



A GLOBAL NGO NETWORK
FOR PRINCIPLED AND EFFECTIVE
HUMANITARIAN ACTION

ICVA Annual Conference

18 March 2020, Geneva

Member Engagement Days 17 & 19 March 2020



#ICVAConference2020

**Protecting principled humanitarian action:
an honest conversation on risk**

CONCEPT NOTE

At ICVA's 2019 Annual Conference "Translating Commitment to Action" ICVA members and partners highlighted the importance to dive deeper into the **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.**

In order to deliver on our mandate, as humanitarian actors, we have committed to uphold and respect principles enshrined in international legal frameworks (i.e. Human Rights, International Humanitarian Law, Refugee Law and International Criminal Law), the humanitarian principles, the global humanitarian standards, the Principles of Partnership, principles on localization, safeguarding principles etc.

In the meantime, NGOs often operate in volatile conflicts and extremely complex humanitarian settings and are placed under even more pressure to deliver better with less resources and under increased legal, bureaucratic, security and political restrictions.

How does this all impact NGOs and our commitments on principled intervention? It definitely requires us as NGOs to take more risks. What are the additional risks and how do we choose whether to accept them or not? How does this all impact on the individuals and populations we are working with?

Approach:

ICVA's Annual Conference will bring together members, States, donors, UN agencies, experts and other stakeholders to share their experiences, lessons learned, challenges and ways forward around these issues. The Annual Conference will be held on 18 March and will be preceded by a **Members' Day on 17 March** and followed by a **Partners' Day on 19 March** which will provide an opportunity for NGOs to further engage and interact around the theme.

Objectives:

- Increase awareness on the challenging contexts under which NGOs currently operate;
- Enable members to share and learn from each other on how to deal with existing risks while not jeopardizing on principled intervention (existing resources, tools, good practices, etc.);
- Create opportunities for dialogue between ICVA members and other NGOs and with States, private sector, UN Agencies and multilateral agencies on how to mitigate challenges and support NGOs to deliver on their humanitarian and human rights mandate.

Outcomes:

ICVA will produce an outcome document capturing key learning from the Annual Conference and the Engagement days which will guide the policy and advocacy work with members towards member states and other actors around some of the issues of risk to humanitarian principles and risk to NGOs, aid workers and to civilians including incorporating outcomes into a learning stream in 2020. ICVA will also ensure increased access to, promotion and use of the different content produced through the briefing papers, learnings and the annual conference.

Background Reading:

- InterAction, [Resources on NGO Risk Management](#)
- Norwegian Refugee Council, "[Principles Under Pressure](#)": The impact counterterrorism measure and preventing/countering violent extremism on principled humanitarian action" (2018)
- Norwegian Refugee Council and Handicap International, "[Challenges to Principled Humanitarian Action: Perspectives from four countries](#)" | (2016)
- ICRC and Deakin University, Australia "[Principled Humanitarian Action Roundtable report](#)" | (2015)
- ICVA briefing paper on Risk to be published soon

Registration for the Annual Conference is now open until February 2020. Please visit <https://www.icvanetwork.org/icva-annual-conference-2020> for more information. Due to limited seating we encourage early registration.