



EXAMINING ANTI-RACISM AND ANTI-COLONIALISM

in the Baring Foundation's International
Development programme

By Arbie Baguios, Aid Re-imagined

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About the Baring Foundation

The Baring Foundation is an independent foundation which protects and advances human rights and promotes inclusion.

Since 2015, our International Development programme has supported civil society organisations to address discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI+) individuals and communities in sub-Saharan Africa, with a specific focus on lesbian and transgender communities.

The Baring Foundation commissioned Aid Re-imagined to review the International Development programme through the lens of anti-racism and anti-colonialism as part of a wider review of the programme strategy in 2021. This in turn is part of a wider commitment by the Baring Foundation to broaden our focus on racial justice from 2020 onwards. To find out more, see: baringfoundation.org.uk/blog-post/new-baring-foundation-funding-for-racial-justice.

The Foundation is grateful to Arbie for this report.

About the author

Arbie Baguios is the founder of Aid Re-imagined, an initiative that advocates for aid justice and effectiveness. Through this initiative, Arbie has worked with various international aid organisations on issues including anti-racism, decolonization, and localization of aid. He has previously worked for ActionAid, Save the Children, the Red Cross, UNICEF and other non-governmental organisations. He is currently pursuing doctoral research at the London School of Economics. He is originally from the Philippines.

Contents

Summary	2
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Definitions of racism and colonialism	4
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Racism and colonialism in philanthropy	5
Mechanisms	5
Effects	7
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Addressing racism and colonialism in the Baring Foundation	12
Practices to keep	12
Areas for improvement	14
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Summary

Racism and **colonialism** manifest themselves in distinct ways within the philanthropy sector – including in international development and LGBTQI+¹ rights space. This could be inequities internally within an organisation (for example, lack of diversity among staff and leadership) or in its partnerships and programmes (such as inequitable access to funding of Global South partners). These ultimately may have a negative impact on an organisation’s work and their recipient people and communities.

This report was commissioned by the Baring Foundation as part of a mid-term strategy review of its International Development programme which supports civil society organisations to address discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI+) individuals and communities in sub-Saharan Africa, with a specific focus on lesbian and transgender communities.

Based on Focus Group Discussions and interviews with 21 Baring Foundation stakeholders (including 10 from partners in the Global South), this report aims to provide recommendations on:

- defining anti-colonialism and anti-racism in the context of stakeholders’ work;
- effective anti-colonial and anti-racist practice among grantmakers;
- the work of the Baring Foundation and how it embodies (or not) best practice;
- steps it can and should consider as part of its future strategy.

This report finds that the stakeholders understand racism and colonialism in the context of their work with the Foundation as manifest in two broad categories:

- 1. The mechanisms:**
Which regards white people as superior, including their ideas.
- 2. The effects:**
That is, its impact on their context and work.

MECHANISMS

The stakeholders identified three salient mechanisms of racism and colonialism in their work:

- 1. White supremacy:**
Which regards white people as superior, including their ideas.
- 2. Neocolonisation:**
In which postcolonial societies experience new forms of control, extraction and exploitation.
- 3. Capitalism:**
That serves as an underlying driver of racism and colonialism.

EFFECTS

In the context of the Foundation’s work, racism and colonialism – as well as their mechanisms – have an effect on:

- 1.** How problems are understood.
- 2.** How solutions are designed.

¹ Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex.

Understanding the problem

In understanding the problem, racism and colonialism is relevant to:

- **The conceptualisation of sexuality:**
Mainly how the Global North has imposed concepts of sexuality on the Global South.
- **Intersectionality:**
Around the intersections of gender, race and class.
- **Economic justice:**
Recognising the economic impacts of racism and colonialism.

Designing solutions

In designing solutions, racism and colonialism mainly affects:

- **Nature of solutions:**
Their appropriateness/relevance to people and communities;
- **Decision-making:**
That is, who gets to make the decisions?
- **Partnership and funding:**
Whether these are equitable or not.

In addressing these issues, this report recommends practices that the Foundation can keep, as well as areas for improvement.

PRACTICES TO KEEP

- 1. Focus on Black- and LBQTI-led partner organisations:**
Maintaining focus on these partners who are underfunded to keep the intersectional lens;
- 2. Deep, trusting and supportive relationship with partners:**
Offering an equitable and respectful partnership that is open to dialogue;
- 3. Ease, responsiveness and flexibility of funding:**
Providing multi-year funding without onerous requirements that can be adapted according to need.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- 1. Recognition of historical ties and transparency in investment:**
A recognition of ties to slavery and colonial enterprise, including how the organisation will be accountable, as well as transparency on current investments;
- 2. Representative and participatory decision-making:**
Having people who are LBQTI+ and who are Global South civil society actors in decision-making platforms, and enabling their participation in decision-making;
- 3. Transparent and accountable systems:**
Systematised approach to relationship/partnership management, including some structure or standardised decision-making process for transparency;
- 3. Advocacy with other grantmakers, institutional donors, and policymakers:**
Influencing other philanthropic actors and policymakers to be anti-racist and anti-colonial.

Definitions of racism and colonialism

Racism is defined by the Merriam Webster dictionary as “a belief that race is a fundamental determinant of human traits and capacities and that racial differences produce an inherent superiority of a particular race.”² This aligns with some stakeholders’ own understanding that racism “[are] attitudes...on inferiority or superiority based on the racial characteristics of a whole group.”³

Racism can also be described as structural or systemic.⁴ This means that while on paper individuals can be prejudiced (i.e. racist) against any race (for example, Black people being prejudiced against white people), there is, in fact, a power differential between different racial groups. This is because, statistically speaking, there are differences in social, political and economic resources across different categories of race. In the Global North context, including the Global North’s relation to the Global South, this power differential can be broadly seen between white people and Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC).

Given this, racism – beyond individual offences or aggressions – can be understood as a “collection of racist policies that lead to racial inequity and are substantiated by racist ideas.”⁵ Such racist inequities show up in many realms in society such as in income or health and education outcomes.

Colonialism, on the other hand, is a concept associated with *colonisation*, which means the act of establishing a colony. In development and human rights discourse, colonisation often refers to the West’s colonisation of countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America, which entailed occupation of land, decimation of native populations, establishment of Western legal, economic and political systems, and imposition of culture.⁶ The origin of the concept of the “Global South” is linked to such experiences by postcolonial countries.⁷ This also aligns with stakeholders’ understanding that colonialism is about “forces of oppression and power and imbalances within society... which are structural, individual, collective and generational, and having manifestations, for example, around narrative that our countries are independent or postcolonial, although the reality of colonialism is very much there”.⁸

Colonialism is also associated with *coloniality*, which is a distinct concept from colonisation, and which means having the quality of being colonial. This often refers to how culture, knowledge, and knowledge production processes are still predominantly dominated by Western logics, even in contemporary postcolonial societies.⁹ Colonialism can thus be understood as the hegemony of Western/ Global North influence and logics over the Global South.

2 “Racism”. Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, Merriam-Webster, www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/racism. Accessed 5 May 2021.

3 Trustees’ interview.

4 Golash-Boza, T. (2016). A Critical and Comprehensive Sociological Theory of Race and Racism. *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*, 2(2), 129-141.

