



AID REIMAGINED SUMMIT 2020

REIMAGINE - RESHAPE - REALISE

Part of WHAF's Reshaping Aid
Agenda 2030

24-25TH NOVEMBER

2020





THE SUMMIT IN NUMBERS

883

Registered Participants

637

Registered Organisations

91

Countries
From the 'Global South' - 69

300

People Attended

28

Speakers & Panellists
14 from the 'Global South'

3

Plenary
Sessions

3

Breakout
Sessions

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The World Humanitarian Action Forum (WHAF) would like to thank our Summit co-organiser and co-host - NEAR (Network for Empowered Aid Response), a network of Global South Local and National NGOs.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We gratefully appreciate the tremendous support of the WHAF Consultative Committee partners who provided their expertise, time and energy to help organise the Aid Reimagined Global Summit 2020 and facilitating the breakout sessions; Islamic Relief Worldwide, ALNAP and A4EP.

We are grateful to our funding partner Al-Khair Foundation for their support and the Summit's media outlet partner The New Humanitarian.

We are thankful to all our speakers, panellists, contributors and moderators who shared their expertise,

experience, perspectives, ideas and solutions.

Finally thank you to all the participants who joined us from around the world and provided insightful inputs for an effective discussion at the summit.



REIMAGINING AND RESHAPING AID

Is the COVID-19 crisis the latest catalyst for change that the sector needs?

At times of major global crises, change is inevitable and questions need to be asked. COVID-19 has indeed changed the way the world works.

Could COVID-19 be the latest opportunity for the much-needed change to happen in the aid sector too? How do we reimagine aid through the “core responsibilities” that were set out in the “Agenda for Humanity”?

The need to give greater control to local groups has been widely acknowledged, but efforts to this effect have seen little progress.

This discrepancy has been especially evident during the current COVID-19 crisis, with countless examples of local actors taking on increasing responsibility and risk with very little if any credit or direct funding to do so. How will our leadership's responses to the economic and geopolitical shift and the narrative

of global economic trends shape the future of aid and humanitarian financing in particular?

What should the humanitarian space and aid sector in general look like and more importantly feel like?

Moving forward, it is crucial that humanitarian and development projects are not only self-reflexive but also constantly acknowledging, interrogating, and challenging the existing paradigm in order to respond to our rapidly changing reality.

The pandemic may indeed serve as a catalyst for change that dramatically disrupts our way of understanding the world, laying bare the inadequacies and injustices of the current system so clearly that challenges to the status quo may no longer be placated by rhetorical shifts.

In the pursuit of a humanitarian sector that works for everyone, international practitioners must prioritise localisation not only to magnify the voices of those directly affected by crises but also to actively ground understandings of the economic, social, and political structures that produce poverty and inequality in grassroots realities.

Fundamentally, the geopolitical power dynamics that underpin the international aid ecosystem must be reimagined truly from the bottom up - allowing local organisations to take the lead - to adequately address the growing demands of global inequity and instability.



THE WHAF JOURNEY to 2020

WHAF, together with a variety of stakeholders, identified that multiple parallel humanitarian crises of the last decade imposed several challenges to the traditional humanitarian system.

One, in particular, was that despite increasingly open political contexts taking shape across parts of the Southern hemisphere, civil society organizations

(CSOs) still had a very limited influence on policy making.

Following the World Humanitarian Summit of 2016 for enhanced coherence in humanitarian responses, the WHAF injects momentum for reinvigorated and locally appropriate partnerships and coordination amongst humanitarian actors in the global 'North' and 'South'.

Building a broader support base through engagement with more diverse stakeholders is essential to strengthen the

acceptance, perception and relevance of humanitarian aid and assistance. Collective agreement is required on regional priorities and mechanisms for organising humanitarian responses that promote long-term thinking.

For NGOs, there is a clear recognition of the need to improve connections with other responses through operational partnerships.

WHAF was launched on 28 November 2017 at the Queen Elizabeth Conference Centre in London, with representatives from INGOs, local and national NGOs from the global South, public sector officials, philanthropists, donors, academics and the media.

The forum drew over 136 NGOs, of which 77 were from the global South. It was important that conversations and recommendations included the voice of communities and organisations from the global south in order to achieve inclusive, balanced and effective outcomes that were better informed.

