

SANDSTONE CONSULTING



A GLOBAL NGO NETWORK
FOR PRINCIPLED AND EFFECTIVE
HUMANITARIAN ACTION

Authors

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A blue-tinted background image showing several hands of different skin tones reaching up to hold a globe. The hands are positioned around the globe, with some fingers resting on it. The overall tone is blue, matching the design's color palette.

2015-2018 IMPACT STUDY REPORT

FEBRUARY 2019



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SECTION 1

Executive Summary

This impact evaluation refers to ICVA's 2015-2018 strategy. The report has been structured to align with how ICVA worked in practice, while staying true to the selected focus areas; Forced Displacement, Humanitarian Partnerships, Humanitarian Financing, Humanitarian Coordination. The methodology comprised interviews and document reviews, also drawing from interim impact studies conducted previously. The main findings are presented under the main work areas used to frame the key evaluation questions.

Increasing NGO understanding of the humanitarian sector and its policies

ICVA's initiatives to build NGO understanding included publications and briefings, learning streams, digital communications, conferences and meetings. The initiatives have covered a wide range of topics considered a priority in the sector, such as the Grand Bargain, the Global Compact on Refugees, localisation, shrinking space for civil society, sexual exploitation and abuse, humanitarian financing, quality standards, the Nexus, and 'The New Way of Working'.

ICVA's **publications and briefing papers** were clearly valued, as they analysed and translated complex topics into a form in which they were digestible and applicable for organisations. The interview data collected is supported by (former) survey data showing over 75% of NGOs considered this part of ICVA's work 'very important'. The products were available as public goods, so impact almost certainly went beyond just NGOs. ICVA's **digital communications**, with an average 3,234 direct recipients for each monthly bulletin (covering all stakeholders), a 20% open rate (*annual average*) and 2606 twitter followers (*as at January 2019*), are further indicators of reach in absolute terms.

The learning streams were viewed by respondents as interactive, allowing exchange and cross learning between those engaging. With a total of 5,308 live participants and 25,805 recording views (*cumulative, as at January 2019*), learning was stimulated in both real-time and afterwards.

Annual Conferences and **General Assemblies** also provided opportunities for exchange, formally and informally with strong attendance rates by NGOs.

Conclusion: ICVA's work in building understanding of NGOs has been well aligned with the strategy, has moved with the time, and is widely utilised and appreciated. Reaching greater numbers of small, less well-resourced NGOs, located in places closer to humanitarian crises continues to be a challenge. While ICVA has clearly reached many people, it is difficult to know the degree to which ICVA's work has built organisation-wide understanding or just the understanding of a limited number of interested engaged people in any given organisation.

Increasing NGO engagement in policy & advocacy in key issues related to ICVA's focus areas

ICVA has stimulated NGO engagement, utilising its links to core processes in which it has a coordination role, its standing presence in inter-agency bodies (e.g. the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC)) and through its focus on specific priority initiatives. This approach has ensured that the 'engagement' has always had a purpose, rather than access, or presence for the sake of it.

On **Forced Displacement**, ICVA has had an important role around the UNHCR-NGO annual consultations, using its historical relationship with the UNHCR to shape these events. It has taken some effort to keep this event a true 'consultation' and preventing it from becoming just a 'conference' or 'networking event'.

Additionally, ICVA has been a key contributor to the New York Declaration and Comprehensive Refugee Response

Framework negotiations; consultations in the Global Compacts on Refugees and for Migration and co-organised the IOM-NGO Humanitarian Consultations.

In all cases ICVA has reached out and facilitated significant NGO participation.

ICVA is the co-chair with OCHA of the IASC **Humanitarian Financing** Task Team with over 20 NGOs active in informing this process.

ICVA's work on **humanitarian coordination** has included active engagement into all IASC architecture bodies (Principals, Deputies forum, Emergency Directors Group (EDG), focal points and Humanitarian Financing Task Team (HFTT)) and promotion of a dialogue with humanitarian leadership (Resident Coordinators (RCs), Humanitarian

Coordinators (HCs), Deputy Humanitarian Coordinators (DHCs), OCHA leadership, Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC), etc.). ICVA has been observed or perceived as actively seeking broad input from its NGO members to inform its positions and interactions towards those it engages with. Through the NGO fora Support Programme, launched at the beginning of 2017, ICVA enables networks to engage in ICVA focus areas.

Related to **Humanitarian Partnership**, ICVA has run a number of well attended regional consultations in the Asia Pacific region from 2016-2018 on numerous issues. In Africa this has been more ad-hoc, linking in to debates within regional institutions such as the African Union (AU), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the Economic Community of West and African States (ECOWAS). Despite earlier disruptions in staffing, activities in the Middle East and North African region (MENA) have grown through 2018, including exploring partnerships with the Arab league, the King Salman Center and high level representation in Egypt and Tunisia. In addition to regional work, ICVA supported the IFRC, UNHCR-NGO dialogues on Partnership.

Conclusion: ICVA's engagement work combines a systematic 'backbone anchored in its long-term link with the UN and other international platforms with more time-bound engagement on priority issues and processes. Over the period, ICVA has had considerable success in facilitating engagement for a diverse range of NGOs and in linking networks with networks. High calibre staff are perceived by peers to have been key to the network's successes. ICVA's links with and efforts to include organisations located in countries affected by crisis (compared with other networks) is recognised, and ICVA is clear to say it aspires to do more in this area. Regional hubs have been 'force-multipliers' for engagement and still have potential to go further. Throughout the 2015-2018 period ICVA has continued to diversify the range of global, regional and national actors and influencers they engage with. This is positive, while at the same time represents a potential risk of ICVA spreading its limited resources too thinly and/or diluting impact.

Influencing key debates and policies related to ICVA's focus areas

The World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) appears to have had a profound impact on ICVA's work and standing in the sector. ICVA was involved from planning through to shaping the outcomes of the WHS and has been heavily involved in a number of the main follow-up workstreams.

In the areas of **Forced Displacement** ICVA has actively engaged with and constructively challenged the UNHCR Executive & Standing Committee generating close to 100 statements developed together with NGOs. They have increased NGO participation in and transparency of the UNHCR and IOM leadership appointment processes. ICVA has facilitated NGO influence through convening and preparing meetings related to the UNHCR Dialogue on International Protection, the 20th Anniversary of the Guiding Principles (2018) and the UNHCR work on Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) Policy Consultation.

The IASC and IASC EDG have been the main channel for influence related to **Humanitarian Coordination** with clear input on a number of country specific issues such as the activation and deactivation of system wide Level 3 emergency classification. Examples include the Ebola response in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the Syria context, Yemen and on a number of policy issues such as the development of the new Scale-Up system and the Terms of Reference (TORs) for the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT). ICVA's work in mobilising a rapid response to new policy proposals around sexual exploitation in 2018 is one powerful example of ICVA's influence and convening power.

ICVA's work on **Humanitarian Financing** has included initiatives such as the Less Paper More Aid campaign, a forerunner to their involvement in the Grand Bargain. In addition to influencing a range of processes and shaping dialogue, ICVA is the co-convenor of the workstream to harmonise and simplify donor reporting requirements, producing templates and having run pilots showing encouraging results. ICVA is also member of the pooled funding working group.

While ICVA has been effective in its policy and influencing work, getting a critical mass of input, it has at times been challenging to reach all members and be able to generate meaningful, yet still representative messages from a diverse and, understandably, not always united group.

Conclusion: While it is difficult to precisely describe the impact of ICVA's influence work, considering the evidence, it is reasonable to conclude that a number of opportunities and messages may not have happened with the same quality, had ICVA not existed. ICVA has been collaborative in its approach, with its role shifting between being an analyser, coordinator, convenor and trusted broker. Engaging in such diverse ways and tying so many elements together with a relatively small and dispersed team, is an impressive achievement. Until now ICVA has been mainly a conduit for collective voices of NGOs rather than having an independent voice of its own. Developing a representative, meaningful position with many members is always a challenge and ICVA, unsurprisingly, occasionally finds itself in tension with positions of some members. ICVA's deepening regional presence and trend towards 'localisation' will probably require ICVA to consider the degree to which they build local and regional influencing actions to complement their global work.

Connecting policies and practices through the strengthening of field-level NGO fora

Encouraging and supporting coordination among NGOs has been part of ICVA's priorities throughout the period but it ramped up in July 2017, when ICVA began implementing a two-year programme funded by DG ECHO of the European Commission. The project is aimed at increasing capacity and impact of in-country NGO fora.

ICVA has implemented a number of complementary initiatives comprising a global support desk, convening regional workshops and having selected direct engagement through missions in Asia (Myanmar, Bangladesh, Afghanistan), Africa (South Sudan, Nigeria, Central African Republic, Mali, Senegal, Ethiopia & Cameroon) and MENA (Yemen, Lebanon, Turkey & Syria).

The **global support desk** has been substantially used by at least 35 fora for governance and joint advocacy resources as well as dealing with specific requests. The regional workshops have been aimed at cross/peer

learning and have been well attended. The **direct engagement** has ranged from mainly connecting fora with resources, to ongoing support to fora development, to directly collaborating in the creation of new fora. Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh was a stand-out example of this direct collaboration, but there were also other compelling examples such as support to fora in Dakar, West Africa.

Conclusion: ICVA's approach of being a global resource for best practice, enabling cross-learning regionally and direct support have been complementary. Focus on this work seems justified and consistent with the post-WHS trends towards localisation. The ECHO contract in 2017 and 2018 was key in taking this work to the current scale and continuation of funding will be key for continuation; especially if there is a desire to increase direct support along the lines of the Bangladesh example, potentially requiring significant internal capacity.

M&E Recommendations

In addition to the impact study findings and conclusions the report includes specific recommendations related to future monitoring & evaluation (M&E):

1. Use findings from this study to review and potentially adapt the theory of change
2. Reduce the frequency of impact evaluations from the current annual cycle and focus member surveys on key programmatic topics
3. Map out data collection processes for log-frame indicators
4. Encourage more routine use of the Customer-Relationship Management (CRM) tool
5. Nominate a monitoring and evaluation lead

Strategic Reflection

The report concludes by suggesting several topics for medium-term reflection:

1. Long-term positioning of ICVA considering the increasing number of networks emerging
2. The degree to which ICVA should become more 'positional' in its own right
3. Evolution of ICVA at the regional and field level
4. The importance of direct support to NGO fora and operations
5. Balancing the diversification of actions with traditional areas of work, in line with capacity

SECTION 2

Introduction

Overview of this study

This impact study has been carried out in accordance with the project description, methodology, and evaluation questions agreed in the initial workplan:

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

BACKGROUND

ICVA is a global network of non-governmental organisations whose mission is to make humanitarian action more principled and effective by working collectively and independently to influence policy and practice. The network's Secretariat is based in Geneva, Switzerland, with regional representation in Africa (Nairobi), Asia (Bangkok) and the MENA region (Amman). The network has over 100 members and 3 observers, among INGOs as well as regional, national and local NGOs.

ICVA is completing the term of the 2015-2018 strategic plan and intends to take stock of the impact it achieved during this 4-year period and specifically for the year 2018.

KEY QUESTION

What was the overall impact of ICVA's work against the priority areas & objectives of the 2015-2018 strategic plan?

SCOPE

1. Compiling the initiatives and activities between 2015-2018
2. Seeking external stakeholder perceptions about ICVA's role in echoing NGO perspectives and shaping humanitarian policies
3. Updating a selection of case studies of ICVA's policy engagement & member development
4. Providing lessons learned & guidance to inform M&E approach for the next strategic plan

OUT OF SCOPE

1. Assessing individual staff performance
2. Full individual evaluations of initiatives
3. Reviewing and/or providing input for the 2019-2021 strategic plan
4. Comprehensive review of the organisational setup

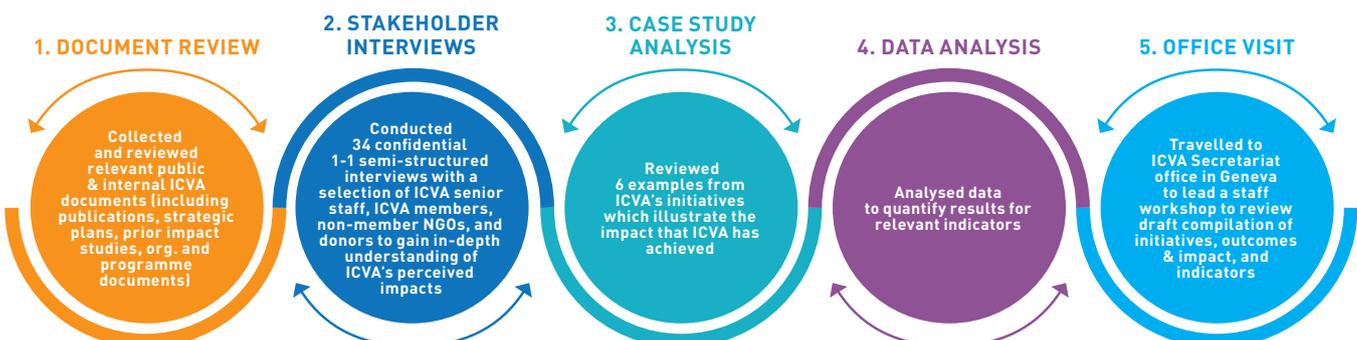
ASSUMPTIONS

- The methodology for this study will be re-designed by Sandstone using the previous impact studies methodologies as a reference only.
- Evaluation questions will primarily be formulated based on the strategic plan priority areas & objectives as well as ICVA's overall mission
- Evidence of outcomes & impact will include qualitative examples, quantitative indicators, and perceptions.
- Quality and delivery against the planned timeline is dependent on the ICVA team and identified interviewees supporting the work in a timely way with due regard for Sandstones obligations.

It is important to clarify that this study has focused on the impact achieved by the ICVA network through the work of the ICVA Secretariat, rather than the collective impact achieved by ICVA's members.

The study comprises a document review, interviews with main stakeholders and focus group discussions with ICVA staff.¹

METHODOLOGY

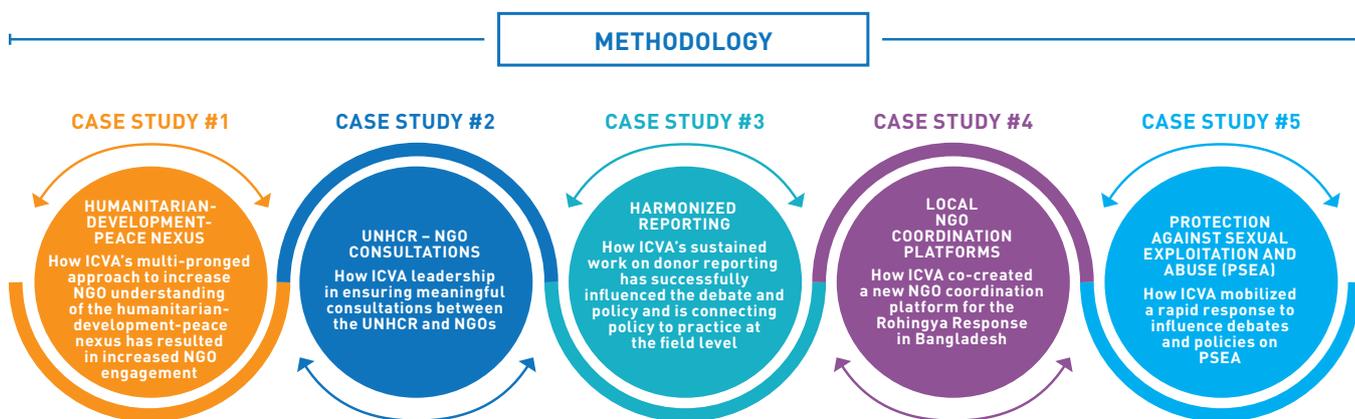


¹ A decision was taken to not include a survey as part of the methodology. Prior survey data and the notes from the '100 members 100 days' interviews were utilised instead.

The breakdown of interviews per stakeholder group is shown below. The detailed list of interviewees is provided in Annex II.