5 Kendi, I. (2019). *How to be Anti-Racist*. New York, NY: Random House.

6 Ferro, M. (1997). *Colonization: A Global History*. Routledge: London.

7 Dirlík, A. (2007). Global South: Predicament and Promise. *The Global South* 1(1), 12-23. Retrieved from: www.muse.jhu.edu/article/398223.

8 Grantmakers’ Focus Group Discussion.

9 Quijano, A. (2000). Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism and Latin America. *International Sociology*, 15(2).

Racism and colonialism in philanthropy

Racism and colonialism in philanthropy – particularly in international development and the LGBTQI rights space – show up in a number of ways.

At the organisational level, this can be around unequal access to funding, where Black-led organisations get a smaller share of funding than White-led organisations¹⁰, and where Global South organisations get less funding than Global North ones¹¹. It can also be seen in the lack of diversity in leadership positions and among staff¹². At the root of these issues is the lack of network and support for Black and Global South philanthropy actors.¹³ Racist and colonial attitudes also lead to toxic workplace environments that enable the abuse of BIPOC staff¹⁴. In international development, this can manifest itself in the inequity between the pay and benefits of international versus national staff¹⁵; and the lack of security protection for local staff.¹⁶

At a programmatic level, racism and colonialism often translate to misguided solutions¹⁷ that are not appropriate or relevant to their intended recipients; or solutions that perpetuate more

harm than good. They can also appear as the imposition of priorities of funders over the actual needs of impacted groups.

But beyond the literature, it is important to ground the concepts of racism and colonialism in the actual understanding and perspectives of the Baring Foundation's stakeholders. Based on their responses, stakeholders understand racism and colonialism via two broad themes: their **mechanisms** (including their interlinkages), and their **effects**.

MECHANISMS

Stakeholders identify three salient themes when they talk about their understanding of racism and colonialism. These themes offer an explanation about the root causes of these two concepts, how they are interlinked, and how they are perpetuated, particularly in the international development and human rights space. These three themes are:

1. White supremacy
2. Neocolonisation
3. Capitalism

10 Sullivan, P. (2020, May 1). In Philanthropy, Race Is Still a Factor in Who Gets What, Study Shows. *New York Times*. Retrieved from: www.nytimes.com/2020/05/01/your-money/philanthropy-race.html.

11 This is true for LGBTQI+ funding, see *Global Resources Report 2017/2018*, retrieved from: cdn.baringfoundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/GRR_2017-2018_Color.pdf.

12 Buteau, E. & Orensten, N. (2020). *Foundations Respond to Crisis: Towards Equity?*. Centre for Effective Philanthropy. Retrieved from: cep.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/CEP_Foundations-Respond-to-Crisis_Toward-Equity_2020.pdf.

13 Dorsey, C. et al. (2020, May 4). Overcoming the Racial Bias in Philanthropic Funding. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*. Retrieved from: ssir.org/articles/entry/overcoming_the_racial_bias_in_philanthropic_funding.

14 Parveen, N. (2021, April 20). Amnesty International has culture of white privilege, report finds. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from: www.theguardian.com/world/2021/apr/20/amnesty-international-has-culture-of-white-privilege-report-finds.

15 Carr, S. & McWha-Hermann, I. (2016, April 20). Expat wages up to 900% higher than for local employees, research shows. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from: www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2016/apr/20/expat-wages-900-per-cent-higher-than-local-employees-study.

16 Haver, K. (2007). Duty of care? Local staff aid worker security. *Forced Migration Review*, 28. Retrieved from: www.fmreview.org/sites/fmr/files/FMRdownloads/en/capacitybuilding/haver.pdf.

17 Dorsey, C., Bardach, J. & Kim, P. (2020, June 5). The Problem with "Color-Blind" Philanthropy. *Harvard Business Review*. Retrieved from: hbr.org/2020/06/the-problem-with-color-blind-philanthropy.

White supremacy

Stakeholders understand that racism and colonialism stem from white supremacy, defined as “a political, economic and cultural system in which whites overwhelmingly control power and material resources, conscious and unconscious ideas of white superiority and entitlement are widespread, and relations of white dominance and non-white subordination are daily re-enacted across a broad array of institutions and social settings.”¹⁸ A Black African stakeholder says: “Personally, I think the core foundation to racism and colonialism is white supremacy... White supremacy is still the inherent [cause of the] prevalence [of] racism and colonialism. In many respects, Persons of Colour, Black and white people are affected by white supremacy.”¹⁹

White supremacy also occurs at multiple levels. For instance, at an individual level, when stakeholders provide their examples of being mistreated because of their race (such as experiencing microaggressions or even being bullied²⁰). But also, as one stakeholder says, “systemic and institutional white supremacy and white privilege. My understanding of that as applied to our work, whether we like it or not, and linked to colonialism, is that there is systemic bias built into our work, the way we operate, and the way power exists between [Global North and Global South organisations].”²¹

Neocolonisation

Neocolonisation is understood as the persistence of colonial control, extraction and exploitation by the West in postcolonial societies through means other than direct occupation – for example through the economy (including trade and sanctions), political intervention, language and culture.²²

This concept best captures how stakeholders still see the impacts of colonisation in their societies, and how they use the lens of colonisation to understand the problems they are facing at present.

A West African stakeholder talks about how, until today, some West African countries’ currencies are pegged to European currencies, and how these West African countries remained under European control even after they have declared independence.²³ A South African partner says: “If you were to think of how South Africa would have been without the colonisers, probably we’ll have a different system or approach.”²⁴ Another says: “We talk about how colonialism in Africa doesn’t exist anymore in the way that it used to, but we’re definitely seeing a lot of imperialism in its different forms... People say we’re no longer colonised, but in many ways there’s still imperialism that is erasing cultures.”²⁵

In the context of the Foundation’s international development and human rights work, a South African partner says it is important to “locate our current analysis within the context of South Africa’s apartheid legacy. And sadly if we thought that apartheid is over, I think it’s just taken on a different manifestation. As my friend says, those who of us who do sex work come from the street. And we continue that sex work when we do fundraising for our organisation. Because we ask money from the Global North; and the Global North feel entitled to our body, our sweat, our tears.”²⁶

Capitalism

Stakeholders also understand that capitalism is an underlying driver of racism and colonialism: “Racism and colonialism are connected by capitalism... it has to do with the exploitation and extraction of people by a small minority to accumulate wealth themselves.”²⁷

18 Ansley, F. (1989). *Stirring the Ashes: Race Class and the Future of Civil Rights Scholarship*. *Cornell Law Review*, 6(74).

