



House of Commons
International Development
Committee

Racism in the aid sector

First Report of Session 2022–23

*Report, together with formal minutes relating
to the report*

*Ordered by the House of Commons
to be printed 14 June 2022*

The International Development Committee

The International Development Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration and policy of the Department for International Development and its associated public bodies.

On 1 September 2020, DFID and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office were merged to form the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO). The Committee remains responsible for scrutiny of those parts of FCDO expenditure, administration and policy that were formerly the responsibility of DFID.

Current membership

[Sarah Champion MP](#) (*Labour, Rotherham*) (Chair)

[Mr Richard Bacon MP](#) (*Conservative, South Norfolk*)

[Theo Clarke MP](#) (*Conservative, Stafford*)

[Mrs Pauline Latham OBE MP](#) (*Conservative, Mid Derbyshire*)

[Chris Law MP](#) (*Scottish National Party, Dundee West*)

[Mr Ian Liddell-Grainger MP](#) (*Conservative, Bridgwater and West Somerset*)

[Nigel Mills MP](#) (*Conservative, Amber Valley*)

[Navendu Mishra MP](#) (*Labour, Stockport*)

[Kate Osamor MP](#) (*Labour, Edmonton*)

[Dr Dan Poulter MP](#) (*Conservative, Central Suffolk and North Ipswich*)

[Mr Virendra Sharma MP](#) (*Labour, Ealing Southall*)

The Committee is one of the departmental select committees, the powers of which are set out in House of Commons Standing Orders, principally in SO No. 152. These are available on the internet via www.parliament.uk.

Publications

© Parliamentary Copyright House of Commons 2022. This publication may be reproduced under the terms of the Open Parliament Licence, which is published at www.parliament.uk/site-information/copyright-parliament/.

Committee reports are published on the [Committee's website](#) and in print by Order of the House.

Committee staff

The current staff of the Committee are Nick Beech (Clerk), Silvia Behrens, (Political Studies Association Postgraduate Intern), Mark Doyle (Media and Communications Officer), Gini Griffin (Second Clerk), Paul Hampson (Committee Operations Officer), Zoe Hays (Committee Specialist), Danniella Kinder (Committee Specialist), Alex Knight (Senior Economist), Rowena Macdonald (Committee Operations Officer), Emma Makey (Senior Committee Specialist), Ailish McAllister-Fisher (Second Clerk), Leo Oliveira (Committee Operations Manager), and Alison Pickard (Committee Specialist).

Contacts

All correspondence should be addressed to the Clerk of the International Development Committee, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA. The telephone number for general enquiries is 020 7219 1223; the Committee's email address is indcom@parliament.uk

You can follow the Committee on Twitter using [@CommonsIDC](#).

Contents

Summary	3
Language used in this report	4
Definition of racism	4
1 Introduction	5
Our inquiry	5
Context of the inquiry	5
Colonial legacy	6
2 Working with partners in-country	8
Shifting the power	8
UK aid cuts	10
3 Communications and storytelling	13
Fundraising strategies	13
Language	14
Informed consent	14
4 Data on racism and diversity in the aid sector	15
How racism manifests in the UK aid sector	15
Intersectionality	16
Data on racism in aid organisations	16
Workplace diversity data in aid organisations	17
Ethnicity pay gaps	19
Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO)	20
5 Building an equitable and inclusive aid sector	22
Barriers to entry	22
Improving recruitment practices	23
“Be comfortable with not being comfortable”	23
Diversity leads	25
Remuneration and contracts	26
Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO)	28

Conclusions and recommendations	30
Annex: Letter from the Chair to the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Secretary, dated 11 January 2022	34
Formal minutes	45
Witnesses	47
Published written evidence	49
List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament	52

Summary

In the last two years, since the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis, many countries around the world have faced a day of reckoning on racial injustice in their societies. Questions of equality and dignity have been asked of the aid sector for much longer, but this debate has also intensified in this period.

Racism manifests in the very structure of international aid; the sector still reflects the power relationships of colonialism. It shows up in the terminology that aid actors use to describe the people they work with, and in fundraising campaigns which reinforce stereotypes of people in low- and middle- income countries as helpless and in need of saving.

Donors, such as the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, multilateral organisations, international non-governmental organisations, and private sector contractors must recognise racism in the sector. They should undertake to shift decision-making power and resources to the communities they work with. The manner in which some cuts to UK funded aid programmes took place, with little or no consultation of the implementing partners or the communities affected, demonstrated the power imbalance that exists and the urgent need for equity.

We heard that the aid sector has a problem if its workforce does not reflect those it works with. High barriers to entry make it challenging for staff from under-represented groups to obtain core policy jobs in the sector. Data shows under-representation at all levels, with the least diversity in leadership positions. There are also inequalities in the positions and pay available to internationally hired staff which are often not available to locally hired staff. These disparities are underpinned by preferences for international experience over contextual or cultural knowledge and assumptions of best practice originating in White majority, high-income countries.

Language used in this report

The words we use to describe race and ethnicity are important. Any term that groups people together to describe a collective experience will be reductive and cannot capture the nuances between the individuals described, or their differing experiences.

To describe people from minority ethnic groups in the UK, public bodies typically use the acronym ‘BAME’ which stands for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic. This term is widely contested and was not commonly used in the evidence we gathered for this inquiry. The UK Government recently moved away from using this term because it emphasises Black and Asian groups while excluding others, such as mixed groups.¹ It would not be appropriate in many of the contexts where aid programmes are delivered.

Some of our witnesses preferred to refer to ‘People of Colour’ others referred to ‘Black and Brown people’ or ‘Black and Brown bodies’.² Other evidence submissions used the acronym ‘BIPOC’ as an alternative to ‘BAME’.³ BIPOC is more inclusive and refers to Black, Indigenous and People of Colour.

As the scope of this inquiry did not include an in-depth investigation into the differing experiences of individuals in different racial groups, this report will refer to Black, Indigenous and People of Colour. We recognise that any such term is problematic.

Definition of racism

The definition of institutional racism, set out in The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry 1999 undertaken by Sir William McPherson, is a useful starting point for our inquiry:

The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture, or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people.⁴

1 Gov.uk, [Writing about ethnicity](#), accessed 28 March 2022

2 For example: Degan Ali (Q86), Natalie Lartey (Q98), Bond ([CPA0062](#)) Save the Children UK ([CPA0048](#))

3 For example: Plan International UK ([CPA0056](#))

4 [The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry](#), Report of an Inquiry, by Sir William Macpherson of Cluny, February 1999, CM 4262 - I, para 6.34

1 Introduction

Our inquiry

1. In February 2021 we launched an inquiry into the philosophy and culture of aid. Our previous inquiries into sexual exploitation and abuse in the aid sector highlighted the power imbalances that exist and the vulnerabilities that these cause within the communities where aid programmes are implemented.⁵ We found there can be harmful attitudes amongst those designing, managing and delivering aid programmes and projects.⁶ We wanted to find out how the sector, and relationships within it, can be improved so we asked if there were other weaknesses within the sector and, if so, how they can be overcome.

2. We launched a call for written evidence and began taking oral evidence from witnesses both in the UK and in countries in receipt of UK Official Development Assistance (ODA) to find out what the key issues were. Time and again we heard that we needed to shift decision making power and resources, which are typically wielded by aid donors such as the UK Government and large international non-governmental organisations (INGOs), towards the countries and communities where programmes are delivered. We heard that aid institutions need to face up to racist and paternalistic attitudes, as well as addressing challenges with diversity, equity and inclusion in staffing.⁷ Therefore, we decided our first sub-inquiry would scrutinise structural and institutional racism in the aid sector.

3. We are very grateful to all those who had the courage to give oral and written evidence to this inquiry. We know that talking about racism will be painful for those who have experienced it. We would also like to thank our Special Adviser, Mohammed Ali, Co-Founder of The Innovation for his guidance and insight throughout this inquiry.

4. We want to make sure the aid sector is the best it can be; delivering effectively for the communities it serves; providing safe, equitable, rewarding experiences and development for staff working on aid programmes; and value for money for the taxpayer. Throughout this inquiry we have considered our own position in the British establishment; how our practices and the language we use influence the sector. We have made conclusions and recommendations to the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, and the rest of the sector, but we acknowledge that we do not have all the answers.

5. We hope our inquiry and report will embolden other aid actors, including donors, non-governmental organisations, private sector contractors and international finance institutions to take the opportunity to appraise their own policies and practices to ensure they are operating in an anti-racist manner.

Context of the inquiry

6. This inquiry came at a time when the footage of the killing of George Floyd by a White police officer in Minneapolis, has shone a light on racial injustice, globally. The resurgence

5 International Development Committee, [Progress on tackling the sexual exploitation and abuse of aid beneficiaries](#), Seventh Report of Session 2019–21, HC 605, published 14 January 2021, p.21

6 Ibid, p.22

7 For example: Bond ([CPA0023](#)), British Red Cross ([CPA0032](#)), Christian Aid ([CPA0036](#)), Diasporic Development ([CPA0044](#)), Peace Direct ([CPA0016](#)), Results UK ([CPA0028](#)), Save the Children ([CPA0017](#)), STOPAIDS, Salamander Trust and Youth STOPAIDS ([CPA0034](#))

of the Black Lives Matter Movement has brought to the fore the racism in British society that Black communities endure. Several UK based charities and aid organisations put out statements in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter Movement and some have taken this opportunity to undertake a period of self-reflection about their own policies and practices.⁸

7. The structure of the aid sector is built on a concentration of resources and authority in high-income, White majority countries, primarily in Europe and North America. Programmes are mostly delivered in low- and middle-income countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. This means the question of power dynamics is important in examining who makes the key decisions and how prejudices and assumptions based on race have influenced working practices.

8. Discussions about making the sector more equitable and respectful of those it is intended to serve, are by no means new. Degan Ali, Executive Director of Nairobi-based NGO, Adeso, told us that when she previously spoke out about her experiences of racism in the aid sector, it was not well received.⁹ As a result of speaking out, her organisation was blacklisted by many of the donors in her home country, Somalia.¹⁰ She explained that people want to believe that aid workers are good people, who have sacrificed a nice life in their home country, so how can they be participating in a system that is racist?¹¹

9. Since the killing of George Floyd brought questions of racial injustice to the fore, and the Covid-19 pandemic required INGOs to withdraw staff from the frontlines of programme delivery, several organisations have created more space for difficult conversations about their position in the global system,¹² and the impact of their internal working practices,¹³ but we are yet to see what the long-term impact will be.

Colonial legacy

10. Many evidence submissions we received to this inquiry described the structure of the aid sector as a legacy of the colonial era, which continues to replicate imperial power imbalances.¹⁴ Dr Lata Narayanaswamy, Associate Professor in the Politics of Global Development at the University of Leeds explained how numerous colonial officers went on to shape the multilateral 'Bretton Woods' institutions including the World Bank and IMF as well as some UN agencies at the forefront of the aid sector.¹⁵ Best practice for systems and approaches continue to be directed by donors and NGOs from White majority, high income countries such as the UK.

11. We also received evidence that the UK's involvement in the slave trade and wealth extraction from around the British Empire contributed significantly to the economic development of our nation, at the direct expense of others.¹⁶ In turn, this has contributed

8 For example: Christian Aid ([CPA0036](#)), International Committee of the Red Cross ([CPA0061](#)), Save the Children UK ([CPA0048](#))

9 Degan Ali ([Q86](#))

10 Ibid

11 Ibid

12 For example: Christian Aid ([CPA0036](#)), International Committee of the Red Cross ([CPA0061](#)), Save the Children UK ([CPA0048](#))

13 For Example: International Committee of the Red Cross ([CPA0061](#)), Save the Children UK ([CPA0048](#))

14 For Example: Bond ([CPA0062](#)), Gender and Development Network ([CPA0059](#)), Oxfam GB ([CPA0070](#))

15 Dr Narayanaswamy ([Q80](#))

16 Oxfam GB ([CPA0070](#))

to many of the conditions that necessitate the aid sector to exist today.¹⁷ Furthermore, we heard how colonialism left a legacy of racial hierarchies, having used illegitimate beliefs about communities that are Black, Indigenous and People of Colour to justify slavery and forced displacement.¹⁸ This led to perceptions that these communities were incapable of self-governance,¹⁹ and is reflected in the discrimination they face today. The aid sector needs to have difficult conversations about how power imbalances, racial injustice and poverty came about and how it can help to address these underlying factors.

17 Ibid

18 Bond ([CPA0062](#))

19 Dr Narayanaswamy ([Q80](#))

2 Working with partners in-country

Shifting the power

12. This sub-inquiry to our umbrella inquiry into the philosophy and culture of aid has focused on racism in the aid sector. While this is closely aligned to efforts to shift the power to local organisations, communities and countries that aid interventions serve, the scope of the inquiry has not allowed an in-depth analysis of all the ways in which this needs to happen. However, we have heard powerful testimony that aid actors in the UK need to work more equitably with partners in the countries where they operate. Many of our conclusions about this can be found in the letter we wrote to the Foreign Secretary in January 2022, ahead of the UK's new International Development Strategy, and is annexed to this report.²⁰

13. Decisions around aid spending are still often made in the headquarters of European and North American donors and INGOs. They are detached from the communities that organisations serve geographically, politically and culturally which can lead to programmes being less effective.²¹ Justifications for this are often couched in beliefs that NGOs from these high-income countries are less likely to mismanage financial resources.²² However, we heard that if the funds are transferred directly from the donor to the local civil society organisation, to the recipient, then there is a very short, auditable trail. The more transfers involved in a resource-flow, the more opportunities there are for money to go astray and to be lost in overheads and transaction costs.²³ Therefore, it is not beneficial to have international NGOs acting as intermediaries between donors and local organisations.

