



A GLOBAL NGO NETWORK  
FOR PRINCIPLED AND EFFECTIVE  
HUMANITARIAN ACTION



# Strategic Priorities 2025-2027

Approved by the 19th General Assembly  
20 March 2024

The strategic priorities are drawn from the 2030 strategic vision, offering a more targeted focus for the period 2025-2027. Building on these priorities, the Secretariat will develop a three-year plan 2025-2027 for consideration and approval by the Board in November 2024. The plan will cover key elements, incorporating the content of ICVA’s initiatives, enabling strategies, resource planning and requirements, and a defined set of performance indicators.

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## Focus Area Forced Migration

### Context

Armed conflicts, widespread violence, serious human rights abuses and the climate crisis persist as intricate and interconnected catalysts for forced migration. Projections indicate that these challenges are poised to escalate and endure in the years ahead. The global impact of emerging humanitarian crises, coupled with the widening gap in humanitarian funding, hampers the effectiveness of existing responses to forced displacement. Concurrently, restrictive government policies, tightening of borders and negative public narratives further narrow opportunities for those forced to flee. Additionally, as the outlook for durable solutions diminishes, protracted crises are expected to persist.

### Strategic priorities

- ICVA is committed to monitoring on-the-ground developments, as well as staying abreast of evolving laws, policies, and practices, with the aim of enabling non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to exert influence across all levels.
- ICVA will actively participate in selected human mobility governance processes at both global and regional tiers, concentrating its efforts on refugees, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), migrants in vulnerable situations, and stateless individuals.
- As part of its advocacy efforts, ICVA will work towards raising awareness regarding forced migration contexts. The organization will conduct advocacy campaigns on shared concerns, emphasizing the need for the provision of assistance, protection, and lasting solutions for displaced populations, while advocating for the steadfast adherence to international human rights law.

### Key initiatives

- **The United Nations (UN) Global Compact on Refugees arrangements**, including follow-up from the second Global Refugee Forum held in 2023 and its links to complementary global initiatives, with a continued focus on protection and durable solutions for displaced populations.
- **Climate displacement** including a focus on UNHCR's Strategic Framework for Climate Action, and the International Organisation for Migration's (IOM) Institutional Strategy on Migration, Environment and Climate Change 2021-2030.
- **The UN Action Agenda on Internal Displacement**, including follow-up on commitments made and engagement with the High-Level event to be held in 2024 on internal displacement.

### What success looks like

- NGOs influence developments in laws, policies, and practices at all levels in support of refugees, internally displaced persons, vulnerable migrants, and stateless persons.
- NGOs enhance and improve the provision of assistance, protection, and durable solutions to displaced populations.
- Incremental integration of climate change and disaster-related dimensions into forced migration work.
- Effective partnerships with people and local, national, and international organisations, with other networks, and other sectors to support and influence forced migration work.



## Focus Area Coordination

### Context

Effective coordination among diverse humanitarian actors is instrumental in facilitating collaborative operations and advocacy efforts. This collaborative approach not only enhances the overall quality of assistance and protection but also reinforces accountability to those impacted by crises. It is imperative for NGOs to establish internal coordination mechanisms while actively participating in interagency coordination frameworks, operating at global, regional, national, and sub-national levels, bring together a growing array of diverse actors.

NGOs, through collective action, play a crucial role in shaping and influencing humanitarian coordination mechanisms. Our concerted efforts contribute to the relevance, inclusivity, effectiveness, and accountability of these mechanisms. By actively engaging with and influencing such coordination structures, NGOs can ensure that the response to crises is not only well-coordinated but also responsive to the evolving needs of affected populations.

### Strategic priorities

ICVA will work to ensure NGOs understand coordination mechanisms and support them to participate and influence both independently and collectively, and to take leadership roles where possible.

### Key initiatives

- Represent diverse NGO perspectives to strengthen the effectiveness and accountability of Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) coordination mechanisms at all levels.
- Support and strengthen the role of independent NGO coordination fora and increase recognition of their important role within national coordination structures.
- Support NGO advocacy and policy influencing processes at national and global levels.

