

Anti-racism and decolonising

A framework for
organisations



Introduction

In 2020, George Floyd's murder sparked waves of solidarity and protest around the world, which demanded deep systemic change to tackle racism in the humanitarian and development sector. This framework shares a holistic approach in addressing racism and decolonising the sector by focusing on all dimensions in an organisation.

When we discuss "decolonising" we refer to:

The processes of decolonisation understanding that colonisation is more than just a physical project – it has cultural and psychological components which determine whose knowledge is privileged. Decolonisation involves seeking restorative justice through cultural, psychological and economic freedom. Decolonisation is the process of deconstructing colonial ideologies regarding the superiority and privilege of Western thought and approaches, moving away from the 'white gaze'.

Source: Racism, power and truth report, Bond, (2021)

When we discuss "anti-racism" we refer to:

The work of actively opposing racism by advocating for changes in political, economic, and social life.

Source: Race Reporting Guide (2015), Race Forward



After working with the Bond People of Colour working group, and multiple Black people and people of colour* working across the UK charity sector in various roles and organisations, **we identified that for deep-rooted systemic change, the issue of tackling and dismantling racism in our sector and within our organisations must not solely sit with HR teams or with the CEO of an organisation.** Otherwise, the action you can take to address these issues is limited. Instead, tackling and dismantling racism must be broadened out to include everyone in an organisation with an understanding of how action can be taken in specific areas. Despite the sector making progress on locally led development and how to "shift power", **these conversations are not taking into account the anti-racism or racial equity lens needed.** This lens is vital given that "international development" was historically built on a system of oppression, and with that comes continued racial inequity and racism, which we see manifest across the sector today.

To address these issues, **this framework maps out how racism cuts across all areas of our organisations, so colleagues can see how and why an anti-racist approach must be embedded into any attempt to decolonise international development organisations.** Working in isolation and without recognition of the interlinkages risks addressing racism in a siloed way. For example, if we change the language we use in our external campaigns, without addressing the language we use internally in our organisations then we are doing half a job, and not addressing racism throughout our work, because it is all connected. Having a holistic view of the interconnectivities and recognising the structural change that we need to tackle racism and the legacy of colonialism can help us to progress change on multiple fronts, rather than in siloes.

*To learn why we use the term 'People of Colour', see the Racism, Power and Truth report, Bond p.6 (2021)

What's in this framework?

Page 4 - The overview

A topline overview of where we need to begin and a vision of where we want to get to.

Page 5 - The detail

Further detail on what building anti-racist practices across these areas will mean and what it could look like. We invite you to look at the whole page, to see where you are as an individual and identify what action you can take to progress further.

Page 6 - Roles and Functions

Areas across organisations that need to build anti-racist practices and why it's important to do so for each specific area.

Since 2020 Bond has worked to address both leadership and governance issues, through programmes looking to build anti-racist practices for CEOs and through an anti-racism and EDI Board development programme.

Using the framework

You can use the images in the following pages to discuss with your teams internally what actions you can start to take to address racism, be inclusive and redress power.

At the end of the framework, we have provided starter questions specifically for CEOs and other functions to ask themselves, which can be extended to their senior leadership teams. We've included this because it is important that CEOs, as leaders of organisations, start the deep personal work of self-reflection and learning by asking questions of their power, positionality and privilege and think about what they can do to engage in anti-racism.

The framework is a comprehensive overview of how systemic racism manifests in our organisations. This needs to be recognised and understood as a first step towards action. It can be used with other resources Bond has produced, including the Becoming locally-led guide as an anti-racist practice.



This is a working framework and will evolve over time.

This framework has been created with the Bond People of Colour working group, and multiple Black people and People of Colour working across the UK charity sector.

Framework overview

Being actively anti-racist organisations by building anti-racist practices through a reparatory justice lens

Recognising and addressing our colonial past

Equitable international systems, structures and institutions including exit strategies & newly visioned roles for INGOs

Programmes

Economy

Business Models

Funding

Policy and advocacy

Communications

Culture

Accountability

Knowledge and learning

Partnerships

The fruits produced by the tree grow from seeds that can continue the life cycle of this new system. When you sow the seeds of this new future, you need to embed from the start this new holistic approach.

Redefine success You begin planting the seeds of an anti-racist and equitable mindset. These seeds need to be showered with deep personal work, self-reflection, consistency and care.

Decision making

Over time, the plant will start growing roots and shoots, which symbolises your new approach to inclusive decision-making.

Shift access and power

As the roots deepen and the plant sprouts higher, you can begin to shift access and address power imbalances through action.

Redefine expertise

Over time, the plant will bear the fruits of this hard work and transform the sector into a new equitable international system, structure, and institution, which supports everyone.

