



**CENTRE LSD'S FINAL PROJECT REPORT
OF THE
DECOLONISATION AND ANTI-RACISM: LEARNING CURRICULUM
DEVELOPMENT**

Funded by Christian-Aid.

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Produced by:

**The African Centre for Leadership Strategy and Development
(Centre LSD)**

2024

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ABBREVIATIONS

Acronym/Meaning

CA	Christian Aid
FBOs	Faith Based Organizations
GESI	Gender and Social Inclusion
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
KII	Key Informant Interview

DECOLONISATION AND ANTI-RACISM: LEARNING CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Submission Date:	8th August 2024
Period Covered:	1 ST DEC -31 ST MARCH 2024
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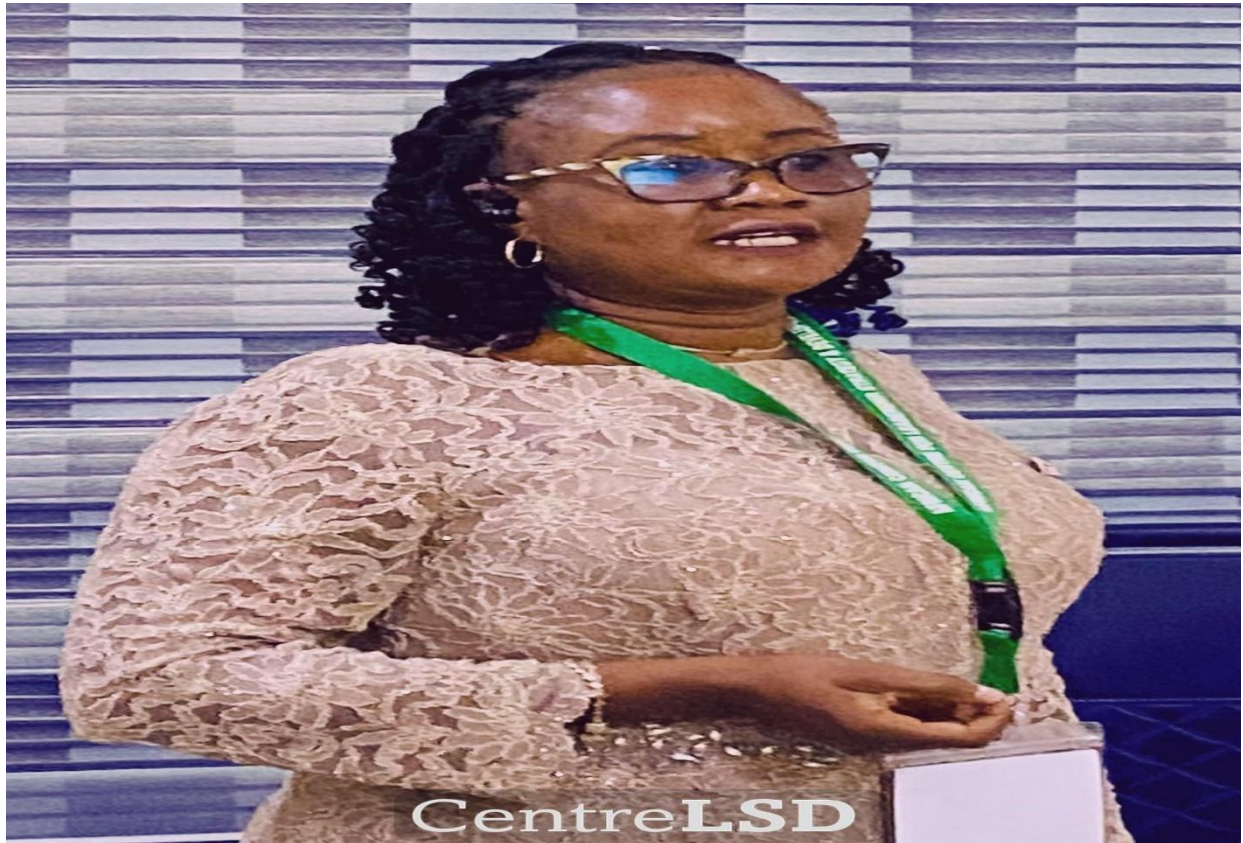
I. INTRODUCTION