The second Forum in Istanbul in 2019 involved 261 NGOs (200 from the global south), from 51 countries and was organised in collaboration with more than 53 partners.

On 16th September 2020, WHAF arranged a consultation meeting with 35 organisations from across the sector to discuss the concept of the Re-imagining Aid initiative and asked two key questions:

Should we continue with this initiative?

68% said yes, 38% said Yes, but... and 0% said no.

What are the issues to prioritise and address?

The top 3 were 'decolonisation of aid' (40%), and 'local coordination and representation' tied with 'funding flows' at 23%, followed by 'efficacy of humanitarian action' at 17%.





W WHAF SUMMIT 2020

The Aid Reimagined Summit 2020 was the 3rd WHAF Forum (and our first virtually) to bring together humanitarian, development and peacebuilding sector to address key issues, and this time it was the Aid System under the theme of Re-imagining Aid.

883

Registrations

91

Countries

637

NGOs

300

Attended

The 2020 Summit attracted over 883 registrations from 91 countries, with 637 NGOs represented (of which 383 were from the Global South). Of these, 300 attended across the two-day Summit providing a fruitful discussion during the breakout sessions.

The Summit set the scene for the Reshaping Aid initiative, addressing the question of **what** issues specifically and realistically need to be addressed and **why** we need to act now. At the end of the November Summit, we announced the Research Project which aims to address what needs to change within the system and how to get there (more details in section 7, p9).



SHARED PURPOSE

- The WHAF2020 Summit, led by a consultative committee, was organised by several partners
- The Summit brought together over 300 delegates representing local and national NGOs, INGOs, networks, philanthropists and academics from across the humanitarian, development and peace-building sector for a two-day virtual forum on 24-25 November 2020.
- The Summit focused on three key topics: The Future of Humanitarianism, Local Leadership and the Decolonisation of Aid.
- At the Summit we launched the Reshaping Aid Research Project which will collect evidence and direction for system change led by the 'global south'.
- This summary report presents key observations, ideas and recommendations for influence and action.

AID REIMAGINED GLOBAL SUMMIT 2020 PROGRAMME

Tuesday, November 24th

12:00-12:20*	Welcome and Programme Overview
	Dr. Hany El Banna, <i>Chairman, WHAF</i> Hibak Kalfan, <i>Executive Director, NEAR</i> Imam Qasim Rashid Ahmad, <i>Executive Chairman, Al-Khair Foundation (Summit Sponsor)</i> Mihaela Zupancic Magovac, <i>Deputy Director for General Affairs, ECHO</i> Rawaad Mahyub CEO, <i>WHAF Co-host</i>
12:20-13:15	Plenary 1: The Future State of Humanitarianism
	Jessica Alexander, <i>Senior Editor, The New Humanitarian</i> Dr. Muhtari Aminu-Kanu, <i>Director General, Nigerian Conservation Foundation</i> Prof. Hari Darshan Shrestha, <i>Member, NEAR Leadership Council</i> Prof. Dorothea Hilhorst, <i>President, International Humanitarian Studies Association</i> Safa Shahkhalili, <i>Founder & Host, Rethinking Development Podcast Moderator</i>
13:15-13:20	Break
13:20-14:15	Plenary 2: The Decolonisation of Aid
	Degan Ali, <i>Executive Director, Adeso</i> Dr. Sara Pantuliano, <i>CEO, ODI</i> Sudhanshu S. Singh, <i>CEO, HAI and Convenor, A4EP</i> Dylan Mathews, <i>Chief Executive, Peace Direct</i> Marie Rose-Romain Murphy, <i>Co-Founder & President, ESPWA, Inc. & The Haiti Community Foundation Moderator</i>
14:15-14:30	Closing Remarks and Brief for Day 2
	Dr. Valerie Nkamgang Bemo, <i>Deputy Director Emergency Response, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation</i> Alix Masson, <i>Advocacy Lead, NEAR Co-host</i>

