



IRC UK GEDI STRATEGY

IRC UK GENDER, EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION
(GEDI) STRATEGY 2022 – 2024



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Cover: Chadia with her daughter Noor at the seafront in Brighton in 2022. They were forced to leave their home in Syria due to conflict in 2016. Through the IRC UK's Refugee Integration in Southeast England (RISE) Cultural Orientation and Employment Readiness training, Chadia has now found work in a local school.

Photo credits

Front cover: Betty Laura Zapata / IRC; Page 5: KC Nwakalor / IRC; Page 8: Andres Brenner / IRC; Page 11: Elena Heatherwick / IRC; Page 14: Camilla Greenwell / IRC; Page 16: Etinosa Yvonne / IRC

INTRODUCTION

The anti-racism movements of the past two years have shone a light on the pervasive effects of structural racism and inequalities of power in the IRC, the humanitarian, development and refugee sectors, in UK society and around the globe.

IRC UK recognises the inherent biases and power imbalances in our organisation, which in turn reflect longstanding historical and colonial injustices. We also recognise the need to confront and stop the harmful practices that result from racism and discrimination at the IRC.

Across race, gender and other protected characteristics like disability and sexual orientation, and for those with refugee / asylum status – those whom the IRC serves – we can do better. We are determined to keep driving forward progress in IRC UK and more widely in the IRC, as part of the global IRC network.

In 2020, IRC UK launched a Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) Action Plan, which included 79 important and urgent actions to drive necessary change quickly. This UK Gender, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy ('UK GEDI Strategy') builds on the FY21 Action Plan and sets out how we will continue to make IRC UK a more diverse, equitable and inclusive place to work through to 2024. In this strategy we keep a necessary focus on race and ethnicity but also strengthen our commitments to people with disabilities, to LGBTQ+ staff and clients, and to people with lived experience of conflict and displacement.

This strategy also seeks to complement the GEDI work being driven by global functions at the IRC within the framework of the IRC's Global DEI Strategy and Action Plan, launched in 2021 and 2022 respectively, and our wider organisational Strategy100. We are hopeful that delivering on the commitments in this UK GEDI strategy will contribute to a meaningful change in the composition and culture of IRC UK, while also supporting the IRC's global GEDI vision and objectives. Staff based in the UK will also be contributing to the delivery of functional GEDI strategies and actions led by their departments.

However, the UK – and IRC UK – are part of a geographical, historical, legal and cultural context that impact our clients, staff, partners and supporters in particular ways. Our size and composition, including representatives from many global teams and our own programmes, also gives us unique opportunities to act and drive change.

That is why the core of this strategy is action. This document does not attempt to summarise all the work being done at the IRC to deliver global GEDI commitments. Instead, it seeks to pinpoint where IRC UK can and must take action to contribute to that work: where staff have said there are gaps in the UK specifically and where they have great ideas that we can drive forward in the UK now.

These are things like setting out how exactly we'll consult UK clients on UK RAI programme design and how we'll compensate them for their expertise; how we'll partner with migrant-led organisations in our communications; how we'll grow opportunities for career development for staff from underrepresented groups; or how we'll build accessibility into our everyday, drawing on disability inclusion expertise.

In the following pages, this strategy sets out work to date driven by IRC UK teams, which is the foundation on which the next phase of our work sits. It also sets out some of the gaps and strengths we know exist in IRC UK, whether through the IRC UK ethnicity and gender pay gap reporting, recommendations from external experts, and most importantly, feedback from UK staff. Based on these learnings, it defines IRC UK's strategic focus areas and situates them within the global IRC GEDI vision and objectives. Most importantly, it commits IRC UK to delivering 75 targeted actions by FY24 which will drive change in these UK focus areas and ultimately, progress towards the IRC's global GEDI objectives.

BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

As one of the actions of IRC UK's FY21 D&I Action Plan, the UK Management Team (UKMT) committed to delivering a longer-term strategy for IRC UK covering FY22-24. Led by IRC UK's Executive Director, Laura Kyrke-Smith, the UK GEDI strategy development process began in February 2022 and was split into three phases:

- 1) Discovery:** Drawing together internal learnings from work to date, surveys and data; external benchmarking and feedback from inclusion experts; and importantly, input from employee resource groups (ERGs) and all UK staff to identify priorities for the strategy.
- 2) Development:** Defining IRC UK's strategic approach and focus areas based on the discovery phase, cross-referenced against the global GEDI objectives.
- 3) Action Planning:** Setting out a plan with specific actions, accountabilities and timelines for delivering change within these strategic focus areas and in turn, global GEDI objectives.

The resulting UK GEDI Strategy covers 10 characteristics: the nine protected characteristics based on the Equality Act 2010 (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation), plus refugee / asylum status in recognition of the IRC's work to support people who are fleeing conflict and disaster, including the climate crisis. As a result of our learnings, it keeps a necessary focus on race and ethnicity but also strengthens our commitments to people with disabilities, to LGBTQ+ staff and clients, and to people with lived experience of conflict and displacement.

Long-term cultural change relies on the genuine inclusion of all members of IRC UK in the development and delivery of this strategy. A consultative and transparent process is also essential to avoid the 'top-down' approach that can lead to exclusionary decision-making. How consultation was conducted in each of the three phases of this strategy development is detailed in [Appendix 1](#).

TERMINOLOGY

The terminology in this UK GEDI strategy follows the [IRC GEDI Lexicon](#) and external language approved by the IRC Chief GEDI Officer. For ease of reference, some terms used often in this document are below.

- **DEI** (Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion): a key component of the global IRC GEDI vision and strategy and the acronym we use externally.
- **GEDI** (Gender, Diversity, Equality and Inclusion): builds on DEI by adding 'Gender' in recognition of the IRC's commitment to be a feminist organisation. We refer to it throughout this strategy, but since GEDI may be considered an internal IRC term, so we also use 'DEI' externally.
- **D&I** (diversity and inclusion): does not reflect recent advances in thinking, so we use only when referring to titled documents that previously included it, e.g. the FY21 UK D&I Action Plan.
- **BAME/BIPOC**: The IRC UK staff network identifies as the BAME/BIPOC Network, so this strategy refers to the acronym throughout. IRC UK data collection included later in this strategy differentiates between specific categories within BAAMOW (Black, Asian, Arab, Mixed, Other, White).
- **LGBTQ+**: We use this acronym because it is widely understood in the UK, but recognise and acknowledge its imperfections.
- We capitalise when using a term of ethnicity, for example, Black colleagues, the Jewish community.
- We define races/ethnicities that are typically under-represented in global power structures, including people of Black or Afro-descent; Indigenous or native peoples; Middle Eastern / Middle Eastern descent; North African / North African descent; Northeast Asian or Northeast Asian descent; South Asian or South Asian descent; Southeast Asian or Southeast Asian descent; Latin America or Latin American descent.



