



3RD INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE 2026



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MEET OUR SPEAKERS

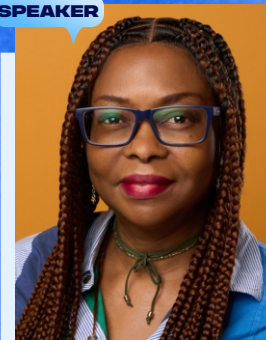
SPEAKER



DR. MICAH HUGHES

Position:
Associate Director, Center for Middle East and Islamic
Studies, University of North Carolina, USA

SPEAKER



**DR. CATHERINE
ANIGBOLU-OKOYE (CHICHI)**

Position:
Regional Director For West Africa,
Ford Foundation, Lagos, Nigeria

SPEAKER



**DR. RUNE
STEEBERG REYHE**

Position:
Project Principal Investigator, Asian Studies Department,
Palacky University Olomouc, Czech Republic

SPEAKER



**PROF. SHARIQ AHMED
SIDDIQUI**

Position:
Director, Muslim Philanthropy Initiative,
Lilly Family School of Philanthropy, Indian University,
USA.

SPEAKER



DR. KOLE SHETTIMA

Position:
Director, MacArthur Foundation,
Abuja Office, Nigeria.

SPEAKER



MR. ARIF EKRAM

Position:
Senior Partnerships Manager, Candid,
New York, Usa.



**UNIVERSITY OF ABUJA
FEDERAL CAPITAL
TERRITORY ABUJA,
NIGERIA.**



**APRIL 21st - 23rd
2026**

TOPIC

**FROM STATE CENTRIC TO
PEOPLE CENTRIC: THE ROLE OF ZAKAT IN THE
POST-WAR RECONSTRUCTION OF SUDAN**

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Salma Abdalla is a senior Researcher with the Raad Peace Research Institute, East Africa Region. Her primary field of research is political violence, diaspora political engagement, and religion-politics relationships. Over the past decade, she held researcher positions in Germany and Norway and has been a member of international research projects with universities in France and Sweden. She has worked as a consultant for think-tanks and research institutions on the issue of governance and strategies for the transformation of Sudan. She also provided policy advice to various international institutions including the Life and Peace Institute in the Horn of Africa, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University and the Bertelsmann Stiftung in Germany. Salma has published several articles and book chapters in the fields of Zakat, political violence, and Gender.

Dr. Salma Abdalla's presentation will focus on the decades of suffering in Sudan; poverty and lack of adequate social welfare policies to the ways in which Islamic institutions such as zakat (almmsgiving) play a vital role in providing socio-economic protection to the poor and vulnerable population. The state Zakat in Sudan is considered a money-making industry for the government as they adopted policies that mostly benefit the interests of politicians at the expense of beneficiaries, which results in public mistrust of the institution. considering the devastating war that erupted in Sudan in April 2023 between the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), it is important to understand the significance of socio-economic dimensions of the post-conflict reconstruction in Sudan especially in the complex process of rehabilitation, restoration, and improving the lives of Sudanese for a sustainable peace. Salma will explore ways that Zakat will be transformed from a state-centric to people-centered sector.

SPEAKER



**DR. CATHERINE
ANIAGOLU-OKOYE (CHICHI)**

Position: Regional Director for West Africa,
FORD FOUNDATION, LAGOS, NIGERIA

TOPIC

UNLOCKING LOCAL PHILANTHROPY: STRATEGIES FOR BRIDGING THE DONOR FUNDING GAP IN AFRICA

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Dr. Catherine Aniagolu-Okoye (ChiChi) is the regional director for west Africa, Ford Foundation and a distinguished expert in philanthropy and nonprofit management. She has a strong academic background and extensive experience in promoting human rights, democracy, social justice and inclusion in West Africa. Dr. Chichi have over 20 years of experience leading international organization development.

Her presentation will explore innovative strategies to bridge Africa's funding gap by leveraging local philanthropy. Dr. Aniagolu-Okoye will examine the role of local resources and community-based giving, challenges and opportunities in Africa's funding landscape, capacity building, partnerships and innovative fundraising approaches to unlock local philanthropy. By sharing her expertise, Dr. Aniagolu-Okoye aims to inspire stakeholders to rethink philanthropy in Africa and explore new avenues for sustainable development.

