

Strategic Considerations: Resourcing the collective ambitions of ICVA

iv. Resourcing the collective ambitions of ICVA

Why is this important

At present, ICVA is primarily resourced through government grants, philanthropic foundations and membership fees. In terms of implementation, while members are engaged in various degrees, much of ICVA's work is carried out by the secretariat. Sustainable and flexible funding along with a more effective collective engagement of Members will be essential, especially if ICVA has ambition to grow in the coming decade.

What is the current situation?

Funding for 2020 is UN 5%, Philanthropic Foundations 10%, membership fees 20% and governments 65%. Between 2012 the ICVA budget fluctuated between 1.5 and 2.7 million CHF, stabilizing to 3.2 million in 2018 and 2019. The core budget has been relatively stable with the main growth investments related to ICVA's regional development. Two thirds of the budget are staff costs with 2 staff in six locations. There has been an increase in multi-year and unrestricted funding, mainly from governments, with a broadening funding base overall with priority given to government donors and philanthropic foundations, focusing on multi-year grants. ICVA has strengthened its communication capacity to better communicate to different target groups and foster engagement of critical stakeholders. This will better enable organisations to understand at once the value and necessity to support ICVA.

Key messages include:

- ICVA's perceived added value in being global and diverse membership
- The perceived quality of the engagement and historical legitimacy
- The importance given on impact (external impact evaluation, case studies, theory of change...)
- Bridging between local, national, regional and international levels to influence policy and practice

Membership fees monitoring has been reinforced with a slight increase of members resulting in a 10% increase in membership fees.

While the trend is positive ICVA consistently fell short in 2019 of its target budget by 10% of target budget (3.5 million). The following trends help explain this trend:

- Some traditional donors are concerned and adjusting the number of contracts they have with "support system organisations".
- Some NGOs going through financial constraints tend to reduce advocacy positions or liaison functions as the impact of their work is more difficult to trace.
- The political agendas of some governments is changing with an impact on funding for humanitarian action through NGOs & NGO networks
- The 'Localisation agenda' is both an opportunity and a threat to the unity of the NGO community (INGO vs National and/or local NGOs).

Looking forwards

When talking about resources, **we should also be considering members engagement**. The strength of ICVA depends on the members engagements, not only in growing the size of the Secretariat. In fact, a very large secretariat with increased independent capacity may risk disengagement rather than engagement of members. We do need a sustainable financial base but leveraging off the collective ambitions of Members and joining forces to use our collective resources more effectively is probably the single most important factor to positively change the way ICVA action is resourced.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- a) Is the current resourcing model for ICVA adequate?
- b) How best to grow the resources for achieving the desired impact of ICVA as an organisation either through increased funding, increasing efficiency of ICVAs work or increasing the role of Members in acting on behalf of ICVA?