### What success looks like

- NGO representation and engagement in the IASC leads to more effective, inclusive, and accountable humanitarian coordination structures at global, regional, national, and sub-national levels.
- NGO representation and engagement in the IASC forum leads to strengthened collective action towards a more inclusive and fit-for-purpose humanitarian system.
- NGO Fora provide effective NGO coordination at national level among NGO actors and between humanitarian stakeholders.



## Focus Area Financing

### Context

The strategic framework for addressing the humanitarian finance funding gap, as outlined by the 2016 High-Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing, continues to guide our efforts. This framework identifies three key action areas: 1) reducing humanitarian needs to alleviate the strain on the system, 2) expanding the resource base by accessing new funds through both traditional and innovative mechanisms, and 3) enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of humanitarian funding.

Despite the strategic clarity provided by these action areas, the reality on the ground presents a stark contrast. Humanitarian needs persist in their exponential growth, surpassing the rate at which resources or efficiency gains are expanding. This widening gap between escalating needs and available resources signals a critical juncture, demanding exploration of alternatives to the conventional system supporting humanitarian action. In the face of these challenges, our strategic working plan aims to address this disconcerting trend by reassessing and refining our approach to meet the evolving demands of humanitarian crises.

### Strategic priorities

In the dynamic landscape of global humanitarian challenges, where needs are escalating exponentially, it is imperative that funding streams are aligned with contextual requirements of people affected by crisis at the response level. ICVA commits to translate global dialogue on quality humanitarian funding into practical tools, approaches, and policies, supporting increased access to quality funding for frontline responders, with a special emphasis on local and national partners.

### Key initiatives

- Engage with key platforms shape humanitarian finance policy, with donors, UN agencies, and intermediary funders to reduce the gap between humanitarian finance policy and operational implementation.
- Convene NGOs and UN agencies to negotiate simplified and harmonised conditions of partnership.
- Engagement with the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and other types of pooled funding mechanisms to increase NGO understanding and access and facilitate the participation of local and national NGOs.
- Support for improved NGO risk management practices, especially in understanding and navigating restrictive contexts.

### What success looks like

- Conditions of humanitarian funding for NGOs are increasingly simplified and harmonized, and better aligned with the evolving needs of humanitarian responses.
- NGOs, especially local and national actors, are equipped with knowledge and skills to better understand, access, and efficiently use different pooled funding mechanisms (OCHA's Country-Based Pooled Funds, NGO-led or consortia-led mechanisms, etc.).
- NGOs' management of risks, especially in high-risk humanitarian contexts affected by restrictive measures, is improved to inform humanitarian funding decisions and facilitate humanitarian operations.



## Transformation 1 Champion principled humanitarian action

### Context

The work of ICVA members is firmly rooted in humanitarian principles, which remain as crucial as ever. Unfortunately, the politicisation of humanitarian action, narratives distortions, a lack of trust, competitive approaches, and increasingly restrictive operating environments present formidable challenges. These factors constrain the ability of NGOs to navigate dilemmas and preserve humanitarian space.

In our commitment to enhancing the humanitarian system, ICVA assumes a unique role to play as a convenor of diverse local, national, and international NGOs. Our focus is on fostering a contextually relevant and culturally appropriate application of the principles. However, addressing the challenges to principled humanitarian action requires collective effort. ICVA must not only facilitate collaboration among NGOs but also actively contribute to wider efforts to uphold normative and legal frameworks within international and national systems, including to support the engagement of humanitarian actors with key influential states and other stakeholders.

### Strategic priorities

ICVA will champion principled humanitarian action, advocating for the preservation of humanitarian space through the effective and appropriate translation of principles into practice.

### Key initiatives

- ICVA will lead and support initiatives that strengthen partnerships, coherence, and connectivity around principled humanitarian action at global, regional, national, and local levels.
- ICVA will invest in thought leadership towards collectively identifying and addressing threats to principled humanitarian action and building trust, both amongst NGOs and between NGOs and other humanitarian actors.
- ICVA will support its members to collaborate, share experience and practice, and learn from each other in promoting principled humanitarian action, including by leveraging the expertise and capacity of local and national NGOs.

