EQUAL • RESPECTED • PROUD

Womankind Worldwide's commitment to anti-racism

Womankind Worldwide recognises that the aid and development sector was founded in the context of colonisation and that there are ongoing power imbalances and power dynamics at its core which perpetuate racial hierarchies and discrimination.

At the time of the appalling killing of George Floyd in May 2020, Womankind had been undertaking an externally facilitated diversity & inclusion review. The resurgence of the Black Lives Matter campaign across the world triggered by global outrage at the murder of George Floyd inspired Womankind to dig deeper into racism and coloniality in our own organisation culture and operations and to develop this anti-racism pledge in order to address it.

The work upon which this pledge is based was facilitated by Camille Barton of the Collective Liberation Project, and further inspired by the work of the Women of Colour Forum, hosted by the Gender & Development Network.

Our pledge

Womankind Worldwide stands in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement and others committed to anti-racism work, who seek to create a world in which all people are treated equally, in line with universal human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and many others shone a light on racism is the USA, igniting worldwide outrage and resurgence of the Black Lives Matter campaign across the globe. It is important to recognise that systemic racism is a global issue and a British issue. The Lammy Review (2017) highlighted systemic racism in the UK criminal justice system. COVID-19 has demonstrated that racism impacts public health, with Black people dying at four times the rate of white people in the UK. Moreover, the ongoing struggle to access justice for the victims of the Grenfell fire or the Windrush generation that suffered so grievously under the hostile environment policy, reflects a centuries long pattern of violence and harm involving police brutality, false accusations, dehumanisation and criminalisation of Black people and people of colour. In Britain, systemic racism in general, and in the international aid and development sector in particular, is rooted in Britain's history as a colonial power.

Racism is traumatic and continues to impact the bodies and lives of Black, Indigenous and women of colour in many countries around the world. This trauma is intergenerational and compounded for the descendants of those who have been subjected to the violence of colonialism and western empire building. As an international development organisation based in England, Womankind is determined to reckon with the colonial origins of the international aid and development sector and to work to understand the ways in which legacies of colonisation continue to cause harm, exploitation and power imbalance internally, for staff, volunteers and trustees, and for our partners and allies in the Global South.

Womankind is committed to working sustainably in the long term, in a reflective and accountable way, to ensure that anti-racism permeates throughout the strategies, culture and working policies and practices of the organisation. To this end, as we engage in this process, Womankind will continue to re-evaluate and develop new ways of working that are more aligned with a transformative justice approach and feminist values. Further, we will hold ourselves accountable for delivery on our commitments, by reviewing and replenishing the commitments we make on an ongoing basis.

Womankind is aware of the need for external expertise to support this work and is committed to resourcing it, including drawing on best practice in the field of diversity & inclusion and expertise in organisation and culture change to support increased literacy around anti-racism and transformative justice.

Womankind hopes that our anti-racism work over the coming years will enable us to be part of a movement towards systemic healing, justice and a more equitable world no longer based on racial hierarchies.

Our internal commitments

- To **strengthen anti-racism in our organisation culture** we will:
    - **Increase knowledge and raise consciousness** within our staff and board teams, through resourcing and institutionalising a monthly learning hour on colonisation, racism and solidarity with Black & people of colour, from April 2021.
    - **Address both the expression and impact of racist microaggression** through a 'code of conduct', forthcoming Feminist Toolkit and normalising a culture of calling it out and expressing the hurt it causes. Ensure support for affected Black & people of colour.
    - Systematically apply an anti-racism lens to routine **reviews of all our policies,** from 2021-22.

- To **work purposefully toward equitable, feminist team composition** we will:
    - Pursue targets of 50% staff, 50% trustees, 50% senior management team and 50% board officials identifying as Black & people of colour, including those based in the Global South, within 3 years, through **positive action.**
    - Increase access to careers in the sector for Black & women of colour through **paid internships**, especially in less diverse functional areas such as fundraising, from July 2021.
    - Develop policies which ensure **equitable terms and conditions for staff & trustees based overseas,** including in the regions where we work, from January 2021.
    - Review our recruitment and selection procedures and institute best practice to **widen promotion of vacancies amongst Black & women of colour**, and **reduce barriers to access and unconscious bias** in recruitment and selection, from January 2021.

