

Can you help reinvent foreign aid for \$20,000?

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The [Global Development Network](#) and the [Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation](#) have teamed up to sponsor an [essay contest](#) with a prize pool of \$400,000, calling for ideas to reinvent foreign aid.

Contestants are asked to write a 5,000 word essay addressing how they would reinvent foreign aid for today's world. Up to 20 winning entries will be selected and awarded \$20,000 each. Gargee Ghosh of the Gates Foundation [states](#):

“How would you use modern financial instruments and modern technology to give faster, smarter development assistance? How would you reach the poorest people more effectively, no matter where they live? How would you use aid alongside other resources both public and private? And how would you organize the system as a whole?”

We are looking for the best ideas from around the world on these and other questions that will define the next generation of effective development assistance.”

The competition calls for essays proposing solutions to questions under the following themes: instruments, bilateral and multilateral institutions, middle-income countries, aid and governance, recipient roles, and data and information technology. The eligibility criteria is wide, and submissions can be made in English, French or Spanish.

There is no promise that these ideas will then be adopted by either the Gates Foundation or GDN, but rather, according to Ms Ghosh: “the idea is just to inspire, share, and hopefully to use great thinking on these critical issues.”

Crowdsourcing is used in almost every industry these days, and it's great to see it being more broadly adopted in the aid community (we are currently crowdsourcing [Australian aid stories](#)). With a healthy prize pool available let's hope they get some quality submissions!