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Integral:

Integral Alliance

Approach to Localisation and Statement of Intent

Integral Alliance (Integral) is made up of 21 Christian global relief and development agencies, united in their vision of alleviating suffering and restoring hope in disasters and beyond.

We are committed to combining resources and drawing together our collective reach, sectoral expertise and access to funding to respond more efficiently and effectively together to disasters worldwide.

Collectively Integral Members work in more than 85 countries, working both directly and with over 540 local Partners.

Integral works to bring together the strengths of all of our Members in disaster response - supporting very localised and church-based responses, supporting the work of local Partners and enabling directly implemented emergency responses by Members - in order to best meet the needs of communities affected by disaster.

Integral recognises the combination of approaches by our Members as a strength, providing the opportunity for the work of those who implement directly (operational Members) to complement and strengthen the work of Partner-led Members (cooperational Members) and their local Partners before, during and after a disaster.

Integral endorses and commits to working towards the Core Humanitarian Standard

The commitments CHS contains ensure that organisations support people and communities affected by crisis and vulnerability in ways that respect their rights and dignity. They also promote their primary role in finding solutions to the crises they face. We have mapped how each of our localisation commitments is reflected in the CHS (see page four).



The Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability

2024 Edition

Integral and Localisation

Since the Grand Bargain¹ in 2017, Integral Members have been learning together, encouraging and challenging one another to increasingly prioritise the voice and place of local entities and local communities in humanitarian response.

Integral's initial efforts were focused on commitment #2 from the Grand Bargain: "More support and funding tools for local and national responders". But Members have increasingly sought to consider broader implications of working through localised approaches and have encouraged and challenged one another in this process.

Integral Members have affirmed the following International Council of Voluntary Agencies' (ICVA) definition of localisation:²

Localisation is the process of having a humanitarian response owned in part or wholly by a national and/or local capacity that is embedded within, and understands the needs and socio-cultural context of, the area and people in crisis.



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Integral understands that in humanitarian crises it is local organisations and communities who respond first. Part of our objective is to support and enable local actors to be able to respond more effectively.

Integral Members will therefore advocate for national and local agencies in humanitarian response efforts and support their involvement in international fora. Support also includes the provision of expertise, good practice, and additional capacity to enable national and local actors to respond to a crisis, rather than relying on external mechanisms and support.

Integral acknowledges that localisation is broader than actions taken during a crisis, and that work done in development contexts can enable more effective localised responses when disaster strikes.

Integral recognises the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) definition of local actors – including both state and non-state actors.

Non-state actors are defined as: "Organisations engaged in relief that are headquartered and operating in their own aid recipient country and which are not affiliated to an international NGO... A local actor is not considered to be affiliated merely because it is part of a network, confederation or alliance wherein it maintains independent fundraising and governance systems."

State actors include: "State authorities of the affected aid recipient country engaged in relief, whether at local or national level."³

As an alliance of faith-based INGOs, Integral models equitable partnerships, placing the community and local actors such as local NGOs, churches, and local governments at the heart of locally-owned disaster response.

Integral recognises that national governments are duty bearers to their disaster and crisis-affected communities. However, Integral Members also have an important role in amplifying the voices of those who are excluded and affected by crises, where rule of law and governance has broken down, or where conflict exists.

¹ *The Grand Bargain Explained: An ICVA briefing paper* [PDF], Retrieved from <https://www.icvanetwork.org/resource/the-grand-bargain-explained-an-icva-briefing-paper-march-2017/>

² *ICVA ODI Localisation Paper* [PDF], p. 3, Retrieved in July 2020 from https://www.icvanetwork.org/system/files/versions/ICVA_ODI_Localisation_paper.pdf (no longer available)

³ *Definitions Paper IASC Humanitarian Financing Task Team, Localisation Marker Working Group* [PDF], p. 2, Section III Retrieved in July 2020 from: https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/sites/default/files/migrated/2018-01/hftt_localisation_marker_definitions_paper_24_january_2018.pdf (no longer available)



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Integral's Approach:

Transformational... Complementary... In Partnership



Transformational

Integral chooses to view the ethos of localisation from the perspective of "transformation" and not "decentralisation".

Transformation acknowledges that decision-making rights start with the disaster-affected community, and their ability, where possible and desirable, to locally coordinate their own humanitarian response.



Complementary

Integral sees the combination of approaches by its Members as complementary; however, we acknowledge that 'the heavy footprint and attitudes of international agencies are one of the important obstacles to both national leadership and the building of strong and sustained national capacities'.⁴

- We seek to be part of a transformational movement that promotes partnerships that have equity in the delivery of all of Integral disaster responses, and are in line with [Micah Global Partnership Guidelines](#).
- We commend the [Charter 4 Change](#) movement and the commitments it endorses as one of the ways which can achieve a transformational approach to localisation.
- When local capacity is not existent, unable to respond or not in a position to meet large-scale needs as a result of the crisis, we will support direct implementation by operational Integral Members, so fulfilling international humanitarian principles to serve those who are in crisis.



In Partnership

Integral Members seek partnerships with local actors based on mutual respect, trust, truth, and humility.

