# International Development Committee

## Oral evidence: The Philosophy and culture of aid, HC 101

Tuesday 15 June 2021

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Members present: Mrs Pauline Latham (Chair); Chris Law; Navendu Mishra; Mr Virendra Sharma

Questions 102 - 121

## Witnesses

I: Dr Tigist Grieve, Trustee, South West International Development Network, Senior Research Associate, University of Bristol; Faraz Hassan, Senior Technical Specialist, Social Development Direct; Dr Rosanna Duncan, Chief Diversity Officer, Palladium International.

# Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: Dr Tigist Grieve, Faraz Hassan and Dr Rosanna Duncan.

Q102  **Chair:** Welcome to the second evidence session on the philosophy and culture of aid: racism in the aid sector. This evidence session is focused on aid delivery organisations, the ways in which their working practices could be perpetuating discrimination and how to overcome this. Before the Committee starts with questions, could I ask the witnesses to introduce themselves, please?

*Dr Duncan:* I am Rosanna Duncan. I am the chief diversity officer at Palladium, which is one of the major suppliers for FCDO. We work with UK Government and communities to promote sustainable development. My role at Palladium as chief diversity officer is an internal-facing one, rather than a role where I have programmatic responsibilities.

*Dr Grieve:* Good afternoon and thank you for the invitation to this important meeting. I am a trustee of South West International Development Network and other charities. I am also an academic with an international development disciplinary background. I look forward to sharing with you my insights, particularly in the context of small NGOs. I am also looking forward to learning from others in this session.

The South West International Development Network is a collective of like-minded people in the international development sector. It grew up organically from good conversations in the south-west. It benefits from collaboration with many other organisations and it aspires to serve as a space where joined-up thinking and learning happens. Our members range from small-and-medium-sized NGOs, academic institutions, academics, consultants and students who are interested in being part of the conversation and solutions in the sector. We have approximately 160 members and a wider network of around 800 international development professionals and organisations who also engage with our community.

In preparation for this session, we wanted to gather perspectives and experiences from all our members, but we had very short notice, so I will follow up in written evidence, including anything else that I do not get to cover today.

*Faraz Hassan:* I am Faraz Hassan. I am a senior urban and infrastructure technical specialist at Social Development Direct, which is a niche, small consultancy working in international development. We specialise in gender equality and social inclusion.

Q103  **Chair:** I have a fairly general question to start us off with, which you could each address. What does it mean for international development organisations to be actively anti-racist?

*Dr Duncan:* There are a number of things at play here. First of all, if organisations want to be anti-racist, there has to be an acknowledgement

of the fact that historical racism and colonialism are having an impact on how we deliver today within the sector. There has to be this acceptance.

Organisations also have to create safe spaces for conversations to take place about racism and discrimination, so that people feel that they are able to have those conversations and to be open in terms of talking about this topic, which for some people can be a sensitive one and not one that they necessarily want to lean into. It is also important that organisations acknowledge that being anti-racist is a journey that organisations will be on.

There are also practical elements that organisations need to think about and consider, like improving their approaches to capturing diversity data, so that they can understand exactly what the picture is within their organisations and think about how they can use that data to inform change and activities. They also need to look at their procedures, processes and approaches from an anti-racist perspective and try to understand and dismantle any barriers that exist within practices that are common and everyday and which may be having a discriminatory impact.

*Dr Grieve:* Before I answer that, I just want to give a quick caveat. I would like to mention that, as a collective, we are not a homogenous community that always thinks alike. We agree on many things and respectfully hold different views on issues, so I am not speaking on all of our behalf, but from within the board of trustees and staff as well as from my own position as an academic in the international development discipline; as a black female originally from a low-income country, where sharing and actions that are similar to aid are embedded in our being; as a person who has faith; as a practitioner, where I spent a significant amount of my time educating myself on how to contribute towards good change; and also as a person who made my mistakes, which I will be talking about today, and had to do my own unlearning and continue to learn with privilege and to contribute to others' learning. I will be drawing from all these contexts and positionalities today.

In terms of your question, we need to be moving organisations into being actively anti-racist. We see that many in our network are beginning to take the first step in this journey. We see this as being important in not polarising this problem and isolating those who have yet to recognise the need for this journey—for example, the lived experience of racism belongs to those who live in black and brown bodies, like myself. Tackling the pain that it causes is our collective responsibility.

Among our network, we have found small international development organisations that have started on a journey towards becoming anti-racist are those that openly recognise the roots of development being in colonialism and are taking action to tackle the same imbalance of power that remains in our development practices today. Becoming anti-racist is a process and not a one-time event or decision.

We see many organisations making time and space available for improving their understanding of the issue, where funding is scarce and time is often voluntary. We would like to recognise their commitment and to encourage the UK Government to join us in this essential process of self-scrutiny. Small charities have a trust-based partnership, and the examples that we have collected include how they are actively creating time and space to have that open conversation around racism and recognising it as a structural issue, and investing in partnership anchored in respect for communities that we work in.

They have told us about establishing working groups and reading groups internally within their organisation to address racism and inequality. They are auditing their policies and processes for historical bias and existing gaps, as well as governance structures, including all-white boards and secretariats and how to address them.

They are looking into their programmes for inclusion and decision-making, power and participation. They are establishing working standards, such as contributions of the diaspora, professionalism and underrepresented communities to be represented there, so facilitating dignified, trust-based practices alongside communities in which their work happens. For an organisation to become anti-racist, it needs to be open, to learn and to reflect on how its own work fits into the debate around shifting power.

*Faraz Hassan:* I agree with both colleagues, who have outlined it excellently, and especially the point around this being a journey and all of us finding our way and understanding what works and so on.

There are two aspects for me. One is to first recognise that the aid system is a neo-colonial system, and that is embedded in the way that the sector is institutionally arranged and set up. A recognition of that is essential, as well as not taking a historical approach but recognising that the aid sector is based on history. As a result, that embodies power imbalances.

The second point is around recognising the lack of diversity within the sector in the UK. That is important not just because the sector should be representative of British society, but because of the detrimental impact that can be had on the delivery of aid, if we are not drawing on our strengths as a very diverse society.

Being anti-racist is about strengthening the quality of partnerships with organisations in the countries that we are working in, by which I mean it not being an extractive relationship but a meaningful one. Secondly, we need to make sure that we are harnessing the voices, talents, strengths, views and experiences of the different communities within the UK and that we are bringing that to bear in our practice as practitioners in the international development sector.

Q104 **Mr Sharma:** What actions have your organisations taken to shift power

to the communities, organisations and authorities in the countries where programmes are delivered?