DISCOVERY PHASE LEARNINGS

The goal of the discovery phase was to bring together and analyse existing internal feedback, plans, surveys, data, and progress in IRC UK, IRC Europe and IRC globally. It was important not to duplicate these efforts or the staff time involved in giving their data, thoughts and experiences, but build on the collective information that already existed while also gathering current views from staff on where gaps and opportunities still exist.

A list of the main written materials reviewed can be found in [Appendix 2](#). These included existing IRC GEDI feedback, strategies and progress/actions against them to date, both UK and global; external assessments of IRC UK (TIDE) and publicly available strategies from sister organisations and sector reports.

A key part of the discovery phase was staff feedback. A number of listening sessions, including with the PRIDE and BAME/BIPOC Networks and all UK staff, were held, which again are detailed in [Appendix 1](#).

Key findings from the written materials reviewed and staff feedback are summarised below, with even more detail on each in [Appendix 3](#).

CONTEXT: WORK TO DATE AND SECTOR FINDINGS

IRC work to date

We cannot say it enough: There is much more to do. But the work of teams across the IRC has laid a strong foundation for this strategy.

In 2020, IRC UK launched a [Diversity & Inclusion \(D&I\) action plan](#). This plan followed from the recognition that IRC UK had not expressed a commitment to anti-racism determinedly enough and had not matched this commitment with wide-ranging action that dismantled privilege. Of the 79 commitments in the plan, 60 were either complete or embedded in the way we work by April 2022, thanks to UK-based staff and teams.

The IRC UK Board of Trustees committed to its [own Action Plan in 2021](#), recognising its role in supporting IRC UK to become a more diverse and inclusive organisation. This included a commitment to become more representative of the people the IRC supports as a crucial part of living up to the responsibilities to good governance of IRC UK. These actions were completed or embedded in the Board's work by the end of FY21, and the Board now includes seven (50%) women, five Trustees who identify as BAME/BIPOC (38%), and three (23%) with lived experience of conflict and displacement.

In April 2021, the IRC launched a [global Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion Strategy \('Global GEDI Strategy'\)](#), with a vision that:

At the IRC, our diverse clients, partners, and staff have the power, voice, and agency to shape programs and operations. Within the IRC, we actively work to end all forms of systemic discrimination and foster an inclusive working environment where everyone feels respected, heard, valued, and supported. Our programs seek to reduce disparities in outcomes that are driven by systemic inequality.

This Global GEDI Strategy acknowledges that in order to truly fulfill our **organisational mission** to help people whose lives and livelihoods are shattered by conflict and disaster, including the climate crisis, to survive, recover and regain control over their future, and our organisational strategy, **Strategy100**, the IRC must better understand and address different forms of systemic inequalities within our organisation, and how these inequalities impact many of our clients and colleagues worldwide.

A [global GEDI Action Plan](#) that accompanies the Global GEDI Strategy was published in 2022. It details actions and accountability measures for the IRC globally towards the Global GEDI Strategy objectives through 2025.

In March 2022, a **Special Committee** of the IRC Global Board of Directors shared the [findings of a review](#), conducted by WilmerHale, of concerns regarding the IRC's global approach to promoting diversity, equality, and inclusion. While most of the report's recommendations are for global functions to lead, we have considered them carefully in the development of this strategy and included specific actions for IRC UK to take related to them, specifically around leadership diversity; inclusive management training; leadership commitment to an inclusive working environment; and monitoring DEI goals. Many IRC staff, including in the UK, contributed to the investigation conducted by WilmerHale and have fed back that the final report did not meet their expectations. Many UK staff feel that the report's conclusions do not reflect their own lived experiences of racism and discrimination at the IRC, and that acknowledging these experiences is a necessary first step towards change. While we factor the report's findings and recommendations into this strategy, we are also guided by the principle that ultimately it is our staff and clients who must be the judge of whether or not our work to tackle racism and discrimination is sufficient – and the success or not of this strategy will be monitored and decided by them.

More details and resources for all of the above foundations of this strategy can be found in [Appendix 3](#).

International Development Committee and Bond sector reports

In June 2022, the International Development Committee released the findings of its inquiry into racism in the aid sector. This highlighted how racism manifests in the structure of international aid and how the sector still reflects the power relationships of colonialism. It also reflected on the terminologies used within the sector to describe the people we work

with, and how fundraising and campaigning efforts reinforce many negative stereotypes. Lastly, the report addresses the under-representation of people of colour in the sector, particularly in leadership positions, and disparities between international and locally hired staff.

Most of the recommendations in the report are aimed at FCDO, so IRC UK will continue to work through BOND to engage with FCDO on progressing these. There are also number of recommendations for INGOs like the IRC. Many of these, like publishing diversity data, are already embedded in the way we work. However, there is more we can do, particularly around the report's communications and recruitment recommendations. A detailed list of these recommendations and how we have either already embedded them in the way we work or how we will do so now is listed in [Appendix 4](#).

In April 2021, Bond published a [report](#) on the experiences of people of colour working for UK international development organisations, both in the UK and overseas. The report highlighted the structural racism and anti-Blackness that is prevalent in the sector and how this intersects with other forms of systemic discrimination and oppression. It offers recommendations for the actions that are required to create inclusive organisations for people of colour. These have also been carefully considered, incorporated where relevant and noted as such in the FY22-24 UK Action Plan.

IRC UK – WHAT THE DATA SAYS

Leadership diversity (IRC UK Board and UKMT)

As of July 2022, the UK Board of Trustees had 14 members, comprised of:

- 7 women (50%) and 7 men (50%)
- 5 (38%) Trustees who identify as BAME/BIPOC
- 3 (23%) Trustees with lived experience of conflict or displacement

The UK Management Team (UKMT) is a group of senior staff representing all functions in the UK office (with the exception of Crisis Response, Recovery, and Development Department (CRRD) / Technical Excellence and other hosted staff, mirroring the Europe Senior Management Team structure). There are currently eight members, of which:

- 8 are women (100%) and 0 men (0%)
- 2 members identify as BAME/BIPOC (25%)

IRC UK staff data collection

In 2021, IRC UK committed to improving our data collection to better understand the IRC UK staff composition and identify any areas for improvement across representation, recruitment, and compensation.

