

Content for this topic: [The IASC and the global humanitarian coordination architecture: how can NGOs engage?](#) was informed through a combination of contributions from individuals and desk research.



Complementing the webinar for this topic on the global humanitarian coordination architecture, the International Association of Professionals in Humanitarian Assistance and Protection (PHAP) took the opportunity to talk with **Kirk Prichard, Director of Humanitarian Programs at Concern US, and project manager of the Building a Better Response project.**

Read below for Kirk's response to various questions. With thanks to PHAP for undertaking this interview.

EXPERT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Kirk, many actors provide humanitarian assistance and protection to very localized populations. Working for such actors, is it important to have an understanding of the global humanitarian coordination system?

“Absolutely, all actors engaged in humanitarian response should have at least a basic understanding of the global humanitarian coordination, so they can see where they fit within it, and hopefully feed into and participate in it.

I think it is especially important for actors who are working closest to affected populations to be engaged with the system as these actors know best what is going on in the crisis and can make recommendations to improve the response.”

What do you see as the main challenges that local and national NGOs face when trying to access information relating to humanitarian coordination mechanisms at the international level?

“Speaking frankly, information about the humanitarian coordination mechanisms at the international level is not always the most easily available, nor is it often presented in a way which shows its immediate importance to direct field staff. While the information is out there, it often requires people knowing who to ask and where to go, something a busy field

practitioner might not have the time or energy to do. Furthermore, beyond English, French, and to a lesser degree Arabic, language translation is inconsistent.

I think where they exist, NGO consortia can help in regards to accessing information, acting as a clearinghouse to disseminate important information and providing contacts for additional support.”

As a humanitarian practitioner yourself, strongly involved in informing other professionals about humanitarian coordination mechanisms, and as one of the first speakers in PHAP’s and ICVA’s online learning stream on humanitarian coordination – is there anything in particular you look forward to being covered in the upcoming sessions of this series?

“It may seem naïve or idealistic, but I hope after these sessions people really do see why they should be involved with these systems. No one undertakes coordination because it is fun – I can’t remember the last time a cluster meeting I was at could be described as electrifying – but we do these things because the alternative is simply not acceptable. We cannot have gaps or duplications of services, we need shared standards and objectives, and we need to be accountable to affected populations, all of which the coordination system currently strives for – albeit with varying degrees of success.”

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