



A GLOBAL NGO NETWORK
FOR PRINCIPLED AND EFFECTIVE
HUMANITARIAN ACTION

ICVA Africa Regional Hub

Regional Direction and Achievements
2019-2020

February 2021

ICVA Africa Overview

ICVA's regional hubs in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), established in 2013, foster proximity to members, NGO networks and partners in the region; expand representation to regional humanitarian and political actors; strengthen links between field realities and global policies and strengthen support and collective advocacy. The Africa hub is managed by the Africa Regional and Deputy Regional Representatives based in Nairobi, Kenya and in Addis Abba, Ethiopia.

Sub Saharan Africa is characterised by multiple crises including protracted armed conflicts (such as those in Somalia, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger, Chad, Mali, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan and South Sudan), natural disasters including droughts, floods and crop plagues, as well as infectious disease outbreaks. Disrespect of international humanitarian law and human rights is widespread with frequent reports of atrocities and pre- and post-election tension and violence remain common across the continent. The number of displaced person's within Africa - resulting primarily from conflict (75%) and natural disasters (25%) totaled over 6.3 million IDPs and almost 18 million refugees in 2019¹, making Africa one of the largest refugee hosting continents². The political dimension of the mixed migration phenomenon, particularly migration to Europe, has led to a politicisation of humanitarian aid, with the use of management instruments such as European Trust Funds largely driven by political priorities, rather than principled humanitarian action and development effectiveness³. Widespread poverty and fast paced demographic growth also pose serious threats to stability across the continent.

In humanitarian financing terms, the 2019 requirement for Africa, inclusive of Humanitarian Response Plans (HRP), and Refugee Response Plans, totaled 80 million persons in need with a requirement of 11.3 billion USD. This represents over half of the global requirement both in terms of financing and person in need of humanitarian assistance.

These challenges demonstrate the need for collective humanitarian coordination, advocacy, and discussion across a wide range of priorities. The ICVA Africa hub has established engagement with local, national and international NGOs, NGO fora, UN agencies and donors, as well as several intergovernmental bodies, to support enhanced inclusive dialogue and coordination. The direction and achievements in the ICVA Africa hub, structured by the ICVA focus areas are defined below.

¹ UNHCR <https://www.unhcr.org/5d9319447.pdf>

² <http://popstats.unhcr.org/en/overview> and <http://www.unhcr.org/5b27be547.pdf> Europe also hosts 31% of the Global Refugee population, thereof 17% in Turkey.

³ https://concordeurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/CONCORD_EUTrustFundReport_2018_online.pdf?ac636b&ac636b and Principles of Development Effectiveness: https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/policies/eu-approach-aid-effectiveness_en

Achievements and Challenges

Focus Area One: Forced Migration

ICVA Global Outcome: Improved protection, assistance and durable solutions for refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and migrants in vulnerable situations.

ICVA Africa aimed to work closely with the ICVA Forced Migration team to arranging briefing opportunities in the region, identify and build relations with key actors and experts in regional institutions; NGO's intergovernmental bodies; UN agencies and communities. Within these opportunities, ICVA Africa would complement briefings and contribute to discussions at regional and global level; support relations with UNHCR and IOM for consultations, general partnerships and identify members and actors to represent NGOs at various events and speaking opportunities; and engage and maintain active relations with and between NGOs and mixed bodies active in the region on the Forced Migration. Including but not limited to [Regional Durable Solutions Secretariat](#) (ReDSS), Mixed Migration Center (MMC), IGAD mixed Migration Unit and AU Humanitarian Affairs department.

