

Humanitarians of the Majority World: A Look into the Lives of National Aid Workers

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Summary of Research Focus

Using existing data from Dr. Thomas Arcaro's 2019 online survey of humanitarian aid workers of the majority world, this research will analyze the opinions and experiences of the national aid worker population. The survey includes questions ranging from relationships with international colleagues, gender, and trauma in the aid sector to opinions on the structure and improvement of the humanitarian aid sector. The data have been collected but not yet analyzed. Using descriptive statistical analyses augmented by qualitative narrative responses to many of the questions, this research hopes to find themes that represent the national humanitarian worker population.

Methodology

Design

- This research is a mixed methodology, exploratory study of the opinions and views of national aid workers in the majority world.
- Dr. Tom Arcaro conducted a "National Humanitarians of the 'Global South'" survey in 2019.
- Because of the global impact of COVID-19, research has now allowed for interviews with Dr. Arcaro's close humanitarian contacts.

Participants

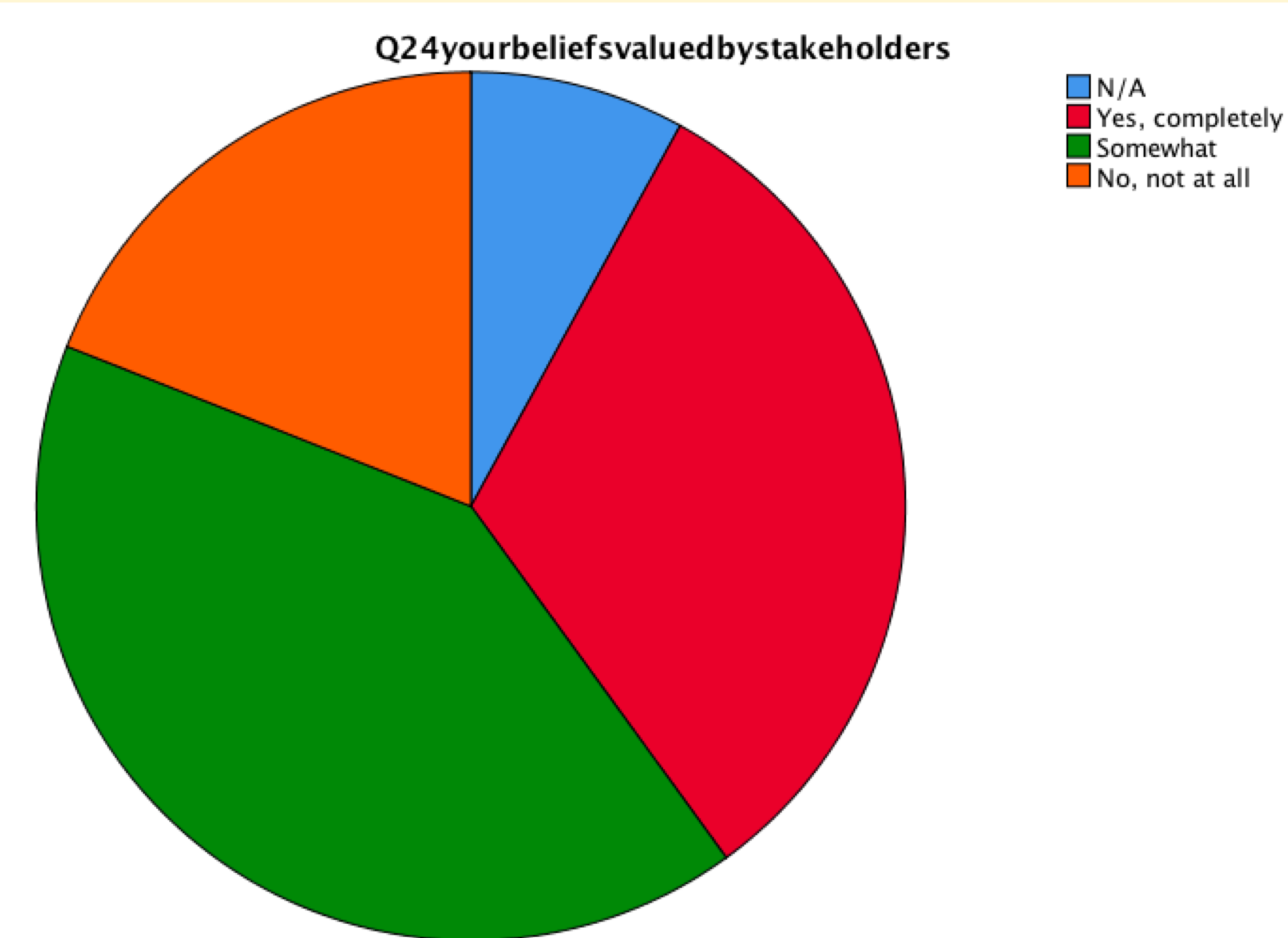
- Participants were recruited from all over the world and represent 17+ countries. The survey received 185 responses.

