ICVA BULLETIN
Highlights from March 2020

Message from Executive Director

NGOs are preparing to do so much more

The war in Syria is in its 10th year… As with other humanitarian contexts, it is falling further off the world's collective radars. The world is gripped by a pandemic with a fast-paced news cycle and challenging priority setting. COVID-19 has added another layer of complexity and threatens to exacerbate current humanitarian situations.

To ensure the diversity of NGOs remain able to stay in place and deliver across the system, a true global support translated into solidarity in delivering principled humanitarian assistance is needed.

NGOs are under immense strain from travel and other restrictions, the need to keep staff safe, losing income, having projects postponed, tapping into their financial reserves when they exist, and diverting energies to making alternative plans…

NGOs are preparing to do so much more.

We are witnessing how NGOs are readjusting and delivering. We are witnessing how local NGOs and informal groups of citizens are taking action and supporting their communities.

Some donors and supporters have been quick to reinforce their sustained support and commitment to enabling the work of NGOs and other actors. A sign of trust in the crucial role of civil society.

However, collectively, as humanitarian actors, we are facing a number of fundamental challenges including articulating how to scale up critical capability and how to provide effective and appropriate reinforcement to local and national actors. All stakeholders need to engage in constructive dialogue to determine which actors are best placed to deliver principled assistance to those most in need, now and in the future.

As you will read in the ICVA Statement and in the Bulletin, ICVA members are critical in advocating for the protection of the most vulnerable in ongoing humanitarian operations, for continued access for aid workers, for a real risk sharing attitude…

ICVA's first-ever Virtual Annual Conference on 18 March hosted inspiring discussions on risk to principled humanitarian action and in turn the risks taken by NGOs to deliver effective and efficient humanitarian assistance to those most in need. A timely ICVA Annual Conference report is shared in this Bulletin alongside the ICVA 2019 Annual Report and ICVA briefing documents such as the one on "Localization and the COVID-19 Humanitarian Response".

ICVA members are adapting their operations and keeping their organisations safe. At the ICVA Secretariat, we are managing COVID-19 as a cross-cutting issue covering our existing focus areas and ways of working within the ICVA network. In uncharted territory, the ICVA 2030 is offering multiple opportunities for members to engage to adjust ICVA's added value
and adapt our ways of working.

Engagement is not in isolation and you are invited to join the ICVA 2030.

Ignacio Packer
Executive Director | ICVA

ICVA Updates

ICVA's Virtual Annual Conference
Online - 18 March 2020

Protecting principled humanitarian action: an honest conversation on risk

ICVA's Virtual Annual Conference
ICVA was proud to put in place its first-ever Virtual Annual Conference on 18 March 2020. The conference had active and vibrant engagement of almost 1,300 participants, who either joined the event on the webinar platform or through video and audio-only livestreams.

If you missed it, don’t worry, you can read the report and view the recordings of all three sessions on ICVA’s Virtual Annual Conference webpage. You can find English captions at the bottom of the recordings and French and Arabic subtitles are also available on the YouTube settings. For more information and background reading see the ICVA website.

Annual Conference 2020 Report
The report from ICVA’s 2020 Annual Conference is now available!

Read now!
ICVA’s 2019 Annual Report

We invite you to discover ICVA’s 2019 digital Annual Report!
This report is a summary of ICVA’s key achievements throughout the year! The digital format reduces our environmental impact, links to our website, responds better to some special needs of readers and showcases some of our video content.

Read now!

1. ICVA’s COVID-19 Resources page:
ICVA has created a resources page that has a collection of guidelines, tools, statements, papers and useful links which are relevant to the current COVID-19 pandemic.

2. Eman Ismail, the Deputy Regional Representative for the MENA region, has recently been promoted as the lead Regional Representative for ICVA MENA. ICVA is proud to have Eman as part of our team, and congratulates her on this promotion within ICVA! ICVA is now looking to hire a Deputy Representative to work alongside Eman.

3. Vacancy – Deputy Regional Representative MENA
ICVA has a vacancy for a Deputy Regional Representative for MENA. See the vacancy notice for more information. The position is based in Amman, Jordan. Deadline for applications is 19 April, 2020.

