Supplementary written evidence from Dr Lata Narayanaswamy, Associate Professor, Politics of Global Development at University of Leeds

- **Who usually leads project teams and how does this affect the power balance in the aid sector?**

In answer to this, I would highlight 2 key concerns. The first is that I believe there is a more fundamental concern about 'project' based models, where the sectoral standard is to have fairly short timescales that are not really suitable for the sorts of longer-term objectives that are central to the targets and associated competencies required to be awarded funding, including goals like 'gender equality and social inclusion (GESI)', which may then include objectives to tackle racism and racial inequality. In short, tackling the power structures that underpin all types of inequality, including racial inequality (and the associated racisms that might manifest as a result of these inequalities) takes time. Measuring 'progress' in goals such as these is a real challenge as this is so often context-specific but very often deeply personal, where change, if it happens at all, may be intangible and/or immeasurable. There is no one 'intervention' or 'pathway' that will guarantee an 'anti-racist' outcome, particularly as the system we live in is also historically specific and in which these raced hierarchies, as myself and many others shared in oral evidence, are so deeply embedded.

Secondly, on the specific question of leadership, it is of course true that power imbalances have raced, gendered and other intersectional dimensions that have historically narrowed who is seen as a 'leader' in the context of development. The question is: who is 'allowed' to be a leader? There is a risk of simply reproducing existing power imbalances, except with leaders who 'look' visibly different i.e., tick diversity 'boxes' against a norm of 'whiteness'. The reason we are likely to end up with this shallow approach to representation, or where ticking a 'diversity' box is used as a proxy for rebalancing power in the aid sector, is that the capacity to operate in ways that meet the requirements of most funders – and here FCDO is no exception – is reserved for those people who, as I have found in my research, share certain professional characteristics, including being able to speak English and holding an advanced degree from a recognised (preferably Western) Higher Education institution. So the question of 'who leads' will depend on whether we can also diversify who is 'allowed' to lead and/or be seen as a possible leader, and whether the notion of capacity can be broadened to include a wider array of competencies and/or characteristics that would, in turn, open up the possibilities for a more diverse group of people to aspire to leadership roles.