RESPONDENT GROUP	# OF INTERVIEW COMPLETED
ICVA BOARD	2
ICVA MANAGEMENT & STAFF	8
ICVA MEMBERS	9
NON-MEMBERS & NGO FORA	3
CURRENT & PROSPECTIVE DONORS	2
UN AGENCIES	6
OTHER	4
TOTAL	34

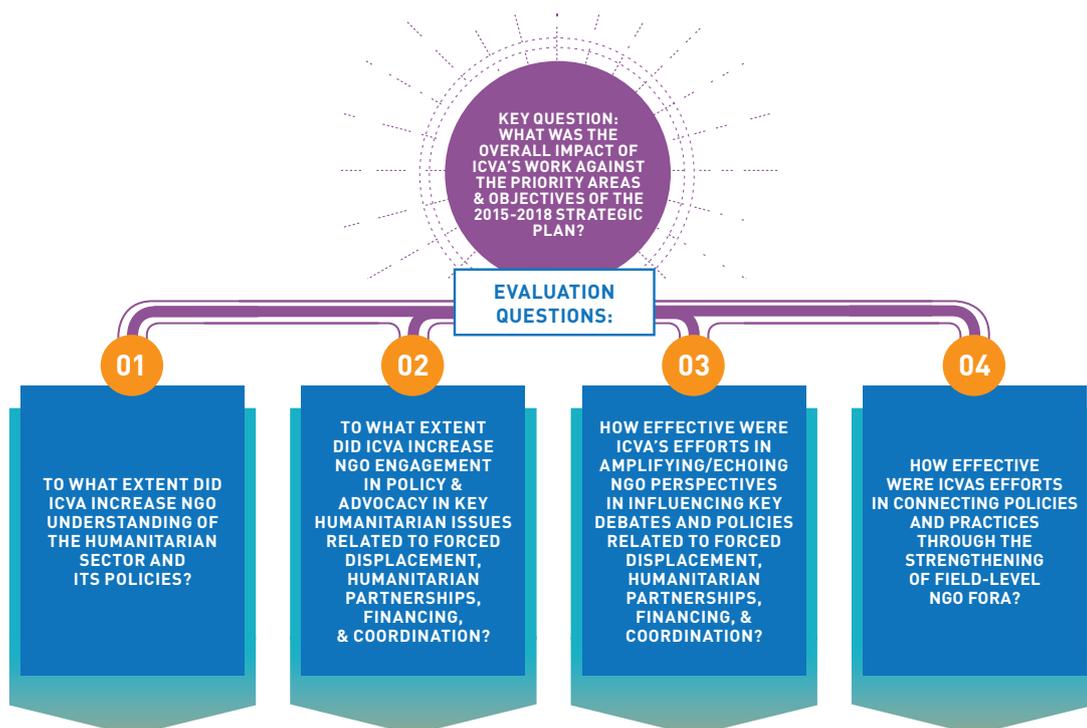
Sandstone Consulting and ICVA identified the following case studies, which were developed with input from individual ICVA staff involved.



SECTION 2

Evaluation Framework

This review relied on an evaluation framework that best captured the way ICVA delivered its programmes over the four year period, rather than the theoretical framework of the original strategy.²



¹ A decision was taken to not include a survey as part of the methodology. Prior survey data and the notes from the '100 members 100 days' interviews were utilised instead.

EVALUATION QUESTION – UNPACKED	METHODS
1. TO WHAT EXTENT DID ICVA INCREASE NGO UNDERSTANDING OF THE HUMANITARIAN SECTOR AND ITS POLICES?	
1.1 What initiatives did ICVA take to improve NGO understanding of the sector/policies?	Documents
1.2 How many NGOs benefited from these initiatives and in what ways?	Documents Interviews Data Request
1.3 How do a sample of member NGOs perceive ICVA's role in increasing their level of understanding of the sector/policies?	Interviews Case Study
1.4 What other evidence helps describe the effectiveness of these initiatives?	Documents Interviews
2. TO WHAT EXTENT DID ICVA INCREASE NGO ENGAGEMENT IN POLICY & ADVOCACY IN KEY HUMANITARIAN ISSUES RELATED TO FORCED DISPLACEMENT, HUMANITARIAN PARTNERSHIP, FINANCING, & COORDINATION?	
2.1 What initiatives did ICVA take to support NGOs (and NGO fora) to increase engagement?	Documents
2.2 How many NGOs & NGO fora participated in these initiatives?	Documents Interviews Data Request
2.3 How do a sample of NGOs, UN agencies, and donors perceive ICVA's role in increasing the level of NGO engagement?	Interviews Case Study
2.4 What other evidence helps describe the effectiveness of these initiatives?	Documents Interviews
3. HOW EFFECTIVE WERE ICVA'S EFFORT IN AMPLIFYING/ECHOING NGO PERSPECTIVES IN INFLUENCING KEY DEBATES AND POLICIES RELATED TO FORCED DISPLACEMENT, HUMANITARIAN PARTNERSHIP, FINANCING, & COORDINATION?	
3.1 What initiatives did ICVA take to amplify/echo NGO perspectives at the regional & global level to influence key debates and policies?	Documents
3.2 How do a sample of NGOs, NGO fora, UN agencies, and donors perceive ICVA's influence through these initiatives?	Interviews Case Study
3.3 What other evidence helps describe the effectiveness of these initiatives?	Documents Interviews
4. HOW EFFECTIVE WERE ICVA'S EFFORT IN CONNECTING POLICIES AND PRACTICES THROUGH THE STRENGTHENING OF FIELD-LEVEL NGO FORA?	
4.1 What initiatives did ICVA take to strengthen organisational capacity & field-level coordination of NGO fora?	Documents
4.2 How many NGO fora benefited and in what ways?	Documents Interviews Data Request
4.3 How do a sample of NGO fora perceive ICVA's role in connecting humanitarian policies and practice at the field-level?	Interviews Case Study
4.4 What other evidence helps describe the effectiveness of these initiatives?	Documents Interviews

Limitations of this study

Several important factors have limited some of this study's findings:

- **Lack of theory of change:** While it has been possible to review the impact and value of individual initiatives and to find some connections between them, it was not possible to map the initiatives in terms of their relevance, complementarity (or redundancy) as parts of an 'ecosystem' of action.³
- **Interpretation of 'impact':** The term 'Impact' can mean different things to different people and so in the context of this review, 'impact' is defined as the degree to which ICVA's action resulted in creating or reinforcing a link in the chain of action, rather than whether that action can ultimately be tracked to impacting the lives of those caught in crisis.
- **Shifting strategy:** ICVA's strategy underwent some reframing and certain programmes were expanded during the strategic period which does not lend itself to a uniform evaluation of impact across the full period with a common reference. The impact studies of 2016 and 2017 also used different reference points which ICVA chose not to replicate for this study.
- **Challenge of attribution:** The impact of ICVA's advocacy and influence in debates and policies is very difficult to assess given the confidential nature of the processes through which governments define their positions for negotiations. In addition, ICVA's advocacy efforts often run in parallel to advocacy efforts by other NGO platforms with similar priorities and ICVA members themselves. In terms of attribution the main consideration was if ICVA had played a meaningful role, not necessarily as the sole actor.
- **Interviewee selection & availability:** Candidates for interviews were identified by the ICVA Secretariat based on their interaction with ICVA during the period of this evaluation. Sandstone was unable to schedule interviews with 13 interviewee candidates.
- **Lack of member survey:** ICVA and Sandstone agreed not to conduct a member survey as part of this impact study due to a sense that ICVA risks creating 'survey fatigue' among members. This decision was made with the acknowledgement that this necessarily limits the ability to quantify the actual value of certain indicators from the log frame that deal with NGO perceptions.⁴
- **Data quality and completeness:** In its analysis, Sandstone has relied heavily on monitoring data which had been collected by ICVA. During the analysis, Sandstone recognised that the data required some clean-up in order to be accurate and that certain data is incomplete due to a lack of consistent use.

³ ICVA recently began a participatory process for staff to develop a set of theories of change which are beginning to inform the implementation of ICVA's 2019-2021 strategy

⁴ Please see the comments in the 2018 Log frame table in Annex III

SECTION 3

Background

ICVA 2015-2018 Strategy

ICVA's vision is 'A world in which crisis-affected populations are effectively protected, assisted and enabled to rebuild their lives and livelihoods with dignity'. Their mission statement positions ICVA as 'A global network of non-governmental organisations whose mission is to make humanitarian action more principled and effective by working collectively and independently to influence policy and practice'

The 2015 strategy was concisely framed under a set of guiding values, ways of working, and four focus areas as follows:

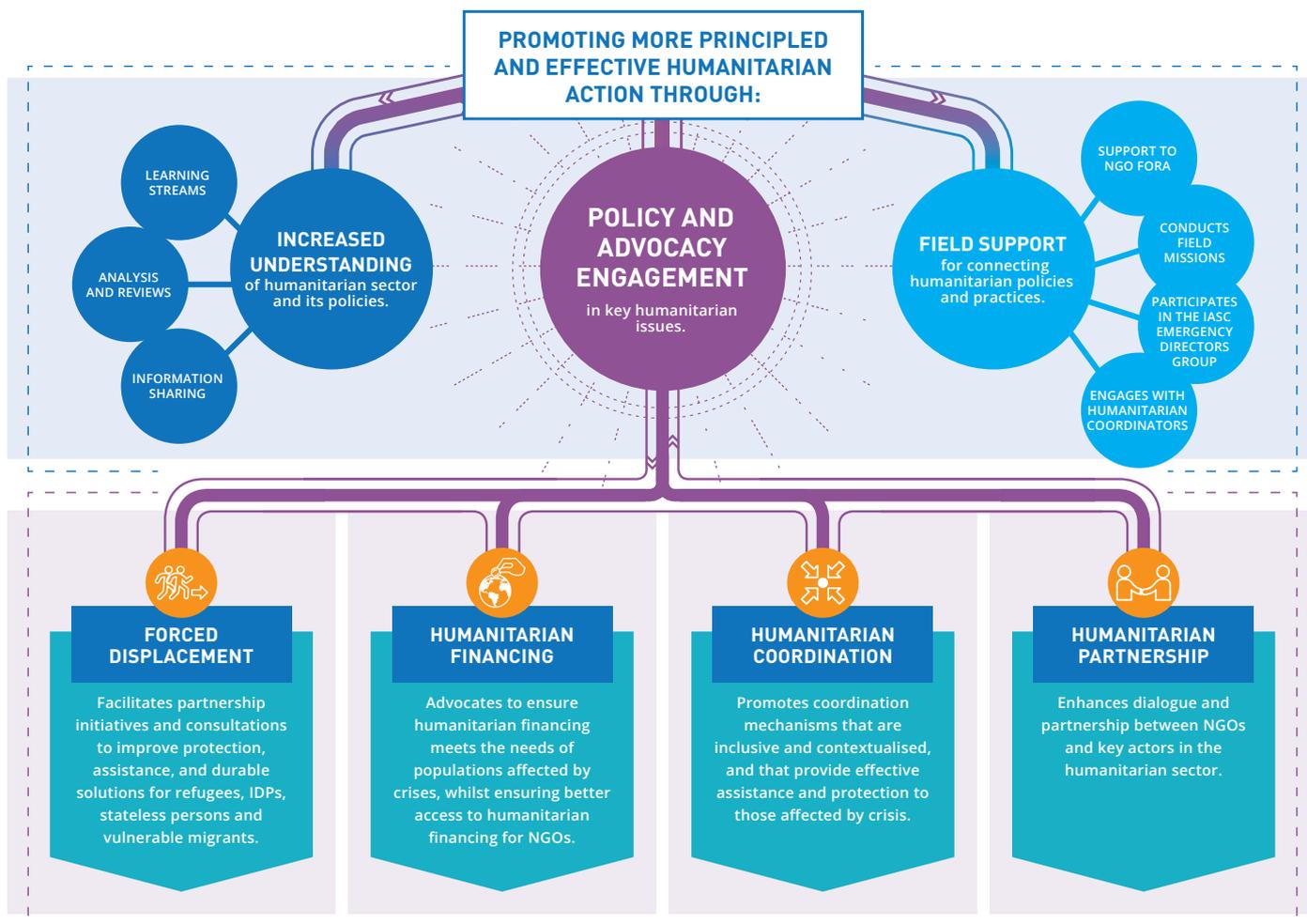
- Forced Displacement
- Humanitarian Partnerships
- Humanitarian Coordination
- Humanitarian Financing

These focus areas were further defined with objectives and actions:

Focus Areas	Objectives	Actions		
1. FORCED DISPLACEMENT	NGOs strengthen protection, assistance and durable solutions for refugees, IDPs, stateless persons and vulnerable migrants.	Support collective NGO advocacy by facilitating statements, positions and action on critical issues pertaining to forced displacement	Improve institutional engagement between NGOs and organizations such as UNHCR by facilitating partnership initiatives and consultations to better serve displaced persons	Influence practice on the ground by promoting improved understanding of and synergy between global policies and operational realities
2. HUMANITARIAN PARTNERSHIPS	NGOs provide leadership in principled humanitarian policy and practice, working in effective partnership with other key humanitarian actors.	Advocate for policies that ensure better partnership approaches for NGOs by engaging in policy development to strengthen partnership approaches in humanitarian work	Support strong NGO partnerships based on the Principles of Partnership by providing platforms for improving NGO partnerships, with particular attention to national NGO capacity support amongst NGOs, UN agencies and other stakeholders	Promote learning and dialogue on humanitarian principles and quality and accountability to foster a humanitarian system with affected populations at the core
3. HUMANITARIAN COORDINATION	NGOs actively influence and engage in humanitarian coordination mechanisms to ensure they are inclusive, contextualised and provide effective assistance and protection of those affected by crisis.	Influence global humanitarian policy on coordination and leadership particularly through the IASC	Influence inter-agency coordination mechanisms at country and regional levels by monitoring coordination activities, and providing constructive analysis and advocacy on NGO participation, particularly by national NGOs	Enhance NGO coordination by supporting regional and country-based NGO coordination bodies through peer-support mechanisms, and analysing and disseminating best practice and relevant resources
4. HUMANITARIAN FINANCING	Humanitarian financing meets the needs of populations affected by crises, and NGOs – particularly national NGOs – understand, influence, and have better access to humanitarian financing.	Influence policy to strengthen financing mechanisms by promoting NGO engagement on IASC finance platforms and other funding mechanisms	Improve NGO access to funding through research, analysis and tracking of NGO experiences (particularly national NGOs) in accessing humanitarian funding and by promoting best practice	Improve NGO understanding of humanitarian financing mechanisms by providing guidance and learning opportunities for NGOs to better resource humanitarian action

In 2016 ICVA reframed the strategic choices around three areas of impact; the central area was 'policy and advocacy and engagement' under which the four original pillars were subordinated.⁵ This was complemented by two other pillars, 'Increasing NGO Understanding' and 'Field Support'. The shift was supported and understood by some, but it did not suit

all people and so things continued to evolve.⁶ In 2017, ICVA significantly expanded its NGO for Support Programme, with support from funding from the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), so that this became a main component of the Field Support pillar, complementing other valuable work.



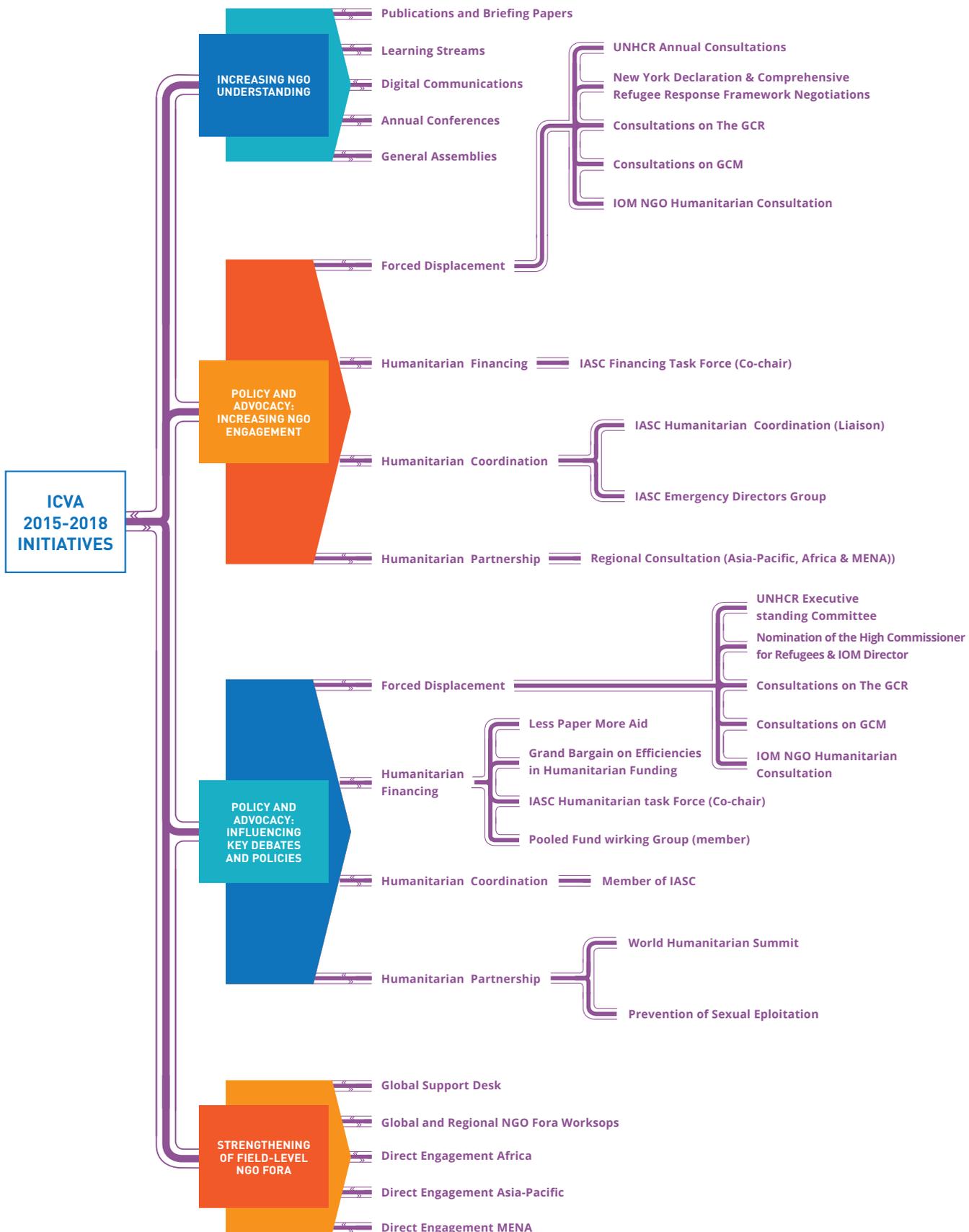
SECTION 3

⁵ This diagram was extracted from 'ICVA at a glance' communication material created in 2017

⁶ While it was always expected the focus areas would overlap at some level, ICVA staff in Geneva and in the regional hubs seemed to struggle to align their work to a particular focus area. Forced displacement, as one of the historical topics of ICVA was quite straightforward, as was the work on Financing; the work on Humanitarian Coordination was clear, but it was multi-layered and so did not fall into a single focus area, while the work on humanitarian Partnerships seemed the most difficult focus area to clearly place.