14. Donors such as the FCDO need to be at the forefront of efforts to shift the power and provide funding directly to locally led organisations. Donors' compliance requirements and complex applications for funding can be some of the biggest barriers to locally led development.²⁴ The South West International Development Network called on the Government to pioneer new and innovative funding models to redress the power imbalances, including unrestricted funding that can be truly community led, including by diaspora led organisations in the UK.²⁵ The UK Department for International Development had made some progress towards decentralising funding decisions to country offices, which often have working relationships with implementing partners in-country. It is important this approach is maintained and strengthened under the merged Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office so that decisions can be informed by the people who will be affected by them, rather than taken by ministers in Whitehall.²⁶

15. Gloria Soma, Executive Director of the Titi Foundation explained how, in South Sudan, donors typically take a top-down approach, imposing what they deem right for the population rather than what those communities want. They often work through intermediaries so there is gap between donors and international NGOs, and the

20 Correspondence from the International Development Committee to the Foreign Secretary, regarding [Philosophy and culture of aid](#), 11 January 2022, see annex

21 Results UK ([CPA0063](#))

22 Ibid

23 Tom Wein (Q247)

24 Bond, [Locally-led development. Ready to set sail...but on rough seas](#), by Annalisa Renna, 19 January 2022, accessed 28 March 2022

25 South West International Development Network ([CPA0072](#))

26 Results UK ([CPA0063](#))

communities they serve. She explained how local organisations often feel reduced to sub-contractors at the end of a long chain and side-lined by the aid community. When local organisations have carried out assessments or gathered information it has not been recognised by the multilateral agencies that have taken on delivery roles in her country. However, if similar data was collected by an international NGO, it would be accepted.²⁷

16. The South Sudan NGO Forum has been set up to enable over 400 local members to be involved in the discussions about where decisions are made and to share their data with other aid actors. Through the Advisory Board they are able to speak directly with donors.²⁸ Despite these positive steps in South Sudan, Plan International warn that local NGOs are still severely under-represented in coordination clusters, advocacy and funding.²⁹ Furthermore, when local actors are given a seat at the table, the forums may not be truly inclusive and they will often suffer from language barriers.³⁰ Degan Ali from Adeso also gave powerful testimony regarding the way that exclusion of local actors occurs due to language barriers:

Can you imagine people coming from Nepal, speaking Nepalese, coming to the UK to support the UK citizens and saying that all meetings that happen in the UK must be run in the Nepalese language and that British citizens do not get access to these meetings, that you have to have a special kind of relationship? If you are a citizen and you want to go into your school board and protest or have questions for the school board you have full access, but if you are a citizen in Somalia and you want to go into these UN co-ordination meetings you do not have full access. It is not accessible to the communities; you have no way of giving your feedback.³¹

The ability to speak English affords individuals with significant privilege over those who cannot.³² Bids for contracts with the FCDO and similar donors tend to be in English which could prevent local actors who do not have English speaking staff from bidding.

17. Since the Covid-19 pandemic took hold in 2020, many aid organisations have had to quickly shift their operating models, relying more heavily on local actors who could maintain access to local populations. This gave impetus to conversations about locally led development, but it is too early to see if it has led to a long-term shift in decision making power or increased direct funding to local actors. One of the principles of locally led development is that it should work towards a scenario where the country is no longer reliant on outside aid. The aid community should ensure that country programmes clearly outline a responsible and locally led exit strategy.³³ FCDO Minister, Lord Ahmad agreed with this approach in his oral evidence to this inquiry:

As we help countries, there needs to be a process to our development support that allows them to move through in a structured fashion to the next level

27 Gloria Soma (Q23)

28 Ibid

29 Plan International UK (CPA0056)

30 Ibid

31 Degan Ali (Q83)

32 Dr Narayanaswamy (Q85)

33 Development Reimagined (CPA0050)

of their own development, but I am very clear from my own perspective that priorities must be set from the ground upwards, to ensure that our strategy reflects that.³⁴

18. **Across the global aid sector, racism manifests in decisions around whose expertise we value. Evidence to our inquiry suggested that institutions in high income countries like the UK assume they have the knowledge and best practice to assist people in low- and middle-income countries. Due to a belief that these institutions represent the ‘gold standard’, local partners are often required to adapt to their way of working.³⁵ Racist attitudes also play out in the narrative that local organisations are ‘high risk’ and need ‘capacity building’.³⁶**

19. **The use of European languages, particularly English, in the development sector can lock out national actors who operate in local languages. *The FCDO should consider whether applications for funding must always be submitted in English - especially in bids for small projects administered by embassies, which are to be undertaken by local civil society organisations.***

20. **It is important that progress made by DFID to shift funding decisions from Whitehall towards country offices is not lost under the merged department. *Further, the FCDO should increase the amount of UK aid funding that goes directly to locally led civil society organisations. It should reconsider how it conceptualises and calculates risk and work with local civil society organisations to undertake the due diligence and administration associated with bidding for FCDO contracts.***

UK aid cuts

21. Although the terms of reference for this sub-inquiry made no mention of the UK Government’s decision to cut the UK’s Official Development Assistance (ODA) budget, it was in this context that this inquiry took place. Several oral witnesses and written submissions raised concerns about the manner in which the cuts took place. We heard that in many cases the cuts to programmes were decided and implemented by a top-down approach, with very little consultation.³⁷ This led to mistreatment of partnerships between the UK Government, implementing partners and the communities where they work. It demonstrated the lack of control afforded to the countries where programmes are delivered or accountability to the local community, on the part of the donor.³⁸ Several organisations were clearly frustrated by their experience. A member of the South West International Development Network fed back to the Network:

Aid cuts send a shocking message that we do not care about the poorest - we are dealing with the realisation that we have the impacts of colonialism, the injustice that there is, and to take the funding away shows a gigantic lack of understanding and racism.³⁹

34 Lord Ahmad (Q152)

35 Save the Children UK (CPA0048)

36 Degan Ali (Q82)

37 Dr Grieve Q106, Plan International (CPA0056), South West International Development Network (CPA0072)

38 Plan International (CPA0056)

39 South West International Development Network (CPA0072)

22. Dr Tigist Grieve from the South West International Development Network described how one instance has played out:

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.⁴⁰

23. Amanda Khozi Mukwashi, then CEO of Christian Aid said the cuts send the message that the UK Government is no longer interested in working with people who are vulnerable or who are in extreme poverty because they were able to just cut them off.⁴¹ The preparation involved in applying for an FCDO grant can amount to hundreds of hours of staff time, including from community partners. Therefore, the cuts have resulted in significant losses relating to costs already borne and have undermined long-established trust between UK based NGOs and local partners.⁴²

24. Implementing partners were shocked by the sudden withdrawal of funding that had previously been awarded and it induced a feeling of helplessness in them.⁴³ The cuts are most likely to impact on staff implementing the programmes in-country, including small national organisations. Amanda Khozi Mukwashi highlighted how the current funding models transfer risk to partners in-country, due to short-term contracts that do not provide security of job tenure for most of the people who work on those projects.⁴⁴ The sudden cuts to UK ODA funding show how precarious this relationship can be for those on the frontline.

25. Charlotte Biswas, Deputy Director for Civil Society and Civic Space at the FCDO recognised that the cuts were a big surprise to many organisations, but she said it was necessary to make strategic decisions.⁴⁵ The Senior Responsible Officers for each grant worked closely with the organisations to ensure that any changes to the grant or contract “would be implemented with the great most care to downstream partners and beneficiaries. There was a really strong emphasis to do no harm in so much as was possible.”⁴⁶ In its written evidence, the FCDO further set out that its due diligence requirements for procurement include “a clear principle to avoid doing harm, with a responsibility to protect all people involved in our programmes, including those with protected characteristics, including race.”⁴⁷ *The FCDO should apply these same principles to do no harm when it removes funding, as well as when aid programmes are initiated.*

26. The manner in which the cuts to UK aid took place, with little or no consultation of downstream partners, or the communities where they are implemented has sent a harmful message that the UK does not care about the people affected, many of which are Black, Indigenous and People of Colour.

40 Dr Grieve (Q106)

41 Amanda Khozi Mukwashi (Q146)

42 South West International Development Network (CPA0072)

43 Ibid

44 Amanda Khozi Mukwashi (Q124)

45 Charlotte Biswas (Q159)

46 Ibid

47 Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (CPA0068)

27. **The structure of the sector transfers much of the risk to frontline implementing partners who have the least capacity to mitigate those risks. *The FCDO should consider how it can restructure its funding commitments to give long-term certainty to local civil society organisations to ensure funding that has been committed cannot be suddenly withdrawn at short notice.***

3 Communications and storytelling

Fundraising strategies

28. Many people in the UK are familiar with Comic Relief fundraising events. As part of its TV fundraising appeals, Comic Relief typically used to send ‘Western’ celebrities to communities in Africa to generate donations from the public.⁴⁸ After facing criticism that these films portray communities in Africa as helpless and needy and promote ‘white saviourism’, Comic Relief announced in 2020 that it will no longer send celebrities to Africa. Instead, it will use local film makers to make fundraising appeals from a “more authentic perspective”.⁴⁹

29. Comic Relief has not been unique in this strategy. Charity fundraising appeals that depict communities they serve as poor and helpless have become a cliché. Although many organisations have moved away from showing White aid workers—instead using images of frontline workers from the local community—these films still give a sense that the individuals they serve are needy and require saving, thus replicating outdated stereotypes. These narratives can also oversimplify the situation and do not explore the reasons why those communities are living in poverty.⁵⁰ Slogans often follow the model that says ‘give £X per month and you can achieve Y’. This underplays the other factors that have contributed to that individual being in that situation, such as unequal trading relations, climate change or conflict.⁵¹

30. There are examples of how fundraising appeals can be more nuanced and engaging. Radi-Aid’s Rusty Radiator and Golden Radiator awards convened by the Norwegian Students’ & Academics’ International Assistance Fund identified the best and worst campaigns.⁵² This brought attention to the worst offenders, but it also highlighted how appeals can be done differently. Natalie Lartey, Advocacy and Engagement Manager at the International Institute for Environment and Development told us that it is important to shift the narrative because the traditional stories do not appeal to Black audiences.⁵³ Therefore, as aid agencies manage to change their stories, they might be able to connect to new audiences. Viewers require more sophisticated stories that delve into why global poverty exists and how it links to racism and inequality.⁵⁴

31. Fundraising is extremely important to many international aid organisations, but public appeals that depict the communities they serve as helpless and needy strip those communities of their dignity. They contribute to the narrative that the countries where they work are somehow inferior to the UK. *Fundraising appeals should depict positive, realistic stories and wherever possible use local filmmakers. They should seek to inform audiences about the drivers of poverty and inequality instead of giving simplistic messages about the difference donations can make.*

48 BBC News, [Comic Relief will stop sending celebrities to Africa](#), 28 October 2020, accessed 28 March 2022

49 Ibid

50 Natalie Lartey (Q95)

51 Ibid

52 Radi-Aid: Africa for Norway, [Awards 2017](#), accessed 28 March 2022

53 Natalie Lartey (Q95)

54 Ibid

Language

32. There is a broad consensus that much of the terminology commonly used in the aid sector disempowers and ‘others’ the communities that aid organisations work with. It is the manifestation of colonial attitudes in today’s language and can reinforce harmful and demeaning stereotypes.⁵⁵ It has led to a ‘white saviour’ narrative, where knowledge and resources are seen to be transferred to passive ‘recipients’ or ‘beneficiaries’.⁵⁶ This undermines the possibility of equitable partnerships and strips individuals of their identity and agency.⁵⁷ Themrise Khan, an independent development professional from Pakistan strongly rejected the narrative that communities in low- and middle-income countries are poor and need to be saved.⁵⁸

33. Witnesses also explored the idea that in countries like the UK there is an ideal of western civilisation that others need to aspire to.⁵⁹ Natalie Lartey from the International Institute for Environment and Development argued that the narratives around the need for modernisation and the need to save can only exist while we are silent on the broader root causes of extreme poverty, which have their roots in racism, in colonialism, in poor terms of trade, and in conflict.⁶⁰

34. The terminology used in the aid sector has its roots in colonialism; it ‘others’ the communities where programmes are delivered and reinforces ideas that ‘the West’ is the ideal that others should aspire to. It is not easy to strip the sector of terms such as ‘recipient’ or ‘beneficiary’, even the term ‘aid’ adds to this narrative. *The aid sector should have a conversation that includes the communities it works with to develop positive and inclusive working terminology, the FCDO should consider how it can lead this work.*

Informed consent

35. Aid actors will often use pictures of the communities they work with to generate support and promote their work. We heard that practices for obtaining consent for the use of these images are often not as strong as they are in the UK. Witnesses raised concerns that even where consent forms have been signed, those depicted may not have been fully informed about how the images would be used.⁶¹ Often, images are recycled and used with stories which are entirely unconnected to the original purpose or location.

36. *Guidelines on informed consent for obtaining and using images should be observed just as thoroughly in relation to individuals from the communities that aid organisations work with, as they are in the UK. It is unacceptable for images to be used and re-used without the subject’s express consent.*

55 Action for Global Health (CPA0058)

56 REDI Collective (CPA0057), Save the Children UK (CPA0048)

57 Dr Grieve (Q121)

58 Themrise Khan (Q17)

59 Natalie Lartey (Q95)

60 Ibid

61 Dr Grieve (Q121), Faraz Hassan (Q121)

4 Data on racism and diversity in the aid sector

How racism manifests in the UK aid sector

37. Evidence to our inquiry set out several ways in which racism manifests within organisations in the aid sector. The boards and senior leadership of NGOs and private sector contractors who hold decision-making power are still mostly White and based in high-income countries such as the UK. They are often not accountable to, or representative of, the people they serve.⁶² In contrast, many frontline service delivery jobs are undertaken by people from the local community and are more likely to be Black, Indigenous and People of Colour.⁶³

38. Staff in the UK aid sector experience racism in similar ways to other sectors in our society. Lena Bheeroo, Engagement and Equity Manager at Bond told us it includes individuals being judged for who they are and perceptions of what they do or do not know, just because of the colour of their skin.⁶⁴ Racism in the workplace can also include micro-aggressions, overtly racist comments, inadequate responses to whistleblowing complaints, lack of access to promotions, cultural exclusion and stereotyping.⁶⁵ In addition to racist “jokes” and slurs being played down by their employers, some witnesses pointed to the gaslighting that makes victims of racism question their judgement or perceptions of racism.⁶⁶ Some organisations have already been called-out publicly for the way they have treated staff who are Black, Indigenous and People of Colour.⁶⁷

39. We heard that staff who are Black, Indigenous and People of Colour also face preconceptions of not being good or clever enough and can be denied access to development opportunities or funding.⁶⁸ Lena Bheeroo told us that groups such as Charity So White and the Racial Equity Index have raised concerns that staff often do not raise concerns because they don’t trust they will be addressed in a meaningful way.⁶⁹

40. When individuals experience racism during their careers in the aid sector, it can damage their mental health, their confidence, their sense of belonging in the sector and their sense of worth.⁷⁰ If they share these experiences with their peers, it can prevent other people of colour from entering the sector.⁷¹ When staff leave the sector due to these experiences, it becomes more homogenous, particularly at higher levels.⁷²

62 Oxfam GB ([CPA0070](#))

63 Ibid

64 Lena Bheeroo (Q2)

65 Results UK ([CPA0063](#))

66 Bond ([CPA0062](#))

67 Decolonise MSF, [Open Letter to Senior Management and Colleagues in MSF: Beyond Words to Anti-Racist Action \(2020\)](#), Christian Aid press release, [Christian Aid announces steps to address racial injustice](#), The Guardian, [Amnesty International has a culture of white privilege, report finds](#), 20 April 2021, accessed 28 March 2022

68 Bond ([CPA0062](#))

69 Lena Bheeroo (Q2)

70 Bond ([CPA0062](#)),

71 Save the Children UK ([CPA0048](#))

72 Bond ([CPA0062](#))

Intersectionality

41. We heard how important it is to recognise how race intersects with other characteristics, such as gender, social class, sexual orientation, religion, age or disability. Individuals have complex, layered identities and diverse experiences of the aid sector.⁷³ Natalie Lartey from the International Institute for Environment and Development told us the sector has a reputation for being quite elitist, quite exclusive and quite male-dominated.⁷⁴ This means that issues around race, gender and disability will need to be looked at together.⁷⁵ We also need to ensure that we do not see people as being one-dimensional or a homogenous group. There are different aspects that can further impact inequality, and therefore, the solutions will likely be different for each person.⁷⁶ The impact of intersecting identities on ethnicity pay gaps will be touched on later in this chapter.