ICVA 2030

4. ICVA is planning a new strategy to propose at our General Assembly in May 2021. This strategy will be shaping the future of the ICVA Network. In order to create a well-informed strategy, focusing on humanitarian concerns that are relevant to our members and stakeholders, we need your input! Over the next few months, you can provide your feedback on what ICVA should focus our strategy around. From now until September 2020 there are a variety of ways to share your thinking on the future of the humanitarian sector and the future of ICVA.

To participate in ICVA 2030 you can:
- Fill out the ICVA 2030 survey: English, French or Arabic. Deadline 30 April, 2020
- Record a 90 second video giving your feedback. On camera answer the question, "What should ICVA focus on for the 2030 Strategy?" Here is how to record a video
- Send us a written submission giving your feedback
- Participate in ICVA webinars & meetings (dates to come)

For more information on ICVA 2030, see our Strategic Development Document or contact communications@icvanetwork.org
Forced migration

5. UNHCR 77th Standing Committee
ICVA facilitated the drafting and delivery of six NGO statements during the 77th meeting of the Standing Committee (10-12 March), thanks to the many NGOs’ valuable contributions. The statements were focused on regional updates on Europe, Africa, the Middle East and North Africa, and the Americas; as well as on the Global Compact on Refugees and the outcomes of the Global Refugee Forum.

6. Internal Displacement
Meeting with Ms. Cecilia Jimenez-Damary, Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons:
On 9 March, ICVA organized a meeting with the UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of IDPs, particularly to exchange on her recent official visit to Iraq (15-23 February), particularly the ten points raised in her End of Mission Statement and on how NGOs can engage to strengthen the response. This was also the opportunity to exchange on Ms. Jimenez-Damary upcoming report on Protection of IDPs with disabilities.

High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement
On 19 March, ICVA organized a second meeting with the Head of the Secretariat of the High-Level Panel, Assistant Secretary-General Mr. George Okoth-Obbo and his colleagues. On this occasion, following the February inaugural meeting of the Panel, NGOs and the Secretariat exchanged inter alia on the Panel’s priorities, its work plan and adaptation to the current COVID-19 situation, and ways for NGOs to get involved. NGOs are now working to develop written submissions to contribute to the work of the High-Level Panel.
For more information, contact: jerome.elie@icvanetwork.org and Loise.dairocheteau@icvanetwork.org. You can also visit ICVA’s webpage.

7. Global Refugee Forum follow-up
As part of its activities related to the follow-up to the December 2019 Global Refugee Forum (GRF), on 13 March ICVA contributed to a full-day workshop on the Global Action Plan for the Implementation of the Three-Year Strategy (2019-2021) on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways. The workshop was an important opportunity to exchange and work collectively to pin down the planned or ongoing activities that contribute to the objectives of the Strategy. Further GRF follow-up activities and meetings should take place in the weeks to come, including providing feedback to UNHCR on the upgraded Pledges & Contributions Dashboard.

8. UNHCR and NGO meetings on COVID-19 response, particularly in refugee settings.
Since 17 March, UNHCR is organizing weekly global exchanges with NGOs aiming at maintaining close contact and discussing specific COVID-19 related issues, such as protection, continuity of service and partnership agreements. Notes from those meetings and relevant documents have been shared with members and ICVA continues to channel inputs and questions to UNHCR from its membership. Those meetings have also been useful in raising attention towards UNHCR dedicated guidelines and situation reports available on a specific RefWorld page and Global Focus webpage.
For more information, contact: jerome.elie@icvanetwork.org.

On 12 March, Mr. Ed Schenkenberg van Mierop, Director of Here-Geneva, was invited to discuss with NGOs the recent report he co-authored on UNHCR’s Leadership and Coordination in Refugee Response Settings. This was the opportunity to engage in a lively discussion looking at the objectives and results of the research, as well as potential follow-up this report may lead to. This independent desk review was commissioned by UNHCR’s Evaluation Service.
10. Addressing migrants’ vulnerability
Concerned with the dire situation of refugees and migrants at the Turkey- Greece border, after announcements by Turkey that it will open its border for people to pass to Greece, the Civil Society Action Committee, to which ICVA is a member issued a joint statement. It called upon States to protect and uphold the rights of refugees and migrants, and to not use them as bargaining chips. The statement can be found here.