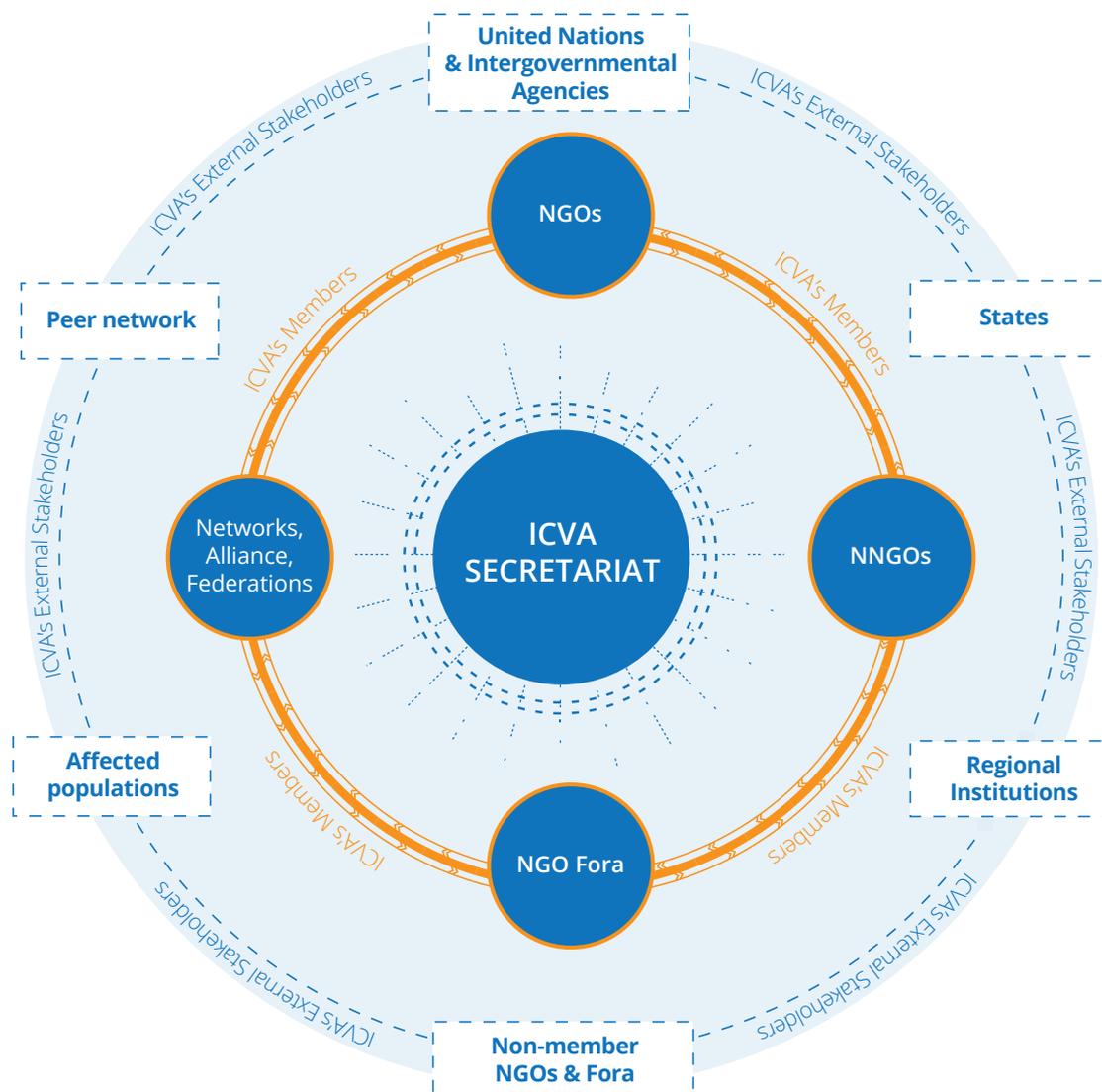
Main Initiatives 2015-2018

The mind-map below shows how ICVA's initiatives align to the evaluation framework used for this study:



Added Value for Stakeholders

The diagrams below shows a simplistic representation of the different groups of stakeholder and the multiple ways that ICVA adds value for these stakeholders.



SECTION 3

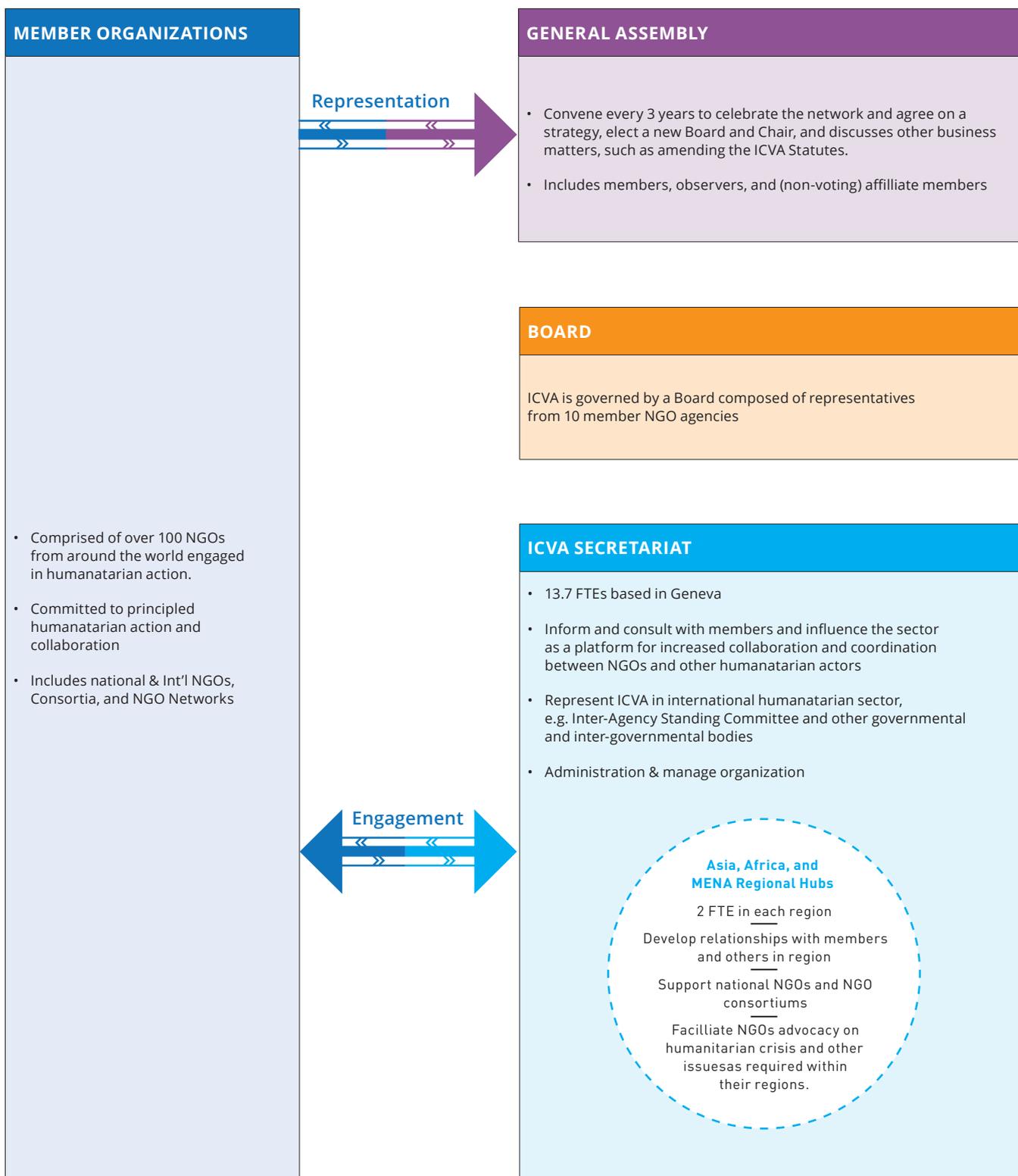
ICVA's Added Value in Humanitarian Action

- A. Trusted broker and convener, enabling two-way interaction between UN/intergovernmental agency policy makers and a broad range of NGOs/Networks, connecting policy to practice and vice versa
- B. A truly global network, informing and engaging diverse, and often excluded NGOs in key international policy issues at a high-level
- C. Provides information, analysis and expert resources for those needing to translate and exchange views on complex policies, standards, initiatives or theoretical ideas into practical guidance
- D. Enables access / opens doors for NGOs and creates space for influence, involvement and exchange at country, regional and global level
- E. Is a trusted actor among NGOS/Fora creating opportunities for multiple actors to speak with a balanced collective voice on key issues
- F. Creates connections to build/strengthen operational capabilities
- G. Provides knowhow and practical support for the creation and running of NGO fora
- H. Creates links within and between organisations and networks, adapting its approach as needed
- I. Provides leadership to support the design, roll out and monitoring of international humanitarian policies and initiatives

Organisational Overview

A simplified representation of ICVA as a membership-based network is shown below, which shows the main structure of the organisation.

ICVA NETWORK



NOTE: FTE counts as December 2018

SECTION 4

Detailed 2015-2018 Findings

This section presents the detailed findings of the study organised under four main pillars of ICVA's programmes. Each section includes: 1) a compilation of ICVA's initiatives and activities between 2015-2018 with the corresponding outcomes and impacts and indicators 2) perspectives of different stakeholder groups with supporting evidence and 3) concluding remarks and case studies which illustrate impact.

Increasing NGO Understanding

The humanitarian sector is complex and constantly evolving. As the patterns of need change, as states and international bodies shift their positions and as civil society innovates new approaches to assist those affected, standards, policies and initiatives are constantly in flux. There is friction, competition and compromise, making it hard for even the most informed organisations to keep track.

Under this pillar, ICVA aims to support NGOs (including both ICVA members and non-members) in increasing their information, knowledge, and understanding of the policies and processes of the humanitarian sector. Increased NGO understanding of policy processes is a necessary pre-requisite for effective NGO engagement in key humanitarian policies. This is particularly true for smaller NGOs working at the local/national level which often have less involvement with the processes.

ICVA's general approach to increasing NGO understanding is to provide learning resources on its website which are open and accessible to the public, in effect creating global public goods intended to benefit the humanitarian sector as a whole. In addition, ICVA creates space, convenes meetings and conferences designed to bring in the voices of NGOs and multiple other stakeholders to learn, debate, share experiences, and/or provides briefings to NGOs on key topics. It should be noted that ICVA's impact on NGO understanding is not restricted to elements mentioned in this section; other pillars of ICVA's work such as "Increasing NGO Engagement" impact understanding, but more as a by-product of necessary step in a process rather than as an objective in itself.

Specific ICVA initiatives which align to this pillar include the following:

- **Publications & briefings:** Providing overviews and summaries of important processes and the latest developments in the humanitarian sector. These papers are based on ICVA's analysis and synthesis and are translated to French, Arabic, and Spanish.
- **Learning streams (webinar series):** Planning and delivery of thematic learning streams, lasting between three to six months, involving a series of 'live' 90-minute webinars, short videos and short briefing papers. Learning streams specifically target NGO audiences, unpacking and discussing the opportunities and challenges faced by NGOs in humanitarian action.
- **Digital communications:** Regular updates on important events and developments in the humanitarian policy agenda (especially with respect to UN bodies), with curated links to additional resources, events, and information.
- **Annual Conferences and General Assembly Meetings**

INCREASING UNDERSTANDING

Initiatives (2015-2018)	Outcomes & Impacts	Indicators
FORCED DISPLACEMENT		
Publications & Briefing Papers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grand Bargain Explained • Global Compact on Refugees • New Way of Working • World Bank and Refugees • Localization Examined • WHS NGO Briefs • NGO Fora Advocacy • Civil Society Space in Hum. Action • The Long Run to Protection Against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse • Learning stream Info sheets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced information asymmetries between NGOs and governments or UN agencies • Provided thought leadership to change narratives to more sophisticated understandings • Available as a public good, increased understanding outside of NGO community (e.g. utilised as a reference within donor, UN, and WB institutions) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8,137 total downloads
Learning Streams (webinar series) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Humanitarian Financing (2016-2017) • Humanitarian Coordination (2017) • Humanitarian-development-peace nexus (2018) • Navigating Change (currently in progress, not included in statistics) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leveled the playing field between NGOs of different capacities • Brought together diverse community of subject matter experts, NGOs, UN, CSO, private sector, and academia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5,308 “live” participants • 25,805 recording views • 69% of participant feedback = “Very useful”
Digital Communications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distributing monthly email Bulletins (English, French, Arabic) • Twitter and LinkedIn social media platforms • Email updates to 9 working groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive information on humanitarian processes and policies • Enabled NGOs to anticipate developments that may impact them, and plan accordingly • Information channeled directly to regional/country level of large organisations • Consolidated calendar of events & trainings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3,234 direct recipients of monthly Bulletin with 20% open rate • 2,606 Twitter followers • 780 LinkedIn followers
20th Anniversary of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (2018) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member of GP20 Steering Committee and Communications Working Group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported oversight of ‘Plan of Action’ implementation and promoted stakeholder engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avg. more than 150 attendees each year (> 80% from NGOs)
UNHCR’s work on IDPs (2018) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convened meetings between UNHCR and ICVA members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exchanged perspectives on the development of updated IDP policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased membership from 86 to 110 members • Majority of voting members present

Stakeholder Perceptions

- **Briefing papers** on the Global Compact on Refugees and the Grand Bargain Explained have been very relevant and timely – each of these publications were downloaded by more than 1,000 people in 2018 and 2017 respectively.
- A few non-NGO interviewees noted that ICVA's **briefing papers & publications** are written concisely and well-edited and are frequently utilised and shared as references by humanitarian actors beyond NGOs, such as Member states, World Bank, and UN staff.
- The interactive nature of the **learning streams** is valued since it gives space to attendees to ask questions related to their own experience and can lead to a hands-on discussion.
- Interviewees from National NGOs stated that the **ICVA Bulletin** is the only way to know what's happening since they often feel side-lined by or outside of the circles of other international actors - "without ICVA we simply wouldn't have this information".
- Multiple ICVA focal points noted that they forward the **ICVA Bulletin** to their wider networks (e.g. to other NGO fora members), reflecting a reach which is wider than the number of direct recipients.
- Some interviewees referred to how ICVA assisted them in building their contextual understanding and made introductions to relevant actors to take this further. These examples imply an impact in building understanding across issues and actors not just through papers and linear communication channels.
- The **Annual Conferences** and **General Assembly** meetings are valued as important opportunities for learning and networking between peer NGOs and networks.

Supporting Evidence

- 33 out of 44 NGOs interviewed in 2018 indicated that the Increased Understanding pillar was "very important" for their organisation (See Annex 1V for complete analysis).
- The mid-strategy review found that 87% of members⁷ felt that being a member of ICVA has contributed somewhat or significantly to their understanding of the humanitarian sector, with responses from smaller NGOs (national and local) scoring the added value higher than the larger (international) NGOs.
- A 2016 membership survey showed that 92% of ICVA members consider that, as a result of their participation in ICVA, their understanding of humanitarian policies have improved.⁸

Conclusion

ICVA's various initiatives to increase NGO understanding have been very well aligned with the 2015-2018 strategy, in particular the priority areas of Forced Displacement, Humanitarian Financing, Humanitarian Partnership, and Humanitarian Coordination.