19 Grantholders’ Focus Group Discussion.

20 Grantholders’ Focus Group Discussion.

21 Grantmakers’ Focus Group Discussion.

22 Sartre, J. P. (2005). *Colonialism and Neocolonialism*. Abingdon, UK: Taylor and Francis.

23 Grantmakers’ Focus Group Discussion.

24 Grantholders’ Focus Group Discussion.

25 Grantmakers’ Focus Group Discussion.

26 Grantholders’ Focus Group Discussion.

27 Staff interviews.

Drawing a historical link between colonisation and capitalism, an African stakeholder says: "Why did colonisation play out the way it played out? The huge umbrella of slavery, colonisation, the use of labour, other people's resources for the growth of their economy, and robbing communities, and lack of concern and accountability. They are so interlinked."²⁸ Another explains that "Colonialism is a function of capital... I think colonialism is part of the project of capitalism. It occupies resources, people, labour, politics, and people movement."²⁹

Finally, tying colonialism, capitalism and racism together, an Africa-based partner says: "Occupation, forced entry of another country, taking over economic means and creating systems of hierarchy – in this case especially for Africa – this is based on race, so these systems of hierarchy are used to dominate. The implication of colonialism is that racism became embedded and part of the system through industrial revolution and now capitalism."³⁰

EFFECTS

Through the mechanisms of white supremacy, neocolonisation and capitalism, racism and colonialism have had particular effects in the international development and human rights space. Based on stakeholders' responses, these can be understood in two categories:

1. Effects on how problems are understood
2. Effects on how solutions are designed

Effects on how problems are understood

Concepts of sexuality

There are extensive accounts for how racism and colonialism in particular has impacted concepts of sexuality in the Global South,

specifically in Africa.³¹ Based on stakeholders' responses, this works in two ways: the colonial history of criminalising sexuality; and the neocolonial impositions of Western conceptions of what it means to be LGBTQI+.

An Africa-based partner says: "The colonisers came to South Africa with an intention to take all to themselves under two guises: religion and developing the countries. The land was taken from [native populations] and they consciously wiped histories of the locals."³² Imposed religions and "civilising missions" "introduced laws and religion that changed the view of gender and sexuality."³³ A South African stakeholder says: "When we look at the very impositions and the disregard to African religion and other frameworks of expression, even that is embedded in white supremacy. When you look at the very controls in relation to sex and gender expression, you look at the models of white supremacy, because the Black body was criminalised to not [desire or be desired]. It was legally enforced only to be a body of production, of making things – through slavery to sexual violence to ownership."³⁴

They also say that this can be seen in the conception of the family: "Families in black African culture are not a heteronormative model. Even if its female and male, and they're married, and they would be considered as heteronormative, the family structure is not heteronormative. We regard extended family as family."³⁵

In terms of neocolonial conceptions of what it means to be LGBTQI+, an African partner says: "It's interesting how you use LGBTQI+ and that particular framing, understanding it through a Western lens. That is how identity has been packaged for us to consume in the Global South...In addition to that, looking at how the anti-gender ideology movement has started

²⁸ Grantmakers' Focus Group Discussion.

²⁹ Grantma Grantmakers' Focus Group Discussion.

³⁰ Grantmakers' Focus Group Discussion.

³¹ Msibi, T. (2011). The Lies We Have Been Told: On (Homo) Sexuality in Africa. *Africa Today*, 58(1), 55-77. Retrieved from: www.jstor.org/stable/10.2979/africatoday.58.1.55?seq=1.

³² Grantholders' Focus Group Discussion.

³³ UK stakeholder interview.

³⁴ Grantholders' Focus Group Discussion.

³⁵ Grantholders' Focus Group Discussion.

gaining momentum in Africa, [partly due to] US type intervention, where they conflate gender and sex as being one and the same.”³⁶

An African stakeholder also adds: “South Africa had and still continues to have conversion therapy. During apartheid they also had medical reassignment. Even after you identify as trans, you had to identify as a feminine gay, and there were medical violations that were committed to people’s bodies without their consent. When we look at the inherent trauma experienced by people who identify as LGBTI, the very enforced notion of normalisation becomes premised in what white supremacy regarded as normal.”³⁷

Intersectionality

One effect of the mechanisms of racism and colonialism, which has been identified strongly by stakeholders, is intersectionality – a concept that shows how oppression can be experienced in different ways depending on the intersections of one’s identity.³⁸ For instance, how a white lesbian woman might face a different kind of prejudice compared to a Black trans man.

An Africa-based stakeholder highlights the intersections around gender: “The analysis then of Black women and Black feminists is that there is a hierarchy: white men, then white women, then Black men, then Black women. A lot of that plays itself out in contemporary LGBT movements where we still see Black lesbian and transgender women who are called to the board room for meetings where we are supposed to make tea and take notes.”³⁹

A South African stakeholder shares: “White supremacy and patriarchy are closely related. In the context of our work it becomes slightly difficult because we have to constantly deal with racism internally within LGBTI

communities. We have to deal with white gay men. I remember in 2011 when we had Pride, some of the Black lesbians were beaten up by white gay men.”⁴⁰ As one partner puts it: “I don’t think you can deal with racism and colonialism without dealing with patriarchy.”⁴¹

LGBTQI+ issues also intersect with class. A South African-based stakeholder says, “Classism has been racialized, where the large majority of people in the country still live in dire poverty – that’s the majority Black population of the country.”⁴² Another stakeholder shares their experience in another country in Asia where “upper-middle class [gay] men were going to represent the movement. White gay men [who work for donors] end up just listening to people who are like them, who they can be mates with. A working-class sex worker who dropped out of school – you can’t relate to her at all, and you’re not listening to their priorities.”⁴³

Economic justice

Finally, based on stakeholders’ responses, due to racism and colonialism, understanding of LGBTQI+ issues must also be informed by the lens of economic justice. A partner says that historically in South Africa, “They would kill the families and the crops and the cattle to ensure that there’s dependency. For many years, many of their acts were to ensure the black person was at the end of the food chain.”⁴⁴

At a macro level, as an African stakeholder explains, racism and colonialism has led to “Economic imperialism [that is] shifting our economy in ways that people living in those countries don’t have the power and the agency to decide what their economy should look like... It also creates economies that create even more harm, based on extractivism. We’re seeing this in the protest against mining in Botswana and

36 Grantholders’ Focus Group Discussion.

37 Grantholders’ Focus Group Discussion.

38 Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Anti-racist Politics. *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 1(8).

39 Grantholders’ Focus Group Discussion.

40 Grantholders’ Focus Group Discussion.

41 Grantholders’ Focus Group Discussion.

42 Grantholders’ Focus Group Discussion.

43 Trustees’ interview.

44 Grantholders’ Focus Group Discussion.

Namibia, in protesting against oil and fracking. We're seeing areas considered vulnerable ecosystems are now mining venues."⁴⁵

At a micro level, racism and colonialism have led to economic inequities among people. A South African stakeholder talking about apartheid shares: "A Black person couldn't own a business anywhere until recently. We are prohibited from even having a beer shop. We cannot have any economical exchange activities without having a certification. Unfortunately not all could have that. And those few who have it will tell you they had to bribe. So you can see in the economic system how disenfranchised we were... For me, the economic challenges that were brought by the colonisers allowed racism and apartheid."⁴⁶

As a stakeholder explains: "There's tension that seemingly exists between civil political and socioeconomic rights. We know that from the Global North, there's a huge emphasis on civil political rights because there's also access to resources; people are, to some extent, economically secure. However, in our context, we are fighting a battle on multiple fronts. And sometimes, we do get a sense that there's a level of disconnect between socioeconomic rights advancement and civil political rights advancement. In the South African context, we cannot claim civil political rights effectively if we don't have a social economic safety net that ensures we can act with full agency and full autonomy in realising and claiming those rights."⁴⁷

Effects on how solutions are designed

Nature of solutions

Racism and colonialism, along with their mechanisms, are evident in the nature of solutions designed within the international development and, specifically, the LGBTQI+ rights, space. That is because a lot of the solutions follow Western logic or are designed

in the Global North, and are not necessarily always relevant/appropriate in the context of BIPOC in the Global South.

