

100 Ways Aid Works

Help ensure UK Aid is spent on human development programmes that reduce poverty.

The UK has long been a leader in global development, having reached the international target of spending 0.7% of its gross national income on Official Development Assistance (ODA) since 2013. The Department for International Development (DFID) funds important 'human development' programmes (such as nutrition and education) in 32 countries, and supports effective multilateral institutions such as Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria, and the Global Partnership for Education. But in a turbulent political climate, spending on vital human development programmes cannot be taken for granted. While the new Government has recommitted itself to the 0.7% target, aid priorities are changing toward economic growth, climate change, and the UK's national interest. These efforts will be in vain if human development is not seen as the main priority for DFID, and there has already been a reduction in the amount of money being spent on human development.

Political decisions on how to spend taxpayers' money don't happen in a vacuum. At RESULTS, we know that political will can be the missing link without which change doesn't happen. That's why campaigning with RESULTS matters, and why your advocacy is needed to help the Government do the right thing. This month, please help us show that there is strong public support for focusing UK aid spending on human development – the vital programmes that enable people to fight their way out of poverty. Help us show how DFID's human development programmes are among the most powerful ways that aid works, using their #100WaysAidWorks hashtag.

What is 'human development'?

The term '[human development](#)' refers to processes which advance human wellbeing and improve people's lives, rather than simply the size of the economy. It focuses on the opportunities and choices people have, rather than assuming that economic growth will automatically lead to greater wellbeing for all. Since 1990, [more than 1.1 billion people](#) have been lifted out of extreme poverty. Programmes which promote economic growth may also promote human development and wellbeing, but don't automatically do so, if the benefits of growth aren't felt equally and if sections of the population are left behind.

Investing in human development

Human development programmes involve investing in improving people's lives. As well as being a good in itself, this also provides the bedrock of economic development. Investing in people through nutrition, health care, education, jobs and skills helps develop the 'human capital' that is key to creating economic growth, ending poverty, and creating more equitable societies. The World Bank's '[Human Capital Project](#)' shows how much income countries could gain if they invest sufficiently in human capital. Former World Bank President Dr. Jim Kim called human capital 'a key driver of sustainable, inclusive economic growth'.

Lack of access to essential health and education services disproportionately affects the world's poorest and most vulnerable people, which in turn fosters a vicious cycle of poverty and inequality. It also stagnates economic development through the constraints that poor health and education place on individuals and communities. This is why the UK's commitment to delivering the Global Goals, 'Leave no one behind' and promoting global prosperity will go unfulfilled without investing in human development.

Health and human development

Health is fundamental for a productive and fulfilling life. Without a healthy population, countries can't make the most of people's skills and energies. Global Goal 3 includes targets to ensure healthy lives for all, aiming for 'Universal Health Coverage' (UHC) by 2030, so that people have access to essential health care without suffering financial hardship. Many [vital investments in health](#) are necessary to achieve this goal, including tackling diseases of poverty such as HIV, TB and malaria, ensuring all children receive the essential vaccinations they need, and that they have access to nutritious food to live healthy and productive lives. A [UN High-Level Meeting on UHC](#) (23 September) will assess the progress the world is making toward building a healthier world.

Education and human development

Education is vital to ensure that all people are able to function as independent and productive members of society. Yet in many lower-income countries, children are denied access to even a basic education, and the world will not meet Global Goal 4 (“inclusive and quality education for all”) this century, with the most marginalised and vulnerable being left behind, particularly girls, children with disabilities, and those caught up in crises. Education is needed to achieve all the Global Goals, and other aspects of poverty alleviation such as health, gender equality, economic development, national security, and democracy.

UK aid works to support human development

UK aid supports human development by funding programmes that provide access to services such as health and education. The UK has long been a leader in global development, having reached the international target of spending 0.7% of its gross national income on Official Development Assistance (ODA) since 2013. The Department for International Development (DFID) funds important ‘bilateral’ human development programmes (e.g. improving access to nutrition and education) in 32 countries, and also supports multilateral institutions such as Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria, and the Global Partnership for Education.

UK aid spent by DFID is among the most effective and transparent in the world. The Government’s [‘Development tracker’](#) shows exactly how and where aid money is spent and what it achieves. According to the latest [DFID Annual Report](#), between January 2015 and December 2017, UK aid supported immunisation of over 56 million children, saving 990,000 lives. It reached over 60 million children under 5, women of childbearing age and adolescent girls with nutrition programmes from April 2015 to March 2019. And it supported over 14 million people to gain a decent education between April 2015 and March 2019.

Changing UK aid priorities

But in a turbulent political climate, spending on human development cannot be taken for granted. The new Government has recommitted itself to the 0.7% target, but aid priorities are changing toward economic growth, climate change, and the UK’s national interest. This is already having an impact on the amounts of money being spent on human development. Already, the UK spends less than the World Health Organisation (WHO) recommendation of 0.1% of Gross National Income on global health – this would amount to around 14% of the UK’s aid budget. However, the proportion of UK aid spent on health has declined from a high point of 20% in 2013 to around 12% in 2016. And the UK spends around 7% of the aid budget on education, much lower than the Send My Friend to School campaign’s [recommendation](#) of 15%.

Influencing the new Government

It’s vital that DFID’s leadership – senior civil servants and Ministers – recognise the importance of continuing to fund human development programmes alongside other aid priorities. Political decisions on how to spend taxpayers’ money don’t happen in a vacuum, and at RESULTS, we know that political will can be the missing link without which change doesn’t happen. Therefore we are working alongside other organisations to show there is strong public support for the kinds of human development programmes that well-spent UK aid funds.

This month, please use your local and social media opportunities to help focus political attention on the importance of spending UK aid on the human development programmes that are among the most powerful ways that aid works. If you are on social media, please use the [#100WaysAidWorks](#) hashtag, which new Secretary of State Alok Sharma has been using to showcase UK aid. We believe that public opinion has a strong influence within DFID and its leadership, and would like to use this opportunity to promote DFID’s work on human development.

Take action

Please use your social media channels or write to your local media to share some of the #100WaysAidWorks. Don’t forget to tag @AlokSharma_RDG and either @DFID_UK or #AidWorks. Refer to [Background Sheet 2](#) for talking points and tips on how to make your online content compelling.

You can also add your signature to this cross-agency [UHC HLM sign-on letter](#), showing Alok Sharma there is public support for Universal Health Coverage. Please do so by 23 September.