Reaching ICVA's ideal target audience of smaller NGOs is a challenge, even online mechanisms have limitations given connectivity constraints and limited capacity of smaller NGOs in terms of time or background to absorb the more specialised information. Meanwhile, many large NGOs have access to other means to increase their understanding of the humanitarian sector and related policy issues.⁹ Importantly, ICVA's approach has been to ensure the same key topics or themes are "carried forward" and linked across the various initiatives (for example, the topic of Navigating the Nexus initially was examined through a briefing paper and subsequently became a webinar series and the overarching theme of the 2018 Annual Conference). This linkage is helpful in furthering NGO understanding since it provides multiple

channels for NGOs to benefit and also helps to raise the overall level of interest and awareness in the topic in the broader humanitarian ecosystem.

Previous surveys (as noted above) and impact studies show strong evidence that ICVA's initiatives to increase NGO understanding have been well received and useful to ICVA's NGO members. In addition, the feedback received about the content of ICVA's Bulletins and briefing paper publications show that the insights and information generated by ICVA is also sufficiently relevant and timely in order to facilitate NGO engagement in policy processes. Increasing the number of languages in which documents are available would no doubt increase the geographical and cultural reach of publications.

A caveat to the clearly positive trend indicated by the findings is that it is difficult to know how much ICVA's work has increased NGO understanding at the organisation level rather than at the level of individual people within NGOs.

⁷ The mid-strategy review survey yielded a total of 37 members responses

⁸ The 2016 membership survey had a 38% response rate

⁹ There are a number of virtual learning initiatives, offering intensive, in-depth learning initiatives, (including BuildingaBetterResponse.com; ALNAP; Bond; Humanitarian Leadership Academy; Disaster Ready and Harvard Humanitarian Initiative)

CASE STUDY #1

Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus

How ICVA's multi-pronged approach to increase NGO understanding of the humanitarian-development-peace Nexus has resulted in increased NGO engagement.

Overview

The Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus – New Way of Working is one of the main outputs of the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit, where ICVA has been considerably contributing, bringing its members' views at the highest level. It represents a major change in the UN and Government approaches toward Humanitarian Development and Peace affairs. Major changes, in Humanitarian affairs or in other sectors impacting humanitarian affairs, are a priority for ICVA.

ICVA has been one of the main drivers of the current interest of NGOs on the subject of the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus. Over the last two years, ICVA has included the topic of the Nexus in various initiatives, including publications, webinars, working groups, regional workshops, and 2018 Annual Conference. ICVA's common objective for these initiatives has been to ensuring that the NGOs have sufficient information to understand the Nexus process and its many interconnections, so that NGOs are duly engaged in the process and are able to influence it with their views and experience. As a result, more and more NGOs are now actively involved in the process, through ICVA and/or independently.

Details

ICVA has worked in a range of ways to keep its NGO members abreast of the Nexus changes, preparing them to understand and equip themselves to navigate it and influence it.

In 2017, ICVA published an online briefing paper on "The New Way of Working" with analysis of the opportunities and risks associated.

Since 2016, ICVA has been active in the Grand Bargain Workstream 10, which is dedicated to strengthening engagement between humanitarian and development actors in order to better deal with protracted crises and shrink humanitarian needs over the long term.

ICVA's 2018 Annual Conference provided NGO attendees the opportunity to interact with development and peace actors and hear from double or triple-mandated agencies on their experience of working in various humanitarian contexts. Participants had the opportunity to hear about policies related to the UN, the World Bank and the peace sector, how they are working towards a more collaborative approach when working in the Nexus and how NGOs are best placed to share their expertise and knowledge with policy platforms.

Also in 2018, ICVA produced a webinar series "Demystifying the Humanitarian, Development and Peace Nexus" which had a total of 1,818 'live' participants. The sessions have been viewed online more than 5,000 times.

ICVA has also played multiple prominent roles in facilitating NGO engagement with the UN, intergovernmental agencies and stakeholders by:

- ensuring wide NGO participation in and representing the views of NGOs within leading global humanitarian-development-peace Nexus bodies (such as the Grand Bargain workstream);
- relaying between UN- (mainly IASC-) led bodies and NGOs;
- briefing NGOs on new developments (ad-hoc or through the working group list-serve);
- supporting NGOs at the regional and national level;
- ensuring liaison with the RC/HCs is real, honest and regular at the country-level.

As a result of ICVA's work:

- NGOs are regularly informed about the process, receive the main documentation for feedbacks and for information. They review the documents internally, debate on it among peers, share information and reactions and decide positioning, both as individual NGOs or as a group;
- NGOs are invited to the sessions of the community of practice on the Nexus (CoPN), a body embracing UN and NGOs, created to ensure peer-to-peer exchanges among practitioners dealing with Nexus related issues on their daily work;
- NGOs receive ICVA's analysis on the subject and have an open channel to pose questions, request for further details or analysis;
- A dedicated working group for NGOs is established to ensure that the channel is open and accessible to interested members.

Policy & Advocacy: Increasing NGO Engagement

Under this pillar, ICVA aims to facilitate NGO engagement providing access to the complex range of platforms, fora and contact points that comprise the humanitarian sector network; in particular with respect to the 2015-2018 Strategy priority areas of Forced Displacement, Partnership, Coordination, and Financing. Engagement is a prerequisite for influence, so this pillar is about **structured and systematic access**, where the following pillar is about **influencing processes and policies (ie how engagement is used)**. There is some natural overlap between these pillars but the overarching objective of ICVA's work in this area is to enable diverse NGOs to work collectively and independently to engage at national, regional, and global levels (both directly and using ICVA as a channel for their collective voices).

ICVA has a long history of engagement and seems to have developed a standing as a trusted broker in humanitarian circles, able to convene and open doors, where others might not be able. ICVA's general approach to increasing NGO engagement is to use this standing to advocate for and enable diverse NGO inclusion (especially smaller and national NGOs which are often excluded from consultation processes), to convene forums of NGOs and policymakers and connect NGOs directly with policymakers, and to serve as a broker to formulate and convey collective NGO perspectives to policymakers.

Specific ICVA initiatives which align most closely to this pillar include the following:

- Co-organising and facilitating NGO participation to the **UNHCR- NGO Annual Consultations** and contributing NGO perspectives to other UNHCR consultations such as the **Structure Dialogue**
- **IOM NGO Humanitarian Consultations** focusing on policy and expanded to focus on partnerships between IOM and frontline humanitarian NGOs, and addressing important challenges
- Shaping the processes and participating in leadership of country-level engagement in the development of the **Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework** and **Global Compact on Refugees** and **Global Compact for Migration**
- Liaising with UN bodies (e.g. **Inter-Agency Standing Committee bodies (Principals, Deputies Forum, EDG, focal points) Humanitarian Coordinators**) to support NGO engagement on behalf of ICVA members

INCREASING ENGAGEMENT

Initiatives (2015-2018)	Outcomes & Impacts	Indicators
FORCED DISPLACEMENT		
<p>UNHCR Annual NGO Consultations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-organised 3-day events: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2015: In pursuit of solutions 2016: Youth, the Future is Now 2017: CRRF process 2018: Putting People First 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provided an important forum for large volume of NGOs and UNHCR to network, dialogue and exchange views with UNHCR as equal partnerst 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 500 participants / 86 countries (2015) ~600 participants / 90 countries / 300 organisations, including 40 refugee youth (2016) >500 participants (2017) 523 participants / 287 organisations / 88 countries, including refugee representatives (2018) 66% of evaluation responses were positive (2018)
<p>New York Declaration & Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework negotiations (2017-2018)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivered regular inputs to the co-facilitators and States Co-convended the Civil Society Action Committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instrumental in the set-up of the UNHCR-NGO-IFRC Reference Group on the CRRF, bringing together UNHCR, IFRC and major NGO consortia and networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action Committee included 30 diverse civil society organisations
<p>Consultations for the Global Compact on Refugees (2018)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Represented NGOs in six rounds of consultations with UNHCR Co-chaired panel on 'whole-of-society' approach. Regional Engagement in Uganda Member state briefings (NGOs Forward) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocated for meaningful consultations with NGOs in order to ensure that the Compact was informed by their direct experience of the lived realities of refugees. Ensured the compact included refugee voices, refugee access to information, and the specific vulnerabilities of women, girls, and children, as well as people with disabilities Provided specific recommendations for the Programme of Action, which informed an integral part of the Global Compact on Refugees Principles of Partnership referenced in final text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20 NGO statements delivered 102 NGOs participated in ICVA-led consultation effort (incl. 35 members)
<p>Consultations for the Global Compact for Migration (2018)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-convended the Civil Society Action Committee Bilateral briefings provided to several governments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensured that civil society was informed, involved, and heard throughout the process Amplified civil society's strategy, content, and political work around the Global Compact for migration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 Civil Society statements on negotiations of the GCM 6 member state briefings/meetings on the GCM Spoke at 8 major events
<p>IOM NGO Humanitarian Consultations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jointly planning, organising, and participating in annual consultations on key themes: Principles for Humanitarian action (Geneva, 2015) Partnership (Geneva, 2016) Complementarity, coherence, and collaboration (Nairobi, 2017) Internal displacement (Geneva, 2018) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established and institutionalised a new platform for discussion between IOM and NGOs, including the first regional consultation for IOM Created a unique opportunity for IOM and current and potential NGO partners to come together and engage in strategic dialogue, explore new ways of working together, and build better partnerships to improve operational response Showcased successful partnerships between IOM and NGOs in the Ukraine, South Sudan, Turkey, and Colombia Participated in peer conversations with candidates for IOM Secretary General 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 76 participants from more than 40 NGOs and 17 countries (2015) 98 participants attended, including 76 rep-representatives of 46 NGOs in 18 countries (2016) 74 participants, including 45 representatives of 33 NGOs predominantly from East Africa region (2017)

INCREASING ENGAGEMENT

Initiatives (2015-2018)	Outcomes & Impacts	Indicators
HUMANITARIAN FINANCING		
IASC Humanitarian Financing Task Team (co-chair with OCHA / CERF) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convened the 'Friends of the Dialogue', an informal group of NGOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brings together NGOs, UN agencies, IOM, the World Bank, ICRC, and IFRC to discuss and act upon common challenges in humanitarian financing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • >20 NGOs active
HUMANITARIAN COORDINATION		
Humanitarian Leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hosted meetings in Geneva between Humanitarian Coordinators, OCHA Leadership, and the NGO community • Involved in HC selection process (applying criteria, interviewing) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brought NGO community views to shape regional policy and created dialogue for sharing sensitive information, ensuring common understanding, and advocacy, including NGOs who don't have access at the national level • Advocated for NNGO fora to have a seat at HCT and contributed to presence of NNGO in Chad and CAR • Increased accountability of HC leadership and advocacy to NGO community 	
IASC Emergency Directors Group <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitated input for annual HC appraisals and operations reviews • Performed study on 'Role of Deputy HC' • Consultations with NGO fora prior to each EDG meeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendations to inform collective discussion and decisions associated with the DHC role within the humanitarian coordination system • Advocated to raise certain contexts in the EDG agenda 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 180 survey responses for 21 HC appraisals, incl. 36 NNGOs (2018)
HUMANITARIAN PARTNERSHIP		
Regional Consultations (Asia-Pacific) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2016: Engaged regional members in WHS • 2017: Global commitments and national action, partnered with ADRRN • 2018: NGO Partnerships Week (cofounded by ICVA and OCHA, held in Bangkok) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brought together national actors from the region for the first time • Brought together perspectives to flesh out localisation themes • Dialogues on 'nexus' and changing modes of response in region with increased gov't involvement and leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • >100 participants (2017), including 16 National/Regional NGO Fora • >150 participants (2018)
Regional Consultations (Africa) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefings/meetings with ECOWAS, African Union, IGAD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connected to the dialogues, debates, and decisions taking place in key regional institutions (e.g. ECOWAS humanitarian strategy, IGAD humanitarian agency 'Machakos process', AU Hum Agency, and thematic year on refugee returns and IDPs) 	
UNHCR-IFRC-NGO Structured Dialogue on Partnership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Country missions (2016) • HIAS & UNHCR annual survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Held country missions to assess quality of partnership and identify improvements to collaboration between UNHCR and NGO partners • Supported conduct NGO Survey to solicit field-level partner feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 26 NGO representatives in Greece (2016) • 44 Latin American NGOs in El Salvador (2016)

Stakeholder Perceptions

- Compared to other IASC members, ICVA is considered to be providing more **national NGOs** a channel of access, through which they can contribute to IASC discussions. ICVA's reach to those closest to crises, is considered by those interviewed from the UN to be greater than that perceived from some of the other alliances engaged with the IASC.
- ICVA is strengthening NGOs' engagement with national governments and regional actors such as the Arab League, African Union or IGAD. It has connected NGOs to policy-making dialogues that they weren't otherwise a part of and connected NGO members to the dialogues, debates, and decisions taking place in key regional institutions while also linking in other local actors. This has not been uniform due to gaps in staffing and the learning process at the regional hub level, but the perception of progress was clear.
- Many smaller NGOs lack capacity to monitor policy processes and rely on ICVA's supportive leadership to stimulate meaningful engagement.
- NGOs value the way ICVA has increased transparency of UN processes (NB: UN stakeholders also appreciate ICVA's role in holding them accountable for seeking NGO input)
- Donors, intergovernmental and UN bodies rely on ICVA to convene NGOs for input and ICVA is recognised as the "one stop shop" for organising consultations or discussions with the NGO sector, including its Global South members. ICVA also has potential to link UN bodies with organisations (and vice versa) in a way that might not otherwise happen (e.g. NGOs that have emerged in response to the Middle East/Syria crises, largely unaware of the global humanitarian system).
- UNHCR appreciates ICVA's ability to connect to over 100 different NGOs, particularly NGOs based in the Global South, to ensure discussions on NGO concerns.

Supporting Evidence

- Having been part of the initial consultation World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) processes in 2014 & 2015, ICVA's role shifted in 2016 to supporting the NGO application process, shaping the actual event and ultimately in coordinating statements related to the summit outputs. ICVA gained recognition as a key representative of the NGO community through its involvement in the WHS process.¹⁰ Some interviewed considered this as a step change in ICVA's standing as a global network and interlocutor.
- The annual UNHCR-NGO Partnership Survey shows a four-year trend of increasingly favorable assessments of the UNCHR-NGO partnership by NGOs.¹¹
- UNHCR invited ICVA to formally support the Global Compact on Refugees consultation sessions.
- There are examples where ICVA has included individuals from affected populations such as refugee youth and refugee-led organisations in UNHCR-NGO consultations. These are limited but symbolic and sincere attempt to go beyond just dealing with NGOs, a layer removed from people affected by crisis.
- Mid-strategy review findings:
 - a) facilitation of NGO engagement in policy processes was judged very positively as 60 % of survey respondents felt that their ability to more actively/more efficiently engage & influence humanitarian policies has improved somewhat or significantly as a result of their engagement in ICVA. Smaller members were more positive in their judgement of ICVA's impact on their engagement. 30% of the smaller members responding to the survey found significant improvement, while among the larger organisations none chose that option.
 - b) 20 out of 31 survey respondents also felt that being a member of ICVA had some or significant benefit in strengthening their advocacy efforts.
 - c) A total of 76 new organisations have been engaged in 2017, with 51% of the newly engaged organisations (39 in total) coming from NGO fora/networks and 23% (18 total) from national or international NGOs based in the Global South.¹²

¹⁰ ICVA 2017 Impact Study, Case Study 6

⁸ <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/2017-unhcr-ngo-partnership-survey-general-report>

⁹ "Engagement" is defined in line with the 2016 evaluation in the broad sense, including organisations who participated to meetings, events or formal and informal consultations with ICVA.

Conclusion

ICVA has used multiple channels to create opportunities and mechanisms for NGOs to engage in a wide range of initiatives.

In addition to engagement on specific issues and events (such as the WHS and related work), ICVA's engagement work has a systematic backbone, anchored in its relationship with the UNHCR, the UN in general and its position on the IASC. This role seems to be valued by both NGOs and intergovernmental bodies with many interviewees giving credit to ICVA for how it has developed as a trusted broker and interlocutor; a difficult balance that ICVA must probably maintain to have a continued unique value. It will be interesting if a more structural role will emerge for ICVA with other key intergovernmental bodies (e.g. further strengthening the role with the African Union).

The work with humanitarian coordinators seems to be most systematic at the Geneva level and more ad-hoc, opportunistic at the regional level. This may simply reflect the hub-nature of Geneva and the need for prioritisation, but it may be worth reflecting on expectations of hubs towards HCs in their region and whether something beyond the ad-hoc is needed.

