

## WRITTEN EVIDENCE BY ADD INTERNATIONAL ON THE IMPACT OF UK CUTS TO ODA, MAY 2021

### 1. Introduction to ADD International

- 1.1. ADD International is an international disability rights organisation, with its headquarters in the UK, and country programmes in 5 countries in Asia and Africa (Bangladesh, Cambodia, Tanzania, Uganda and Sudan). We fight for the independence, equality and opportunity for persons with disabilities living in poverty.
- 1.2. For more than 30 years, we have been an ally to the global disability movement, working with grassroots activists to advocate for their rights and to build strong and sustainable Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs).
- 1.3. We provide capacity building support to OPDs so that they can secure access to rights and services for their members, challenge discrimination and exclusion at all levels of society, and campaign for policies and services which are inclusive of persons with disabilities. We also engage with policymakers and development actors to promote approaches which are based on the voice and lived experience of persons with disabilities.
- 1.4. ADD International is submitting this evidence because we believe the process and substance of the cuts will have significant, negative consequences to the lives of persons with disabilities, and, to minimise this adverse impact, the FCDO's new approach must prioritise disability inclusion at every step along the way.
- 1.5. We welcome the opportunity to submit oral evidence as needed.

### 2. Summary of Key Points

- 2.1. FCDO's changes will have **significant negative consequences to the lives and livelihood** of persons with disabilities, their representative organisations and national disability movements.
- 2.2. There are **gaps on issues related to inclusion** - and significantly on disability inclusion - between the conclusions of the Integrated Review and the focus areas set out by FCDO's seven global challenges
- 2.3. FCDO's changes have been **poorly communicated, with timing delayed and not in step with the government's commitment to transparency**, negatively affecting the people for whom we work, jeopardizing gains made in strengthening OPDs, **damaging our working relationships with partners**, and narrowing the potential for future work.
- 2.4. FCDO **budget cuts threaten the viability, sustainability and indeed existence of OPDs and small-medium sized INGOs**. Budget cuts also make it increasingly **difficult to plan, retain staff, and maintain morale**.
- 2.5. FCDO's budget cuts **exacerbate inequality and inadequacies in collective global efforts to recover from COVID-19** - especially for the poorest and most marginalised, and especially for persons with disabilities who continue to be disproportionately affected by the pandemic, yet disproportionately excluded from its response.

3. **There are gaps on issues related to inclusion between the focus areas set out by the [FCDO's seven global challenges](#) and conclusions of the [Integrated Review](#)**

- 3.1. The Letter from the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs on strategic priorities and global challenges (Dec 2 2020) states the UK will deliver solutions in resilience and poverty, but **does not recognise the imperative for inclusion to effectively deliver those solutions**, as is highlighted in the Integrated Review.
- 3.2. The Letter on strategic priorities and global challenges does not recognise inclusivity and participative process as imperatives to become more effective, as is reflected in the conclusions of the Integrated Review (6 & 7 | p98). This gap is unfortunate, as **inclusivity and participative process will make and sustain gains across all seven global strategic 'aid' priorities**.
- 3.3. Global Challenge 5 recognises the role of open society for effective governance, but does not mention **open society as a pathway toward inclusive governance**, as is concluded in the Integrated Review (2.1 | 8 | p46).
- 3.4. Global Challenge 4 mentions technology, but does not recognise **technology as a driver of inclusive growth**, as is mentioned in the Integrated Review (p56).
- 3.5. **Partnership based on inclusive growth** is recognised in the Integrated Review (p64), but absent from the Global Challenges.
- 3.6. Global Challenge 5 mentions human rights, but does not mention the **need to work toward inclusive societies**, as is highlighted in the Integrated Review (p64).
- 3.7. The Integrated Review concludes there is **'much more to do' to harness diverse perspectives for inclusive behaviour** (8 | p98), but this is absent from the Global Challenges.

4. **FCDO focus areas miss one of the most pressing global development challenges and opportunities of our time: [full disability inclusion](#)**

- 4.1. **FCDO's Global Challenges miss explicit focus on the monumental, cross-cutting challenges and opportunities of including hundreds of millions of persons with disabilities** living in poverty. An estimated 15% of the world's population lives with some form of disability ([WHO](#)), and they **face disproportionate barriers to participate in society** on an equal basis as others, as has also recently been further evidenced by the demonstrable, disproportionate impact of pandemic on persons with disabilities (ADD [evidence](#) presented to FCDO in December 2020).
- 4.2. FCDO therefore is in **danger of failing to build on all the gains made in recent years for global disability inclusion**, including, specifically on the UK continuing to be a global leader for disability inclusion, as well as the continued roll-out and progress against FCDO's own Disability Inclusion Strategy.

## FCDO PROCESS

### 5. There has been a consequential gap in transparency as to how FCDO will administer and allocate UK ODA

- 5.1. **FCDO's gap in transparency** regarding the changes to the administration and allocation of UK ODA **has led to uncertainty and negative consequences among persons with disabilities and their representative organisations** with whom we partner.
- 5.2. **We call for FCDO to use the ODA disability inclusion marker**, as introduced by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Working Party for Development Finance Statistics in 2018, and welcomed by the disability movement, to 'track development finance in support of persons with disabilities.'
- 5.3. We call for FCDO to seize the opportunity for more **focus on human rights**, which is **highlighted in the Global Challenges and Integrated Review, but not playing out in the cuts being made**.
- 5.4. Neither ADD nor its partners on the ground have been consulted regarding the cuts, and we are concerned that cuts have been made with **little or no consultation with Civil Society Organisations** or their representative bodies.
- 5.5. We have found the FCDO approach to be piecemeal, informing individual organisations without giving clear statements.
- 5.6. We are not clear about what FCDO's actual strategy is and what programmes FCDO will have, which makes it difficult for us to plan and budget.
- 5.7. The lack of clarity in this process is at odds with the UK government's commitment to transparency.

