Greetings from the Pledge Secretariat:

We are thrilled to share highlights of the progress the Pledge for Change community has made over the last quarter.

When we had asked you "What positive changes have you experienced because of Pledge participation so far?", the top four responses were:

- Leadership courage
- Improved language on Shift the Power
- Practical tools for advancing equitable partnerships
- Building the Pledge community and movement

2024 has started with increasing momentum in community and movement building and we are delighted to welcome new supporters and to hear their ambitions for – and challenges to – the Pledge for Change signatory organisations. Civil society organisations, networks, and individuals are coming to us with innovative ideas for making the pledges come true in various contexts. Catalysing this energy and power to inform how the Pledge for Change works, to model and practice equitable partnerships, authentic storytelling, and influencing, informed by our values of solidarity and self-determination, will be at the heart of our approach this year.

Connecting with others who are also working to transform the system and amplifying and elevating the amazing efforts of local leaders, remains central to how we want to work. Come and join us! Reach out to pledgeforchange@adesoafirca.org to learn more!
UPDATES


These additions bring the total number of supporters to 30, showcasing a growing commitment to improving the aid sector. Their collaborative spirit underlines the collective desire to see real change take root, proving that the Pledge for Change isn't just a promise, but a powerful movement driven by genuine passion and action.

Monitoring, Evaluating and Accountability and Learning (MEAL) Working Group

The MEAL Working Group (WG) has been charged with developing a Pledge for Change Accountability And Learning Mechanism (PALM for short). As all signatories are on different stages of their Pledge journey, this is a challenging task, but also one which focuses the mind on our commonalities, and how we are more effective together.

Over the past year, the MEAL WG has been working to identify key metrics which the signatories can use to chart our Pledge journey. These metrics are based on the Pledge commitments and allow signatories to self-report on progress made within each organisation: all Pledge signatories will provide a first annual report in 2024. We have also set out to develop a wider framework of complementary data collection to ensure a southern-based perspective on what change Pledge is bringing about. These include putting in place methodologies for partner and local feedback and enabling southern-led assessment of Pledge progress.

Christian Aid has seconded MEAL capacity to the Pledge secretariat for six months, to help set up these processes. During this time, the MEAL WG is meeting monthly, rather than quarterly, to help deliver on this ambitious agenda. At the same time, the Pledge secretariat is seeking funding to implement the various data collection methodologies of the PALM, so that Pledge can tell its story of change, learn from its progress and improve going forward.
The visuals below highlight the main components and how partner feedback, self-reported data, and Southern-led assessment will support learning and accountability.

The first Pledge for Change Annual Virtual Retreat in November 2023 saw active participation from 70+ signatories and supporters joining across 16 time zones. We designed the retreat on principles of inclusive and distributed leadership so colleagues from signatories and supporters led most of the sessions. We had a talented visual artist, Jenny Leonard, join us during the retreat who illustrated the sessions with the graphics you see in this newsletter.

We asked our participants how they feel about the Pledge for Change at this stage of our collective journey, and here is a word cloud of what they had to say:
Our keynote speaker, Julian Corner from Lankelly Chase Charitable Foundation presented his organisation’s radical decolonisation of philanthropy, including closing and redistributing assets to communities. He highlighted the challenges of shifting power, moving from project-based to system-focused funding, and facing the anxieties of dismantling an institution built on colonial capital. He also talked about the need to move money towards communities, not institutions, acknowledging the emotional distress and potential collateral damage of such transformative change. While acknowledging the complexities, Julian ultimately argued that the existential crisis of the current system demands a fundamental shift in approach. To watch the recording, please click here.

**Session 1: Pledge Accountability and Learning Mechanism (West Africa Civil Society Institute)**

Participants discussed reporting requirements and requested more guidance on self-reporting, particularly definitions for measures. The phased approach was appreciated, with an initial reporting requirement focused on five indicators. Participants noted the importance of giving all PALM components a test-drive in 2024, which may require prioritising what is essential and measurable in the short run while committing to reporting on more indicators in subsequent years.

**Session 2: Decolonising Aid through the Pledge for Change (Oxfam)**

Adama Coulibaly, Global Programs Director at Oxfam International, presented an overview of findings from a pre-retreat survey for participants on decolonising aid. In general, the survey findings indicated a widespread desire for a fundamental transformation in the aid sector. Such transformation would be characterised by a focus on empowering local communities, adopting sustainable practices, engaging in equitable and ethical collaborations, and moving away from Western-centric models. The slide deck and survey findings are shared at the following links: survey analysis and presentation.

**Session 3: How is the Pledge supporting country-level change? (Humanitarian Aid International and UPDHHE-DRC)**

Sudhanshu Singh from HAI (India) and Meschac Nakanywenge from UPDDHHE (DRC), who have been active members of the Pledge Global Advisory Group and supporter organisations, focused this breakout session on the importance of implementing global pledge commitments at the country level. They proposed that Pledge signatories should be expected to share their concrete goals and outcomes in relation to pledge implementation in countries where they operate. The urgent need to demonstrate how pledges apply at the country level was stressed to the Pledge team who will take this proposal into conversations with working groups this year.

