



From here to anti-racism

Audit and recommendations for the UK
Committee for UNICEF

Executive Summary

November 2022

About the audit

Purpose of the audit

Full Colour was commissioned in Autumn 2021 to identify whether racism exists within the UK Committee for UNICEF (UNICEF UK), and if so to what extent. Full Colour was also asked to devise recommendations to address the issues we found. The audit outcome was agreed as:

“Building on what the organisation already knows, to develop a shared understanding across all key stakeholders of the extent to which and how racism currently manifests at UNICEF UK. This is to enable UNICEF UK to create targeted and relevant actions, which the whole organisation can embrace on UNICEF UK's journey towards becoming anti-racist.”

Methodology

The methodology for this audit was co-created with a UNICEF UK Anti-Racism Working Group, and at each stage of the audit, Full Colour tested what we found with them to ensure no substantive issues had been missed. In the latter stages of the audit, we also spoke with a wider UNICEF UK Advisory Group with whom we tested the findings and recommendations. Both groups had representatives from different levels of the hierarchy and with different backgrounds and identities.

The audit consisted of an extensive desk review, 1:1 interviews, online qualitative research and focus groups. Data gathering took place between December 2021 and June 2022.

Context

As the audit was being conducted, UNICEF UK was rolling out several initiatives to address issues of equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI), so things were evolving at the same time as data was being gathered. Therefore, the research would not have been able to assess the impact these initiatives might be having.

Who we spoke to and how

Structure of data gathering

The audit was conducted in several phases to ensure that Full Colour was able to collect comprehensive, robust data and to deepen our understanding of what has been happening at UNICEF UK on issues of racial equity and racism.

The initial phase of work involved a desk review of key documents and a small number of interviews which enabled Full Colour to download what UNICEF UK already knew about issues of race prior to this audit.

The findings from this initial phase shaped the questions explored in an online research project which invited all staff to share their views and experiences. 124 people took part.

The key themes from this online research were explored in more depth through 13 focus groups, some of which were cross organisational, and some specifically for racially minoritized groups. In total, 63 people took part.

Ensuring robust recommendations

The recommendations were tested with the UNICEF UK Anti-Racism Working Group and the UNICEF UK Advisory Group. Early drafts of this report were also tested with the UNICEF UK Anti-Racism Working Group, members of UNICEF UK's Racial Justice Network and other colleagues at UNICEF UK.

What led to the audit

Allegations of racism

In 2021 UNICEF UK was publicly accused of institutional racism. This triggered the audit; however, the public accusation came on the heels of a number of internal issues and incidents related to racism that the organisation had dealt with in recent years.

Disparity of experience

Data from the 2021 Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Survey showed a disparity of experience between people of colour and white colleagues at UNICEF UK, and that trust in leaders had been damaged. The UNICEF UK Racial Justice Network (RJN) reported the impact of a restructure on people of colour. With many entry level roles lost in the restructure, the RJN was concerned that people of colour were at a structural disadvantage in seeking to join UNICEF UK.

Erosion of trust

Issues including a delay in publishing ethnicity pay gap data and a perceived unwillingness to share the equality impact assessment of the restructure further damaged trust. While UNICEF UK says these can be explained by wider organisational issues such as the impact of Covid and the need to ensure those affected by the restructure were not identifiable from the equality impact assessment, for those whose trust had already been damaged, these two things deepened mistrust.

Concerns about structural and interpersonal racism

Staff told Full Colour that the lack of ethnic diversity amongst leaders was a concern, and there was anecdotal evidence of covert and subtle racism being experienced by colleagues of colour.

Inclusion

On equity, diversity and inclusion more widely, only 36% of staff were aware of their department's commitment to inclusion, and staff believed there to be an inconsistent commitment to and understanding of EDI amongst leaders.

All the factors above provided the context within which Full Colour was commissioned to conduct an anti-racism audit.