ICVA's reach to organisations rooted in contexts close to humanitarian crises came up a lot interviews, as did their efforts to include these voices in positions they bring to the IASC and other fora. ICVA would like to do better, knowing this will not be easy, but the ambition is there.

ICVA has also been strengthening its member engagement with ICVA members which are organised as alliances, networks, federations (e.g. ACT Alliance) and using links with other global networks to add value beyond its own membership (e.g. ADRRN). This role in linking networks with networks appears to have been a core theme in the development of the ICVA regional hubs during the last strategic period. Considering the ambition of the sector to reach and include regional and local actors more, there is some expectation that ICVA's regional hubs will have a key role to play. This is an opportunity, but at the same time ICVA will need to both prioritise and set boundaries in order to ensure regional tasks remain manageable for small staff numbers.

Like most of ICVA's work, maintaining and furthering engagement will depend on people able to lever off its reputation and able to identify the right opportunities and priorities. ICVA is a small team and so they cannot compromise on the calibre of staff they choose.

CASE STUDY #2

UNHCR – NGO Consultations

How ICVA's leadership ensures meaningful consultations between the UNHCR and NGOs

Overview

The UNHCR Annual NGO Consultation, co-organised by UNHCR and ICVA, is a major event that provides an important forum for debate and dialogue on global and regional themes and an opportunity to explore collaboration on advocacy and operational issues. Since its inception more than 30 years ago, the event has grown to more than 500 participants and has become one of the best networking opportunities for humanitarian professionals working in the field of Forced Displacement. However, this growth has created challenges in meeting ICVA's main objective: to ensure there is a safe forum/space for direct exchange between NGOs and UNHCR on issues of common concern, particularly partnership dynamics; operational challenges and achievements; policy developments related to refugees, IDPs and stateless persons. In recent years, ICVA and UNHCR have taken steps to adapt the consultation and contemplate broader reforms.

Details

ICVA is co-organiser of the event with UNHCR Partnership and Coordination Service (PCS), meaning it cooperates with UNHCR in steering the planning and organisation of the consultation. ICVA and PCS carry out a preliminary consultation process to poll NGOs and UNHCR about the theme to be addressed at the next consultations; asking their suggestions in terms of sessions/workshops to be included on the agenda; asking NGOs to collaborate with UNHCR focal points on organising the sessions/workshops that have been selected. Once the focal points have been appointed, ICVA and PCS oversee the work, making sure general directions and deadlines are respected. This consultative approach is valued but also very time consuming and depends on NGOs' willingness to contribute time and resources. During the event, ICVA also provides support to the NGO Rapporteur to develop the closing speech, draft the report, and present the report at UNHCR's Executive Committee. While the reports do collect many recommendations there does not seem to be a comprehensive follow-up and monitoring of the recommendations by ICVA or UNHCR.

The main value, as reported by participants, is the opportunity to network and exchange with peers and with UNHCR. It is also seen as a good moment for NGOs to hold bilateral meetings with their UNHCR counterparts or with UNHCR senior management, thus sometimes helping unlock issues or generate collaborative work at regional/national level. At the same time, there has been some controversy that the consultation is morphing into a multi-stakeholder conference as participation in the consultation have included some actors beyond the NGO community (e.g. academics, individual refugees and sometimes other UN Agencies). Some fear this is diluting the purpose of the event towards being a general sharing and less a meaningful 'consultation'.

In 2017, ICVA supported UNHCR in piloting a new format for the annual consultations, aiming to make the discussion sessions more participatory and more representative of the diversity of NGOs in attendance, through organising breakout sessions and involving "pairs" of INGOs and NNGOs to widen the reach of the sessions. In addition, ICVA facilitated or co-facilitated preparation sessions via a webinar and online meetings to streamline the process. In 2018 an innovation award was introduced and the meeting featured a BBC 'Hard Talk' journalist which helped to sharpen discussions at the podium.

Looking ahead there is an ongoing reflection on how to reform the Annual Consultations as UNHCR is examining how to align the consultations with their internal reform; for example, by reducing consultations at Geneva level and increasing consultations at regional levels. ICVA and UNHCR will need to continue to partner together to refine the approach to truly get what is needed from the consultation. It must be more than just an excellent networking opportunity, offering an environment for meaningful exchange on challenges and ideas between NGOs and UNHCR as equal partners.

Policy & Advocacy: Influencing Key Debates and Policies

Humanitarian issues range from being local, affecting specific communities (such as disease outbreaks or isolated conflict) to being truly global phenomena (such as the impacts of climate change or forced migration). In order to ensure that policies and initiatives are relevant, it is considered crucial to have multi-stakeholder engagement from identification to design to implementation. In particular, it is important that those stakeholders rooted in contexts close to crises have influence, and not just those that operate at scale or are well-resourced. The ICVA Secretariat works to influence and shape humanitarian policies by advocating on behalf of NGOs. While engagement is a prerequisite, it is the way in which engagement is prepared, executed and followed-up that defines the potential for influence.

ICVA's approach in influencing policies is to advocate for and create greater inclusion of NGO voices and leadership and to represent NGO perspectives by echoing and amplifying NGO perspectives in policy processes where ICVA has a seat at the table or organised fora where ICVA can provide a brokering role. ICVA raises and follows humanitarian issues in global fora to ensure the NGO views are heard and engages in various roles (e.g. dialogue, co-chairing committees, and convening meetings) with the key organisations and actors involved in humanitarian policy processes; especially related to Forced Displacement, Partnership, Coordination, and Financing.

Specific ICVA initiatives which align most closely to this pillar include the following:

- Representing and amplifying NGO voices in the **IASC** and **UNHCR** meetings;
- Shaping agenda of global fora and events (e.g. **World Humanitarian Summit**) and providing thought leadership to promote and highlight key NGO issues (e.g. **Less Paper More Aid** campaign);
- Implementing of the **Grand Bargain** commitments (e.g. donor conditions, reporting harmonisation, localisation);
- Bringing together actors to collectively improve functions and operations (e.g. **Humanitarian Financing Task Team; Pooled Fund Working Group**)

Initiatives (2015-2018)	Outcomes & Impacts	Indicators
FORCED DISPLACEMENT		
UNHCR Executive & Standing Committees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitated a consultative processes for NGOs to draft and deliver statements pertaining to the agenda topics of meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2015: 24 statements 2016: 18 statements 2017: 19 statements 2018: 17 statements > 55 NGOs involved in developing statements
Nominations of the High Commissioner for Refugees (2016) and IOM Director General (2018)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased transparency in the nominations processes for UNHCR and IOM leaders UNHCR applicants publicly answered five key questions in response to call from ICVA ICVA organised CSO meetings with 3 IOM candidates and secured pre-nomination commitments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 HCR candidates responded, including Filippo Grandi 3 IOM candidates participated Quoted in NY Times, Le Temps, Reuters, and other articles
High Commissioner’s Dialogue on International Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepared NGO contributions to the annual multi-stakeholder dialogues by drafting joint NGO advocacy messages on protection challenges each year (e.g. Children on the Move, Urban settings) Supported NGO attendance at annual Dialogues 	
20th Anniversary of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (2018)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported oversight of ‘Plan of Action’ implementation and promoted stakeholder engagement 	
UNHCR’s work on IDPs (2018)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exchanged perspectives on the development of updated IDP policy 	
HUMANITARIAN COORDINATION		
Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raised issues/situations to EDG (e.g. Ebola response) Engaged in EDG discussions including the Level 3 emergency classifications and helped design the new scale-up protocols (2018) Commented on revisions to HCT Terms of References (2017) Debated to ensure NGO representation and decision-making roles in the reformed setup of IASC and work modalities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participated in ~95% of EDG meetings
HUMANITARIAN COORDINATION		
World Humanitarian Summit (2015-2017)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocated for implementation of principles of partnership through WHS Increased transparency by sharing NGOs commitments on website and mailing lists Ensured NGO voices were represented by developing briefings representing the NGO view Supported an inclusive selection process for NGOs applying to attend the summit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principles of Partnership referenced throughout summit

INFLUENCING DEBATES & POLICIES

Initiatives (2015-2018)	Outcomes & Impacts	Indicators
<p>Prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) (2018)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mobilized a rapid response to new policy proposals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ICVA's general assembly resolved to renew commitment to transparency and accountability and to engage with governments on safeguarding policies Persuaded UNICEF to have consultation process which resulted in more appropriate Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) policies which national/local organisations can implement to reduce risk Influenced the debate and consultation process to better represent the voice of national and local organisations 	
HUMANITARIAN FINANCING		
<p>Less Paper More Aid campaign (2016)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launched initiative in collaboration with several NGOs, VOICE, and CHS Alliance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presented and discussed report to UN agencies and member states Demonstrated the negative impact of excessive donor requirements and suggested concrete ways to harmonize and simplify reporting procedures and formats Informed the Grand Bargain workstream on simplifying and harmonizing reporting requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Featured at member state briefings Presented to UN agencies as part of the IASC HFTT Discussed by UNHCR-UNICEFWFP and OCHA-NGO Platform on Pooled Funds
<p>Grand Bargain on Efficiencies in Humanitarian Financing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-chaired the final Sherpa meeting in Bonn in Sept 2016 Co-convenor of workstream to harmonize and simplify donor reporting requirements Workshops in Kenya (2017) and Somalia (2018) Active in Nexus and Localisation workstreams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lobbied to get NGOs a seat at the table in the "Sherpa process" Provided feedback on negotiated shared commitments which were launched at World Humanitarian Summit – including strong language in support of first line respondents (e.g. direct funding and capacity strengthening) and commitments to reduce burden of donor conditions Showcased and piloted "8+3" reporting template in 3 counties (Myanmar, Iraq, Somalia) for sector-wide reform Led dialogue between NGOs and UN on efforts harmonize partnership agreements and share partner assessment info 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New common reporting template accepted by 8 donors Initial pilot report showed 8+3 template required less or equal time for 76% of NGOs
<p>IASC Humanitarian Financing Task Team (2015-2018)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-chairs monthly meetings and annual retreat and participates as NGO member 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Led the organisation of the Learning Lab on Innovation Financing, which completed first module on Islamic Social Financing (2018) Mapped existing risk management initiatives Led study to explore ways for country-level Partner Capacity Assessments to become more interoperable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ICVA re-elected as NGO chair
<p>Pooled Fund Working Group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Member of the working group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provided NGO perspectives to donors and other stakeholders on topics including Syria, Yemen, DRC, Iraq, Enabled NNGO representatives to advise on Country-Based Pooled Funds management 	

Stakeholder Perceptions

- As mentioned under engagement, the WHS is perceived to have created a step-change in ICVA's potential to both engage with and influence policy and processes.
- ICVA is perceived as a trusted broker between actors, taking care to position itself as a communicator of views and convener rather, for example, than a stand-alone lobbying body.
- Attendees in IASC meetings report that ICVA regularly takes timely opportunities to make statements on behalf of NGOs, making efforts to consult widely beforehand.
- UNHCR meeting attendees believe ICVA plays a crucial role of finding a balanced, middle ground among diverse perspectives, so that engagement is generally constructive.
- ICVA's leadership is held in high regard as effective spokespeople capable of engaging in complex policy discussions.
- There were differing views on whether ICVA should remain in its 'broker' role or whether there should be a move towards more 'ICVA' positions.
- ICVA is perceived to be mainly focussed on influence from global to local and vice versa. It is a question as to whether ICVA should use its regional hubs to develop strategies (as opposed to just taking ad-hoc opportunities) tailored to local and regional priorities. The choices taken will further inform the respective duties and nature of collaboration between the regional representatives and the 'specialist leads' (mainly based in Geneva). It will also shape capacity requirements and the interaction between regional representatives and stakeholders in the region.

Supporting Evidence

Supporting Evidence

- ICVA made a total of 78 NGO statements at the UNHCR ExCom and Standing Committees (2015-2018).
- During 2018, ICVA Executive Director met with 28 permanent missions in Geneva for member state briefings and travelled to 10 capitals to build relationships and support with high level government officials.

Conclusion

ICVA's work on advocacy and influencing has been extremely diverse including initiatives such as ensuring transparency in leadership processes for the UNHCR & IOM; preparation and coordination around the WHS; assisting in leadership of processes it was involved in catalysing (e.g. less paper more aid and the link to the Grand Bargain) using its position on structural bodies such as the IASC to move agendas forward. The list of outcomes presented above speaks for itself in indicating some of the successes ICVA has achieved. While it is hard to frame most of these impacts as having directly benefited the lives of people in crisis, it can be said that there are links that ICVA is making that might not be made if ICVA were not there. NGOs themselves tend to want to take positions and play an independent role (with good reason) and so it is often hard for them to play this coordination function in a way that is not perceived to be biased or self-serving.

While ICVA has a long history of fostering relationships between intergovernmental bodies and civil society organisations, based on perceptions and specific initiatives their standing seems to have made significant gains in the 2015-2018 period. While multiple factors have been at play, ICVA's role before during and after the WHS stands out as a significant factor. Not only the event itself, but the work streams emerging from it.

Engaging in such a range of ways and tying so many issues and processes together with a relatively small and dispersed team is an impressive achievement; also to have done so without losing the core function of being a 'trusted broker' rather than an independent protagonist.

This said, the question of whether ICVA should be more positional as an organisation arises frequently. The sense from the inputs to this review was that most see the brokering role as quite unique (or at least rare) and so not something to be compromised. Also, it was said that the more ICVA moves towards positions, the greater the risk to be perceived as 'competition' by members who think differently. This is already an issue to some extent, but it would be exacerbated with such a move. Furthermore, if ICVA were to be more 'positional' there is some risk that doors that might otherwise be open may close.

Another challenge with representation is that ICVA will never get feedback from all members on a particular consultation, nor will it get complete unity of position. It takes care, skill and trust to navigate to a position which is above the lowest common denominator and representative of enough members views to be legitimate. ICVA is positioned as an intermediary and so it has to take care to voice the views of NGOs without replacing NGOs individual voices. Inviting relevant organisations to accompany them is a means for navigating this.

The allocation of particular specialisations to regional representatives (e.g. Localisation to the Asia Pacific representative and Navigating the Nexus to the Africa representative) is perceived as being quite positive by those who are aware. Having these functions provide this support cross-regionally has not yet been fully tested. On the more challenging side, the allocation of such specialisations gives extra duties to an already small team and brings the discussion back to the central question of deciding how ICVA wants to evolve in the medium term.

CASE STUDY #3

Harmonised Reporting

How ICVA's sustained work on donor reporting has successfully influenced the debate and policy and is connecting policy to practice at the field level.

Overview

The harmonised narrative reporting work serves as an example of a complete cycle of ICVA's sustained policy engagement to change the humanitarian system. Beginning in 2015, ICVA helped lead the initial research into reducing reporting burdens, followed by global policy debate support by the Less Paper More Aid paper, which led to the Grand Bargain workstream on reporting, the development of the common 8+3 template with donor support, the implementation of a pilot project, and practical change in field practice.

Details

ICVA launched the Less Paper More Aid campaign in 2015 in collaboration with several NGOs, VOICE, and CHS Alliance.¹³ A study was conducted showing the impact of fulfilling donor conditions on NGOs with the help of ICVA staff in document review, interviews with field staff, collecting data, and editing the report. The study demonstrated the negative impact of excessive donor requirements and concluded that significant time-savings could be realised through harmonisation of the content and frequency of narrative reporting. It also suggested concrete ways to harmonise and simplify reporting procedures and formats. The campaign presented the study's findings and held discussions with UN agencies and member states to influence the debate ahead of the Grand Bargain.

The Grand Bargain was launched during the World Humanitarian Summit in April 2016 and represents a deal established between the five largest donors and six largest UN Agencies and NGOs to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian operations, thereby freeing additional existing resources for operational use. The Grand Bargain initiative relied extensively on the Less Paper More Aid study, particularly in forming a dedicated implementation work stream for 'Harmonised/Simplified reporting requirements'. Within the Grand Bargain structure, the workstream on harmonised narrative reporting is co-led by ICVA and Germany.

Working together as co-conveners of the workstream, ICVA and Germany jointly planned a pilot project to test usage of a harmonised narrative reporting template in Iraq, Myanmar, and Somalia. Early in the process, Germany also contracted with the Global Public Policy Institute (GPPi) in Berlin to develop the technical guidance for harmonised reporting, conduct data collection during the pilot, and lead mid-term and final reviews. ICVA and Germany held overall control over the pilot process and direction, with ICVA leading communications with NGOs and UN agencies, and Germany focused on donor governments.

