PEER TO PEER LEARNING EVENT:
Funding tips on advocacy and campaigns for Protection@Sea and Statelessness

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https://icvanetwork.org/asia-region
Peer to Peer Learning event: Funding tips on advocacy and campaigns for Protection @ Sea and Statelessness in Asia

Summary

The International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA) organized a three-day workshop in Bangkok on 22-24 September 2015, which brought together various international and national NGOs with UNHCR, IFRC and IOM. During the first day participants reviewed the quality of partnership between UNHCR, NGOs and IFRC in the framework of the Structured Dialogue Initiative. The second day was dedicated to a debate on Protection at Sea and Statelessness in Asia. The Peer-to-Peer learning event held on the third day built on the extensive and diverse knowledge from participants, a group of 34 representatives of INGOs, NNGOs, ICRC coming from different countries and regions. The aim of this event was to identify innovative solutions to raise funding for collective regional advocacy on Protection at Sea and Statelessness. It also offered an opportunity to stimulate further engagement from NGOs into the humanitarian financing architecture in line with ICVA strategy, supported by the German Government – represented at the initiative - to increase the understanding of humanitarian financing mechanisms.

Methodology

The workshop started with one plenary session to set the scene on humanitarian financing related to protection at sea and statelessness, building on the outcome of the discussions in the previous days. Three participants shared their experience in fundraising for advocacy and campaigns around these two themes further inviting the others to interact by asking questions. To stimulate mutual learning with practical examples participants were given a group exercise aimed at identifying a key challenge (problem statement) in fundraising for advocacy and campaigns and develop simple intervention logic for a successful proposal to be submitted to a donor. When reporting back in plenary tips and suggestions for improvement were discussed.

Scene setting on fundraising and humanitarian financing

1. Existing partnerships in campaigns and/or advocacy work – APRRN experience

Julia Mayflower, Interim Executive Director at APRRN (Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network), following a brief presentation of the network, shared her experience in financing collective advocacy and partnership highlighting challenges and opportunities. One of the major limitation in fundraising for advocacy is accessibility: lack of human resources and know how to develop detailed and technical proposals; lack of capacity to deal with the reporting and accounting requirements; and limited recognition of CBOs, national networks and small NGOs. Additional constraints are related to heavy donor requirements and lack of flexibility, challenges in securing funding for core activities, difficulties in translating results of advocacy activities into measurable indicators and finally lack of interest from donors to support protracted situations as the one often experienced

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1 Detailed reports are available at https://icvanetwork.org/resources/regional-structured-dialogue-report-asia
in Asia. Foundations, being more flexible and eager to engage in innovative programs, can represent a good alternative for fundraising for advocacy in these two specific themes. They play an increasingly important role in the development, advocacy, humanitarian response, and are moving away from just giving money to more “strategic grant making”. The philanthropic sector is growing in Asia-Pacific and some recent foundations are focusing on human rights and advocacy often interested in funding small organizations. One of the keys to succeed in fundraising for advocacy is to join forces but also to create true partnerships with donors raising awareness on the importance of advocacy, ensuring proper communication, information sharing, and jointly contribute at increasing capacities. Additional alternative funding models should be explored including, innovative financing, social entrepreneurship and microfinance models. In the debate that followed this presentation participants referred to their own experience in fundraising pointing to crowd funding (incredibly effective after the earthquake in Nepal), looking at other partnership models with corporate foundations or through CSR initiatives, exploring local funding opportunities and eventually pooled funding mechanisms. Regular and focus donor engagement has been indicated by many as essential to access funding in particular for advocacy for the two very specific themes under discussion.

2. Advocacy and campaigns fundraising in North Africa – IFRC experience

Katherine Bundra-Roux, Regional Communications and Advocacy Manager, IFRC brought to the attention of participants the IFRC campaign and advocacy program funded by ECHO and DEVCO in North Africa as an example of successful fundraising. During this experience-sharing session Ms. Bundra called the attention of participants on the main features that have facilitated fundraising in this specific case: i) Campaigns and advocacy activities were integrated into a larger program including service delivery and development outcomes; ii) IFRC played an essential role in the region being one of the very few partners on the ground; iii) Solid relationship with both donors were in place and a fully fledged donor engagement structure was available. More broadly speaking successful fundraising is also tied to the ‘mediatization’ of the topics the agencies are advocating for hence media and communication services are essential. How to sustain relationship with media is an issue as well as how to use the media strategically. There is a need to choose carefully which media should be involved. For example, if the issue is not new, it does not draw attention from the media. In addition, media coverage can lead to a wrong information or perception. Media can be useful but it is difficult to control them as very unpredictable.

3. The Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat experience

Chris Horwood from the Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat (RMMS) was invited to present the Secretariat experience as an extraordinary example of partnership to fundraising for an initiative aimed at coordinating research and advocacy. The secretariat has been established in East Africa upon the initiative of Danish Refugee Council (DRC), IOM, UNHCR Intersos and the Yemen Mixed Migration Task Force. They all got together to support agencies, institutions and forums in the Horn of Africa and Yemen and sub-region to improve the management of protection and assistance response to people in mixed migration flows. The RMMS aims to address overall regional migration and asylum challenges identified by the Inter Agency Standing Committee’s Mixed Migration Task
Force (IASC MMTF), and coordinate closely with existing Mixed Migration Task Forces. The RMMS, following request from UNHCR is considering expanding to other regions, including Asia. This roundtable discussion is a great opportunity to explore further this option and verify the need and added value for further engagement of the Secretariat in the region. At the moment the RMMS receives funding from the EU and Swiss government with the main proposal jointly submitted to the EU under the leadership of DRC. The consortium created for submitting the proposal is a good example of success obtained by joining forces on the ground and build on each other complementarity. The Secretariat, its composition as well as modus operandi and funding modalities roused great interest amongst participants and further inspired discussion about possible creation of similar structure in the region.