- To ensure that our forthcoming **strategy prioritises and supports anti-racism** we will:
    - Define how we will **apply an anti-racism lens to our strategy development process** in practice, early in the process.
    - Seek ways in which to **contribute to rebalancing North-South power relations equitably** in each of our strategies, sub-strategies and operational plans.

Our commitments to partners and allies

- To **strengthen shared understanding and better address the context and priorities of our partners in the Global South** we will:

  - Strengthen our approach to and resourcing for **translation of a wider range of key documents into local/national languages and accessible forms such as braille and audio** in our focus countries.
  - Expand **location of selected roles in the Global South, especially in our focus countries,** from October 2020.
  - Invest in our **Values Based Consultancy approach, adding an anti-racism lens** to the values system and ensuring the inclusion of lived experience and local knowledge to selection criteria.

- To progress **from 'amplifying the voices' of our partners in the Global South to shifting power to them** we will:

  - Develop practical approaches to **support partner access to core and flexible funding,** including through continuing advocacy on funding women's rights organisations and movements, resourcing fundraising and income generating capacity within the partnership, and developing flexible funding mechanisms through Womankind, from April 2021.
  - Create a properly resourced advisory structure through which to **elevate the perspectives of partners in our strategy and practice** at key moments and on an ongoing basis, in a way which is inclusive, but not extractive, from July 2021.

Our commitments in funding, communications and public affairs

- To **understand and address colonial dynamics in fundraising practice** we will:

  - Introduce a routine process through which to **discuss the sources of Womankind funding with partners** so that they can take a fully informed decision about how their work is funded, from April 2021.
  - Work with our partners and supporters to **develop a funding charter** setting out the principles and practices which underline quality funding and fundraising communications for women's rights organisations & movements, including in relation to anti-racist, feminist ethics, from July 2021.
  - Explore our approach to fundraising as part of new strategy development and **create a five year financing sub-strategy and plan** setting out how Womankind will migrate toward compliance with the funding charter over the 5 year period of the sub-strategy, whilst meeting the financial requirements of its strategies and plans, from October 2021.
  - Develop **anti-racist, feminist fundraising and marketing communications** which work to build knowledge as well as commitment amongst our existing supporter base and attract new supporter segments to Womankind over the period of the financing sub-strategy, from January 2021.
  - Further develop our approach to **anti-racist, feminist and ethical content gathering and image use** through review of guidance for staff and consultants and routine training, from April 2021.
  - Develop **anti-racist, feminist fundraising and marketing communications** which work to build knowledge as well as commitment amongst our existing supporter base and attract new supporter segments to Womankind over the period of the financing sub-strategy, from January 2021.

- To **make flexible and core funding available to our partners, which they will determine how to use** we will:

    - Continue to **advocate for quality flexible and core funding** for women's rights organisations & movements across all funding streams, using our Funding Charter.
    - Research the market and **ensure we build relationships with progressive donors** who are interested in supporting women's rights organisations & movements and flexible and core funding to them, from April 2021.
    - Develop **creative new fundraising products for flexible and core funding of our partnership network**, from October 2021.

- To ensure our **communications do not perpetuate power imbalances** we will:

    - Strengthen our understanding of **anti-racist, feminist communications**, considering the framing and narrative of the stories we tell and how these are portrayed.
    - Interrogate our **use of language**, recognising that power is exercised through language.
    - Further develop our approach to **anti-racist, feminist and ethical content gathering and image use** through review of guidance for staff and consultants and routine training, from April 2021.

- To learn from others and share our experience, we will **join in sector discourse** on developing anti-racist practice, from October 2020.