- Integral is committed to greater transparency of decision-making and tracking of its performance, including the volume of funding going to local Partners. Integral encourages all Members to consider their own commitments to support localisation.
- Integral often brokers the representation of local Partners to international and national donors and coordination mechanisms, advocating when they are undermined or isolated from decision-making.
- Integral Members will model accountability to local Partners and enable local decision-making.
- Integral Members are employers of national staff, contributing to upskilling local employment markets, while at the same time being mindful of not undermining local capacity, and promoting fair employment practices.
- Integral supports the sharing of learning between Partners and recognises that there is much Integral can learn from local Partners.
- Integral coordinates both resources and approaches to strengthen capacity development and the financial stabilisation of local Partners.

Charter4Change.org Commitments



Direct funding



Partnership



Transparency



Recruitment



Advocacy



Equality



Support



Promotion

⁴The Start Fund, Start Network and Localisation current situation and future directions [PDF], p. 7, Retrieved from <https://start-network.app.box.com/s/0dpqfthx8c3yfh6pcpmjyjkocqm26srr3z>

Integral's Commitments

For our work in disasters, Integral Members will ensure:

1. Partner organisations and their needs and aspirations are understood and responded to flexibly
(CHS 1.5, 1.6, 2.1, 2.6)



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2. Shared investment in capacity strengthening leads to effective and accountable humanitarian action
(CHS 2.6, 3.2, 6.2)

3. Local actor's voices are present and heard in spaces of influence
(CHS 1.6, 6.1)

4. Partnerships are shaped by shared decision-making
(CHS 1.2, 1.4, 1.6, 6.4, 7.4)

5. Resources from Integral Members flow as directly as possible to Partners for the delivery of quality programming
(CHS 9.2, 9.4, 9.6)

These outcomes were developed from commitments informed by a Partner listening consultation commissioned across diverse geographical regions in 2019 and 2020. This included the Caribbean, Middle East, East Africa and South Asia. They have been modified as Integral Members have continued to listen to Partners, welcomed their input into our discussions, and modified our practices as a result.

Integral Members have each developed plans on how we will work towards these outcomes, and agree to dialogue with our Partners about our plans. Integral will seek opportunities to continue to hear directly from local Partners to deepen our understanding and improve our practice of localisation. Efforts will be made to include the voices of both men and women.

As an alliance Integral puts people first and desires to see each person fulfil their God-given potential. We strive for a truly diverse and inclusive aid industry free from structural racism. Integral reaffirms our desire for a genuine realignment of power through our commitment to localisation, and recognises the need to address historical and current power imbalances and injustices that are a part of the humanitarian system and seen in our own organisations and within the Alliance.

We recognise and acknowledge that this is a journey, and each Member is at a different stage of. Because of our human fallibility, there is no point at which we can rest, feeling we have done all we can. As the Alliance we take on the challenges of the journey, seeking God's wisdom, grace and guidance.

Integral's Localisation Commitments:

For our work in disasters, Integral Members will ensure:

Integral:

1. Partner organisations and their needs and aspirations are understood and responded to flexibly (CHS 1.5, 1.6, 2.1, 2.6)

Characterised by:

- Time invested together in building relationships and a shared understanding and appreciation of one another
- Good understanding of the Partner's vision, contributions, desires and aspirations
- Support for needs that are appropriate to both the Partner and the context
- Flexibility in budget to respond adaptively to emergent needs and contextual changes
- Power dynamics are understood and processes are in place that ensure Partner needs are heard in a safe space
- Processes in place so Partners and Members listen and hear one another's stories

2. Shared investment in capacity strengthening leads to effective and accountable humanitarian action (CHS 2.6, 3.2, 6.2)

Characterised by:

- Capacity sharing and strengthening that goes two ways - mutually supportive
- Clear respect for and understanding of one another's existing capacities including organisational purpose, identity and context
- Inclusion of capacity strengthening in plans and budgets
- Mechanisms that systematise learning and build trust
 - o Joint learning mechanisms
 - o MERL - integrated and continuous
 - o Opportunities for reflection, lessons learned

3. Local actor's voices are present and heard in spaces of influence (CHS 1.6, 6.1)

Characterised by:

- Our Partners have access to relevant forums and have both voice and influence
- Partners are supported to take full part in relevant forums through support that reduces barriers
- Our donors have increased awareness of our Partners and their capacities
- Direct relationships are forged between Partners and international donors

4. Partnerships are shaped by shared decision-making (CHS 1.2, 1.4, 1.6, 6.4, 7.4)

Characterised by:

- Transparency and information sharing
- Power dynamics are understood and processes in place to mitigate their influence
- Interdependency and mutual accountability of Partners and Integral Members is well understood and practised

5. Resources from Integral Members flow as directly as possible to Partners for the delivery of quality programming (CHS 9.2, 9.4, 9.6)

Characterised by:

- Increased autonomy and agency of Partners in utilising resources
- Resources are available to sustain Partner core functions
- Admin or overheads are fairly and equitably shared
- Maximised resources for crisis-affected communities
- Trust - through transparency in budgets
- Co-created resource plans