Addressing power imbalances

Framework detail

Taking actions in these areas to build trust internally and externally

Recognising and addressing our colonial past

Equitable international systems, structures and institutions including exit strategies & newly visioned roles for INGOs

Redefine expertise –knowledge and influencing
Ensure that your policy and influence is inclusive and reflects the change you want to see involving the right people who are most affected by issues

Redefine expertise –community led solutions and impact
Move from extraction of expertise to centring of expertise in all areas including all aspects of programming, monitoring, evaluation and learning and policy

Equitable representation
From Board governance to entry level, diversity across departments is necessary to bring in lived experience

Shift access and power
Open doors and invitations to marginalised communities both in the UK and outside
Redress power through funding directly
Redistribute power in partnerships

Decision making
Decision-making power in your organisation needs to be transparent and power must be shared
Decision-making power is moved to and driven by national, local actors, and communities.

Review narrative and imagery
Centre local communities first in what your work looks like and how you communicate

Addressing power imbalances

Roles and functions



People of Colour group

Centring people of colour from marginalised communities working in your organisation and those you work with. Creating space to hear from POC staff to share their experiences and raise concerns is important and can act as an accountability mechanism within your organisation.



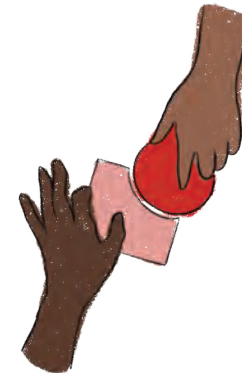
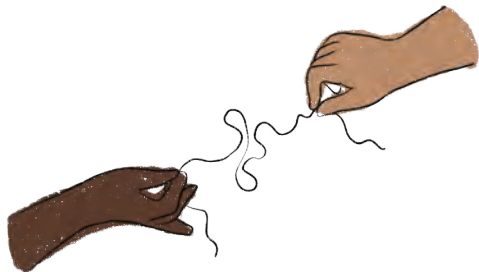
CEO

As the leaders of NGOs, the CEOs need to be able to understand anti-racism and its links to international development and decolonisation. CEOs need to build their own anti-racism practices by both leading and stepping back to support and make space for people of colour. CEOs must bring their staff along with them, modeling regular self reflection, accountability and action.



Research

The research and data you use as evidence for policy making and programming holds power. You need to question where that data is coming from; who is leading that research and identify any bias in the process. This will help us to better understand how you can remove barriers that marginalised communities feel and develop your understanding of how you can create fairer more equitable support for the communities you work with.



Communicating/ campaigning/ fundraising

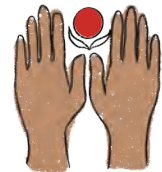
The way you communicate your work is important. The images and words you use are powerful and hold meaning. Organisations have a responsibility to review the imagery and narrative used, both internally and externally to ensure an anti-oppressive and anti-racist approach.

Governance

Trustee boards of INGOs share formal responsibility for the charity, this means following the seven pillars of governance as outlined by the Charity Governance Code. As part of this, trustees must implement the principles of EDI and integrity to lead by example.

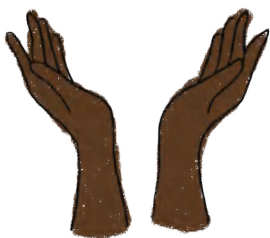
HR

HR are the gatekeepers to our organisations. You need to address bias in HR and change the way you recruit by providing a process where candidates can thrive. You need to review the type of culture you are bringing people into, where learning and development is fully equitable. You need to develop POC talent; identify opportunities for progression and review how you promote people into leadership.



Programmes

Programming in INGOs is built on an imbalance of power, with headquarters in the North/UK holding power for decision making, for funding and resource allocation in programmes. These roles need to identify and address the racism that manifests through these power dynamics.



Advocacy and influencing

You influence, advocate and lobby different institutions who hold power across the sector (including government departments, donors, think tanks etc.), but you are not yet fully representative of our diverse sector or the communities you work with. These roles need to focus on equity and inclusion to ensure meaningful representation, whilst self reflecting on the power and privilege held to begin changing the way the power is used.

Questions for CEOs



1.
Have you **taken time to recognise your positionality, power and privilege** that you hold and what it means for you as a CEO?



2.
How **diverse** is your senior management team?



3.
How can you **hear from more diverse perspectives** in your organisation?



4.
Do you have **an anti-racism action plan**?



5.
Do you feel **comfortable talking about race and racism**?



6.
Do you have a standing item in meetings with your senior management team to discuss actions on anti-racism, equity, diversity and inclusion?