4. The Humanitarian financing landscape- why it is important to engage

ICVA briefly presented the Humanitarian Financing architecture mapping out existing platforms where humanitarian financing is discussed, information shared and analysis provided to facilitate increased access to funding for NGOs: the OCHA- NGO Platform on Country Based Pooled Funds, the IASC Humanitarian Financing Task Team (both co-chaired by ICVA), the Pooled Funds Working Group and the High Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing. This fora and working groups are unique platforms for discussing and identifying common interagency advocacy strategies on humanitarian financing, and working together with UN agencies and International Organizations at improving and shaping the humanitarian financing architecture to be better used to flag issues of concern related to areas and themes that are underfunded. Funding for Education in Emergencies (EiE) has been used as a case study to show the importance of engaging in this fora and advocate for funding to cover specific issues. Targeted and joined advocacy from NGOs and UN agencies towards EU donors contributed increasing funding for EiE in the past three years from 2 million euros to 23 million euros. Participants commented that donors should be identified as target of direct advocacy to “educate them” and raise awareness around specific themes and challenges.

Two practical examples of fundraising opportunities for advocacy and campaigns related to Protection at Sea and Statelessness were suggested for further analysis:

- ECHO – Humanitarian Implementation Plan on public awareness, information and communication: ECHO includes in its mandate communication and campaigning around humanitarian issues. Each year a funding opportunity in this framework is offered through the publication of a humanitarian Implementation Plan. Only INGOs with a framework agreement with ECHO are eligible to apply though partnerships with a wide variety of actors from different countries is encouraged. Humanitarian Implementation Plan on Enhanced Response Capacity (ERC): this funding opportunity, again published every year by ECHO is focused on increasing humanitarian actors capacity to respond to crisis building knowledge and understanding around specific sectors. Protection activities and know how is included hence certain awareness raising and capacity building intervention could be funded. 

2 The overview of humanitarian financing architecture is available at: https://icvanetwork.org/system/files/versions/150610%20Humanitarian%20Architecture.pdf
4 The 2015 ERC HIP is available here: http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/funding/decisions/2015/HIPs/ERC_en.pdf
There is currently a Call for Proposal open from the European Commission, EuropeAid Directorate on Human Rights and Democracy. One of the objective of this Call is to support the rights of migrants including asylum seekers in third countries, internally displaced persons and stateless persons. EuropeAid regularly publish funding opportunities at global and country level under this funding Instrument. Direct engagement with EU Delegations in country is encouraged to understand better opportunities and possibly influence local funding strategies. Other funding opportunities could be found in the framework of the recently launched Global Public Goods and Challenges (GPGC) Instrument.

National and local NGOs are often underrepresented in the debate around humanitarian financing while they are the key actors having in-depth knowledge of local contexts, languages and cultures and are better positioned to provide quicker and more targeted responses and/or run advocacy and campaigns. ICVA, with support from the German Government is chairing a dedicated working group offering a a forum for ICVA members to discuss humanitarian financing developments, exchange information, increase understanding and identify opportunities for collective advocacy. It serves as well as a platform for NGOs to debate amongst themselves about issues further discussed at global level, provide evidence from programming, and contribute to global initiatives, etc. NGOs, and in particular NNGOs are encouraged to further engage on this through the ICVA Asia hub, suggesting inputs from the field to be taken at global level.

Ideas and tips from the working groups

Participants, divided in two groups were asked to identify a challenge related to advocacy and campaigns on Protection at Sea and Statelessness. This challenge was used as a problem statement for developing a simple intervention logic for the submission of a project proposal. Discussion stimulated through the exercise brought to information haring and the formulation of some tips and ideas to move forward in fundraising for advocacy and campaigns:

• Build on complementarity of different agencies, taking advantage from diverse expertise and knowledge, is indeed a challenge but represents a key opportunity for successful fundraising;
• When jointly fundraising and submitting proposals NGOs should carefully consider how to budget management costs, avoiding adding up overheads of each and single organization.
• Much information around mixed migration has been gathered and circulated often not effectively. The establishment of an independent, centralized hub in the region – building on the RMMS experience in the Horn of Africa- could be an option to improve information sharing but also provide reliable and evidence based information and at the same time catalyze funding for advocacy and campaigns. Participants stressed the importance of engaging grass-roots organization in this experience;

5 For more information on this funding opportunity: https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/online-services/index.cfm?do=publish&nb=PubList=15&order=upd&orderby=Desc&searchtype=RS&aofr=150264

• Increase engagement with local donors, building on the emerging role played especially by the Gulf States in situation involving Muslim migrants;
• Invest in building true partnerships with donors, beyond the proposal writing/submission process to contribute raising awareness on issues of concern;
• Consider organizing fundraising roundtable at country level to stimulate joint advocacy proposals and improve fundraising capacities of single organisations;
• Building on the experience shared by IFRC and on the outcome of one of the working group that developed a comprehensive program, explore opportunities for integrating advocacy and campaigns in larger programs also looking at service delivery and development;
• Finally consider increasing NGO engagement in humanitarian financing debate taking advantage of the opportunity offered by the ICVA Humanitarian Financing Working Group. ¹

¹ For more info: https://icvanetwork.org/humanitarian-financing#improve%20ngo%20understanding%20of%20humanitarian%20financing%20mechanisms
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