

Annual Report 2021

6th IHSA Conference
on Humanitarian Studies
New realities of politics and humanitarianism: between solidarity and abandonment
3-5 November 2021



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Foreword

We are pleased to present the 2021 annual report of the International Humanitarian Studies Association; a year in which we still lived in the shadow of the Covid-19 pandemic. In November 2021, we finally had our bi-annual conference in Paris (one year later than planned). This conference gave many of us the opportunity to meet face-to-face for the first time in two years. But more importantly, it was our first hybrid conference, in which the potential for online participation made it a far more global conference than before, with participants from Africa, Oceania and Asia, as well as Europe and the Americas. We aim to continue such a hybrid model for future conferences.

The weekly blog selection further strengthens our online community. It remains popular with posts on humanitarian issues from across the world and has a steady open and click rate. Other IHSA publications during the past year include a special issue of International Migration journal on a key topic from the 2018 conference: politics, humanitarianism and migration to Europe.

During the conference, we also held elections for new board members. We streamlined our board by reducing the total number of members, and at the same time increased our diversity. We now also have a truly global board – with members from the Americas, Africa, the Pacific and Europe.

The Covid-19 pandemic has emphasized the relevance and importance of humanitarian studies across the globe and our interconnectedness in the issues we face; whether pandemics, climate change, violence or forced migration. Not surprisingly the field of humanitarian studies has been steadily growing. It was recognised as a serious academic discipline when Thea, one of IHSA's founders, was awarded the prestigious Spinoza prize – the highest award in Dutch academia. In the coming years, IHSA will continue to support the evolution of humanitarian studies, in particular in crisis-affected countries, by providing a platform for academics and practitioners to exchange ideas and work together.

Finally, our thanks to Marloes Viet and Nicolas Caso who have dedicated themselves to the secretariat, to Andrew Cunningham as our treasurer, and to our fellow board members.

Susanne Jaspars, Vice President IHSA
Dorothea Hilhorst, President IHSA





About the International Humanitarian Studies Association

The International Humanitarian Studies Association is a network engaged with the study of humanitarian crises caused by disaster, conflict or political instability. Humanitarian studies concern how humanitarian crises evolve, how they affect people and their institutions, communities and societies, and the responses they trigger.

IHSA forms a platform for the different disciplines that address humanitarian issues. It offers a venue where these scholarly communities can meet and debate their different insights and understanding of humanitarian crises, in dialogue with policy actors and implementing agencies. IHSA equally welcomes academic scholars, consultants, policy researchers, and reflective practitioners among its membership.

Governance (2019-2021)

Executive Committee



Dorothea Hilhorst
- President



Susanne Jaspars
- Secretary



Andrew Cunningham
- Treasurer

Board Members



Christopher Cushing



Rodrigo Mena



Kristin Bergtora Sandvik



Virginie Troit



Diego Otegui



Mohamed Jelle



François Grünewald

Institutional Members



Julia Steets
- The Global Public Policy
Institute (GPPi)



Mihir Bhatt
- All India Disaster
Mitigation Institute (AIDMI)



Tanja Müller
- Humanitarian and Conflict
Response Institute (HCRI)

2021 Activities

Humanitarian Blog Post Selection

When the Covid-19 crisis hit, and most of us went into quarantine, the idea came to mind to start bundling blogs and op-eds from the field to create a way to connect with one another. We had the idea to start pulling together topical blogs and op-eds on humanitarian issues as a way to connect with each other.

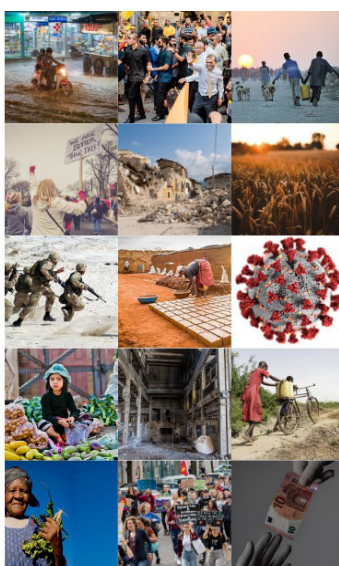
What started as a 6 week idea in 2020, grew in popularity every week, as more and more subscribers found out about the blog selection. The short-term blog selection project turned into a long-term project that went further than just focussing on Covid-19. In 2021, the editing committee consisted of Susanne Jaspars, Mihir Bhatt, Rodrigo Mena and Thea Hilhorst. Pre-selection is done by Nico Caso and Marloes Viet.

