

**Grand Bargain in 2021:**  
**Annual Self Report – Narrative Summary**

**Name of Institution:**

International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA)

**Point of Contact (please provide a name, title and email to enable the consultants to contact you for an interview):**

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## **Grand Bargain in 2021**

**Question 1: Reflecting on the information you have provided in the Excel spreadsheet, please highlight the 2 or 3 key outcomes or results relating to the Grand Bargain that your institution achieved in 2021?**

The role of ICVA as a non-operational NGO continues to define our role in implementation of the Grand Bargain, with efforts focused on direct advocacy with signatories for increased implementation of commitments, as well as representing the broader NGO voice in Grand Bargain workstream discussions. Support for the development of Grand Bargain 2.0 was a significant focus for ICVA in 2021 outside of implementation of commitments. ICVA also concluded the year by rotating on to the Grand Bargain Facilitation Group in one of two NGO seats. Top focus areas for ICVA in 2021 included localization, quality funding, and the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.

Localization has been a long-standing focus for ICVA given our mixed membership of both local and international NGOs, and as a key element in the ICVA 2030 strategy. In 2021, ICVA continued to engage with the IASC RG1 subgroup on Localisation which included a primary deliverables on the articulation of [guidance](#) to strengthen local participation of LNNGOs in HCTs, clusters, and IASC coordination mechanisms. ICVA played a vital role in these discussions, including identifying the need to reinforce institutional capacities of LNNGOs and the need for multi-year investment to strengthen LNNGO meaningful participation in the leadership and the decision-making processes.

At the regional level, ICVA supported workshops to foster exchange learning opportunities among peers. Priority topics included strengthening accountability, quality measurements and standards, collective advocacy, good governance, strategic planning, risk management, negotiation, and representation skills. ICVA also support the local NGO Fora in conducting these workshops, facilitating exchange and learning among the local and international NGO fora, and providing NGO with required tools and guidance.

Quality funding was also a long-term focus for ICVA that continued in 2021. Extending from work started under Covid-19 response in the IASC, ICVA continued to use its position as Co-Chair of IASC RG5 to facilitate discussion on increased funding flexibility among IASC members. The initial "Proposal for a Harmonized Approach to Funding Flexibility in the Context of COVID-19" introduced in 2020 was extended through the end of 2021 as part of these efforts. During the second half of 2021 RG 5 was also tasked to map the

cascading of overheads (indirect costs) through the funding chain to local partners, identifying current practice and equity in coverage of costs.

Outside of RG5 work, ICVA engaged with members following the endorsement of Grand Bargain 2.0 to identify NGO quality funding priorities in anticipation of a caucus focusing on quality funding. A sub-group within the ICVA Humanitarian Finance Working Group initially met in the summer to discuss Grand Bargain 2.0 implementation, followed by additional group meeting in the fall to discuss NGO support and priorities for the quality funding caucus. Through these discussions NGO priorities were identified to address multi-year funding issues as well as the data gap evident in understanding the nature of funding currently in the system.

Also extending from work initiated in previous years, in 2021 ICVA continued to support a Nexus Working Group for members and to serve as Co-chair of the Nexus Community of Practice through IASC RG4. The community of practice for the Nexus includes approximately 150 members of NGOs, UN, IFIs, and Governments. Bi-monthly calls focused on country-level and global issues and contexts, including DRC, Lebanon, OPT, and UNDCO updates, and OECD DAC recommendations. In cooperation with OECD INCAF, ICVA also prepared a session to exchange with approximately 40 NGOs on the OECD DAC recommendation on the Nexus and ways for NGOs to consider formal endorsement.

**Question 2: Briefly explain how the outcomes contribute to achieving the Grand Bargain 2.0 enabling priority 1 (quality funding).**

As described above, quality funding itself was one of the key focus areas for ICVA Grand Bargain action in 2021. In particular, the work accomplished through IASC RG5 in 2021 supported both the expansion of flexibility in funding and improvements to cost classifications targeting real cost coverage. A key component in the prioritization of multi-year funding among NGOs engaging in the quality funding caucus can also be linked to the need to secure more sustainable funding stream in protracted crises – particular for L/NNGO partners that frequently rely on a very limited mix of funding sources.

