

Pooled Fund for Localisation (PFL)

Bangladesh • Rohingya Response

A proof point

A bridge

A model the sector now needs



30–40%

lower cost per
outcome



80%

of every dollar
reaches Bangladeshi
NGOs directly



23 of 27

partners now hold
independent donor
funding

Managed by



Delivered by

27 Bangladeshi
NGOs

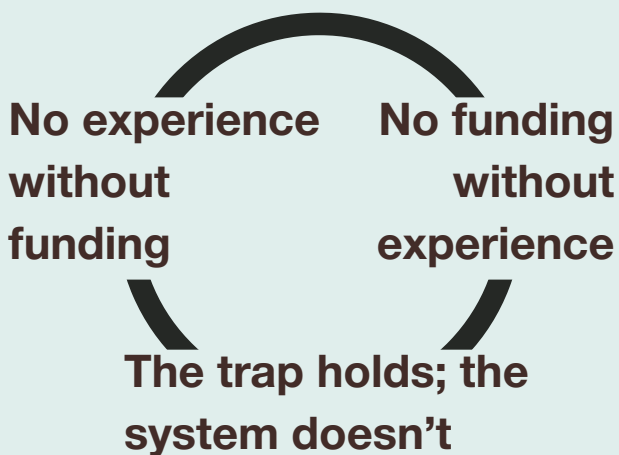
Funded by



Why this Fund Exists, and Why Now

For thirty years, the humanitarian sector has committed to shifting more funding to national actors. The needle has barely moved. Less than 5% of humanitarian funding reaches national actors directly today, far below the 25% commitment made under the Grand Bargain, and far below what the actors closest to most crises actually deliver.

The reason is structural. The sector calls this a capacity problem. It is, in fact, a **capability trap**.



Bangladeshi NGOs have been kept out of frontline humanitarian roles for decades, so they have not built the specific compliance, financial, and safeguarding systems donor architecture requires. Asked to build those systems, they point — correctly — to the absence of funding.

Asked to fund them, donors point — also correctly — to the absence of those systems. The trap holds: national NGOs cannot get experience without funding, and cannot get funding without experience. It explains why the Grand Bargain commitments have not been met.

The Pooled Fund is built to spring the trap. It gives Bangladeshi NGOs the capital, the back-office support, and the operating space to build the specific systems they have been kept from building — while they continue delivering the response. Not after some hypothetical point of “readiness.” Now. It is a transitional mechanism: not the destination, but the bridge — the only realistic route from a system that excludes national leadership to one that runs on it.

This is not charity. In a contracting funding environment, building this bridge is the most cost-effective way to keep the Rohingya response standing. It also strengthens the soft power, stability, and security interests of the donor governments funding it — by demonstrating that aid invested through national institutions delivers more, lasts longer, and is harder to lose when crises shift.

The Pooled Fund Model

The fund pairs capital with three forms of structural support, delivered through a model best described as "backstopping", not "intermediation." Partners run the work. Partners hold the relationships. Partners deliver the results. BRAC sits behind them, catching what would otherwise fall through and providing pooled access to specialist capability that no single partner at this scale could afford to build alone.



BRAC Pooled Fund Team

Specialist capability | Quality standards | Pooled systems
Technical backstopping | Strategic influence
Catching what would otherwise fall through