ICVA Africa has:

- **Improved understanding on the Global Compact for Refugees (GCR):** ICVA Africa arranged and conducted, in collaboration with ICVA's global forced migration team and UNHCR meetings for members and NGO fora in Chad, Kenya, the Ivory Coast, Ethiopia and Uganda on the Global Compact for Refugees (GCR).
- **Enhanced information exchanges and networking opportunities for members on forced migration. This brought the global dimension to regional bodies and connected country level networks to mainstream actors.** ICVA Africa also established **connections** and worked with Regional Economic Commissions (RECs) and specialised programs including the [Regional Durable Solutions Secretariat](#) (ReDSS). With the goal of contributing to their work and identifying and connecting forced migration related networks in Uganda and Tanzania.
- **Improved opportunities for members to liaise and exchange with UNHCR at regional level: ICVA Africa established and fostered the partnerships with UNHCR** at the regional level following the establishment of the regional UNHCR bureau; **supported the UNHCR regional consultations** in Southern Africa and initiated discussions for consultations for the other sub regions; **supported inputs to the NGO statements** in UNHCR formal events; **established links and facilitated exchanges between members and the UNHCR** Implementing Partnership Management Service (IPMS).
- **Enabled opportunities for NGO's and NGO fora to 'influence' African policy makers in the area of forced migration: engaged with the African Union Humanitarian Agency (AUHA);** with the AU **co-organised the African Union Symposium** (Kigali, October 2019), linked members to events and facilitated presence of national NGO fora at panels enabling engagement with high-level stakeholders including ministers and ambassadors on neutral ground.
- Through consultations with NGOs, ICVA provided opportunities to input in the definition of the African Union Humanitarian Agency AUHA (August 2020), engaging on the creation of its mission statement and the final document. ICVA Africa also engaged with a number of member states on behalf of NGOs.

The establishment of the regional UNHCR bureau changed the way that the regional hub engaged with UNHCR. In 2021 ICVA Africa will seek to strengthen the partnership – as equal

partners – with the Africa UNHCR bureau and continue to build relations with the African Union, maintaining the space for NGO engagement in policy making spaces.

Focus Area Two: Coordination

ICVAs global objective is to strengthen the collective ability of NGOs to actively engage in and influence coordination mechanisms to ensure that they are inclusive, contextualised and to provide effective assistance and protection to those affected by crisis.

ICVA Africa aimed to: maintain active engagement with Resident/Humanitarian Coordinators and their offices in a number of countries and monitor the inclusion and involvement of NGOs in analysis, planning and coordination of humanitarian affairs and operations; map and analyze HCT compositions, highlighting key findings and potential recommendations in terms of NGO representation; actively participate in the work of the regional IASC and the Regional Humanitarian Partnership Teams in West/Central and Eastern/Southern Africa promoting inclusiveness and diversity of NGOs representation; relay information from the IASC and its bodies to the regional audience and collect inputs and reflections from national international NGOs and NGOs fora to share with the ICVA global coordination team to inform interaction with the IASC and OCHA at the global level; maintain relations with OCHA at regional and country level; and, enhance relations among NGO fora including tailored partnership with fora in need of specific support as well as ad hoc needs based support.

In 2019-2020 ICVA Africa has invested in understanding regional dynamic's and strengthened work in this area at both country and regional levels:

IASC Humanitarian Coordination:

- **Maintained and intensified active engagement with OCHA and HC/RC's through meetings, online exchanges** including in Chad, Burkina Faso, Mali, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, Cameroon, Central African Republic and DRC **to facilitate NGO engagement in humanitarian leadership structures, processes and policy and to facilitate support from Humanitarian Coordinators and joint action on specific challenges.**
- Supported the ICVA London School of Economics research on NGO engagement in Humanitarian Country Teams and monitored data collected by OCHA on HCT membership at country level across the region to **advocate for meaningful engagement of NGOs in humanitarian leadership as needed.**
- **Consolidated the position of ICVA in the regional IASC for West and Central Africa and Eastern Africa, enabling increased influence of NGOs** through effective messaging and advocacy.
- Collected, analysed and shared regional humanitarian policy and practice updates with members and NGO fora in accessible formats.
- Enabled NGOs – particularly national NGOs that do not have a presence at the global level – **to raise critical issues from country to global level, detected critical issues and supported specific requests** from Mali, Cameroon, Mozambique and DRC.
- **Contributed to the credible engagement of ICVA at the global level through regular engagement with HCs and NGOs** to prepare for Emergency Director Calls and on key issues. For example in 2019, ICVA undertook a mission to Mali to gain field perspectives on the Sahel region (focused on Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger). Through strong joint positioning with NGOs, based on the actual situation, ICVA raised the crisis and conveyed key messages calling for additional support to the Sahel region at the highest global level including to the Council of the European Union, under the Finnish presidency, the IASC Principles and OECD donor countries.

