

# Media developers and humanitarians: A shared path forward

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Why don't media developers and humanitarians collaborate more closely amid shrinking civic space, eroding trust, and funding cuts? The 2025 fome Symposium and CDAC Network Public Forum focused on this question.



Image: Ayse Tasci-Steinebach/DW

The joint events took place on 9-10 December 2025 at Deutsche Welle's headquarters in Bonn and culminated in a Call to Action urging stronger coalitions across humanitarian, media development, and local actors.

Co-organized by DW Akademie and [Fondation Hirondelle](#), the gathering brought together more than 140 participants, including media development experts, humanitarian practitioners, journalists, activists, media managers, academics and representatives from government, civil society, and philanthropic organizations.

*Churchill Otieno, The New Humanitarian:*  
"We live in a world where everyone feels entitled to their own truth. But we also know that that's not possible. That is why we need journalists now more than ever."



Lina Chawaf

*Image: Ayse Tascli-Steinebach/DW*

Lina



Churchill Otieno

*Image: Ayse Tascli-Steinebach/DW*

*where to find food, medicine, or legal support, they become vulnerable and lose their voices. That's why it's very important to amplify their voices and support them through the media."*

*Tammam Aloudat, The New Humanitarian:  
"It remains imperative that both  
humanitarian and media actors work  
together in a way that emphasizes the  
autonomy of people affected by crisis, their  
choices and their way of seeing the world."*



Laura Moore and Sarah Cotton

*Image: Ayse Tascli-Steinebach/DW*

Sarah



Tammam Aloudat

*Image: Ayse Tascli-Steinebach/DW*

*Cotton, CDAC Network: "We are putting a  
call to action together with media  
development organizations and  
humanitarians that looks to protect the  
space available for journalists for the work  
they really need to do serve communities in  
crisis."*

*Gilles Marchand, Media and Philanthropy  
Initiative: "Media are facing a big crisis  
today. The crisis is twofold: It's a crisis of  
funding and a crisis of trust. This is not just  
a crisis that media in the South of the world  
are facing, it's equally true for Europe. We  
need to develop a new argumentation for  
funding journalism, one that is not only*



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Anneke Hudalla, Bärbel Kofler, Ivana Bjelic Vucinic and Mariya Sadouskaya-Komlach (left to right)

Image: Ayse Tascli-Steinebach/DW

*Mariya Sadouskaya-Komlach, Free Press Unlimited: “Media in repressive environments are often more innovative than their global counterparts because they know how to deal with the local audiences, they know how to circumvent very specific censorship around them and they also know how to be relevant.”*

In various sessions, participants addressed urgent shared challenges revolving around the need to listen to and engage with

affected communities despite shrinking resources and the fact that digitalization and automation are reshaping how people in fragile and crisis-affected contexts access, share and trust information.

Throughout the event, participants were invited to contribute to refining a [Call to Action](#) ↗, aimed at fostering principled collaboration between media developers and humanitarians. The momentum generated by bringing these two sectors together in Bonn is already translating into concrete follow-up: a dedicated session on “Information Is Aid” will take place during the Humanitarian Networks and Partnerships Week (HNPW) 2026, held from 2–12 March 2026 in Geneva.

Find more resources from the event [here](#) ↗

Go to our [photo gallery](#).

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## **Home Symposium "Beyond Dependency: Rethinking Support for Public Interest Media" and CDAC's Public Forum "Information in Crisis" 2025**

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