

Christian Aid response: Power Learning Review

Christian Aid's overall goal is for all women and men to have the power to end poverty; to become empowered and active, individually and collectively in changing and challenging the forces, people, structures and systems which dominate their lives. A lack of power is a form of poverty, since poverty is related to the ways in which our societies are designed and governed, and driven by unjust and unequal distribution of power. Equally, empowerment is a key driver of effectiveness, supporting community ownership over projects and building the capacity of community organisations to influence government and the development agenda in their own communities and country over the long-term. As such, integrating an understanding and analysis of power and its forms is a cornerstone of our work.

Christian Aid (CA) has been the recipient of two [Programme Partnership Arrangements](#) (PPA) from the UK Department for International Development (DFID) since 2011, one for our Humanitarian work and one for our Development work. We have used this strategic funding to invest in technical expertise, test new approaches, pilot innovative initiatives, enter into new partnerships, and take them to scale. At the outset of the PPA in 2011, power was less of an explicit focus but this has increased over time. Through the [Power Learning Review](#), we aimed to deepen our understanding of how well we have integrated issues of power within our PPA work at partner and programme level and how this has influenced our programme practice as a result. In particular, we wanted to use this review to explore and deepen our understanding of our approach to power in some of our PPA [resilience work](#).

The Learning Review has met these aims, providing us with clear evidence of some of our good practice, as well as key recommendations on areas in which we can develop our work further. Our management response acknowledges these recommendations and seeks to address these through clear, coordinated actions that will be implemented over the coming 18 months. You can see the detailed response document [here](#). We will make good use of the reflections that have come out, working with our partners to strengthen our focus on power and inclusion, integrating these actions into wider work that is planned already. There are three main recommendations we will be addressing:

The review challenged us to better articulate how our work aims to address unequal power relations. We will continue to research and document case studies to learn about the factors that contribute to success and failure within programmes and projects when seeking to change different types of power relations, power relations at different levels and different characteristics of individuals. We will look at the different thematic areas of our work (such as Health or Resilience) and clearly explain what power shifts each approach is intending to bring about, how these are being achieved and for whom.

We will also look at how our strategies and policies consider power not only at country level but also more broadly across Christian Aid. A large part of this will be to facilitate country level Christian Aid and partner discussions to create a shared understanding of what transformative change looks like and different roles of Christian Aid and partners can play in this. This will include a concerted effort to support our partners in going through this same process with us. While the review suggested conducting a systematic analysis of what power analysis means for our partners, we do not feel this is the most effective way taking this forward. Instead, we will focus on systematically developing our own processes to ensure that key questions are asked of our partners, allow us to better support them with capacity building.

Finally, we will develop more practical tools for power analysis that we can point colleagues towards. This will include clear guidance on how to apply power, gender and inclusion analysis within each area of our work. This will involve signposting to tools, frameworks and case studies, or the development of new tools and case studies. We will make sure this links with our wider work on accountability and inclusion in a coordinated manner. We will also ensure that reflections on shifts in power as a result of our work are included in our evaluation policy and that teams are supported in putting this into practice.