Despite the flag and ceremonial independence attained by African countries, coloniality continues to rear its head in other forms such as language, culture (symbols, food, fashion, bodily embellishments and scarifications, marriage traditions, etc.), religion, history, education, political systems and many more. There is a sense of inherent colonial mentality arising from a hangover of the experiences and vestiges of the colonial era. Evidence of the sustenance of colonial power has been identified in the racial, political, and social hierarchal orders imposed by European colonialism that prescribed the value to certain people and societies while disenfranchising others. Globalization has created an avenue to reinforce this practice.

Particularly, the development industry was founded and continues to operate on a mindset of paternalistic benevolence enterprise and helping others, thereby concealing a motive of political, economic, and cultural subjugation. The need to reverse this mentality and ensure total freedom for all people has elicited discourse and scholarship in the concepts of decolonization and antiracism. To further understand these concepts, their elements, reinforcements, and adaptations to development practice in the context of Nigeria, we identified and interviewed scholars and practitioners.

These then became the frame on which the manual was developed. The final document advocated for decolonial and anti-racial indoctrination in social work practice, addressing injustices and impacts of colonization in Nigeria. It critiques Western epistemology and advocates for an antiracist model, challenging white supremacist, colonial, and oppressive structures. The manual provides tools, guidelines, and a manifesto for transforming social practice in Nigeria, demystifying and redressing concepts of decolonization and antiracism. The manual also emphasizes the importance of addressing the history of colonization and race in socio-economic thoughts,

actively recruiting diverse leaders, mentors, workers, and beneficiaries, and going beyond data-driven approaches to create emancipatory practices.



Christian-Aid lead on this project speaking at the validation meeting

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT CONCEPTUALIZATION

Decolonization and anti-racism are important frameworks that can be used to address historical injustices, systemic inequalities, and power imbalances rooted in colonial histories. In recent times, these issues have gained prominence. It has become imperative to understand their significance, especially in the context of organizations and development work. A proper study of decolonization and anti-racism can help to address historical legacies, foster equality, and promote justice. This is why organizations especially those engaged in development work must critically examine their practices, knowledge systems, and power structures through the lenses of decolonization and anti-racism.

To develop knowledge and practice that aligns with the principles of decolonization and anti-racism that will establish a foundation for transformative learning and equitable partnerships, Christian Aid graciously committed to the process of making this a reality. The main objective of

“Our entire economy is tied back to our colonial masters leaving us vulnerable and completely dependent on foreign exchange”.

“It is crucial to consider the impact of decolonization on women and persons with disabilities, who they often experience double discrimination”.

“We were structured to remain poor through colonization”.

“We are still colonized but in a different way.”

“Christian Aid should Let partners have the feel of decolonization in working with Christian Aid so partners can bring in ideas and innovations

the assignment was to design, develop, and implement a comprehensive learning curriculum on decolonization and anti-racism for Christian Aid staff, partners, and communities with a focus on Nigeria. Specifically, the objectives were to:

1. To determine the common understanding of “decolonization” and anti-racism for an average Nigerian.
2. To examine the impact of decolonization in ending poverty and shifting power in Nigeria.
3. To examine the connection between colonialism, poverty, and development practice in Nigeria and Internationally.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology for developing the decolonization and anti-racism: learning curriculum was essentially a qualitative study with the utilization of participatory approaches. It incorporated a comprehensive literature review, key informant insights, and participatory focus group discussion to inform the development of a decolonization and anti-racism curriculum tailored to the Nigerian context.

4. PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

4.1 Literature Review

This was the first step in the development of the decolonization and anti-racism manual. This exercise conducted an extensive literature review on decolonization, anti-racism, race, racism, racialization, poverty, and their interconnections with a focus on the Nigerian context. Additionally, relevant academic works,

policy documents, and reports that address the relationship between colonialism, poverty, and development practice in Nigeria were reviewed and salient points were extracted. To ensure that the manual/curriculum that will be produced meets international standards, Centre LSD analyzed existing educational materials and curricula relating to decolonization and anti-racism to understand best practices and potential adaptations for the Nigerian context. The literature reviewed formed the basis for the thoughts, assertions, and recommendations in the final output.