42. The aid sector does not operate in a vacuum. The different forms of discrimination that permeate British society manifest in the aid sector too. Racism is particularly pertinent for aid organisations because they work directly with individuals from around the world who are Black, Indigenous and People of Colour. Discriminatory attitudes within these organisations will have a negative impact on the communities they work with and the programmes they deliver. Aid organisations must ensure their working practices and programmes are mindful of the intersecting identities of their staff and the people they serve.

Data on racism in aid organisations

43. In June 2020, the Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations (ACEVO) published its “Home Truths” report into undoing racism and delivering real diversity in the charity sector.⁷⁷ As part of this work, it undertook an online survey of Black, Asian and Minoritised Ethnic ‘BAME’ staff in the charity sector. It did not focus on international aid organisations specifically, but the results give us a useful indication of the scale of the problem in the UK. It found that 68% of respondents (335 out of 489 people) said that they had experienced, witnessed, or heard stories about racism in their time in the charity sector.⁷⁸

44. These survey results from the UK charity sector corroborate the results of surveys into the international aid sector; in 2020, Aid Works and Thomson Reuters Foundation surveyed 286 aid workers across 63 countries. They found that half of responders who identified as belonging to a racial or ethnic minority had experienced racism at work in the last year.⁷⁹ A further survey was undertaken by Bond, the UK network for international development organisations. In June 2021, Bond published its report into Racism, Power and Truth. 150 People of Colour working in the aid sector responded to its survey, 77% of which are based in the UK.⁸⁰ 68% of respondents to the survey said that they had

73 Palladium International ([CPA0052](#))

74 Natalie Lartey ([Q97](#))

75 Ibid

76 Palladium International ([CPA0052](#))

77 Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations, [Home Truths: Undoing racism and delivering real diversity in the charity sector](#), June 2020

78 Ibid

79 Thomson Reuters, [Exclusive: Half aid workers report racism at work in past year - poll](#), October 2020, accessed 28 March 2022

80 Bond, [Racism, power and truth: Experiences of people of colour in development](#), June 2021, p4, accessed 28 March 2022

experienced an incident of racism in the workplace within the past year or had supported someone else who experienced a racist incident.⁸¹ According to the report, many of these examples were incidents of overt racism, which can lead to psychological harm and mental health challenges for the individuals involved. Furthermore, STOPAIDS, 4Mnet, and Harm Reduction International pointed to research by The Royal College of Psychiatrists that found that people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds are less likely to receive the care and support they need when they experience these mental health challenges.⁸² The interviews Bond undertook also found examples of employees who were made to continue working in environments in which they felt unsafe.⁸³ Worryingly, Bond said that its findings:

paint a picture of senior leaders and HR departments in NGOs not being fully equipped or effective in dealing with incidents of racism. According to interviewees, informal complaints are oftentimes not taken seriously, and formal grievances rarely result in an outcome that complainants find satisfactory.⁸⁴

45. Evidence submitted to this inquiry and recent surveys by actors in the UK charity and international aid sectors show the scale of racism experienced by staff who are Black, Indigenous and People of Colour. Any level of racism in the workplace is unacceptable, and the findings that leaders and HR departments are ill equipped to deal with such incidents are deeply concerning. All aid organisations should have effective processes in place to tackle instances of racism when they occur. They should also be able to measure and assess whether those processes are working.

Workplace diversity data in aid organisations

46. In February 2021 we took oral evidence from Lena Bheeroo, Engagement and Equity Manager at Bond, as part of our umbrella inquiry into the philosophy and culture of aid. We asked witnesses if there are any issues or weaknesses in the aid sector that the Committee should inquire into. Lena told us:

For a sector whose missions include many things, from eradicating poverty to ensuring access to education, water, health and food, eradicating violence against women and girls and ensuring the most marginalised communities do not get left behind, we have a problem when our sector does not reflect those we work with.⁸⁵

47. As the aid sector operates across the globe, ensuring diversity in staffing will require context-specific solutions, tailored to the challenges arising in different countries and regions. It is difficult to accurately describe the diversity of staffing in the UK aid sector because the relevant HR data is not readily available for each organisation.⁸⁶ However, several written evidence submissions pointed to research undertaken on the UK charity sector that indicate disappointing trends.

81 Ibid

82 Royal College of Psychiatrists, [Racism and Mental Health](#), March 2018, p2, STOPAIDS, 4Mnet, and Harm Reduction International ([CPA0054](#))

83 Bond, [Racism, power and truth: Experiences of people of colour in development](#), June 2021, p4

84 Bond ([CPA0062](#))

85 Lena Bheeroo ([Q2](#))

86 Results UK ([CPA0063](#))

48. Our evidence referred to the 2018 UK Civil Society Almanac published by the National Council of Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) found that only 9% of charity sector staff were from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic ‘BAME’ backgrounds, compared to 12% of the private sector and 11% of the public sector, despite making up 14% of the UK population.⁸⁷ As many charities are based in London, where People of Colour make up closer to 40% of the population, some suggest the workforce should more closely reflect this higher number.⁸⁸

49. The evidence we gathered during this inquiry all pointed to similar trends in staffing; there is an under-representation of staff who are Black, Indigenous and People of Colour in more senior positions.⁸⁹ Frontline staff in aid organisations are usually representative of the countries in which they work, but as seniority increases they are more and more likely to come from White backgrounds.⁹⁰ The International Rescue Committee explained that Women of Colour and women from the Global South make up the majority of frontline staff but are particularly underrepresented in leadership positions.⁹¹

50. Several aid organisations told us they have set targets to increase diversity of staffing, particularly in leadership positions.⁹² We also heard from organisations that are developing ways to better capture diversity data in order to understand the full picture and focus activity on how they can improve.⁹³ Ammara Khan, Diversity Director at Save the Children UK told us her organisation is working on collecting recruitment data to understand who is applying for roles, who is being shortlisted, who is appointed and who is not.⁹⁴ In its written evidence, Palladium International set out the importance of efforts to capture and share staff diversity data externally so that a global picture can be developed, tracked, monitored and used to systematically tackle underrepresentation of different groups.⁹⁵

51. Several submissions recommended that the FCDO creates a requirement for organisations bidding for UK aid funds to publish their diversity data and have an inclusion strategy in place, which goes beyond tick-box exercises.⁹⁶ We recognise that ensuring staff diversity can be a challenge for small organisations that might be run by volunteers or just one or two staff. The 2017 McGregor-Smith review of race in the workplace commissioned by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy recommended that companies and businesses with more than 50 employees publish a breakdown of employees by race and pay band.⁹⁷ This is an appropriate size of organisation to include in stipulations relating to data reporting.⁹⁸

87 STOPAIDS, 4MNet, and Harm Reduction International ([CPA0054](#))

88 Oxfam GB ([CPA0070](#))

89 International Committee of the Red Cross ([CPA0061](#)), International Rescue Committee ([CPA0067](#)), Oxfam GB ([CPA0070](#))

90 International Rescue Committee ([CPA0067](#))

91 Ibid

92 International Rescue Committee ([CPA0067](#)), Plan International ([CPA0056](#)), UNICEF UK ([CPA0064](#))

93 For example: Dr Duncan ([Q103](#))

94 Ammara Khan ([Q129](#))

95 Palladium International ([CPA0052](#))

96 For example: Development Reimagined ([CPA0050](#)), Bond ([CPA0062](#))

97 Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, [Race in the workplace: The McGregor-Smith Review](#), p16

98 Staff members must have the right not to submit personal diversity data if they do not feel comfortable to do so.

52. Dr Tigist Grieve from the South West International Development Network told us that its members are often based in areas of the country which are not as diverse as London.⁹⁹ She suggested that practical measures available to them might include creating funded internships for candidates from diasporic or underrepresented communities, or funded networks of professionals from diaspora communities who can be consulted and included in board-level representation.¹⁰⁰

53. Collecting and publishing data on diversity in staffing is a key element of holding aid organisations to account. Only by being transparent can organisations share and learn from each-other. For the smallest organisations it might not be appropriate to publish diversity data if it could compromise employees' rights to confidentiality but organisations with over 50 employees should do so.

54. The Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office should require organisations that it funds, which employ more than 50 staff, to publish their diversity data. This should not act as a barrier to small organisations in receiving funding. The FCDO should work with small organisations to identify ways to increase opportunities for staff from underrepresented groups.

Ethnicity pay gaps

55. The 2017 McGregor-Smith Review of race in the workplace highlighted the importance of employers collecting and publishing ethnicity pay gap data to establish a baseline against which to measure progress.¹⁰¹ Save the Children UK is one of the first big, international NGOs to publish its ethnicity pay gap data and should be commended for its commitment to transparency. According to its ethnicity and pay gap report 2020, People of Colour are paid a median average of 2.11% less than White staff and 4.94% less based on the mean average.¹⁰² This compares to a median pay gap of 3.8% across the whole country and 21.7% in London.¹⁰³ However, the Save the Children figures also reveal serious discrepancies in pay. Most strikingly, Black women earn a mean average of more than 23% less than White men and 13% less than White women.¹⁰⁴ This highlights the impact of intersecting characteristics. We encourage other organisations to publish their data so a full picture can be established, and lessons learned.

56. Ammara Khan explained that publishing this data has helped to make Save the Children accountable externally, and it is looking internally too. It has established an equal pay working group to see why the gaps came about and how they can be overcome.¹⁰⁵ Ammara told us that sometimes the organisation inherits the differences in pay due to the ethnicity pay gaps across the sector. Therefore, Save the Children has introduced measures to ensure that when starting salaries are negotiated, they are balanced against other salaries.¹⁰⁶ Palladium International has launched a global diversity monitoring platform to capture data on ethnicity, disability, religion, and socio-economic background of its

99 Dr Grieve (Q112)

100 Ibid

101 Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, [Race in the workplace: The McGregor-Smith Review](#), p7

102 Save the Children UK, [SCUK Ethnicity Data and Pay Gap Report 2020](#), October 2020, p7

103 Office for National Statistics, [Ethnicity pay gaps in Great Britain: 2018](#), p12

104 Save the Children UK, [SCUK Ethnicity Data and Pay Gap Report 2020](#), October 2020, p7

105 Ammara Khan (Q131)

106 Ibid

candidate pools and workforce.¹⁰⁷ It says the data will enable it to accurately monitor progress and report internally on ethnicity against pay, promotion, and turnover. We hope it will consider how this information can be put in the public domain, without compromising its staff. Ways of building a more diverse and inclusive workforce are explored in more detail in chapter 5.

57. *Aid organisations, including private sector contractors, with more than 50 staff should measure and publish their ethnicity pay gap data in order to be held accountable. It will also help them to identify if there are inequalities in their workforce that should be addressed.*

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO)

58. Evidence submissions suggested that the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) should also take steps to raise awareness and ensure diversity, equity and inclusion in its own workforce.¹⁰⁸ In March 2020, the Department for International Development, which has since merged into the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, faced accusations of endemic racism in its UK headquarters and in its offices around the world.¹⁰⁹ A majority of responders to a survey of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic ‘BAME’ staff at the organisation said they had direct negative experiences, such as exclusions from networks to sustained discrimination that halted their careers. They also endured racist jokes and questions about their UK citizenship.¹¹⁰

59. STOPAIDS, 4Mnet, and Harm Reduction International welcomed the FCDO’s aspirations to increase Senior Management from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic ‘BAME’ backgrounds to 13%, up from 7.5% today, and to create a talent pipeline for progression.¹¹¹ But concerns were raised that the FCDO is a ‘reserved department’ which means that will not hire new staff who are foreign nationals. In contrast, the former Department for International Development was an ‘unreserved department’.¹¹² The justification for the reserved status rests in security concerns, but it raises questions about whether it is appropriate to proscribe staff who may come from the countries where UK aid funded programmes are delivered from being involved in funding decisions.