**Dr Grieve:** We recognise the imbalance of power, where the sector is divided between givers and receivers, and the binary of poor and rich, which is very unhelpful. It upholds the narrative that communities are less able to solve their problems, and a top-down approach to our own intervention is appropriate and required.

If we want transformation, we need to develop a sense of ownership among communities, which requires a reversal of power, to quote Robert Chambers, but there is a resistance, where those with power do not necessarily give it away very easily. Examples from among our network include organisations that have deliberately invested in their partner organisations at the expense of capacity in the UK. Some of our network members have shifted the balance of power, so that their country partners identify and design the programmes that their UK counterparts then go on to seek to fund. In theory, this distribution of power should work, but the requirements of UK donors do not fully support a relocation of power within communities in which programmes are delivered.

Organisations are creating more equitable collaboration by partnering with and being led by local consultants and by having greater engagement with local communities and increased participation in evaluations and their results. Some organisations have checked in with their in-country colleagues about whether they have any experience of prejudice or racism. They have invited colleagues from partner organisations to their high-level meetings. This is important and encouraging, and fosters equal-partnership collaborations. Donors can encourage more of this.

An example of shifting power that we can draw from established organisations that some of our members are also a member of and have highlighted to us is how ActionAid adopted feminist behaviour that provides strong leadership around how individuals can work towards addressing power imbalances in their day-to-day work. In this case, they received unrestricted funding—and it is really important to emphasise that—from the People's Postcode Lottery to run a women's rights fellowship with organisations in the global south; many of them were small organisations. From this funding, they went on to give unrestricted grants to encourage fellowship. This was a new model of work outside of the usual power dynamics in the funding sector. This involves sub-granting, which makes it possible for a donor to trust and to be prepared to allow organisations to utilise those funds to bring good change.

I will go back to Robert Chambers's PRA, where he talks about adaptive programmes and the need for continual change to meet the needs of those who we would like to support or work with, with the co-creation of projects and strong relationships based on respect, listening to communities and being guided by their agendas.

**Faraz Hassan:** I would like to share from the perspective of a smaller organisation, again emphasising that it is very much a journey that we are on. I would not claim to have cracked this issue in any way, but we have certainly come a long way in our thinking and what we have found works and does not work. From that perspective, we started our journey with a long-term recognition of our lack of diversity and the need to address that, but very much catalysed by the death of George Floyd last year in the US, not just in terms of us but the sector as a whole and thinking about what it means for us and our role in anti-racism.

We wanted to not address this in a reactive way, so we avoided putting out statements immediately, but embarked on a process of self-reflection and recognition about our position within the sector, the role that we play in those power imbalances, and our privilege as an organisation based in London and working in international development. This was very much at the heart of what we wanted to do.

We also recognised that we work on social inclusion and gender equality, so there was a pressing need for us to address this issue, given what we do. We very much turned the analysis and practice that we use outwardly towards ourselves internally. That is very important, because it gives meaning to the work on things like policies, procedures and practices that come afterwards. It is very important that the heart piece is done as well as the mind and knowledge piece.

We have had a lot of internal discussions to position ourselves and we are still in the process of building that with practical measures and a set of priorities. That involves looking at our internal processes and things like our hiring practices and human resources; the way in which we nurture and foster an inclusive environment within the organisation that very much supports diversity, inclusion and diverse voices of people from different races and ethnic backgrounds; how we look at career progression within the organisation, job specifications and very much tackling the proxies in which people might be excluded on the basis of race or ethnicity; and thinking about our internal structures and how we can change.

Secondly, it involves looking at our external work in our practice as a consultancy: how we bring voices from people in the countries in which we work into our consultancy and practice, and making sure that that informs what we do; thinking about our communications and the way that language and imagery play a role in the stereotypes within the sector; and participating in advocacy, partnering with other organisations and being part of platforms of other organisations in the sector, particularly in the private sector, which are helping to form a sector-wide approach, recognising that there is only so much that we can do as an organisation on our own. We have been working with organisations like the REDI Collective and British Expertise International to engage with other allies and colleagues in the sector.

It is very much about making sure that what we do is meaningful, recognising that we cannot do everything but picking priorities, and ensuring that whatever we decide is important is backed up by clear objectives and timelines, ownership within the organisation, and resources, importantly. We are very much putting our money where our mouth is, as it were.

As I said, we are still in the process and it is not an easy and quick journey. It has to be done right and well, so we are very much considering what we can do in the short term and then more meaningful and challenging issues that we have to tackle, which will take longer.

*Dr Duncan:* Hopefully, we will get an opportunity later on to talk about some of the actions that organisations in the sector are taking more broadly. Focusing on the question here around what organisations have done to shift the power in terms of the countries where programmes are delivered, there are three key actions that I would like to reflect on there.

First of all, we make it a priority and the default that the teams that we build in the countries where we are delivering programmes are all local nationals. That does not always happen, but that is our default, and we do everything that we can to make that happen. That involves being proactive in engaging with networks but also thinking about the way in which we advertise roles, making a strong commitment in those statements about attracting people who are from those countries where we are delivering programmes, and also considering whether or not the criteria that we are asking for in those roles are not going to guarantee the best people for the job but are going to exclude talent.

We are involved in an interesting piece of work at the moment in terms of thinking about the power relationships with the organisations that are our partners and in our supply chain. We are doing an exercise to check in with them to understand their experience of us. We can understand whether or not there are any challenges in the way that we are working that we need to correct from the power differential perspective, and whether or not there are certain organisations that have a different experience from others. We are currently exploring that.

One of the things that we do at Palladium is administer grants. We have developed a community of practice internally around this, with one of the key pillars and tenets of that being around how we can embed more equity, diversity and inclusion in that process. Part of that is around how we can make sure we engage with people from diverse backgrounds and from the countries where we are delivering and implementing programmes, and engage those people in that grant selection process.

Q105 **Mr Sharma:** I know that Dr Grieve and Mr Hassan have touched on this, but could you briefly explain further why the changes needed to shift the power in the aid sector have been slow in being implemented?

**Dr Grieve:** That is a very good question. Aid as a concept can be problematic. If I may take that first in terms of the philosophy of aid that you are trying to engage with, I will then come to the practical aspects of it from the perspective of our small organisation.

First, at the macro level, aid is inherently paternalistic in its power dynamics, where the north controls the money and thus has the power, which upholds this imbalance. The philosophy of aid can be taken as racist. Aid is still considered as a gift using taxpayers' money, for example, rather than a question of justice. Reframing aid as reparation could help us shift the power very quickly, but we have not yet done this. The shift is fundamental to the way we think about things, and the shift has been slow or yet to be started because the issue and the perceived solutions are so entrenched.

