use in humanitarian settings. The main issue remaining is coordination. Therefore, a joint letter sent from some members of the GHD to the IASC in March 2018 recommended a decision on cash coordination in emergencies. (The IASC acknowledged receipt and the need to come to a clear conclusion on the matter.) In addition, work on measuring cash and identifying outcome indicators has originated from the GHD work stream. Notably, at the last workshop in May 2018, a proposal for a new GHD principle on cash was developed and adopted at the HLM in June 2018.

Significant progress could be recorded in other work streams as well, for instance on **multi-year financing** arrangements. The work stream on localization worked collaboratively with the Grand

Bargain Cash workstream to resolve some difficult definitional issues around measuring localization progress. The work stream, in partnership with ICVA, convened a roundtable between GHD members and a large number of national NGO representatives. National NGOs shared frank perspectives of donor and partner progress on localization, and identified areas for further effort. Gaps identified were related to Grand Bargain implementation (moving from rhetoric to reality), accountability (upwards and downwards), access (shrinking humanitarian space), and risk management. The work stream also convened several forums for showcasing good practice in donor and partner efforts on localization.

In the context of the **Humanitarian-Development Nexus** debate, GHD members arrived at a better understanding for the practical challenges in the field and the need to protect humanitarian space while sharing analysis and linking up planning with peace and development actors. The GHD work stream, with Denmark and Japan as the co-chairs, took a field-focused approach and organized a panel discussion with practitioners, beneficiary countries and GHD donors that identified challenges and steps forward. The work stream also compiled examples of good practices (available on the GHD website).

The work stream on **earmarking** invited all GHD members to participate in a survey to learn more about factors hindering further flexibility in funding. The survey was undertaken by Sweden, co-lead of the relevant GHD work stream, as part of its work within the mirroring Grand Bargain work stream. Sweden's Grand Bargain work stream partner ICRC undertook a similar exercise on the agency side. GHD work stream participants were subsequently invited to participate in a Grand Bargain workshop on the survey results, presented in a short written analysis. A main challenge identified was how to push the benefits of flexible funding further down the funding line, i.e. closer to the response. Further work within the Grand Bargain work stream will focus on the linkages to multi-year funding, i.e. flexibility and predictability, due to potential tensions between the two.

With regard to the work stream on **reporting requirements**, we conducted a survey among GHD members which strongly suggests that at large amount of reporting is not triggered by donors requests. We asked the group how we might better align reporting required by donors (for due diligence), by the overall system (for coordination, resource mobilization and advocacy), and by partners themselves (for program management) to see if it would be possible to use common reports that meet multiple needs. OCHA is looking at alignment around quantitative indicators, trying to weed out from the existing list of indicators those that are consistently not used. It was noted that many donors track a handful of key, macro-level indicators that are used to measure progress at global and country level when reporting to appropriators and top decision-makers. It might be possible for GHD donors to identify and harmonize top indicators which could help to inform the work of OCHA and the IASC, too. Similarly, a list of donors' legal reporting requirements (such as gender, SEA) could be helpful for partners. The harmonization of reporting end dates could be another useful endeavor (NRC showed interest in pursuing this further). Finally, the work stream recommended establishing a good practice that asks UN agencies to report to FTS on disbursements to their partners. At present, only the first disbursement (donor to agency) is being captured. The CERF already has this as a practice.

While not all work stream activities materialized into tangible products such as survey results, policy papers and best practices, they all contributed to increased knowledge and awareness in the humanitarian donor community.

Outreach and Dialogue with the IASC

The co-chairs represented GHD in a meeting of the **OECD International Network on Conflict and Fragility** in Paris on the humanitarian-development-peace nexus in November 2017.

GHD continued the US-led **Crisis Coordination Calls** at the onset, or intensification, of crises to support effective donor information sharing and coordination at capital level – a mechanism that was used several times successfully over the two years.

As a number of GHD members are also actively engaged in the **Grand Bargain**, GHD and Grand Bargain work streams started to explore synergies and mutually informed on each other's work and progress. GHD's comparative advantages were felt to be its inclusive and values based membership, its diversity as well as its field orientation and focus on best practices, whereas the Grand Bargain was primarily seen as a welcomed, but separate process to boost efficiency in humanitarian action.

In an effort to (1) limit potential overlap and duplication with the Grand Bargain and (2) to increase its impact on and relevance for the humanitarian ecosystem, the GHD co-chairs filed in autumn 2017 a proposal for GHD to engage more actively in a **dialogue with the Interagency Standing Committee** as the uniquely positioned "natural" interlocutor, both at strategic and working levels. The proposal was endorsed at a GHD plenary meeting and highly welcomed by ASG Ursula Müller (as chair of the IASC Working Group) and the IASC secretariat. The co-chairs hence met several times with the IASC secretariat and discussed the terms of collaboration.

Some GHD and IASC work streams with comparable scope of work started to engage with each other. The co-chairs were invited to take part in meetings with the **Humanitarian Financing Task Team** in January 2017 and 2018. A **special working session on PSEA** took place in May 2018. Finally, the June 2018 High Level Meeting was fully dedicated to a strategic exchange between the two bodies on system-wide issues. GHD and IASC members agreed to continue the partnership and exchange beyond the Germany – Australia co-chairmanship.

The co-chairs would like to thank all GHD members for their invaluable support and active engagement over the two years, which contributed to elevating GHD's impact and visibility. We thanks the EU and Switzerland for taking on the Co-Chair roles for 2018-2020.

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