

Inter-Agency Regional Analyst Network (IARAN)

Complementing and Empowering Humanitarian NGOs

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Introduction

The Inter-Agency Regional Analysts Network (IARAN) was introduced to Save the Children in 2012 and in Action Against Hunger in 2014 as part of an operational research project to enhance strategic programming in the humanitarian sector. In 2016 the IARAN became a legal consortium with the ambition to open membership to other humanitarian NGOs.

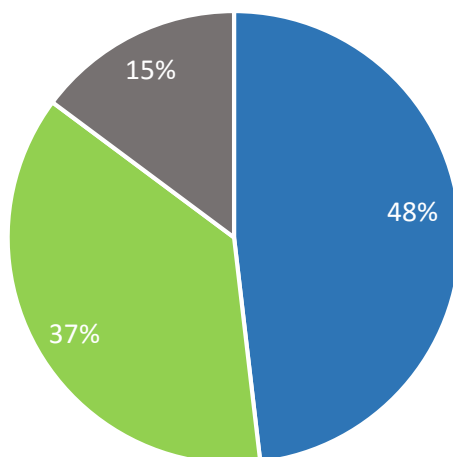
The overall objective of the IARAN is to leverage humanitarian programming to enable members to effectively contribute to the achievement of SDGs by 2030. To do so the IARAN provides strategic foresight to enable member NGOs to implement pre-emptive strategies, drive change and to become more proactive.

A key element of the IARAN is to lift humanitarian decision makers from being present-oriented tacticians to future-oriented strategists. In order to do this the IARAN not only provides support services with an empowerment approach but also provides trainings to key decision makers within the member organizations and influences key Masters Courses on Humanitarian Leadership within the sector.

The IARAN approach is to act as a cost effective, shared strategic intelligence unit for all members, mirroring what a strategy department would provide to executive officers in the private and public sectors. Acting as a service provider, demand driven by decision makers in the member organizations, the IARAN exploits not only qualitative analytic techniques but also quantitative analysis (including predictive analytics) to produce a portfolio of foresight products and help to build preemptive humanitarian strategies.

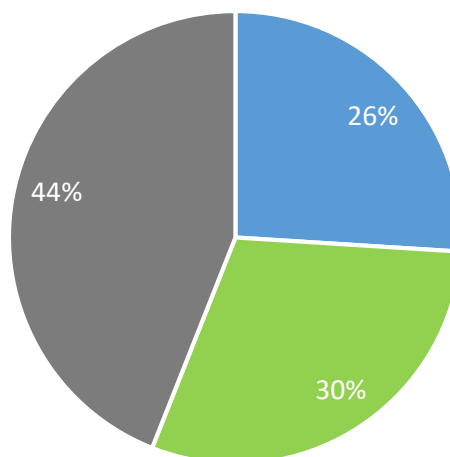
The IARAN structure comprises a Director, a Chief Analyst and teams of Global and Regional Analysts for each operational member organization.

Who requests IARAN products?



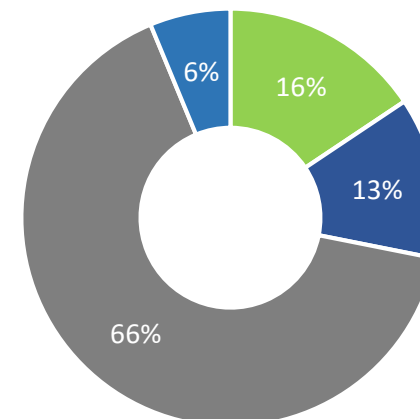
■ Country ■ Regional ■ Global

Uptake of IARAN reports



■ Donors ■ Key stakeholders ■ Humanitarian Community

Types of reports produced



■ Key Trends Analyses ■ Actor Analyses
■ Foresight Analyses ■ Briefing notes

Performance to date

After a successful test phase in Save the Children between 2012 and 2014, the IARAN was fully deployed in Action Against Hunger (AAH) by September 2015, with 4 Regional Analysts based in Dakar, Amman, Kampala and Yangon respectively. The first priority of the analysts was to introduce the concept of strategic foresight to the Country Offices in their region and begin assessing how best they could offer support. As a result, the majority of the work undertaken by the analysts in 2015 has been requested by

Country Directors and focused on country specific dynamics. The hiring of a Global Analyst in September 2016 reflects the increased demands for global projects.

Since its inception at AAH, the IARAN has produced **34 reports** -a combination of key trends analyses, actor analyses, foresight analyses and briefing notes, ranging from 1 to 15 year time horizons. Furthermore, the IARAN has helped two Country Offices build their Country Strategy and develop and test two toolkits for the humanitarian sector: 1) to produce territorial foresight analysis; 2) to articulate foresight analysis and strategy planning.

To improve the diffusion of reports, increase public profile and improve uptake, since May 2016 the IARAN has started producing communications materials such as infographics, presentations, summary documents, podcasts and videos which accompany the reports making them more accessible and digestible. The added value of these products will be evaluated towards the end of 2016.

In addition to the above, an annual review is produced at the start of each calendar year in which we outline the successes of the IARAN, lessons learned and the plans for the future.

Concerning the transformative agenda, we have carried out strategic foresight training for all country directors and keys decision makers in Action Against Hunger, signed a MoU with the Deakin University and the Humanitarian Leadership Centre (Melbourne, Australia) to create a Francophone pan-African HLP (Humanitarian Leadership Programme) and introduced strategic foresight elements in the current Anglophone HLP Programme. At IRIS Sup' (Paris) the IARAN has strongly influenced the direction of the Humanitarian Managers (HM) Masters Course and in 2016 a Junior IARAN Analyst Programme (JIAP) was established. The JIAP, with its 5 Junior Analyst trainee positions, add cost-effective capacity and resources to the IARAN analytical team.