An Africa-based stakeholder says racism and colonialism shows up in "how philanthropy looks like, what issues get funded. For example, in Uganda or Tanzania, there's this 'freedom train', which removes people from Uganda or Tanzania and takes them to Canada so [funders can] say, 'We've helped!' There's that white saviour thing."⁴⁸ Another stakeholder says: "the campaigns around marriage equality in the US is cited as a success, but that was the priority of middle-class white gay men. That was not primarily the issue of LGBT people of colour. Discrimination, violence – that would have been the priority for them."⁴⁹

A partner in South Africa shares: "A big issue is the emergence of our own knowledge systems in the context of gender and sexuality, and being queer in different ways. If I go out to a rural area and I use LGBTQI to speak to people about gender identity, many people will not have that articulation. It's that imposition of Western knowledge systems, and not allowing [our own knowledge systems] to emerge, so we can make sense and start articulating the work in ways that make sense to our communities."⁵⁰

Racist and colonial assumptions limit the kind of programme that is possible in addressing issues around LGBTQI+ rights. A partner says: "It becomes very difficult to introduce programmes of joy, programmes of healing, a different form of agency...because it's the inherent pathology of donors to look at Black bodies as victims of violence, and in that there is almost no framing of agency...What does it mean to have non-Western, non-white supremacist approach in the activism that we do?"⁵¹

Finally, a UK-based stakeholder talks about the disconnect in policymaking between the Global North and South: "The UK has, as a

⁴⁵ Grantmakers' Focus Group Discussion.

⁴⁶ Grantholders' Focus Group Discussion.

⁴⁷ Grantholders' Focus Group Discussion.

⁴⁸ Grantmakers' Focus Group Discussion.

⁴⁹ Trustees' interview.

⁵⁰ Grantholders' Focus Group Discussion.

⁵¹ Grantholders' Focus Group Discussion.

nation, acknowledged that those colonial laws [criminalising people who are LGBTQI+] were their fault and have caused harm. But the government still positions itself as somehow ahead of the curve, like ‘You still have those laws, that’s not really our fault because you haven’t changed them, so hurry up.’⁵²”

Decision-making

Racism and colonialism, and their mechanisms, are also seen in decision-making in the international development and LGBTQI+ rights space, particularly in terms of lack of representation and lived experience among decision-makers; and in how the decision-making process is not participatory nor accountable to the intended recipients of the solution⁵³. As one African stakeholder says, “When I think about racism, I think about funding and financial management, and who gets to make those decisions.”⁵⁴

In the Global North, many offices of organisations in the international development and LGBTQI+ space – including funders and policymakers – do not have people from the local context or people with lived experience among their decision-makers. A UK-based stakeholder says: “I work with Parliament. It’s embedded in a long history of very monolithic representation in Parliament and the staff of Parliament which is obviously a direct result of institutional racism in the UK. And my entire office is white, everyone on my floor is so white.”⁵⁵

According to partners, this lack of representation is due to racism and colonialism. A Black queer African stakeholder says: “we are not expected to be making funding resourcing decisions because the resources don’t belong to us, they come from somewhere else. And

then we work and produce reports. We are the bodies that do labour and are used as means of production.”⁵⁶

That is why an Africa-based partner asks: “Who is actually making decisions? Who actually implements? Who drives that? In many instances, what we’ve seen is that it’s not necessarily those people who are most affected... In some instances, these funders are attempting to get community members involved in decision-making. But to what extent are those processes tokenistic, where we go to the table for the mere purpose of ticking a box?”⁵⁷

Without involvement of people closer to the context or with lived experience, programmes do not benefit from their tacit knowledge – that is, the deep contextual knowledge essential in a programme’s success, and which is hard to communicate/be obtained by outsiders.⁵⁸ A stakeholder affirms that such knowledge resides not in the Global North but the Global South: “In most cases the technical expertise is held by civil society organisations anyway... It’s not that we have technical expertise we need to give them.”⁵⁹

Speaking about the relationship between decision-makers and partners, a grant-making stakeholder says: “I want the grantees to know that I’m not a gatekeeper. Especially with LGBTQ activists, where sometimes there’s a dynamic of friendships broken and gone sour. I ensure there’s always other people that they can email because partners are at the mercy of a donor acting that way, and that disrupts the trust-building process.”⁶⁰

Partnership and funding

Finally, the effects of racism and colonialism also show up in partnership and funding processes because of the skewed power dynamic between Global North and Global

52 UK stakeholder interview.

53 IssueLab. (nd.) Transparency and accountability in philanthropy and private social investment. *IssueLab*. Retrieved from: issuelab.org/resources/20911/20911.pdf.

54 Grantholders’ Focus Group Discussion.

55 UK stakeholder interview.

56 Grantmakers’ Focus Group Discussion.

57 Grantholders’ Focus Group Discussion.

58 Honig, D. (2018). *Navigation by Judgement*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

59 Staff interviews.

60 Grantmakers’ Focus Group Discussion.

South organisations: “that power dynamic exists and it’s not going to go away”⁶¹; “you can’t get past power and funding.”⁶²

Because of this, many Global North organisations impose partnership requirements onto Global South organisations that perpetuate inequities. One African stakeholder shares: “An area where we are reminded that we are African is the kind of accountability that is expected of us. We have to jump through serious hoops to prove that we are accountable... Because of colonisation and racism, [Global North organisations assume] we should be stealing this money because we are corrupt and we are lazy.”⁶³

Some stakeholders shared their experience with big multilateral funders – how their funding comes with strings attached (for example, conditions on which kind of programmes to implement); or how their compliance processes are extremely onerous (such as 300-page manuals).⁶⁴ This has been described as “donor-centrism”⁶⁵ and also “infantilization” of Global South movements.⁶⁶

Global North organisations also expect Global South organisations to take on their preferred organisational forms – this has been called the “NGO-ization”⁶⁷ of grassroots movements: “When we think about things like accountability, conflict of interest, how organising should look, it is very much based on Western, Global North ideas of what organisations look like.”⁶⁸

This “value system gets translated into grantmaking, and what is expected for organisations to be seen as eligible or as credible or as worthy of being able

to manage resources.”⁶⁹ Beyond due diligence requirements, this also manifests itself in the “pressure to fit into a certain narrative to prove the worthiness of our work.”⁷⁰ An African partner says, “There’s a way in which we are expected to perform poverty and be able to talk about how difficult our lives are. If we can’t say we live in the worst country or things really horrible or bad, then it’s not pressing enough.”⁷¹

At the same time, donors’ priorities, instead of partners’ needs, determine “what issues get funded... For example, the push around marriage equality. It’s an important issue. I mean, Kenyans would like to get married, but on the scale of things, queer Kenyans just want to be able to walk and not be killed in the process. The hierarchy of needs are very different. This influences, for instance, how security is resourced.”⁷²

For a grant-making stakeholder, they endeavour to ensure that there is “full accessibility, language justice” in their partnership and funding process; that “we’re including non-registered organisations in our portfolio, even if that means fraud risk. More informally, it’s ensuring that the kind of interactions that take place recognise the power dynamic but not leverage it to our own advantage, mentioning the elephant in the room, working with the elephant.”⁷³

61 Grantmakers’ Focus Group Discussion.

62 Trustees’ interview.

63 Grantmakers’ Focus Group Discussion.

64 Grantmakers’ Focus Group Discussion.

65 Vu, L. (2017, May 15). How donor-centrism perpetuates inequity, and why we must move toward community-centric fundraising. *Nonprofit AF*. Retrieved from: nonprofitaf.com/2017/05/how-donor-centrism-perpetuates-inequity-and-why-we-must-move-toward-community-centric-fundraising.