### 6. FCDO's approach to the process of implementing in-year changes to the aid budget, including its communication with stakeholders, pose significant challenges to project planning, jeopardize gains made and damage potential for future work.

- 6.1. FCDO's decision to make changes in-year are compromising our ability to fulfill our commitments to partners and stakeholders. FCDO's late changes will negatively affect the lives of persons with disabilities in the short-term and **damage working relationships with key partners**, especially in our engagement with OPDs, which **could limit the effectiveness of FCDO work in the longer term**.

## IMPACT OF CHANGES

### 7. Cuts will have direct, and in some cases profound, impact on community-based civil society organisations in lower income countries.

- 7.1. Cuts will stall critical work being done to strengthen civil society by developing the capacity of Organisations of Persons with Disabilities. Capacity strengthening is key to a rights-based approach, and **while human rights feature in FCDO strategic areas, their cuts jeopardise human rights approaches to development**.
- 7.2. Many OPDs, particularly in the grassroots, have made significant gains, growing as institutions for change, but many are still in their formative stages, fragile, but on the verge of gaining momentum to

thrive independently - we have received reports that **budget cuts at this critical step of organisational development risk erasing progress to date.**

- 7.3. FCDO support is critical: FCDO support buoys not just a strategic portion of the management costs for some OPDs, but also supports key organisational functions, such as meetings with persons with disabilities (self-help groups), linking them with livelihood support, sensitising employers, and raising awareness on issues such as the pandemic and vaccination. The anticipated budget cuts will have a huge impact not only on the overall dynamics of OPDs and their trajectory toward sustainability, but also, most importantly, on the lives and livelihood of persons with disabilities.
- 7.4. Cuts to the UK aid funded-programme, Inclusion Works (which is one of the Aid Connect programmes) will halt national advocacy interventions with government and policy makers, an undertaking which builds on years of grassroots groundwork -- and **the disability rights movement in Bangladesh will likely lose its momentum as a result.**
- 7.5. Cuts will stall the ongoing work to strengthen the capacity of OPD and disability movement in Tanzania. The capacity building to OPD through training, mentoring, and coaching is key toward effective policy influencing and advocacy and the movement at large.
- 7.6. From Tanzania, we receive reports that cuts will halt policy influencing interventions with power holders at national, district, and ward levels. This will **undermine the progress of the disability movement in Tanzania, and slow down its momentum.**

## **8. Cuts will have direct, and in some cases profound, impact on persons with disabilities in lower income countries.**

- 8.1. UK aid funded-programme, Inclusion Works, supports the most marginalised and vulnerable groups of people in society. In pandemic, persons with disabilities have been doubly jeopardised, and we have received reports that cuts at this stage could mean these groups will 'fall further in the dark, losing hope'.
- 8.2. We receive reports that in Bangladesh, these cuts will halt key negotiations for inclusion with employers and hamper the processes for persons with disabilities to establish access social protection schemes.
- 8.3. Cuts during project implementation puts us in a position of now having made undeliverable promises to persons with disabilities in some of the most marginalised contexts. UK commitments, which have already been communicated to those who are most marginalised, will now go unfulfilled. **The timing and substance of the cuts may erode trust, create disillusion and hurt UK credibility.**
- 8.4. From Bangladesh and Uganda, we receive reports that cuts will have a large negative impact on the livelihood and economic empowerment of youth, women and men with disabilities -- these are people who are mostly left behind from other development initiatives.
- 8.5. From Bangladesh, we receive reports that if we reduce our FCDO support now, it will jeopardise the path toward achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals for decent work and economic growth (Goal 8), reduced inequalities (Goal 10) and no poverty (Goal 1). In addition, cuts stall progress toward the fulfilment of the mandates enshrined the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- 8.6. In Tanzania, cuts will affect our ability to support teachers and school management committees with capacity building on how to support and manage inclusive classrooms. The cuts will slow the

momentum of reaching more teachers. Through UK aid funded-programme Children in the Crossfire programme, more than 200 teachers will not be effectively trained due to budget cuts.

- 8.7. In Tanzania, cuts mean that many communities will no longer be able to access the capacity strengthening support through sensitization, training, awareness raising. Basic but essential awareness raising materials, ie flyers, posters and banners, will no longer be provided or available.
- 8.8. Cuts will lead to reductions in material and training support to teachers which **risk resulting in children with disabilities facing more barriers to participate in school** and in the learning process (reports from Tanzania).

## 9. Cuts have profound impact upon the organisations and the people who are implementing UK ODA programmes

- 9.1. Cuts affect key factors for effective delivery of programmes: cuts are putting **pressure on planning** and making it **difficult to retain staff** and maintain morale.
- 9.2. In our Sudan country office, **staff will lose more than 40% of their salaries for 4 months** -- this in the face of high inflation rates and dramatic increases in the price of all commodities, particularly essential items
- 9.3. **Staff** working on inclusive education for children with disabilities in Sudan **will be dismissed**.
- 9.4. In Sudan, unexpected and sudden cuts will affect ADD's reputation with the government and the communities in which we work. As an example, communities had been planning for a highly anticipated conference on inclusive education, building on a UK-funded inclusive education intervention that government officials had praised as a model for Sudan. Due to cuts, this conference will no longer take place.

We are grateful for the opportunity to submit a response to IDC's call on the impact of UK aid cuts to ODA, and we welcome the opportunity to submit oral evidence as needed.

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