**Session 4: Collaborative Design (NEAR and IRC) - Case study of SSWC and IRC**

https://mailchi.mp/52c75955ed7b/quarterly-update-from-the-pledge-for-change-16972098
Shahida Arif from NEAR presented the collaborative design framework co-developed by NEAR and IRC. Shahida Suleiman and Caroline Muasya discussed the testing of the collaborative design and lessons learned from applying it in their contexts.

**Session 5: Ethical and Authentic Storytelling (Africa No Filter)**

Abimbola Ogundairo from Africa No Filter (ANF) presented on Ethical and Authentic Storytelling, particularly in the context of narratives about Africa. ANF is a narrative change organisation on a mission to shift outdated perceptions about Africa. It supports storytellers, conducts research, provides grants, builds community, and advocates for better representation of Africa.

Click here to read the full report of the Virtual Retreat

**EVENTS**

**ASYLUM ACCESS**

Asylum Access is one of the Pledge for Change supporters, and they have shared a roster of equity consultants who can support equity learning journeys in the forced displacement sector. The areas of expertise include understanding and enabling decolonized organizations, diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) strategy, cultural intelligence training and coaching, trauma-informed engagement, and equity training.

**PLEDGE FOR CHANGE ANNUAL IN-PERSON RETREAT 2024**

The Steering Group of the Pledge for Change has finalised the dates for the in-person retreat in April 2024, which will be held in Nairobi. Please keep an eye out for the invitations and agenda for the retreat in your inbox, as they will be sent out soon. If you have any ideas or suggestions that you would like to share, please get in touch with the Pledge Secretariat.

**THE DRAGONFLY COLLECTIVE**

A message from our new supporter, Mo Ali from The Innovation Community: I introduce the Dragonfly Collective by taking you through a live coaching prompt recorded just for the Pledge for Change community:

**Energy, Commitment and Courage:** I hope the energy is received with the care it’s intended. You are leading incredible change around the world, keep going. If you’d like to learn more here’s the link to the Dragonfly Collective and here’s an alternative cover letter about me: Who are you, What’s your purpose. Don’t book the programme, instead, I invite you to connect for a playful and deep conversation using this link.

**WILD WOMEN’S GLOBAL LEADERSHIP FORUM**

The annual WILD Women’s Global Leadership Forum, May 8-9 (virtual), is a vibrant global convening of 1300+ participants, from 250+ organisations and 115+ countries, coming together for transformational leadership learning, networking and career development. Sessions of special interest to Pledge for Change supporters include Leadership Innovations for Locally Led Development; Navigating What’s Next: How Global South Professionals Are Building Their Careers for the Global Dev Sector of Tomorrow; The Authority Gap; and DEIA in International Development: Staying the Course.

They are now accepting applications for speakers to deliver Community Conversations and lead Networking Tables. Each year, 40+ global speakers at all stages of their careers share inspiring and thought-provoking topics during these sessions. Fellowships are available to cover costs if needed. Speaker application deadline is February 14, 2024.

**THE GLOBAL EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP INITIATIVE (GELI)**

The Global Executive Leadership Initiative (GELI) offers exclusive executive leadership programs for senior leaders with 15+ years of experience. The 2024 programs include:

a) Negotiation Skills for Senior Leaders
b) Influencing Skills for Senior Leaders
c) Inspiring Women Leaders (exclusively for female leaders)
Each session in 2024 will occur once in regional hubs: Amman, Nairobi, Dakar, Bangkok, and Panama City. Sessions consist of a four-day in-person segment followed by five weeks of 90-minute online sessions. Currently open for nomination are the Negotiation Skills for Senior Leaders sessions scheduled for Senegal (January 22-25, 2024) and Bangkok (February 12-15, 2024). Dates for other sessions will be announced soon.

To express interest in participation, or for further details, please contact Mr. Panos Moumtzis, GELI’s Executive Director at moumtzis@un.org.

FEATURED

1. Inequality Inc - a report by Oxfam: since 2020, the richest five men in the world have doubled their fortunes. During the same period, almost five billion people globally have become poorer.

2. Shifting the power - a call to transformation rooted in the personal

3. Interview with Degan Ali, Executive Director of Adeso on #ShiftThePower

4. HAI has launched the Dashboard for Aid transparency and accountability (DATA). It is intended for the humanitarian organisations operating in India to publish their data.

5. Using AI to decolonize language

If you have any queries, kindly reach out to us at pledgeforchange@adesoafrica.org and we would be happy to respond.

Our next newsletter will be shared in April 2024, please let us know if you have any updates or information to share.

Click here to learn how you can become a signatory or a supporter and join the Pledge for Change 2030