

Anti-racism & decolonizing Global Health & International Development

A UNAIDS Perspective

....sometimes one must go public with an idea to push a reluctant organization in the direction you want it to go.”



....about unconscious bias. When something happens once it's fine to say it's a bug. It's an error. It's a mistake. But if it is the same pattern that happens decade, after decade, after decade there is only one explanation. That it is intentional, it is deliberate, and it is designed to work as it is designed.

[Prof.Madhu Pai, McGill University, Montreal, Canada]

Anti-racism and Decolonisation at UNAIDS

Addressing entrenched & systemic institutional racism realities of Black, Brown, Indigenous, Global South and other racially marginalized people

- Review and address racism, discrimination and un/conscious biases at HR level- policies/practices that perpetuate and sustain racism
- Key finding from 2021 review of consultants in ERP/GSM and TSM - Race and gender pay gap with Black Women behind White Men, White Women and Black Men in terms of consultancy rates, contracts and consultancy days.
- Data Drought: Lack of race, ethnicity, nationality and age data + intersectional analyses to understand recruitment, retention and career development realities.

Racism as a pathology: key driver of morbidity and mortality in contexts of HIV, COVID-19, cervical cancer and maternal and child health.

Allyship and aligning with intersectional movements: recognizing the multiple and intersecting barriers and challenges

Conference inequity: 96% of global health conferences happen in HMIC with only 39% of attendees from LMIC

...there were barely veiled racist attacks on the DG of WHO, from global leaders, from presidents and the way that dynamic impacted the global views of what people thought or not of this microbe called SARS- COVID 2. People underestimated the gravity of the moment because the man at the head of the WHO was a Black man from Northern Ethiopia named Tedros. But we wonder what would have happened if he was a white man from Calgary called Theodore. Perhaps the world would have taken it more seriously and we would not be where we are today.

Dr Ayoade Alakija, WHO Special Envoy ACT-Accelerator & Co-Chair of AU'S Vaccine Delivery Alliance]

Speaking from the Heart: Successes & Challenges

Conversations have happened & Pledges have been made spurred on by:

- Police murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor
- COVID-19 pandemic and vaccine apartheid

What does not get measured does not get done

- Addressing the reluctance/other challenges to collate and analyse race, ethnicity, nationality and age data at the institutional and programmatic levels.

Allyship is a verb not a noun

- need for self reflection and action to give up (unearned) privilege & cede power & space
- Addressing white supremacy and white silence

DEI alone will not dismantle institutional racism

- DEI is often a side-strategy and poorly/non- funded
- DEI Champions & Activists at risk: Studies shown that people from ethnic minorities who have demonstrated a tendency to advocate for diversity are less likely to be promoted or get a new job

The recent AIDS conference is a typical example of racism, exclusion and putting people in vulnerable conditions... and we say no more! We need to take a position. No more sitting on precarious fences. Be counted, be an ally and join us.

[Dr Vuyiseka Dubula Majola, Stellenbosch University, South Africa]

Building Back Better

Collect & analyse programmatic & institutional intersectional race, ethnicity, nationality & age data

- develop evidence-based anti-racism & DEI recommendations
- data on cases/complaints of racism and discrimination reported to various complaints bodies (ombuds, ethics offices, staff association, GBA and the ILO tribunal)

Adhering to rules of confidentiality

Review HR policies & practices

- Analyse & understand how these may be biased, discriminatory and racist
- Activate anti-racism & evidence-informed DEI reform in HR policies and practices

Psychosocial & mental health support specifically for Black/Brown & other racially marginalized groups

Fund/Resource the DEI Office, DEI Strategy & Workplan

Set-up a UN Interagency Anti-racism & DEI Working Group

- Develop a terms of reference for a joint Strategy and Workplan
- Monitoring framework (indicators with time-bound measurable targets)

Publish, Publish, Publish

- Joint sessions at key global health and development fora/events
- Joint blogs/commentaries/articles in peer reviewed resources and other health and mainstream media outlets.

Amandla!