



ICVA Policy on Diversity

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to reinforce ICVA’s¹ longstanding commitment to diversity considerations. Through this Policy, ICVA aims at supporting that persons of concern can enjoy their rights on equal grounds and participate meaningfully in the decisions that affect their lives, families, and communities.

By zooming into age, gender and disabilities, the Policy requires that ICVA supports and applies these considerations to all aspects of its work. This Policy consolidates and updates ICVA’s existing commitments to a strong diversity orientation and Accountability to Affected People.

2. Background

Humanitarian crisis affect people differently depending on a number of factors, such as age and gender, residence, religion, ethnicity, disability, and their intersection. Existing inequalities can be further worsened during humanitarian crises. People become more exposed to violence and/or face extra difficulties to access protection and assistance. Solid evidence shows for example how girls and women are more exposed to sexual violence during crisis with many cases where sexual violence has become a weapon of war. Violence on man is also multifaceted, though it remains less spoken off. Children lose on education and boys in particularly face the risk of being recruited as combatants. Persons with disabilities risk to become easy target and be denied access to protection and assistance.² Power inequalities make people even more exposed to abuse and exploitation, including by those whose mandate is to protect and support them.

The international legal framework clearly prohibits discrimination on the grounds of the race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status (see Annex One for a full list of relevant legal instruments). National laws should however be further improved, and practical barriers removed to ensure equal access to rights for all.

¹ As a network and a secretariat

² See among others : Report of the United Nations Secretary-General for the World Humanitarian Summit, [One Humanity, Shared Responsibility](#).

Although the importance of diversity considerations is endorsed by most of the NGOs, practical application of these considerations in humanitarian situations remains challenging for the sector. The difficult environment and the pressure to deliver urgently hinders often a solid analysis of diversity dynamics and how they are impacted by the crisis. Such analysis is extremely complex and might require expertise that the NGO humanitarian team in place does not necessarily have. The people concerned are also not regularly reached out to, which means their perspectives are not well reflected. Subjected to ongoing injustice some of them still feel they have more to lose than to gain by speaking up. (ICVA, [The Long Run to PSEA](#))

Acknowledging such challenges, the sector is committed to better address diversity considerations. NGOs are often at the forefront of ongoing improvements and ICVA role is to build upon and contribute to further enhance existing good results.

3. Members and ICVA’s role so far

The aim of related ICVA work is to ensure a better implementation of diversity considerations in NGO’s intervention. This is not a new area of focus for ICVA. In fact, many of ICVA members are pioneers of diversity considerations, with a substantial number of NGO members leading on gender, child rights and the rights of people with disability, both at national and international level. In the past ICVA has leveraged upon such expertise and successfully supported advocacy for diversity considerations. The most recent examples include ICVA support to NGOs members advocacy work for better diversity considerations in the [Global Compact on Refugees](#) and its active contribution to the work of the [Initiative for Child Rights in the Global Compacts](#). Moreover, ICVA has and continues to invest also in strengthening accountability to affected people, including notably in protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) within the wider humanitarian community. Diversity considerations are also reflected internally at ICVA policies and practices including in the Human Resource management of the ICVA Secretariat ([2019-2021 HR ICVA Enabling Strategy](#))

4. Objective and future scope of ICVA diversity work

It is also due to this previous work, that ICVA can now further consolidate its efforts on diversity and ensure that they are better reflected as overarching principles across all its focus areas. For ICVA respect for diversity has become an indispensable element of its navigating change work.

Although what can fall under diversity considerations will vary from situation to situation, based on its analysis of the main issues, ICVA believes on the need to zoom on:

- Consideration of Gender: focusing on girls, women, boys and men; PSEA; and protection against violence due to sexual orientation and gender identity;
- Consideration of age: the rights of the child and considerations for the elderly;
- Disability and the rights of persons with disabilities.

5. What ICVA will do to reach the objective within the scope of work

ICVA considers its added value will be to:

- ⇒ Contribute to strengthen global and regional normative framework and their transformation into actions that adequately reflect diversity considerations;
- ⇒ Feed action, policy development and multi-stakeholders’ partnerships by sharing peer to peer experiences, challenges, lessons learnt and good practices.

6. Responsibilities and examples of activities

ICVA diversity work will be led by the ICVA Director of Policy. However, progress will be achieved only if all the staff contributes and incorporates it in his/her ongoing work.

With few additional investments, the priority is to build better upon existing/ongoing work. ICVA participation to Fora such as the OPAG and its results group s(i.e. the result group on accountability to affected populations) as well as GenCaP and PSEA Senior Advisors Group enables ICVA to reflect diversity consideration during the revision of draft relevant policies.

In addition, few webinars and exchanges will be facilitated by ICVA among NGOs and other stakeholders (States, UN Agencies, etc). Already in late 2019, ICVA will start facilitating regular consultations between UNICEF and NGOs on the partnership and the rights of the child in humanitarian settings. The 2020 ICVA Workplan will further cover dedicated activities to diversity consideration, as for example two yearly webinars for the members on PSEA and a webinar on the Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action. Further reflection will take place on how diversity considerations can be better reflected and supported in each of the focus areas.

Moreover, progress on diversity considerations is to be pursued through a nexus approach (peace- humanitarian-development. It is also a subject on which a lot can be learnt by local and national actors. Therefore, diversity considerations will also be included in ICVA’s work on the nexus and localisation with some subjects considered in specific in planned regional meetings.

More thinking is needed on how to address violence based on sexual identity and orientation. While none of ICVA members tolerates such violence, they might not always agree on prioritizing the issue. In similar lines, more thinking is needed on how to support and relief the impact of humanitarian crisis in the elderly.

All activities will be constructed in close collaboration with members that have specific expertise and sharing practices by national and local actors, including women, youth and disability organizations will be prioritized in ICVA’s related webinars and other activities. ICVA will also invest in resource mobilization to expand such activities into more consolidated research and regional work.



Annex One

Anti-discrimination in international law

Universal Instruments

- Charter of the United Nations, 1945
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966
- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, 1965
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 1979
- Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2008
- Statute of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, 1993
- Statute of the International Tribunal for Rwanda, 1994
- Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, 1998
- The Four Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949
- The 1977 Protocols Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 *****
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948
- Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination based on Religion or Belief, 1981
- Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, 1992

Regional Instruments

- African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights, 1981
- African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, 1990
- American Convention on Human Rights, 1969
- Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women, 1994
- Inter-American Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities, 1999
- European Convention on Human Rights, 1950
- European Social Charter, 1961, and European Social Charter (Revised), 1996
- Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, 1995