Wednesday, November 25th

12:00-12:10	Opening Remarks
	Mervat Shelbaya, <i>Head, IASC Secretariat</i> Mohammed Al-Ghamdi, <i>Assistant CEO for Governance, Qatar Charity</i> Alix Masson, <i>Advocacy Lead, NEAR Co-host</i>
12:10-13:05	Plenary 3: Local Coordination and Representation
	Hareth Alareyani, <i>External Relations & Coordination Officer, Life Makers Meeting Place</i> Benedict Balderama, <i>National Coordinator, Partnership of Philippine Support Service Agencies (PHILSSA)</i> Denis Humberto Meléndez Aguirre, <i>Executive Director, Regional Network for Risk Management in Central America (CRGR)</i> Marina Skuric-Prodanovic, <i>Chief, System-wide Approaches and Practices Section, OCHA</i> Shahida Arif, <i>Regional Representative Asia Pacific, NEAR Moderator</i>
13:05-13:10	Break
13:10-13:15	Where Next?
	Dr. Hugo Slim, <i>Senior Research Fellow, Blavatnik School of Government</i>
13:15-14:05	Break Out Sessions
	Group 1: The Future State of Humanitarianism <i>Moderator:</i> Juliet Parker, <i>Deputy Director, ALNAP</i> Group 2: The Decolonisation of Aid <i>Moderator:</i> Shahin Ashraf, <i>Head of Global Advocacy, Islamic Relief Worldwide</i> Group 3: Local Coordination and Representation <i>Moderator:</i> Gareth Price-Jones, <i>Executive Secretary, Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response</i>
14:05-14:20	Feedback Fire Round
	All Moderators
14:20-14:30	What Next and the Summit Series
	Rawaad Mahyub CEO, <i>WHAF Co-host</i> Alix Masson, <i>Advocacy Lead, NEAR Co-host</i>

* Time zone listed is GMT. Start times: 12pm GMT or 3pm EAT

THREE KEY TOPICS

discussed at the Aid Reimagined
Global Summit 2020



1. THE FUTURE OF HUMANITARIANISM

Plenary

The WHAF 2020 Aid Reimagined Global Summit's opening plenary session focused on the future of humanitarianism.

The panel, moderated by Safa Shahkhalili from the Rethinking Development podcast included Jessica Alexander (The New Humanitarian), Dr. Muhtari Aminu-Kanu (Nigerian Conservation Foundation), Prof. Hari Darshan Shrestha (NEAR Leadership Council), and Prof. Dorothea Hilhorst (International Humanitarian Studies Association).

With experience in media, academia, research, and local and international organisations, the panel offered a diversity of perspectives that illuminated shared priorities in regard to the practices, systems, and assumptions that must be amended if the sector is to deliver on its lofty promises.

Notably, changes to the “dictionary” used by humanitarians were called for to help shift donor and practitioner mindsets, citing terms “aid beneficiary” and “capacity building” as dismissive and paternalistic.

While the humanitarian premise of alleviating human suffering remains a worthwhile and noble one, the panellists



agreed that drastic change is necessary.

A panellist summarized this feeling, suggesting that the sector doesn't "need another reform agenda that tinkers at the margins and makes technocratic changes by insiders to a model that's already flawed," instead, true change needs to be led and even demanded by those on the ground.

When asked what concrete actions could be taken to work toward a brighter future, the panellists agreed that a return to the foundational values of compassion and solidarity must be accompanied by a rethinking of technocratic funding mechanisms, rigid contracting relationships, and unequal decision-making structures.

Local context and long-term impact are crucial considerations for future humanitarian efforts, and it is necessary to not only focus on the North-South power dynamic but also inequities within crisis-affected communities themselves.

Ultimately, lasting change must be led by local actors challenging the existing paradigm by claiming power and advocating for a better future.

Panellists expressed a glimmer of hope as the global COVID-19 crisis has not only revealed the shortcomings of the existing system, but also underscored the indispensability of local actors--prompting a broad rethinking of humanitarian practices and potentially providing momentum for the much-needed shift.

These valuable insights provided an excellent jumping off point for the following discussions on the decolonisation of aid and local coordination and representation.

Breakout session

To open the session, moderator Juliet Parker (ALNAP) reflected back on the Future State of Humanitarianism plenary discussion and set out to highlight gaps and challenges in the sector to begin identifying potential areas for exploration through WHAF's upcoming research project and regional summits in 2021.

With this in mind, the following question was posed: Where do you see the most room for improvement within the sector?

Participants agreed that although historically, changes have been made at the margins, the COVID-19 pandemic provides an opportunity to accelerate change.

It will be crucial to focus on local leadership, flexibility, and adaptability moving forward if the sector is to advance as participants hope.