66 Grantmakers’ Focus Group Discussion.

67 Choudry, A., & Kapoor, D. (2013). *NGOization: Complicity, contradictions and prospects*. London: Zed Books.

68 Grantmakers’ Focus Group Discussion.

69 Grantmakers’ Focus Group Discussion.

70 Grantmakers’ Focus Group Discussion.

71 Grantmakers’ Focus Group Discussion.

72 Grantmakers’ Focus Group Discussion.

73 Grantmakers’ Focus Group Discussion.

Addressing racism and colonialism in the Baring Foundation

PRACTICES TO KEEP

Focus on Black- and LBQTI-led partner organisations

In LGBTI philanthropy, intersectional organisations that prioritise Black LBQTI+ issues – particularly in the Global South – remain under-resourced.⁷⁴ Given this, the Foundation’s explicit focus on Black- and LBQTI-led partner organisations is a practice that must be kept. Stakeholders recognise this as very positive; and this is echoed by the recent evaluation of the Foundation’s work, which finds that the Foundation “[comes] in at an earlier stage than other funders” which has allowed other Black- and LBQTI-led partners to leverage that support to gain more funding.⁷⁵ A grantee in South Africa says: “The focus on gender-diverse communities is so important. When we’re looking at the Global Resources Report⁷⁶, we know that trans work and intersex work is really underfunded globally. And so a continuation on this particular thematic area is so critical to drive change in the region.”⁷⁷

Prior to the beginning of the current international development funding strategy, there was an internal discussion on whether the Baring Foundation should open an office in Africa.⁷⁸ Upon deliberation, including with partners, the Foundation opted instead to partner with existing Black- and LBQTI-led

organisations in the region. This turned out to be a good decision: this provides support to local/national civil society organisations; and this allows programmes to benefit from the tacit knowledge and expertise of Black LBQTI+ Africans.

Deep, trusting and supportive relationships with partners

Stakeholders have been unanimously positive in their experience of establishing and maintaining a relationship with the Foundation. Some grant recipients have become partners through long-term and sustained engagement. A stakeholder from West Africa recalls: “Our conversations with the Baring Foundation started around 2015. We had done a mapping on what the context is in West Africa. We talked about gaps in West Africa. But we didn’t have funding conversations until two years later.”⁷⁹ This illustrates that the relationship is not just transactional but built on mutual interest. While racist and colonial attitudes are prevalent among other donors, this is not the case with the Foundation. A grant recipient from South Africa says, “This is different from funding from other organisations that is led by cisgender people, that is led by predominantly white people which has a level of distrust [towards Black LBQTI+ people] that we can’t account for ourselves.”⁸⁰

⁷⁴ Saleh, L and Sood, N, (2020). *Vibrant Yet UnderResourced: The State of Lesbian, Bisexual, and Queer Movements*. New York and Amsterdam: Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice and Mama Cash.

⁷⁵ *An external evaluation of the Baring Foundation’s International Development Programme, April 2021* (internal document).

⁷⁶ globalresourcesreport.org.

⁷⁷ Grantholders’ Focus Group Discussion.

⁷⁸ Trustees’ interview.

⁷⁹ Grantmakers’ Focus Group Discussion.

⁸⁰ Grantholders’ Focus Group Discussion.

A common approach among funders especially in the international development sector is to conduct onerous due diligence processes among their partners, and then subject them to restrictions on how to design programmes and spend grants. The Foundation, on the other hand, provides sufficient support to partners so that they can deliver their work: “We [are] being given the benefit of the doubt as community led organisations, if we’ve not already strengthened our systems, that we can become optimally accountable in strengthening those systems.”⁸¹ And the Foundation also respects the agency of partners in developing solutions that are relevant/appropriate to their context: “We could use our discretion in alignment with our strategic plan on what the best route for change would look like on any given year. There is a great deal of flexibility provided.”⁸²

Stakeholders feel that they can trust the Foundation: “We have full confidence that if we have to approach the Foundation with any concern that we might have, that there will be an openness to dialogue and troubleshooting ways to address it. We don’t live with this constant fear over our heads.”⁸³ And stakeholders also appreciate that there is continued support provided by the Foundation, especially through regular catch-ups: “We do check in calls to see where we’re at as an organisation and to give feedback.”⁸⁴ Ultimately, as a partner from South Africa says, the Foundation “makes time to meet with us and engage with our programmes. They understand where we’re at and I think they have a deeper understanding now in relation to context... I view them as partners not as donors. It’s a comfortable, easy relationship.”⁸⁵

Ease, responsiveness and flexibility of funding

Stakeholders highly value the ease of the Foundation’s funding process (including application and reporting): “The Baring Foundation has been quite considerate in putting together easy to use processes, application forms, templates and reporting format on the grant. It doesn’t take up huge chunks of time for us...we can put [that time] to content heavy work that we try to do within the communities. [We are not] bogged down by administration and we can use our time in meaningful ways.”⁸⁶

Due to its endowment, the Foundation is in a very unique position to be able to provide grants with minimal compliance requirements, which gives a lot of agency for recipients on how to use the funds: “I think that we do have significant freedom in terms of how we can spend the grant in order to make the overarching objective which is to ensure we drive work that’s aligned to catering to the circumstances of trans and gender diverse persons whether short-term or long-term.”⁸⁷ Although one grantmaking stakeholder wonders: “Our grant contracts have been 2-3 years, and currently we have 1-year grants, but we’d like to see longer term grants. I think they should be able to project longer. I wish I knew that I had funding for 5 years. Right now we can only get this from the government, which is so restrictive. What if the Baring Foundation can give that type of duration, knowing that this is how long before you can see change?”⁸⁸

The Foundation has also been described as responsive to partners’ needs, particularly during Covid-19: “When we reached out to the Baring Foundation to say that many of our funders are not responding quickly enough to Covid-19, the Baring Foundation really came through in being able to quickly make

81 Grantholders’ Focus Group Discussion.

82 Grantholders’ Focus Group Discussion.

83 Grantholders’ Focus Group Discussion.

84 Grantholders’ Focus Group Discussion.

85 Grantholders’ Focus Group Discussion.

86 Grantholders’ Focus Group Discussion.

87 Grantholders’ Focus Group Discussion.

88 Grantmakers’ Focus Group Discussion.

decisions and resource, which enabled our partners to bring relief to the communities. That was testament to how seriously the Baring Foundation took that crisis.”⁸⁹ The Foundation also provides multi-year funding, including for core organisational costs, which enables partners to deliver their work more effectively: “In 2017, the Baring Foundation approached us with funding, specifically to support organisational development. We’re now in our second and third multi-year grant.”⁹⁰ And finally, the Foundation is also flexible when partners request for changes in the budget. One grant recipient says: “As a donor the Baring Foundation is responsive to what grantee partners are going through on the ground in their everyday interactions, and I think that’s a beautiful thing to do.”⁹¹

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Recognition of historical ties and transparency in investment

Stakeholders recognise this exercise of looking at anti-racism and anti-colonialism within the Foundation as a very welcome and positive action. A stakeholder says, “It’s really quite reassuring that we’re having this conversation and that they are investing in a way that it’s starting this journey.”⁹² The next step, therefore, must be a deeper grappling with these issues in policy and practice.

