

Inspiring humanitarian, development and peace nexus futures: Exploring the value-based philanthropy for displaced women *Engaging with Islamic philanthropy actors and principles*

17 June 2026, 12:00pm UK time (2:00pm Doha/Nairobi; 7:00am NY)

This event launches the early outputs of the ongoing UKRI funded project titled '[Making Aid Work for Displaced Women: Integrating Islamic Philanthropy and the International Humanitarian System to Improve Outcomes for Women](#)'. Outputs include: two working papers, two stakeholder mapping reports, two outcome notes and two policy briefings from Making Aid Work consultative workshops.

Connecting humanitarian, migration and religious systems, the Making Aid Work initiative seeks to develop innovative conceptual and financing solutions to support displaced women through integrating different aid paradigms. The webinar will inform proceedings of the humanitarian segment of [2026 ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment and ECOSOC Meeting on the Transition from Relief to Development](#). The Making Aid Work project is of particular relevance to the discussions on the strand: *"Funding with impact: financing humanitarian action to deliver results in support of people in need"*.

As of the end of June 2025, according to the most recent [UNHCR reporting period](#), 117.3 million people, with more than half being women and children, had been forced to flee their homes globally due to persecution, conflict, violence, human rights violations or events seriously disturbing public order. Displaced women face heightened vulnerabilities from pre-existing structural inequalities intensified during displacement. As different groups of displaced women have different needs, the quest to save lives ought to operationalise inclusive and intersectional approaches to aid, which account for diverse and contextual needs, and which apply 'leave nobody behind' by reaching the most vulnerable groups at all stages of forced migration.

Muslim-majority countries host a [significant proportion](#) of the world's forcibly displaced populations, yet gender-responsive approaches within Islamic philanthropic practice remain under-documented. Islamic philanthropy operates with diverse theological interpretations, cultural practices, and regulatory frameworks. While this diversity reflects the richness of Islamic giving traditions—such as *zakat*, *sadaqa*, and *waqf*—it also presents challenges for coordination and scalability as well as monitoring and evaluating.

This event aims to present and consult the up-to-date findings of the Making Aid Work initiative, in particular: exploring gender-sensitive innovative humanitarian financing, faith-based charitable resources and ethical principles to advance women's protection in conflict and displacement settings, while reducing social safety net burdens and easing public spending. The event will conclude with actionable recommendations for governments, non-governmental organisations and financial institutions to operationalise innovative refugee financing models.

Working Paper 1: *(Dis)connects between Islamic philanthropy and the international humanitarian system: Implications for women*

This working paper outlines a framework to understand interactions between Islamic philanthropy (IsP) actors and the international humanitarian sector in relation to women in conflict and displacement contexts. The study draws on a two-stage literature review of English and Arabic academic and grey sources to argue that interactions between IsP and IHS carry meaningful implications on humanitarian outcomes for women in conflict, emergencies and displacement. This analysis serves to identify key questions for further empirical exploration to fill evidence gap in this field. Our findings discuss a number of connects and disconnects between the two systems, such as divergent governance and accountability standards, securitisation agendas, financial de-risking, and assumptions about neutrality. The analysis suggests the participation of diverse actors in the humanitarian systems matters to improve outcomes for women.

Working Paper 2: *Financing displaced women's resilience: A conceptual framework from Islamic philanthropy*

This paper is the first to offer an original analysis of Islamic philanthropic instruments as inclusive tools to mobilise ethically grounded support for strengthening resilience and protection of women in displacement. While global humanitarian systems often overlook faith as a resource, Islamic philanthropy – rooted in principles of justice, compassion and human rights – offers a culturally resonant model for addressing the gendered impact of displacement. Using multi-methods, the study applied a four-fold approach integrating practical, historical, ethical and scriptural evidence drawn from interdisciplinary literature in gender, forced migration and Islamic studies, anthropology, sociology and history. Practical mapping synthesises contemporary applications of *zakat*, *sadaqa* and *waqf* across displacement phases, from short-term emergency relief (e.g. *zakat*-funded cash assistance) to medium-term recovery (e.g. debt relief and psychosocial support) and long-term inclusion (e.g. *waqf*-funded education and livelihoods). This study proposes an integrated framework positioning Islamic philanthropy as a robust mechanism for gender-sensitive humanitarian financing and governance.