ICVA also contributed to the Civil Society Action Committee’s Statement calling for a renewed solidarity with refugees and migrants in face of COVID 19 pandemic. This Statement can be read here.

Additionally, ICVA contributed to the IASC Interim Guidance on COVID-19: Focus on Persons Deprived of Their Liberty, which calls upon States to urgently establish non-custodial alternatives to migrant detention in accordance with international law.

11. UN Network on Migration
The Coordinator of the United Nations Network on Migration (Network), IOM Director General António Vitorino, briefed Member States on 4 March 2020, alongside the UN High Commissioner of the Office for Human Rights (OHCHR), Ms. Bachelet; the Deputy Director-General of International Labour Organization (ILO), Mr. Oumarou; and the Assistant High Commissioner for Protection at UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), Ms. Triggs. For a summary of the Briefing, read here.

Financing

12. Funding flexibility and COVID-19 response: Through the IASC Humanitarian Results Group (RG5) platform, ICVA has engaged in a significant dialogue over the past 3 weeks to push for increased flexibility in existing grant and partnership agreements in response to the current pressures placed on field staff to both maintain critical ongoing humanitarian operations while adjusting to meet the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. Through IASC RG5 engagement, this work has crossed over in the ongoing efforts to simplify and harmonise elements of UN partnership agreements as well.

13. On 31 March, the IASC issued interim key messages on flexible funding for humanitarian response, available here. The intent of these messages is to 1) establish a unified position for how IASC members will move forward on funding flexibility; 2) introduce common messaging to approach donor governments and harmonise practice across the humanitarian system to the extent possible; 3) identify four areas for funding flexibility to guide the discussion going forward: budget/cost flexibility, no-cost extensions, reprogramming of funds, and due diligence / risk management processes.

For next steps, IASC members are now mapping detailed practices in these four areas, and will focus on developing detailed common guidance on funding flexibility by mid-April. So far, efforts have focused on agreements with UNHCR, OCHA, UNICEF, WFP, and UNFPA. The ICVA Humanitarian Finance Working Group (HFWG) is tracking this discussion and collecting input from the humanitarian perspective. To join the ICVA HFWG, contact jeremy.rempel@icvanetwork.org.

14. Localization and humanitarian finance: In addition to the new ICVA paper on localization in the COVID-19 response (referenced below under Navigating Change), the theme of localization has taken up a central role in the COVID-19 Global HRP given the fact that this response will rely heavily on local and national partners due to the current limitations on mobility of international staff. Within IASC RG5, members are currently seeking to increase participation and field engagement with national partners. Likewise, the ICVA Humanitarian Finance Working Group will be tracking the humanitarian finance implications of localization and would benefit from increased participation of our local and national
15. IASC Principals:
Ad hoc IASC principals meeting were organised on 13, 23, 27 and 30 March regarding the response on COVID-19 outbreak. The Principals discussed ongoing COVID-19 developments, reviewed progress on the global humanitarian response plan for the pandemic and exchanged on collaborative approaches to sustain humanitarian operations and on how to respond to the pandemic amid duty of care concerns, logistical/civil-military challenges and travel/movement restrictions. They also reviewed existing and complementary relevant guidance and guidelines and discussed on how to sustain funding for Humanitarian Response Plans.

Eight interim guidance documents and a Storybook for Children on COVID-19 have been developed jointly by a number of the IASC members and/or IASC Reference Groups. ICVA contributed to a number of them. They can all be downloaded here.

16. IASCEmergency Directors Group (EDG):
On 14 March, the EDG had a call to discuss the latest developments and next steps around the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, followed by a call on 18 March which concentrated on the then draft outline of the Global Humanitarian Response Plan (GHRP) for COVID-19. On 19 March, the EDG met virtually to discuss support to operations, scaling up operations and duty of care. The EDG discussed how to sustain (and expand where needed) humanitarian operations in view of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, including in terms of programme criticality reviews, duty of care considerations, and logistics/supply chain options. Following the GHRP’s launch, on 26 March, the EDG organised a call on COVID-19 to discuss the latest developments and the applicability of activating the scale-up protocols for the control of infectious disease events.