There is some evidence that links the Baring family to slavery and the British colonial enterprise. It’s been claimed that Francis Baring made his wealth in the slave trade⁹³, and members of the Baring family also appear to have made a claim for slave

compensation.⁹⁴ Francis Baring was also at one point the director of the East India company, and helped pass the East India Company Act, which put India formally under British government control.⁹⁵

The Foundation’s staff members provide nuance to this narrative: that the Foundation was only founded in 1969; it only received an annual income from the modern Barings Bank; and it received the endowment from a separate trust.⁹⁶ Meanwhile, partners in Africa have an astute view of the bigger picture: “Baring Foundation is perhaps not necessarily unique. The reality of philanthropy especially within the US is that it’s built on exploitation. If not colonial, it’s labour exploitation, exploitation of the land, extractive industry. The sources of money are really complex.”⁹⁷

Speaking more broadly on philanthropy’s ties to capitalism, another stakeholder offers a more sober take: “Philanthropy is a service function of capitalism. We serve the tax-deductible function of capitalism. We all are a part of the capitalist system and it’s naive to think that we’re not...My job is to move bigger money. My job is not to destroy that system, nor to upend the system. I am a fonctionnaire within an existing ecosystem of capitalism. My job is to extract as much money as I can and move it to the Global South.”⁹⁸

The Foundation’s stakeholders recognise that “all money is problematic. Private funding is problematic because of its roots and where it comes from”⁹⁹ But they also recognise that the activists and communities they are working with “need money, we’re going to get it and we’re going to do something good with it.”¹⁰⁰

89 Grantholders’ Focus Group Discussion.

90 Grantmakers’ Focus Group Discussion.

91 Grantmakers’ Focus Group Discussion.

92 Grantmakers’ Focus Group Discussion.

93 The New Black Magazine. (nd.) How the City Profited from Slavery. *The New Black Magazine*. Retrieved from: www.thenewblackmagazine.com/view.aspx?index=730.

94 See UCL Legacies of British Slave-Ownership record of members of the Baring Family: www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/firm/view/-1735259225.

95 Evans, E. (2011). *The Shaping of Modern Empire: Identity, Industry and Empire 1780–1914*. London: Routledge.

96 Staff interview.

97 Grantmakers’ Focus Group Discussion.

98 Stakeholder interview.

99 Grantmakers’ Focus Group Discussion.

100 Grantmakers’ Focus Group Discussion.

So it becomes a matter of “trying to hold that tension with a bit of grace...because there is no black and white.”¹⁰¹

How then can this tension be held more gracefully? A good step that the Foundation can do is recognising these historical ties and being more transparent and accountable about it (instead of hesitating to acknowledge it): “We can’t change the history. But how transparent is the Foundation willing to be? And what is the commitment that the Foundation is making especially in light of the history?”¹⁰²

Similar philanthropic organisations – notably the Joseph Rowntree Foundation¹⁰³ – have begun taking steps in acknowledging this history. This acknowledgement can also help set the tone as the Foundation takes its anti-racism and anti-colonialism work forward.

The Foundation must have an intentional deliberation, guided by its partners, on how to recognise its historical ties and how it can demonstrate a level of accountability in light of it. Such recognition of the history, however, must be done with intentionality, “otherwise, it appears if you make this assertion, it almost feels like you’re going with the current times of language and appropriate, versus very intentional and transformative work at an institutional level.”¹⁰⁴

In recognising that sources of money are complex, even up until today, it will also serve the Foundation well to be more transparent with its current investments. A stakeholder says: “If we would see that a funder had very unclear practices in the contemporary age then that’s a clear bold line to draw. With all the information we have right now, if a funder were to have contemporary

practice around exploitation, extractivism, land grabbing, supporting the things that destabilise and disenfranchise communities, that would be an absolute no.”¹⁰⁵ And yet the Foundation’s Statement on Responsible Investment Strategy is less than half a page, with broad but unspecific wording about how they “promote responsible investment and... encourage business to be ethical...[aiming] to avoid investments which would support activities inconsistent with the purpose of the Foundation.”¹⁰⁶

Recognition of historical ties and greater transparency around current investments can make relationships with partners more respectful. As one re-granting organisation says: “When we have funding that comes from sources that are politically contentious, we disclose that to our grantee partners and say, ‘We have this grant for you, it’s up to you if you want to receive it or not. If you don’t want to receive it, we can try to find a funding source that is not problematic.’ For us it’s important to give people a choice.”¹⁰⁷ The Foundation could adopt a similar approach, which requires more specificity and transparency on their history and current funding.

Representative and participatory decision-making

Based on interviews and discussions, it is positive that the decision-making process within the Foundation is done through meaningful, deliberative discussions. The staff and trustees have been described as having “integrity”¹⁰⁸ and “humility”¹⁰⁹ and deeply committed to human rights based approaches.¹¹⁰ There also seems to be rich professional experience among decision-makers, including experience working

101 Grantmakers’ Focus Group Discussion.

102 Grantmakers’ Focus Group Discussion.

103 See: Joseph Rowntree Foundation. (2021, April 15). A statement from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) Trustees and Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust (JRHT) Board. *Joseph Rowntree Foundation*. Retrieved from: www.jrf.org.uk/press/statement-joseph-rowntree-foundation-jrf-trustees-and-joseph-rowntree-housing-trust-jrht-board.

104 Grantholders’ Focus Group Discussion.

105 Grantmakers’ Focus Group Discussion.

106 *Baring Foundation Statement on Responsible Investment*, accessed here: baringfoundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Statement-on-Responsible-Investment-Strategy.pdf.

107 Grantmakers’ Focus Group Discussion.

108 Stakeholder interview.

109 Trustees’ interview.

110 Trustees’ interview.

on racial justice¹¹¹, international development, women's rights, and LGBT activism.¹¹² It's also positive that there is some level of ethnic diversity among the trustees.

However, people who are LBQTI+ and who are part of local/national civil society in Africa are not represented within the Foundation's decision-making structures. At the moment, they are not represented within the trustees nor senior management. There is also no formal way for Africa-based partners to participate in the Foundation's internal decision-making processes.