We also acknowledge that aid is not the most effective way, whereas reparative justice on a macro scale would be far more effective in achieving equality, if we are serious about the systems that achieve this. When the system acknowledges its inequalities, it can create a sense of shared experience that unites in tackling racism together. Unless the drivers of the system acknowledge the problem, it can be harder for individual organisations, particularly small ones, to engage without feeling accused or defensive. This acknowledgment is something that, for example, FCDO can do with its power, and create a space for that.

Innovations by donors and charities that I mentioned earlier are happening, but a paternalistic way of thinking still hinders this and it will take time to shift individual changes that are happening. Systematic changes are slower.

Small NGOs have an innovative way of doing things and are pursuing change in their partnerships, but, as we all know, their role is a very small one. FCDO, drawing from its DFID years of learning and expertise within it, could and should be at the forefront of testing innovative ideas in this area. This is slow, because certain things like a pay gap and parachuting solutions and lead experts were normalised over many years in our sector. While shifting that is pertinent, it requires patience, because of the entrenched inequality and assumptions that governed the sector for decades.

Another point to make here is that some of the exercises we are going through may be performative and equated to tokenistic actions. This is part of the difficulty in shifting power. For example, we may churn out policies or set up committees, but these committees may sit without any real power. Unless this is at the core of the leadership level, it is difficult to bring change.

**Faraz Hassan:** Again, I agree with what Dr Grieve said. She covered a lot of it, so I will not repeat what has already been mentioned. If we consider how we conceptualise the aid sector and what it is, it is not just about the policies and practices of the organisations that comprise the

sector. Those are hard enough to change as it is. They take time and require organisations to shift their culture. It is also about the set-up of a system, which is much larger than any individual organisation or institution. As has been said, it is a historic system that has been built up over time, so changing that requires a shift in power, which those who have power will be hesitant to undertake.

Another thing to add is that, given the lack of diversity within the sector, you will have a lack of innovation and perhaps willingness to take on more radical ideas or actions, which will again take time to change. As the sector becomes more diverse, you will get that diversity of voices that ask, "Why can we not do this or that?" whereas the people who have been involved in sustaining that system will perhaps not be able to see it in that way. Accelerating that change in the sense of how we are delivering aid and what we are doing also involves bringing more and more diverse voices into the sector as a whole.

Q106 **Navendu Mishra:** I am incredibly grateful to the three panellists who have made time for our Committee today. How do the working practices at the newly formed FCDO and other donors influence the work undertaken by development organisations to combat racism, in either a positive or a negative light?

*Dr Grieve:* That is another really good question. Donors are the single biggest driver of change in our sector. Without the shift in donor focus to address racism, the shift will be limited and slow. It is funders who determine how not only money but time is spent in organisations, and the focus for organisations. Small charities have very little access to funds, and a positive and progressive action that DFID took was the launch of the Small Charities Challenge Fund and adding a budget line to the capacity build or capacity development of small NGOs.

During the latest round of FCDO cuts, these programmes appear to have been closed. Our fear is that, in the future, small NGOs will have no access to any FCDO funding and will face an even more heightened competitive environment for funding. In turn, this takes away their limited resources to find alternative funding to bridge the gap that that leaves. In this context, cuts can be seen as disrupting the journey of smaller organisations towards becoming anti-racist and progressing in the good practices that they have been implementing. Organisations were left to communicate this difficult news to their local partners, which is a major blow that harms relationships and undermines trust-based collaborations and partnerships that they have built over time.

It is also important to recognise that getting funding is a hugely time-consuming exercise, so it comes at a cost. There is the cost of time for both partners that they spend preparing for a successful grant, which is now lost. The time is lost and the funding is withdrawn, so they are in a lose-lose situation.

The recent cuts in ODA funding provide a current example of FCDO upholding views and practices that are unhelpful. They are an example of top-down or donor-centred approaches to development, in which the donor has excessive power and there is no process of accountability. In this scenario, the power imbalance, where FCDO can give or take away funds, with few repercussions to it, is an important one to take notice of.

Our members have raised with us a number of things about noting the failure to deliver on multiple signed contracts, and the absence of consultation or engagement with the organisations and communities that are affected. They also talked about having half-hour group meetings to discuss the details of closing entire programmes, where individual small charities have given hundreds of hours of staff time to provide a detailed response to FCDO, as required previously. It is a stretch of imagination that the same standards of practice would be acceptable to any other area of Government commitments.

Our example from among our network is a programme in which DFID funded the education and empowerment of women to make their own reproductive decisions. FCDO has now cut funding to these programmes, which has removed the provision of contraception, for example, to communities. It is a power deployed by a nation of global privilege, and we see little accountability for the harm it causes to brown and black people and their lives.

I have two further examples. What is relevant here is the Tropical Health and Education Trust, which is a brilliant model that links to members of the diaspora and knowledge exchange to enhance healthcare provision. Another one is the UNFPA, which is a good example to draw on here, since I am aware of the impact. I was part of the UK send-off party and, at the time, felt particularly motivated by the announcement made by Baroness Sugg and others. Sexual and reproductive health for adolescent girls is a subject close to my own research interests, and I am aware that the ultimate cost of these cuts is borne by the black and brown communities that remain voiceless.

The failure of any contingency planning and the devastating impact of the cuts on the lives and livelihoods of communities that are overwhelmingly people of colour and from low-income countries is representative of a disregard towards these communities.

We are grateful to our friends, the Small International Development Charities Network, for sharing their data with us as we were preparing for today. We know that the reversal of funding commitments to and broken contracts with just 24 small charities has resulted in a loss of essential services to a minimum of 480,000 people in low-income countries, and many more small charities have been affected by these cuts. We have also heard from small NGOs about the loss of trust that they have been building, and that rebuilding trust and collaboration between small NGOs and communities will take time.

I would say that FCDO has a critical role to play in establishing standards, programmes and a sensitive way of making decisions in way that does no harm.

Q107 **Navendu Mishra:** The points made about the disproportionate impact on smaller charities and the latest round of ODA cuts were quite valid. Could I come to Dr Duncan on the same question around the working practices of FCDO and other donors influencing the work undertaken by development organisations?

*Dr Duncan:* Dr Grieve eloquently covered a range of points there. One of the things that I would like to add is something slightly outside of this. In terms of requirements and practices from an FCDO perspective, one of the positive elements that have been brought in around trying to rebalance power and to put more resources and power into local organisations is this whole thing around supply-chain mapping and the requirement that, in supply chains, there has to be X percentage of supply chains represented by local organisations. I would see that as a positive step in terms of breaking down barriers and increasing engagement with organisations that come from countries where we are implementing programmes.