17. Update on IASCResults groups:
RG 1 Operational response: In light of the latest COVID-19 developments, the RG1 decided to focus its work on the following 3 priority areas: 1. Operationalising localisation; 2. Addressing bureaucratic impediments; 3. Centrality of Protection. Other priority areas will be put on hold or delayed for the moment.

RG 2 Accountability and inclusion: No updates this month.

RG 3 Collective advocacy: No updates this month.

RG 4 Nexus: As member of the Reference Group of the Peace articulation Pillar within the RG4, ICVA has consulted members of its Nexus Working Group on the outline of a paper on the “Peace articulation.” Moreover, a call was convened, giving members the opportunity to exchange with World Vision International as part of the drafting group.

A Survey has been launched to upgrade the Community of Practice on the Nexus. Results will be available soon and will inform the revision of the CoPN Terms of Reference and the next months of work. The CoPN and the ICVA Nexus Working Group are growing, if interested in joining contact: marco.rotelli@icvanetwork.org

RG5 Humanitarian Finance: See update above under ‘Financing’.

18. Country and regional updates from humanitarian leadership: On 2 and 5 March respectively, ICVA hosted meetings with David McLachlan-Karr, DSRSG/RC/HC in DRC, and Alain Noudehou, DSRSG/RC/HC in South Sudan, to discuss the humanitarian situations and in country responses. On 27 March, ICVA organised an online discussion on the Global
Humanitarian Response Plan (GHRP) with Steve O’Malley, Head of OCHA COVID-19 team.
ICVA, NGOs and SIRF joined a meeting with RHC Kevin Kennedy and OCHA HoO ROSC Paul Handley, the main discussion focused on COVID-19 and the implication on humanitarian response for the whole of Syria architecture, coordination and limitation, and restrictions in movement.

19. NGO Fora Support
- A mission was performed in Mali to support members and the NGO forum in country. After its mission in 2019, ICVA Africa completed a follow up mission to Mali to expand working relations with Fora's in country.

- ICVA Africa has been busy advocating with Donors in the West and Central Africa region for NGO Fora funding, including for Cameroon International and National for a (CHINGO and CHOI) as well as the GOAH INGOs group in Burkina Faso. Responses are promising and ICVA will continue to advocate.

- ICVA has facilitated a peer to peer exchange between in country NGO Fora to ensure transfer of experience and knowledge, collect inputs and better link with Fora on the operational challenges of their members. Fora represented were from Cameroon, DRC, Tanzania, Ethiopia and more.

For more information contact: marco.rotelli@icvanetwork.org

20. NGO fora and COVID-19
- Predictably, COVID-19 took an important space this month across the regions with the system and NGOs trying to prepare for potentially devastating impacts on fragile contexts and vulnerable communities. We have been working alongside members and Fora at regional and country level to ensure that field instances are conveyed at the global decision-making level informing the process.

- ICVA Africa has supported the roll out of the READY workshops on disease outbreaks, focused on COVID-19 in Africa.

- MENA NGO Fora discussion on COVID-19: 21 participants from 15 NGO Fora and regional networks. The main objective was to share info related to COVID-19 between different NGO Fora on how they work to address challenges (access, business continuity, funding, partnerships, duty of care, safety and risks measures, etc.). A list of suggested ideas and action points will be shared with NGO Fora in MENA. The next meeting is to be held next month to continue the discussion with NGO Fora members.

- Different NGO Fora’s in MENA started adapting their operational and advocacy work to be ready to respond to needs related to COVID-19, ICVA will continue to support NGOs on their work and will exchange information and best practices among different NGO Fora.

  Statements can be found on ICVA COVID-19 resources page.

Navigating change: cross cutting issues

21. Civil society space in humanitarian action
Updates on civil society space and COVID-19 has been included under Humanitarian Coordination. Regular bi-weekly emails are being sent to members who would like to join the Civil Society Space working group of ICVA, please send in your interest to join the group to: nishanie.jayamaha@icvanetwork.org
New Publication!