International mapping: *Aid ecosystem mapping: Islamic social finance for women in conflict and displacement*

This review explores how humanitarian donors use Islamic social finance instruments in supporting women in conflict and displacement contexts. These tools include *zakat*, *sadaqa*, *waqf* and *zakat-al-fitr*, *sukuk* (Islamic bonds), *kafala* (loan guarantee), *qard hassan* (interest-free loans) and *takaful* (insurance). Whilst interest in Islamic philanthropy in the international humanitarian sector is growing to address urgent unmet needs, there is little understanding of its potential and limitations to assist displaced women. The analysis is based on an inter-disciplinary and desk-based review of academic and grey literature in English and in Arabic. Given the dynamic nature of the sector, the review was restricted to the last decade, the period between 2015 – 2025. The mapping looks at major actors in the Gulf region and other important Muslim-majority countries such as Türkiye, Pakistan and Indonesia, as well as key international stakeholders, namely Islamic Development Bank, Islamic Solidarity Fund for Development, International Federation of Red Cross

and Red Crescent Societies, and Islamic Relief Worldwide. The aid ecosystem mapping reveals significant gaps in relation to information on how Muslim donors' mobilise Islamic social finance instruments, as well as on how these tools are applied in practice. Many Gulf-based organisations lack frameworks that recognise displaced women as a vulnerable demographic with their own protection and inclusion needs.

UK mapping: *How international Muslim charities in the UK support women in conflict and displacement*

This mapping examines how UK-based Muslim charities support women and girls affected by conflict, displacement, and forced migration. While Muslim charities constitute a significant part of the UK humanitarian ecosystem and operate extensively across major displacement contexts, their contributions to gender-responsive humanitarian action remain under-recognised and under-documented within the international humanitarian sector. The analysis draws on an interdisciplinary, desk-based review of publicly available organisational materials, including the UK Charity Commission records, organisational websites, annual and impact reports, and programme documentation. Given the rapidly evolving humanitarian landscape, the mapping concentrates on documentation produced between 2015 and 2025. In summary, the mapping reveals significant gaps in public documentation, transparency, and gender-disaggregated reporting, which limit the visibility and recognition of Muslim charities as humanitarian actors for displaced women.

Policy briefings:

[Policy-Briefing-Inclusive-Humanitarian-Finance-Final.pdf](#)

[Women-and-girls-in-conflict-and-displacement-spiral-continuum.pdf](#)

[Addressing the needs-of-women-on-the-move.pdf](#)

Outcome notes:

[Summary-Islamic-philanthropy-and-protection-outcomes-for-displaced-women-policy-dialogue-final.pdf](#)

Reports:

[Symposium-Report-Advancing-Humanitarian-Innovation.pdf](#)

Draft agenda

12:00 – 12:10 Welcome remarks – Dr Ghassan Elkahlout, Center for Humanitarian and Conflict Studies, Doha, Qatar

12:10 – 12:30 From innovative humanitarian financing to exploring the value-based philanthropy for women – research findings - Dr Sandra Pertek, UKRI Future Leaders Fellow, Senior Research Fellow, Project Lead, and team, University of Birmingham, UK

12:30 – 13:00 Redefining humanitarian futures – expert discussion: What is the place of IsP in the future shape of development and humanitarianism?



Discussants:

Dr Alaa Murabit - UN SDG Advocate; Commissioner, Lancet-Georgetown Commission on Faith, Trust and Health; Managing Partner, 500 Global

Saleh Mohamed Al-Yamani - Islamic philanthropy expert

Wilson Opudo - ICHA Research Manager, Kenya Red Cross Society

13:00 – 13:20 Q&A

13:20 – 13:30 Final remarks, recommendations and next steps – Dr Ghassan Elkahlout and MAW team

Please register for the webinar here: https://bham-ac-uk.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_CF-mptt_QUapbVn0y4aGsw