SPEAKER



DR. SALMA ABDALLA

Position:

Senior Researcher, Raad Peace Research
Institute, East Africa Region

TOPIC

CROWDFUNDING AND ONLINE PHILANTHROPY IN NIGERIA

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Murtala Ibrahim is a lead researcher at the Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology, Freie Universität Berlin, Germany. His research project is funded by a grant from the German Research Foundation (DFG). His primary research interest focuses on the intersection of religion and new media technologies in Nigeria. Murtala was trained in the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies at Universiteit Utrecht, Netherlands. Dr. Murtala has earlier worked as a postdoctoral fellow at the Institute of Cultural Anthropology at Freie Universität Berlin, the Department of Cultural Anthropology at Universiteit Utrecht and at the Institute of Political Science at the University of Tübingen, Germany.

Dr. Murtala's presentation will examine the use of the internet to promote philanthropy in Nigeria and through the use of the social media, philanthropy is collected and disbursed to people in extreme need. The presentation will include the use of the social media by both the faith-Based and Non-Governmental Organizations in Nigeria. It will also look at the popularity of crowdfunding online philanthropy and how people patronize such platforms either as donors or potential beneficiaries. The presentation will conclude by providing a detail analysis of online philanthropic platforms in Nigeria and their impact on development.

SPEAKER



DR. MICAH HUGHES

Position:

Associate Director, Center for Middle East and Islamic Studies, University of North Carolina, USA

TOPIC

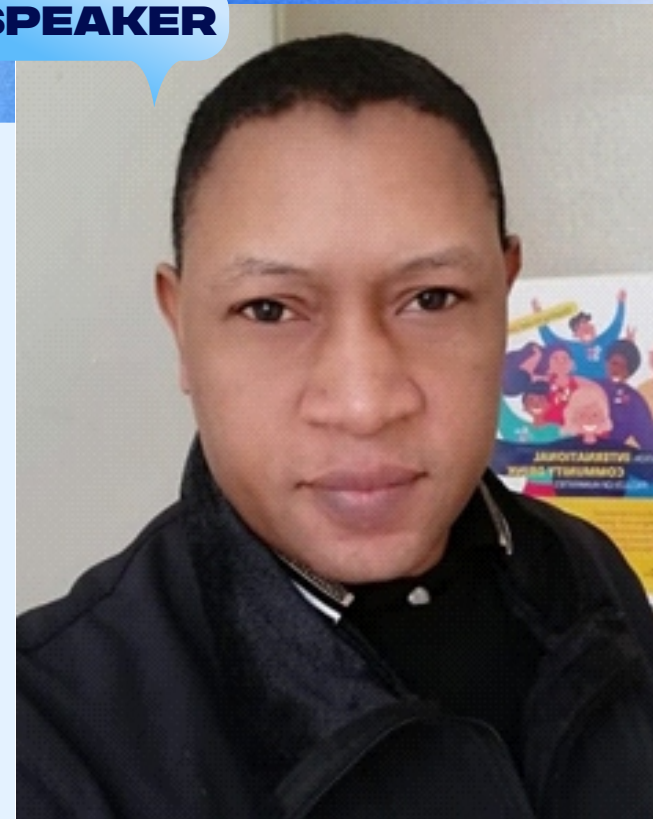
MAQASID AS-SHARI'A AND PHILANTHROPY: TWO MODELS OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Dr. Micah Hughes is an Associate Director at the Center for Middle East and Islamic Studies, University of North Carolina, USA. Prior to that, he was a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Muslim Philanthropy Initiative, Lilly Family School of Philanthropy, Indiana University, USA. At IU, he worked with an interdisciplinary team of researchers studying Muslim philanthropy from a global perspective.

Dr. Micah Hughes' presentation on: "Maqasid As-Shari'a and Philanthropy: Two Models of Social Justice" will explore the intersection of Islamic principles and philanthropic practices. By examining the concept of Maqasid As-Shari'a, he will discuss how Muslim philanthropy can be a powerful tool for promoting social justice and human well-being. His presentation will also highlight the importance of understanding the nuances of Muslim philanthropy and its potential for driving positive change in communities around the world.

SPEAKER



DR. MURTALA IBRAHIM

Position:

Project Lead Researcher, Institute of Social
and Cultural Anthropology,
Freie Universität, Berlin, Germany

TOPIC

PHILANTHROPIC, WEALTHY INDIVIDUAL AND PERSONAL DONATIONS

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Dr. Dauda Abubakar is an Associate Professor with over 20 years of experience in teaching and research in the Department of Religion and Philosophy, University of Jos, Nigeria. Abubakar is the founder and director of Dawood Research Institute, Jos, Nigeria. An Institute that was founded to promote both African researchers and research as well as encourage the flow of publications from African scholars. Dr. Abubakar is a key figure in philanthropic research in west Africa. With a strong passion and deep-seated interest particularly within the context of Islam, his research delves into the intricate intersection of religion, society, and culture, addressing critical issues that impact both local communities and global perspectives.