Why the Model works



Proximity produces solutions external actors cannot replicate



Scale transforms impact from community level to response level

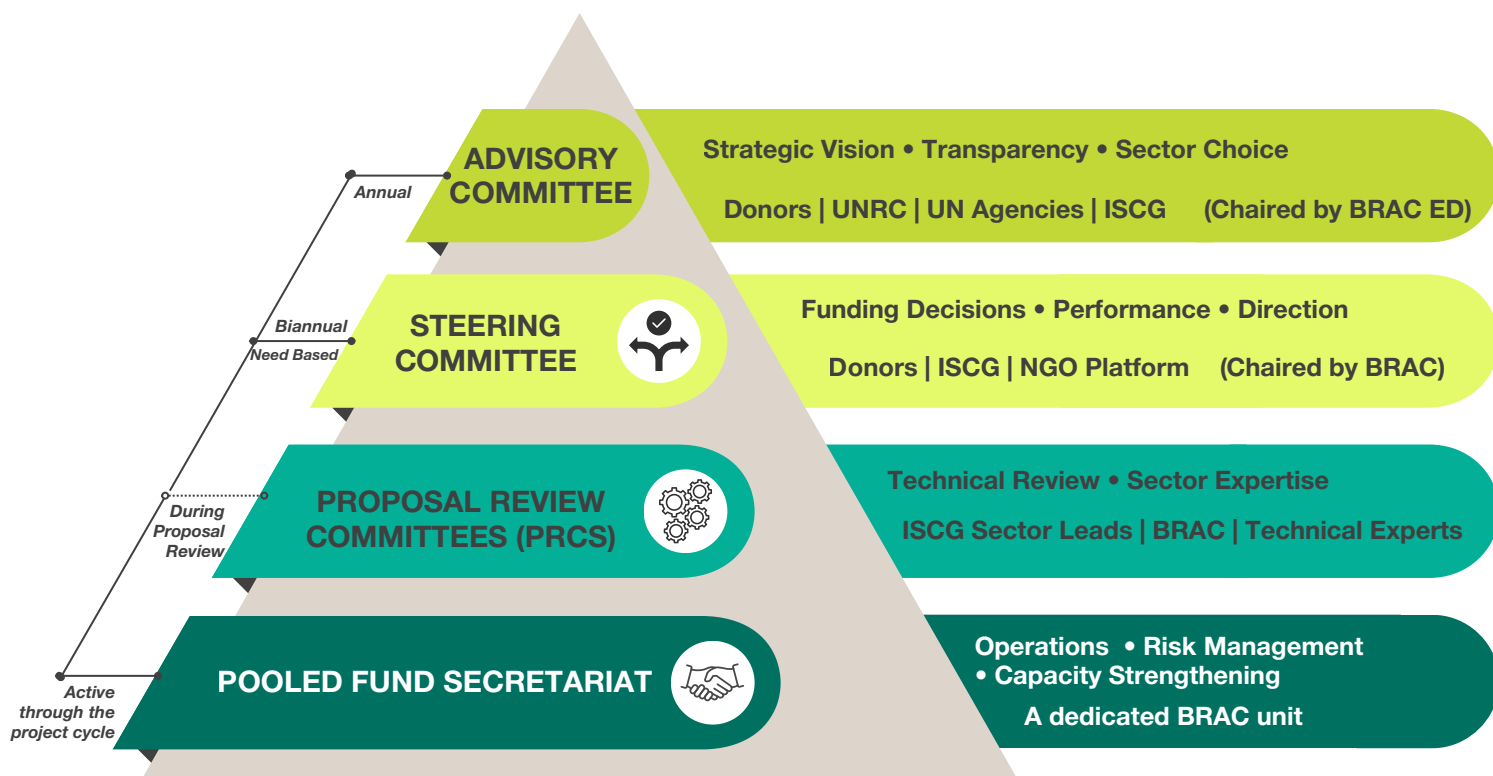


Pooling makes specialist humanitarian capability accessible and affordable



Partners build ownership, capacity, and influence. Not dependency

Governance



Pooled Fund at a Glance



Total partners

27

currently active

19



Projects implemented

29

currently ongoing

19



Women led organisations

10

member of PSEA Network

21



Projects in **Ukhiya**, Cox's Bazar

25

camps covered

18



Projects in **Bhasan Char**

04

clusters covered

25

What the Fund has Delivered

3 results that matter



Better outcomes per dollar

30%–40% lower cost per outcome than comparable internationally-managed humanitarian projects in the same response, achieved by pooling compliance, finance, MEAL, and safeguarding functions across partners. Not by lowering standards but by removing duplication.



Direct flow of capital

80% of each dollar reaches the Bangladeshi NGO leading the work — a share that grows as more functions move from shared to partner-held. The remaining 20% covers shared back-office, audit, and safeguarding functions used by every partner.



Demonstrated independence

23 of 27 partners now hold direct donor relationships of their own



Pooled Fund under BRAC leadership and in collaboration with national and local organisations is the most cost-efficient way to deliver WASH response in the Rohingya camps. Such funding mechanisms need to be scaled up.

Julien Graveleau – WASH
Sector Coordinator, ISCG

And on the ground, this is what those numbers mean

The **Pooled Fund** partners provide critical humanitarian service in **03** sectors



Education

Our partners enhance access to quality and inclusive education for children in the Rohingya community through trained teachers and improved learning environments

Cox's Bazar

5,374

children supported with access to inclusive learning opportunities

Bhasan Char

2,190

305

Community teachers trained

177

community based learning facility

20

Learning center in Bhasan Char



Livelihood

Through targeted skills training and market linkage support, the Pooled Fund partner BNGOs strengthen income-generating opportunities, fostering resilience and long-term sustainability.

Cox's Bazar

6,940

individuals trained and empowered to improve income and resilience

60%

started their own business

22

Self-help groups strengthen solidarity, boosting livelihoods

84%

of participants report increased income within the project period



WASH

Partner BNGOs improve community health and well-being by ensuring access to safe water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities while promoting behavior change through community-led WASH initiatives.