7.
What new skill do you want to gain in relation to decolonisation and anti-racism?



8.
Is anti-racism embedded in your strategic objectives and do you monitor progress?



9.
What's one small thing you can do to become an advocate?

Refer to pages 13-14 in the **Becoming Locally Led** guide for more questions

Addressing power imbalances 

Questions for Governance



1.
What **induction process** is in place for Board members?



2.
What **principles and culture** do you hold as a Board in how you work together? How equitable is it?



3.
How representative is the Board of **marginalised communities** and the communities you work with? How racially diverse is the Board?



4.
Have you explored the **positionality, power and privilege you hold** and how that effects you as Board members?



5.
Does your **risk register** recognise risks around specifically not being anti-racist?



6.
Are you aware of the refreshed **Charity Commission's Governance Code** covering, EDI and Integrity for Boards?



7.
Has the Board had a conversation about **anti-racism** and its importance as Board members of an **international development organisation**?



8.
Does the Board have a **standing agenda item** that reviews anti-racism, equity, diversity and inclusion?

Refer to page 17 in the **Becoming Locally Led** guide for more questions

Addressing power imbalances →

Questions for Programmes



1.
Where is **decision-making** for programming situated?



2.
How diverse are those in decision-making roles?



3.
What decision making power do **communities have** in programming?



4.
Have you explored the **positionality, power and privilege** you hold and how that effects you as a member of the programmes team?



5.
How is **funding for programming distributed** to communities? Does it include more than activity costs?



6.
How **inclusive** is your programming? Is the language you use inclusive? Are people with different identities involved in the creation? Have you reflected on the assumptions you hold each aspect of the programme? Does trust exist between you and your partners and the community you are working with?



7.
At what stage do you engage with communities in your programming? Conception? Development? Implementation? Evaluation?



8.
Who defines **what success** of the programme looks like?

Refer to pages 18 & 21 in the **Becoming Locally Led** guide for more questions

Addressing power imbalances →

Questions for Communications/fundraising/campaigns



1.

Where **is decision-making** for communications, fundraising and campaigns situated?



2.

Have you explored the **positionality, power and privilege** you hold as part of the communications/fundraising/campaigns team and what it means for the responsibility of telling stories?



3.

How **diverse** are those in decision-making roles?



4.

Whose **story** is it? And whose **image** is it?



5.

Do you have **permission** to tell a story? Or use an image?



6.

How do you **behave** when gathering your content?



7.

Who has **power** in gathering content? What does that power look like?



8.

What does success look like when evaluating a campaign? **Are you missing a perspective?**

Refer to pages 22 in the **Becoming Locally Led** guide for more questions

Addressing power imbalances →

Questions for Advocacy and influencing



1.

Where is **decision-making** for advocacy, influencing and lobbying efforts held?



2.

How **diverse** is the team?



3.

Who can **you collaborate with** to bring in more diverse perspectives to inform your work?



4.

Who is **invited to meetings** with governments, or donors or influential institutions?



5.

Do you **recognise expertise of diaspora** and marginalised communities to advocate and influence?



6.

Have you explored the **positionality, power and privilege you hold** and what it means for the advocacy and influencing you do?



7.

What **one small thing can you do** to use your personal power to bring in more diversity to meetings?

Refer to pages 23 in the **Becoming Locally Led** guide for more questions

Addressing power imbalances →

Questions for HR



1.

What is your **organisations business case** for creating a racially diverse, equitable and inclusive workplace?



2.

How does your organisation **measure staff diversity and inclusion**? If you don't know, how might you find out? How can you ensure you are capturing the **nuances of racial equity**?



3.

Have you explored the **positionality, power and privilege you hold** and what it means for how you support, make space for, and grow diverse talent?



4.

What are you **doing today** to create and sustain an anti-racist workplace?



5.

What **deeper conversations** are needed in your organisation?



6.

Have you signed up to the **Race at Work charter**?



7.

Who do you need to **collaborate with** to be sure your recruitment process is equitable?



8.

How **diverse** is your HR team?

Refer to page 20 in the **Becoming Locally Led** guide for more questions

Addressing power imbalances →

Resources and further reading

Additional links to resources

- **Becoming Locally Led guide**
- **Racism, power and truth: Experiences of people of colour in international development**
- **Taking British politics and colonialism out of our language**
- **Time to decolonise aid**
- **Shaping a post-colonial INGO**
- **The Racial Equity Index**
- **A White dominant culture and something different worksheet**
- **Introduction to courageous conversations about race – an overview**
- **An overview: Continuum on Becoming an Anti-Racist Multicultural Organization**
- **On Intersectionality in Feminism and Pizza**
- **#PolicySoWhite blog**
- **UK Parliament's Racism in the aid sector report and summary**
- **Healing Solidarity's anti-racism reading and action list**