In addition to a broader cultural shift, the group identified emerging practices and policies that would encourage progress including community-based budgeting, accountability between and among communities, reduced bureaucracy, breaking down of silos, adaptive contracting, agile funding mechanisms, and increased local leadership at all stages.

One participant even shared a dream of a

funding mechanism that could eliminate the donor-recipient relationship altogether.

A focus area that was raised briefly and warrants further discussion is how new technologies are being incubated in the humanitarian space and how they can be used to increase transparency and coordination.

Potential barriers to success include those who wish to uphold the status quo

like Northern organizations reluctant to adapt their policies and practices, financial and operational barriers to genuine competition between local and international organizations, and a significant “accountability gap.”

If the future of humanitarianism is to be more inclusive and fit for purpose, we need a radical reimagining of “who does what and how” across the sector.

QUOTES

“The whole problem of the humanitarian development nexus is a northern construct - when I first started in this sector in the 1980s, this wasn’t a thing - humanitarianism was the alleviation of suffering, not this extraordinary infrastructure and architecture of clusters etc”

“Aid should focus on helping communities to come out of their crisis and then aid agencies should be able to exit and focus on another area in need.”

If the future of humanitarianism is to be more inclusive and fit for purpose, we need a radical reimagining of “who does what and how” across the sector



2. THE DECOLONISATION OF AID

Plenary

The second panel brought together moderator Marie-Rose Romain Murphy (ESPWA, Inc. & The Haiti Community Foundation), Degan Ali (Adeso), Dr. Sara Pantuliano (ODI), Sudhanshu S. Singh (HAI and A4EP), Dylan Mathews (Peace Direct) to discuss the decolonisation of the aid sector.

Recent global events and rising racial tensions have brought anti-racist policy and practice to the forefront of development discourse, resulting in the proliferation of “decolonisation” discussions within the sector.

Echoing the Future State of Humanitarianism plenary, panellists articulated a number of ways that colonialism is reproduced in aid policy, practice, and discourse - deeply impacting debt and trade relations, political stability, and even local culture.

A panellist suggested that the term’s fundamentally personal and political

nature may have more potential than other “localisation” efforts to catalyze change, as it forces actors to acknowledge their role in extractive and exploitative policies and partnerships.

While recognizing this potential, many panellists cautioned against allowing decolonisation to become another policy “buzz word” with little impact on practice.

At the core of the call for the decolonisation of aid is a fundamental question about racial justice and inequality that must be addressed head-on.

The panel agreed, however, that this is a difficult task requiring organizations to ensure that communities are given the space to claim their power, and that international actors cede power and, as one panellist suggested, “vacate our space.”

When asked about how to move technocratic discussions on the topic to on-the-ground results a panellist proposed three concrete actions:

1. We must acknowledge our own complicity and internalized racism

2. Organizations must make difficult decisions to dismantle institutional practices that perpetuate inequity

3. Local actors have to lead the change within their own institutions through processes like collective resource fundraising and local philanthropy.

Other panellists echoed this sentiment, calling for international organizations to redefine success previously measured in growing budgets and staff numbers to genuine partnerships and decreasing footprints in so-called “beneficiary countries.”

To create real change and dismantle the existing system, these actions must be led, planned, and defined by local actors and organizations.

Ultimately, addressing colonialism at all levels within the sector will require great courage, determination, integrity, and accountability.

A task we must take on together.

Breakout session

Moderator Shahin Ashraf (Islamic Relief Worldwide) opened the Decolonisation of Aid Breakout session by positing that the current decolonisation conversation constitutes a haphazard collection of voices that must be grown to a critical mass and harnessed into a movement in order to preserve momentum and transform the sector.

For decolonisation efforts to be successful, institutions must undergo significant cultural reforms that tackle structural racism from the top down while avoiding the tokenization of people of colour. Although similar to some themes addressed in discussions of localisation, participants agreed that the decolonisation agenda is much more radical as it depends on local communities claiming significant power from those who are reluctant to give it up.

For those committed to decolonisation, this process necessitates countless uncomfortable conversations and financial sacrifices that will require great courage, integrity, and accountability.

While some participants viewed decolonisation as the responsibility of INGOs and multilateral organizations, others suggested that the onus is on the oppressed to “level the playing field and confront the North.”