During 2021, we shared 45 weekly selections with posts by authors from all corners of the world. We focus the selection on themes like: migration and refugees, localisation and decolonisation, conflict and famine, aid policy and research methods, as well as Covid-19. Throughout the year, this project grew significantly: to date we have more than 7,000 followers on social media and a little more than 1,700 recipients for our weekly selection. Our stable open (22%) and click (17%) rate motivate us to keep working hard on selecting the most topical and relevant entries for 2022. For the future, our aim is to include more entries from the Global South.

international
**Humanitarian
Studies**
association 

Would you like to
receive our weekly
humanitarian blog
posts selection?

Subscribe!



If you have not subscribed yet, we encourage you to do so by clicking on the subscribe button on the left.

New selections every Wednesday!

IHSA Routledge Bookseries

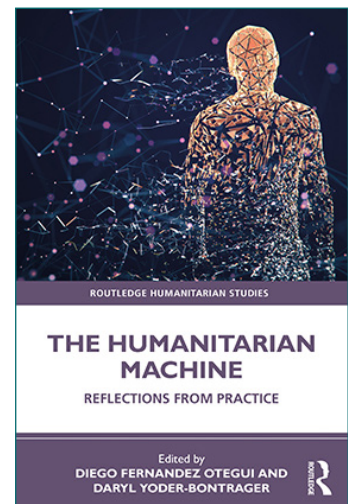
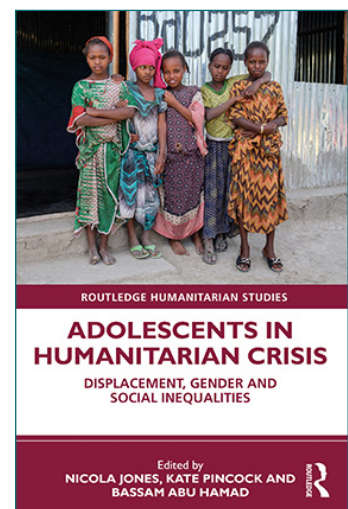
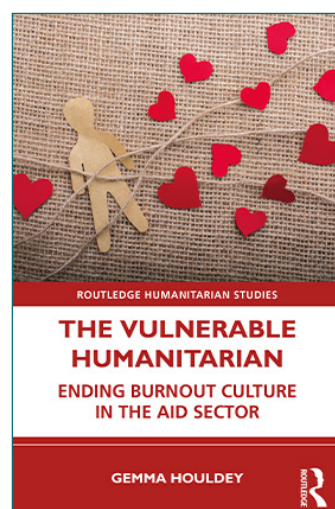
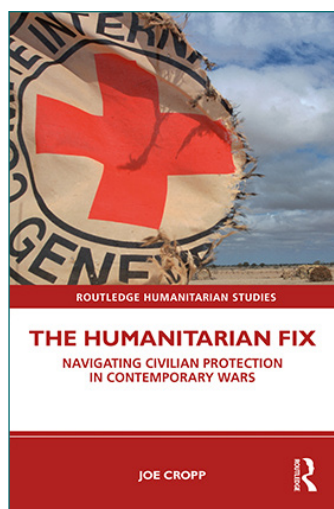
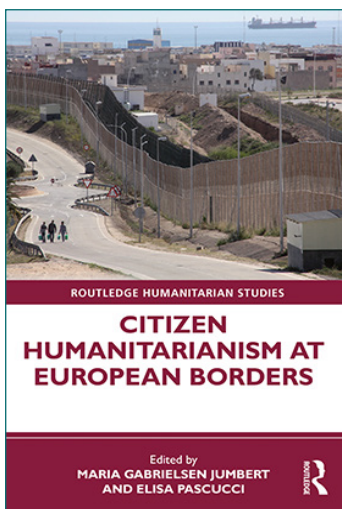
The Routledge Humanitarian Studies series is a collaboration between Routledge and the International Humanitarian Studies Association. The series editors are Alex de Waal, Dorothea Hilhorst, Mihir Bhatt and Annette Jansen.

The series takes a comprehensive approach to the growing field of expertise that is humanitarian studies. This field is concerned with humanitarian crises caused by natural disaster, conflict or political instability and deals with the study of how humanitarian crises evolve, how they affect people and their institutions and societies, and the responses they trigger.

We invite book proposals that address, amongst other topics, questions of aid delivery, institutional aspects of service provision, the dynamics of rebel wars, state building after war, the international architecture of peacekeeping, the ways in which ordinary people continue to make a living throughout crises, and the effect of crises on gender relations. This interdisciplinary series draws on and is relevant to a range of disciplines, including development studies, international relations, international law, anthropology, peace and conflict studies, public health and migration studies.

[Visit the website](#), to see all books in the series, discuss projects or to find out how IHSA members will receive a 20% discount on all books in the series.