60. In its written evidence, the FCDO said it has committed to putting inclusion at the heart of the organisation:

Our aspiration to be a truly inclusive organisation is driven not only by the moral case—our workplace should reflect the values we are projecting internationally—but because an inclusive organisation, in which the potential of our diverse workforce is fully harnessed, will enhance the FCDO’s creativity and innovation.¹¹³

61. The FCDO appointed Sir Tim Barrow as its Board Sponsor for Race and signed up the FCDO to Business in the Community’s Race at Work Charter.¹¹⁴ The department has

107 Palladium International ([CPA0052](#))

108 REDI Collective ([CPA0057](#)), STOPAIDS, 4Mnet, and Harm Reduction International ([CPA0054](#))

109 The Guardian, [Racism endemic at DfID, staff claim](#), August 2020, accessed May 2022

110 Ibid

111 STOPAIDS, 4Mnet, and Harm Reduction International ([CPA0054](#))

112 Results UK ([CPA0063](#))

113 Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office ([CPA0068](#))

114 Ibid

also signed up to the Inclusive Data Charter to improve data disaggregation, to enable evidence-based decision making.¹¹⁵ The Inclusive Data Charter Action Plan published by DFID in 2019 set out the department's ambitions which primarily relate to programme data:

to report key headline results disaggregated by at least sex, age, disability status and geography where relevant/appropriate under our Single Departmental Plan by 2022... In the longer term, we will move towards additional disaggregation variables; we expect this to include income, race and ethnicity.¹¹⁶

However, when we asked the FCDO when this information will be available, it told us it cannot commit to a timeline.¹¹⁷

62. We are concerned that the decision to designate the merged Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office as a 'reserved department' shuts down the possibility of civil servants from the countries where UK aid funding is spent, from taking part in funding decisions. It appears to go against other commitments to diversity in staffing and to shift decision making power towards the countries where the aid budget is spent. *The FCDO should undertake a review of its reserved department status to identify whether its security considerations warrant the decision not to hire foreign nationals.*

63. DFID previously set out its ambition to publish more inclusive data, in order to improve its programming in 2022. *The FDCO should publish the first tranche of inclusive data this year and set out a timeline for when it will be able to publish further data relating to race, ethnicity and income.*

115 Ibid

116 Department for International Development and Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, [Inclusive Data Charter Action Plan](#), Updated March 2019, accessed May 2022

117 [Correspondence from Lord \(Tariq\) Ahmad of Wimbledon](#), on racism in the aid sector, dated 14 October 2021

5 Building an equitable and inclusive aid sector

Barriers to entry

64. We heard that although aid organisations have begun to take action to improve diversity and inclusion, progress has been slow.¹¹⁸ A 2020 survey undertaken by Bond of 150 aid organisations found that 73% reported having diversity and inclusion policies in place,¹¹⁹ however, Bond’s separate survey of individuals working in the sector found only 11% strongly agreed that their organisation was strongly committed to the agenda.¹²⁰

65. There are several barriers that prevent people from diverse backgrounds from moving into jobs in the aid sector. Unpaid internships can provide a crucial foot in the door but often reinforce social and economic inequality.¹²¹ Many people cannot afford to work for free. Furthermore, donors and employers prefer candidates with postgraduate degrees, even when it’s not necessary for the role. Criteria such as these narrow the pool of eligible candidates which increases the risk of ending up with applicants who are from a similar background.¹²²

66. Recruiting based on years of experience in the aid sector can disadvantage candidates who have not been able to gain experience, due to racial or other types of discrimination; candidates who could not afford to take an internship; and candidates returning to the job market after taking time off for caring responsibilities or illness.¹²³ Dr Rosanna Duncan, Diversity Manager at Palladium International, told us that when negotiating base pay, organisations should not ask candidates about previous pay conditions as it can bake-in previous discrimination and inequalities. A job is worth what it’s worth and the organisation should pay that.¹²⁴

67. Within aid organisations, some teams tend to be more diverse than others. Bond set out that finance teams and others that undertake service functions tend to be more diverse than policy teams, which are predominantly White.¹²⁵ This means the teams that shape policies and take decisions on programmes tend to be the whitest.¹²⁶

68. The barriers to entering the aid sector for candidates from diverse backgrounds can be considerable. Donors and aid organisations should reduce barriers to entry by ending the use of unpaid internships and paying all employees the living wage and removing unnecessary stipulations in job applications such as years of experience in the international aid sector and higher degrees that disadvantage individuals from under-represented backgrounds.

118 Oxfam GB ([CPA0070](#))

119 Bond, [Racism, power and truth: Experiences of people of colour in development](#), June 2021, p18

120 Ibid, p4

121 Results UK ([CPA0063](#))

122 Dr Duncan ([Q112](#))

123 Palladium International ([CPA0052](#))

124 Dr Duncan ([Q114](#))

125 Bond ([CPA0062](#))

126 Ibid

Improving recruitment practices

69. Increasing diversity and inclusion is not just the right thing to do, it is beneficial for employers too. Our evidence pointed to research that shows that higher levels of diversity and inclusion leads to better organisational decision-making, increased team performance, innovation, and agility.^{127,128}

70. Lorriann Robinson of the Advocacy Team described the measures that some organisations are taking to improve their recruitment practices. For example, an organisation has determined that if two candidates are equally matched and one comes from an underrepresented group then they will recruit that individual. Other organisations have banned all-White recruitment panels. If the team cannot put forward a suitably diverse panel internally, then it should bring in external resources.¹²⁹ However, we heard that there are other leaders in the aid sector who are defensive and hope the issue will go away without having to address it.¹³⁰

71. Palladium International is introducing targeted, paid and inclusive internship programmes that provide candidates with an income they can live on independently. They also suggest recognising the experience that candidates have achieved in their own countries – for example, working with socio-economically disadvantaged communities and vulnerable people and groups, rather than insisting on international experience.¹³¹ Other organisations told us they have made changes to their recruitment process, such as updating the language in person specifications in job descriptions and advertising in new places where people from underrepresented groups will easily access them;¹³² ensuring diverse representation on recruiting teams to avoid unconscious bias;¹³³ and HR teams are considering blind applications.¹³⁴

72. Some aid organisations are taking action to increase diversity in their workforce, such as reducing unnecessary stipulations in person specifications in job descriptions and banning all-White recruitment boards. *All aid organisations, including private sector contractors should reflect on their diversity data and seek to understand if their recruitment practices need strengthening to support talented candidates from diverse backgrounds. We need sector-wide cooperation to share best practice and identify how the recruitment process can better facilitate candidates from diverse backgrounds to enter core roles in the aid sector*

“Be comfortable with not being comfortable”

73. Approaches that just increase diversity without addressing the underlying culture of the sector are unlikely to lead to the long-term changes needed to address the power

127 International Rescue Committee ([CPA0067](#))

128 Sector-wide research undertaken by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) suggests that more diverse and inclusive teams are more likely to include a diverse range of community members in programming. ICRC ([CPA0061](#))

129 Lorriann Robinson ([Q98](#))

130 Ibid

131 Palladium International ([CPA0052](#))

132 Ammara Khan ([Q129](#)), Action for Global Health ([CPA0058](#)), UNICEF UK ([CPA0064](#))

133 Action for Global Health ([CPA0058](#))

134 Natalie Lartey ([Q97](#))

imbalances or improve the experiences of staff who are Black, Indigenous and People of Colour. We are all on a journey and nobody has all the answers but the whole sector needs to move forward with humility.¹³⁵

74. The evidence submitted warned that diversity and inclusion strategies that rely on tokenistic compliance activities, such as basic training and capacity building or including diverse voices without giving them power and influence, will fail to have a profound impact.¹³⁶ Systemic change requires the structural barriers to be overcome. We must make sure we move past tick-box exercises and welcome a diversity of ideas and values. Building inclusive cultures will take much more than fulfilling diversity quotas. It will require extensive self-reflection:

Talking about racial discrimination demands that we hold a mirror up to ourselves, individually and as a sector, which is scary but not impossible. Our sector is not perfect, but no sector is. We need to acknowledge the path that it took to create where we are now. We need to change our culture so that it builds trust and is not afraid to be held accountable.¹³⁷

75. Many organisations have made statements of solidarity and expressed their intentions to tackle racism in their organisation. Some have begun undertaking employee engagement surveys and appointing working groups and reading groups to confront and learn about these issues.¹³⁸ The REDI Collective said the organisations with a stronger response are willing to direct resources to improving their practices.¹³⁹ Organisations need to create a supportive, safe, and inclusive environment for honest and open conversations around racism and discrimination. This might raise difficult questions, but these are important to improve mutual trust, respect and acceptance of each other's diversity.¹⁴⁰

76. Amanda Khozi Mukwashi, then CEO of Christian Aid told us the sector needs to “be comfortable with not being comfortable”.¹⁴¹ Several organisations have already started this process.¹⁴² The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) admits the conversations it is having with its staff have been difficult.

These conversations have at times been painful and uncomfortable and have revealed entrenched power imbalances and subtle, insidious and unconscious inequity engrained in our structures and history. Although discriminatory or racist behaviour is not tolerated under the ICRC Code of Conduct, it is clear that many members of staff feel race affects the extent to which people feel valued, are enabled to give their best and able to develop their careers.¹⁴³

77. Aid actors that are serious about moving forward will need to move from conversations to action. They should provide staff who are Black, Indigenous and People

135 Lena Bheeroo (Q2)

136 Oxfam GB (CPA0070)

137 Lena Bheeroo (Q2)

138 For example: Christian Aid (CPA0036), Save the Children UK (CPA0048)

139 REDI Collective (CPA0057)

140 International Committee of the Red Cross (CPA0061)

141 Amanda Khozi Mukwashi (Q143)

142 International Committee of the Red Cross (CPA0061), International Rescue Committee (CPA0067), Save the Children UK (CPA0048)

143 International Committee of the Red Cross (CPA0061)

of Colour with the support they need. This includes believing and assisting victims of racism and racial discrimination. Any form of racism and racial discrimination must be expressly prohibited behaviours in codes of conduct and appropriate systems embedded to address complaints when they arise. Employers in the aid sector need to be conscious of the fact that despite taking actions to be anti-racist, people can still have racist experiences within their organisation, and they need to be actively monitoring this, have the courage to recognise the truth of individual experiences and address it.¹⁴⁴

78. Other actions organisations can and are taking include: actively learning and unlearning unconscious bias and auditing policies and practices for unconscious bias;¹⁴⁵ establishing working groups to address racism and inequality;¹⁴⁶ establishing working standards to ensure panel events include diverse voices;¹⁴⁷ and recognising the value of contextual knowledge.¹⁴⁸ Counterweight Support Limited questioned the value of diversity, equity and inclusion training which, it said is unregulated and can push “an overly race conscious form of anti-racism that is not inclusive of diverse worldviews that exist in the charity sector.”¹⁴⁹ Counterweight suggested there was little evidence that it changes attitudes or behaviour. It could even make the problem worse if it characterised minority groups as powerless and lacking agency.¹⁵⁰

79. The South West International Development Network surveyed its members about the actions they were taking to be anti-racist. The Network was encouraged to see the steps that many of its members were beginning to take, but the majority of smaller ones found they lacked the resources and support to move beyond central activities unless required to do so. They recommended that donors and ‘thought leaders’ made this a requirement for funding but also provided the resources to enable them to build their capacity.¹⁵¹

80. Some aid organisations are beginning to introduce measures to open up and encourage conversations about racism in their workplaces but much more needs to be done to welcome diverse ideas and values. These processes are likely to be painful and difficult and will take courage on the part of leaders, managers, and staff to be open, honest and committed to change. Aid organisations, including private sector contractors, should publicly acknowledge that racism exists in the sector and prioritise anti-racism work that tackles the underlying culture of their workplaces and not just the racial diversity of their staff. This will include making space for open, honest and often difficult conversations. It also requires them to welcome ideas and approaches suggested by staff who are Black, Indigenous and People of Colour.

Diversity leads

81. We heard how work to tackle racism and increase diversity in aid organisations has typically been undertaken by staff who are Black, Indigenous and People of Colour, who take it upon themselves to try to improve their organisation, without remuneration

144 South West International Development Network ([CPA0072](#))

145 Amanda Khozi Mukwashi (Q130), REDI Collective ([CPA0057](#))

146 REDI Collective ([CPA0057](#)), South West International Development Network ([CPA0072](#))

147 South West International Development Network ([CPA0072](#))

148 Bond ([CPA0062](#))

149 Counterweight Support Limited ([CPA0047](#))

150 Ibid

151 South West International Development Network ([CPA0072](#))

and sometimes at considerable personal cost. Women of colour in the REDI Collective network found that ‘speaking up’ and advocating for diversity within their organisation led to individuals being pushed out.¹⁵²

82. It will take a commitment of resources to drive forward the necessary changes. Several organisations told us they have appointed diversity leads,¹⁵³ or their board has taken ultimate responsibility for addressing these issues.¹⁵⁴ Often, diversity leads are responsible for developing diversity and inclusion or racial justice frameworks, including accountability mechanisms. There are other ways in which the leadership can make sure it is accountable for this work. For example, Palladium International told us it has introduced diversity and inclusion Key Performance Indicators which are linked to senior leaders’ pay.¹⁵⁵

83. It is the responsibility of those in the sector who hold the most power to increase diversity, inclusion and transparency, and be accountable for the steps their organisations are taking to dismantle structural racism. Responsibility for engendering culture change and increasing diversity within aid organisations should sit with the senior leadership of the organisation. Whoever is leading this work needs sufficient seniority to be able to drive it forward without fear of reprisals. Likewise, responsibility should not sit solely in human resources departments; the vision must be adopted by the senior leadership, and it should be embedded throughout the workforce. Leaders must ensure that everyone understands their own personal responsibility to promote a zero-tolerance culture towards discrimination, abuse and harassment. *Aid organisations and private sector contractors with a large enough leadership team should appoint senior leaders with the remit to tackle racism and increase diversity, equity and inclusion in their organisations, with the full support of the senior leadership team.*

Remuneration and contracts

84. Two issues that came up repeatedly throughout our evidence relate to Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) contracts and how these affect the employment of individuals hired in-country. The first is the emphasis on international expertise over local expertise and the second is the fee rates stipulated for internationally hired staff and locally hired staff.¹⁵⁶

85. Faraz Hassan, Senior Technical Specialist at Social Development Direct told us that experience has shown that for programmes to be sustainable and have impact, local expertise must guide the programme at every stage.¹⁵⁷ However, due to the way that bids and FCDO procurement contracts are structured, there is disproportionate weighting given to the deployment of staff with international experience and education, over the value given to more local, contextual experience.¹⁵⁸ There are times when an organisation would be disadvantaged in their bid if the team leader is an in-country national rather

152 REDI Collective ([CPA0057](#))

153 Plan International ([CPA0056](#)), South West International Development Network ([CPA0072](#)), REDI Collective ([CPA0057](#)), UNICEF UK ([CPA0064](#))

154 Amanda Khozi Mukwashi ([Q134](#))

155 Palladium International ([CPA0052](#))

156 Dr Duncan ([Q114](#)), Lorriann Robinson ([Q93](#)), Action for Global Health ([CPA0058](#))

157 Faraz Hassan ([Q108](#))

158 Ibid

than an international staff member.¹⁵⁹ He said this creates a disincentive to implementing partners to assemble teams that give more value to contextual knowledge and prevents development professionals from leading projects in their own country.¹⁶⁰ Action for Global Health said the lack of inclusion of lived experience in the planning stages of projects and programmes can lead to over-simplifications misrepresentations of the issues and challenges being addressed.¹⁶¹