An initial meeting between ICVA, Germany, GPPi, and key stakeholders was held in November of 2016. This was the point at which the concept for harmonising reporting was validated, and the decision was made to move forward with developing a harmonised template to pilot was made. Key developments since then include:

- In March 2017, stakeholders from UN, NGOs, and donor governments met again in Berlin to discuss a proposed template to pilot that became known as the "8+3" template. Participants agreed to support pilot work, and agreed on Iraq, Myanmar, and Somalia as the primary pilot locations.
- The March Berlin meeting was followed in June 2017 with a formal "go" decision by ICVA and Germany to launch the pilot work. This decision was based on a critical mass of donors who were willing to test the "8+3" template with NGO partners, including a mix of governments and UN agencies. Notably, OCHA, UNHCR, UNICEF, and WFP agreed to join the pilot, representing a large pool of funding for both international and national NGOs.
- In July 2018, GPPi published a mid-term review of the pilot based on document review of completed reports, field interviews, and discussions with donors. The mid-term review validated the work so far, with participants sharing generally favorable views of the 8+3 template and the pilot process.¹⁴

ICVA continues to co-lead the workstream and refinements to the template guidance will be implemented in 2019.

¹³ <https://lesspapermoreaid.org/>

¹⁴ Initial pilot report showed 8+3 template required less or equal time for 76% of NGOs

Strengthening of field-level NGO fora

Encouraging and supporting coordination among NGOs has traditionally been part of ICVA's priorities. In January 2017, ICVA started to implement a programme to support NGO fora that was then financially supported by the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) of the European Commission on a two-year grant since July 2017. The programme aims to support in-country NGO fora (including international, national, and mixed NGO fora) in contexts of major humanitarian crises. The programme was designed with substantial consultation with NGO fora

active in the three regions covered by ICVA to understand the challenges and role of NGO fora in the humanitarian coordination architecture.

The objective of the programme is to strengthen organisational capacity development (i.e. strategic planning, governance, human resource management, and advocacy), amplify NGO fora advocacy at regional and global level, and promote the pivotal role of NGO fora amongst policy-makers.

Specific ICVA initiatives which align most closely to this pillar include the following:

- **Global support desk** providing ad-hoc advice on organisational or advocacy issues upon requests from fora themselves;
- **NGO fora workshops** organised by ICVA;
- Support to NGO fora through **direct engagement** by ICVA's staff.

The ECHO grant enabled NGO fora to be supported alongside NGOs through ICVA's other programmes, for example webinars, Building Better Response trainings, attending conferences, etc.

STRENGTHENING NGO FORA

Initiatives (2015-2018)	Outcomes & Impacts	Indicators
<p>Global Support Desk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ad hoc support from NGO fora • NGO Coordination Resource Centre (ngocoordination.org, launched in 2005, re-organisation planned in 2019) • Published NGO Fora Advocacy guide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed capacities of in-country NGO fora in areas of governance, strategic planning, human resource management, and joint advocacy • Created an online 'one-stop-shop' for NGO coordination resources in Arabic, French, and English • Supported advocacy action to facilitate NGO collective action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 35 NGO Fora provided ad hoc support (e.g. structure, ToRs, etc.)
<p>Global & Regional NGO Fora Workshops</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional workshops for NGO Fora coordination (Amman: 2015, 2016; Dakar: 2016; Bangkok: 2016, 2017) • NGO Consortia and Coordination Symposium – 2-days in Bangkok (2015, 2016) • National & Mixed NGO Fora Workshop, 3-day workshop in Geneva (2018) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brought diverse NGO fora together to exchange and share their experience on NGO fora governance, strategic planning, joint advocacy and fundraising • Consulted on NGO Fora support programme • Peer-to-peer experience sharing and networking • Helped improve collective understanding around NGO coordination • Discussed regional priorities and opportunities for joint advocacy • Developed a roadmap towards strengthening mechanisms for sub-regional collaboration within ASEAN and SAARC regions • Provided financial support for workshop attendees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 representatives of national and international NGO fora from Yemen, Palestine, Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, Turkey and Jordan (Amman, 2015) • 17 country-level and 2 regional-level NGO networks (Amman, 2016) • 35 participants representing NGO Fora and NGOs region (Bangkok, 2017) • 16 NGO Fora participants from Africa, Asia and the MENA region (Geneva, 2018)
<p>Direct engagement with African NGO fora</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Missions to NNGO fora in South Sudan, Nigeria, Central Africa Republic, Mali, Senegal, Ethiopia, and Cameroon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General dissemination of knowledge and support to NGO fora and members in the region • Connected NGO fora with specialised training providers (e.g. SSD CHOI and NNPHL) • Cameroon: Supported creation of NNGO and INGO fora 	
<p>Direct engagement with Asia-Pacific NGO fora</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • APRRN-ICVA Dialogue (2018) • Missions to Myanmar, Bangladesh, Afghanistan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Myanmar: Provided extensive ongoing support around Rohingya crisis, including coordinating advocacy, NGO staff security, information sharing, and general support <u>Dialogue</u>; UNHCR and civil society from both Myanmar and Bangladesh shared perspectives on Rohingya Returns and voiced concerns on process • Bangladesh: Built a new NGO/CSO fora in Cox's Bazar from the ground up based on best practices • Heavily involved in forging SAARTI, a network of network in Afghanistan-Pakistan-India 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 participants in APRRN-ICVA dialogue
<p>Direct engagement with MENA NGO fora</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Missions to Yemen, Syria, and Gaziantep (Turkey) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions focused on governance and potential functions of NGO fora; examples of best practice from the region and beyond; and advocacy opportunities 	

Stakeholder Perceptions

- This work stream is consistent with the overall shift towards focusing on local actors following the WHS.
- There is a perception that the UN, intergovernmental and governmental bodies are increasingly reluctant to engage bilaterally with all NGOs; it is impractical considering the growing number of NGOs and actors involved in humanitarian aid and it is not efficient for enabling and building understanding more broadly. In this regards national NGO fora have the potential to be interlocutors for collectives of actors.
- Most of ICVA's work in this area focusses on strengthening, building capacity and cross learning between NGO fora. In the Bangladesh example (see case study) ICVA was a catalyst and enabler to create a new NGO forum that filled a major gap in one the most pressing humanitarian crises. Interviewees linked to this raised the question as to whether this and other such actions (e.g. Dakar, Jordan & Cameroon) were exceptions or an indicator of a role ICVA might play more often.
- Some people spoken to were themselves coordinators of regional fora. They commented on the value of their interaction with ICVA in helping them link their networks with other networks, or having ICVA support parts of what they were doing using some of the relationships that ICVA had through its standing in the humanitarian sector (e.g. Le Comité de Coordination des ONGI, Inter Agency Working Group on Disaster Preparedness for East and Central Africa)
- It was also noted that with the introduction of regional hubs, ICVA was perceived as having brought value and complementarity at the national and regional level rather than competing with other networks.
- Among the challenges of this work is the turnover of senior staff between 2015 & 2018 (e.g. gaps at regional level) and ensuring staff have the right skills, pivotal for building the momentum and/or the continuity of the work. Also, ICVA is not alone in this initiative. The more that the work can lever off other similar work, the lower this risk of duplication, redundancy and competition between initiatives.

Supporting Evidence

- 90 NGO fora have attended ICVA hosted regional workshops focusing on NGO fora while 17 NGO fora attended the 2018 ICVA Annual Conference.
- The 2017 Evaluation noted: "There are indications of a network starting to emerge between NGO fora, which is a promising development and could enhance the sustainability of the outcomes of the project by creating opportunities for cooperation and connections that enable future peer support among fora. In some cases, ICVA was already instrumental in facilitating cooperation and meetings between NGO fora which would not have happened otherwise. The meeting among fora working in Syria, organised and hosted by ICVA in late 2017 is an example of this. The team has succeeded in creating structures to guide engagement with NGO fora in field visits, such as a TOR for the missions and a needs assessment template."
- Fewer than 40% of ICVA members interviewed in 2017 (as part of the '100 members in 100 days initiative') identified this as 'Very Important' (as shown in Annex 4). This needs more investigation to understand as, based on notes by ICVA, the survey question was only framed as 'Field Support' and the interviewers did not fully articulate what this entailed and the sample size for this question was 41 (fewer than half of all of ICVA's members).
- Detailed indicators for the fora programme are provided in Annex III.

Conclusion

ICVA's work on supporting NGO fora combines complementary initiatives working from Global Support through to convening at the regional level for cross learning and with direct support in all regions where ICVA is present. The scope is impressive considering all the other work ICVA has and the limited resources available.

From various perspectives the need to strengthen local networks and fora appears to be a cornerstone of realising some of the post WHS ambitions. For example, the New Ways of Working, The Grand Bargain all point towards an increased role for local and locally connected actors.

ICVA has been resourced to further build and deepen their role in enabling and catalysing country level action through the ECHO programme and this work would appear to be showing results both in itself and as an opportunity

to support the other works streams of building understanding engagement and influence; NGO fora increase a sense of community, act as points of cross fertilisation that accelerate learning and serve to initiate/reinforce advocacy initiatives.

It is interesting that the majority of members regard this as the lowest priority area of work and this should be further investigated to understand what is behind that.

Going forwards ICVA will need to decide the boundaries and scale of their role in supporting NGO fora; being clear on whether they will support what others create; or if they will put themselves forward more often to catalyse and build new NGO fora.¹⁵ The latter would require either more structural capacity within ICVA or mechanisms for activating the capacity in members.

¹⁵ See also Reflection Paper on ICVA's Role in Operational Coordination (Jeremy Wellard, 2018)

CASE STUDY #4

Country level NGO Coordination Platforms

How ICVA co-created a new NGO coordination platform for the Rohingya Response in Bangladesh

Overview

There is a long history of violence and oppression towards the Rohingya people in Bangladesh that has resulted in many displacements over the years. In August 2017 there was a sudden upsurge in violence in Myanmar resulting in over 500,000 people being forcibly displaced into the Cox's Bazar region of Bangladesh during the following months. There was a massive humanitarian response and need for better coordination. At the request of ICVA members and partners engaged in the response, ICVA's Regional Representative for Asia conducted a mission to Dhaka and Cox's Bazar Bangladesh and continued to provide ongoing support for the establishment of a new NGO platform to coordinate humanitarian response.

Details

Initially the aim was for ICVA to support coordination in the short-term by using its networks and influence to connect NGOs to the overall coordination structure. Following the initial ICVA visit in October 2017, ICVA supported structured engagement between the various actors. ICVA then collaborated with others to establish a functional NGO forum comprising both INGOs and NNGOs and could ensure NGO engagement at operational and strategic levels in the response. With the platform in place, ICVA has continued to advocate for the role of a locally-led, sustainable and protection-centered approach by NGOs in what will clearly be a protracted refugee response context.

In terms of role, ICVA was primarily a convener of discussion and a broker of relationships, staying out of the day-to-day details. They were able to link global processes to the ground in real time as well as provide practical value supporting the development of TORs, job descriptions and strategies. The Danish Refugee Council was the lead agency in negotiating the funding arrangement with ECHO for the NGO platform. The COAST Trust assisted in brokering relationships with the national NGO community and critical support was received from UN agencies (particularly OCHA and UNHCR) throughout.

Some key milestones in the process included:

- Oct 2017: High level meeting for NGOs with the ERC during early stages of response
- Oct 2017: Inclusion of NGO Liaison Unit within the ISCG structure for first six months
- Oct 2017: Inclusion of NGOs in the Strategic Executive Group (at Dhaka level)
- Feb 2018: Agreement to establish NGO platform
- Feb-Oct 2018: Successful negotiation on participation by national NGOs in the platform
- Feb-Oct 2018: Development of NGO platform TORs and interim steering committee
- Oct-Nov 2018: Participation in Coordination Review Mission

As a result of the collaborative effort the new NGO platform for Rohingya response is now well established, with a central role in all coordination mechanisms and an effective governance structure in place for accountability.

¹⁶ ICVA members/partners consulted when planning mission: COAST Trust, Oxfam, Plan, WVI, BRAC, UN OCHA, UN RC Office

SECTION 5

Detailed 2018 Findings

2018 was a transitional year for ICVA; a new strategy was agreed early in the year, a new Executive Director, senior staff turnover and significant changes on the board created some instability but also new opportunity. While there are other nuanced changes, the future strategy essentially keeps the three pillars that continue to be relevant and exchanges 'Humanitarian Partnership' for 'navigating change' to better represent the cross-cutting nature of ICVA's work.

The new Board and senior executive took the opportunity of turn over to streamline expectations of members, explore the Board's supporting role in engagement, strategic choices, communications, human resource strategy, representation guidelines and fundraising. Staffing has increased by five FTEs overall (@30% growth).

Funding contracts came to end with the end of the last strategy. IKEA shifted their strategy and will no longer fund ICVA while Sweden, Germany, Denmark, UNHCR will all continue their funding.

Despite this turbulence ICVA was able to keep engaged with all major work streams and core dossiers related to Forced Displacement, engagement, influence and partnership (moving the latter more towards navigating change).

In addition to engagement with regular platforms (such as the IASC) ICVA hold quarterly strategic meetings between SCHR, InterAction, VOICE and ICVA and have initiated engagement with CEOs of diverse networks to look at emerging trends and areas of potential collaboration. These include CIVICUS, CONCORD, InterAction, NEAR, VANI, Climate Action Network, SDGNet, FORES.

The Regional Hubs have continued to develop well, recovering from the gaps of 2016 and 2017. That said, some reflection is now needed to look at how they will develop over the coming years and the degree to which they will be driven by the four priority areas equally versus a more nuanced approach based on regional priorities.

The following tables represent ICVA's main initiatives, outcomes/impact, and indicators during 2018:

INCREASING NGO UNDERSTANDING

Initiatives (2018 only)	Outcomes & Impacts	Indicators
Publications & Briefing Papers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Localization Examined • Civil Society Space in Hum. Action • The Long Run to Protection Against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse • Learning stream Info sheets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced information asymmetries between NGOs and governments or UN agencies • Provided thought leadership to change narratives to more sophisticated understandings • Available as a public good, increased understanding outside of NGO community (e.g. utilised as a reference within donor, UN, and WB institutions) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,849 downloads (new material) • 5,060 downloads (all material)
Learning Streams (webinar series) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Humanitarian-development-peace nexus • Navigating Change (currently in progress, not included in statistics) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leveled the playing field between NGOs of different capacities • Brought together diverse community of subject matter experts, NGOs, UN, CSO, private sector, and academia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2,098 "live" participants • 13,421 recording views
Digital Communications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distributing monthly email Bulletins (English, French, Arabic) • Twitter and LinkedIn social media platforms • Email updates to 9 working groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive information on humanitarian processes and policies • Enabled NGOs to anticipate developments that may impact them, and plan accordingly • Information channeled directly to regional/country level of large organisations • Consolidated calendar of events & trainings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8% annual increase in Bulletin recipients during 2018
ICVA Annual Conferences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organised 2-day events on key theme: Navigating the Nexus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased understanding among participants through sharing NGO experience • Strengthened networking and partnership within NGO community and beyond • Promoted ongoing discussion on important topics, e.g. direct dialogue on localisation between donor reps & local/national NGOs • Connected members with policy-makers on regional-specific topics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attended by over 140 participants from 36 countries • 25 speakers, including 6 reps from NGO Fora • Financially supported 54 attendees
General Assembly Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2018 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed member relationships and increased involvement of national NGOs in ICVA's governance (e.g. elected NNGO rep from MENA region to board) • Approved strategies, reflected on ICVA's work, and elected board. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 55 of 98 voting members present • ~70% of members actively engaged in forging 2019 strategy • 20% of members expressed interest in joining ICVA board

INCREASING NGO ENGAGEMENT

Initiatives (2018 only)	Outcomes & Impacts	Indicators
FORCED DISPLACEMENT		
UNHCR Annual NGO Consultations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-organised 3-day event: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2018: Putting People First 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provided an important forum for large volume of NGOs and UNHCR to network, dialogue and exchange views with UNHCR as equal partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 523 participants / 287 organisations / 88 countries, including refugee representatives (2018) 66% of evaluation responses were positive (2018)
Consultations for the Global Compact on Refugees (2018) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Represented NGOs in six rounds of consultations with UNHCR Co-chaired panel on 'whole-of-society' approach Regional Engagement in Uganda Member state briefings (NGOs Forward) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocated for meaningful consultations with NGOs in order to ensure that the Compact was informed by their direct experience of the lived realities of refugees Ensured the compact included refugee voices, refugee access to information, and the specific vulnerabilities of women, girls, and children, as well as people with disabilities Provided specific recommendations for the Programme of Action, which informed an integral part of the Global Compact on Refugees Principles of Partnership referenced in final text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20 NGO statements delivered 102 NGOs participated in ICVA-led consultation effort (incl. 35 members)
Consultations for the Global Compact for Migration (2018) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-convened the Civil Society Action Committee Bilateral briefings provided to several governments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensured that civil society was informed, involved, and heard throughout the process Amplified civil society's strategy, content, and political work around the Global Compact for Migration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 Civil Society statements on negotiations of the GCM 6 member state briefings/meetings on the GCM Spoke at 8 major event
IOM NGO Humanitarian Consultations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jointly planning, organising, and participating in annual consultations on key themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal displacement (Geneva, 2018) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participated in peer conversations with candidates for IOM Secretary General 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attended by over 140 participants from 36 countries 25 speakers, including 6 reps from NGO Fora Financially supported 54 attendees