22. Localization
ICVA has released a new paper, titled "REINFORCE, REINFORCE, REINFORCE: Localization in the COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response" ICVA developed this note to support dialogue on strengthening principled and effective humanitarian action by NGOs during the COVID-19 response, with a focus on reinforcing local and national action wherever possible.

Read now!

23. Excerpts from the Final Report to ECHO from the “Accelerating Localisation through Partnerships” programme. The programme responded to an increasing demand among humanitarian actors for the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) commitments on localisation to become a reality in field operations. The document includes conclusions and lessons learned from the programme. Read here.

24. Safeguarding
PSEA assessment process for partners of UN agencies:
NGO partners of UNICEF should already be aware that UNICEF is currently rolling out a new toolkit and PSEA assessment process for all partners in 2020, available here. ICVA and UNICEF co-hosted a webinar on 20 March that included a presentation from UNICEF on the rollout and Q&A session with NGOs. A more detailed FAQ document is in development based on the webinar to be released in the coming weeks.

One of the issues highlighted in the UNICEF discussion is the need to align PSEA assessment efforts across UN agencies. Work is currently underway to develop a joint UN PSEA assessment and a round of consultations on the draft assessment tool was concluded. While the UN assessment is finalised, NGO partners are advised that assessments completed recently for UNICEF or UNHCR should be valid for other UN agencies. To join the conversation with the ICVA PSEA Working Group, contact: alon.plato@icvanetwork.org.


Region Specific

ICVA regional teams have been working intensively with inter agency coordination groups to ensure national and international NGO involvement and active contribution to the ongoing preparedness and response to the COVID19, including to liaise at the country, regional and global level.

25. Asia and the Pacific Region:
ICVA conducted a mission to Pakistan to meet ICVA members and partners and discuss issues related to their work in refugee and disaster contexts in the country. ICVA also engaged with the key NGO Fora, National Humanitarian Network (NHN) and Pakistan Humanitarian Fund (PHF), regarding NGO participation in coordination. A multi-stakeholder dialogue was held where ICVA engaged NGOs and other actors regarding the changing humanitarian context in Afghanistan.

Country consultation process for AADMER Work Program 2021-2025 drafting
ICVA and AADMER Partnership Group (APG) have been working with NGOs/NGO Fora at country level (in Cambodia, Myanmar, the PHL and Indonesia) to conduct a consultation process in order to provide collective inputs for the drafting of the Work Program 2021-2025 of The ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER). Two consultation meetings were completed in Myanmar and Indonesia respectively with participants from related NGO networks, National and local NGOs and INGOs. A summary report will be submitted to ASEAN after the consultation process is complete in all the selected countries and at regional level.

26. Africa Region:
- ICVA Africa has provided inputs for the IASC EWARE from the Region, highlighting ongoing critical situations in Southern Africa and growing concerns in Humanitarian Access in the Central Sahel and Lake Chad Basin.

- ICVA Africa regional team has participated to the R-IASC exercises in East, Southern and West and Central Africa.

- ICVA Africa has been advocating in the region on specific points about shrinking space for humanitarian actors, criminalisation of aid and various bureaucratic impediments. The advocacy efforts have included Permanent Missions in Geneva, the IASC, International Centre for Not-for-Profit-Law (ICNL) and TrustLaw.

For more information contact: marco.rotelli@icvanetwork.org or Addis.Tesfa@icvanetwork.org

27. MENA Region:
ICVA joined a discussion with Crisis Action in MENA to discuss a global advocacy campaign on a global ceasefire. This campaign came after the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres issued a call for a global ceasefire in light of the COVID-19 crisis. The discussion focused on the global advocacy campaign goal, target, success indicators, key messages and potential activities and tactics.


