

**Grand Bargain in 2019:**  
**Annual Self Report – Narrative Summary**

**Name of Institution: ICVA – International Council of Voluntary Agencies**

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(NB. Please limit your answer to no more than **3 pages in total** – anything over this word limit will not be considered by ODI in their analysis. Please respond to all of the questions below.)

**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 2019?**

The primary focus areas for implementation of Grand Bargain commitments remained relatively unchanged in 2019. As a non-operational NGO network, the most relevant role for ICVA involves direct advocacy with signatories for increased implementation of commitments, as well as representing the broader NGO voice in Grand Bargain workstream discussions.

ICVA continued in its role as Co-Convener with Germany of Workstream 9 on Harmonized and Simplified Narrative Reporting. Germany and ICVA, with the technical support of GPPi, completed the pilot work to test a harmonized “8+3” narrative reporting template in June 2019. GPPi conducted a final review of the pilot work in Iraq, Myanmar, and Somalia, and also issued a revised 8+3 template and guidance in December for broader mainstream use. UNHCR was an early adopter of the 8+3 reporting template, and final pilot results indicated a positive effect of the work on reducing burdens associated with reporting. By the end of 2019 UNHCR, OCHA, Germany, France, Netherlands, Canada, Australia, Italy, and US PRM are committed to using the 8+3 template. UK DFID and ECHO are also working towards future adoption.

Linked to the work on harmonized reporting, ICVA also closely engaged in support of commitments to reduce duplication and management costs in 2019 (Workstream 4). This work focused on carrying forward the commitment to harmonize partnership agreements. In March 2019, ICVA convened a dialogue in Geneva between NGOs and UN agencies (UNHCR, OCHA, WFP, UNICEF, and UNFPA) to review partnership agreements and propose a way forward to better harmonize language and conditions across agencies. This resulted from a commitment by agencies and NGOs to continue a regular dialogue on key partnership topics through the year. In May 2019, ICVA supported an Oxfam-led NGO analysis of UN partnership agreements that included specific recommendations on improvements to agreements. For UNHCR, this led to an update of the PPA template released in June 2019 for 2020 PPAs. Recommendations from the NGO analysis also fed into the UNICEF NGO consultations organized by ICVA in September 2019.

On localization, ICVA continued to organize regional engagements in 2019 to examine the localization agenda with partners at the country and regional levels, including how to better channel funding to national partners, and how to reinforce the value added of working through local partners. ICVA also partnered with Humanitarian Leadership Academy to issue a second briefing paper on localization titled “Unpacking Localization” to support broader understanding of how to move toward improved localization of aid. The results of advocacy work that ICVA contributed to in 2019 can be seen in the increased levels of funding

through UN agencies to national partners, and through the modification of policies enabling local partners to improve capacity – such as the UNHCR decision to allow national partners to spend 4% of contracts on integrity support costs (up from 0% previously).

**Question 2: Please explain how the outcomes/results have or will lead to long-term institutional changes in policy and/or practice.**

For work on harmonized reporting and implementation of the 8+3 template, results from the completed final GPPi assessment of the pilot work indicated that participants have already experienced benefits. Both reporters and donors indicated that reporting was much more predictable, templates were simplified and easier to use, and the use of standard questions made analysis easier. On the donor side, the majority of donors interviewed for the final assessment indicated that quality had improved with the 8+3 template.

The ultimate intended benefit of simplifying and harmonizing reporting is a reduced burden on field staff that enables more effective use of resources to meet the needs of people in crisis. While detailed measurement of this objective has not yet been completed, the final assessment clearly indicated that burdens have been reduced as a result of using the 8+3 template.

Work on the harmonization of partnership agreements also produced some initial tangible results in 2019. Both UNHCR and UNICEF responded in writing to proposed recommendations to partnership agreements, with UNHCR releasing a revised agreement template before the end of the year. The dialog also sparked a more detailed discussion on how to better align language on data protection between UN agencies, including in agreements. Although there is more work to be done, the initial steps taken in 2019 have established a solid base to carry forward the discussion. Ultimately, simplified and harmonized partnership agreements have the potential to significantly reduce the amount of staff time spent on competing agreements, as well as ensure that there is a more consistent application and understanding of the various terms and conditions in agreements.

Localization continues to be a topic of high interest with NGO partners. Although expansion of direct funding by donor governments to support 25% of humanitarian funding going directly to national partners is moving slowly, funding by UN agencies to national partners has continued to increase. National partners are increasingly recognized as important partners and are invited to participate in fora such as the IASC. Ultimately, it is important to ensure that the humanitarian system is realigned to better support the activities of frontline national partners, rather than just increasing participation of national partners in global dialog.

**Question 3: 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**

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

**have been achieved in this regard? (please outline specific initiatives or changes in practice and their outcomes/results).** Please refer to the Guidelines for definitions of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, which are included in this self-report template package.

Although ICVA has a significant focus on gender issues, this is not always highlighted in Grand Bargain implementation. This is generally due to the fact that ICVA is a network, non-operational, and does not implement operations in the field.

In 2019, 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 training modules to improve awareness of gender and SEA issues in the field.

**Question 4: 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.

ICVA has continued to focus on support for implementation of the Nexus. Linked to the IASC Nexus Results Group (RG4), ICVA co-leads a Nexus Community of Practice with WFP, which remained active in 2019 to improve understanding of the Nexus with humanitarian practitioners and provide input into improved guidance on how to implement humanitarian programmes in alignment with Nexus objectives. ICVA also engaged in the dialogue on Collective Outcomes, including guidance on definitions in 2019, to clarify common language and high-level outcome objectives for humanitarian operations.

The Nexus also features in ICVA's work on the IASC Humanitarian Finance Results Group (HFRG) which it co-chairs with OCHA. The HFRG has made a direct link between the Nexus and work on quality funding (multi year, flexible) through priority deliverables on carrying forward recommendations on the "Financing the Nexus" study. Begun in 2019, the work of the HFRG in 2020 will include products to improve guidance on how to apply quality funding in Nexus contexts.