Despite differing views, the group agreed that decolonisation of the sector must begin with a shift from existing fragmented efforts to a unified and “deafening chorus,” the rethinking of funding structures that perpetuate inequality, and the re-writing of humanitarian dictionary that reflects deeply imbedded biases and neo-colonial ideologies.

Additionally, significant political will and a broader mindset shift were cited as crucial to the success of decolonisation efforts.



QUOTES

"I am worried that decolonisation is becoming another bandwagon in the sector; its a more fundamental question about racial justice and racial inequality, and we have a problem calling out what the problem really is, a racist issue. Still deep roots in colonial structures, but we should be more upfront about racism"

"I don't believe in "shifting the power" because the power was always with us. Those that haven encroached on our power must vacate our space".

"Racism is very personal and decolonization is very political. Localization allows you to distance yourself from it and not take any responsibility for yourself and your institution and how your institution is perpetuating complicity in a neo-colonial racist structure that is aid".

"We need to have to courage to show that we can work in a different way by giving away part of our budgets and redefining success away from growing budgets and numbers of staff to how genuine our partnerships are and how we can reduce instead of expand our footprint in some of the countries in which we work, making sure that action is led, planned, and defined by local organizations".

"all organisations need to reflect on colonisation and racism within their own organisation."

"I think we often visualize the colonizers as the external powers (foreign companies, expats, governments), while neglecting/refusing to see how we also reproduce that inherited colonial way of thinking...So what role (if any) does the humanitarian sector play in supporting countries to recognize those issues and tackle them?"

SUMMIT SPEAKERS

PLENARY 1: THE FUTURE OF HUMANITARIANISM



Jessica Alexander
The New Humanitarian



Muhtari Aminu-Kanu
Nigerian Conservation Foundation



Hari Darshan Shrestha
NEAR



Dorothea Hilhorst
IHSA



Safa Shahkhalili
Rethinking Development Podcast
Moderator

PLENARY 2: THE DECOLONISATION OF AID



Degan Ali
Adeso



Sara Pantuliano
ODI



Sudhanshu Singh
A4EP



Dylan Mathews
Peace Direct



Marie Rose-Romain Murphy
ESPWA Inc. & The Haiti Community Foundation
Moderator

PLENARY 3: LOCAL COORDINATION AND REPRESENTATION



Benedict Balderama
PHILSSA



Denis Humberto Meléndez Aguirre
CRGR



Marina Skuric-Prodanovic
OCHA



Hareth Alareyani
Life Makers Meeting Place



Shahida Arif
NEAR
Moderator

SPEAKERS AND FACILITATORS:



Hany El Banna
WHAF



Mihaela Zupancic Magovac
ECHO



Imam Qasim Rashid Ahmad
Al-Khair Foundation



Hibak Kalfan
NEAR



Hugo Slim
Blavatnik School of Government



Valerie Nkamgang Bemo
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation



Mohammed Al-Ghamdi
Qatar Charity



Mervat Shelbaya
IASC



Shahin Ashraf
IRW
Breakout Facilitator



Juliet Parker
ALNAP
Breakout Facilitator



Gareth Price-Jones
SCHR
Breakout Facilitator



Rawaad Mahyub
WHAF
Co-host



Alix Masson
NEAR
Co-host



3. LOCAL COORDINATION AND REPRESENTATION

Plenary

The final plenary session featured a diverse set of perspectives on the “localisation agenda” from varied contexts. Panellists included Hareth Al-Eryani (Life Makers Meeting Place, Yemen), Benedict Balderama (Partnership of Philippine Support Service Agencies), Denis Humberto Meléndez Aguirre (Regional Network for Risk Management in Central America), and Marina Skuric-Prodanovic (UN OCHA).

After acknowledging that too often space for local actors in the international system is limited by the space provided for them by powerful organizations, moderator Shahida Arif (NEAR) asked two key questions:

How do we reimagine the coordination structure to begin a true two-way exchange of information and capacity?

And, how can we centre and amplify local voices to accommodate their genuine participation in the sector?

In response panellists stressed the importance of local actors having opportunities for meaningful engagement, and the need for a shift from “capacity building” initiatives, which imply a lack of local capacity, to “capacity sharing” that recognizes the invaluable context, experience, and expertise that local actors bring to the equation.