One of the opportunities for FCDO in terms of its working practices and how we can embed better approaches to equity, diversity and inclusion into programme delivery, is thinking in the same way as, over time, we have looked at gender equality and social inclusion. All our programmes have GESI strategies, and we are more recently thinking about disability as well.

In terms of FCDO requirements and practices, it would be really positive to see a shift into that space, where discussions, planning and KPIs are embedded into programme design and implementation, but focus, beyond gender and disability, on race and ethnicity as well. It is slightly going off on a different track there.

*Faraz Hassan:* Again, a lot of good points have been made by colleagues. I suppose another point I would add is to consider the role of social development expertise in programmes. While I would not say that addressing race or ethnicity sits solely within social development or the role that social development experts play, in a volatile aid climate, with budget constraints, sometimes social development is the first thing to be cut. That can be harmful and it sends a mixed message that is contrary to values that we all hold.

What I mean is that, if you are developing a programme and the first thing to get cut, when, rightly so, budgets need to be made very efficient, particularly in the way that we formulate contracts, bids and so on in our sector, is the role that social development experts play in ensuring that the communities where programmes are being implemented are influencing the programme and, likewise, considering the impacts that those programmes are having on those communities,

and particularly people who are excluded or marginalised based on race and ethnicity, among other things, that can be detrimental, if you are talking about an anti-racism agenda. I would add that to the points made by colleagues.

Q108 **Navendu Mishra:** Following up on that, what role do the FCDO fee-rate structures play in determining the pay scales of locally hired and internationally hired staff and consultants at your organisations?

*Faraz Hassan:* We are based in London, so our experience of that is through hiring teams and consultants who may be international or based locally in the countries where we are delivering programmes. One of the big challenges that my colleagues may also talk about is the weighting and emphasis on international versus local expertise, and the assumptions around that: pay scales that are higher for international expertise compared to local experts.

We know from experience that, in order for these programmes to be sustainable and have impact, local expertise is absolutely essential in guiding those programmes at all stages and all levels. What we have found in practice is that it is a disincentive to create or assemble teams that give equal or more value to contextual knowledge.

To give an example, if a requirement in a bidding process is around 15 years of international experience, finding someone who has that versus someone who has 15 years of experience in the country where the programme is being delivered, which one is more valuable? That is laden with assumptions rather than being based in reality, and we need to rapidly update the way in which we perceive expertise, what it is and where it comes from. Similarly, all the way down to weighting in bids and the way that bids and procurement are structured, there is disproportionate weighting on international experience and education versus contextual experience, which needs to be addressed.

Going back to my point on social development, economists and engineers often have higher rates than social development expertise. A lot of the time, social development experts may be women or people of colour, so what message is that sending in terms of importance in terms of race, ethnicity and other kinds of issues of diversity and inclusion?

Q109 **Navendu Mishra:** You have made very important points, Mr Hassan. I hope you do not mind, but could I push you specifically on the point regarding the FCDO fee-rate structure? I completely understand the points made about the imbalance of power when it comes to international experience versus local experience, which needs to be looked at, but particularly on the FCDO fee structure, is it a positive impact or more of a negative impact on how these contracts and payment plans are structured?

*Faraz Hassan:* *[Inaudible]*—placing a disproportionate impact on international expertise is detrimental. I know that, in some cases, we

have struggled to identify people who fit criteria on paper in a bid versus people who we know would be perfectly capable of doing the job. In those cases, it can be detrimental to assembling a team that is really reflecting the things we are speaking about here today in terms of valuing the expertise and knowledge and, in fact, giving leadership and ownership to people who are living in the countries in which we are working.

For team leads, for example, we have seen contracts where we would potentially be at a disadvantage if the team lead was from the country and based there, versus having a team lead who is international or based elsewhere and has worked in many different countries. We feel that, in those cases, it can be very hard for us, despite whatever we are trying to do in terms of balancing this power relationship, to make it work in the commercial and competitive context.

Q110 **Navendu Mishra:** Your comments about team leads are concerning. Are there challenges within the tendering and bidding process for FCDO contracts that might prevent equitable working practices?

*Faraz Hassan:* I mentioned the weighting on expertise when it comes to forming a bid and that being built into the procurement and the way in which we need to try to be competitive at the same time. There is a disadvantage sometimes, as I mentioned, in having that within leadership in the way that we would want. Considering the way that bids are undertaken, sometimes with a lot of pressures on time and resources, a question that we are still trying to grapple with is how you meaningfully bring people from the countries where we are working into the bidding process to help shape what we are proposing as a programme, rather than bringing them in later, once all the decisions have been made and budgets allocated.

It is for FCDO to facilitate people from organisations in the countries where programmes are being implemented to play a greater role upfront rather than down the line. In terms of us as a sector, it is about recognising that we should not just be bringing in people from different races or ethnicities or who are based in those countries for data collection.

Q111 **Navendu Mishra:** Do you mean a tick-box exercise?

*Faraz Hassan:* Yes, absolutely, and it needs to be done meaningfully. That is a question and challenge to the sector as a whole.

Q112 **Mr Sharma:** What changes are organisations undertaking to increase diversity at all staffing levels?

*Dr Duncan:* From Palladium's perspective and from what we can see that is going on in the sector, there are a few key actions that organisations can take and, indeed, that we have already started to do at Palladium.

First of all, it is about making sure that, as an organisation, there is a global commitment to embedding diversity, equity and inclusion within the organisation and having a vision that is supported by the most senior people within the organisation, which can then be cascaded across the organisation and contextualised to the local context. When you talk about increasing diversity, what diversity looks like in an office in the UK is going to be different from what it looks like in Nigeria, so it is very important that organisations think about having a vision that can be contextualised.

The other important thing around embedding and increasing diversity is that increasing diversity is just one aspect. Attracting diverse candidates and having diverse hires is one element. To get that bit right in some of the stuff that we have already touched on, you have to think about the approaches that you are using in your recruitment and selection and what you consider to be an ideal candidate.

In the international development sector, thinking broadly about roles, we often rely and put a greater value on people who, for example, have a postgraduate degree from a particular university or who may have been able to do unpaid internship work. All of these criteria just result in you narrowing the pool, which invariably means you end up with people who are from a similar background—in other words, white people from higher socioeconomic backgrounds. That is something that permeates throughout the international development sector. It is about considering what your attraction strategies are and what you are doing to help broaden the pool without lessening quality, because that is not what it is about. It is about organisations questioning themselves around what an ideal candidate looks like and whether they need qualifications from a particular university in order to get the ideal candidate.