Initiatives (2018 only)	Outcomes & Impacts	Indicators
HUMANITARIAN FINANCING		
IASC Humanitarian Financing Task Team (co-chair with OCHA / CERF) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meets monthly, and biannual retreats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brings together NGOs, UN agencies, IOM, the World Bank, ICRC, and IFRC to discuss and act upon common challenges in humanitarian financing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >20 NGOs active
HUMANITARIAN COORDINATION		
Humanitarian Leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hosted meetings in Geneva between Humanitarian Coordinators, OCHA Leadership, and the NGO community Involved in HC selection process (applying criteria, interviewing) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brought NGO community views to shape regional policy and created dialogue for sharing sensitive information, ensuring common understanding, and advocacy, including NGOs who don't have access at the national level Advocated for NNGO fora to have a seat at HCT and contributed to presence of NNGO in Chad and CAR Increased accountability of HC leadership and advocacy to NGO community 	
IASC Emergency Directors Group <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitated input for annual HC appraisals and operations reviews Performed study on 'Role of Deputy HC' Consultations with NGO fora prior to each EDG meeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommendations to inform collective discussion and decisions associated with the DHC role within the humanitarian coordination system Advocated to raise certain contexts in the EDG agenda 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 180 survey responses for 21 HC appraisals, incl. 36 NNGOs (2018)
HUMANITARIAN PARTNERSHIP		
Regional Consultations (Asia-Pacific) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2018: NGO Partnerships Week (cofounded by ICVA and OCHA, held in Bangkok) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dialogues on 'nexus' and changing modes of response in region with increased gov't involvement and leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >150 participants

INFLUENCING KEY DEBATES & POLICIES

Initiatives (2018 only)	Outcomes & Impacts	Indicators
FORCED DISPLACEMENT		
UNHCR Executive & Standing Committees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitated consultative processes for NGOs to draft and deliver statements pertaining to the agenda topics of meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2018: 17 statements
Nomination of IOM Director General (2018)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ICVA organised CSO meetings with 3 IOM candidates and secured pre-nomination commitments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 IOM candidates participated
20th Anniversary of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (2018) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Member of GP20 Steering Committee and Communications Working Group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported oversight of 'Plan of Action' implementation and promoted stakeholder engagement 	
UNHCR's work on IDPs (2018)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exchanged perspectives on the development of updated IDP policy 	
HUMANITARIAN COORDINATION		
Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaged in EDG discussions including the Level 3 emergency classifications and helped design the new scale-up protocols (2018) Debated to ensure NGO representation and decision-making roles in the reformed setup of IASC and work modalities 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participant in Principals Meeting (ED-level & Board Chair), debrief members Emergency Directors Group (EDG) semi-annual meetings and ad hoc calls Working Group (WG) IASC Focal Point Meetings Deputies Forum (ICVA Dir. of Policy and Vice Chair) (2018) 		
IASC Emergency Directors Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommendations to inform collective discussion and decisions associated with the DHC role within the humanitarian coordination system Advocated to raise certain contexts in the EDG agenda 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 180 survey responses for 21 HC appraisals, incl. 36 NNGOs (2018)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitated input for annual HC appraisals and operations reviews Performed study on 'Role of Deputy HC' Consultations with NGO fora prior to each EDG meeting 		
HUMANITARIAN PARTNERSHIP		
Prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) (2018)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ICVA's general assembly resolved to renew commitment to transparency and accountability and to engage with governments on safeguarding policies Persuaded UNICEF to have consultation process which resulted in more appropriate Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) policies which national/local organisations can implement to reduce risk Influenced the debate and consultation process to better represent the voice of national and local organisations 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mobilized a rapid response to new policy proposals 		

Initiatives (2018 only)	Outcomes & Impacts	Indicators
HUMANITARIAN FINANCING		
<p>Grand Bargain on Efficiencies in Humanitarian Financing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-convenor of workstream to harmonise and simplify donor reporting requirements • Workshop in Somalia (2018) • Active in Nexus and Localisation workstreams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Showcased and piloted “8+3” reporting template in 3 countries (Myanmar, Iraq, Somalia) for sector-wide reform 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New common reporting template accepted by 8 donors • Initial pilot report showed 8+3 template required less or equal time for 76% of NGOs
<p>IASC Humanitarian Financing Task Team</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-chairs monthly meetings and annual retreat and participates as NGO member 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Led the organisation of the Learning Lab on Innovation Financing, which completed first module on Islamic Social Financing (2018) • Mapped existing risk management initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICVA re-elected as NGO chair
<p>Pooled Fund Working Group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member of the working group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enabled NNGO representatives to advise on Country- Based Pooled Funds management 	

STRENGTHENING NGO FORA

Initiatives (2018 only)	Outcomes & Impacts	Indicators
<p>Global Support Desk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ad hoc support from NGO fora Published NGO Fora Advocacy guide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed capacities of in-country NGO fora in areas of governance, strategic planning, human resource management, and joint advocacy Supported advocacy action to facilitate NGO collective action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 16 NGO Fora provided ad hoc support (e.g. structure, ToRs, etc.)
<p>Global & Regional NGO Fora Workshops</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National & Mixed NGO Fora Workshop, 3-day workshop in Geneva (2018) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brought diverse NGO fora together to exchange and share their experience on NGO fora governance, strategic planning, joint advocacy and fundraising Peer-to-peer experience sharing and networking Helped improve collective understanding around NGO coordination Provided financial support for workshop attendees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 16 NGO Fora participants from Africa, Asia and the MENA region (Geneva, 2018)
<p>Direct engagement with African NGO fora</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Missions to NNGO fora in South Sudan, Nigeria, and Lake Chad Region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General dissemination of knowledge and support to NGO fora and members in the region Connected NGO fora with specialised training providers (e.g. SSD CHOI and NNPHL) <u>Cameroon</u>: Supported creation of NNGO and INGO fora 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct engagement through missions with at least 3 NGO Fora
<p>Direct engagement with Asia-Pacific NGO fora</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> APRRN-ICVA Dialogue (2018) Missions to NGO Fora in Myanmar, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, and Bhutan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Myanmar</u>: Provided extensive ongoing support around Rohingya crisis, including coordinating advocacy, NGO staff security, information sharing, and general support <u>Dialogue</u>: UNHCR and civil society from both Myanmar and Bangladesh shared perspectives on Rohingya Returns and voiced concerns on process <u>Bangladesh</u>: Built a new NGO/CSO fora in Cox's Bazar from the ground up based on best practices Heavily involved in forging SAARTI, a network of network in Afghanistan-Pakistan-India 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct engagement through missions with at least 6 NGO Fora 30 participants in APRRN-ICVA dialogue
<p>Direct engagement with MENA NGO fora</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Missions to Jordan and Turkey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussions focused on governance and potential functions of NGO fora; examples of best practice from the region and beyond; and advocacy opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct engagement through missions with at least 2 NGO Fora

CASE STUDY #5

Protection against sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA)

How ICVA mobilised a rapid response to influence debates and policies on PSEA

Overview

In early 2018, there was clear international momentum to move forward with a safeguarding and protection against sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) agenda.

Through its efforts ICVA drew attention to the potential trade-offs of policies (for example, un-foreseen effects on people, on organisations and on other commitments) and to the implications on resourcing and capacity building of smaller organisation. Throughout this process ICVA worked to ensure that the framing of the discussion went beyond technical responses and also consider cultural, root causes, and political factors. ICVA also sought to ensure PSEA measures would be built together with national and local actors and communities, and that the negative impact on survivors would also be mitigated.

Details

ICVA recognised the urgent need for a strategic position on PSEA in order to influence the policy debate. The ICVA Secretariat and Board mobilised a rapid response.

During the ICVA General Assembly in March 2018, a motion was adopted with a set of objectives, including: 1) to document and voice the challenges of all ICVA members in complying to safeguarding standards and engage with their governments when appropriate; and 2) to engage in dialogue with UN Permanent Missions in Geneva.¹⁷

The ICVA Secretariat developed its position through engagement with its members, with special attention given to national and local actors since the work on PSEA also links to the localisation commitments following the World Humanitarian Summit and the Grand Bargain. These consultations identified inadequate resources, gender inequalities and power relations as current challenges affecting enhancement of protection against SEA.

During 2018, ICVA published the following papers and positions on PSEA:

- June 2018 - “The Long Run Protection against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse” to contribute to the reflection by sharing on the experiences of the members of ICVA (national and international NGO members, as well as with few NGO fora).
- September 2018 – Discussion paper on “Humanitarian Ombudsperson”.
- From July 2018 to January 2019 - ICVA prepared a publication on “Navigating the Standards” which will be launched in March 2019. This paper, developed with a number of external consultations, will help NGOs and others understand the plethora of standards being developed in relation to good practice, including those relating to PSEA and SHW.

¹⁶ The motion also set an objective for ICVA to perform an external review of the ICVA Secretariat safeguarding system which assessed that “despite the level of risk assessed as low, the measures are providing for an excellent example on PSEA to be followed by the entire sector”

During this time, ICVA was actively engaging to explain its position and attempt to influence PSEA policy, notably ICVA:

- attended several meetings in capital and at UN Permanent Missions in Geneva with donors (SIDA, MFA Norway, DFID, UE, USAID, SDC);
- convened several meetings with membership including to share the “Discussion paper on Ombudsperson”, the review on PSEA “The Long Run”, and debrief on Safeguarding Summit;
- participated in the DFID hosted Safeguarding Summit in London;
- held dedicated session on PSEA-SHW during ICVA’s three-day workshop in Geneva for NNGO fora;
- ICVA Secretariat and individual ICVA members worked on the Inter-Agency Misconduct Disclosure Scheme, led by SCHR.

ICVA took a strategic decision to focus on the PSEA policy process and due to its rapid response, ICVA is recognised as having influenced the debate and the consultation process to better represent the voice of national and local organisations (for example, ICVA helped persuade UNICEF to have consultation process which resulted in more appropriate policies for national/local organisations to implement to reduce risk).

Section 6

¹⁸ This review did not systematically track ICVA’s progress against all recommendations made by previous impact studies.

However, recommendations were reviewed to check if there was anything Sandstone would fundamentally disagree with and all thoughts were considered to be sound and relevant for ICVA’s reflection

¹⁹ https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/rainbow_framework/define/develop_programme_theory

SECTION 6

M&E Recommendations

The following six recommendations are based on Sandstone's observations during this impact study.¹⁸ This impact study did not include a functional review of ICVA's Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) capability or assessing the new 2019-2021 strategy & corresponding log frame. Nonetheless these recommendations may provide useful guidance for ICVA M&E approach going forward.

1. Theory of Change

The absence of an agreed upon theory of change (TOC) has been highlighted in previous evaluations. ICVA has recently developed a TOC for the new strategy which is a positive step. As it is still early in the new strategy it is recommended to revisit this, using the findings from this review.

An effective TOC can serve as a reference to decide priorities, design action, and determine investments of energy.¹⁹ One way to test the new TOC is by retroactively looking at the 2015-2018 activities/outcomes/impacts asking whether the models provide clarity on the inputs, processes, outputs, outcomes and impacts. A good TOC will usually include various loops and cross connections rather than being completely linear and consider the role of other network organisations in the system.

2. Reduction of the frequency of evaluations

Undertaking organisation-wide evaluations every year risks overburdening ICVA management and staff. Annual evaluations can probably be replaced with annual objectives planning & monitoring of workplans for individual people and team, without the involvement of external evaluators. The organisation-wide evaluation should ideally be done only once per strategic plan and should be timed so that it informs the next strategic planning process. For additional evaluation needs, ICVA can pursue programme- or project-level evaluations, which are more targeted and will require fewer resources.

3. Data collection for log frame Indicators

In this study, there were several indicators which were not feasible to determine. To avoid this going forward, ICVA will need to map the information sources and data collection methods for each of the indicators in the log frame and take steps to ensure that the data is being collected periodically. It is also recommended to reduce the total number of indicators, focusing on at most two indicators per strategic component or pillar. If the approach of this number is adopted, there is no reason why ICVA could not keep track of its initiatives, outcomes and impacts without external help and then feed this into its annual planning cycle.

4. Appointment of M&E lead

Responsibility for M&E is currently distributed to various roles across the ICVA Secretariat. There is no single person responsible for ensuring that data needed for the log frame indicators is identified in advance and collected appropriately. There does not seem to be a strong culture for evaluations in ICVA, which may be in part due to the challenge of attribution in influencing policy. In addition, the indicators of the log frame are mostly shared in common across ICVA's projects which means there isn't a lot of individual ownership over specific indicators either. Sandstone's recommendation is to nominate a M&E lead, responsible for planning and coordinating M&E data collection processes. This change may not require an increase in staff headcount since the work involved is periodic.

5. Monitoring tools

ICVA's CRM tool (CVCRM) was not widely used until 2018 to track engagement with members at events. The value of the tool's data will be much greater if ICVA also consistently uses the tool to track non-member engagement, for example ICVA's engagement with NGO fora. As much as possible, ICVA should use the tool to replace ad-hoc spreadsheets which are being used in parallel, making any necessary adjustments to the data fields / categories within the CRM tool as needed to accommodate new requirements.

6. Membership surveys

The nature of ICVA's work depends on getting input and feedback from its members, which have limited time and capacity. So it is understandable that the ICVA Secretariat wants to avoid making excessive requests to members. Conducting too many surveys can result in survey fatigue and lower response rates. This has the effect of diluting the value of the survey results and insights because a lower number of survey responses will be less representative of the membership as a whole and more subject to self-selection bias. Sandstone recommends doing fewer membership surveys which are not primarily programme/policy-focused (e.g. One or two comprehensive membership survey every three-years to coincide with the strategic planning & organisation-wide evaluation ahead of General Assemblies).

SECTION 7

Strategic Reflections

While out of the scope of this study, Sandstone has identified several important strategic reflections which may be included in future strategic planning or longer-term mission and vision reflections:²⁰

1. Future value of ICVA in the landscape of humanitarian networks

There are now many networked organisations and interorganisational alliances/platforms operating in the humanitarian sector, some of which are ICVA members. It may be useful to map the landscape of networks as input for ICVA's own discussion as to the future value-added of ICVA and how ICVA will relate to and engage with these networks.²¹

2. Public positioning

The issue of whether ICVA should be more positional beyond representing the voices of members was a recurring theme during the review. Any tendency to move in this direction should be weighed against the degree to which it risks compromising ICVA's (relatively unique) position as a trusted broker and how it might place ICVA alongside members rather than in service to them.

3. Regional/local focus

While ICVA does reach out to the local level, the organisation seems to mainly focus on bringing local voices to inform global policies/issues and translating global policies to local action. As the regional hubs continue to develop, ICVA will likely need to choose the degree to which they are conduits for this global-local dynamic or if ICVA will develop more regionally focused strategies tailored for their specific needs & priorities. The decision should be rooted in ICVA's theory of change and will help to inform the different capacities required (volume and knowhow) and the appropriate dynamic between ICVA's Geneva office and the ICVA regional hubs.

4. NGO fora and operational support

There have been some exciting experiences in that last period working with NGO fora, including the creation of new 'entities' from scratch. In light of this experience, ICVA's TOC and the broader localisation agenda, to what degree should and could ICVA engage in more operational support at the 'field' level?

5. 'Breadth versus focus'

ICVA has maintained a long-standing core function and set of activities due to its link to the UN & Intergovernmental agencies and its historical focus on Forced Displacement.²² At the same time ICVA is also expanding its networks and potentially the range of issues it is engaging in. Expanding and diversifying can be seen as progressive on the one hand, while on the other hand may risk spreading the organisation's limited resources too thinly and/or diluting the unique value ICVA brings. As part of future reflection's on ICVA's mission & identity, both the traditional and emerging aspects of ICVA's work should be examined and choices made.

Section 7

²⁰ As the new strategy is further consolidated and longer-term vision emerges, it may also be useful to review/fine-tune the overall set up and ensure alignment with ambitions.

²¹ ICVA has recently been active in this area (e.g. quarterly strategic meetings with SCHR, InterAction, and VOICE, engaging with CEOs of networks, and developing differentiated member engagement models).

²² ICVA already actively engages with other types of key actors (e.g. private sector, foundations, and regional banks).

