



Global Perspectives 2021 Let's Talk About Power!

The international CSO leadership forum

Dates	25 October – 04 November 2021
Location	Hybrid, with in-person regional hub meetings in East Africa, South East Asia and Latin America, and online

1. Global Perspectives

The [Global Perspectives](#) conference brings together leaders from key international and national civil society organisations (CSOs) with high-level representatives from government and intergovernmental organisations, the corporate sector, philanthropy and academia. A unique interactive format awaits up to 150 participants who propose topics and workshops, devising common strategies to deal with major trends, challenges and opportunities. Participants engage in discussions and devise collaborative strategies to deal with challenges and trends affecting civil society. Exchange, mutual learning opportunities, and the forming of new partnerships are emphasised and encouraged at the event.

2. This year's topic

For the year 2021, Global Perspectives focuses on civil society sector approaches, opportunities and challenges of Shifting Power. We increasingly see Shifting Power at work in demonstrating the strength of communities around the world in creating organic networks aiming at making a positive change. What does this mean for us as members of the more formalised international civil society sector?

To explore this, Global Perspectives 2021 will bring together some of the international and local organisations and civil society networks from around the world who are focusing on new, innovative and fresh approaches to shifting power. The conference will be a space for new and existing conversations and workstreams to happen. We are putting you, our participants and partners, at the heart of the discussions.

We chose this topic after consulting with our shareholders and partners who are questioning the way they work, and thinking constructively about the future sustainability of their influence and relevance. CSOs are challenging, unlearning and deconstructing the current cultural norms that benefit from hierarchical worldviews and moving towards networked and more community-based approach, this especially with the shared ambition of the 2030 goals and shared experience of working through a global pandemic.



The Centre, with its unique sector leadership convening position, wants to support organisations in understanding privilege and the colonial legacies that have long influenced the way the international civil society sector operates. Our ambition towards supporting CSOs to take action includes providing the safe space of Global Perspectives for organisations, futurists, thinkers, academics and business to come together to share innovative solutions to the current and legacy challenges the sector is facing.

Global Perspectives 2021 will explore three pillars:

- a. De-concentrating Data and Digitalisation: since the pandemic spread in 2020, digitalisation and data usage have grown rapidly, causing a bigger gap between different parts of the world in terms of education and services. At the same time, CSOs around the world continue gathering data from marginalised groups for advocacy and influencing government decisions. How can CSOs work collectively, effectively and ethically with citizen-generated and open data, to give power to marginalised groups? What are the moral and practical questions around the gathering and use of this data? How can CSOs build from and strengthen civic tech initiatives, or help disrupt the concentration and potential misuse of data, technology by powerful private companies, states and non-state actors? What are innovative approaches used with artificial intelligence and other digital technologies of the Fourth Industrial Revolution?
- b. Decolonising Aid and Organisational Structures: CSOs around the world around are now rethinking, reframing and reconstructing processes to stay relevant and operational. What got us here will no longer get us to where we need to be; it requires more fundamental reflection and action to challenge the current institutional hierarchy and monopoly on knowledge and aid. Shifting power is about empowering different relevant community networks. What can CSOs learn from movements such as the Black Lives Matter movement? How can we amplify lived experiences and practices from marginalised communities? How can we challenge ourselves and accept that we do not have all the answers? How do we balance both our best legacy elements with aspirational futures in the decisions around change and action we need to take today? What does it mean to decolonise the future of the sector and aid system in which we operate, and what is our role in that?
- c. Embracing New Power: with shifting power comes new systems and processes that put transparency, diversity and inclusivity at the core. Many organisations are exploring new models of working, such as feminist models that intentionally operate for a sustained and more equitable future after COVID-19. This is a time to share, reflect and organise to support and advocate for marginalised communities through our organisations. We want to come together to think about how we as a sector can better understand and challenge powerful privileging forces. How can we move from hierarchical structure into effective network models? How can we engage New Power actors? What are the practical approaches, tools and models that we can use to actively shift power?



For each pillar, we will share successful, innovative and future-facing approaches on how we might best align with Shifting Power for sustained futures and better knowledge management and community-led networks.

3. Format

Global Perspectives 2021 will be hybrid (on-site and online) for the first time in 11 years, broadcasting from different hubs around the world with regional and global focus. Over the period of 2 weeks spread over six individual days from 25 October – 4 November, we will bring you hot topic, high-calibre panel discussions and interactive peer-to-peer exchanges.

We will focus on the ‘How’ and ‘What can we do next’ through mutual learning opportunities, where CSOs, donors, foundations and social businesses can share constructive dialogue. We will make sure to harness the power our respective communities of the projects we are leading and hosting such as the [Solidarity Action Network](#), [Leave No One Behind](#), [Innovation Report 2021](#), [Scanning the Horizon](#) and [Digital Debates](#).

We would also like to create a dedicated spaces for side discussions between and with donor and philanthropy representatives on some of the priority issues on power and privilege being covered in the wider conference.

4. People and Partners

We are inviting up to 150 diverse leaders and change makers from the global civil society community – regulars, as well as newcomers – to shape and use *Global Perspectives* to learn from and exchange with each other, with donors, business, government and academia.

Global Perspectives 2021 aims to provide our participants with:

- Insights into the important current discussions and practice on how to strengthen Power Shift within their organisations, with their partners and communities.
- An idea of which trends are likely to influence and intersect with Power Shift in the next years.
- An extended network of peers from CSOs and elsewhere working on these topics
- Inspiration and ideas for collaboration, exchange and action.

5. International Civil Society Centre - The global action platform for ICSOs

As the global action platform for civil society, we work with international CSOs to develop strategies for successfully navigating change. We scan the horizon for exciting opportunities, enable learning and cooperation among such organisations and their stakeholders, assist in developing effective leadership, and promote robust accountability to strengthen legitimacy. We strive to set high standards in management, governance and strategy for international ICSOs and the wider sector. The Centre is a non-profit organisation fully owned by the organisations we serve.