Once you attract and recruit diverse hires, whatever that diversity means within the context in which you operate, it is around retention. Organisations have to build a culture within their organisations, once they attract people from diverse backgrounds, to retain them. Part of that is about having spaces where people, as we mentioned earlier on, can have conversations about discrimination, harassment, abuse and inequality in an open and transparent way and feel that those voices are heard, so that people also feel that they are valued.

If you think about the employment life cycle—and we talked about attraction, recruitment and retention—it is also about understanding why people leave the organisation and making sure that, as organisations, we tap into different data points, whether that is around turnover or pay, as well as looking at staff engagement and staff satisfaction.

Another element that organisations have to think about is training and awareness, which has to be locally matched to circumstances, and ensuring that there is resourcing. The reality is that, if you want to be truly equitable, diverse and inclusive as an organisation, it takes

resources, which invariably cost money. Organisations have to resource this.

What is also important is that they have to ensure that whoever is leading on diversity, equity and inclusion is suitably senior within the organisation to have the ability to really drive that change forward. So many organisations make a mistake around trying to go forward with D&I and then employing people at junior levels, and then they find it very difficult to effect change. That is crucial.

It is about having a global approach and making sure that people contextualise that in terms of the local context, whatever "diversity" means; making sure we are tapping into non-traditional networks to attract people from non-traditional backgrounds; and also, as a sector, especially when we have roles where we can attract people from non-traditional backgrounds and sectors, asking ourselves why we are not valuing transferable skills that people who are currently underrepresented in the international development sector generally may possess from other industries. Somebody mentioned earlier the importance of having diversity of thought. Having that will, hopefully, help us develop and deliver even more positive impact.

As I have already touched on, creating the right culture is so important, because it is all very well to attract diversity, but, if you do not create a sense of belonging for people, where they can be vocal and communicate the challenges, and if we do not have a workforce who are prepared to listen and accept what people are telling them about their lived experience, people are not going to want to stick around.

When we think about equity, diversity and inclusion, and especially specialists who lead on this, organisations often compartmentalise that role within the HR element of an organisation, but equity, diversity and inclusion is beyond that. Our strategy at Palladium is about embedding D&I for our workforce, thinking about that in terms of the work that we do with communities, and also about how we embed that within our supply chains.

It is also about the thought leadership piece and making sure that our people talk about these topics and that we encourage our senior leaders to do that as well. Something that we have found quite successful at Palladium is that we introduced D&I-related KPIs that are linked to senior leaders' pay. As well as being the right thing to do, there is also an incentive to really deliver on this. We have put the responsibility on our leaders to report progress on diversity and inclusion, and that is quite a powerful thing for organisations to do as well.

*Faraz Hassan:* I very much agree with all of the things mentioned, which have been our experience as well. We have tried very hard to think about what it means to do this meaningfully and not in a tick-box way. What we have found that to mean is, as I mentioned earlier, doing this heart piece as well around why we are doing it. There are a lot of

measures that can be taken to improve diversity and inclusion, which, unless you really understand the reason, can be done in quite a tick-box fashion or done for the sake of it. The purpose should very much be about improving our practice and delivering better outcomes and impacts through our work. Holding that front and centre helps provide a sense-check in terms of making sure that we are not doing things just for the sake of it, that there is a purpose and that it is connected to our core business and what we are delivering, and that those voices are empowered to engage with and help shape the organisation.

For us, that has also meant recognising that, as has been said, a preference for certain kinds of qualifications or education means that teams who are delivering our consultancy work can end up being less diverse, and gains made in diversity end up being in the other teams. You might have people in HR, finance or other departments, which is important and essential, but that should also extend to, in our case, our technical teams that are delivering those programmes. I would just add that.

**Dr Grieve:** I agree entirely with all of Dr Duncan's and Faraz's well-made points. Perhaps I could add that the politics of diversity itself is challenging. Why diversity? I was left asking that question to myself. Who is allowed to represent others? There is substantial literature that demonstrates that organisations have better outcomes, in whatever way that has been measured, when there is diversity of people and ideas. We need to avoid diversity being turned into a tick-box exercise, so intersectionality is key. What does diversity mean in the context in which we work? Understanding different ways in which difference interacts will strengthen internal organisational dynamics and how organisations work externally.

Staff diversity is a huge challenge for small organisations, many of which are run by teams of volunteers or teams of one or two staff. If you do not have resources, that question becomes very difficult to engage with, so setting organisational targets for diverse teams is not necessarily applicable to all, particularly if we are looking at the south-west, where we operate, and where diversity is not the same percentage of the general population as it is in London. This is something to pay attention to.

More practical solutions would include making available funded internships for diaspora or candidates from underrepresented communities, and being really intentional about that, or funded networks of professionals from diaspora communities who can be consulted and included in board-level representation. This requires commitment to fund that is currently unavailable.

There is an argument for FCDO to directly fund international organisations to deliver programmes within their own communities. Its existing funding model creates a middle-management structure in which

power imbalance is given space to thrive. If FCDO is serious about tackling racism in aid, its entire funding structure needs to be scrutinised in terms of why it does not consider direct funding for indigenous organisations, for example, in low-income countries. There is also the need to take a considered approach to how aid is utilised as soft power and in the best interests of the UK. For professionals in this sector, such framing is concerning because, where aid is used as a tool to pursue other interests, it might decentre the focus from people and tackling poverty, injustice and ill-being to something else.

Q113 **Mr Sharma:** I know that my next questions have been touched on, so I just want a brief response from all three of you. How can the sector help reduce barriers to entry for staff from diverse backgrounds?

*Dr Duncan:* We have covered some of the barriers that would feature in this, but one of the things that we have not touched on is the need to capture better data. At Palladium, we have been building a new diversity data capture platform, whereby, in different parts of the world where we operate, we will ask questions that are sensitive to the local situation. That ties into what we talked about earlier in terms of diversity looking different in different places where we operate. Collectively, the sector needs to get better at capturing data because, once we understand the true picture and the extent of it, we can really think about focused activity and actions that will help us improve.

We already touched on some of the challenges around the barriers to recruitment, including some of the experiences or qualifications that the sector values over others. If we are talking about entry-level jobs, if somebody has previously done an unpaid internship, they would be a candidate who may be considered better than one who had not. As a sector, we really need to understand that there are lots of people who just cannot afford to work for free. That is going to have an impact on the diversity of the people who you then attract.

Another key issue that we have not talked about today, which really leads into this, is that we also need to ensure that, when we are thinking about entry-level jobs—and I am moving away from in-country jobs towards broader jobs, especially at HQ in London, for example—we are paying people enough for them to live. Historically, the sector has perhaps been tempted to pay lower wages, because a lot of people who it attracts have additional income streams—for instance, family members who can help them through the early part of their career, so that they can survive on a lower income. That is also something that the sector needs to think about in terms of reducing barriers to diversity.