NGO Fora Programme:

- **Strengthened links between ICVA and NGO fora across Africa**, to support fora through information exchange and both joint and bilateral support, **including a particular focus on regular engagement and support to national NGO fora** with established regular bi-weekly calls with fora.
- Fed issues and priorities identified by national and international NGO fora into ICVAs global advocacy and policy work.
- Engaged with and **supported NGO fora in systematic exchanges at country, regional and inter regional level**. This included through calls, side events in institutional processes and briefings. For example: in June 2020, ICVA supported the INGO forum in Mali (FONGIM) to participate on a high-level panel, “Transition Event from Relief to Development” moderated by the UN Assistant Secretary-General and Development Cooperation Office. The panel considered achievements, challenges, and opportunities to strengthen collaboration at country, regional and global levels. Additionally, in July 2020, the INGO forum in Mali (FONGIM), in collaboration with ICVA, gave a presentation on the humanitarian-development-peace nexus in Mali; Burkina Faso scale up, Central Sahel MRT, Nigeria and Somalia NGO bills and COVID-19.
- **Hosted online peer-to-peer exchanges between NGO fora** on topics including the Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19 and Duty of Care, including access to Medevac provisions.
- Extended capacity building support to the Burkina Faso forum (August and September 2020) on Governance.
- Completed two missions to Mali (June 2019 and March 2020), debriefed the outgoing and incoming Mali NGO fora coordinators, supporting their engagement in key meetings such as the HAS, MRT etc.
- Selected NGO fora in the region for financial support under the ICVA global COVID-19 NGO fora support project.

Overall ICVA Africa, in collaboration with the global Humanitarian Coordination Unit has played a role in influencing IASC coordination mechanisms and humanitarian priorities at the country and regional level. Possibilities to further influence through engagement at the level of permanent missions/ambassadors will be considered in 2021. Along with identifying relevant support, including information and skills, for national NGOs to engage at the HCT level and cluster and sub-national level. While not explicitly included in the ICVA Africa directions paper under humanitarian coordination, engagement with national, international and joint NGO fora has become an increasing priority and way of working for the Africa hub that will continue in 2021 and beyond.

Focus Area Three: Financing

ICVA’s global objective is to ensure humanitarian financing meets the needs of populations affected by crises while ensuring adequate NGO access to principled, quality funding.

ICVA Africa intended to work with and support the ICVA global Financing Unit to: collect information about financing issues of ICVA membership and regional audience with particular focus and analysis of CBPF shares; create and maintain relations with the key players of the Grand Bargain at the regional and where possible country level; assist in the mapping, analysis, understanding and dissemination of knowledge of non-UN financing mechanisms pertinent to the members; as a convener, facilitate briefing opportunities and workshops to the regional audience from experts.

In 2019-2020 ICVA Africa has:

- Shared key updates with the region from ICVA's Financing Policy Team – including as co-chair with OCHA/CERF of the IASC working group on humanitarian financing – to **support Africa members and fora in their understanding on global humanitarian financing issues**. Including but not limited to; donor conditions and requirements, risk sharing, risk management, Country-Based Pooled Funds (CBPF), Pooled Fund Working Groups (PFWG), and Grand Bargain commitments and progress. ICVA Africa has hosted multiple briefing and exchanges on financing matters, including on Country Based Pooled Funds (CBPF's), the COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan and Regional Based Pooled Funds. For example in **2020, ICVA Africa hosted an interactive webinar covering key humanitarian financing priorities including funding flexibility related to COVID-19 and Grand Bargain commitments for Africa members**.
- Placed a focus on **Grand Bargain actions – including through trainings, briefings and information sharing on the simplification and harmonisation of reporting**. For example, in 2019 ICVA Africa hosted a joint mission in Somalia (Mogadishu and Hargeisa) and Kenya on humanitarian financing and simplification of narrative reporting, resulting in NGOs jointly requesting UNHCR to simplify reporting requirements.
- **Monitored the use and distribution of funds from CBPFs and found that where an alternative exists for UN funding, UN agencies draw less on CBPF**, for example in Somalia where over 40% goes to national NGOs.
- **Increased knowledge on non-UN financing mechanisms** through briefings to members and NGO fora – for example on the socio-economic framework, COVID-19 and DCO global and regional offices.
- Consistently connected the regional level to the global level and vice versa, for example through the global ICVA Humanitarian Financing Unit and key partners.

Overall, in 2019-2020 humanitarian financing gave significant focus in the Africa region. Actions and priorities will continue in 2021.

Focus Area Four: Navigating Change

ICVAs global objective is to ensure relevant support to NGOs in developing strategic thinking to navigate and influence changes in the response to affected populations.

ICVA Africa intended to maintain relations with prioritised Intergovernmental Bodies -- including the African Union (AU), Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS)-- to promote: inclusion, engagement and influence of NGOs in their humanitarian processes and decisions; coordination and joint action between NGO fora and active participation in humanitarian coordination mechanisms; humanitarian principles and the principles of partnership amongst members, partners and stakeholders; identify resources, financial and human to ensure surge capacity for NGO fora as needed; and organise briefings related to the nexus and other navigating change priorities. In 2019-2020 ICVA Africa has:

Cross Cutting Priorities:

- **Increased awareness of and access to learning and exchange opportunities** by sharing opportunities with members in the region on key navigating change priorities including **shrinking space/access impediments for humanitarian actors; the humanitarian, development, peace nexus; and localization**.
- Convened meetings and briefings and **provided opportunities for discussion and debate for and with members on localization; the humanitarian, development, peace nexus;**

and shrinking space/access impediments. Approximately 30 members and partners attended each meeting and briefing.

- Identified and raised key issues and priorities at regional and global level, **ensuring linkages between the regional and global level.** For example, the negative effects of implementation of the nexus in countries such as Mali and Cameroon (where the peace component needs to be in place first) and messages from mapping of access impediments and the humanitarian space situation in collaboration with OCHA and ICVA's Humanitarian Coordination and Financing Units.
- Established ICVA as a credible actor advocating for meaningful partnerships. **Mainstreamed advocacy on the Principles of Partnership in meetings and briefings with members, partners and stakeholders.**

Engagement with regional bodies

- ICVA Africa invested in **maintaining and increasing relationships with Intergovernmental bodies to influence policy and practice including with the AU and IGAD:**
- In 2019 ICVA invested heavily in increasing relations with the AU under the theme 'Year of the AU for Forced Migration.' In 2020 engagement had been maintained at pre 2019 levels with instances of influence. For example, in November 2020, ICVA engaged as a panelist at the AU Humanitarian Summit on the topic of COVID-19 implications for humanitarian affairs. ICVA advocated for improved humanitarian access, which resulted in issues of access being integrated into the AU Humanitarian Affairs, Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (HARDP) stream.
- **Relations with IGAD have been maintained with regular interaction on Forced Migration related matters as well as promotion of humanitarian principles at IGAD events.** For example, ICVA Africa engaged at the IGAD Regional Scientific Conference on Forced Displacement and Mixed Migration in the East & Horn of Africa (May 2019) in Nairobi, Kenya as well as the second IGAD Ministerial Stocktaking meeting on the Nairobi Declaration and Plan of Action where ICVA facilitated participation of members and NGO fora and provided input linked to humanitarian principles.

