FCDO poverty-reduction priorities

In June, Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced the merger of the Department for International Development with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office from the start of September, forming a new Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO).

If you were able to take our July action to express concern about the DFID / FCO merger, thank you! This month, please write to the Foreign Secretary, Rt. Hon. Dominic Raab MP, who will now be responsible for the UK’s international development work, asking him to ensure that his new Department focuses on the vital priorities needed to end global poverty and to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

These ‘human development’ priorities are vital to continue to make progress against poverty, particularly in the face of the huge additional challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Key priorities the new FCDO should adopt:

- Ring fence education spending in the new FCDO and commit to increasing the proportion of ODA spending on education to 15%.

- Make a commitment to reaching 50 million women and children with high impact nutrition interventions over the next five years.

- Continue the UK’s strong support for global immunisation programmes, including supporting Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance and the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, to help ensure that all children have all the recommended vaccinations against easily preventable diseases (and, when a vaccine is available, against COVID-19).

- Continue the UK’s support for the fight against infectious diseases such as TB, HIV and malaria, particularly through its support for the Global Fund.

- Provide additional support for the global response to the COVID-19 pandemic, in a way that does not detract from the response to existing health emergencies such as TB.

- Adequately prioritise the Government’s strategy to end preventable child deaths, aiming to support all the critical interventions needed to ensure quality primary health care, including immunisation, adequate nutrition and services for infectious diseases.
Why the FCDO’s priorities matter

Case study: Educating Nigerian Girls in New Enterprises (ENGINE)

The Girls’ Education Challenge (GEC) was launched by the UK in 2012 as a 12-year commitment to reach the most marginalised girls in the world and is the largest global fund dedicated to girls’ education.

When 19-year-old Yemisi arrived in Lagos from her native Ogun State last year, she was escaping poverty and in search of greener pastures. Determined to find success to make a difference in the lives of her parents and two siblings, she spent the first few weeks there sleeping in a church until a woman told her about the ENGINE project (supported by GEC).

“When I joined ENGINE, I was just wondering if it was truly possible to make it in life, but I gathered myself together and told myself that I will. They taught us how to start a business and I started my business with N 1,000 (about $5) recharge cards from the money my parents gave me on my way to Lagos.”

Today, Yemisi now sells fashion items and accessories and credits ENGINE for all the encouragement, motivation and education that has brought her this far. Today, she has a total net worth of about N 14,000 (about $70). Daily, she thinks of how to expand her business, using the skills she acquired from the programme. She is full of resolve not to depend on anyone for handouts and even though she dropped out from school in her final year due to financial constraints, she is determined not to remain idle.

Source: Girls’ Education Challenge

Case study: Immunisation in Democratic Republic of Congo

Esther, 11, has come to get her Yellow fever vaccination at one of the 102 vaccination sites in Binza Ozone, Kinshasa, DRC. Her mother Dongo brought her to get vaccinated. Esther told us she wasn't scared to be vaccinated, but hid behind her hands when said it.

Esther and her mother are glad to be vaccinated so that they will stay healthy.

Esther says: "We live close to this health centre, on the other side of the road. It wasn’t far to come here. I am not scared to get vaccinated or maybe a little. I have been vaccinated before, against measles. This is my second time to be vaccinated. I am glad I'm getting vaccinated, because then I will be protected. I'd be scared if I didn’t get vaccinated."

Source: Save the Children