There is also the basic stuff around making sure that our hiring managers and people who are in talent acquisition understand this whole thing around bias, which can be unconscious or conscious, and how that can permeate into recruitment decisions. It is about really understanding that, if you keep going back to the same networks of people to recruit, you should not really be that surprised that you end up recruiting the

same kind of people. As organisations, if we want to reduce those barriers, we really need to tap into more networks that are more diverse and have people from more diverse backgrounds.

The point that was made earlier about paid internships is a really good one. Again, it harks back to the philosophy around the kind of people who have been attracted historically to the sector, the kinds of economic, racial and ethnic backgrounds that they come from, and the sorts of barriers that the industry has put in place that prevent people from diverse backgrounds from coming on board.

I have already alluded to the notion that, if we want to make change, we have to make it the responsibility of leaders to be part of that and hold them accountable. Having visible key performance indicators that leaders have to report on, against which their success in their role is monitored, is really key in helping drive change forward.

**Faraz Hassan:** I would add that it is important to consider racial and ethnic diversity along with other intersecting points of identity. There is also a clear overlap with class. When I started my career in international development, I was looking at these jobs and trying to figure out how I get one. I asked someone and was told, "Just go to a country that you are interested in, and turn up at an NGO and volunteer." I was like, "That makes no sense and it is not something that I could do." Exactly as was said, that is a very clear barrier to entry. If you look at it solely from the perspective of race or ethnicity, it would fail to account for the other factors that overlap with race or ethnicity and which prevent people from entering the sector, so it is important to consider all of the avenues and all of the barriers as individuals. People are not just one aspect of their identity; they are a collection of different aspects. That is one thing in terms of being effective.

To be very clear, while this is secondary to all of the things that have been mentioned and not a primary reason, more could be done to attract people from diverse backgrounds to careers in international development, very much emphasising that, given what international development is, the nature of aid and what it involves, those kinds of lived experiences of people from different backgrounds are valuable and contribute to the work that we do. Raising awareness, engaging with schools and institutions to really highlight that we need their skills and experiences in this sector is also important.

**Dr Grieve:** My point is that change must come from the top. In this case, it is from donors. Donors could fund internship opportunities for diaspora or underrepresented candidates to enable the future of our sector to be more diverse than it is today.

A final point that I want to recall here was made by Lena Bheeroo from Bond in one of your inquiries. She mentioned trauma and how some people of colour are leaving the sector. It is important that we address this and create an enabling environment, so that people thrive and bring

good change, and that good change happens, rather than feeling disheartened and leaving the sector.

Q114 **Mr Sharma:** Although you have all touched on this, there is an opportunity to expand on the question of what causes ethnicity pay gaps in the sector and how they can be addressed.

*Dr Duncan:* We have already touched on the challenge around rate caps when we are talking about the senior positions on projects and the challenges there. I just wanted to add a point to some of those already made very clearly and succinctly by my fellow panellists. We really need to be clear here that these rate caps mean that, essentially, less-qualified international staff, who are invariably white, can command higher rates than people who are more qualified and sometimes more suitable, who are national staff and are likely to be black people, indigenous people and people of colour. We have to be very clear about what that means and the inequity that that places on us.

In terms of the pay gaps there, that is quite self-explanatory, but there are then pay gaps that exist beyond those roles within the sector. A few things are going on here. When we talk about ethnicity gaps, if we are talking about them in the same way we talk about gender pay gaps, that is often using a methodology where we just use an average. The pay gaps that come up as part of that process highlight the fact that, when we look at the sector, we have a lower number of people in senior roles who are black, indigenous or people of colour. That will then create that pay gap.

You also have some historical challenges here. As an organisation, we ask our recruiters and our people who are involved in recruitment not to ask people about, or to base pay offers on, their previous pay conditions, although we are sometimes asked by clients to ask for that information. We do not ask that because we have the view that the job is worth what it is worth, and we should be looking to pay that. If we start making decisions based on previous pay that people have had, we could end reproducing pay inequalities that that person may have experienced due to racial or ethnic inequalities. It is really important that organisations do not look back but at what the role is and is worth, rather than thinking about what the person was paid before.

In terms of the structure of the rate caps, it is really important that, as a sector, we and donors have that discussion, because they are inequitable and send a signal that white workers are worth more than black and indigenous people and people of colour. There are two aspects there: the project aspect and the more corporate side. Hopefully, that answers your question.

*Dr Grieve:* Among our network, we observe that those organisations that are on a journey towards inclusivity are those that deliberately make space for intersectional identities in their work. The issue of power being at the top table—the top table still being predominantly in the global

north, as mentioned—is the way we become truly inclusive and engage with proactive policies to increase diversity. Many of my points have been made, so I have tried to give you new ones.

*Faraz Hassan:* Most of the points have been made, but going back to the idea of years of experience, for example, if you are from a background where you could afford to accrue years of experience in a particular country, that puts you at an advantage when negotiating what scale or grade job you might be going for.

People of colour need specific support for their progression through promotion processes. If those promotion processes are based on self-selection and putting yourself forward, there is evidence to suggest that, in a similar way to gender, people from ethnic minorities can be disadvantaged. Specific measures are needed to support people's progression and promotion that are transparent and based on a recognition of a broader set of skills and experiences than the assumptions that they are based on at the moment.

Q115 **Chris Law:** I have the last two questions, but I have a little bit of time on my hands, so I want to ask a couple of supplementaries as well. The information that has been given has been really interesting. Given the level of cuts that we are already seeing come from FCDO, it is not just programmes that are going to be cut. What about training and people who are likely to apply? Are we going backwards in terms of overcoming and challenging inequality and racism in the aid sector? How is this going to push your own organisations back?

*Dr Grieve:* As I said earlier, the cuts are definitely an area where we will end up regressing rather than progressing in the sector, especially when we are talking about the power imbalance that already exists, where communities do not necessarily have a voice in decision making. This is about the lives, wellbeing and livelihood of those people who exist in very faraway places. As I mentioned in particular, making these kinds of decisions while we are going through a pandemic is really difficult to comprehend for us as a sector, particularly from the perspective of a small organisation.

What I would like to see is a reversal and a rethinking, given the era that we are existing through and the pandemic we are going through, with the implications of that to be considered, from our privileged position in the global sphere in terms of power and using our voice, resources and funding in a positive way. We have a choice and the power to make those decisions.

Q116 **Chris Law:** Faraz, I just want to expand on that, thinking about what you said earlier about who is likely to be attracted, and picking a country where you get your experience. Given the level of cuts that are happening just now, and given the fact that, as Tigist has just rightly said, we are in the middle of a pandemic, is it not only going to be those who have wealthy parents who are likely to be attracted to this sector,

given the instability and the nature of these cuts and how long they are likely to last?

