

Content for this topic: [The NGO fora and NGO Consortia](#) 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 **Raphael Gorgeu (ICVA)**.

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

## EXPERT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

**The International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA) is an NGO consortium. What does this mean? And what is the main difference between an NGO consortium and an NGO forum?**

“An NGO consortium and an NGO forum are based on the same approach and on the same objective, which is to bring NGOs together and to promote collective action. That is, I would say, the main idea of a consortium like ICVA.

The difference we usually make between a consortium and a forum is that the latter brings NGOs together in a country in which there is a specific humanitarian response; a few current examples are Nigeria, DRC, South Sudan, and a series of other countries. On the other hand, when we speak about a consortium, we usually speak about a collective NGO body that is not linked to a specific humanitarian response. If we make this kind of differentiation, you see that a forum is directly linked to a specific response, and tries to help NGOs as a collective to improve their answer to specific crises. In contrast, a consortium is more about working on and influencing policies and approaches adopted by different humanitarian stakeholders at the global level.

This is the most common difference we make between a consortium and a forum. If we look at ICVA, for instance, it is a global consortium of NGOs: our membership is composed of NGOs located all over the world – international NGOs, NGOs from the South, and national NGOs – and our main objective is to make sure that NGOs' perspective and voices are echoed and represented in discussions at global level, which lead to shape the future of the humanitarian sector.”

## What is the main value that international NGO consortia can bring in terms of improving humanitarian response? What is the most valued aspect in this regard among ICVA members?

“Again, I will use the example of ICVA to be more concrete, ICVA is trying to bring a new perspective to the global debate on humanitarian assistance. We try to participate in this debate, by influencing and developing humanitarian policies and humanitarian trends at the global level – that is, we try to influence the humanitarian system.

How is this useful? We are working in a sector that is led by international actors – by the donors and member states – when most of the work at the field level is implemented by NGOs. Therefore, the idea behind the creation of ICVA was basically that the more NGOs will participate in shaping global policies and global approaches at the [IASC level](#), these policies and approaches will actually reflect to a larger extent the realities that humanitarian practitioners experience in the field. We can actually bring these perspectives to the discussions at the global level. Yet, in order to ensure that ICVA is effectively bridging between NGOs within the global structures of the humanitarian sector, we foster NGOs’ voices aiming for a sounder humanitarian system.

Regarding your question on what is the most valued aspect among our members at ICVA, I have already mentioned this bridging function, but there is also another aspect of our work that our members do really appreciate, and that is the capacity of ICVA to provide them with information. We are currently living in a highly complex world, which is moving extremely fast, and there are large amounts of information that we need to identify and process on time, and ICVA provides the possibility for NGOs – especially small NGOs – to have a good quality overview of what is currently happening; and we bring this information to our members in a more organized way – that is, in a way that information can be more understandable. And the idea that ICVA can help NGOs to increase their understanding of the humanitarian sector is something extremely valuable today. And in this case, NGOs will use this information to adjust their strategy and their whole operational approach.”

## Do you think that the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) and Grand Bargain outcomes have had an effect on the way NGOs collaborate and coordinate their work?

“I think it is extremely difficult to identify concrete impacts of the WHS and the Grand Bargain, which are rather long-term processes. However, it is interesting to point out here that the WHS and the Grand Bargain have highlighted the importance of collective action encouraging partnership among humanitarian stakeholders. From here, we do hope that this spirit, this approach will actually lead us to greater coordination among NGOs, and specially, to stronger partnerships between NGOs, I am specially thinking between international NGOs, NGOs from the Global South, and national NGOs.”

---

**LEARN MORE:** Visit [www.icvanetwork.org](http://www.icvanetwork.org) for the webinar, video, further information and references.

**JOIN ICVA:** Contribute to Working Groups, Task Teams and Humanitarian Coordination Policy Development.