A significant development for ICVA in 2013 was the establishment of three Regional Hubs in Bangkok, Dakar and Amman. At the end of 2013 these three offices were in their infancy and we now take the opportunity to provide further details on what the Hubs have achieved and what you can expect going forward.

The Hubs’ overarching work plan was designed through a series of consultations with our members and key partners in the three regions, and focuses on three objectives for improving humanitarian partnerships, practice and policy.

1 STRENGTHEN HUMANITARIAN PARTNERSHIPS TO ENABLE MORE EFFECTIVE RESPONSE WITH EQUITY OF NATIONAL NGO ENGAGEMENT

The Regional Hubs support national NGOs to have a stronger voice in the international humanitarian system, provide connections with humanitarian NGO coordination mechanisms, undertake research and promote the role of NGOs in interagency coordination mechanisms, such as Humanitarian Country Teams and clusters, and build stronger relationships between the NGO community and UN agencies.

Achievements to date include:

Raising national NGO voices in global and regional debates:
- Advocated for more national NGOs to engage in meetings, such as the regional South East and North Asia and West Africa World Humanitarian Summit consultations in Japan and Cote d’Ivoire, regional and global IASC meetings, and the Kuwait pledging conference for the Syria crisis;
- Supported 17 national NGO staff members to participate in the ICVA Annual Conference on humanitarian financing in April 2014;
- Supported 13 national NGO staff members to participate in the UNHCR-NGO Annual Consultations in June 2014;
- Developed diversity in the ICVA network, with three more regional and national NGOs becoming members of ICVA and a number more considering joining.

Supporting NGO coordination mechanisms:
- Disseminated and promoted the ICVA NGO Coordination Guide with many country and regional level NGO consortia (www.icvanetwork.org/ngocoordinationguide);
- Provided guidance and feedback to various consortia on their structure, focus etc.;
- Deployed the ICVA Asia Regional Representative to evaluate and assist with NGO liaison efforts in response to Typhoon Haiyan.

Improving UN & NGO Partnerships:
- Advocated for a greater number of NGOs actively engaged with IASC mechanisms and Humanitarian Country Teams, and supported NGO involvement in developing UN-led plans or appeals in the regions.
Support the roll-out of the High Commissioner’s Dialogue on UNHCR-IFRC-NGO Partnership through hosting a regional-level consultation in Bangkok and co-facilitating country-level workshops in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Pakistan. These consultations highlighted the relevance of the Structured Dialogue in the field, and generated ideas on how to improve partnership, particularly in the areas of information sharing, joint planning, complementary advocacy and capacity strengthening.

Contributed to improving NGO engagement in developing UNHCR’s “Enhanced Framework for Implementing with Partners.”

Looking ahead, in 2014, the Regional Hubs will convene meetings with the national and regional humanitarian NGO consortia in their regions to explore best practice in establishing NGO coordination bodies and look at ongoing ways to strengthen NGO coordination. They will gather best practice on NGOs’ role in inter-agency mechanisms, such as HCTs and clusters, and will use the examples of best practice to revise and update the NGO Coordination Guide.

The Regional Hubs will continue to have a critical role in supporting partnerships between UNHCR and NGOs through activities related to the Structured Dialogue and NGO Framework Agreements.

2 IMPROVE HUMANITARIAN PRACTICE BY NGOS TO DELIVER PRINCIPLED, ACCOUNTABLE AND BETTER QUALITY RESPONSE.

The Regional Hubs bring together humanitarian practitioners to look at collective practice around three themes: humanitarian financing, quality of services and accountability to affected populations, and humanitarian principles. Through learning events and developing case studies, the Hubs share best practice, while identifying challenges and ways to improve NGO performance and coordination in these areas. Achievements to date include:

Debating access to humanitarian financing:

- Identified and supported 17 national NGOs to attend the ICVA Annual Conference on humanitarian financing, bringing a greater diversity of voices to the global debate;
- Organised a one-day practicum on humanitarian financing mechanisms available to national NGOs – including country-based pooled funds, partnerships with UN agencies and the private sector - and practical details on how to access them;
- Provided inputs into the work of the IASC Task Team on Humanitarian Financing – a grouping which has previously lacked NGO engagement;
- Held regional humanitarian financing workshops in Dakar and Bangkok which brought together INGOs and NNGOs, UN agencies, donors, and experts.

Promoting exchange on Quality and Accountability in the sector:

- Held workshops on integrating Quality and Accountability into humanitarian programming in Beirut, Amman and Dakar, with a fourth planned for Bangkok in September 2014;
- Facilitated the participation of affected populations in workshops in Dakar and Abidjan.