IRC UK now collects GEDI data on a voluntary basis for gender and ethnicity (differentiated between groups within BAME/BIPOC) relative to grade for existing staff, as well as the diversity of shortlisted candidates, again on a voluntary basis. Updates are provided to UKMT monthly.

As of June 2022, IRC UK had 187 total employees, whose self-declared gender and ethnicity rates are:

Gender	% of UK staff
Female	70%
Male	30%

Declared ethnicity	% of UK staff
Black	5%
Asian	11%
Arab	4%
Mixed	5%
Other	0%
White	54%
Prefer not to say	2%
No data	19%

Voluntary declaration of LGBTQ+ status is not currently supported in the global IRC Workday platform; an action is included in the accompanying action plan to encourage this to be added.

In addition to monthly reporting, IRC UK undertakes detailed gender and ethnicity pay gap reporting on a yearly basis.

UK Gender Pay Gap audit

The IRC made a global commitment in 2019 to being a [feminist organisation](#). IRC UK continues to support and commit to the gender equality goals embedded now in the [Global GEDI Strategy](#), and so gender equality remains a priority for this UK GEDI Strategy.

IRC UK publishes a detailed Gender Pay Gap audit each year to inform actions needed to address any pay inequality that may exist. As an organisation with less than 250 employees, IRC UK is not legally required to publish this annual report, but we feel doing so is important for transparency and to enable our staff to contribute to dialogue around gender equality in the workplace.

The most recent [IRC UK Gender Pay Gap report](#) (published in April 2022 from measurement in April 2021) found women on average have a higher hourly pay than men at IRC UK. Specifically:

- The mean gender pay gap for IRC UK was -2% on mean hourly salaries (£26.88 for male staff and £27.52 for female staff)
- The median gender pay gap for IRC UK was -3% on median hourly salaries (£24.33 for male staff and £24.97 for female staff)

This represents a decrease of 1.5% in the mean gender pay gap between women since the previous measurement in April 2020; median gender pay gap has remained the same since 2020. Women are a significant majority of employees at all levels of the organisation, with 69% of full pay relevant employees being women on 5 April 2021. The average salary for women is higher in all quartiles apart from the middle upper. However, all part-time staff at IRC UK are women.



Jean Michael, 27, is a client from Haiti who participated in the IRC's Economic Recovery and Development (ERD) and [Mental Health and Psychosocial Support \(MHPSS\)](#) programs in Tenosique, Mexico.

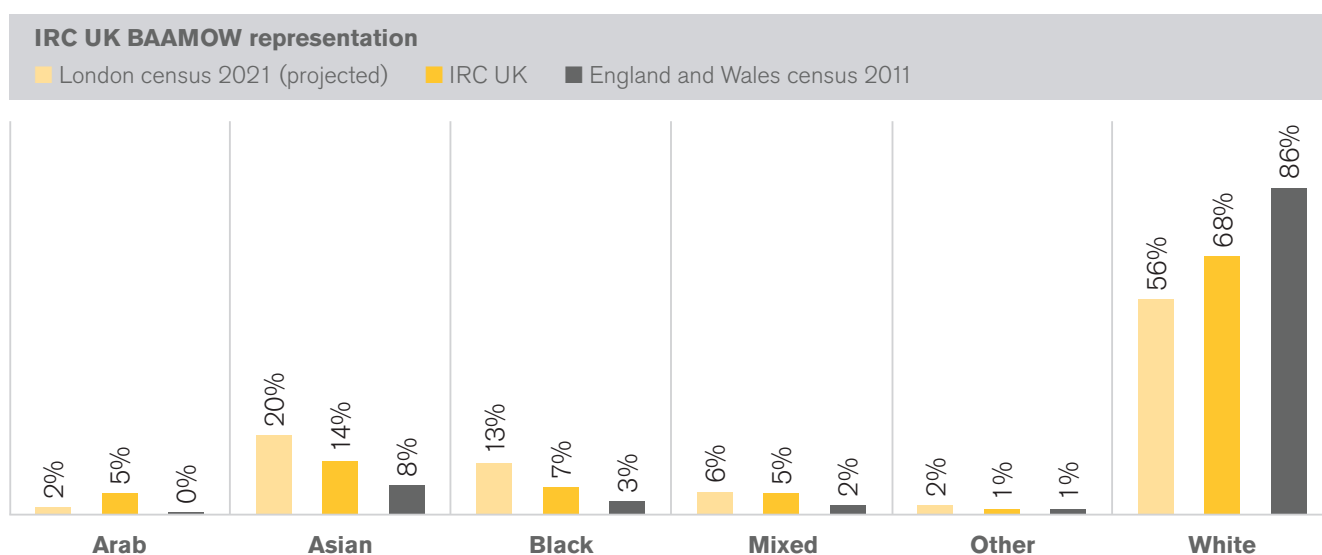
UK Ethnicity Pay Gap audit

As an action of the UK's FY21 D&I Action Plan, IRC UK committed to gathering more data around ethnicity and pay. Ethnicity pay gap reporting is not mandatory to publish in the UK, and indeed only 31% of UK employers currently voluntarily publish their ethnicity pay gap reporting.¹ However, IRC UK is committed to establishing and presenting a full view of ethnicity pay differences within our organisation – and using these data to inform tangible actions that can be taken to address any pay inequality on the basis of ethnicity.

With 76% of IRC UK staff reporting their ethnicity, the most recent [Ethnicity Pay Gap report](#) (published in March 2022 for measurement in August 2021) found that:

Representation:

- There is lower representation across all BAAMO (Black, Asian, Arab, Mixed, Other) ethnic groups except Arab at IRC UK when compared to the projected London 2021 census figures for these groups.² There is higher representation in the White ethnic group at IRC UK compared to the projected 2021 London figures.
- When compared to the England and Wales 2011 census (the most recent nation-wide census available), the opposite is true: there is higher representation at IRC UK across all BAAMO groups compared to the nation-wide census figures for each group, and lower representation of the White group at IRC UK compared to the nation-wide figures.



Pay:

- The mean ethnicity pay gap for IRC UK when considering homogenous grouping of White and BAAMO is 4% (mean hourly pay: £29.65 for White grouping and £28.58 for BAAMO grouping)
- The median ethnicity pay gap for IRC UK is 2% (median hourly pay: £26.15 for White grouping and £25.64 for BAAMO grouping)

IRC UK is confident that its ethnicity pay gap does not stem from paying each ethnic group differently for the same or equivalent work. Rather, its ethnic pay gap is the result of what roles are on offer and the salary grade that they are allocated, and so the salaries that these roles attract and who fills the roles.