The current Deakin HLP and IRIS HM Masters Programmes train **210 humanitarian professionals** across **8 large humanitarian NGOs**, every year.

Capacity and Prioritization

The current IARAN setup, with 4 Regional Analysts, 1 Global Analyst and 1 Data-Scientist, has an annual target capacity of **60 analytical and strategic products**, 48 of which have a regional and country scope and 12 of which have a global one. Each product informs the IARAN library with actor and driver files which are incrementally growing in number and increase the IARAN production capacity year after year.

Any regional, country and global decision maker within the member organizations can commission an analytical product. Regional and country requests are formulated to the Regional Analyst, and prioritized on a quarterly basis by the Regional leadership. Global requests are managed by a system of quota between Operations (30%); Advocacy (30%), Technical (10%) and Executive leaders (30%). Within each quota, requests are prioritized on a biannual basis by the respective leaderships.

In the eventuality of a new operational agency becoming a IARAN member the toolkits, trainings and the IARAN Library will be completely co-shared, and there will be two models of outputs prioritization:

- a) A system of organizational quota at regional, country and global level is introduced according to the financial contribution (at the time of writing, each analytical or strategic product has a unit cost of 16k euros according to the current business model¹).
- b) The organization sets up its own Regional Analyst Network (RAN) structure, embedded in the IARAN and mirroring the existing one in Action Against Hunger or Save the Children. Prioritization will be then performed according to the capacity implemented and the leadership structure of the specific organization. This process of prioritization with regular updates, reassessments and sharing of requests ensures responsiveness to the changing needs and enables the IARAN to provide for and adapt to shifting organizational priorities.

¹ Comparatively the cost of an equivalent product in the public and private sector ranges from 32-34k Euros.

Added value

1. Achieving the SDGs

Many humanitarian NGOs are increasingly looking at achieving long-term goals such as the SDGs, which have timespans of over ten years. Traditional short-term programming with a focus on local, country context will not be enough for the achievement, or even in order to make a contribution to the achievement of these goals. The IARAN brings much needed foresight context analysis to decision makers - lifting them out of the perpetual present and training them on how to use analysis to plan strategically for the future. Having a long-term as well as regional or global context analysis will allow our organisation to honour the commitments made to 2030 and beyond.

2. Financial growth

In transforming NGO's profile from a country-focused, reactive humanitarian NGO to a regional based, pre-emptive one, the IARAN guarantees increased donor credibility for the member organisations. With this change will also come the ability to adapt to changing donor strategies, which increasingly support long-term, regional issues, collaborative programs and projects focused on building structural resilience. By having an in-house capacity for futures planning, member organisations are likely to attract attention and funds from the private sector, which has traditionally led on strategic foresight research. Ultimately, via the IARAN consortium structure, member organisations will be more willing to pool humanitarian pre-emptive strategies in front of regional or thematic pool funds, multiplying members growth opportunities.

3. Innovation

The IARAN is emblematic of this approach in its scientific methodology of research - the exploratory foresight & strategic planning toolkits - and its combination of Francophone and Anglo-Saxon approaches to futurology studies. In addition, the creation of the WISHES (Warming Information System for Humanitarian Emergency Strategies) Dataset -- a robust and continuous 10 year time series of variables pertaining to human vulnerability -- which is being developed with partners at the University of Naples, is the first of its kind. The IARAN's unique combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches also puts member organisations at the forefront of what is likely to be an invaluable innovative tool for humanitarian strategy methodologies in years to come.

4. Cost-effective humanitarian intelligence

The consortium model of the IARAN is cost efficient in that it allows analytical capacity and humanitarian intelligence to be shared, not duplicated, and used collectively by a large and scalable number of member organisations with the ultimate aim of increasing impact across the humanitarian sector. Indeed as more organisations join the IARAN consortium, the larger the foresight library becomes - the lower the investment will be to create a larger number of strategic outputs.

5. Leadership transformation

Finally, the IARAN's crucial transformative agenda to create, train and support humanitarian leaders of tomorrow brings added capacity to the organisation both now and in the future. Our partnerships with academic institutions and think tanks allow research on humanitarian foresight as well as our training for strategic programming to be cutting edge, of the utmost quality and directly accessible to member organisations.

6. External partnerships and avenues for growth

Since its inception at Save the Children in 2012, the IARAN has extended its partnership base to include academic institutions and think tanks. To grow our portfolio further, since 2014 we have strategically partnered with future-oriented organisations - Futuribles (a French think-tank dedicated to interdisciplinary, future-oriented studies) and the University of Denver (with a large-scale, open source global futures modelling system). These partnerships have certainly added capacity, but have also allowed us to pursue operational requests such as the SAM Future Caseload Study.

Options for joining the IARAN consortium

Options ²	Outputs	Price ³	Human resources	Notes
1. 'As you go products'	a. Foresight report	16k/unit	0	These are standalone products, and do not provide any in-house human resource capacity within the partner organisation.
	b. Strategy plan	32k/plan	0	
	c. Briefings & consultations	0.4k/day	0	
2. 'Mixed package'	1 Regional/Global Analyst	35k/year	50%	Total 4 products per year
	+ 1 Chief Analyst/Director ⁴	45k/year	50%	Training, quality control and support for organizational buy-in and uptake
3. 'Full suite'	Baseline of a Chief Analyst and 3 Regional Analysts.	600k/year ⁵	All 100%/full-time	Total of 24 products per year for the first year ⁶

² All options available until end of 2017 only.

³ All prices in EUR

⁴ The analyst's time is combined with the Chief Analyst's/Director's time simply because of management and training costs.

⁵ Dependent on joining members' salary scales

⁶ This is a lower amount of outputs in the first year (2nd year =60 products) because of the time needed to train and integrate an analyst.