In 2021 the following books were published:



Conference Special Issue + Webinar

In 2021, IHSA published a special issue of International Migration journal, based on contributions to their conference in The Hague in 2018. The issue is titled *“Politics, humanitarianism and migration to Europe”*.

The issue can be found on the [IHSA website](#).

On September 9, we organised a webinar to disseminate the analysis and findings in the special issue, together with KUNO. KUNO is a network of humanitarian professionals in the Netherlands: practitioners, academics and policy makers. They were one of the main partners of the 2018 IHSA conference on Humanitarian Studies in the Hague.

Like the special issue, the webinar focussed on *How Europe’s (anti-)migration policies are fuelling a humanitarian crisis*, with key issues summarised as follows:



When some one million people crossed the Mediterranean in the course of 2015 to seek refuge, European countries called it a crisis. Yet the real crisis was created by European immigration and asylum policies and by the challenges they posed for aid providers. The Covid-19 pandemic has worsened the violence experienced by people seeking safety in countries such as Italy, Greece, France, Belgium, Germany, Norway, and the UK.

Policies such as strengthening border controls, the externalisation of borders, and a focus on smuggling and trafficking rather than on the causes of forced migration all result in humanitarian crisis. The new reality affects humanitarian organizations, including the criminalisation of assistance provision, as well as the rise in resistance and activism by newly created volunteer groups.

Speakers: Thea Hilhorst, Susanne Jaspars, Marta Welander, Francesca Pusterla, Gonzalo Vargas Llosa, and Adil Izemrane.



IHSA Board Member Elections

During the 2021 conference on Humanitarian Studies we also held new board elections. A brand new online voting system was developed on our website, which will be expanded with more features in the future.

We said goodbye to long standing board members Christopher Cushing, Kristin Bergtora Sandvik, Julia Steets, Tanja Muller, François Grünewald and Mihir Bhatt. We thank them for everything they have done for IHSA! Thea Hilhorst's term as president was over, however she was re-elected as general board member for another term. No one stood for election as President, so the first action of the new board was to appoint Thea Hilhorst as interim President and to actively search for a new President to stand for election.

A decision was made to make the board smaller with a total of ten members and no more institutional members.

We had eleven people running for the 5 remaining spots on the board. Susanne Jaspars and Dorthea Hilhorst were re-elected and we welcomed three new members on board. [Visit the website](#) to learn more about the new members.



**Nazanin
Zadeh-Cummings**
Centre for Humanitarian
Leadership



**Maryam
Zarnegar Deloffre**
George Washington University



**Patrick
Milabyo Kyamusugulwa**
Institut Supérieur de
Développement Rural de Bukavu

Conference on Humanitarian Studies

The 6th International Humanitarian Studies Conference was organized in Paris, France, from 3-5 November 2021, in collaboration with Sciences Po and a significant scientific involvement of the Center for International Studies (CERI) at Sciences Po.

You can view the full programme of the 2021 conference via [this link](#).

We had 400 participants from around the world. 190 attended in-person in Paris, while 250 joined online. In 3 full days, there were 62 panel sessions of 90 minutes, with up to 8 parallel sessions at the same time. In these sessions we had a total of 327 paper presentations. Next to the regular panel sessions there were also 5 side events and 14 round tables.

The conference offered space for stands for organisations that would like to promote anything related to humanitarian studies. We also had 2 publishers present at the conference: Routledge and Humanitarian Alternatives. We also like to offer the space for art or other creative expressions. This year we welcomed a photo exhibition by Doctors without Borders, celebrating 50 Years of Humanity.

Due to covid travel restrictions in France and at the conference venue, most in-person participants this year were from surrounding European countries. The attendance overall this year was around 50% European, the other 50 percent was (in declining order) from North America, Africa, Oceania, and Asia, with the smallest percentage being from South America.

Among the 400+ participants, the representation of the practitioners versus academics was close to 50/50% for each category.

