Reconstructing
Children’s Rights
An online institute about dismantling racism, neo-colonialism, and patriarchy in humanitarian and development efforts to protect children and support families

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Briefing Paper #6:

How Can Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion be Understood and Applied in Humanitarian and Development Organizations?

OVERVIEW

Over the course of this last year, the Reconstructing Children’s Rights Institute has recognized and unpacked the power imbalances inherent in the international development and humanitarian aid industries and more specifically in international children’s rights and child protection. Through a series of recorded discussions and accompanying learning materials, these conversations have highlighted how racism, neo-colonialism, and patriarchy are embedded in the industry’s structures and underpin the ways in which humanitarian and development actors conceptualize and enact child rights and child protection in countries all over the world.

Over the last 18 months, numerous international non-government organizations (INGOs), UN agencies, multilateral agencies, bilateral donors, philanthropic donors, among other institutions have reflected upon these power imbalances and tried to tackle these issues via the lenses of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). DEI is “a term used to describe programs and policies that encourage representation and participation of diverse groups of people, including people of different genders, races and ethnicities, abilities and disabilities, religions, cultures, ages, and sexual orientations.” Organizations have set up working groups, developed policies and guidelines, and issued statements.

This session will reflect on the successes and shortcomings of these DEI initiatives and the broader 18-month endeavor to “decolonize aid” and “shift power.” The conversation will unpack the international children’s rights and child protection industry’s forms of discrimination, inequalities, implicit biases, and realities of exclusion. And, by reflecting on their own personal experiences in settings around the world, the experts will discuss how we can center non-Global North stakeholders and organizations to inform the necessary changes and adapt and shift DEIA approaches to work in different contexts and organizational realities.

1. What are Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)? (techtarget.com)
Speaker Biographies:

Chernor Bah, Co-Founder and Chief Executive, Purposeful

Chernor Bah is a globally recognised champion of girls’ rights, global education and youth development. He is the Co-founder and Co-CEO of Purposeful - the first Africa rooted, global feminist hub for girl’s activism. At 15, Chernor founded and led the Children’s Forum Network, a mass movement of children who mobilised to demand their voices be included in peace and reconciliation efforts after Sierra Leone’s civil war. In 2012, Bah co-founded A World at School – a global mobilisation and campaign organisation for education. He has been appointed numerous times by the United Nations Secretary-General and is a frequent speaker and advisor at high-level platforms including the United Nations, The European Union, the World Bank and at major universities around the world.
**Speaker Biographies:**

**Santi Kusumaningrum, Co-Founder and Director, PUSKAPA**

Santi Kusumaningrum is the co-founder and director of PUSKAPA, a think tank that uses evidence to realise changes in Indonesia. With the center, she manages policy advocacy and the implementation of solutions she and her team design based on research. PUSKAPA also mobilises young people’s capacity to enhance civic engagement. PUSKAPA work focuses on addressing and mitigating the implications of poverty, violence, discrimination, and social-environmental risks in children and at-risk individuals. PUSKAPA also works to ensure that everyone is counted since birth and their privacy is protected while their data are managed ethically and with accountability to inform policy decisions. Lastly, PUSKAPA works to realise civil rights of children in and outside the justice system. Santi envisions a younger leadership in PUSKAPA by 2025 at the latest. One of her priorities now is preparing for that and ensuring that the work of PUSKAPA sustains. In the academic world, Santi seeks to build scientific and ethical rigour in social justice.
Speaker Biographies:

Marie-Rose Romain Murphy, President, RMC-Romain Murphy Consulting

Marie-Rose Romain Murphy is the President of RMC-Romain Murphy Consulting, a nonprofit management and strategy firm that works with U.S and International organizations on community, organizational and resource development. She is the Founder of ESPWA, Inc. (Economic Stimulus Projects for Work and Action), a Haitian-led organization focusing on the long-term development of Haitian organizations working in Haiti. She is also the Co-Founder of the Fondation Communautaire Haitienne-Espwa, Haiti’s first community foundation. In her more than 25 years’ experience as a social entrepreneur, a community development practitioner, and a management consultant, Marie-Rose has worked to create sustainable pathways of development for and with low-income individuals, marginalized communities, and developing countries. She earned an MBA from Babson College, an MS in Community Economic Development from New Hampshire College, and a BS in Journalism from Boston University. Born and raised in Haiti, she is fluent in French, Haitian Kreyol, and English.
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