86. Lorriann Robinson, from the Advocacy Team, explained that FCDO fee rate stipulations—which determine the level of pay that staff or consultants working on a project can be paid—are based on a combination of location, level of experience, and type of project. The highest rates go to international staff who are overwhelmingly White, and the core staff are overwhelmingly non-White.¹⁶² She explained that this results in significant inequalities:

I have seen examples of projects where the application of the FCDO's rate cards means that you can have a professional with 15 years' experience working side-by-side on a project with a graduate from the UK with two years' experience, and the UK graduate is being paid more than the professional with 15 years' experience. That is an example of what we would say is a policy that is producing inequities between racial groups. I am sure it is not the intention, but that is the consequence of that policy... I ask the Committee to think about what that must feel like for that professional with 15 years' experience being paid less than their UK counterpart that they perhaps are supervising.¹⁶³

87. The South West International Development Network heard from one organisation which said that, following FCDO guidance, the salary of a UK staff member was ten times that of their national counterpart.¹⁶⁴ Palladium International explained that the capped rates on the International Multi-Disciplinary Programme (IMDP) framework have posed a particular challenge. Palladium International had been interested in bidding on IMDP opportunities but the low rates for national experts have meant they couldn't retain appropriate national talent.¹⁶⁵ Furthermore, the FCDO pay structures are widely replicated across the sector and are upheld as perceived good practice.¹⁶⁶

88. Counterweight point out that the way international staff and locally hired staff are treated can seem unfair but introducing salaries that are many times the usual local salaries in humanitarian settings can create social problems, lead to conflict, or even undermine local systems.¹⁶⁷ Lord Ahmad also made the point that when you look at the country where aid actors are operating there will be national pay scales for similar work. He told us the FCDO sets the parameters, but individual organisations should have the flexibility to ensure they meet the required standards.¹⁶⁸ Charlotte Biswas, Deputy Director at the

159 Ibid

160 Palladium International ([CPA0052](#))

161 Action for Global Health ([CPA0058](#))

162 Lorriann Robinson (Q93)

163 Lorriann Robinson (Q93)

164 South West International Development Network ([CPA0072](#))

165 Palladium International ([CPA0052](#))

166 South West International Development Network ([CPA0072](#))

167 Counterweight Support Limited ([CPA0047](#))

168 Lord Ahmad (Q157)

FCDO reiterated that pay scales are set to match the local economy. She described them as “competitive, but also value for money”.¹⁶⁹ She did not anticipate that they will be levelled up globally.¹⁷⁰

89. The way that FCDO contracts are structured creates disincentives for implementing partners to hire local staff, particularly in project lead roles. While FCDO fee rates for locally hired staff may be linked to local pay-scales in humanitarian and development settings, they can lead to large inequalities when compared to internationally hired staff. This can undermine relations with local actors, damage trust and make frontline workers feel undervalued.

90. We urge the FCDO to recognise their important role in determining levels of pay across the sector and commit to undertaking a full audit of its pay structures to assess the impact of them on staff hired in-country. The department must ensure that staffing stipulations in contracts take into account the value of contextual knowledge and do not lead to locally hired staff being undermined by differences in pay and conditions in comparison with their international counterparts.

Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO)

91. Our evidence was clear that donors such as the FCDO have significant influence on the culture and standards in the aid sector. Amanda Khozi Mukwashi, then CEO of Christian Aid, warned that unless the FCDO leads conversations on tackling racism, the sector will only partially address them. She described the Government’s leadership as perhaps the most critical in creating an anti-racist aid sector and dealing with issues of decolonisation.¹⁷¹

92. The criteria and stipulations in funding agreements often set the standard for due diligence practices, for example on anti-corruption measures, that partners working on those contracts must adhere to. The FCDO recently enhanced the due diligence measures for preventing sexual exploitation and abuse. Furthermore, Palladium International pointed out that most large UK-funded programmes include a gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) adviser in the inception phase, and a GESI assessment is undertaken to inform programme design and key performance indicators.¹⁷² This model could be replicated to introduce ethnic or racial analysis, as has been done on some HMG initiatives implemented by Palladium International.¹⁷³ When he gave evidence to this Committee, FCDO Minister, Lord Ahmad agreed this approach could work.¹⁷⁴

93. The South West International Development Network urged the FCDO to fund the creation of best practice guidelines appropriate to small and large organisations on becoming anti-racist.¹⁷⁵ Additionally, it recommended the FCDO host events to highlight

169 Charlotte Biswas (Q157)

170 Ibid

171 Amanda Khozi Mukwashi (Q141)

172 Palladium International (CPA0052)

173 Palladium International (CPA0052)

174 Lord Ahmad (Q160)

175 South West International Development Network (CPA0072)

good practice with regards to race equality in the sector.¹⁷⁶ Other witnesses suggested that the FCDO also needs to look internally at its own working practices and implement training on power and bias within its own staff.¹⁷⁷

94. Although it was acknowledged that there are some understanding staff in the FCDO, we heard that there was some arrogance on the part of others who did not want to listen.¹⁷⁸ Others suggested the FCDO needs to establish dedicated learning and sharing spaces where there is room to discuss initiatives to reduce racial and ethnic inequality within its programmes to ensure diversity and inclusion is prioritised.¹⁷⁹ Save the Children UK also suggested it could introduce training for staff which addressed the underlying factors that have enabled power imbalances between aid actors and implementing partners in the Global South, to persist.¹⁸⁰

95. Charlotte Biswas, Deputy Director for Civil Society and Civic Space at the FCDO told us the department is setting a high bar for how it behaves among its own staff, and she hopes that that sets a positive example.¹⁸¹ She rejected suggestions that the Office should lead conversations on tackling racism in the aid sector. Instead, Charlotte told us it was right for these conversations to be generated from the grass roots. The FCDO was keen to learn from the people who have been most affected and, therefore, should not drive the agenda.¹⁸²

96. The FCDO considers inclusion to be a cornerstone of effective development and humanitarian response.¹⁸³ It extends the definition of inclusion across gender, socioeconomic status, age, disability and race and ethnicity. The department acknowledges that racism and ethnic division can be drivers of exclusion, conflict and inequality. The FCDO says these issues are key priorities it will take into account designing its programmes and shaping development policy.¹⁸⁴

97. The FCDO has significant convening power across the aid sector. It should use its position to facilitate sector-wide conversations about how aid actors can improve diversity, equity and inclusion and being anti-racist. The FCDO still has work to do internally and will not have all the answers, but it can create the forum for these conversations and provide the funding to develop best practice guidelines for its partners. The FCDO can also put stipulations on organisations that it funds to publish their diversity data and demonstrate the work they are undertaking to build truly inclusive workplaces.

176 Ibid

177 Degan Ali (Q90)

178 Palladium International (CPA0052)

179 South West International Development Network (CPA0072)

180 Save the Children UK (CPA0048)

181 Charlotte Biswas (Q153)

182 Ibid

183 Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (CPA0068)

184 Ibid

Conclusions and recommendations

Working with partners in-country

1. Across the global aid sector, racism manifests in decisions around whose expertise we value. Evidence to our inquiry suggested that institutions in high income countries like the UK assume they have the knowledge and best practice to assist people in low- and middle-income countries. Due to a belief that these institutions represent the 'gold standard', local partners are often required to adapt to their way of working. Racist attitudes also play out in the narrative that local organisations are 'high risk' and need 'capacity building'. (Paragraph 18)
2. The use of European languages, particularly English, in the development sector can lock out national actors who operate in local languages. (Paragraph 19)
3. *The FCDO should consider whether applications for funding must always be submitted in English – especially in bids for small projects administered by embassies, which are to be undertaken by local civil society organisations.* (Paragraph 19)
4. It is important that progress made by DFID to shift funding decisions from Whitehall towards country offices is not lost under the merged department. (Paragraph 20)
5. *Further, the FCDO should increase the amount of UK aid funding that goes directly to locally led civil society organisations. It should reconsider how it conceptualises and calculates risk and work with local civil society organisations to undertake the due diligence and administration associated with bidding for FCDO contracts.* (Paragraph 20)
6. *The FCDO should apply these same principles to do no harm when it removes funding, as well as when aid programmes are initiated.* (Paragraph 25)
7. The manner in which the cuts to UK aid took place, with little or no consultation of downstream partners, or the communities where they are implemented has sent a harmful message that the UK does not care about the people affected, many of which are Black, Indigenous and People of Colour. (Paragraph 26)
8. The structure of the sector transfers much of the risk to frontline implementing partners who have the least capacity to mitigate those risks. (Paragraph 27)
9. *The FCDO should consider how it can restructure its funding commitments to give long-term certainty to local civil society organisations to ensure funding that has been committed cannot be suddenly withdrawn at short notice.* (Paragraph 27)

Communications and storytelling

10. Fundraising is extremely important to many international aid organisations, but public appeals that depict the communities they serve as helpless and needy strip those communities of their dignity. They contribute to the narrative that the countries where they work are somehow inferior to the UK. (Paragraph 31)

11. *Fundraising appeals should depict positive, realistic stories and wherever possible use local filmmakers. They should seek to inform audiences about the drivers of poverty and inequality instead of giving simplistic messages about the difference donations can make. (Paragraph 31)*
12. The terminology used in the aid sector has its roots in colonialism; it ‘others’ the communities where programmes are delivered and reinforces ideas that ‘the West’ is the ideal that others should aspire to. It is not easy to strip the sector of terms such as ‘recipient’ or ‘beneficiary’, even the term ‘aid’ adds to this narrative. (Paragraph 34)
13. *The aid sector should have a conversation that includes the communities it works with to develop positive and inclusive working terminology, the FCDO should consider how it can lead this work. (Paragraph 34)*
14. *Guidelines on informed consent for obtaining and using images should be observed just as thoroughly in relation to individuals from the communities that aid organisations work with, as they are in the UK. It is unacceptable for images to be used and re-used without the subject’s express consent. (Paragraph 36)*

Data on racism and diversity in the aid sector

15. The aid sector does not operate in a vacuum. The different forms of discrimination that permeate British society manifest in the aid sector too. Racism is particularly pertinent for aid organisations because they work directly with individuals from around the world who are Black, Indigenous and People of Colour. Discriminatory attitudes within these organisations will have a negative impact on the communities they work with and the programmes they deliver. (Paragraph 42)
16. *Aid organisations must ensure their working practices and programmes are mindful of the intersecting identities of their staff and the people they serve. (Paragraph 42)*
17. Evidence submitted to this inquiry and recent surveys by actors in the UK charity and international aid sectors show the scale of racism experienced by staff who are Black, Indigenous and People of Colour. Any level of racism in the workplace is unacceptable, and the findings that leaders and HR departments are ill equipped to deal with such incidents are deeply concerning. (Paragraph 45)
18. *All aid organisations should have effective processes in place to tackle instances of racism when they occur. They should also be able to measure and assess whether those processes are working. (Paragraph 45)*
19. Collecting and publishing data on diversity in staffing is a key element of holding aid organisations to account. Only by being transparent can organisations share and learn from each-other. For the smallest organisations it might not be appropriate to publish diversity data if it could compromise employees’ rights to confidentiality but organisations with over 50 employees should do so. (Paragraph 53)
20. *The Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office should require organisations that it funds, which employ more than 50 staff, to publish their diversity data. This*

should not act as a barrier to small organisations in receiving funding. The FCDO should work with small organisations to identify ways to increase opportunities for staff from underrepresented groups. (Paragraph 54)

21. *Aid organisations, including private sector contractors, with more than 50 staff should measure and publish their ethnicity pay gap data in order to be held accountable. It will also help them to identify if there are inequalities in their workforce that should be addressed. (Paragraph 57)*
22. We are concerned that the decision to designate the merged Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office as a 'reserved department' shuts down the possibility of civil servants from the countries where UK aid funding is spent, from taking part in funding decisions. It appears to go against other commitments to diversity in staffing and to shift decision making power towards the countries where the aid budget is spent. (Paragraph 62)
23. *The FCDO should undertake a review of its reserved department status to identify whether its security considerations warrant the decision not to hire foreign nationals. (Paragraph 62)*
24. DFID previously set out its ambition to publish more inclusive data, in order to improve its programming in 2022. (Paragraph 63)
25. *The FDCO should publish the first tranche of inclusive data this year and set out a timeline for when it will be able to publish further data relating to race, ethnicity and income. (Paragraph 63)*

Building an equitable and inclusive aid sector

26. The barriers to entering the aid sector for candidates from diverse backgrounds can be considerable. (Paragraph 68)
27. *Donors and aid organisations should reduce barriers to entry by ending the use of unpaid internships and paying all employees the living wage and removing unnecessary stipulations in job applications such as years of experience in the international aid sector and higher degrees that disadvantage individuals from under-represented backgrounds. (Paragraph 68)*
28. Some aid organisations are taking action to increase diversity in their workforce, such as reducing unnecessary stipulations in person specifications in job descriptions and banning all-White recruitment boards. (Paragraph 72)
29. *All aid organisations, including private sector contractors should reflect on their diversity data and seek to understand if their recruitment practices need strengthening to support talented candidates from diverse backgrounds. We need sector-wide cooperation to share best practice and identify how the recruitment process can better facilitate candidates from diverse backgrounds to enter core roles in the aid sector. (Paragraph 72)*
30. Some aid organisations are beginning to introduce measures to open up and encourage conversations about racism in their workplaces but much more needs to

be done to welcome diverse ideas and values. These processes are likely to be painful and difficult and will take courage on the part of leaders, managers, and staff to be open, honest and committed to change. (Paragraph 80)

31. *Aid organisations, including private sector contractors, should publicly acknowledge that racism exists in the sector and prioritise anti-racism work that tackles the underlying culture of their workplaces and not just the racial diversity of their staff. This will include making space for open, honest and often difficult conversations. It also requires them to welcome ideas and approaches suggested by staff who are Black, Indigenous and People of Colour.* (Paragraph 80)
32. It is the responsibility of those in the sector who hold the most power to increase diversity, inclusion and transparency, and be accountable for the steps their organisations are taking to dismantle structural racism. Responsibility for engendering culture change and increasing diversity within aid organisations should sit with the senior leadership of the organisation. Whoever is leading this work needs sufficient seniority to be able to drive it forward without fear of reprisals. Likewise, responsibility should not sit solely in human resources departments; the vision must be adopted by the senior leadership, and it should be embedded throughout the workforce. Leaders must ensure that everyone understands their own personal responsibility to promote a zero-tolerance culture towards discrimination, abuse and harassment. (Paragraph 83)
33. *Aid organisations and private sector contractors with a large enough leadership team should appoint senior leaders with the remit to tackle racism and increase diversity, equity and inclusion in their organisations, with the full support of the senior leadership team.* (Paragraph 83)
34. The way that FCDO contracts are structured creates disincentives for implementing partners to hire local staff, particularly in project lead roles. While FCDO fee rates for locally hired staff may be linked to local pay-scales in humanitarian and development settings, they can lead to large inequalities when compared to internationally hired staff. This can undermine relations with local actors, damage trust and make frontline workers feel undervalued. (Paragraph 89)
35. *We urge the FCDO to recognise their important role in determining levels of pay across the sector and commit to undertaking a full audit of its pay structures to assess the impact of them on staff hired in-country. The department must ensure that staffing stipulations in contracts take into account the value of contextual knowledge and do not lead to locally hired staff being undermined by differences in pay and conditions in comparison with their international counterparts.* (Paragraph 90)
36. The FCDO has significant convening power across the aid sector. (Paragraph 97)
37. *It should use its position to facilitate sector-wide conversations about how aid actors can improve diversity, equity and inclusion and being anti-racist. The FCDO still has work to do internally and will not have all the answers, but it can create the forum for these conversations and provide the funding to develop best practice guidelines for its partners. The FCDO can also put stipulations on organisations that it funds to publish their diversity data and demonstrate the work they are undertaking to build truly inclusive workplaces.* (Paragraph 97)

Annex: Letter from the Chair to the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Secretary, dated 11 January 2022

Philosophy and culture of aid inquiry

I'm writing to share with you the key evidence that my Committee has collected during its inquiry into The philosophy and culture of aid. We hope that the discussions we have held, and the suggestions we have gathered, will help to inform the new International Development Strategy.