Discussing perceptions and application of the Humanitarian Principles:

- Ongoing collaboration with ICRC to develop learning events on humanitarian principles to be held in the regions. The goal will be to provide a forum for a variety of actors to better understand their common humanitarian values, support the use of humanitarian principles in operational decision-
making and help translate the principles of humanitarian action into practice, all while creating links between practitioners working in the same geographic area. National and regional events are planned for Amman, Southern Turkey, Bamako, Jakarta, Dakar and Bangkok in 2014.

The learning from these workshops will be captured in one report on each theme, illustrated with case studies, by the end of 2014. These will be shared with the membership and fed into the various policy discussion and debates.

3  IMPROVE HUMANITARIAN POLICY WHICH SUPPORTS MORE EFFECTIVE HUMANITARIAN PARTNERSHIP AND PRACTICE

Through triangulating the experiences of the Hubs’ work, ICVA is better placed to advocate and provide evidence-based examples of good partnerships and practices to influence policy-making through channels including the IASC, OCHA and UNHCR, donors and States. The Hubs will continue to work bilaterally with NGOs, and also with regional and national NGO fora, to carry and amplify messages at the global level. Achievements to date include:

Promoting discussion and understanding of the Transformative Agenda (TA):

- Discussed with ICVA members and NGO fora to better understand the challenges and improve engagement with the TA;
- Contributed to a discussion paper for the IASC Working Group on strengthening civil society organisations and national disaster management offices capacity;
- Ensured a broader range of NGO responses to global surveys ICVA carried out on NGO perceptions of the humanitarian leadership, coordination and accountability in more than 20 countries.

Influencing policy on forced displacement:

- Provided an efficient communication channel for gathering input into joint NGO Statements delivered at the March 2014 UNHCR Standing Committee meeting on operations and preparing for the July UNHCR Standing Committee meeting on Protection. These Statements draw States’ attention to NGO concerns regarding protection, assistance and durable solutions for refugees, IDPs, and stateless persons.

All this and more is what the ICVA hubs do: supporting a collective NGO voice, providing fora for dialogue, debate and learning among NGOs, influencing policy, and ensuring NGOs—and particularly national NGOs—are represented in international humanitarian fora.

We would particularly like to thank our members Save the Children in Amman, Plan International in Dakar and Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network in Bangkok for hosting the ICVA Regional Hubs; and the European Commission Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO). Their support to this initiative has been invaluable!

ICVA is developing its 2015 – 2017 strategy whereby the ways of improving the linkages between the national and the regional, and the regional and the global will be further articulated. In developing this strategy we will be soliciting your views about how we can strengthen this connection, continue closing the gap between humanitarian policy and practice, and build stronger humanitarian alliances around partnership and policy.
Introduction to the Regional Representatives

West Africa Regional Representative, Liliane Bitong
Hosted by Plan International, Dakar, Senegal
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Since 2001, Liliane has served as Humanitarian Reporter for IRINNEWS West Africa, managed returnee reintegration programmes in Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of Congo, and run advocacy projects in Central Africa. More recently, she managed the NGOs and Humanitarian Reform Projects in Côte d’Ivoire and DR Congo. Liliane brings to the job deep familiarity with humanitarian policy advocacy, strong analytical and capacity building skills and a commitment to improving partnerships between national and international humanitarian actors. She holds a Masters degree in Humanitarian Assistance from Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, the Netherlands.

Asia Regional Representative, Jamie Munn
Hosted by Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network (APRRN), Bangkok, Thailand
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Jamie has previous worked with UN OCHA in Myanmar with a focus on Accountability to Affected Populations and communications with host communities and government. He has managed humanitarian and development programmes in Pakistan and Afghanistan, and with the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP International) in Geneva assisting humanitarian agencies with project-site, regional and head office organisational change and accountability assessments. He brings to the role in-depth knowledge and experience in monitoring & evaluation, organisational change and development, staff training on Humanitarian Standards, and research into Gender based-violence, accountability to affected populations, and capacity building of staff and organisations. Jamie holds a PhD in International Politics and is a published researcher and academic on gender in humanitarianism and post-conflict societal reconstruction.

MENA Regional Representative, Reza Kasraï
Hosted by Save the Children’s regional office in Amman, Jordan
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Reza Kasraï has been working on development and humanitarian projects in the field since 2002, including in disaster, conflict and post-conflict settings. His work has taken him from South Asia to East, Central and West Africa, and now to the Middle East, his most recent roles being as Country Director with different humanitarian NGOs. Reza has intimate knowledge of monitoring, evaluation and learning, NGO- and inter-agency coordination, as well as humanitarian funding mechanisms in the context of humanitarian operations. Before entering humanitarian work, Reza was a consultant and a scientific researcher in the field of medical imaging.