This report has highlighted the need to:

- Improve the ethnicity declaration rate to 90% at least
- Increase representation of Black African and Black Caribbean staff, especially in upper quartiles, and to understand the lack of representation of Asian East grouping

¹ Bank of England. Staff working paper No.877: Understanding Pay Gaps. July 2020.

² Greater London Authority. Ethnic group population projections. 2016. <https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/ethnic-group-population-projections>

- Promote consistent representation of all groups at all grade levels and quartiles as this is the only way to reduce the ethnicity pay gaps

Specific actions to address these needs are included in the FY22-24 UK Action Plan.

Disability inclusion

Since 2020, IRC UK has taken part in the Disability Confident employer scheme. This is run by the UK government and provides an assessment and recommendations for how employers can better recruit, retain and develop disabled people. There are three levels of employer accreditation within the scheme:

- 1 Disability Confident Committed > 2 Disability Confident > 3 Disability Confident Leader**

In 2020, IRC UK achieved level 1 with commitments to: inclusive and accessible recruitment, communicating vacancies, offering an interview to disabled people, providing reasonable adjustments, and supporting existing employees.

In 2022, IRC UK achieved level 2, which recognises employers “as going the extra mile to make sure disabled people get a fair chance.”

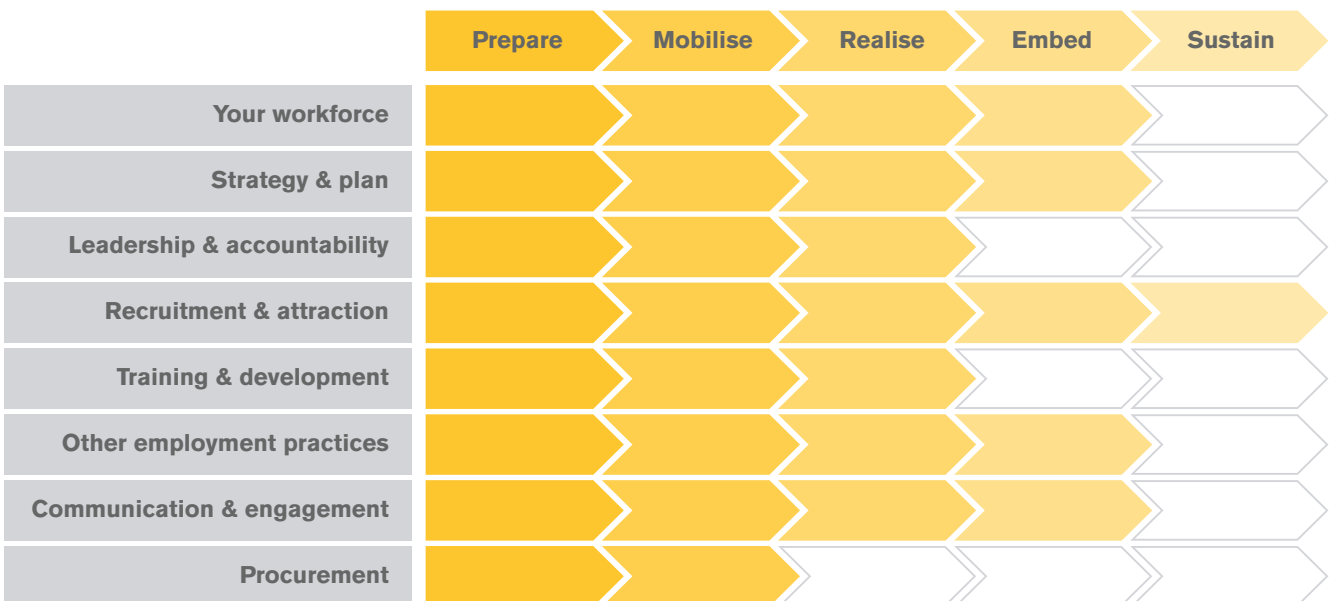
Included in the FY22-24 UK Action Plan is IRC UK’s commitment to reach the third and final level, Disability Confident Leader.

TIDE

IRC UK is a member of the Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion (enei) and completes enei’s Talent Inclusion & Diversity Evaluation (TIDE) annual self-assessment, an external benchmarking tool for evaluating organisations’ performance in diversity and inclusion.

Between IRC UK’s first and second assessments in 2020 and 2021 respectively, our TIDE score improved from 26% to 54%, placing IRC UK in the ‘realise’ stage of enei’s Equality to Inclusion Roadmap. In 2022, this score improved further to 65%, placing IRC UK at the ‘embed’ level overall.

The TIDE assessment provides a thematic breakdown for IRC UK across eight areas in addition to this overall score (see chart below). The area that the assessment highlighted as strongest for IRC UK was recruitment and attraction, followed by workforce, communication and engagement, and strategy and planning. The area for most improvement was procurement, followed by training and development and leadership and accountability. Specific actions related to the 2021 TIDE assessment in these areas are included in the FY22-24 UK Action Plan.



TIP TOP FISH & CHIPS & CHINESE FOOD TO TAKE AWAY



Nasrin and her dad on the morning of her first day of school in Andover, Hampshire. Nasrin's dad Maasom has been supported by the IRC UK's RISE programme which helps resettled refugees as they navigate their new life in the UK.

IRC UK – WHAT STAFF SAY

An important part of the discovery phase was gathering feedback on the gaps and strengths of IRC UK's GEDI progress from staff groups, like the UK BAME/BIPOC Network and Europe PRIDE Network, along with all staff at IRC UK. The key themes that emerged from this feedback were:

- There's been clear **commitment** to and **communication** on GEDI progress from IRC UK leadership, but IRC UK should be sharing its GEDI work in the global IRC network; many UK staff are part of global functional teams, which staff felt can have different, often US-centric, approaches and cultures. Staff shared that it's important to lead by example in the UK, e.g. with the ambitious actions achieved in the FY21 UK D&I Action Plan and future ones set out in this strategy, as well to influence global leadership, e.g. around the Special Committee report.
- It's important to **avoid duplicating** global efforts so that staff are not pulled in different directions and can meet outcomes in the Global GEDI Strategy as well as through the UK GEDI Strategy.
- **Empathy, transparency and consultation** are key; many staff members felt these were missing in the global Special Committee report and leadership's communication around it.
- It's extremely important to **resource future action and those driving it**, e.g. IRC UK staff groups.
- **Data collection** in the UK has improved significantly, but doesn't always have defined actions around it.
- **Refugee voices** are critical, especially now with programmes up and running in the UK.
- **Diversity of leadership** (including the Board) has improved but questions remain around other UK leadership diversity (e.g. UKMT).
- More UK **policies** need to be reviewed with a GEDI lens.
- **Intersectionality** is often missing in the plans that exist.