One panellist suggested that in order to achieve these aims, the sector must not settle for local actors gaining a “seat at the table” but must push for collaborative decision making, planning, budgeting, and implementation on all levels.

In addition, panellists agreed that there is a need for further investment not only in disaster response activities, but also in preparedness initiatives and collaboration capacities like communication strategies and emerging technologies that would allow for a more genuine exchange.

This can only happen if the existing barriers to equal participation, including restricted access to funding, (English) language requirements for proposals, and meeting locations in cosmopolitan cities as opposed to affected areas are challenged.

The consensus of the group was that international and local actors need to work not only individually, but also together to push back on a system that is not fully meeting the needs of the populations it is meant to serve.

Ultimately, in order to realise “localisation,” international institutions and donors, local civil society organisations, affected communities, and government actors must contribute to the solution.

In order to build truly collaborative and sustainable models long-term, it is crucial for actors in the sector to identify what is working, highlight those experiences, and learn from and build on them.

Breakout session

The Local Coordination and Representation breakout session, moderated by Gareth Price-Jones (SCHR), built on the plenary discussion by exploring concrete actions that organizations and actors can take to envision and work towards meaningful engagement and capacity sharing.

Panellists and participants shared their worries that calls for localisation might place an undue burden on local actors, communities could face backlash for speaking up and claiming power, and that international powers will ultimately be unwilling to “walk the talk.”

One participant even suggested that the sector has lost its humanitarian heart altogether. Despite these fears and the significant work yet to be done, there is progress being made.

While coordination mechanisms are continually improving, the sector must focus on the quality of such coordination efforts by bolstering initiatives that promote not just information sharing but meaningful partnerships at all levels.

The context that local actors can provide, for example, is an invaluable asset for international and multilateral agencies, and should be considered a significant contribution to a partnership even if smaller organisations are unable to offer typical “resources.”

Ultimately, conversations such as this forum can be too theoretical, and international

and local actors alike need to take action by developing and promoting practices that meaningfully engage all stakeholders and work to establish mutual trust and shared goals.

This significant shift in the sector must begin by turning existing assumptions (and subsequent practices) on their heads and prioritizing local perspectives and expertise, flexibility, and innovation.



QUOTES

We have made some progress with mechanisms, but need to improve on quality of coordination, shouldn't just be information sharing, but meaningful partnerships at all levels/stages of humanitarian response.

Local NGOs provide much needed context, an invaluable asset for international and multilateral agencies, should be taken into account even though it is not offered as one of the typical "resources".

Conversation can be too theoretical, to take action we need research and all stakeholders participating in the dialogue.

One of the uncomfortable questions we often miss is about streamlining of budgets/overhead costs spent on external experts/advisors etc and the parity between corresponding local actors. This would help in doing away with skewed spending of the limited aid resources.



WHAT NEXT?

WHAF beyond 2020 – Reshaping Aid Agenda 2030

WHAF is not simply a one-off, two-day event, it is a long-term initiative that starts with consultations, develops recommendations and culminates in action.