In 2021 current priorities will continue with the following adjustments:

- In 2019 and 2020 ICVA Africa identified Country Level NGO Law as an area resulting in growing restrictions for NGOs, but ICVA has limited capacity to support directly in its current ways of working given that direct resolution/engagement primarily requires political engagement at country level. At the same time, ICVA Africa recognised their clear added value, given the lack of risk to ICVA, to advocate for NGO space and their connection to high-level actors. In 2021, ICVA Africa will review its added value in this area and define how it can support members and NGO fora with challenges related to country level NGO laws. This could be linked to providing regional resources to help NGOs and fora understand and navigate legal processes to influence laws.
- In terms of work on the nexus, in 2021 ICVA Africa will consider how to influence practice by engaging and influencing at the policy and guideline level, for example the Dakar Guidelines and IASC guidelines on the nexus.
- The increased ownership of governments and intergovernmental bodies in the region will continue to increase the value and importance of interaction with regional intergovernmental bodies on humanitarian issues.

The Way Forward

The regional hub has established strong relationships with a range of key external actors as well as local and international Africa members and NGO fora. It plays a critical role in connecting and linking members and NGO fora to each other, linking ICVA's regional and global policy and advocacy work, and linking with UN and intergovernmental partners for exchange and influence on key priorities. Including the grand bargain priorities, the nexus, civil society space and NGO engagement in humanitarian coordination and policy.

ICVA will continue to foster relationships with existing and new country and regional level NGO fora and networks whilst also directly engaging with individual members and organisations at country level in the region. In 2020 COVID-19 has altered the way that the ICVA Africa hub works, removing country-based travel and engagement. This has opened an opportunity for ICVA. By reducing the time and resources previously assigned to international travel and country-based presence, ICVA has been able to increase engagement in key discussions and processes and deepen relations with individual members and NGO fora through online member and fora meetings and regular online bilateral meetings with NGO fora. This has resulted in increased interaction and enhanced relations than was previously achieved through intermittent country missions.

In 2021 the selective approach outlined in the directions paper for which countries to engage more intensely, will continue to be necessitated by the size of the region, intensity of humanitarian operations and available resources. Priority countries noted in the directions paper remain valid going into 2021 (Burundi, CAR, DRC, Somalia, South Sudan, Nigeria/lake Chad), but in addition, several countries in the Sahel area are added and a stronger focus will be placed on Central Sahel and Lake Chad. Equally the NGO fora Support Project will increase engagement at country level in included countries (Sudan, South Sudan, Ethiopia and Somalia).

With 54 countries in the region, despite the clear prioritisation of countries and objectives the current ICVA structure is inadequate for the region. Needs cannot be met through voluntary engagement of the membership and discussions are underway to increase capacity in the region. Where resources allow, this would be through a seconded or staffed ICVA presence in Central/ West Africa to allow for more effective coverage.

A further constraint relates to languages, ICVA documents and engagement is largely in English whereas French is the predominant language in most countries in the Sahel Region and Central Africa, presenting operational and linguistic limitations that should be addressed moving forward through consistent translation of key documents and processes into French.

In the final year of the Regional Direction Paper, ICVA Africa will continue to deliver as planned whilst aiming to:

- Strengthen the partnership – as equal partners – with the Africa UNHCR bureau.
- Continue to build relations with the AU and IGDA, maintaining the space for NGO engagement in policy-making spaces.
- Consider how to further advocate and influence through engagement at the level of permanent missions/ambassadors.
- Map the support needed for national NGOs to engage not only at the HCT level, but also at cluster and sub-national level.
- Continue to scale up engagement with and support to national, international and joint NGO fora.

- Review and define support to members and NGO fora on country level NGO laws.
- Consider how to influence practice on the nexus through engagement at the policy and guideline level.
- Increase interaction with regional intergovernmental bodies on humanitarian issues.
- Scale up the ICVA Africa team through presence in the Sahel/ West Africa Region.
- Ensure accessibility by translating key documents and processes into French.