**Question 3: Briefly explain how the outcomes contribute to achieving the Grand Bargain 2.0 enabling priority 2 (localisation and participation).**

Localization is a direct strategic focus for ICVA, and most ICVA activities within its regional hubs and Geneva-based policy functions involve some link to the localization agenda. The localization-specific activities described above were

designed to directly contribute to the ability of L/NNGOs and fora representing local actors to improve understanding, participation, and ability to navigate the humanitarian system. ICVA's approach incorporates a mix of capacity-strengthening efforts where needed and facilitation of enhanced ability to engaged in leadership of humanitarian processes.

### **Grand Bargain and cross-cutting issues**

**Question 4: How has your institution contributed to the advancement of gender equality and women's empowerment<sup>1</sup> in humanitarian settings through its implementation of the Grand Bargain? What results/outcomes have been achieved in this regard? (Please outline specific initiatives or changes in practice and their outcomes/results).**

Because ICVA operates as a non-operational network of humanitarian NGOs, it is not engaged directly with incorporation of gender equality and women's empowerment in implementation of humanitarian operations in the field. As part of a focus on global humanitarian policy and coordination issues, ICVA does still maintain a significant focus on gender issues.

In 2021, ICVA was a member of the GenCap Advisory Group and of the IASC Results Group 2 on Accountability and Inclusion (which included a focus on PSEA). ICVA also worked intensively to improve policies around SEA and SH which impact women disproportionately. This work included participation in the development of practical tools and policies to improve awareness of gender and SEA issues in the field.

Linked to the broader theme of gender equality, in February 2020, UNHCR and ICVA partnered in order to establish the [PSEA Community Outreach and Communications Fund](#) as one of the High Commissioner's deliverables as [IASC Champion on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse \(PSEA\) and Sexual Harassment](#). The Fund aims to support the work of NGOs in preventing situations of sexual exploitation and abuse by ensuring all affected people know that humanitarian assistance is never conditional on transactions or exchanges of any kind. Moreover, the Fund invests in community-led efforts to ensure that communities and SEA survivors know how and where to safely report allegations of sexual abuse and exploitation, in line with established IASC priorities. The Fund continued in 2021 and brought the total of funded projects to 34, all focused on awareness raising on the non-conditionality of humanitarian aid, the commitment of the sector to address impunity for

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<sup>1</sup> Refer to the IASC definitions of gender equality and women empowerment, available [here](#).

sexual abuse and exploitation, and the existing possibilities to report any SEA allegation.

**Question 5: How has the humanitarian-development nexus been strategically mainstreamed in your institutional implementation of the Grand Bargain commitments?** *Please explain how your institution has linked commitments 10.1 - 10.5 with other commitments from other workstreams.*

As ICVA is a non-operational network it has focused on building skillsets for practitioners to operate more effectively in Nexus contexts through the Nexus Community of Practice and emerging Nexus Academy. A primary characteristic of these efforts is a focus on field staff – including from local partners - encouraging improved capacity of local partners to navigate the Nexus.

A strong link also exists between quality funding and Nexus efforts. ICVA, as Co-chair of RG5, worked closely with the Co-chairs of RG4 (Nexus) to provide inputs on finance-related elements of Nexus implementation, which including links to multi-year funding and reduced earmarked. ICVA also participated in the UNDP-organized podcast series on the Nexus, speaking on financing the Nexus with a focus on the need to provide sustainable, predictable funding to local partners.

**Question 6: Has your institution taken any steps towards improving risk sharing with its partners? If so, please describe how.** *(For ease of reference, please see a set of actions to enhance risk sharing as suggested in the Netherlands and the ICRC [Statement on risk sharing](#).)<sup>2</sup>*

ICVA organized the final webinar in its risk management series on “Risk Management and Funding Partnerships”, which was co-hosted by PHAP in June 2021. The purpose of the webinar was to highlight how risk management plays an important role in funding decisions, including the appropriate sharing of risk among funding partners. Speakers provided perspectives from the local partner, INGO, UN funder, and network perspectives highlighting challenges, gaps, and good practice with regard to risk management and funding.

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<sup>2</sup> During the 2021 Annual meeting and in consultation leading up to this Signatories have expressed a strong interest in advancing the risk-sharing agenda. As communicated, the Netherlands, ICRC and InterAction are in the process of setting up a Risk Sharing Platform. This work will benefit greatly from an inventory of Signatories’ risk-sharing practices.