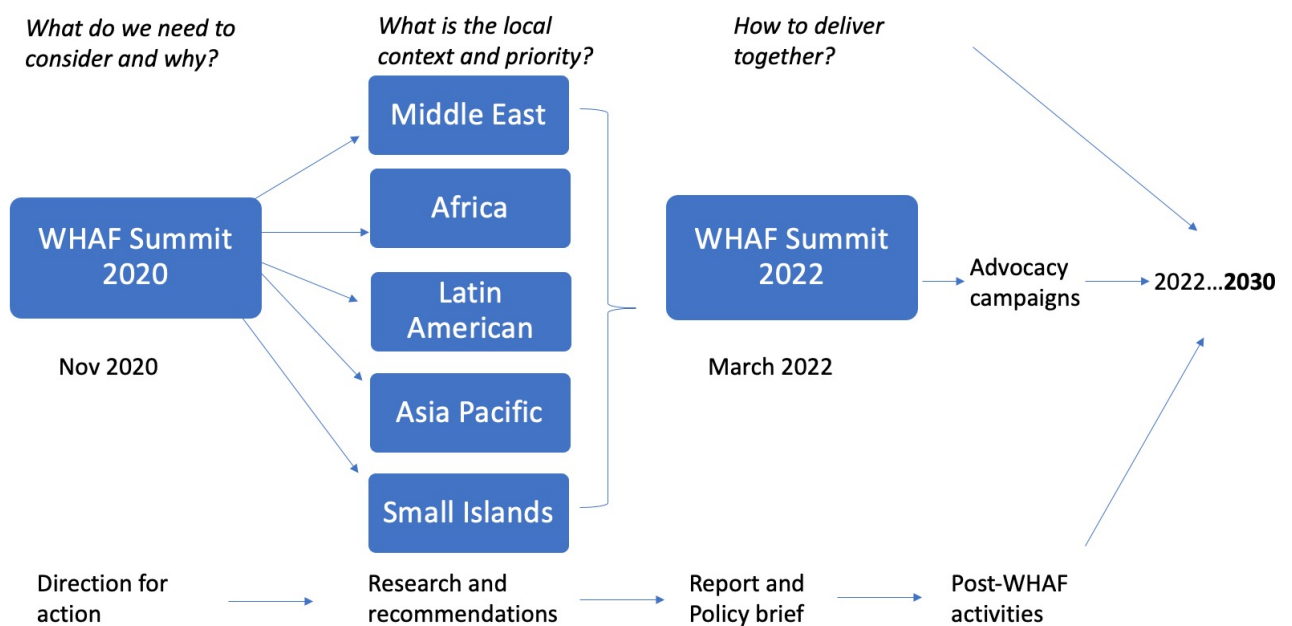


Figure 1: Reshaping Aid Summary Map

The Summit is part of WHAF's long term programme on the Reshaping Aid Agenda 2030, with the first year consisting of several regional summits and a 'global south' led research project to inform policy and practice (Figure 1: Reshaping Aid Summary Map).

SUMMIT SERIES 2020-22

The November 2020 summit was the launch of the Reshaping Aid initiative (previously called 'Reimagining Aid'), which consists of two series.



1

Provide a cross-cutting platform for engagement of local and international NGOs to exchange ideas and strategies on re-shaping the aid sector

2

Organise Regional Summits to inform the research and develop a set of localised priorities for future advocacy campaigns

3

Commission a research study on 'Reshaping Aid' with a policy brief for dissemination and advocacy

SERIES ONE

Series one is made up of the November 2020 Summit and the Research Project.

The Summit set the scene for the Aid Reimagined initiative, addressing the question of **what** issues specifically and realistically need to be addressed and **why** we need to act now.

At the end of the November Summit, we announced the Research Project which aims to address what needs to change within the system and how to get there.

The Research Project consists of two phases:

Phase 1 is the design of the research proposal and

Phase 2 is the research study.

Phase 1 has been completed (the research proposal is available). Phase 2 involves commissioning and carrying out the research which will be guided by an Advisory Group from several think tanks and research institutions to ensure it compliments previous efforts and adds value to the sectors' reform agenda.

The research project seeks to find out:

What are people and organisations in ODA recipient countries saying now about Aid¹, its delivery, and how the international aid system should reform?

It will be comprised of four case studies carried out in partnership with national research teams in ODA recipient countries and is expected to be completed within the course of a year.

Regional summits scheduled for 2021 will complement the research, and the final research findings will inform a policy brief

that will be presented at the final summit in 2022.

Advocacy campaigns and activities will be developed and a global south-led consortium of humanitarian, development and peacebuilding actors will be responsible for advocating for and monitoring these change initiatives.

SERIES TWO

Series two is made up of regional summits covering the spread and diversity of the Global South.

Each regional summit will be co-led with a regional partner, ensuring that it is context specific.

The series of 5 regional summits will culminate with the final WHAF Global Summit to share the findings and policy recommendations.

Each regional summit will address a set of common issues and a specific issue relevant to a regional context and set the agenda for the change that needs to happen.

(1.) In its most expansive, non-limiting, definition. For example: Aid as efforts to meet human needs in the absence of full self-sufficiency between citizen and state. This includes a range of efforts from localised community responses to international interventions and the full range of needs and causes of needs.

The geographical spread

We will cover a large part of the Global South with 5 distinct and specific Summits

Asia

Latin America

Middle East and North Africa

Sub Saharan Africa

Small Islands

The regional summits will call on local partners to host and lead the summits as well as an open call for presenters and innovative ideas, projects and proposals that are not usually heard in an international scene.

