

# DECOLONISING HUMANITARIAN ACTION

Decolonising humanitarian action, critical reflection about power inequalities and questioning dependency structures are key debates towards a more progressive and inclusive humanitarian sector. Yet, established humanitarian organisations find it challenging to scrutinise their own way of working. In our seminar, we will explore to what extent our work practices reflect colonial or racist structures and how we might transform them.

The seminar consists of two online sessions. In the first session, we will reflect on our organisations' structures and ways of thinking. It is intended as internal sensitisation of German NGOs. The second session is also directed at local and national partner organisations. We will have a dialogue about different perspectives of power inequalities and dependencies and engage each other where there is a common understanding and where different perceptions remain. Both sessions address experienced and/or management staff (e.g. public relations, policy, advocacy or programme departments).

Friederike Bubenzer and Carolin Gomulia will facilitate the sessions. Both are Germans but have lived in South Africa for an extensive period of time, working as facilitators in the field of peacebuilding, humanitarian work, decolonialisation and anti-racism. The first session will be in German, the second session will be in English.

The seminar is part of a joint project of the Institute for International Law of Peace and Armed Conflict (IFHV) of Ruhr-University Bochum and VENRO.

The number of participants is limited. You will receive feedback on your admission to the course after the registration deadline. Participation is free of charge.

This training is financially supported by the German Federal Foreign Office.

## WHEN?

Monday, 6 September and  
Thursday, 9 September 2021  
9 am – 1 pm CEST each

## WHERE?

Online (Zoom)

## REGISTRATION

Please register [↘ here](#) until  
27 August 2021.

## CONTACT

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## PROGRAMME

### Monday, 6 September 2021: Session 1 with VENRO member NGOs

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09:00	<b>Introduction and expectations</b>
09:30	<b>History of oppression</b> Short overview of the history of decolonisation and why context matters and discussion in small groups
10:15	Break
10:30	<b>Power inequalities in humanitarian work</b> Input from guest speaker and small group work on inequalities and biases in the own organisation
11:15	<b>Feedback from the groups</b>
11:30	Break
11:45	<b>Making it practical</b> Small group work on the following questions: How to introduce decolonisation in the own NGO? How can power inequalities be broken down?
12:45	<b>Reflection and debriefing</b>
13:00	<b>End of session 1</b>

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**Thursday, 9 September 2021: Session 2 with participants from session 1 and their local and national partner organisations**

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09:00	<b>Introduction, expectations and report from session 1</b>
09:45	<b>Why words matter</b> World Café on the terms & concepts relating to inequality, power relations, decolonisation and anti-racism and how we interpret/understand concepts differently
10:30	Break
10:45	<b>Insights from the field – what does it take to decolonise action?</b> Panel discussion with guest speakers and small group work on systemic and structural inequalities
11:45	<b>Making it practical</b> Small group work on the following questions: What can individual organisations do? What could be the role of networks and alliances?
12:45	<b>Reflection and debriefing</b>
13:00	<b>End of seminar</b>