

Written evidence submitted by Humanity & Inclusion and Sightsavers

Examples of programmes affected by reductions to the UK aid budget.

1. **CBM: Bangladesh – Health project (led by Concern).** The programme was cut completely, which was a huge waste. The implementing agencies were forced to close an extremely successful life-saving project two years into a three-year cycle improving the health of some of the most disadvantaged people living in Bangladesh. CBM received no notice and were informed on 30 April that programme activities had to be stopped the same day. Only close-down operations and key salaries could be paid for 3 months, with no chance to even spend minimal funds to ensure longer-term sustainability of the project outcomes so far. The project cost £2m to help 2m people access health services, including over 140,000 people with disabilities and including a health portal due to be handed to the government. It's worth noting it previously had A ratings from the FCDO and was considered to be so strong that after Year One it was awarded supplementary funding! And in addition to the overall project goal of increasing access to essential health services for highly marginalised people, the project was majorly adapted to respond to COVID-19 including supporting testing and vaccination of people with disabilities.
2. **CBM: Ghana - Mental Health (UK Aid Direct).** There was a 25% cut in final-year funding of a three-year project. This meant that the Maternal Mental Health screening tool for women attending ante- and post-natal clinics was reduced from a full-scale rollout to a limited pilot and a number of women with mental health conditions were unable to receive the support promised.
3. **CBM: Tanzania - Act2 - (FCDO funds administered by KPMG in country).** This was completely and suddenly closed with loss of effectively 80% of budget of a project advocating nationally for inclusive employment and vocational education. The fact and nature of the closure was very harmful for carefully nurtured relations with organisations of persons with disabilities and other partners and stakeholders in Tanzania (this point also applies to point 1 above).
4. **CBM: Bangladesh & Kenya - Innovation to Inclusion (I2I).** Initially, there was an 11% cut to budget costs, but then a much more serious cut was made of 47% across the whole programme in the final year to March 2022 (implying a 65% cut for CBM UK's portion of the project). The CBM Federation recognised the devastating effect this would cause and used other funds to step up to fill the gap of £250,000 in total. It's worth noting that this project was paralysed for almost four months while CBM awaited final decisions from the FCDO and was further exacerbated by cuts happening during Covid lockdowns, meaning the project had to be reworked at a critical time for implementation and thus a great deal of momentum was lost. This, in turn, affected the project outcomes, with both participants with disabilities and the

private-sector stakeholders (corporate employers) feeding back that the delay had a very negative impact on an otherwise effective and successful project.

5. **Anonymous:** 100% cut to the Small Charities Challenge Fund, which included ending a programme to educate children with special needs in Tanzania and another project to set up a helpline for carers of disabled children in Nepal.
6. **Anonymous:** The complete cut of £1.9 million of funding to increase leprosy case-detection in Bangladesh over the next four years and to create employment opportunities for people with disabilities in Nepal completely cut.
7. **Anonymous:** Cuts to a programme in Zambia to help deaf youth access sexual and reproductive health services.
8. **Anonymous:** Cuts to a food-security programme in South Sudan that would have benefited 850 farmers, 60% of whom were women and 10% were people living with disabilities.
9. **Link Education:** Link had to cut 900 children, overwhelmingly girls, from its Girls Education Challenge programme in Malawi.
10. **Link Education:** The STAGES project in Ethiopia, part of the Girls Education Challenge, suffered cuts of £214k. These have been absorbed by scaling back activities such as teacher refresher training and community engagement.
11. **HI:** HI was part of a consortium implementing the FCDO-funded Women's Integrated Sexual Health programme. This multi-country contract was originally due to end in September 2021 and plans for future funding had been under discussion since before the announcement of the reduction in the aid budget to 0.5% GNI. The programme has had to be closed in several countries, including Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Mozambique and Pakistan. This has meant ending vital SRHR information and services in these countries, especially Bangladesh, Ethiopia and Pakistan, where HI was directly implementing.
12. **HI:** HI had to rapidly close a long-running programme for people with disabilities in Bangladesh, depriving almost 5,000 people with disabilities of services. As a result, people with disabilities are facing challenges to access doctor's appointments and buy medicine, especially people seeking support for mental illnesses. Some people with mental illnesses have had to stop taking their medicine, increasing the rate of relapse. Physical therapy services and the provision of new assistive devices has also had to end, as has support for accessing and maintaining viable livelihoods.
13. **HI:** HI was implementing five grants worth over £7 million across three countries in the Middle East, supporting more than 18,200 people directly and over 50,000 people indirectly. These all faced a "cliff edge" at the end of March 2021. The projects were delivering rehabilitation, mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services to people with disabilities, many of

whom are refugees, for several years. The funding was managed by FCDO delegations in country and, for some grants, HI was a sub-partner in a consortium. While alternative funding has been secured to cover some of this shortfall, huge gaps remain, resulting in the loss of critical services directly impacting extremely vulnerable people with disabilities. This has been especially acute in Lebanon, where the cuts have led to the loss of an entire support structure built over years of engagement, which has offered disabled people services that didn't previously exist in Lebanon. It will take years to rebuild what has been lost. In the meantime, children will not have the support they need to be able to develop as best they can.

**14. Sightsavers (with consortium partners)** – The 'Inclusion Works' programme was cut by 27% (a 3.5m cut from the 13.2m programme) The cuts have impacted the amount of evidence the programme has been able to generate and disseminate, which was the intended outcome and impact level of the programme. That won't be met and there will continue to be a significant evidence gap on disability inclusion in labour markets and the long-term impact of the programme will be impacted. The programmes also had to make cuts to some work with the private sector which supports the long-term sustainability of the programme, by decreasing the likelihood that more private sector organisations will continue to hire and work with people with disabilities. For this programme we are still waiting for funding confirmation for the last quarter of the programme (April to June 2022). It is likely that we won't hear about this until well into the quarter which is really challenging when trying to plan for activities as well as close the programme in a responsible and sustainable way. The significant uncertainty and planning and replanning has a big impact on partners, in particular organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) who play a key role in the programme design and delivery and are embedded in the communities the programme works with. Given the levels of exclusion from decision making that OPDs have traditionally faced this level of change and uncertainty has potential long-term impacts.