### What success looks like

- ICVA plays a unique role as a champion of principled humanitarian action, demonstrated through its ability to connect and engage with a range of key stakeholders on challenges to and opportunities for principled humanitarian action.
- ICVA members are equipped with the knowledge and skills to contextualise approaches and address impediments to principled humanitarian action.



## Transformation 2

### Address the impact of climate change on humanitarian action

#### Context

Climate change is increasingly driving humanitarian crises, affecting millions of people, especially those who are already vulnerable and marginalised in conflict and fragile contexts. ICVA is cognisant that the scale of the crisis requires a collective and holistic approach that cuts across siloes, as humanitarian action alone cannot full address the challenges.

Recent years have seen numerous initiatives bridging climate change and humanitarian action, requiring NGOs to participate in a multitude of platforms and discussions. However, many NGOs lack resources to engage in all these initiatives and are yet to build organisational capacities to prepare, respond and build resilience to impacts of climate change and to be more environmentally sustainable in humanitarian action.

#### Strategic priorities

ICVA will rally the diversity of humanitarian NGOs to meaningfully contribute to discussions and decision-making processes related to climate-environment and humanitarian action. ICVA will advocate for support and resources to build our own, and community resilience to face and address impacts of climate change in humanitarian action and be more environmentally sustainable in our actions. ICVA will enhance our understanding and capacities, and bring together our collective and collaborative strengths as a network to face challenges that cannot be solved alone.

#### Key initiatives

- Support the actioning of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) road map on climate, mainstreaming climate change and environment sustainability considerations into humanitarian planning and response.
- Promote the Climate and Environment Charter for Humanitarian Organisations and Host the Charter Secretariat to support signatories and humanitarian organisations in fulfilling their commitments.
- Collaborate across humanitarian and climate sectors, supporting members' engagement in climate initiatives and processes relevant to humanitarian action, such as the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).
- Raise awareness about the humanitarian linkages and implications of climate loss and damage advocating for adequate, additional humanitarian, climate and loss and damage efforts accessible to local actors and are accountable to affected communities.
- Gather and share evidence and lessons learned on ICVA members and NGOs' work are on climate change, environmental sustainability, and humanitarian action encouraging coordination and communication with affected communities and local actors whenever possible.

#### What success looks like

- ICVA members and other humanitarian actors will have improved their understanding and capacities related to climate change and environmental sustainability in humanitarian action.
- ICVA members and other humanitarian actors can better engage in policy and advocacy processes on climate and humanitarian action at relevant local/national, regional and global levels.
- ICVA and its members work more collectively and collaboratively across the climate-humanitarian-development sectors to be prepared for and to reduce and minimise humanitarian impacts of climate change in humanitarian contexts.



## Transformation 3 Be globally distributed and locally rooted

### Context

ICVA is an internationally distributed, diverse network leveraging the legitimacy of its members' direct engagement with people in crisis to provide leadership and to inform action at national, regional, and global level. This places ICVA in a unique position to successfully promote principled and effective humanitarian action by also promoting diversity of actors within the system.

### Strategic priorities

ICVA will contribute to an environment where the diversity of humanitarian NGOs is valued and where all humanitarian actors, particularly local and national NGOs, can meaningfully contribute to humanitarian discussions and decision-making. ICVA will proactively support building local agency through country-based members and country fora using our regional and sub-regional hubs, providing information, encouraging participation, and supporting strategic events.

### Key initiatives

- Evidence and advocate to progress on the localization agenda, including on addressing barriers to meaningful contributions of local actors to humanitarian discussions and decision-making and how to address them.
- Advocate and support local and national NGOs in equal partnership with the international actors, including through enhanced access to funding and influencing changes in donor policies and strategies.
- Scaling up local agency initiatives by providing tailored and strategic support to country-based members and local humanitarian actors to strengthen organisational capacity.
- Support initiatives that bridge between international law and global regional realities with practices on the ground and benefit concretely people affected by crisis.