His presentation will examine philanthropy among the wealthy in Africa and their contributions to the development of communities as well as individuals need. The presentation will also look at the opportunities and challenges confronting wealthy people in Africa due to high rate of poverty, poor healthcare delivery, and lack of state sustainable social welfare system. The presentation will recommend cooperation among wealthy individuals and with NGOs and foundations as a means of bringing development to Africa.

SPEAKER



**DR. RUNE
STEENBERG REYHE**

Position:

Project Principal Investigator, Asian Studies Department,
Palacky University Olomouc, Czech Republic

TOPIC

REDEFINING PHILANTHROPY: THE INTERSECTION OF POLITICAL ACTION AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Dr. Steenberg Rune Reyhe is an anthropologist and a researcher currently based at the Department of Asian Studies, Palacky University Olomouc, Czech Republic. Dr. Rune has held various academic positions and he is presently the leading principal investigator for the Project "Horizon Europe Twinning Action: Remote Ethnography of Xinjiang Autonomous Region" at Palacky University Olomouc. Dr. Rune Reyhe specializes in kinship anthropology, narrative theory and political geography.

His presentations will provide a nuanced understanding of the complex relationship between philanthropy, politics, and social transformations. It will also offer insight into how philanthropic effort can be redefined to address the challenges faced by marginalized communities, and will contribute to the ongoing discussion about the role of political philanthropy in promoting social change.

SPEAKER



ASSOCIATE PROF. DAUDA ABUBAKAR

Position:

Director, Dawood Research Institute, Jos,
Nigeria

TOPIC

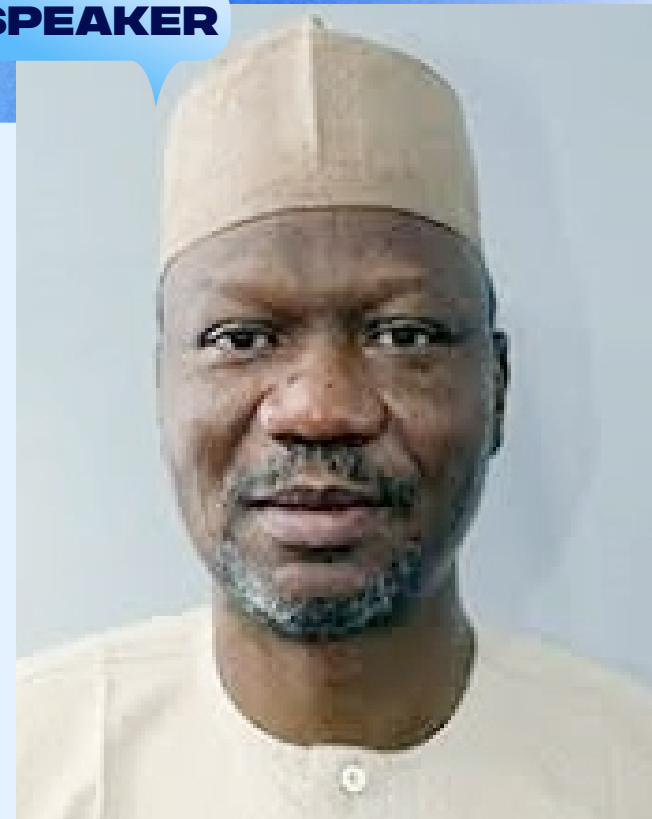
TRENDS AND FUTURE OUTLOOK OF U.S. INSTITUTIONAL PHILANTHROPY IN AFRICA

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Mr. Arif Ekram is a Senior Manager of Global Partnerships at Candid, the world's leading philanthropy data and infrastructure organization, where he advocates for transparency, accountability, and collaboration in the social sector. He manages Candid's global partnerships, working with U.S. and international organizations to drive meaningful change. With experience at leading social sector institutions and a passion for mentoring young leaders, Arif helps bridge development actors to address complex global challenges. Born in Bangladesh and raised in New York, he brings a unique Global South–North perspective to his work. Fluent in multiple languages, he is committed to social justice, climate action, and impact investing.

His presentation explores the landscape of U.S. institutional philanthropic giving to Africa, highlighting funding trends over recent years. He will examine how much has been invested, which sectors and regions have been prioritized, and how these patterns are shifting. Given today's global political and economic realities, he will also discuss what the future may hold—and how funders and partners can adapt to ensure lasting impact.

SPEAKER



DR. KOLE SHETTIMA

Position:

Director, MacArthur Foundation,
Abuja Office, Nigeria.

