

Practical ACTION

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Practical Action's vision is for a world that works better for everyone. We believe that this can only be achieved when all people – regardless of their race, ethnicity, age, religion, sex, class, tribe, caste, sexual orientation, disability, or any other difference – are heard, respected, valued and included.

We stand against all forms of discrimination. In countries where we work across Africa, South Asia and South America, we see first-hand how discrimination contributes to poverty. With communities, stakeholders and decision-makers, we work towards long term changes so that people can overcome poverty. This includes confronting discrimination, and supporting people who are marginalised to have a voice in the decisions that profoundly affect their lives.

Our work in Zimbabwe and Peru, for example, has enabled smallholder vegetable and cacao farmers to build a more equitable relationship with big buyers, negotiating fairer terms and prices and making investment decisions that affect their lives. In Kenya, women and men living in one of the poorest, and most marginalised informal settlements are actively shaping the decisions of the county government and water companies on the types of services they receive, their costs and how they are managed. In Bangladesh, municipalities are including informal settlement residents in their waste and sanitation planning. While we celebrate these tangible results, we also recognise that there is much more that we must do to tackle unjust systems that prevent people from achieving their potential.

As a global organisation, we value the richness of perspectives and experiences that a diverse workforce brings. We seek to create a more inclusive and equitable workplace in which everyone is accepted and respected, regardless of their differences, and where everyone's contribution is valued.

The Black Lives Matter movement is rightly challenging us to be even more thoughtful in how we tackle injustice across all that we do. Our leadership is shared across our teams in the Global South and the UK and decision-making is driven by a balance between global coherence and local relevance. In 2016, recognising that “head office” power was still too embedded in the UK, we embarked on a journey to work as a more globally networked organisation distributing decision making and sharing learning more effectively between teams everywhere. We have also launched initiatives to increase awareness of conscious and unconscious bias with our teams and developed policies on diversity and dignity at work. These are a start but they are not enough. We now need to go further to truly embrace our vision of a world that works better for everyone.

Big change starts small

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Over the coming year, we will focus on strengthening our internal culture, practices and systems to fully reflect our commitment to equity and inclusion for all those who work with us. We will listen to the views, experiences and recommendations of our staff and Board of Trustees and learn from other organisations. A plan of action that to more meaningfully practice and promote diversity, equity and inclusion in the work place, including targets and reporting and accountability mechanisms will be led by our Board of Trustees and Strategic Leadership Team.