### What success looks like

- Enhanced participation and influence of local and national actors in shaping global policies.
- A reduced gap between international law, global policies, and practices on the ground.
- Improved partnerships based on equality especially for national and local NGOs.





## Transformation 4 Be diverse, inclusive, and live our values

### Context

Humanitarian crises impact certain groups in society more than others, deepening power imbalances and further marginalising the most vulnerable. NGOs and other humanitarian actors are increasingly unpacking issues of values, attitudes, and culture with a dialogue on power, authority, inclusion, and safeguarding.

### Strategic priorities

ICVA has a long-standing commitment towards diversity and inclusion both in membership and internal governance structures, and in supporting a more inclusive and accountable humanitarian practice at country level. ICVA aims to increase its importance when it comes to questions of safeguarding and diversity, building on its values and pushing for a sector that is more inclusive, equitable and accountable to affected people, and continues to represent the voices of its membership and influence decision-making.

ICVA will continue to promote safeguarding and diversity and commits to using its standing to contribute to best practices and progress on Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH), inclusion and duty of care.

### Key initiatives

- Initiatives to equip ICVA members with tools and information to guide their organisational and programmatic Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Journeys (e.g. investing in awareness and capacity strengthening on inclusion of persons with disabilities).
- Initiatives on diversity, safeguarding, culture and values aim to influence policy at global level and equip NGOs with tools and information at the operational level that enable improved outcomes for affected people, and particularly vulnerable groups (e.g. PSEA Outreach and Communication Fund, the Safeguarding Resource and Support Hub, humanitarian leadership trainings for women-led organisations)
- Initiatives focused on encouraging and facilitating collaboration between members and a diverse range of stakeholders on issues of gender, safeguarding, diversity and inclusion (e.g. UNICEF-NGO consultations, the ICVA PSEA Working Group, engagement with IASC bodies and others)

### What success looks like

- ICVA strengthens Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) policy and practice within ICVA and provides tools for the sector.
- Members are equipped with the necessary tools, knowledge, and skills to participate and influence policy debate and decisions on safeguarding and diversity, and to enhance their work at the benefit of all people affected by crisis and ensure their full inclusion in humanitarian action, regardless of age, gender, disability, or any other ground.
- The humanitarian sector steps up its efforts on safeguarding, diversity, and inclusion, building on ICVA's values for humanitarian action that is inclusive, equitable, and accountable to affected people.



## Transformation 5

### Proactively engage in agile collaborative partnerships

#### Context

Humanitarian contexts are increasingly complex and humanitarian needs keep rising worldwide.. This also means that the costs required to respond to the existing crises are high. Although humanitarian funding has been increasing too, it has still proven impossible to keep up with the costs' increase for all the people in need. Today there is a large gap between what aid costs and the funding available.

Responding to the situation of people affected by crisis requires listening to their voices and considering longer term sustainable solutions outside the humanitarian sector. This requires meaningful engagement with communities and more strategic collaborations within the humanitarian sector and beyond.

#### Strategic priorities

ICVA will promote principled partnerships that listen to people affected by crisis and seek to efficiently respond to their situation. ICVA will use its convenor role to create spaces for stakeholders to address challenges and opportunities in achieving meaningful partnerships.

#### Key initiatives

- Connecting humanitarian, development and peace actors and evidencing progress related to humanitarian, development, and peace nexus partnerships.
- Initiatives and consultations with NGOs, UN Agencies and States to improve partnerships, with a specific focus on partnerships with national and local NGOs.
- Support to members to learn from each other and other actors on how to design and implement together with affected individuals and communities.

#### What success looks like

- New and improved partnerships supporting members to navigate the humanitarian contexts.



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## Regional Hubs

### **Africa**

Nairobi, Kenya  
Dakar, Senegal

### **Asia-Pacific**

Bangkok, Thailand  
Islamabad, Pakistan

### **MENA**

Amman, Jordan

### **Latin America**

Guadalajara, Mexico  
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