TOPIC

**NAVIGATING POWER DYNAMICS: RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN PHILANTHROPIC FOUNDATIONS
AND NGOS IN AFRICA**

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Dr. Kole Shettima is the director of the MacArthur foundation, Nigeria Office in Abuja and also a Co-Director of the Nigeria Big Bet Program. He has been instrumental in leading the foundation's efforts in promoting Reproductive Health, Girl Child Education, Human Rights, Social and International Justice and supporting higher educational development.

His presentation will examine the complexity of the relationship between philanthropic foundations and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in Africa. He will also examine the ways in which philanthropic foundations shape the development of agendas of NGOs, and how same NGOS navigate these relationships to achieve their goals. The presentation will highlight the challenges and opportunities that arise from these power dynamics, and will provide insight into how philanthropic foundations and NGOs can work together more effectively to promote social change and development in Africa.

SPEAKER



MR. ARIF EKRAM

Position:

Senior Manager of Global Partnerships, Candid,
New York, USA.

SPEAKER



DR. SOKFA FRANCIS JOHN

Position:

Deputy Director, Centre for Mediation in Africa,
University of Pretoria, South Africa

TOPIC

**PHILANTHROPY AS DIALOGUE:
LOCAL AGENCY, CO-CREATION, AND
CONFLICT SENSITIVITY IN AFRICAN GIVING**

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Dr. Sokfa Francis John is the Deputy Director of the Centre for Mediation in Africa, University of Pretoria, South Africa. He co-leads the African Rotary Community Mediation (ARCOM) initiative of Mediators Beyond Borders International (MBBI). Sokfa is a Rotary Peace Fellow, a fellow of the Social Science Research Council's African Peacebuilding Network (APN), and a National Geographic Explorer. Sokfa is a scholar-practitioner in peace mediation, conflict transformation and digital peacebuilding. His research focuses on digital peacebuilding in Africa, localization, and ethnoreligious conflicts and peace. He is also involved in various peacebuilding, mediation and dialogue initiatives across Africa.

Dr. Sokfa's presentation will explore how philanthropy can move beyond transactional models to become a form of transformative dialogue in Africa. Drawing from African peacebuilding experiences and mediation practices, it proposes a shift toward "philanthropy-as-dialogue" an approach that centers on local agency, values co-creation, and embeds conflict sensitivity. By framing philanthropic engagement as a negotiated relationship, rather than a one-directional transfer of resources, this model calls for humility, active listening, and long-term relational commitment. A five-part framework will be introduced, emphasizing: listening before acting; co-creating narratives that challenge extractive assumptions; negotiating power dynamics transparently; anticipating and addressing conflict through peacebuilding tools; and accompanying communities rather than directing them. This approach invites funders, practitioners, and community actors to reimagine philanthropy as a space of shared meaning-making and mutual transformation—where the work of giving becomes inseparable from the work of building peace.

SPEAKER



DR. MUHAMMAD IMRAN KHAN

Position:

Fellow, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland, United Kingdom.

TOPIC

MUSLIM CHARITABLE GIVING. "EFFECTIVE ALTRUISM" AND "STRATEGIC PHILANTHROPY": LESSONS AND PROMISES

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Dr. Muhammad Imran Khan is a fellow at Trinity College Dublin, Ireland since 2021 and is currently focused on preparing several works through extensive data-mining of 10 major Hadith collections. He recently completed postdoctoral research at the Indonesian International Islamic University (IIU) researching the ethico-moral obligations of high net-worth individuals to impart their excess wealth in Islam beyond zakat. His PhD was in Islamic Theology completed at the University of Cambridge. Dr. Imran's MA was in Islamic Theology at Leiden University (2010-11) where he did a dissertation on domestic violence reviewing the premodern and modern tafsir literature, and a BA in International Relations at the University of Leeds. He also spent around 5 years studying Islam traditionally in Syria, Turkey and Pakistan. He has been undertaking charity work in South America for the past 13 years with his UK registered charity: Rosa Foundation.

His presentation will focus on the gap between resources and the outcomes achieved by using them. Whether local African charities, or Western Muslim ones are currently being deployed in the philanthropy field and the purpose. He will address questions such as: what are the major deficits in quality and how may these be best remedied? This presentation will also focus on theory, practice and contemporary trends to advocate for advancing research on qualitative improvement in the philanthropy sector to better outcomes for recipients. It will begin from the premise of optimal giving based on peak-generosity from a religious perspective and thus highlight the indispensable role of faith and spirituality to achieve the above goals. Since, the root of optimization is ihsan yet, it is not a fluffy concept, but a reality rooted in research, knowledge and a deep commitment to best practice towards God and humankind.