Materials

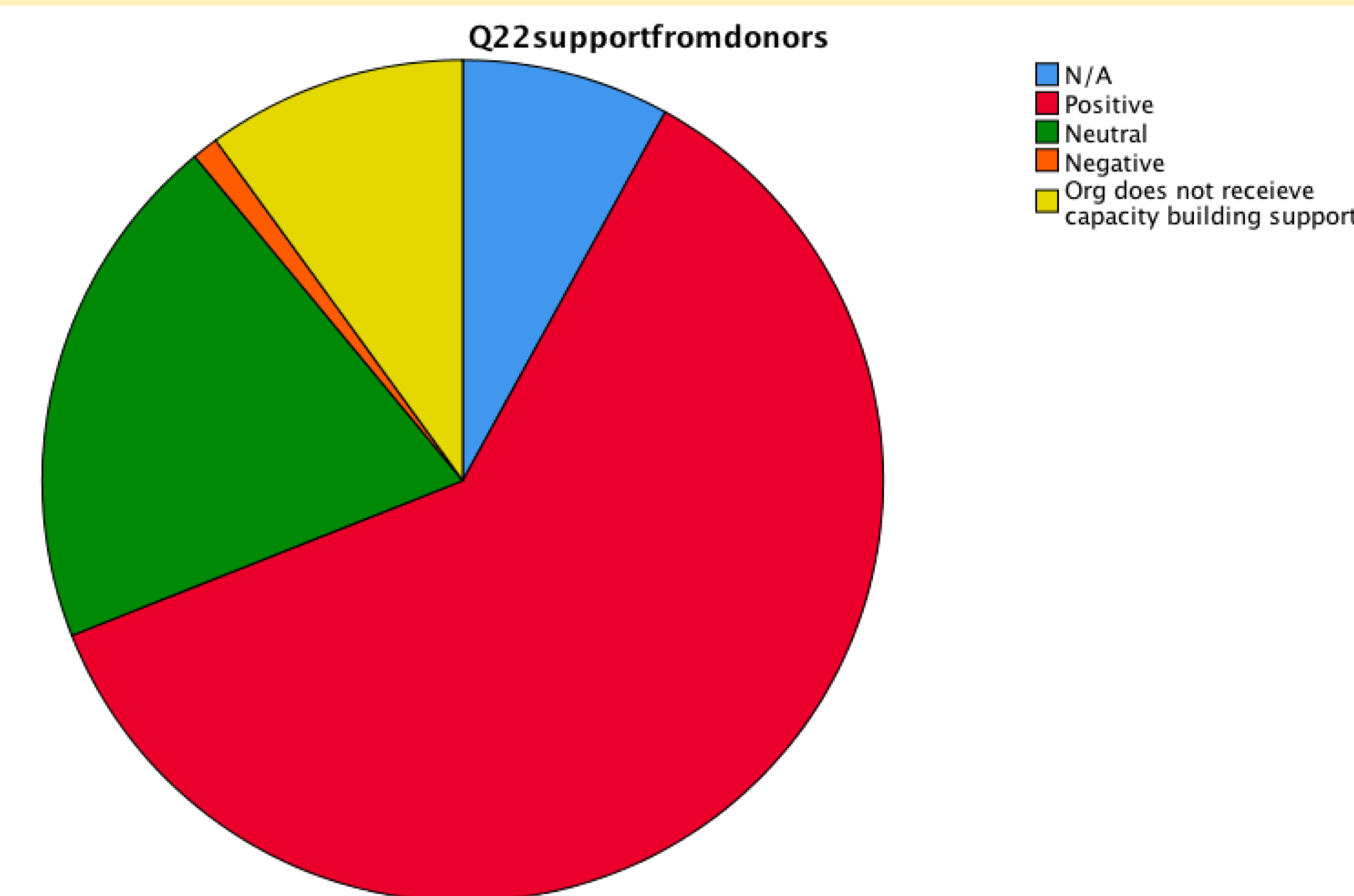
- The research uses secondary data from Survey Monkey and primary data from recent interviews.
- The data has been analyzed using Excel and SPSS.
- The interviews have been conducted over WebEx and will be transcribed using DataGain.

Survey Question Examples

"Do you believe your views, knowledge, and experience are appropriately valued by external stakeholders (e.g. Government officials, UN, other INGOs/NGOs)?"



"If you have received capacity building support from international organizations or donors, how would you describe your experience?"



Example Interview

Female middle-management humanitarian in a major NGO in Iraq (editorial emphasis added):

"We see that the United States is one of the affected countries in the COVID pandemic. Even though there is funding still going to countries like Iraq, the executive decision on cutting funds to WHO has greatly affected the way WHO operates in Iraq.

With INGOs there is a time period where you have a donor to support you and then it ends – and no other INGO can cover for a month to cover that gap and bridge the funding. WHO is able to come in and step up and cover these gaps and bridge programming, until now.

Let's put it in theory and say that there is a camp of 10,000 people. If there is a 2-week gap of not covering that camp, a lot of people will be in a life or death situation. If just one case in that camp erupts of COVID-19, who will come and cover and quarantine? With all the layers – the conflicts and the war, and now the pandemic, the government is unable to take care of this situation."

COVID-19 Impact

The COVID-19 impact has greatly affected the humanitarian aid and development ecosystem. Altered protocols such as social distancing to lockdown procedures have made it difficult for humanitarians to have regular contact with the affected communities.

Over the past few weeks, the direction of the research has expanded to include the necessary impact of COVID-19. To do so, we have been conducting interviews regarding the Coronavirus outbreak and its ramifications on the humanitarian aid sector. Questions include: "How would you describe your organization's reaction to the Coronavirus outbreak?" and "What do you feel are some short and long term impacts on populations already receiving assistance from the humanitarian sector?"

Thus far, six 30 minute-1 hour interviews have been orchestrated. Brief analysis has found that the interview questions tend to give breadth and depth to the survey questions, as shown in the examples. The interviews will be included in a book about the 2019 national humanitarian survey.

Acknowledgements

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A full list of academic references can be provided upon request.