UNHCR Regional Durable Solutions- ICVA is part of the Regional Durable Solutions which is co-chaired by UNHCR’s Regional Bureau based in Amman. During the discussions held in March; UNHCR presented recent information about DS dashboard data related to return, resettlement for Syrian refugees, and an update about resettlement and the efforts spent on this area. In addition, different working streams are established to follow up on key thematic areas related to psychosocial and mental health, and explosive Hazard Risk Education Workstream

28. ICVA's Learning opportunities and resources page: ICVA's learning resource page is a curated list of online and face-to-face (when available) learning and training programmes. Please share with us any interesting opportunities that would be useful to include on the webpage. For more information contact: nishanie.jayamaha@icvanetwork.org

29. Webinar: Quality and Accountability approaches while responding to emergencies like COVID-19
Both the Sphere and Core Humanitarian Standard Alliance (CHSA) have come up with
important information for strengthening principled humanitarian action for responding to the current crises. ICVA member, Community World Service Asia (CWSA) is organizing a Webinar: Q&A Standards in COVID19 Response on April 9 at 11am (Pakistan time), to provide an opportunity to humanitarian professionals to learn about using Quality and Accountability approaches while responding to emergencies like COVID-19.

The webinar will guide humanitarian practitioners on using Q&A tools in their response and will help develop key messages to raise awareness for the most vulnerable populations affected by the COVID-19. Find the link to Registration for this webinar.

30. TrustLaw resources on implications of COVID-19 on non-profit organisations: ICVA is a member of the Thomson Reuters Foundation and they are stepping up their core services to respond to the COVID-19 emergency. Their global pro-bono network, TrustLaw have listed free resources from around the globe on the legal implications of COVID-19, which offer helpful information for non-profit and social enterprises who are navigating the challenges of the ongoing pandemic. The website indicates Global and resources from the various regions.

Additionally, TrustLaw plans on running a series of webinars for NGOs and social enterprises in which TrustLaw members will have an opportunity to receive expert advice directly from lawyers on their legal issues related to the pandemic. Topics included will range from employment issues, contractual rights, insurance, GDPR, governance, health and safety. For more information contact: nishanie.jayamaha@icvanetwork.org

New and noteworthy

31. Your inputs needed to improve the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) framework CHS Alliance is undertaking an external consultancy to explore the application of donor Partner Capacity Assessments (PCAs) by UN and government donors when they assess the eligibility of organisations receiving humanitarian funding or grants. They are interested in hearing your views about what has changed with donor PCAs since the Grand Bargain of 2016. You can complete a short, 5-minute, online survey. The deadline for submission is 17 April 2020. For more information contact CHS Alliance - info@chsalliance.org

32. A compilation of research from DCA/ACT Alliance and Joint Learning Initiative in South Sudan on the role of local faith actors across the triple nexus, is now available. The report is called, "The Triple Nexus and Local Faith Actors in South Sudan: Findings from Primary Research."

33. International Dialogue on Migration (IDM) Red Book No. 29: Youth and Migration Of the 258 million international migrants in 2017, around 11 percent were under 24 years of age. Young people have a key role to play in policy discussions on migration. A new publication, which is based on the two IDM sessions held in 2019, provides a set of best practices, lessons learned and recommendations on the role of youth in migration governance. The publication can be downloaded here.

34. ACAPS Information sharing: In order to get timely and relevant views on the Covid-19 and its impacts, ACAPS is gathering a Humanitarian Experts Network (HEN), a global network of field-based humanitarian experts sharing real-time information about the impact of COVID-19. If you would like to join, click here.
Mark your agenda

April 8-9: Asia-Pacific UNHCR Regional NGO Consultations, Bangkok - Postponed
April 9: Webinar: Quality and Accountability approaches while responding to emergencies
April 22-23: InterAction Forum 2020, Washington DC - Postponed
April 28: State of Humanitarian Professions, Geneva

May 7-8: European Network on Statelessness Conference: Addressing Statelessness in Europe, Spain - Postponed

June 9-11: 2020 ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment
June 12: OCHA Pooled Fund Working Group, New York
June 17-19: UNHCR-NGO Annual Consultations, Geneva
June 20: World Refugee Day
June 25: Grand Bargain Annual Meeting, Geneva
June 26: IASC Principals Meeting, Geneva

July 7-9: 78th UNHCR Standing Committee, Geneva
August 19: World Humanitarian Day
September 16-17: 79th UNHCR Standing Committee, Geneva
October 5-9: 71st UNHCR Executive Committee, Geneva
December 14: UNHCR’s 70th Anniversary

ICVA
Avenue Giuseppe-Motta 26-28
Geneva, GE CH 1202
Switzerland
secretariat@icvanetwork.org
www.icvanetwork.org

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