What UNICEF UK has done so far

Inclusion initiatives

A range of initiatives and projects have been developed and rolled out on inclusion during 2021 and throughout 2022. This followed the development of an EDI strategy in 2020.

Foundations have been laid for creating a culture of inclusion and enabling leaders to take a more active role in driving change. This includes training for leaders and staff on EDI, the creation of seven inclusion principles, and a number of cross organisational collaboration projects on inclusion. UNICEF UK has also established departmental, team and personal objectives around inclusion.

Employee voice

A programme to ensure "employee voice" is more effectively heard has been established and the role, structure and support for the various staff networks that form part of Inclusive UNICEF have been enhanced. This includes creating a governance structure for these staff networks which makes clearer how their voices will be heard in decision making.

Internal reviews

Reviews have been carried out into issues and incidents prior to the audit which in some instances have led to changes in policies and procedures.

Key findings: what's going well

Foundations of change are being laid

A number of initiatives have been rolled out to create the foundations of change. Examples include:

- There is a clear vision, theory of change and a set of projects and design principles to support UNICEF UK to become more inclusive
- Staff networks such as the Racial Justice Network (RJN) are in place
- Ethnicity pay reporting is in place
- A new recruitment platform has been introduced to anonymise and debias recruitment
- There is Executive level sponsorship for the work and the new Chief Executive has taken an active role in overseeing change

- Data is being collected annually on colleagues' experiences through an EDI survey
- Departmental and personal objectives have been developed in support of inclusion at UNICEF UK

Committed individuals

Beyond the key players involved in driving change on EDI, there is a clear cohort of people throughout UNICEF UK who are committed to help change the organisation for the better. This was evident from discussions with all those who took part in face-to-face research with Full Colour.

Hope

Importantly, there are the beginnings of hope that change is possible. This was apparent to Full Colour from the focus groups we conducted towards the end of data gathering.

UNICEF UK also report seeing this hope reflected in recent staff engagement surveys. While not yet experienced consistently at UNICEF UK, hope provides an important foundation on which to build change towards anti-racism, once UNICEF UK has defined what that change will look like.

Key findings: areas to consider and address

Little clarity on anti-racism

While there has been considerable effort to improve inclusion at UNICEF UK, inclusion is not the same as anti-racism. Those leading EDI understand that there is work to be done in defining, resourcing and working towards anti-racism goals. The commissioning of this audit is an early phase of this work.

Where anti-racism sits within wider work on EDI remains unclear to most staff. There is little organisational understanding of what anti-racism is, no shared understanding of what UNICEF UK should be working towards achieving or how it will address and eliminate racism within the organisation.

Some report experiencing racism, others do not

While no examples were shared of overt racism, covert and everyday racism is a regular experience at UNICEF UK for some colleagues of colour. However, the picture is not consistent, with some colleagues of colour reporting that they have not experienced racism at UNICEF UK.

The form of racism reported by those who have experienced it largely relates to microaggressions. Twenty-four separate types of microaggressions were identified by research participants.

All UNICEF UK staff were invited to take part in online research. When asked to rate the extent of racism within the organisation on a numeric scale from 1 (which meant "not at all") to 7 (which meant "completely"), 24 out of the 34

minority ethnic participants (70%) scored the level of racism at UNICEF UK at 4 and above. However, 18 out of 34 participants (53%) stated that they had not themselves experienced racism at UNICEF UK.

Of white participants in the online research 43 out of 90 (48%) had witnessed some form of racism at UNICEF UK.

Continued disparity of experience

Full Colour understands that data gathered after Full Colour's audit had ended shows that the disparity of experience between white colleagues and people of colour that we had seen from the 2021 data, continues. Efforts are being made to address this. For example, Full Colour understands that work is planned to understand and remove the barriers to career progression for minoritized groups.

Danger of over-promising

On the wider EDI programme, an impressive amount of work has been done to lay the foundations for creating a more equitable and inclusive UNICEF UK, but Full Colour would caution against over-promising the change in experience that can be delivered through this work. The change UNICEF UK is seeking will take time and involves transforming how people think and behave. It is also important that UNICEF UK actively works to make sure staff are brought along a journey of understanding as well as action, to ensure any change achieved is deep and long lasting.