Cox's Bazar

98,845

people gained access to safe water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities

Bhasan Char

3,888

53,331 kg

Waste recycled

5000 kg

Organic compost produced

19

Woman hygiene centre

The Graduation

From compliance by proxy → compliance by the partner

The core question is, are partners truly building the systems they need to operate independently, or is the intermediary doing the work while partners simply execute?

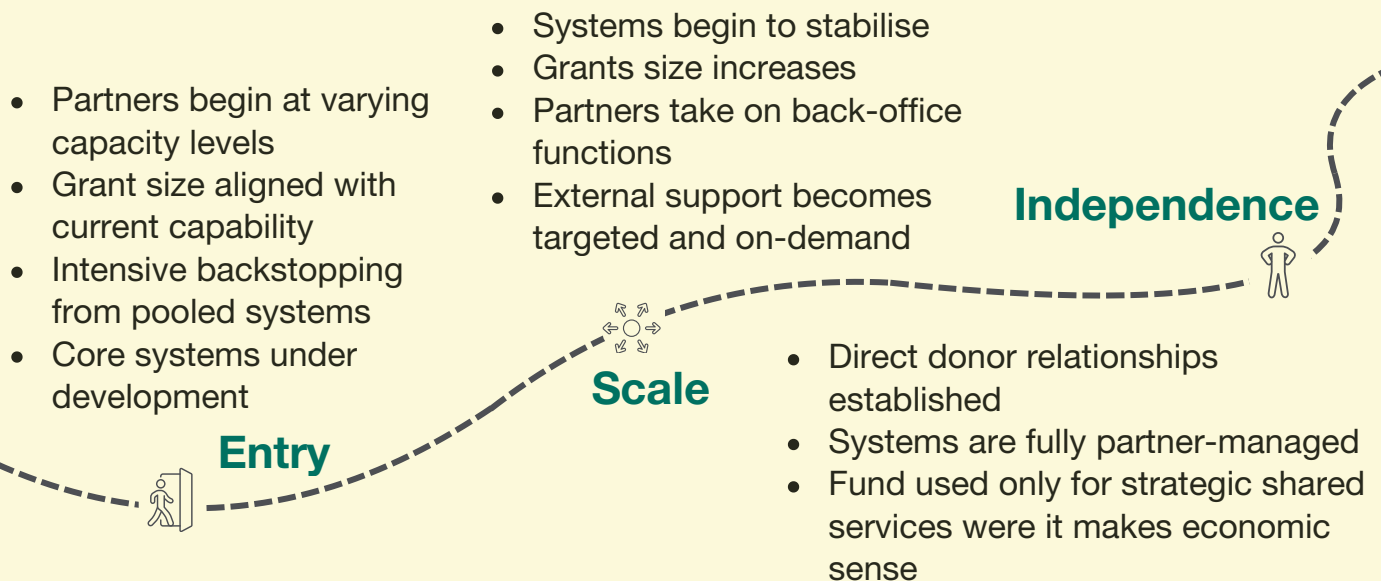
The Answer is **Graduation**

Where policies are not run for partners rather:

- Built with partners | Transferred to partners | Operated by partners

The fund's role progressively reduces as ownership shifts

Graduation Pathway



Impact Across Partner Network

27 / 27

partners upgraded their policies

220

organisational policies drafted, updated or adopted

23 / 27

BNGOs secured donor funding
\$ 54.66 Million

21

partners with standardised MEAL framework

88%

of 4,733 cases resolved via complaint mechanisms (CFRM) across the partner network

