

B. STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING ICVA'S MEMBERSHIP AND WAYS OF WORKING

The previous sections focused on the external environment and on ICVA's role in responding to this. This section will deal with the internal environment of how the ICVA network is comprised, how the members and secretariat will work together and interact with other organisations/platforms.

To start this conversation the ICVA Board and Secretariat have developed some thinking on strategic considerations relating to ICVA as a network.

- i. **ICVA's Collaborative Advantage**
- ii. **Membership and Member Engagement**
- iii. **Regional development of ICVA**
- iv. **Resourcing ICVA**

i. ICVA's Collaborative Advantage

Why is this important?

Humanitarian action and the range of actors involved has become increasingly complex and things are unlikely to become simpler between now and 2030. There is a growing need for meaningful collaboration within the humanitarian sector between organisations and between networks and cross sector collaboration with governments, international organisations and the private sector. Looking towards 2030 ICVA needs to position itself to offer its unique added value complementing the efforts and capacities of others. This is an opportunity to review ICVA's organisational architecture to best fit the engagements for increased influence.

What is the current situation and what have we learned from the past?

Global attention is rightly focused on the Sustainable Development Goals. But nowhere are the impacts of the climate change and poverty they are intended to address felt more keenly than on the front line of disaster. An equitable future cannot be achieved by leaving people behind when they are at their most exposed. And we can often find the most radical and effective solutions to our challenges where they are at their most extreme. When everything around us fails we are forced to learn anew how to survive, how to live and how to meet each other's needs.

The humanitarian sector is stretched by rapidly rising demand and must do more to empower affected people around the world and the communities in which they live to cope with the risks and vulnerabilities that they are increasingly exposed to as their own first responders and primary agents of their own change. This depends on re-aligning the actions of all actors in our operating environments so that lines of empowerment can be traced through governance and all relevant stakeholders right the way to affected people themselves.

Forging such alignment requires a wide range of individual focus areas for shared and collective action. This is too important to be left to chance and in an increasingly complex, turbulent, inter-dependent and emergent environment cannot be left to individual institutions acting in their own capacity alone.

To achieve our SDGs, we need effective humanitarian action. To achieve effective humanitarian action requires new approaches to all dimensions of humanitarian assistance geared to unlocking system-wide participation. This will depend upon new expertise, methods, business models, incentive structures, cultures and accountability mechanisms.

Globally, we have the resources we need to make this transition: it is primarily a question of enabling it to happen.

Humanitarian actors should embrace a climate for change in focusing on the lever of collective action to foster a more joined-up and resilient humanitarian system for exponential impact.²

ICVA's potential added value

ICVA already connects, convenes, influences & advocates, supports as well as analyses & explains to develop diverse models and forms of engagement and partnerships amongst NGO platforms and system strengthening/changing organisations. This includes reinforcing the ongoing NGO Fora Support Programme.

Looking towards 2030 ICVA must aim at being even more radically collaborative in collective influence of a variety of NGO enabling platforms offering the opportunity to re-think the way of working and increase NGO influence. For example

- While ICVA will keep the focus of its mission 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", ICVA must systematically develop diverse models and forms of engagement and partnerships with the increasing diverse range of actors including non-NGOs and non-UN stakeholders.
- The Secretariat can offer value in developing the strategies and engagements with a) private sector (See ICVA 2030 - Private Sector Engagement); b) cities and local governments (platforms), c) Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Donor Countries, d) Regional Bodies (AU, ASEAN, IOC..) and e) other civil society dynamics.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- a) Considering the number of NGO platforms and other NGO networked organisations in the humanitarian sector, what is the unique added value of ICVA that complements the value of others?
- b) If ICVA is to maximise the value it adds, how will it need to change the way in which collaborates with other networks both in terms of the Secretariat functioning and the action of members?

² Adapted from "Creating a Climate for Change - The case for transforming humanitarian action through the System Strengthening Alliance and beyond", Paul Skinner, October 2019. Commissioned by Start Network, GroundTruth and ICVA.