The inquiry

In February 2021, we launched an umbrella inquiry into The philosophy and culture of aid, to find out what the aid sector is doing well, how it can be improved and the role that the UK Government should play in this.¹ We had recently concluded our inquiry into Progress on tackling sexual exploitation and abuse in the aid sector. During that inquiry we found that the extreme power imbalances in the sector had enabled abuse to occur with impunity; sadly such cases continue to come to light and there is yet more work to be done on this. We also found that the communities who benefit from aid programmes are often locked out of decisions about how programmes are designed, and are rarely, meaningfully consulted by aid delivery organisations.² Because we don't stop and listen, and more importantly ask, their concerns, complaints are not heard, and donors and NGOs miss out on the opportunity to use the knowledge and wisdom of those communities to improve future programmes.

To inform our inquiry, we decided to seek evidence from a wide range of people, including individuals from countries in receipt of Official Development Assistance (ODA). In our first oral evidence session in February 2021, we invited witnesses to suggest which issues we needed to explore in more detail. Charles Vandyck from the West Africa Civil Society Institute quoted social scientist and statistician, Barry Knight:

There are three characteristic behaviours in philanthropy and the development industry that impair progress in achieving the world we want. These are: egos, silos and logos. All three concepts are based on imperialist self promotion of individuals and organizations on the supply side of the funding relationship, and do nothing for the people who are meant to benefit.³

This set the tone for much of the evidence we heard on racism in the aid sector and on the philosophy of aid.

1 International Development Committee: [IDC evidence session on the philosophy and culture of aid postponed](#)
 2 International Development Committee: [Seventh Report of Session 2019–21: Progress on tackling the sexual exploitation and abuse of aid beneficiaries](#)
 3 Barry Knight: [SystemsToShiftThePower.pdf \(globalfundcommunityfoundations.org\)](#), p25

The aid sector

The UK Department for International Development (DFID) had developed a strong reputation for its aid spending and the UK can be proud of what it has achieved with its aid budget. However, the system is based on colonial era structures that concentrate decision making power and resources in donor countries. Witnesses, including Arbie Baguios, Founder of Aid Re-imagined pointed out that in some circumstances, aid can cause more harm than good. In addition to the scandals involving sexual exploitation and abuse, aid can exacerbate conflict and undermine national service delivery.⁴ The problems with aid dependency in countries such as South Sudan, are also well documented.⁵

My Committee is keen to ensure that the FCDO learns from the successes and the mistakes of the past as it puts together its new International Development Strategy and considers the impact its policies have on the countries and communities where programmes are delivered.

Conditionality

Many of the submissions we received said that aid can be effective at reducing poverty and addressing inequalities, but highlighted conditions that need to be in place to enable this to happen. The Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD) explained that poverty is underpinned by: “poor and undemocratic governance, weak and corrupt institutions, and entrenched by power dynamics that lead to political and economic exclusion in countries.”⁶ It said the UK Government should have a coherent policy to tackle those systems too.⁷

Despite the need for strong, democratic institutions in recipient countries, many witnesses were sceptical of donors dictating specific reforms in order for countries to receive funding. Bond said it is opposed to aid conditionality, and the practice is not compatible with the principles of locally-led development.⁸ Aid conditionality can undermine strong domestic ownership and equitable engagement between the donor and the recipient country. It puts the risks of not achieving the conditions onto the partner country and often does not achieve the intended reforms anyway.⁹ In the worst cases, partner governments have been forced to implement reforms which were unpopular with their own populations. This can undermine public trust, and negatively affect countries’ overall development.¹⁰

In 2000, the Department for International Development (DFID) published the White Paper *Eliminating World Poverty: Making Globalisation Work for the Poor*. It recognised that in the past, too much aid had been given as part of donor-led projects which weren’t necessarily in the best interests of the recipient country. In other cases, it was tied to the purchase of goods from the donor country, or it was used as a sweetener for commercial contracts.¹¹ DFID committed to focus UK aid on the poorest countries, to achieve the

4 Arbie Baguios [Q10](#)

5 Gloria Soma [Q20](#), Sanjayan Srikanthan [Q238](#)

6 Catholic Agency for Overseas Development [CPA0078](#)

7 [Ibid](#)

8 Bond [CPA0091](#)

9 [Ibid](#)

10 [Ibid](#)

11 [Eliminating World Poverty: Making Globalisation Work for the Poor](#), CM 5005, p85–86

Millennium Development Goals, and reduce poverty.¹² Having adopted this approach, the UK gained a strong reputation for being a responsible and trustworthy aid partner; a reputation the UK should seek to maintain.

Cross-government approach

Heba Aly, CEO of The New Humanitarian told us that the starting point should be a more equitable global power dynamic.¹³ This will take a whole of Government approach to how the UK interacts with low-and middle-income countries, including building equitable trading relationships and investment policies. Degan Ali, Executive Director at Adeso, a Nairobi based NGO, went so far to say, “We do not need aid.”¹⁴ Instead, she said, a level playing field is needed in terms of trade policies that enable countries to compete with the likes of Europe and the US.¹⁵ She argued that the West does not want Africa and some Asian countries to industrialise, so those countries can continue to be a source of extraction of raw materials.¹⁶

Dr Onyekwena, Executive Director of the Centre for the Study of the Economies of Africa, told us the private sector is key to unlocking potential, creating jobs and lifting people out of poverty.¹⁷ He said this is usually done through foreign direct investment (FDI) rather than aid. But for countries to benefit from FDI they need a strong legal and regulatory environment. They also require human capital in the form of a healthy and educated workforce. The UK can help with this.¹⁸ The written evidence from the FCDO demonstrates that your Department understands the interplay between aid and other sources of national income.¹⁹ We expect to see this reflected in the Development Strategy.

However, many witnesses explained that trade often does not overcome inequalities, and the private sector will not willingly fill the gaps that aid currently provides. Nabila Saddiq Tayub said that it is not true that there will be sufficient trickle-down effect to ensure everyone will benefit proportionally from trade.²⁰ Dr Onyekwena pointed out that aid is focused on solving development challenges in a way that FDI or remittances do not.²¹ This is an important distinction and should be considered when the FCDO forecasts the development impact of its development finance institution, CDC (British International Investment from April 2022).

Capital spend and programme spend

We note that the FDCO has an increasing preference for capital spending, for example on infrastructure projects, in place of traditional programmes that might have focused on providing healthcare or education. Dr Onyekwena was very positive about this approach and told us that it is more beneficial to African countries.²² He said it looks

12 [Ibid](#), p12

13 Heba Aly [Q188](#)

14 Degan Ali [Q86](#)

15 [Ibid](#)

16 [Ibid](#)

17 Dr Onyekwena [Q212](#)

18 Dr Onyekwena [Q211](#)

19 FCDO [CPA0095](#)

20 Nabila Saddiq Tayub [Q254](#)

21 Dr Onyekwena [Q206](#)

22 Dr Onyekwena [Q215](#)

more like the Chinese model, which is increasingly well received in Africa and can unlock potential more quickly than strategies that focus on health and education.²³ However, other witnesses warned against this approach. Nabila Saddiq Tayub told us that in her experience, investment in infrastructure had generally been for the benefit of the private sector and rarely generates significant local wealth, nor does it build local expertise, or help to develop local capacity.²⁴

Concerns about China's debt-trap-diplomacy are well documented.²⁵ Tom Wein, founder of the Dignity Project warned us that a report undertaken by AidData found that when people live close to a UK or a US-funded aid project, those people tend to feel more favourably towards the UK and the US. However, when people lived close to a Chinese aid project, they felt less favourably towards China after it was implemented.²⁶ The UK should make sure it maintains this preference and does not fall into unpopular practices undertaken by donors such as China. Your Strategy should set out what you regard to be the key measures of success; we hope that preserving and enhancing the UK's reputation in the countries where our programmes are delivered is among the key measures.

Motivations of donor countries

In its written evidence, the FCDO set out that all UK ODA is delivered with the economic development and wellbeing of partner countries as its goal.²⁷ Your Department also described how benefits can accrue to the UK, such as protecting and promoting our security and prosperity, and delivering global public goods. The Integrated Review also states that the UK Government can use its diplomatic network, aid spending and the armed forces, to help to create goodwill towards the UK.²⁸

As the 2002 International Development Act stipulates, ODA spending should contribute to reducing poverty in the recipient country.²⁹ While it can have mutual benefits for donors too, many witnesses warned against approaches that emphasise the national interest of donor countries.³⁰ We heard that aid spending in the national interest might cause harm or fail to achieve its intended goals. Christian Aid described how aid has been used to create favourable conditions for investment by British companies. But in parts of Africa, this came at the expense of internal stability, and caused conflicts over the mining of resources.³¹ The UK Sustainability and Transitions Working Group pointed to research assessing 144 UK aid projects designed to contribute to the 'UK security agenda'. It found that the projects did not positively affect the strength, security or efficacy of recipient democratic institutions, due to over-optimism and a lack of country ownership and accountability.³²

23 [Ibid](#)

24 [Nabila Saddiq Tayub Q231](#)

25 Eg. BBC News, [MI6 boss warns of China 'debt traps and data traps'](#), 30 November 2021,

26 [Tom Wein Q231](#)

27 [FCDO CPA0095](#)

28 [Global Britain in a competitive age: The Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy p49](#)

29 [International Development Act 2002, Section 1](#)

30 [Themrise Khan Q8](#), [Gloria Soma Q19](#), [Heba Aly Q198](#), [Sanjayan Srikanthan Q230](#), [Leonard Cheshire Disability CPA0030](#)

31 [Christian Aid CPA0036](#)

32 [UK Sustainability and Transitions Working Group CPA0074, Poverty Overview: Development news, research, data | World Bank](#)

Heba Aly told us that aid should be used as a vehicle to ensure rights and freedoms for all people. She argued that when donor countries are pursuing their own self-interest—for example, European countries intervening in the Sahel in attempt to prevent migration to Europe—then this should not be considered as aid.³³

Over the last ten years, Save the Children observed the UK Government’s philosophy of aid shifting from one of moral imperative to assist developing and fragile countries, towards one that justifies aid spending as an issue of national interest.³⁴ This is demonstrated in the 2015 aid strategy UK aid: tackling global challenges in the national interest.³⁵ Peace Direct recommended that aid should not be understood as altruism nor self-interest but as solidarity, an investment in our shared global future.³⁶ Themes relating to solidarity and partnerships came up frequently, throughout our inquiry, and point to a desire for a more equitable sector.

Working with governments

Although concerns were raised about working with governments that do not share our values, several witnesses said that aid should normally be channelled bilaterally from government to government.³⁷ The amount of aid given directly from the UK Government to recipient governments fell to £15 million (approx. 0.1%) in 2018, down from nearly 20%, 15 years ago.³⁸ Global Justice Now argue that this type of budgetary support can help to strengthen public institutions and increase local democracy and accountability in the recipient country.³⁹

Degan Ali criticised the marginalisation of governments who are supposed to be responsible for their citizens. She described the situation in Somalia, where there has been a lack of investment in the infrastructure of government. She feels like INGOs and the UN do not want the Government to have the capacity and sovereignty to dictate the terms of aid in their country.⁴⁰ Themrise Khan, an independent development professional from Pakistan explained that aid funding should be directed from the national government, through local organisations.⁴¹ This will not always be possible if the government is responsible for abuses against its own people or is unwilling to support particular groups. But where it is possible, it helps to ensure that aid does not undermine countries’ own national development plans – and helps governments to fulfil their role to provide services to their citizens.⁴²

Giving more funding directly to governments could raise difficult questions for the FCDO. For example, Themrise Khan raised the issue of women and girls in Pakistan who are not treated as a priority by the national government. But she argued that it is not for the UK to tell the Pakistan Government what its priorities should be.⁴³ FCDO Minister, Lord

33 Heba Aly, [Q193](#)

34 Save the Children [CPA0017](#)

35 HM Treasury, Department for International development, [UK Aid: tackling global challenges in the national interest](#) Cm 9163

36 Peace Direct [CPA0016](#)

37 Themrise Khan [Q12](#), Degan Ali [Q83](#), Heba Aly [Q200](#)

38 Global Justice Now [CPA0011](#), [Effectiveness of UK AID \(parliament.uk\)](#)

39 Global Justice Now [CPA0011](#)

40 Degan Ali [Q83](#)

41 Themrise Khan [Q12](#)

42 Heba Aly [Q200](#)

43 Themrise Khan [Q14](#)

Ahmad told us that development diplomacy is needed when the recipient government doesn't want the UK to work with certain organisations. He said it is important to ensure that the intended recipient gets what works best for them, and different models will work in different countries.⁴⁴ These are important questions the FCDO must grapple with.