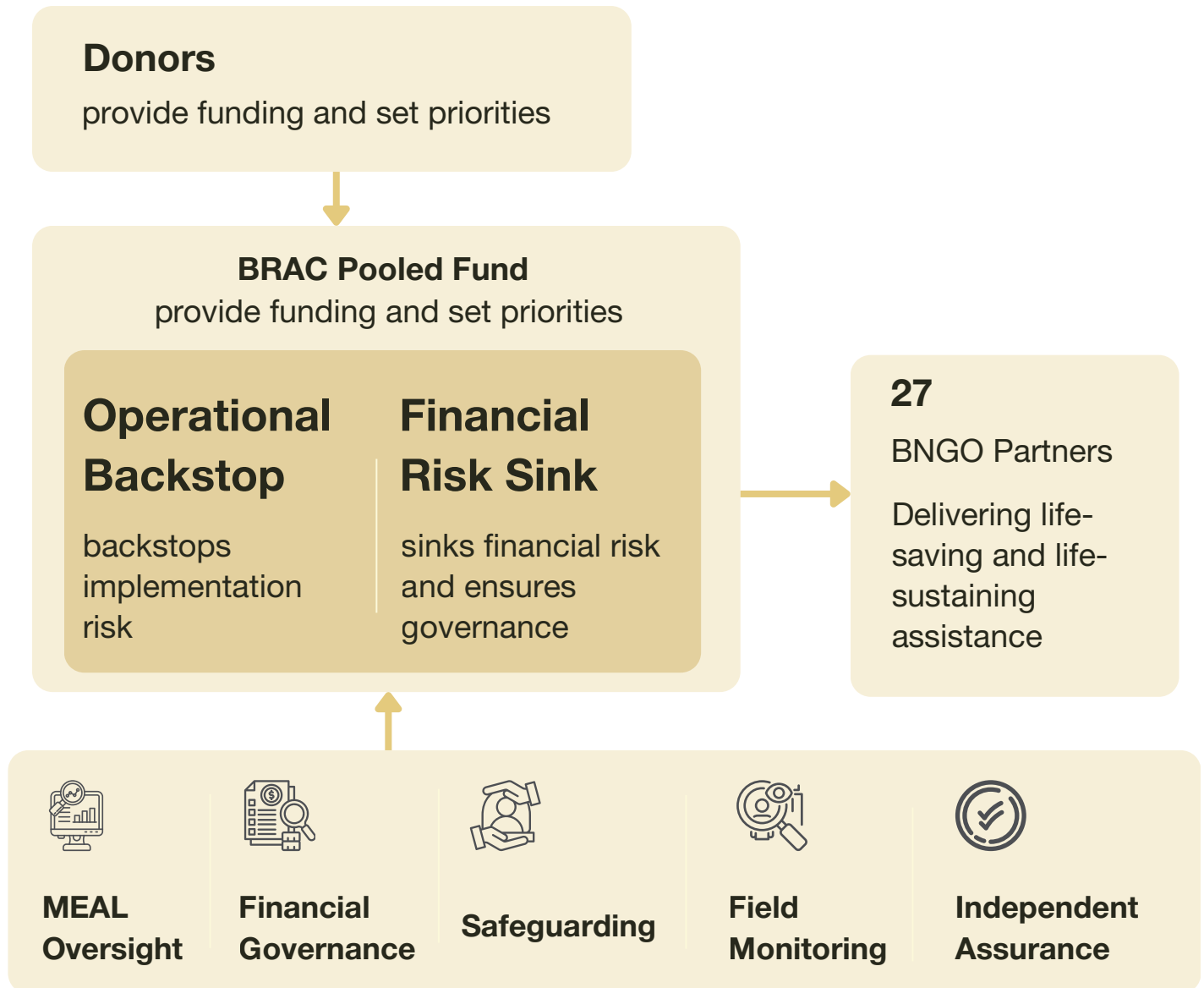
Anwar, once excluded due to his disability, now learns in an inclusive and supportive classroom under the Pooled Fund Education Project. With tailored support and peer acceptance, his journey toward growth and confidence has finally begun.



BRAC works as part of the **community**, as one thread in a larger weave, where our contribution reinforces rather than replaces what is already there



How Risk is Held



As partners build the specific compliance and financial infrastructure they have not previously had the resources to build, the case for routing funding through any external party weakens. That is the GOAL.

In the meantime Pooled Fund will continue to

- Pool back-office functions so that compliance burdens are carried collectively, not pushed onto the smallest partners
- Channel as much capital as possible directly to partners, with shared services covering only what genuinely needs to be shared
- Reduce reporting drag, watch the work, not the paperwork
- Back capability that already exists with long-term flexible funding
- Keep supporting partners to build what is genuinely missing



We are grateful for the assistance that has helped us start an income-generating activity. This opportunity brings hope for a self-sufficient future.

Hamida, Entrepreneur and Livelihood Sector participant

Partners on the Ground



What we are Asking

To donors



Fund Bangladeshi NGOs through this fund now. Use the time the fund buys to revise the policies, grant structures, and risk frameworks that currently make direct funding impossible. The goal is direct relationships with national partners; the path runs through this fund. Resist creating new parallel pooled funds managed from outside the country — additional intermediaries lengthen the path, not shorten it. Reduce reporting drag. Trust the partners you fund.

To partners



This fund is one route. Independence from it is the goal. The systems being built through the fund are yours, not ours.

To ourselves



Continue using this fund to prove what is possible. Build, openly, the path to making it unnecessary.



Our Partners

Livelihood



Education



WASH



Prepared by
Pooled Fund
Secretariat,
Advocacy for Social
Change, BRAC

Feedback and Contacts
quamruzzaman.m@brac.net
fahmid.ahmed@brac.net

Find us
@BRAC Tower
65 Mohakhali
Dhaka 1212
Bangladesh

Check our site