UK GEDI STRATEGY FY22-24: VISION AND OBJECTIVES

The learnings from the discovery phase identified some key areas where IRC UK needs to focus the next phase of its GEDI action. It also identified the need for IRC UK to balance local action with global ambitions, so that UK staff are working towards the same overall goals as colleagues globally.

This UK GEDI Strategy therefore situates its UK strategic focus areas and actions within the global frameworks now provided by the Global GEDI Strategy.

This is because we are confident that delivering on the commitments in this UK GEDI Strategy will contribute to a meaningful change in the composition and culture of IRC UK, which in turn will support IRC's global GEDI vision that: *At the IRC, our diverse clients, partners, and staff have the power, voice, and agency to shape programmes and operations. Within the IRC, we actively work to end all forms of systemic discrimination and foster an inclusive working environment where everyone feels respected, heard, valued, and supported. Our programmes seek to reduce disparities in outcomes which are driven by systemic inequality.*

Similarly, the UK GEDI Strategy supports the IRC's global GEDI objectives, which can be categorised into three main areas:

1) WHO WE ARE:

We have a diverse and inclusive workforce so our programmes reflect the needs of the communities we serve.

- The IRC has a compensation and benefits programme that ensures the entire workforce is categorised and compensated equitably.
- The IRC has diverse leadership that reflects the places we work and people we serve and key roles in all our departments are based closer to the regions where we work.
- The IRC leadership and management take responsibility for creating an inclusive organisational culture in which every staff member feels safe, respected, valued, supported, and encouraged to bring their full authentic selves to work.

2) WHAT WE DO:

Our programmes maximise power for communities that we serve who are respectfully represented and included in our communications.

- Building on our gender equality tools, IRC mainstreams DEI in our programme design and delivery tools, processes, and accountability mechanisms.
- The IRC's programme design is rooted in rigorous intersectional context analysis by engaging clients, partners, and staff to drive decision-making about the type of programming we do.

3) WHAT WE SAY AND HOW WE ENGAGE:

Our communications, engagement and branding represent the diverse voices at the IRC and the communities that we serve.

- Staff at the IRC have equal access to information, and our internal communication is inclusive and reflective of diverse languages, contexts, lived experiences, and voices.
- External communications reflect our DEI vision and commitment to promoting and ensuring the resilience and lived experiences of the diverse people we work with are accurately illustrated while preserving their dignity and agency.
- External engagement (Communications, Marketing, Fundraising, and Advocacy) decision-making and prioritisation processes center the needs of our clients, staff and partners.

Lastly, the UK GEDI Strategy is also guided by the IRC's global principles of client-centrality, intersectionality, decoloniality, accountability, and engagement.³

³ See page 8 of the Global GEDI Strategy [here](#).

UK GEDI STRATEGY FY22-24: STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS

While our overall vision and objectives reflect those of the global organisation, the UK – and IRC UK – are part of a geographical, historical, legal and cultural context that impact our clients, staff, partners and supporters in particular ways. Our size and composition, including representatives from many global teams and our own programmes, also gives us unique opportunities to act and drive change.

Our strategic approach is therefore to focus on where IRC UK can make the biggest impact: where our unique context makes change necessary and possible, and where we can leverage the strengths and expertise we have in the UK. These areas are informed by the learnings in the discovery phase about specific gaps and strengths in IRC UK, which came from data, sector learnings, other GEDI plans and progress, and most importantly, staff feedback.

These strategic focus areas can be broadly summarised as follows, categorised underneath the global IRC GEDI objectives to which they contribute:

1) WHO WE ARE:

- **Data collection:** Ensuring the GEDI data we have and analyse is as multi-faceted, intersectional and meaningful as it can be, so we can guide our actions with evidence
- **Policies:** Re-examining IRC UK policies through a GEDI-specific lens
- **Leadership diversity:** Making clear our ambitions for the diversity of the UK Board and UKMT, and a plan to work towards those ambitions
- **Recruitment:** Making sure our recruitment processes and the avenues for working at the IRC are as inclusive as they can be, especially for people with lived experience – including our own UK clients
- **Training and development:** Expanding our collective UK staff GEDI knowledge, driving forward an inclusive organisational culture with all managers, and supporting future leaders from underrepresented groups
- **External assessment:** Measuring IRC UK against best GEDI practice in the UK

2) WHAT WE DO:

- **UK RAI:** Building UK programmes with a GEDI focus from the outset, working closely with our clients and building partnerships with migrant-led organisations
- **Supply chain:** Encouraging supplier commitment to GEDI throughout our procurement process and supply chain

3) WHAT WE SAY AND HOW WE ENGAGE:

- **ERGs:** Resourcing, supporting and recognising the contributions of UK employee resource groups (ERGs)
- **Internal engagement:** Making sure we're sharing and championing diversity internally, and doing so transparently and inclusively
- **Monitoring and consultation:** Building a review mechanism for this strategy, ensuring staff continue to have regular opportunities to input into it
- **External communications:** Standardising and expanding GEDI across our approach to external communications
- **Policy and advocacy:** Putting clients at the heart of our policy and advocacy activities, and supporting them to be advocates and leaders themselves
- **Fundraising:** Ensuring we share our clients' work and stories with our UK donors, and lending our voice only to external fundraising events that share a commitment to GEDI

Andrii and his wife Mariia took part in the IRC's World Refugee Day Campaign in 2022: When the war escalated in Kharkiv, the family packed up with their children and pet Labrador Rosie and drove for five days before reaching Bulgaria. There they stayed with a family friend for two months before applying to the UK's sponsorship scheme. They arrived in the UK on 6th May 2022 and are living in Farnham thanks to their sponsor Clara.



UK GEDI STRATEGY FY22-24: ACTIONS

By focusing our next phase of action in the above strategic areas, IRC UK can be sure those actions are addressing the most pressing gaps and building on the strongest foundations in the UK. In short, focusing actions in these areas will allow IRC UK's GEDI efforts to be as impactful as they can be, which means they will in turn progress broader organisational change efforts.

We know that to drive meaningful change, action needs to be specific and accountable. So underneath the strategic areas where we know IRC UK needs to focus, we have set out 75 targeted actions that we want to achieve by the end of FY24 (the end of September 2024).