The regional summits will contribute to the Research Project which will be presented at the final Summit for policy makers to take forward.

Tangible outcomes of the Summit Series



A comprehensive research study on 'Reshaping Aid' with a policy brief on the key changes to be made to the sector



A global south-led consortium of humanitarian, development and peacebuilding actors to share and follow up on change initiatives



Advocacy activities and targeted dissemination to deliver on the recommendations of the policy brief for the system change needed



Ideas and solutions that will be national or regional specific

ABOUT THE ORGANISERS AND PARTNERS

The WHAF initiative

WHAF is committed to addressing common issues affecting the humanitarian sector and to promote collaborative working at local and international levels.

WHAF is open to all, with a non-membership-based network involving representatives from local and national NGOs from the global South, international NGOs, Red Cross and Red Crescent

Movement, government authorities, philanthropists, donors, academia, media and the private sector.

Biennial meetings of WHAF provide continuing attention to key themes in order to keep the momentum for policy changes and action in crucial areas, especially on localisation, financial access and humanitarian protection.

Key objectives

Develop strategies for informing policy on key issues affecting humanitarian organisations particularly those from the global 'south'

Develop joint initiatives and campaigns for collaborative working at local, national and international levels.

Added value

WHAF approaches the re-imagining of the aid sector with a focus on collaborating with and elevating the voices of actors from the Global South.

While international powers shape most reform agendas, the Reshaping Aid Summit Series will centre perspectives from the Global South to create an environment of inclusive and equal exchange and ideation. Additionally,

WHAF aims to address the system as a whole, breaking down silos within the aid sector in order to better understand how our focus areas span across issues and efforts.

We hope that the WHAF series can act as a catalyst for a whole-system approach to the reimagining of aid that allows for increased collaboration, coordination, and inclusion.

WHAF adds value by being...

1. Led and managed by partners. Steering groups of NGOs manage the Roundtables to develop the focus on key issues for the sector. The WHAF Advisory Group, representatives of the steering groups, leads the overall Forum.

2. Action orientated. WHAF facilitates discussion around what needs to be done to improve efficacy in humanitarian work. These recommendations are then translated into campaigns and initiatives.

3. Inclusive. WHAF aims to achieve a balance of representatives from the global 'North' and 'South' to foster greater communication and relevance.

4. Collaborative. WHAF initiates joint campaigns and projects with partners to address throughout the year thereby facilitating improved collaboration and coordination in humanitarian work.

ABOUT WHAF

WHAF, formerly the Humanitarian Forum, was founded in 2008 in part as an effort to support the collaboration of international organisations working with Muslim NGOs & communities.

Whilst the forums growing global network is inclusive regardless of faith orientation and location, WHAF and a number of its partners bring an experienced view to discussions on re-shaping an aid sector that frequently marginalises organisations and communities less able to conform

to its norms. The expertise of WHAF and its network include, for example, an understanding of 'non-traditional' models of aid financing as well as having experienced the impact of de-risking² as a result of their proximity to Islamic identities.

These, and other frequently side-lined experiences, can contribute to the plurality of views currently being welcomed into the sector wide re-shaping aid discussions.

(2.) Gordon, S; Robinson, A; Goulding, H; Mahyub, R (2018) The impact of bank de-risking on the humanitarian response to the Syrian crisis Humanitarian Policy Group Working Paper. Overseas Development Institute.

OUR SUMMIT PARTNER



Founded in 2016, the Network for Empowered Aid Response (NEAR) is a movement of Local and National Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) from the Global South who share the common goal of a fair, equitable and dignified Aid system.

NEAR aims to reshape the top-down humanitarian and development system to one that is locally driven and owned, and is built around equitable, dignified and accountable partnerships.

With a network of 220 member organisations NEAR focuses on genuine local participation at all levels of development and disaster management through its four main workstreams: advocacy; financing; organisational development and research.

NEAR advocates at the policy level, shaping agendas and calling for local participation within global initiatives such as the Grand Bargain (GB).

NEAR was an active member of the Localisation marker working group and continues to track the progress towards the GB goal that calls for 25% of global humanitarian funding to be provided directly to local and national responders.

NEAR have developed a localisation performance measurement framework³ and are supporting organisations to implement it and evidence progress towards localisation commitments.

(3) NEAR (2019) Localisation Performance Measurement Framework



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