Representation of Global South LBQTI+ stakeholders in decision-making is a way to redress the power imbalances that, to a large extent, stem from racism and colonialism. An Africa-based partner says: "One of the reasons I started my organisation was because I'm tired of the messaging of, 'Okay let us speak at the United Nations and you have your beauty pageants or continue to conduct your sex work.' For me, it's about looking at the structure of organisations, and looking at how hierarchical that is, and who has the financial power to make decisions. Who is the chair of an organisation, who is the director of the organisation, and how much decision-making power do they have?"¹¹³

Lack of representation in decision-making also means programmes do not benefit from the tacit knowledge, lived experience and expertise of those who are closer to the context. A trustee remarked: "To put it bluntly, I really have no idea what's it like to be an activist in Kenya, as a gay or lesbian activist. So you have to decide that the framework we've used is reasonable and that there are some checks and balances. But at the end of the day that's all they are."¹¹⁴ Another said: "I'm on the international development committee but I don't have the in-depth knowledge of the LGBTQI+ movement in the UK or in the Global South...Am I asking the right questions? Because there's a gap in

my knowledge. Similarly with the geographical context where we're working in, I don't consider myself any kind of an expert."¹¹⁵

Stakeholders would also like to see a more participatory way of grantmaking within the Foundation. Currently, decisions on grants rest on the Foundation's senior staff and the trustees. One stakeholder, while welcoming the 'what' – i.e., the Foundation's decision to commit to anti-racist and anti-colonial work – wonders about the 'how': "Is the Baring Foundation also looking fundamentally at how it makes decisions? Are participatory elements going to be part of decision-making? Is [the Foundation] only focused on the 'what' or is it also focused on the 'how'?"¹¹⁶ As another partner says: "Representatives of the communities that we say are our beneficiaries deserve to be at the agenda setting table, they deserve to be part of the strategy development processes, their voices need to be integrated in a way that is much more meaningful. If the organisation exists to do that work, then it should centre the identities, experiences, realities and priorities of those people. That grantmaking process should be structured around the priorities of those communities."¹¹⁷

Although the Foundation mostly funds other participatory grantmakers (and so has less decision-making involvement on specific programmes), it is still important to have a representative and participatory decision-making process internally especially for direct grantholders and also in shaping the Foundation's strategy and priorities. The Foundation must find a way of involving people who are LBQTI+ and who are part of African civil society in their decision-making – for instance, through recruiting trustees, creating an advisory role, or modifying the grantmaking process so there is more involvement of partners.

111 Staff interview.

112 Trustees' interview.

113 Grantholders' Focus Group Discussion.

114 Trustees' interview.

115 Trustees' interview.

116 Grantholders' Focus Group Discussion.

117 Grantmakers' Focus Group Discussion.

The Foundation will need to undertake further reflection, guided by its partners, on what this participatory approach could look like for the international development programme.

Transparent and accountable systems

Stakeholders engage with the Foundation mostly through one person – the Deputy Director. And this relationship has been overwhelmingly positive. Through the Deputy Director, partners have established deep, trusting and supportive relationships that are not simply transactional or instrumental.

However, stakeholders would like to see this kind of approach to partnership and relationship management be institutionalised or systematised within the Foundation. Recounting their very positive experience of getting in-depth support in submitting a proposal, an Africa-based stakeholder says: “If David were not in the role, if it were somebody else, what would that mean? I get the impression that David does a lot of the negotiation. Is it a particular kind of officer or contact, or is it the institutional approach?”¹¹⁸ Another stakeholder also tried to imagine the perspective of those who may be from smaller grassroots organisations in the Global South with limited experience interacting with donors: “The only people I know are the Davids and that can be really intimidating for a lot of grantee partners. I don’t really see many who look like me [a Black African]. David is so amazing, but he may not be accessible to a lot of grantee partners.”¹¹⁹

When this issue was raised in discussions, staff members and trustees talked about the dynamic of a small foundation (with 6 members of staff), and how everyone has this approach and not just one person.¹²⁰ Perhaps this reassurance could be formalised in the form of a partnership policy/as part of a playbook, and be communicated to partners.

A grantmaking stakeholder also shared their insight that grantees may find it tricky if they only have one focal point in an organisation because, in the absence of a standardised criteria for awarding grants, so much rests on that one particular connection. This forms another point: there seems to be a lack of transparency on the criteria used by the Foundation in decision-making. As a grant recipient says: “At least for our organisation, we don’t have a lot of information on how decisions are made within Baring Foundation. We are consulted along the process. With Covid-19, what I appreciated is David reaching out to ask what’s happening... But I have no idea how decisions are made in Baring Foundation. As we think about how we move towards anti-colonialism and anti-racism, in the same way that we are being asked how we are making decisions, I think an area of growth for the Baring Foundation is being transparent in how they are making decisions, and how do they do this multidirectional accountability.”¹²¹

Interestingly, trustees felt that the Foundation’s decision-making process is reasonably transparent (given that most grants are submitted via an invitation and not an open call, and that grants are awarded based on alignment to the international development strategy/priority). Although trustees recognise that details of the decisions are not necessarily communicated to partners, and that there is no mechanism to appeal a decision.¹²²

Institutionalising/systematising partnership management and approaches should not mean throwing the baby out with the bathwater. There is a better balance that the Foundation can strike in establishing a system that still values deep trusting relationships, but has some structure that has been designed in a participatory way; that provides a level of transparency/standard behind decisions; and that communicates decisions and provides a mechanism for feedback/appeal/complaints.

118 Grantmakers’ Focus Group Discussion.

119 Grantmakers’ Focus Group Discussion.

120 Staff interview; Trustees’ interview.

121 Grantmakers’ Focus Group Discussion.

122 Trustees’ interview.

Fund partners' sustainability

While stakeholders welcome the Foundation's progressive multi-year, flexible and responsive funding approach, they have expressed a need for funding for sustainability. A grantmaking partner says: "One of the conversations we keep having with Baring, seeing that Baring was also formed via an endowment, is around sustainability. How can Baring support organisations like us, beyond our ability to fund in the right now, but also building our own endowment. Our work is not going to end anytime soon."¹²³ Another says: "[I would like to see] support for longer sustainability, capital campaigns, building the sustainability of organisations. We want our organisation to be more resilient and to be able to continue to do this work even beyond this grant period."¹²⁴

Stakeholders see funding for sustainability, and funding more broadly as part of anti-racism and anti-colonialism. An Africa-based stakeholder says: "There are limited resources to enable organisations to build for the longer term...How can Baring Foundation, as a private foundation that has more flexibility, and also has an [anti-racist and anti-colonialist] commitment, support this? I think that would be a commitment that is anti-colonial and anti-racist. That is, in enabling indigenous orgs to survive and thrive and not be dependent on continued resources from Global North donors."¹²⁵ Another says: "In [our organisation] we keep saying, it's our money and we're just bringing it back to where the money came from. That's why when I talked around the need for building our endowment that takes us to where we're not reliant on Baring anymore. I am not removed from the history of where a lot of our resources come from. But I also look at it through the eyes of getting back what is ours as some sort of reparation."¹²⁶

One proposal from a stakeholder is to use part of the Foundation's endowment to fund more partners more progressively with a view to sustainability: "I've raised it a few times in Board Meetings that we have 120 million GBP. If we took out 5 million and spent it in a 3-month period, and gave organisations hard cash that they can use to pay for organisers, for large communication campaigns, etc, we'd still have 115 million. Even if our endowments fall by 50%, we still have 60 million. I just don't believe in hoarding income when everything is going wrong."¹²⁷