All of these actions are listed in an [FY22-24 UK GEDI Action Plan](#) with the accountable UKMT member or lead, deadline, current status, and measure of success.

A non-exhaustive list of some key actions are below, listed under the UK strategic focus area and global GEDI objective to which they contribute. For a full and detailed list of all 75 UK actions, again please see the FY22-24 UK GEDI Action Plan above.

	Who we are	What we do	What we say/how we engage
Global objectives	We have a diverse and inclusive workforce so our programmes reflect the needs of the communities that we serve.	Our programmes maximise power for communities we serve who are respectfully represented and included in our communications.	Our communications, engagement and branding represent the diverse voices at the IRC and the communities we serve.
UK focus areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Data collection ▪ Policies ▪ Leadership diversity ▪ Recruitment ▪ Training and development ▪ External assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ UK programmes ▪ Supply chain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Employee resource groups (ERGs) ▪ Internal communication ▪ Monitoring and consultation ▪ External communications ▪ Policy and advocacy ▪ Fundraising
Some key UK actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Guidance for hiring managers (UK and non-UK) on ensuring diverse UK recruitment ▪ Introducing a paid short-term internship for people with lived experience / clients ▪ Expanding the UK apprenticeship scheme ▪ Achieving final level of Disability Confident Employer government initiative ▪ Assessment as an LGBTQ+ friendly workplace 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Requiring suppliers to have an up-to-date DEI policy and action plan ▪ Guidance on consulting – and compensating – UK clients ▪ Setting goals for GEDI data collection in RAI UK programming ▪ Launching a Client Advisory Board for UK programmes ▪ Developing partnerships with migrant-led organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Including participation in ERGs or consultation on GEDI issues in JDs ▪ Developing a strategy around partnering with / amplifying the voices of migrant-led orgs in our RISE communications ▪ Quarterly sharing with global IRC network, via RescueNet or other internal channels, of IRC UK DEI initiatives and progress ▪ Setting metrics to ensure diversity of spokespeople reflected in media coverage and IRC content

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

While many UK-based staff will be involved in the delivery of these actions, UKMT and the UK Executive Director take ultimate responsibility for their success. In order to monitor progress towards them, they will be reviewed and their status updated quarterly in UKMT meetings. Additionally, an update will be given to all staff every quarter by the UK Executive Director, with a mechanism provided for all staff feedback during these updates (e.g. email/Jamboard).

As the UK GEDI Strategy and Action Plan cover FY22-24, a meeting will be set up every six months and representatives from the BAME/BIPOC and PRIDE Networks, the Union, and up to five staff representatives will be invited to take part. Here, the UK Executive Director will provide an update on progress and challenges and lead a discussion on any changes or resources needed, which will then be taken to UKMT for agreement.

During ALP sessions, a component of the ECHO-funded PEACE program, children at Waziri Ibrahim Primary School in Damaturu gain numeracy, literacy and social and emotional skills. ALP sessions target children who have had to drop out of school in conflict-affected North-East Nigeria region and seek to equip them with the skills necessary to return to mainstream education. Fatima, 10, attends the ALP sessions at Waziri Ibrahim Primary School.



APPENDIX 1: CONSULTATION PROCESS BY PHASE

1) Discovery

- Regular updates were given on the strategy development plans and progress in All Staff meetings from February to June 2022.
- In March and April 2022, three listening sessions were held with representatives from staff-led groups/networks (BAME/BIPOC Network, IRC Europe Pride) and staff with technical experience in disability inclusion. The purpose of these discussions was to hear feedback on progress to date and thoughts on what the UK GEDI Strategy should prioritise in the context of functional and staff group work already underway, and identify potential actions to include in the strategy.
- In April 2022, a 'deep-dive' within an All-Staff meeting was held with the UK Executive Director, where all UK staff were invited to share verbal or written thoughts on progress to date as well as priorities for the UK GEDI Strategy.
- In April 2022, UK staff were included in a pan-European GEDI survey. 31% of UK staff responded and their feedback was incorporated into this strategy.
- In April and May respectively, one All Staff meeting was held with the UK Board Chair, Dr Lola Banjoko, and another between the BAME/BIPOC Network and Board GEDI Champions Hugh Bayley and Jacqueline Muna Musiitwa. The purpose of these meetings was to discuss the recently published Special Committee report and to hear thoughts on UK GEDI progress to date and the strategy development.
- During this discovery phase, the UK RAI programme developed its Strategy Action Plan, including a discussion on GEDI. The learnings from that were included in this strategy.

2) Development

- The draft strategy and actions were shared with the following for input:
 - UKMT (including RAI and HR)
 - enei (an external DEI consultancy)
 - IRC Chief Gender Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Officer
- And for awareness/further feedback:
 - The BAME/BIPOC and Pride Networks, disability inclusion experts and Unite the Union
 - All Staff (both at a 15 June All Staff meeting presentation and the full drafts shared in follow up)
 - IRC Europe Senior Management Team

3) Action planning

- Actions from discussions with PRIDE and BAME/BIPOC Networks, disability inclusion experts, procurement, UKMT (including RAI and HR)
- As above, invitation for ideas from an All Staff meeting (15 June)
- All ideas cross referenced against global actions before being agreed and committed to by UKMT
- In agreement with UK RAI, clients will be invited to the regular reviews of the implementation of this strategy once consultation guidelines/mechanisms are established (see action plan for more detail)

APPENDIX 2: DISCOVERY PHASE MATERIALS REVIEWED

	UK	Regional/global
Inform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ FY21 UK D&I plan ▪ UK Board DEI action plan ▪ IRC UK Ethnicity Pay Gap Report (2022) ▪ IRC UK Gender Pay Gap Report (2022) ▪ Work already underway by staff-led groups/networks in the UK, e.g. Global Disability Inclusion Commitments ▪ HR data on staff gender, ethnicity, grade, location of staff, etc. ▪ UK TIDE assessments (2020 and 2021) ▪ International Development Committee report: Racism in the Aid Sector (2022) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Global DEI Strategy 2021 ▪ Global DEI Strategy research and learning outputs ▪ Global 2021 progress report ▪ Global Action Plan (summary and detailed version) ▪ Special Committee report ▪ Europe GEDI survey results (2022) ▪ Global People Survey results (timeframe TBC)
Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Start Network Anti-Racist and Decoloniality Framework (2022) ▪ UK sister organisations' publicly available GEDI plans, e.g. Save the Children, Oxfam GB ▪ BOND report on the experience of people of colour in the sector and follow up blog series ▪ Gender and Development Network's Women of Colour Forum statement on systemic racism and White supremacy (endorsed by IRC UK) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Europe D&I Fund projects (Another RAI, No Single Picture, Champions of Inclusive Culture) ▪ GAP Europe survey results ▪ Europe D&I Fund outputs (esp Refugee Trauma Initiative commissioned research) ▪ RAI Europe DEI plan

Inform = trends in the UK and IRC UK data, global strategic context

Context = context setting and external benchmarking

APPENDIX 3:

IRC UK WORK TO DATE IN DETAIL

IRC UK FY21 D&I Action Plan

In 2020, IRC UK launched a [Diversity & Inclusion action plan](#). This plan followed from the recognition that IRC UK had not expressed a commitment to anti-racism determinedly enough and had not matched this commitment with wide-ranging action that dismantled privilege.