Addressing racism being experienced now while building an inclusive future

Given becoming more inclusive takes time, how will UNICEF UK balance this with ensuring urgent and meaningful action is taken to address the racism and harms colleagues of colour are experiencing now? There needs to be specific and immediate action to address racism now. The recommendations in this report will give you a strong place to start.

Emotion is holding you back

Work to address racism is being held back by emotion which can be grouped under three headings:

- Feelings of hurt, anger and frustration among those impacted by racism
- White colleagues' feelings of fear of saying or doing the wrong thing and/or being called out for it
- White colleagues who want to be good allies but are worried about doing or saying the wrong thing

No clear process for addressing racism

There is currently no targeted and specific process on how to report and address racism. This is more than about having a document with a written

down process. It is about equipping people to address reports effectively and provide appropriate support to those involved. While colleagues who are part of the Racial Justice Network and Inclusive UNICEF are actively supporting colleagues experiencing racism, this is putting an emotional burden on them which is neither fair nor sustainable. Full Colour has been told that there is an overall process for raising concerns, however all those with whom we tested the findings of this report felt that a specific policy on reporting and addressing racism is needed.

Wider organisational issues are intersecting with EDI and how people experience racism at UNICEF UK

Wider issues of organisational culture and structures at UNICEF UK are impeding progress towards genuine inclusion and anti-racism. Examples include how power and hierarchy works, a perceived aversion to risk and a focus on legalistic and process driven approaches to tackling issues around racism without sufficiently considering the human impact.

Staff want leaders to play a more active, visible role

Colleagues offered significant challenge to leadership to step up and into a more active role in driving change on anti-racism, including taking active steps to learn about the issues. While the efforts of a small number of leaders was praised, a more consistent, visible and concerted effort from all leaders was believed necessary if genuine and deep change is to happen.

What would an anti-racist UNICEF UK look like?

Full Colour asked research participants what behaviours, systems, and leadership would look like if UNICEF UK was anti-racist. We also asked what an anti-racist UNICEF UK would feel like. What we were told is set out below.

Anti-racist behaviours

The main behaviours would include:

- Being able to challenge safely
- Calling out racism
- More reflection and learning
- Celebrating diversity
- A recognition that the journey of change at UNICEF UK needs to be a shared one between those experiencing racism and others
- Acting to generate trust

Anti-racist systems

Systems and processes would include:

- Unbiased recruitment*
- Standard processes for dealing with racism

- The involvement of staff networks representing minoritized groups in key decision making and project development

**NOTE: Full Colour has been told that a system to debias recruitment has been in place since January 2022, however this issue came up in what people told us, so is reflected in this report.*

Anti-racist leadership

Leadership would:

- Be more diverse
- Lead by example
- Speak out publicly about anti-racism

How an anti-racist UNICEF UK would feel

An anti-racist UNICEF UK would feel:

- Safe
- Aligned with UNICEF UK's stated values and mission
- Like there was a proactive approach to anti-racism
- Like levels of trust were high
- Bolder
- Fair
- Less hierarchical

Principles and decisions for UNICEF UK

Before acting on Full Colour's recommendations on becoming anti-racist, we recommend UNICEF UK embrace three principles and decisions.

Principle 1: Work with global colleagues at UNICEF to determine solutions

The first principle is to work with colleagues across the global organisations that make up the UNICEF family.

UNICEF UK does not exist in isolation. It is part of a family of organisations that make up UNICEF. The decisions UNICEF UK takes may have ramifications for colleagues globally, e.g. it may have a short term impact on funds raised (though we recognise this is not inevitable).

Equally UNICEF UK is in the privileged position of being able to learn from colleagues across the globe in ways that can and should inform your anti-racism work.