Global Public Investment

Several witnesses suggested we need a more democratic model for aid, that moves away from the transfer of funding from donor countries, like the UK, to aid organisations in low-and middle- income countries, towards something more inclusive.⁴⁵ This could help to shape the international development sector as a shared endeavour that we are all part of. It might also avoid projects ending abruptly when the donor country decides to pull its funding. However, it might also require the UK to cede some power and influence.

Dr Cathy Ratcliff, CEO of EMMS International, suggested we should stop using the term 'aid' and instead talk of 'international cooperation' to solve global problems.⁴⁶ The Sustainable Development Goals were designed to acknowledge that all countries face development challenges and should work towards common targets. Professor Gaskarth from the Open University suggested building more grassroots people-to-people networks and twinning projects in the UK with projects in other countries, that deal with similar issues.⁴⁷

Under the guidelines set out by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Development Assistance Committee (OECD DAC), countries can face a cliff-edge in funding when their Gross National Income reaches the level where they graduate from ODA eligibility. It is right for the FCDO to continue to adhere to the OECD DAC rules in the absence of more inclusive set of guidelines. However, witnesses suggested that efforts should be made to avoid sudden changes to funding. Results UK told us the UK Government should coordinate with other donors and multilateral organisations to avoid programmes being pulled at the same time. A timeline for the transition process should be devised with the host government and communicated to all stakeholders to allow them to plan for how progress can be maintained.⁴⁸

The UK Sustainability and Transitions Working Group re-conceptualises international aid as a global public good.⁴⁹ It proposes an alternative development framework that it calls 'global public investment' (GPI). All countries could contribute to GPI in order to provide a permanent force for development within the global finance ecosystem. The GPI model avoids ODA being pulled from countries once their Gross National Income (GNI) rises above a certain point, despite the potential persistence of poverty, inequalities, and lack of service provision in the country.⁵⁰ This is one of several models the UK could discuss with other donors and the aid community.

44 Lord Ahmed [Q155](#)

45 Eg. Peace Direct [CPA0016](#), CBM UK [CPA0083](#), Nabila Sadiq Tayub [Q249](#)

46 Dr Cathy Ratcliff [CPA0090](#)

47 Professor Gaskarth [Q9](#)

48 Results UK [CPA0082](#)

49 UK Sustainability and Transitions Working Group [CPA0074](#)

50 [Ibid](#)

Building resilience

Often, when we talk about international aid, many people think about humanitarian crises and emergency relief, rather than long-term development programmes. These emergency responses are often easier to explain to taxpayers and are extremely important for saving lives. Witnesses were clear that the UK Government should continue to provide life-saving aid for emergency responses, but it should also recognise that the impact of crises can be reduced, if the communities affected had resilient systems in place beforehand, such as good quality healthcare and strong civil society organisations.

The Institute of Development Studies observed that development and humanitarian actors often operate in silos which prevents them from working well together and perpetuates a ‘paper-over-the-cracks’ mentality.⁵¹ Your Department acknowledged the need for coordination between humanitarian and development assistance in its written evidence.⁵² This should be taken into consideration as it develops its new Strategy.

Civil society

Sanjayan Srikanthan, representing the Start Network told us that one of the problems with the current approach is that the aid sector often ends up setting up a parallel system; a quasi-social service system, delivered by multilateral agencies and funded by donors, rather than investing in national actors in-country.⁵³ Charles Vandyck warned that in some cases, the current architecture has led to ‘passive recipience’, where communities are not active participants in the development process.⁵⁴

The Covid-19 pandemic has challenged the traditional structure; INGOs had reduced access to communities and had to do more of their work through local organisations. This has shown what a different approach might look like. The aim should be to build a system that is sustainable because of the investment in local capacity and resilience – rather than donors and NGOs concentrating on undertaking ad-hoc ‘capacity building’ workshops and the like.⁵⁵ Sanjayan Srikanthan explained that strengthening civil society can be a goal in itself as it leads to more democratic countries, and longer-term outcomes.⁵⁶

Furthermore, Sophia Gaston Managing Director of the British Foreign Policy Group, which undertakes annual polling of UK attitudes towards foreign policy, agreed that a long-term approach is popular. She told us that putting the power in people’s own hands, to generate transformative change, and helping societies to become economically productive in a global economy, are the sorts of ideas that resonate with British people. She said that we do not do enough to demonstrate that aid can provide a stepping-stone towards a new, empowered life.⁵⁷

51 Institute of Development Studies [CPA0086](#)

52 FCDO [CPA0095](#)

53 Sanjayan Srikanthan [Q236](#)

54 Charles Vandyck [Q4](#)

55 Charles Vandyck [Q1](#)

56 Sanjayan Srikanthan [Q222](#)

57 Sophia Gaston [Q4](#)

Locally-led development

One of the key themes throughout all our evidence was the need for recipient countries, communities and local organisations to be able to play a much more significant role in designing and implementing aid programmes. Currently, decisions are often made in aid organisations' headquarters in Europe or America, detached geographically, politically, and culturally, from the intended recipients.⁵⁸ There is a widespread acceptance that it is time for power relations within the sector to be challenged and more funding should go to local organisations. We were pleased to see this referenced in the FCDO's written evidence.⁵⁹ The Strategy should show how this will be achieved.

The Norwegian Refugee Council said that national and local civil society organisations should be equal or lead partners in programme partnerships and consortia. Instead, they are often considered as sub-contractors to intermediary organisations (often UN agencies or large NGOs).⁶⁰ Many benefits of equal partnership were noted: when aid is delivered through local organisations it can often reach recipients more quickly and the costs are usually lower. It also has long-term benefits; helping to build the foundations for long-term recovery and increasing the capacity of national and local civil society organisations to respond in future.⁶¹

The current situation seems to be in part due to donors' understanding of risk, and hesitancy to fund these organisations directly. Lord Ahmad told us:

When you work with a recognised international agency and partner, such as a UN-endorsed organisation, the structures and the governance are there to ensure that the aid, support and development funding that we are providing gets to the end partner. Where there needs to be added strength in that, you can combine the two. We have localised partners we can work with within a country, which may be receiving funding through an international agency but are working in a very complementary fashion and also informing what a larger agency can do on the ground. It is a mix of both.⁶²

Degan Ali challenged this type of reasoning, pointing out that the FCDO trusts local organisations to undertake 90% of last mile delivery of all its funding in these countries and questioned why it cannot trust them to act without intermediaries?⁶³

There are also questions for INGOs about their role. The West Africa Civil Society Institute has been looking at how INGOs can be involved in a system that shifts more power to the communities where programmes are delivered.⁶⁴ Aid organisations have approached these questions in different ways. Many INGOs are opening local offices in the countries where they work. In 2018, Oxfam International began shifting its headquarters to Nairobi, Kenya to strengthen the legitimacy of the organisation's voice, accountability and relevance in the Global South.⁶⁵ INGOs need to demonstrate that changing their operating models can truly help to shift the power.

58 Results UK [CPA0028](#)

59 FCDO [CPA0095](#)

60 Norwegian Refugee Council [CPA0079](#)

61 Christian Aid [CPA0036](#)

62 Lord Ahmad [Q155](#)

63 Degan Ali [Q82](#)

64 Charles Vandyck [Q1](#)

65 Devex: [Oxfam tackles the complicated logistics of its move to Nairobi](#), 2 January 2018

Meaningful engagement with communities in receipt of aid

As we recommended in our report into Progress on the tackling sexual exploitation and abuse of aid beneficiaries, witnesses stressed the need for meaningful engagement with, and consultation of, the communities where aid programmes are delivered.⁶⁶ People with lived experiences should play a central role in the conception and development of programmes. CBM UK reminded us of the motto “nothing about us without us”.⁶⁷ Aid actors should build authentic partnerships with the communities where programmes are delivered, including the most marginalised individuals, including people with disabilities, and indigenous communities, to ensure they have genuine decision-making power. The Institute of Development Studies said the sector needs to be more humble and move away from its ‘we know best culture’ based on assumptions of superiority.⁶⁸

Heba Aly was sceptical about current feedback mechanisms and the fact that organisations can choose whether to act on the feedback they receive.⁶⁹ By making an effort to incorporate policies to listen to the affected communities and act on their suggestions, the UK Government can demonstrate that the FCDO wants to give aid the right way.⁷⁰

Funding

There are several challenges in the current funding landscape. It is clear that not enough funding is going directly to recipient countries and local organisations who implement aid programmes. Donors’ compliance regimes act as a barrier to local organisations who are less able to demonstrate their capacity and compliance, compared to international actors, with more experience. Furthermore, they may have to put resources into meeting the donor needs rather than delivering programmes.⁷¹ Humentum suggest that the UK and other donors could invest in partners’ good governance and system-wide controls rather than always increasing the demands on aid recipients.⁷²

The new Strategy should address funding arrangements, how they were designed and consider who they are meant to benefit. It could help the authorities in recipient countries if they were able to develop their own systems of accountability, to apply to their own regulations and strengthen their domestic organisations. Heba Aly told us that channelling funding through pooled funds that can be controlled at the local level could also help.⁷³

Sanjayan Srikanthan told us that donors like the FCDO tend to find it easier to give large sums of money to multilateral organisations, such as UN agencies and large INGOs that can operate at scale, rather than making lots of smaller grants to local and national NGOs.⁷⁴ However, the Norwegian Refugee Council found that funds cascaded from the UN to NGOs can take over six months to reach frontline actors.⁷⁵

66 International Development Committee: [Seventh Report of Session 2019–21: Progress on tackling the sexual exploitation and abuse of aid beneficiaries](#)

67 CBM UK [CPA0083](#)

68 Institute of Development Studies [CPA004](#)

69 Heba Aly [Q195](#)

70 Tom Wein [Q232](#)

71 Humentum [CPA0022](#)

72 [Ibid](#)

73 Heba Aly [Q191](#)

74 Sanjayan Srikanthan [Q236](#)

75 Norwegian Refugee Council [CPA0079](#)

Several witnesses raised concerns about the nature of government contracts that tend to be short-term in nature.⁷⁶ Concern Worldwide said they often come with unrealistic expectations of what can be achieved in the timeframe.⁷⁷ Tearfund point out they often do not cover the running costs incurred by implementing organisations.⁷⁸ Witnesses made persuasive arguments that increasing multi-year funding would allow agencies to plan and allocate resources more efficiently and help them to address issues across the humanitarian—development—peace nexus. It also helps them to invest core capabilities such as compliance and safeguarding.⁷⁹

The evidence was clear the UK has been a leader in multi-year funding in the past. The Norwegian Refugee Council set out DFID’s ‘Programme Partnership Arrangements’ allowed for multi-year, flexible funding through “strategic level agreements based around mutually agreed outcomes” to enable NGOs “to better plan and deliver programmes, including in more difficult, higher risk environments”.⁸⁰ DFID’s cost transparency approach recognised the importance of providing full cost recovery for implementing organisations as a mechanism that should be replicated.⁸¹ However, it appears the FCDO has not continued these arrangements. Instead, its grants are tightly earmarked, and it is challenging for implementing partners to move funds between financial years, due to FCDO management systems for meeting ODA targets.⁸² Regrettably, this seems to be a backward step. The new Strategy must describe the path the Government intends to take to move back towards a position where the inefficiencies and short-termism of tightly controlled grants are replaced with more considered and certain multi-year settlements.

Witnesses, including Peace Direct, acknowledged that more flexible funding mechanisms might require donors to accept a greater level of uncertainty but challenged them to fund courageously and modify eligibility criteria to end the preference for western NGOs and organisations they already have close relationships with.⁸³

Anticipatory action

Several witnesses highlighted anticipatory action before a crisis hits as an effective way to avoid problems turning into humanitarian disasters.⁸⁴ Currently, less than 1% of humanitarian funding is available for anticipatory action.⁸⁵ Sanjayan Srikanthan described an insurance mechanism in Senegal that will pay out when droughts hit, to ensure that women and children receive at least two meals per day.⁸⁶

The technology available today means that we can often forecast when weather-related emergencies are likely to strike and predict the possible impact of the weather event.

76 Bond [CPA0091](#), Charles Vandyck [Q4](#)

77 Concern Worldwide (UK) [CPA0076](#)

78 Tearfund [CPA0008](#)

79 Saferworld [CPA0087](#), Humentum [CPA0022](#), Tearfund [CPA0008](#)

80 Norwegian Refugee Council [CPA0079](#)

81 Humentum [CPA0022](#)

82 Norwegian Refugee Council [CPA0079](#)

83 Peace Direct [CPA0016](#)

84 Heba Aly [Q197](#), British Red Cross [CPA0032](#), Norwegian Refugee Council [CPA0079](#)

85 Norwegian Refugee Council [CPA0079](#)

86 Sanjayan Srikanthan [Q239](#)

Therefore, resources should be allocated in advance to ensure vulnerable people are protected and aid pre-positioned for quick distribution. The Norwegian Refugee Council suggests donors should further invest in these early warning systems.⁸⁷

Although these anticipatory approaches are likely to be cheaper and more effective in the long run, it is harder to communicate to a public audience than the traditional response—solution model. But this should not be a barrier to building more anticipatory action into the UK’s International Development Strategy. This anticipatory approach could also apply to FCDO initiatives to prevent conflict—rather than reacting to it.

Measuring success

Key questions for donors and the aid sector include: What does success look like? Who decides what success means? DFID emphasised the top-level figures, such as ‘lives saved’ or children vaccinated. Global Justice Now warns that this approach wrongly suggests an ability to directly attribute outcomes to UK ODA interventions.⁸⁸ It also encourages a focus on things that can be quantified, such as bed nets distributed, rather than long-term outcomes, or results that matter to the local community. This can make it easier to communicate aid spending and impact to the UK taxpayer, but it adds to the tendency to fund short-term projects rather than working towards transformative structural change.⁸⁹

Tome Wein told us the FCDO should have a strong research and evidence division that considers processes as well as outcomes; ensuring the UK’s ODA spend upholds people’s dignity.⁹⁰ Many witnesses said the metrics of success should not be set by the donor but at the national or local level, and those receiving the aid should have some way of feeding into that measurement.⁹¹ This reflects the need for more local engagement at every stage of the programme cycle.

I look forward to discussing with you the UK’s International Development Strategy and the issues we have been exploring throughout our Philosophy and culture of aid inquiry, when you give oral evidence to the Committee as the earliest opportunity you can in 2022.