The process involved listening carefully to staff in our BAME/BIPOC (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic and Black, Indigenous, and People of Color⁴) and Pride networks, our Union and disability and inclusion experts. We also assessed ourselves against best practices from other UK employers. We then made a series of 79 specific commitments for action. Of the 79 commitments in this plan, 60 either were complete or embedded in the way we work by April 2022, thanks to UK-based staff and teams. These were things like updating JD guidelines and processes, introducing unconscious bias training, allocating budget to BAME/BIPOC and PRIDE Networks, putting in place a new apprentice position and undertaking ethnicity and gender pay audits alongside external TIDE assessment.

Of the remaining actions, three weren't possible to implement, and the other 16 have been updated to meet current needs and included in the FY22-24 Strategy Action Plan.

IRC UK Board of Trustees

The IRC UK Board of Trustees committed to its [own DEI Action Plan in 2021](#), recognising its role in supporting IRC UK to become a more diverse and inclusive organisation. This included a commitment to become more representative of the people the IRC supports as a crucial part of living up to the responsibilities to good governance of IRC UK.

The Board's Action Plan included a number of commitments, like appointing D&I Board champions, including D&I as a standing item at all Board meetings, participating in annual race sensitisation and unconscious bias training, and importantly, providing Trustees' D&I data, as well as setting goals and timeframes for increasing the diversity of the Board of Trustees. These included a commitment to ensure that lived refugee experience is represented on the Board, to maintain gender balance on the Board, and to increase racial diversity so that at least one third of positions are held by BAME/BIPOC Trustees.

These actions were completed or embedded in the Board's work by the end of FY21, including meeting the above diversity goals: the Board is currently made up of fourteen Trustees, with seven women (50%) and seven men (50%), five Trustees who identify as BAME/BIPOC (38%), and three (23%) with lived experience of conflict and displacement. Trustees continue to ensure these goals are maintained and are committed to continuing to build on this progress.

IRC Global GEDI Strategy and Action Plan

In April 2021, the IRC launched a global Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion Strategy. This focused on actively shifting power "to where it rightfully belongs: the communities we serve, including frontline staff, clients, and partner organisations," and "expand[ing] on our efforts to break the cycle of reinforcing and perpetuating systemic discrimination that exists in our sector" and in turn support our global DEI vision:

At the IRC, our diverse clients, partners, and staff have the power, voice, and agency to shape programs and operations. Within the IRC, we actively work to end all forms of systemic discrimination and foster an inclusive working environment where everyone feels respected, heard, valued, and supported. Our programs seek to reduce disparities in outcomes that are driven by systemic inequality.

⁴ The IRC UK Network uses the term BAME/BIPOC, so this strategy refers to it throughout. IRC UK data collection included later in this strategy differentiates between specific categories within BAAMOW (Black, Asian, Arab, Mixed, Other, White).

The Global GEDI Strategy identified three pillars of objectives:

- 1) **Who We Are:** We have a diverse and inclusive workforce so our programmes reflect the needs of the communities we serve.
- 2) **What We Do:** Our programmes maximise power for communities that we serve who are respectfully represented and included in our communications.
- 3) **What We Say and How We Engage:** Our communications, engagement and branding represent the diverse voices at the IRC and the communities that we serve.

A [global GEDI Action Plan](#) was published in 2022 and details actions and accountability measures for the IRC globally towards these objectives through 2025.

A cross-cutting theme of the Global GEDI Strategy and Action Plan is shifting power towards local partners and communities. Although IRC UK does not run international programmes directly, we fully support the global recognition that there is a significant power imbalance in interactions with clients and partners, who are not engaged consistently and equitably in decisions about the type of assistance the IRC provides and how services are delivered. Through our UK programming, communications and policy and advocacy work, we will take action toward addressing this, and support the global commitment to meaningfully collaborate with local communities in the IRC's work. We will also ensure that we actively contribute to and encourage IRC to act on the necessary discussions about localisation within the UK charity sector.

Strategy 100 and IRC mission

The IRC's organisational mission is to help people whose lives and livelihoods are shattered by conflict and disaster, including the climate crisis, to survive, recover and regain control over their future. In order to truly fulfill this mission, the IRC must better understand and address different forms of systemic inequalities within our organisation, and how these inequalities impact many of our clients and colleagues worldwide.

This strategy aims to contribute to this progress, and also reinforces the guiding vision of the Strategy100, the IRC's organisational strategy. This vision is ultimately to empower our clients to make meaningful change in their lives; again, like our mission, this vision speaks to the systemic inequality that prevents our clients from realising their power.

Specifically, Strategy 100 includes a Diversity Ambition under its 'People Goal', which focuses specifically on diversifying our leadership and ensuring that our culture and HR practices are more inclusive and equitable. Strategy 100 also includes 'Partners and Clients' Ambitions with commitments to share power and resources with people, governments, and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in the places where we work to shape the services provided to achieve better outcomes for people and their communities.

Special Committee Report

In June 2021, the global IRC Board of Directors created a four-person Special Committee to oversee a review of concerns regarding the IRC's global approach to promoting diversity, equality, and inclusion.

The Special Committee engaged the law firm WilmerHale to conduct an independent review. In March 2022, the Special Committee shared a report available to all IRC employees with the key findings of the WilmerHale review.