This principle matters because:

- If decolonisation is part of your anti-racism journey (see below), you cannot do this work without the cooperation and input of global UNICEF colleagues

- Decolonising (see below) can't be imposed by a "northern"/high income country on other countries it works with in the UNICEF family. Imposing decisions would go against the whole ethos of decolonisation

Principle 2: Define where you stand on decolonisation

The second principle is to decide how you will genuinely decolonise your work.

While work has begun on, for example, considering the imagery you use, decolonisation involves much harder choices, such as how to give up power currently held in "northern", high income countries. What might that look like? How can your efforts to decolonise your work be congruent with the culture you create and the experience of colleagues of colour at UNICEF UK?

Full Colour understands that the responsibility for some of these decisions and factors may sit outside of UNICEF UK and within other parts of the UNICEF family. This is something for UNICEF UK to consider and address appropriately.

This principle matters because:

- It will provide clarity on the decolonisation journey
- It will allow you to deepen your work to decolonise
- It will make the journey more manageable and tangible

Principle 3: Agree how leadership for EDI and anti-racism work will evolve

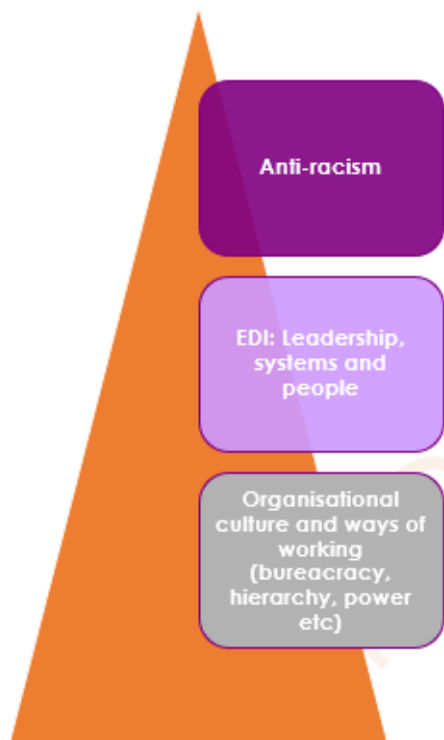
The third principle is about how you will evolve and maintain senior level leadership of anti-racism work so that this is visible to the organisation and embedded into leaders' roles. Agreeing and communicating this will be a key element of rebuilding trust.

Full Colour offers two options on how anti-racism and EDI work could be led at UNICEF UK, setting out pros and cons of both approaches. See Chapter 8.

Summary of recommendations

The detailed recommendations are set out in Chapter 9. The diagram below summarises the recommendations and shows how they inter-relate.

Structure of recommendations



Summary of recommendations

1. Define anti-racism and your goals
2. Train people to understand racism and address microaggressions
3. Develop and train people on a racism reporting process
4. Build an explicit commitment to anti-racism into partnership agreements
5. Build on safe spaces offered by RJN
6. Reframe allyship as collaboration

1. Devise/communicate leadership role on EDI
2. Deepen inclusive leadership programme & track how leaders evolve
3. Agree Trustee role on EDI and wider board role
4. Agree a single clear route map which brings together all EDI and anti-racism strands
5. Set budget that matches route map
6. Build EDI into team plans
7. Formally allocate time for network representatives' roles
8. Train/support network representatives in their leadership role
9. Consult and agree on conditions for diverse people to thrive
10. Coaching for network and D&I Leads
11. Establish learning circles
12. Simplify EDI governance structures

And continue to:

- Publish publicly trustee EDI annual report
- Develop and publish internal annual report from CEO on progress and next steps
- Review success in recruiting to diversity and amend plans based on progress
- Continue to publish pay gap data
- Continue to develop and roll out your Inclusive Talent Strategy

Full Colour has not made recommendations on wider organisational issues such as power and hierarchy that intersect with EDI and anti-racism, as this sits outside of the scope of what we were commissioned to do. However, we encourage UNICEF UK to consider these wider issues as they have an impact on the recommendations we've made on EDI and anti-racism.