SciencesPo



ALTERNATIVES HUMANITAIRES
HUMANITARIAN ALTERNATIVES



In the picture above: As the IHSA conference took place in the same week as COP26, the keynote speakers, together with the audience decided to show solidarity by making a statement on social media saying *“This Climate Crisis is already a Humanitarian Crisis. COP26 turn the tide!”*

From left to right:

- Michel Agier is Senior Researcher at the French Institute of Research for Development and Professor at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris
- Anne Gueguen is the Deputy Secretary General of the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs in France
- Julienne N. Anoko is a social-anthropologist (PhD) and the Social Sciences/RCCE Focal Point of the WHO Regional Office for Africa in the Emergency Preparedness and Response Programme

The main theme of the conference was on ***New realities of politics and humanitarianism: between solidarity and abandonment***. With the theme summarised as follows:

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a major impact on humanitarian needs and responses in the last year and put solidarity to the test. The competition over vaccines, where poor and conflict-affected areas are at the bottom of the list to be served, shows us the naked reality of humanitarian politics and it is feared this situation will compound humanitarian crises even more. While the volume and range of humanitarian activities is higher than ever, the traditionally dominant actors in international aid, i.e., the US, the UK, and the EU, are turning away from the notions of solidarity and respect for the rights of refugees or disaster-affected citizens enshrined in international law towards securitization and criminalization of migration. Together with ever more complex political arrangements, often imbued with populist authoritarianism, whether in Venezuela, India or South Sudan, what humanitarians can do on the ground is being restricted. Are we witnessing the increasing abandonment of crisis-affected people and the humanitarian project? How can solidarity and principled approaches be brought back to the center of the humanitarian endeavor?

The drive for localisation, increasing use of cash transfers, rapid changes in the use of technologies, increasing attention for disaster risk reduction and changing approaches to accountability and participation continue to have major impact on the way humanitarianism is organized, implemented and how it impacts crisis-affected people and communities. As humanitarianism increasingly seeks to build on local capacities and people's resilience, questions can be raised as to what this means for the protection of vulnerable people.

The ambition of this iteration of the conference was to provide a critical forum for discussing the changes within humanitarianism and what these changing political realities mean for the protection and assistance to crisis-affected populations.

The scientific committee of the 6th IHSA conference on Humanitarian Studies consisted of IHSA board members, experts affiliated with Sciences Po and a few external experts from the IHSA network. The conference theme and sub-themes were carefully chosen and put together by this committee.

Panel themes

Theme 1 – Health and the Environment

Theme 2 – Localising Humanitarian Studies

Theme 3 – Political Economy and Politics of Humanitarianism

Theme 4 – Technology and Innovation

Theme 5 – Migration, Displacement and Refugees

You can view the full panel and paper list [via this link](#). And more information on the conference can be found on the [IHSA conference website](#).





Financial Summary

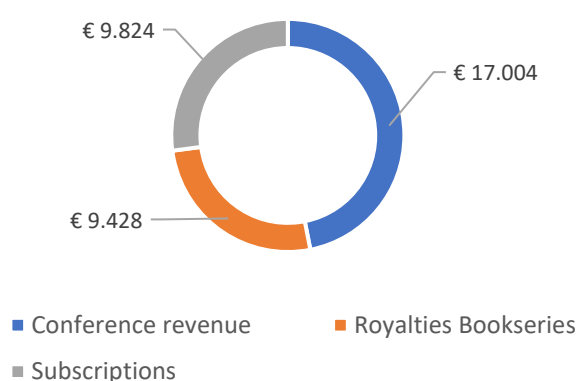
IHSA's main source of income is generated through our conference. As the conference on average is held every other two years, it means that in our so-called off year when we do not organize a conference the source of income is significantly lower. Outside of conferences, IHSA has two other forms of income, the first is membership subscriptions. We have different types of subscriptions; 25 euros for individuals and 100 to 250 euros for institutions depending on their size.

In 2021, we generated a lot more through subscriptions than a non-conference year as the subscription gives you a discount on the conference ticket price. In total we sold 7 institutional memberships and 329 individual memberships. 26% percent of the latter chose to have a recurring membership.

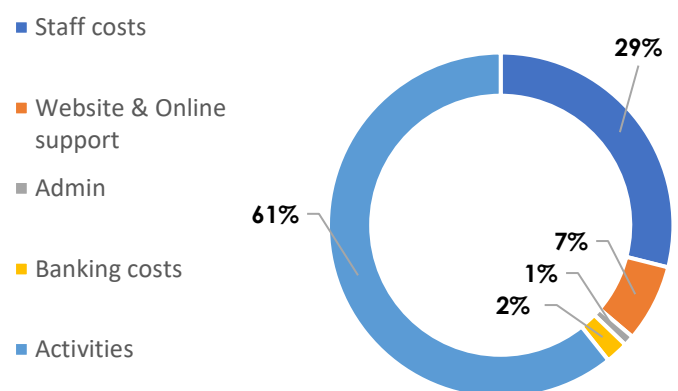
Another source of income are the royalties from the Book Series that IHSA has with Routledge.

Lastly, the main source of income in 2021, was the sales of conference tickets. This money will be used to keep IHSA up and running during the off-conference year.

Incoming funds 2021
(+€36.256)



Outgoing funds 2021
(-€ 92.460)



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