The report includes specific recommendations for the IRC globally around three key themes. While most are for global functions to lead, the report contains several recommendations that do have relevance for IRC UK and we have considered them in the development of this strategy and included relevant actions:

- Leadership diversity
- Inclusive management training
- Leadership commitment to an inclusive working environment
- Monitoring DEI goals

Many IRC staff, including in the UK, contributed to the investigation conducted by WilmerHale and have fed back that the final report did not meet their expectations. Many UK staff feel that the report's conclusions do not reflect their own lived experiences of racism and discrimination at the IRC, and that acknowledging these experiences is a necessary first step towards change. While we factor the report's findings and recommendations into this strategy, we are also guided by the principle that ultimately it is our staff and clients who must be the judge of whether or not our work to tackle racism and discrimination is sufficient – and the success or not of this strategy will be monitored and decided by them.

APPENDIX 4:

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

REPORT ON RACISM IN THE AID SECTOR

The report urged donors like the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), multilateral organisations, international non-governmental organisations like the IRC, and private sector contractors to recognise racism in the sector. The main findings included:

- There is an urgent need to shifting decision-making power and resources to the communities these actors work with.
- The manner in which some cuts to UK funded aid programmes took place, with little or no consultation of the implementing partners or the communities affected, demonstrated the power imbalance that exists and the urgent need for equity.
- The aid sector's workforce does not reflect those it works with. High barriers to entry make it challenging for staff from under-represented groups to obtain core policy jobs in the sector. Data shows under-representation at all levels, with the least diversity in leadership positions, and inequalities in the positions and pay available to internationally hired staff which are often not available to locally hired staff.

While most recommendations from the report are aimed at FCDO to take forward, it also includes recommendations aimed at INGOs like the IRC. These are listed below, along with specific indications of how they are either already embedded in the way IRC UK works, including from actions from the FY21 UK D&I Action Plan and Global GEDI Action Plan, or how the UK Action Plan for FY22-24 addresses them.

Communications and storytelling

- Fundraising appeals should depict positive, realistic stories and wherever possible use local filmmakers. They should seek to inform audiences about the drivers of poverty and inequality instead of giving simplistic messages about the difference donations can make.
 - The IRC already strengthened brand guidelines defining the use of imagery and language as it portrays our clients, including 40 training sessions for over 410 staff, consultants and agencies to ensure our narratives empower and depict people with dignity and agency. The FY22-24 Action Plan includes 20+ further actions under section 3 to ensure our communications, engagement and branding represent the diverse voices at the IRC and the communities that we serve.
- The aid sector should have a conversation that includes the communities it works with to develop positive and inclusive working terminology, the FCDO should consider how it can lead this work.
 - The IRC globally is finalising a GEDI Lexicon and guidelines for inclusive language, as well as a GEDI-specific Communications Master Document and guidebook, ensuring IRC's media, communication, and branding materials do not promote a racist, elitist or patriarchal neocolonial mentality. In the UK, we will work with BOND to encourage FCDO to lead a cross-sector initiative on this.
- Guidelines on informed consent for obtaining and using images should be observed just as thoroughly in relation to individuals from the communities that aid organisations work with, as they are in the UK. It is unacceptable for images to be used and re-used without the subject's express consent.
 - The IRC has had detailed informed consent process in place for several years. See [here](#).

Data on racism and diversity in the aid sector

- Aid organisations, including private sector contractors, with more than 50 staff should measure and publish their ethnicity pay gap data in order to be held accountable. It will also help them to identify if there are inequalities in their workforce that should be addressed.
 - IRC UK publishes both gender and ethnicity pay gaps annually. See [here](#).

- Donors and aid organisations should reduce barriers to entry by ending the use of unpaid internships and paying all employees the living wage and removing unnecessary stipulations in job applications such as years of experience in the international aid sector and higher degrees that disadvantage individuals from under-represented backgrounds.
 - IRC UK does not hire un-paid interns, and is seeking funding for a paid internship specifically for UK RAI clients or those with lived experience of conflict and displacement in FY23 (see Action Plan section 1.2).
 - IRC UK is member of the Living Wage Foundation and has a policy not to pay employees a salary lower than 15% higher than the full-time annual salary based on the hourly London living wage.
 - IRC UK already requires UK hiring managers to check JDs for neutral language and remove credentialism (higher degrees where not directly relevant to the qualifications required for the role). Stronger guidance on this for non-UK hiring managers recruiting for UK-based roles is included in the FY22-24 Action Plan (section 1.2).
- All aid organisations should have effective processes in place to tackle instances of racism when they occur. They should also be able to measure and assess whether those processes are working.
 - The IRC globally has a 24/7 Ethics Hotline, a confidential way to report concerns about misconduct related to DEI (as well as other concerns). These are sent to the IRC's Ethics and Compliance Unit.
 - The 2021 Special Committee report included recommendations for the IRC to provide employees with more clarity and transparency regarding HR's role in conducting investigations and to do more to ensure that investigations are handled consistently and with the appropriate level of care and urgency. Actions related to this recommendation will be shared from global leadership.
- All aid organisations, including private sector contractors should reflect on their diversity data and seek to understand if their recruitment practices need strengthening to support talented candidates from diverse backgrounds. We need sector-wide cooperation to share best practice and identify how the recruitment process can better facilitate candidates from diverse backgrounds to enter core roles in the aid sector.
 - A number of actions toward recruitment practices were achieved in the UK FY21 D&I Action Plan, like ensuring all UK-based hiring managers have access to unconscious bias training and job postings include specific statements to encourage diverse applications.
 - In the FY22-24 Action Plan, further actions include (see section 1.2 for full list):
 - Developing stronger guidance for non-UK hiring managers on ensuring diverse shortlisting / recruitment for roles in the UK.
 - Specialised training provided to HR departments to support hiring of people with refugee/ asylum status.
 - Expanding the FY21 apprenticeship scheme.
- Aid organisations, including private sector contractors, should publicly acknowledge that racism exists in the sector and prioritise anti-racism work that tackles the underlying culture of their workplaces and not just the racial diversity of their staff. This will include making space for open, honest and often difficult conversations. It also requires them to welcome ideas and approaches suggested by staff who are Black, Indigenous and People of Colour.
 - IRC UK's public FY21 Action Plan and this strategy make explicit acknowledgement of racism in the section and our commitment to anti-racism work; this is reflected in other public facing materials like regular [press releases](#) and updates from the UK Executive Director and our [D&I webpage](#) on [rescue-uk.org](#).
- Aid organisations and private sector contractors with a large enough leadership team should appoint senior leaders with the remit to tackle racism and increase diversity, equity and inclusion in their organisations, with the full support of the senior leadership team.
 - The IRC globally has a Chief Gender, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer (Cica DADJO) who reports to the global COO. A senior GEDI leadership position in Europe is currently being recruited.



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