

De-colonizing Aid

Examining key trends and considerations in the development aid landscape



“Discover Foundations”

Unit 1A: Introduction to Fundraising
Canadian Content: Decolonizing Aid

De-colonizing Aid and Localization

At its foundations, this movement is about shifting money and power closer to the communities they are meant to benefit.



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Those who have been working in the international cooperation sector for the last number of years, have likely heard about and grappled with the ‘de-colonizing aid’ movement. At its foundations, this movement is about equity, anti-racism and shifting money and power closer to the communities that aid is meant to serve, in contrast to the top-down, Western-dominated system of providing assistance.



Why is this discussion happening now?

- World Humanitarian Summit and The Grand Bargain
- Black Lives Matter movement and related discussion on Anti-Racism
- Deeper reflection on “White Saviourism”


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While this concept has been around for several decades, it really became a focus in the industry after the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit, and the subsequent “Grand Bargain,” which was a commitment made amongst donors and large aid organizations to allocate 25% of humanitarian aid funding directly to local and national organizations, by 2020. Unfortunately, this target was not met, and by 2020, only 2.1% had been achieved.

However, since then, several geopolitical events have brought newfound, and broader attention to this movement. The tragic murder of George Floyd by police in the United States in 2020 led to massive self-reflection, across many industries, about systemic racism and unconscious bias, brought to the forefront by the Black Lives Matter Movement. COVID-19 and the subsequent departure of many foreign aid workers from the global south, showcased the skills and expertise of local staff, to effectively carry out the missions of many international non-governmental organizations.

Seven dimensions of localisation

FUNDING	PARTNERSHIPS	CAPACITY	PARTICIPATION REVOLUTION	COORDINATION MECHANISMS	VISIBILITY	POLICY INFLUENCE
 25% As directly as possible Better quality	 Less sub contracting More equitable	 Institutional development Stop undermining	 Of crisis affected communities Gender, age, disabilities...	 National actors greater presence and influence	 Roles, results and innovations by national actors	 National actors greater presence and influence in international policy debates

The Start Fund, Start Network and Localisation

Graphic from [The Start Fun](#)



Today, there is no holistic, clearly articulated approach to localisation, or a set of established actions amongst organizations, other than the target that had been set at the 2016 Humanitarian Forum. There are however efforts to provide such a framework, including the Start Network's framework of 7 dimensions that can be used to measure an organization's commitment to localisation. These seven dimensions include funding, partnerships, capacity, participation revolution, coordination mechanisms, visibility, and policy influence.

NINE ROLES THAT INTERMEDIARIES CAN PLAY IN INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

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1	2	3	4	
 INTERPRETER INTERPRETER	 KNOWLEDGE BROKER AND PRODUCER	 TRAINER, COACH AND CO-LEARNER	 CONVENOR CONVENOR	
5	6	7	8	9
 CONNECTOR AND ECO-SYSTEM BUILDER	 ADVOCATE AND AMPLIFIER	 WATCHDOG WATCHDOG	 CRITICAL FRIEND	 SIDEKICK SIDEKICK

Graphic from [Peace Direct](#)



The global organization 'Peace Direct,' has also created a comprehensive reflection on what it would mean to decolonize international aid, including nine recommendations for roles INGOs can play in a decolonized setting.

Canadian Conversation

- Indigenous Reconciliation and reflections on de-colonization
- Cooperation Canada's Anti-Racist Cooperation Hub
- Inter-Council Network's Research on Decolonial, Anti-Racist and Feminist Approaches in Public Engagement



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In recent years, conversations in Canada's international cooperation sector have reflected on localisation, anti-racism, and decolonization. There is a broader public understanding of the concept and dangers of "white saviourism" and it is important for all organizations working in the sector to reflect on and understand these concepts.

There are a number of important resources that have been created in recent years. Cooperation Canada received funding from Global Affairs Canada to create the ARC hub or Anti-Racism Cooperation Hub.

The conversation in Canada has also been heavily influenced by the ongoing national reflections on Indigenous reconciliation. Many Indigenous leaders and thinkers have drawn important parallels between the colonial structures that underly international cooperation and Canada's own colonial legacy of genocide and oppression against Indigenous people.

Finally, the Inter-Council Network has also recently published research that explores decolonial, anti-racist and feminist approaches in public engagement, as part of the network's collective efforts to be more decolonial, anti-racist, and feminist in its public engagement work. Please refer to your workbook, and the additional resources provided, to read more about these initiatives.

The workbook contains more resources and links for those who wish to deepen their understanding.

**This video is part of the
Building Equity: Resource
Mobilization for Impact
training series.**

The series is available online via the Spur Change Resource Library. Made possible in collaboration with JNC Consulting and Change the Game Academy.



Thank you