*Faraz Hassan:* Quite possibly. I would not be able to say whether there is data and evidence that would suggest that, but we would assume that. The challenge at times of volatility and cuts is to protect the space for these agendas and to make sure that they do not suddenly become secondary. When things are going well and we are in a better position, it is a lot easier to tackle these agendas. I guess the true test of whether these matter to organisations of all kinds is whether, at times of volatility or cuts, they are still prioritised. In some cases where there have been clear policy commitments from FCDO, they have enabled us to keep things like social development on the agenda, so it is very much about ensuring that, at times of volatility, we are protecting the importance placed on all kinds of issues around diversity and inclusion.

Q117 **Chris Law:** Rosanna, given the level of cuts, the brunt of which your organisation will bear some of as well, how do you make decisions on where these cuts lie? One of the things that I would be concerned about is how we go about employing and who we choose. It has been said already that it takes money and investment for applications and for doing proper interviewing and getting people onboard. How do you safeguard against that, if at all, given the level of cuts that are coming?

*Dr Duncan:* I am sure I speak for Palladium in saying that we are committed to embedding equity, diversity and inclusion into everything that we do. We have made a commitment to that. Faraz made a good point about having to weather the storm. Ultimately, you cannot do D&I only when it suits you and when times are good; as an organisation, you have to find a way to do that continuously, because this is a continuous journey that we are on. Our commitment at Palladium is that this is something that we are investing in and we will continue to do that.

I know that it has become a bit of a cliché, but building a diverse, inclusive and equitable workforce is not just the right thing to do, but it makes sense from the perspective of innovation, creativity and the bottom line. We know that. This is not a nice-to-have that we will put on only when the times are good; we are in it for the long haul. Organisations that have that understanding of the importance will be on the same journey that we are.

Q118 **Chris Law:** Is that reflected in your experience of FCDO? Is that culture embedded in FCDO?

*Dr Duncan:* Could you clarify what you mean by that?

Q119 **Chris Law:** From your own organisational perspective, I understand how important it is. I will give you an example. The Scottish Government has just carried out a review as a result of covid. In honour of all those who have lost their lives and livelihoods, it is important to review our international development, also in the light of Black Lives Matter. As a result, it has completely changed its programme principles. For example,

earlier you mentioned equality, inclusion and diversity, partner-country-led development, and a number of other principles, including setting up a Global South Programme Panel. What I am driving at is, in the context of these things, whether you are getting that experience from FCDO or whether this is a complete blunder that FCDO has gone into, not just with the cuts but with the merger. Are the philosophy and culture behind FCDO woefully out of touch?

I will go back to something that Tigist said earlier, which is really important. Aid should not be a gift but should be more about reparation and justice. In that context, I am looking at the culture not only within your own organisations but within the major donors, including FCDO, and whether that is happening on that side as well.

*Dr Duncan:* I would like to take that question away and come back with a written response, if that is okay.

**Chris Law:** That would be great, thank you. It is a difficult question.

*Dr Grieve:* I would like to come back to that as well. We are still wading through the data and we will make a written statement. We have also heard from smaller NGOs about what this means and how they have been industrious; they are looking for alternative ways of bridging whatever gap it is leaving. At SWIDN, we are one of the fortunate ones, in that we get to keep our funding. That funding is really important because it was for capacity development for smaller NGOs in our region. We are very grateful that we get to keep that, and we are working to achieve that. Especially given that so many cuts are now being made, it is more important that we get value out of that for small NGOs.

We also have members that have been directly impacted by the cuts and who had been working really hard and asking really difficult questions. They had to break this bad news to their communities and partners around what it means in terms of eroding the equitable collaboration and partnership that they have been trying to foster over many years, and in terms of the unlearning that they have been doing and the new learning that they have been embracing. There are a lot of things that we could consider there.

*Faraz Hassan:* I would add that, again, it is a complex issue, and we would also be happy to submit some evidence in writing. There is no doubt that the cuts have been very difficult; the risk is that they can exacerbate existing inequalities. Some of us in the sector will be better able to weather and push through those cuts, and other organisations— particularly, as colleagues on the panel have said, those based in the countries where we are working—who will suffer disproportionately from that. It is very much about how we mitigate that and continue to press on and hold on to these agendas.

It is when FCDO policy commitments exist that we can use them as a way to press and hold on to important issues, not just around social development but all sorts of issues. Those kinds of policy commitments

and making sure that we are holding FCDO and others to account on those during the cuts are essential for us.

Q120 **Chris Law:** What does it mean for your organisations to be truly inclusive, and what challenges do organisations face when making those changes to the working culture?

*Faraz Hassan:* To be truly inclusive is when things are not done from the perspective of policy and process but as an embodiment of the values that we have discussed today. It is not that people who work in the sector do not embody those values, but really understanding what that means and making sure that that exists across the organisation. As was mentioned before, it is about making sure that they are not just compartmentalised into a diversity and inclusion activity that is done by the people who are interested in it, and that the responsibility is taken up by people across the organisation at different levels of seniority and in different roles. Once you have that, policies and procedures are what supplement that.

To give an example, we have been having a lot of recent discussions on language: should you use this language? Should you say this? Should you not say this? That is a valid discussion, but until you understand why language matters and what role it can play, you could just be creating an arbitrary list of words that could be applicable one day but not the next. All of this work is important but it needs to be underpinned by embodying those values in the heart, so that they do not just become tick-box exercises or done for the sake of it, but are done with clear intent and purpose.

*Dr Grieve:* It is about deliberately making space for intersectional identities in our work, recognising that power is at the top table, and that who gets to sit at that table is really important. Having proactive policies to increase diversity is not necessarily where the staff are sat in the south or in the north. It is not just about the numbers of people we have from diverse backgrounds, although that is important. It is about the senior management team and whether they have people who can be truly representative. Do they have a nuanced understanding of the problem that they are trying to address? Can they do it respectfully? Can they communicate in a dignified way and influence change in a way that is going to be impactful and sustainable?

*Dr Duncan:* My esteemed fellow panel members have covered quite a lot, and we covered some of this in an earlier discussion, but some of the things that stand out for me are around intentionality and proactivity. That is really key. When we talk about being inclusive, it is about all these different components: having diversity at all levels; having people at that top table making decisions; ensuring that our leaders are accountable and responsible in terms of cascading this; and making sure that everybody understands their responsibility in promoting this zero-tolerance culture towards discrimination, abuse and harassment and has

a personal understanding of the role they have to play in some of these things acting out.