Yours sincerely,

Sarah Champion MP

87 Norwegian Refugee Council [CPA0079](#)

88 Global Justice Now [CPA0011](#)

89 [Ibid](#)

90 Tom Wein [Q253](#)

91 UK Sustainability and Transitions Working Group [CPA0074](#), Peace Direct [CPA0016](#), Samuel Wambayo [Q194](#)

Formal minutes

Tuesday 14 June 2022

Members present:

Sarah Champion, in the Chair

Richard Bacon

Pauline Latham

Chris Law

Nigel Mills

Kate Osamor

Virendra Sharma

Racism in the aid sector

Draft Report (*Racism in the aid sector*), proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Amendment proposed, to leave out from “That” to end of the Question and add “this Committee declines to read the Report a second time because:

(a) the selection of witnesses to provide oral evidence to the inquiry was narrow and excluded alternative points of view;

(b) the endless redefinition of language according to the latest trends is a barrier to effective communication, which is key to delivering aid effectively;

(c) the lack of comparative data to other professions, and other selective use of data such as the complete lack of recognition of the fact that China and India are both in the top three providers of international aid globally, makes it difficult to draw meaningful statistical data on racism in the aid sector specifically;

(d) the argument that the provision of development assistance by former colonial powers is a fundamentally racist endeavour repudiates decades of UK development policy and undermines the rationale for the future provision of aid; and

(e) the focus on the reduction in overall aid spending, which is an important topic in itself, detracts from the important discussion of racism in the aid sector.”—[*Mrs Pauline Latham.*]

Question put, That the Amendment be made.

The Committee divided.

Ayes, 2

Mrs Pauline Latham

Nigel Mills

Noes, 3

Chris Law

Kate Osamor

Mr Virendra Sharma

Question accordingly negated.

Question put, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

The Committee divided.

Ayes, 4

Mr Richard Bacon

Chris Law

Kate Osamor

Mr Virendra Sharma

Noes, 2

Mrs Pauline Latham

Nigel Mills

Paragraphs 1 to 97 read and agreed to.

Annex and Summary read and agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Ordered, That the Report be the First Report of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chair make the Report to the House.

Ordered, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 134.

Adjournment

Adjourned till Tuesday 21 June at 1.45 p.m.

Witnesses

The following witnesses gave evidence. Transcripts can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

Tuesday 23 February 2021

Arbie Baguios, Founder, Aid Re-imagined; **Lena Bheeroo**, Lead, Anti-racism and Inclusion, Bond, Committee Member, Charity So White, Working Group Member, The Racial Equity Index; **Professor Jamie Gaskarth**, Professor of Foreign Policy and International Relations, Open University; **Sophia Gaston**, Managing Director, British Foreign Policy Group; **Themrise Khan**, Independent Development Professional; **Charles Vandyck**, Head, Capacity Development Unit, West Africa Civil Society Institute (WACSI)

[Q1–17](#)

Tuesday 9 March 2021

Dr Dhananjayan Sriskandarajah, Chief Executive Officer, Oxfam GB; **Gloria Soma**, Executive Director, Titi Foundation; **Kam Morshed**, Senior Director, BRAC

[Q18–40](#)

Colin Buckley, General Counsel and Head of External Affairs, CDC Group; **Paul Wafer**, Chief Strategy Officer, Crown Agents; **Kate Hargreaves**, Delivery Team Leader, ASCEND Programme, Crown Agents; **Dolika Banda**, Non-executive Director, CDC Group

[Q41–78](#)

Tuesday 25 May 2021

Degan Ali, Executive Director, Adeso; **Dr Lata Narayanaswamy**, Associate Professor, Politics of Global Development, University of Leeds

[Q79–90](#)

Natalie Lartey, Advocacy and Engagement Manager, Communications, International Institute for Environment and Development; **Lorriann Robinson**, Founder and Director, The Advocacy Team

[Q91–101](#)

Tuesday 15 June 2021

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

[Q102–121](#)

Tuesday 7 September 2021

Ammara Khan, Director of Diversity and Inclusion, Save the Children; **Amanda Khozi Mukwashi**, Chief Executive Officer, Christian Aid

[Q122–149](#)

The Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister for South Asia and the Commonwealth, Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office; **Charlotte Biswas**, Deputy Director of Civil Society and Civic Space, Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office

[Q150–181](#)

Tuesday 9 November 2021

Heba Aly, Chief Executive Officer, The New Humanitarian; **Samuel Wambayo**, Executive Director, Co-Founder, Kids Club Kampala

[Q182–203](#)

Themrise Khan, Independent Development Professional; **Dr. Chukwuka Onyekwena**, Executive Director, Centre for the Study of the Economies of Africa [Q204–220](#)

Tuesday 30 November 2021

Mr Tom Wein, Founder, The Dignity Project; **Nabila Saddiq Tayub**, Development and Network Manager, STOPAIDS; **Sanjayan Srikanthan**, Board Chair, The Start Network and Chief Executive Officer, Shelterbox [Q221–254](#)

Published written evidence

The following written evidence was received and can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

CPA numbers are generated by the evidence processing system and so may not be complete.

- 1 Action for Global Health ([CPA0029](#))
- 2 Action for Global Health Network ([CPA0058](#))
- 3 Adam Smith International ([CPA0040](#))
- 4 Al-Masnai, Akram (A Yemeni-British Independent Development Professional, Yemeni-British Diaspora) ([CPA0014](#))
- 5 Anonymous ([CPA0097](#))
- 6 Anonymous ([CPA0071](#))
- 7 Bond ([CPA0091](#))
- 8 Bond ([CPA0062](#))
- 9 Bond ([CPA0023](#))
- 10 Bond SDG Group ([CPA0031](#))
- 11 British Red Cross ([CPA0032](#))
- 12 CBM UK ([CPA0083](#))
- 13 CBM UK ([CPA0018](#))
- 14 CDC Group ([CPA0069](#))
- 15 CHS Alliance ([CPA0026](#))
- 16 Campbell, Dr Meghan (Senior Lecturer, University of Birmingham) ([CPA0010](#))
- 17 Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD) ([CPA0078](#))
- 18 Christian Aid ([CPA0036](#))
- 19 Concern Worldwide (UK) ([CPA0076](#))
- 20 Counterweight Support Limited ([CPA0047](#))
- 21 Development Reimagined ([CPA0050](#))
- 22 Development Studies Association ([CPA0042](#))
- 23 Diasporic Development ([CPA0044](#))
- 24 Drummond, Brian (Independent Researcher, Self-employed) ([CPA0055](#))
- 25 Drummond, Mr Brian ([CPA0039](#))
- 26 Drummond, Brian (Researcher, Independent) ([CPA0084](#))
- 27 Ferguson, Professor Christopher (Professor, Stetson University) ([CPA0046](#))
- 28 Firefly International ([CPA0088](#))
- 29 Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office ([CPA0043](#))
- 30 Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office ([CPA0068](#))
- 31 Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office ([CPA0094](#))
- 32 Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office ([CPA0095](#))
- 33 Gender and Development Network ([CPA0059](#))

- 34 Global Justice Now ([CPA0011](#))
- 35 Gulrajani, Dr Nilima ([CPA0038](#))
- 36 Hub Cymru Africa ([CPA0085](#))
- 37 Humentum ([CPA0022](#))
- 38 International Justice Mission UK ([CPA0024](#))
- 39 Institute of Development Studies ([CPA0004](#))
- 40 Institute of Development Studies ([CPA0086](#))
- 41 International Committee of the Red Cross ([CPA0061](#))
- 42 International Rescue Committee ([CPA0067](#))
- 43 Kapur, Arnav (Chief of Staff, Katikati) ([CPA0073](#))
- 44 Kids Club Kampala ([CPA0075](#))
- 45 Leeds University ([CPA0003](#))
- 46 Leonard Cheshire Disability ([CPA0030](#))
- 47 Li, Dr Jie Sheng (Research Analyst) ([CPA0006](#))
- 48 Lowrie, Mr John ([CPA0045](#))
- 49 Manuel, Mr Marcus ([CPA0019](#))
- 50 Léna, Miss Prouchet (University of Exeter) ([CPA0077](#))
- 51 Médecins Sans Frontières – UK ([CPA0098](#))
- 52 Narayanaswamy, Dr Lata (Associate Professor, Politics of Global Development, University of Leeds) ([CPA0093](#))
- 53 Nicholson, Ben ([CPA0015](#))
- 54 Norwegian Refugee Council; and Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre ([CPA0079](#))
- 55 Nuffield Council on Bioethics ([CPA0089](#))
- 56 Ord, Toby (Senior Research Fellow, Future of Humanity Institute) ([CPA0080](#))
- 57 Oxfam GB ([CPA0070](#))
- 58 Palladium International ([CPA0092](#))
- 59 Palladium International ([CPA0052](#))
- 60 Peace Direct ([CPA0016](#))
- 61 Plan International UK ([CPA0056](#))
- 62 Plan International UK ([CPA0005](#))
- 63 REDI Collective CIC ([CPA0057](#))
- 64 RESULTS UK and STOPAIDS; and UK Sustainability and Transitions Working Group ([CPA0012](#))
- 65 Ratcliff, Dr Cathy (Thrive) ([CPA0090](#))
- 66 Results UK ([CPA0028](#))
- 67 Results UK ([CPA0063](#))
- 68 Results UK ([CPA0082](#))
- 69 STOPAIDS; 4MNet; and Harm Reduction International ([CPA0054](#))

- 70 STOPAIDS; Salamander Trust; and Youth Stop AIDS ([CPA0034](#))
- 71 Saferworld ([CPA0087](#))
- 72 Save the Children UK ([CPA0048](#))
- 73 Save the Children UK ([CPA0017](#))
- 74 Sightsavers ([CPA0021](#))
- 75 Small International Development Charities Network (SIDCN) ([CPA0041](#))
- 76 South West International Development Network ([CPA0072](#))
- 77 Stapleton, Mr Adam (Co-director, The Governance and Justice Group) ([CPA0009](#))
- 78 Start Network ([CPA0035](#))
- 79 Tearfund ([CPA0008](#))
- 80 The Baring Foundation ([CPA0013](#))
- 81 The Dignity Project ([CPA0001](#))
- 82 The Equity Index; and The Advocacy Team ([CPA0060](#))
- 83 The HALO Trust ([CPA0037](#))
- 84 TheCityUK ([CPA0007](#))
- 85 UNICEF ([CPA0064](#))
- 86 UK Sustainability & Transitions Working Group; and Co-Chaired by RESULTS UK and STOPAIDS ([CPA0074](#))
- 87 VSO ([CPA0053](#))
- 88 VSO ([CPA0081](#))
- 89 War Child UK ([CPA0033](#))

List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

All publications from the Committee are available on the [publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

Session 2022–23

Number	Title	Reference
1st Special Report	Afghanistan: UK support for aid workers and the Afghan people: Government response to the Committee's Fifth Report of Session 2021–22	HC 152

Session 2021–22

Number	Title	Reference
1st Report	Assessing DFID's results in nutrition Review: report from the Sub-Committee on the Work of ICAI	HC 103
2nd Report	Global Britain in demand: UK climate action and international development around COP26	HC 99
3rd Report	The UK's approach to tackling modern slavery through the aid programme: report from the Sub-Committee on the Work of ICAI	HC 104
4th Report	International climate finance: UK aid for halting deforestation and preventing irreversible biodiversity loss: report from the Sub-Committee on the Work of ICAI	HC 730
5th Report	Afghanistan: UK support for aid workers and the Afghan people	HC 919
6th Report	UK aid to Pakistan	HC 102
1st Special Report	The humanitarian situation in Tigray: Government Response to the Committee's Tenth Report of Session 2019–21	HC 554
2nd Special Report	The UK's Support to the African Development Bank Group: report from the Sub-Committee on the work of ICAI: Government Response to the Committee's Ninth Report of Session 2019–21	HC 555
3rd Special Report	DFID's results in nutrition Review: report from the Sub-Committee on the work of ICAI: Government response to the Committee's First Report	HC 780
4th Special Report	Global Britain in demand: UK climate action and international development around COP26: Government response to the Committee's Second Report	HC 1008
5th Special Report	The UK's approach to tackling modern slavery through the aid programme: report from the Sub-Committee on the Work of ICAI: Government response to the Committee's Third Report	HC 1021

Session 2019–21

Number	Title	Reference
1st Report	Humanitarian crises monitoring: the Rohingya	HC 259
2nd Report	Effectiveness of UK aid: interim findings	HC 215
3rd Report	The Newton Fund review: report of the Sub-Committee on the work of ICAI	HC 260
4th Report	Effectiveness of UK aid: potential impact of FCO/DFID merger	HC 596
5th Report	Humanitarian crises monitoring: impact of coronavirus (interim findings)	HC 292
6th Report	The Changing Nature of UK Aid in Ghana Review: report from the Sub-Committee on the Work of ICAI	HC 535
7th Report	Progress on tackling the sexual exploitation and abuse of aid beneficiaries	HC 605
8th Report	Covid-19 in developing countries: secondary impacts	HC 1186
9th Report	The UK's support to the African Development Bank Group: report from the Sub-Committee on the Work of ICAI	HC 1055
10th Report	The humanitarian situation in Tigray	HC 1289
1st Special Report	Follow up: sexual exploitation and abuse in the aid sector: Government Response to the First Report of the Committee	HC 127
2nd Special Report	Humanitarian crises monitoring: the Rohingya: Government Response to the First Report of the Committee	HC 658
3rd Special Report	The Newton Fund review: report of the Sub-Committee on the work of ICAI: Government response to the Committee's Third Report	HC 742
4th Special Report	Effectiveness of UK Aid: Interim Report & Effectiveness of UK Aid: potential impact of FCO/DFID merger: Government Response to the Second & Fourth Reports	HC 820
5th Special Report	Humanitarian crises monitoring: impact of coronavirus (interim findings): Government Response to the Committee's Fifth Report	HC 1160
6th Special Report	The Changing Nature of UK Aid in Ghana Review: report from the Sub-Committee on the Work of ICAI: Government response to the Committee's Sixth Report	HC 1198
7th Special Report	Progress on tackling the sexual exploitation and abuse of aid beneficiaries: Government Response to the Seventh Report of the Committee, Session 2019–21	HC 1332
8th Special Report	Covid-19 in developing countries: secondary impacts: Government Response to the Eighth Report of the Committee	HC 1351