This issue touches upon the investment strategy of the Foundation. Currently, the Foundation's approach is to operate/spend "in perpetuity". Some stakeholders (although notably not ones based in Africa) support this: "I don't agree with spend downs. I don't think they're a good idea. Because what often happens is that the best, most progressive, powerful, visionary groups of people spend down their institution and they have no power to influence any other money. Spending down is not the same as scaling up people's ability to influence and inform philanthropy to move in a better way."¹²⁸

This, in turn, touches on the nature of working within the capitalist system. The stakeholder who doesn't agree with spending down says: "That's from a position where I believe that capitalism will preserve itself for a really long time. The devolution of a single foundation is not going to contribute to the end of capitalism. And I think there are better ways to use philanthropy to move more money to the Global South."¹²⁹ Meanwhile, an Africa-based partner says: "Personally, I really believe that in philanthropy we should be working ourselves out of a job. That should be the intention. As long as we keep that as our intention, we know that philanthropy maybe could become obsolete. But it also takes interrogating how capitalism works. Many people live in abject poverty because of capitalism. It means

¹²³ Grantmakers' Focus Group Discussion.

¹²⁴ Grantmakers' Focus Group Discussion.

¹²⁵ Grantmakers' Focus Group Discussion.

¹²⁶ Grantmakers' Focus Group Discussion.

¹²⁷ Staff interview.

¹²⁸ Stakeholders' interview.

¹²⁹ Stakeholders' interview.

challenging the very same system that philanthropy relies on because we rely on that money to make those grants. There's a way that the system perpetuates itself. But I feel it's a tension we're trying to hold and navigate."¹³⁰

It seems, however, that the endowment strategy and this tension of working within a capitalist system has not been fully explored within the Foundation¹³¹. The "in perpetuity" strategy appears to have been continued from the past, without deep organisational reflection and deliberation.¹³² To be clear, this report does not recommend taking one strategy over the other. There is, in fact, an enduring discussion on endowments within the philanthropy sector. And it's worth noting that Black philanthropy actors have called on foundations to "use endowments" in response to Anti-Black Racism so that funding can be mobilised to groups who need it.¹³³

But it does suggest that there should be a transparent, accountable and deeply deliberative way of deciding on the endowment strategy, which involves partners and stakeholders.

Regardless of which investment strategy is pursued, the Foundation could also think about allocating more of its funding towards sustainability. As one Africa-based partner says: "They have a set of tools to grow capital, and they have that knowledge. Are they able to share that knowledge? So that there's greater Black empowerment in that sense around growing capital. It would be great if some of the money they allocated went towards a financial sustainability model, so we get out of the starvation model. Because if the Baring Foundation pulls out from any of these organisations, there will be closures."¹³⁴

Advocacy with other grantmakers, institutional donors, and policymakers

The Foundation is a progressive grant-making organisation in the UK, and this is recognised by its stakeholders. Given this, they thought the Foundation has a special responsibility to advocate for such progressive approaches to other grantmakers and donors.

In terms of advocating with other funders, an Africa-based partner poignantly explains: "The Baring Foundation has a responsibility to teach other donors that when you allow groups to make decisions for the best outcome of the groups that they serve, and the people whose work they are impacting, it's not a matter of losing financial control, or control over the project. It's a good thing to allow groups to make decisions and be flexible about it... Allowing organisations to make mistakes and learn from those, that for me is the real meaning of decolonisation. Because if you continue to colonise us, that really shows up in the way that you control the money, by having these weekly meetings, it's time consuming. You don't employ trans people, the ones you do have no real decision-making power. The Baring Foundation has a responsibility to teach other donors that you can employ trans people, and we can do what cisgender can do. When you give us no agency and autonomy on our own organisation on how financial decisions get made, how can we make better decisions that impact the people we serve; this continues to fuel racism and the colonialism that's linked to it."¹³⁵

Beyond advocating to other funders, the Foundation should also consider influencing policymakers and governments: "Baring has been doing advocacy to the UK government for philanthropy resourcing. So what I'm hoping is that this process on anti-racism and anti-colonialism also translates in terms of influence on government funding to shape it in a way that brings such lens of anti-racism and

130 Grantmakers' interview.

131 Staff responded that the Baring Foundation does review its 'in perpetuity' policy when the organisational strategy is reviewed (last reviewed in 2019 for 2020-2025).

132 Staff interview.

133 Association of Black Foundation Executives. (nd.) *"We Must Be In It for the Long Haul": Black Foundation Executives Request Action by Philanthropy on Anti-Black Racism*. ABFE. Retrieved from: abfe.egnyte.com/dl/NhwadCaj6s.

134 Grantholders' Focus Group Discussion.

135 Grantholders' Focus Group Discussion.

anti-colonialism.¹³⁶ Another stakeholder says: “The Baring Foundation has an opportunity to help shift the needle on a whole lot of levels. One being the challenges faced by the queer community in terms of how do we change the policies in the country...such that we are free when we’re all free.”¹³⁷

The Foundation, in fact, already does engage other funders. Staff and trustees frequently talk about how the Foundation is engaged in philanthropic advocacy (including via different groups such as Prospera and the Global Philanthropy Project) and how funding is being used to leverage other donors to “bring [them] along” and get them to fund grantees in the progressive way that the Foundation does.¹³⁸ Recognising that there are many advocacy players in the philanthropy system, it would be good for the Foundation to consider how this advocacy is being done systematically, and how this is evidenced and measured. As one stakeholder says: “I want the Baring Foundation to be more intentional in its own reflection and encouraging and pushing other actors to be the same.”¹³⁹

The Foundation’s advocacy must also be done in a certain way that does not reproduce racist and colonial power dynamics. That is by “passing the mic”¹⁴⁰ to, instead of speaking on behalf of, Global South organisations. One grant-making partner shares their own organisation’s experience: “It’s a process of co-creation with our frontline partners. This is a holy creed for us. Our philosophy and approach on advocacy is very much based on [our partners’] agency. We build a bridge of solidarity.”¹⁴¹

But at the same time, advocacy must be done in a way that is effective, that “translates” the values and priorities of Global South stakeholders to a language that is understood by, and makes a connection to, Global North policymakers. A UK-based stakeholder says: “It’s difficult to approach it in a way that doesn’t make old white men feel blamed but also helps them understand. To not get people to be defensive and shut down their interest. What we try to do is bring [UK policymakers] directly in contact with activists in country...where they can hear from them directly.”¹⁴²

136 Grantmakers’ Focus Group Discussion.

137 Grantholders’ Focus Group Discussion.

138 Trustees’ interview.

139 Grantmaker interview.

140 This means to avoid speaking on behalf of marginalised groups, and instead letting them speak directly. See: www.anarresproject.org/on-privilege-leadership-and-passing-the-mic.

141 Grantmakers’ Focus Group Discussion.

142 Stakeholder interview.

The Baring Foundation

8-10 Moorgate

London EC2R 6DA

www.baringfoundation.org.uk

Twitter: @baring_found

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