ANNEX

ANNEX I

Completed Interviews

#	STAKEHOLDER GROUPS	NAME	ORGANIZATION	POSITION
1	ICVA Board	Virginie Lefevre	AMEL	
2	ICVA Board	Anoop Sukumaran	Act Alliance	
3	ICVA Management & Staff	Ignacio Packer	ICVA	Executive Director
4	ICVA Management & Staff	Eman Moankar	ICVA	Regional Representative, MENA
5	ICVA Management & Staff	Emmanuelle Osmond	ICVA	Senior Policy Officer - Humanitarian Coordination
6	ICVA Management & Staff	Jerome Elie	ICVA	Senior Policy Officer - Forced Displacement
7	ICVA Management & Staff	Jeremy Wellard	ICVA	Regional Representative, Asia - Pacific
8	ICVA Management & Staff	Marco Rotelli	ICVA	Regional Representative, Africa
9	ICVA Management & Staff	Nishanie Jayamaha	ICVA	
10	ICVA Management & Staff	Michael Hyden	ICVA	
11	ICVA Members	Rolla Hinedi	Syria Relief	
12	ICVA Members	Kari Eliassen	Norwegian Refugee Council	
13	ICVA Members	Mary Pack	IRC	
14	ICVA Members	Talha Keskin	IHH	
15	ICVA Members	Leila Muriithia	RCK	
16	ICVA Members / Affiliate status	Paul Knox-Clarke	ALNAP	Head of Research
17	ICVA Members	Tamara Domicelj	APRRN / Act for peace	
18	ICVA Members	Gareth Price Jones	Care Intl	
19	Non-members & NGO fora	George Njeru	IAWG	Coordinator
20	Non-members & NGO fora	Fiona Gall	ACBAR	
21	Non-members & NGO fora	Baptiste Hanquart	CCO RCA	Coordinator
22	Current & Prospective Donors	Catherine Gill	Australia	Counsellor (Humanitarian)
23	Current & Prospective Donors	Annemieke Tsike-Sossah	IKEA Foundation	
24	UN Agencies	Mervat Shelbaya	IASC	Head of IASC Secretariat
25	UN Agencies	Tanja Schuemer	IASC	IASC Humanitarian Affairs Officer
26	UN Agencies	Arafat Jamal	UNHCR	Head of Partnerships
27	UN Agencies	Nicoletta GIORDANO	IOM	Head of Partnerships
28	UN Agencies	Angela Staiger	IOM	Humanitarian Coordinator
29	Other	Scott Weber	Interpeace	President
30	UN Agencies	Fatima Sherif-Nor	UNHCR	Senior Humanitarian Manager, Partnership Section
31	Others	Magali Murlon	VOICE Network	Coordinator
32	Others	Jos Verbeek	World Bank	
33	Others	Tanya Wood	CHS Alliance	Executive Director
34	ICVA Members	Susan Wilding	CIVICUS	

ANNEX II

Log frame Results

STRENGTHENING NGO FORA

OBJECTIVE	TARGET	2016	2017	2018
PILLAR 1: INCREASE NGO UNDERSTANDING OF THE HUMANITARIAN SECTOR AND ITS POLICIES Expected Result 1: NGOs have increased knowledge of humanitarian policies and architecture, and ability to engage in the development of the aid sector.	At least 150 NGOs and their staff (75% NGOs from the global South, national NGOs, medium-sized NGOs, and NGO fora) demonstrate increased understanding of humanitarian policies and organisation of the aid sector.	<p>Based on 2016 Membership Survey: 38 member NGOs (out of which 36 national / Southern /Medium and fora) responded to the survey; 33 (representing 86%) of which responded that their involvement in ICVA has increased their understanding somewhat or significantly.</p> <p>A total of 219 participants to the three webinars run by ICVA responded that the webinars were somewhat or very useful to them.</p>	<p>A total of 758 participants responding to the feedback polls after the Humanitarian and Coordination Learning streams reported that the online events increased their knowledge somewhat or significantly (86% of all respondents to the feedback polls).</p> <p>Organisational breakdown of these respondents is not available.</p>	<p>ACHIEVED</p> <p>A total of 313 responses to the feedback polls after the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus learning stream reported that the online event increased their knowledge somewhat or significantly (68% of all respondents to the feedback polls). (NB: this does not represent unique participants)</p> <p>In addition, 140 people attended ICVA's Annual Conference on Navigating the Nexus</p>
	E-learning streams and periodic analytical reviews are produced and accessed by at least 5000 aid workers.	<p>Webinar attendees: 706</p> <p>ICVA YouTube views: 2803</p> <p>Downloads of briefing paper on Humanitarian Financing: 111</p>	<p>The sessions of the e-learning streams were attended for live streaming or later downloaded a total of 5297 (Coordination) and 10297 (Humanitarian Financing) times respectively</p>	<p>ACHIEVED</p> <p>2,098 "live" participants and 13,421 recording views during 2018 alone.</p> <p>69% of webinar participant feedback = "Very useful"</p> <p>5,308 "live" participants and 25,805 recording views since 2015 (NB: this does not represent unique participants)</p> <p>(NB: Unique participants were not tracked for all webinar sessions, however as an example, participants in the webinar session on Responsibility Sharing came from 47 different NGOs including 7 based in the Global South).</p>

ANNEX II

Log frame Results

OBJECTIVE	TARGET BY 2018	2016	2017	2018
PILLAR 2: POLICY AND ADVOCACY ENGAGEMENT IN KEY HUMANITARIAN ISSUES	At least 150 NGOs (75% being from the global South, national NGOs, medium- sized NGOs and NGO fora) participate in about 20 ICVA programmes looking at influencing key humanitarian policies and issues in the field of Forced Displacement, Humanitarian Financing, Coordination and Partnership.	249 Total No. NGOs reached	325 Total No. NGOs reached	ACHIEVED
		69% NGOs not based in Global North	71% NGOs not based in Global North	Participants in 2018 ICVA meetings and conferences came from >300 unique NGOs and NGO fora, including 128 NGOs based in the Global South
		16 platforms with structured engagement	17 platforms with structured engagement New platforms: Global Compact on Refugees	ACHIEVED ICVA led 31 Policy & Advocacy initiatives during 2015-2018
Expected Result 2: NGOs participate in defining and influencing the development of the humanitarian sector and its policies.	NGOs report an increased level of engagement in the development of the humanitarian sector and meaningful influence in policy elaboration (through ICVA's action). Humanitarian policies (at least 50) better reflect NGOs concerns, field realities and accountability to affected populations.	Based on 2016 Membership Survey: 60% of survey respondents (23 organisations) felt that participating in ICVA helped them engage	n/a, to be captured through repeated in 2018 Membership Survey	UNKNOWN ICVA members were not surveyed so this data is not available
		n/a	n/a	UNKNOWN ICVA shared more than 100 NGO statements during formal UN policy discussions. However, it is not feasible to determine which policies were influenced.

OBJECTIVE	TARGET BY 2018	2016	2017	2018
PILLAR 3: FIELD SUPPORT - BETTER CONNECT HUMANITARIAN POLICIES AND PRACTICE	At least 25 NGO fora report stronger organisational capacity in strategy development, governance and advocacy at the end of the project. Capacities of NGO fora are strengthened and NGO collective action and voices are echoed at regional and global levels.	n/a	Not yet measured, propose to include in survey in 2018	UNKNOWN N/A. NGO fora supported by ICVA were not surveyed so this data is not available.
		n/a	At least 19 NGO fora provided ad-hoc support (e.g. structure, ToRs, etc).	ACHIEVED 2016-2018: At least 35 additional NGO fora provided ad-hoc support (e.g. structure, ToRs, etc). 2018: At least 16 additional NGO fora provided ad-hoc support (e.g. structure, ToRs, etc). See Annex V for details
		n/a	14	ACHIEVED Since 2016, 90 participants from NGO fora have attended regional workshops led by ICVA which included joint advocacy as a topic

ANNEX II

Log frame Results

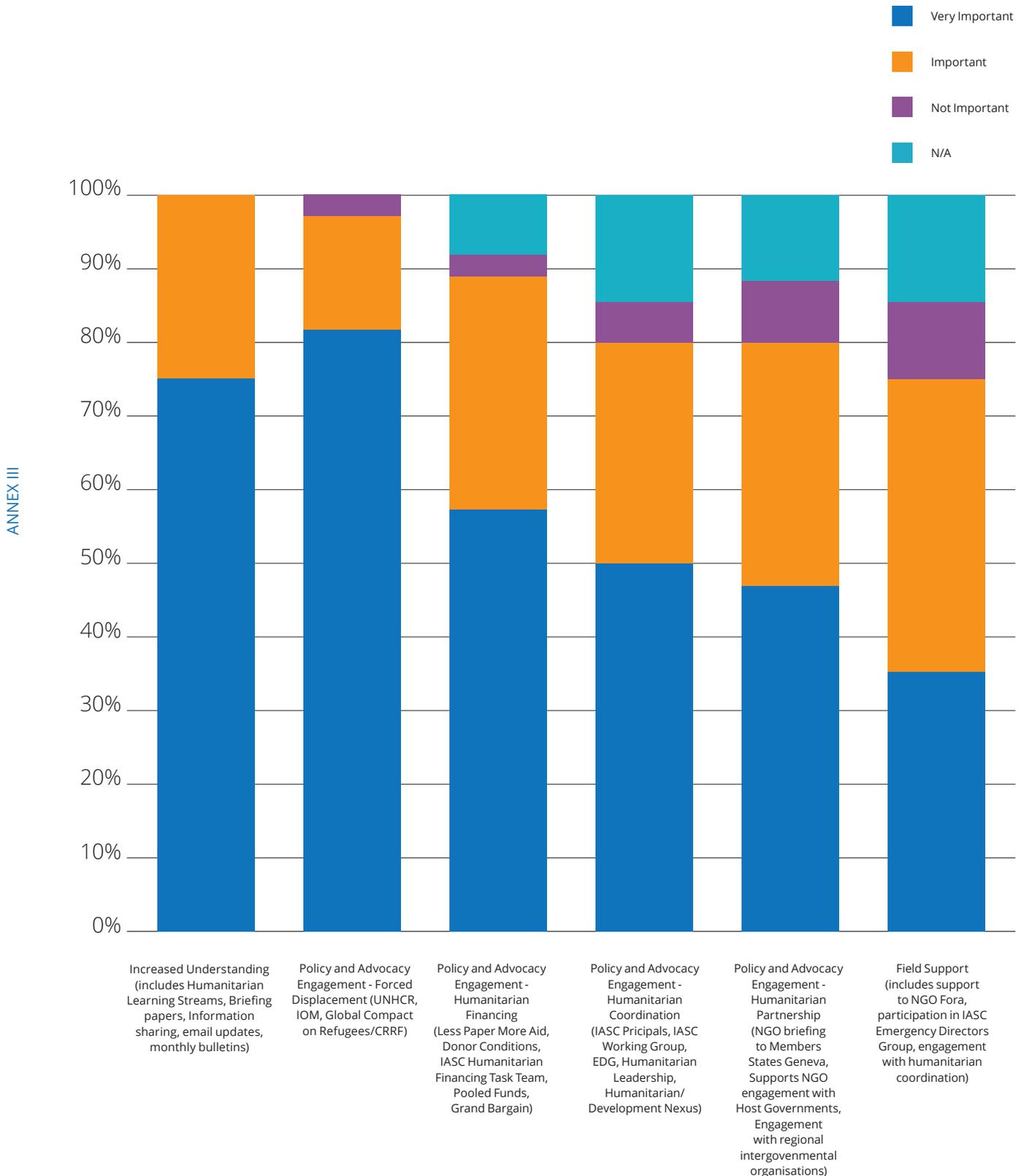
INCREASING NGO UNDERSTANDING

Indicator	Level of analysis	Target value by the end of the project; June 2019	Value at the end of 2017	Value as of July 2018 (per Exho Interim report)	
Indicator 1	In at least 17 contexts, NGO fora are supported to facilitate NGO collective action at field level for the benefit of affected populations	contexts 17	11	19	
Indicator 2	At least 25 NGO fora report stronger organisational capacity in strategy development, governance and advocacy at the end of the project	NGO fora 25	n/a	8	
Indicator 3	At least 25 NGO fora are supported to raise their perspectives at global and regional levels, on country related issues and key policy debates	NGO fora 25	14	20	
EXPECTED RESULT 1	Capacities of NGO fora in strategy development, governance, advocacy are strengthened				
Indicator 1	At least 8 NGO fora have developed or reviewed their Terms of Reference and/or strategic plans	NGO fora 8	6	6	
Indicator 2	80% of field visits (at least 17) result in action plan to support NGO fora (in governance, strategy, advocacy and/or capacity building)	% of field visits 80	60% 3 out of the 5 field visits conducted so far	80%	
Indicator 3	The online resource center (www.ngocoordination.org) is accessible to all NGO fora and gathers key projects' documents and products on governance, advocacy, forum's administrative management, key thematic documents	Online Resource Center 1	0	Re-organisation of the website planned for Q1 2019	
EXPECTED RESULT 1	NGO collective action and voices are promoted and echoed at regional and global levels, especially in the debates linked to country specific issues, Grand Bargain, Localisation, Global Compact on Refugees, New Way of Working, IASC related issues				
Indicator 1	At least 25 country specific issues coming from NGO fora are raised at the IASC level	Country Specific Issues 25	26	26	
Indicator 2	At least 15 NGO fora participate in the annual Humanitarian Coordinators' appraisal done through the IASC EDG	NGO fora 15	13	13	
Indicator 3	At least 12 NGO fora are active in ICVA working groups or ad-hoc thematic meetings linked to the Grand Bargain, the Global Compact for Refugees, the localisation debate and the New Way of Working	NGO fora 12	9 in ICVA WGs; 1 policy input; 8 at events	14	
Indicator 4	At least 2 key advocacy messages per target (NGOs, donors, UN) about the added value of NGO fora are developed	Key advocacy messages per target 2	n/a	2	

ANNEX III

2017 Member Interviews Analysis²³

INCREASING NGO UNDERSTANDING



²³ This chart is based on analysis of the interview notes from the '100 members in 100 days' initiative in 2017 which helped shape the 2019-2021 Strategic Plan. ICVA staff noted that during the interviews 'Field Support' was not fully explained to interviewees

ANNEX IV

NGO Fora Support²⁴

Region	Country	Name	Direct Engagement		Global Support Desk	
			2017	2018	2017	2018
MENA	SYRIA	Sirf - Syria INGO Regional Forum			Yes	
MENA	SYRIA	SNA - Syrian NGO alliance			Yes	Yes
MENA	LEBANON	Partnership Coordination Group			Yes	Yes
MENA	LEBANON	Collectif des Ong Lebanaises			Yes	
MENA	JORDAN	JIF - Jordan INGO Forum		Yes	Yes	Yes
MENA	JORDAN	JNA - Jordanian National Alliance				Yes
MENA	YEMEN	Yemen NNGO Forum				Yes
MENA	oPT	AIDA - Association of International Development Agencies			Yes	
MENA	TURKEY		Yes	Yes		
MENA	IRAQ	NCCI - NGO Coordination Committee for Iraq				Yes
Asia	AFGHANISTAN	Agency Coordinating Body of Afghan Relief and Development		Yes	Yes	
Asia	AFGHANISTAN	ANCB				Yes
Asia	BANGLADESH	NGO Platform		Yes	Yes	Yes
Asia	BANGLADESH	Cox's Bazar CSO and NGO Forum		Yes	Yes	Yes
Asia	BHUTAN			Yes		
Asia	MYANMAR	INGO Forum Myanmar	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Asia	MYANMAR	Local Resource Centre	Yes	Yes		
Asia	NEPAL	Association of International NGO's			Yes	
Asia	PAKISTAN	National Humanitarian Network			Yes	
Asia	PAKISTAN	Pakistan Humanitarian Forum			Yes	Yes
Asia	PHILIPPINES	Caucus of Development NGO Networks	Yes		Yes	Yes
Asia	SRI LANKA	Consortium of Humanatarian Agencies	Yes			
Asia	Regional	Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network			Yes	
EUROPE	UKRAINE				Yes	
West Africa	Regional	Regional Directors INGOs group			Yes	
	LAKE CHAD BASIN	Lake Chad Basin National NGOs forum (Oslo process)		Yes		
Africa	SOMALIA	Somalia NGO Consortium				Yes
Africa	SOUTH SUDAN	SSD NGO Forum		Yes	Yes	
Africa	CAMEROON	Cameroon Humanitarian Organizations Initiative -CHOI-IGNO Forum				Yes
Africa	NIGERIA	IGNO Forum		Yes		Yes
Africa	DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO	CCO			Yes	Yes
Africa	NIGER					Yes
		TOTAL COUNT	5	11	19	16

²⁴ This is derived from data in ICVA's monitoring tool for NGO fora

ANNEX V

List of Acronyms

AU	African Union
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DRC	Danish Refugee Council
DTM	Displacement Tracking Matrix
ECHO	European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EDG	Emergency Directors Group
GCM	Global Compact for Migration
GCR	Global Compact on Refugees
HFTT	Humanitarian Financing Task Team
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICVA	International Council of Voluntary Agencies
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NNGO	National Non-Governmental Organisation
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UN	United Nations
WHS	World Humanitarian Summit





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