The key things there are around this not being passive. The first question we had today asked what it means to be anti-racist. It is all about being proactive and accepting that we are on a journey that may never end. The other thing that has been picked up around the discussion on intersectionality and something that I want to be clear on is that, in lots of discussions in the past that we had about women, for example, we talk about women as if they are a homogenous group. We have to be very careful that we do not have those discussions and that we understand that the other characteristics that can intersect gender can compound discrimination. We also need to ensure that we have that switched on when we are thinking about race and ethnicity, not to see people as being one-dimensional and to understand that people are not a homogenous group and that there are different aspects that can further impact inequality.

It is about being proactive and intentional and ensuring that we do not see people as one-dimensional. We need to understand that there is not just going to be one solution for all the challenges relating to all people. There is going to be a lot of thought involved, hence why you need diversity of thought, to help us really find solutions and keep moving forward and progressing.

Q121 **Chris Law:** Those were great responses from each of you. I have one question left; it is for Tigist and Faraz. What actions have your own organisations taken to modify your communication strategy, storytelling and images used in order to change the "white saviour" narrative.

*Dr Grieve:* That is a really good question and an important one to address. Charities have made great steps to challenge their storytelling and participation approaches, with communications being signed off by some of their partners, so trying to change questions of power dynamics and language. It is also a challenge that much of the language that we use around development issues reinforces that colonial power imbalance that we talked about. This fuels racism, intentional or unintentional, in international development today.

For example, the language that portrays communities in lower-income countries as "beneficiaries" or "the poor" rather than individuals and collectives with their own layers of identity and agency, as just mentioned, reinforces the role of communities as recipients and undermines the possibility of equitable partnership being there.

We would highlight the recent work that Bond has done to decolonise language. It suggests that, at the most basic level of tackling racism in international development, language should be regulated by the sector as a standard. Of course, Lena, one of the witnesses I mentioned earlier, made this point very eloquently. One way of doing that may be engaging with diaspora communities to leverage their insight and contextual

knowledge of communities and a nuanced understanding of the challenge, and to come up with appropriate and culturally sensitive pathways to change, as framed by the local community.

In the short time we had to consult our network, we found that 46% had a communication policy that governed language and imagery use to represent communities in low-income countries. Much of this is related to and enabled by the safeguarding issues that have been in place in the last few years to protect vulnerable adults and children in terms of imagery and consent, but there is a huge gap in our sector relating to informed consent and the use and protection of community-level data, in terms of whether it is similar to what we expect from researchers in academic organisations.

In my view, applying similar standards on data protection that we have here in the UK is an important mechanism and process to aspire for in the context of where we work in the global south. Although it is not easy to do that, aspiring to this and active engagement with this is a fundamental anti-racist journey. We must require of ourselves even more commitment in ethical practices in this regard, as much as to recognise the asymmetry of power being donors such as FCDO or NGOs based in the north and the implications of that. I would also invite and encourage us to apply the same critique.

I suggest that we also need to recognise power between small and medium-sized NGOs and local communities, and what it means. Do we ask ourselves honest questions like, "What does informed consent look like in the context where we are working? How might we empower communities to feel that they can refuse consent to photographs or stories, with no repercussion to them or to the CSOs or communities that they are associated with? Do we communicate how long we keep our images for? How do we frame the challenge and narrative? Do they truly get the time and space needed to dialogue with us as equals in the context of the busy schedules that we seem to be running on?"

I recognise that there is positive change in the sector, but it is also important that we recognise and call out some of the difficulties in the way we have been continuing to represent people in the global south that are unethical and project a narrow picture about people in low-income countries. We fail to realise that communities and individuals targeted by our interventions and programmes are not passive recipients waiting to be rescued.

From experience, people like that, young and old, are industrious in securing their wellbeing. Children in the global south are proactively engaged in securing their own future and prospects, and their families' welfare and wellbeing. That is not to say that it is not okay for children who I followed as an ethnographer to be doing what they were doing, but that is another conversation around what childhood should look like in

context. My point here is that our portrayal of them is extremely narrow and unhelpful.

To conclude, I want to talk about standards and to recognise this journey towards anti-racist practice, as previously discussed by Dr Lata Narayanaswamy and Degan Ali, in order to remind us that it is not just a tick-box exercise or one event, but a domestic process and journey. For me, it is about us being able to make a moral judgment in terms of saying that, if it is not good enough for children here in the UK in the western context, it is not good enough for others in the global south. The way I see things is to ask, "If it is not good enough for my child to be represented in that way, it is not good enough for any child, regardless of their circumstances".

*Faraz Hassan:* I agree with everything said. This is a really important and interesting point. It is simultaneously quite easy but also very difficult to address. On the one hand, we have been focusing on looking at the imagery that we use particularly with a safeguarding lens in terms of the things just mentioned around whether the people in those photos were able to give consent or understood for how long and for what the photos would be used. That is a very high standard for photography and requires resources to then get the right kinds of photographs, because they do not exist. If you went and searched for pictures on websites, you would get all the stereotypical kind of imagery that you would expect, not just on race and ethnicity but on gender and lots of things.

It is easy to recognise the challenge, but it needs resource and thinking to do it well. Often, communications are quite hard to justify in a budget, particularly in the context of FCDO programmes and so on. That is a challenge and we are still in the process of figuring out how we want to address that. The first step we are taking is reviewing photos that we use and making sure that we remove harmful ones at the very least, and then using that as a starting point.

Similarly, I already spoke about language, so I will not go too far into it, but the point to make is that you can take the same action, which can have two different meanings or impacts. To remove harmful photos from the website or to change what photos we have on the website can be done in a window-dressing way. When we have done that, we can pat ourselves on the back, but unless that is part of a wider effort to understand why those pictures are harmful or what role they play, and part of a wider organisation-wide initiative to tackle this issue, then it can just be that the easiest thing to do is to change the website. It is very important that organisations commit to reforming their communications alongside all of the work that needs to go on behind that as well.

**Chris Law:** I know I have run over time, so I will not ask a question but I will just make a point. In order to change public support in this country for the immediate return to the full 0.7%, our language needs to change as well. We need to inform the public how important that is. I thank all of

you for bringing up these really important points and I will be taking a lot away from it. Tigist, it is a long time since I did anthropology, but when you mentioned that you were an ethnographer, it was quite interesting. Hopefully, we can have a conversation another time about it.

**Chair:** Can I thank all the panellists today? We have come to the end of our time. Thank you so much for all the evidence that you have given. I know that each of you mentioned that you would like to come back with some further written evidence, so please feel free to send it in to the staff and the team and add to what we already have. Thank you so much for spending the time with us this afternoon.