

SANDSTONE CONSULTING



A GLOBAL NGO NETWORK
FOR PRINCIPLED AND EFFECTIVE
HUMANITARIAN ACTION

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2019-2020 MID-STRATEGY IMPACT STUDY SUMMARY

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SECTION 1

Executive Summary

The purpose of this impact study is to take stock of the impact ICVA has achieved just over midway through its 2019-2021 Strategy. The key question being investigated is *“What has been the impact of ICVA’s efforts in influencing and amplifying NGO perspectives in humanitarian dialogue and policies across each of the four selected focus areas and other issues arising for the period 2019-2020?”* The methodology comprised a document review, interviews with selected stakeholders, and a review of the substantial existing data from ICVA’s recent 2030 consultations with members.

Summary Conclusion

This study concludes that ICVA has had significant impact whether viewing their work through the lens of the Focus Areas, the defined ways of working or the documented added value of ICVA. ICVA does not provide direct assistance to affected populations, nor is it a major donor, so its impact has been indirect in a way which is fully in line with the positioning of the network.

ICVA’s impact comes in part through the competence and capacity it has on specific areas of work such as finance or forced migration, but its overriding value is how it brings diverse actors together, respects differing views and promotes the power and influence of the collective over that of a single organisation. ICVA should not lose this quality, but at the same time could do better in defining clear objectives and targets where it makes sense to do so.

ICVA is arguably ahead of the field in terms of diversity, but still clearly would like to do better in realising the value of this diversity and become even more inclusive in how it works. The regions have been fundamental in enabling ICVA to be closer and better adapted to different contexts and there is still potential to do more; in part through internal capacity, but probably more so in expanding collaboration.

Referring to the previous impact study done by Sandstone, concern was expressed about ICVA being spread too thinly across too many areas. ICVA’s choices of focus areas have helped provide greater clarity of what their core business is compared to strategies of that past. That said, there is still need to prioritise and avoid overload. Another point raised in past studies was the need for theories of change (TOC); while efforts were made at focus area level, ICVA might still benefit from an organisational level TOC to complement this. This would create a compelling narrative that would build cohesion internally and enable a clearer understanding of ICVA’s approach externally.

ICVA has enormous reach and coverage, and it seems to cover a lot of ground considering the size of the organisation and budget. ICVA operates with limited resources considering its scope, which puts a lot of pressure on the existing staff especially during disruptions like COVID-19. ICVA has managed well, but sustaining the quality of work and meeting ambitions, especially as expectations by members and other stakeholders on ICVA keep increasing, will require stable resourcing from supports and strong collaborations with and between Members

Notwithstanding the points of consideration made, it is important to note that some can already be seen emerging in the draft ICVA 2030 strategy. Most notably relating to ‘diversity, equity & inclusion’, collaboration, linking to Member capacity, reinforcing the regional hubs and continuity in key focus areas.

Lastly, it is important to note that this report is a mid-strategy review and it will be re-edited based on 2021 data to form the final end of strategy impact study. Additionally, the final report will also build upon future considerations and comment on the overall approach to monitoring and evaluation for impact.

FEW HIGHLIGHTS OF ICVA'S IMPACT FOR EACH FOCUS AREA DURING 2019-2020

1. FORCED MIGRATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ICVA played a leading coordination role and influenced the coherence of NGO pledges and also helped ensure a strong presence of national civil society representation during the Global Refugee Forum, where over 770 pledges were announced in support of refugees. ICVA increased opportunities to contribute to and influence Forced Migration policies and practices, especially through ICVA's role as an interlocutor between UN bodies and NGOs (e.g. bringing collective NGO thinking to UN High Level Panel on Internal Displacement) and by catalysing collaboration across civil society (e.g. co-convening the Civil Society Action Committee).
2. COORDINATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At the global level, ICVA spearheaded duty of care discussions in the IASC and elevated the issue of 'Localization' to a broader audience among the IASC Principals. Within the Emergency Directors Group (EDG), enabled NGOs (particularly national NGOs that do not have a presence at the global level) to raise critical issues from country to global level. ICVA provided direct support, workshops, exchanges, and funding to NGO fora in order to develop capacities and strengthen in-country NGO Fora. Due to these efforts, NGOs were more actively engaged in coordination mechanisms and NGO fora contributing to the humanitarian system with greater efficiency.
3. FINANCING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ICVA influenced the Grand Bargain implementation through its role as co-convenor of the workstream to harmonise and simplify donor reporting requirements via the "8+3 template" for narrative reporting. ICVA mobilised members to obtain greater donor flexibility during the COVID-19 crisis and asked to unlocked NGO access to funding made available through the COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan.
4. NAVIGATING CHANGE / CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ICVA provided quality analysis and content to increase NGO understanding on key topics (e.g. humanitarian-peace-development nexus, COVID-19 response), all made available as public goods. Brought diverse NGOs together to share peer-to-peer experiences, challenges, lessons learnt and good practices to drive action, policy development, and partnerships in these topics.

Full Report

The full report includes case studies and detailed findings. It is available at:

<https://www.icvanetwork.org/resources/2019-2020-mid-strategy-impact-study>



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