4.2 Key Informant Interview

For the key informant interview, six (6) scholars and development practitioners were identified and invited to reflect on the concepts, elements, and formations of decolonization and antiracism generally in Nigeria, but specifically as it relates to social or development work. The informants were not necessarily subject matter experts but practitioners with varied multidisciplinary experiences. All the interview sessions were held virtually over Zoom except two—one was over the phone while the other was physical. All sessions, was conducted under the Chatham House-styled rules, non-ascription, and confidentiality, were recorded for the records and ease of recall.

The questions posed to the informants during the KII were structured to elicit their broad thoughts and to reflect on their experiences in their professional and personal lives. The protocol for the interviews was formulated along the following outline: **General Understanding;** How would you define “decolonization” in the context of Nigeria; How do you perceive the term “anti-racism” in the Nigerian context; **Impact of Decolonization:** In your opinion, what has been the impact of decolonization on poverty alleviation in Nigeria? Can you share specific examples of instances where decolonization has influenced power dynamics in the Nigerian context; **Connection between Colonization,**

“Resources are the fuel of any initiatives, and our funders have these resources that we do not have, thus leaving us at their mercy”.

“Christian Aid Should give partners more leverage and trust them to be able to carry out implementations of approved work plans

“One of the biggest problems faced in the decolonization process is that the colonial master gave us power but held on to the economic stronghold. Nigeria and other African Countries are still under colonial rule”.

Power, and Development: From your perspective, how is colonialism connected to poverty in Nigeria? In the realm of development practice, what linkages do you see between colonial histories and current challenges in Nigeria.

Other questions posed at the KII session were on **Faith-Based Organization:** Considering the role of Faith Based Organizations (FBOs), how do you see their involvement in decolonization efforts today?; Are there specific instances or practices within faith-based organizations that contribute to the ongoing decolonization process?; **Decolonization and Development:** Why do you think that decolonization is crucial for ending poverty and shifting power in Nigeria?<What learning opportunities can Christian Aid leverage to effectively support communities in the decolonization and anti-racism discourse? **Gender and Social Inclusion:** How can we ensure gender and social inclusion (GESI) in the discourse of decolonization and anti-racism? Are there specific considerations and challenges related to GESI?

General Submissions from the KII

Since the interviews were conducted under Chatham House-styled rules of non-ascription and confidentiality, presented below is a synopsis of the submissions and recommendations from the respondents.

1. Colonization and decolonization as definitive terms should not be conflated with coloniality and decoloniality. Interviewees agree that colonization emphasizes the political and economic domination of one nation over another, and coloniality is the continuous application of asymmetric power structures, extending from colonization, to subjugate peoples' cultures, knowledge production, and enterprise. Contrariwise, decolonization is the political and economic independence from colonizers and decoloniality is the set of actions or practices to abolish colonial influences on cultures, education, and indigenous society.
2. Poverty and inequalities are part of the repressive legacies emanating from the long years of colonization and persist till today. The same is true for racial inequalities.
3. There are risks associated with not decolonizing, which may include social inequalities and marginalization, cultural appropriation and erasure, environmental degradation, undermining community empowerment, and reinforcing power imbalances.
4. There is a need to actively promote decolonization change champions

5. Regular identification and enumeration of critical elements of decolonization and antiracism and to take actions to correct all observable anomalies.
6. Professionals should be open-minded to learn, unlearn, and relearn evolving ways of coloniality and decoloniality.
7. Development partners can facilitate decolonization through the promotion of collaborative processes, support for locally led initiatives, challenge to assumptions and values, lead advocacy for deliberate and targeted policy change, and engaging in truth and reconciliation.
8. In the face of new and commanding awareness, faith-based institutions should be encouraged to reassess their worldviews, be involved in collaboration with indigenous faith institutions, and establish anti-racist practices in their doctrines.
9. Gender and social inclusion can be promoted through intersectional approaches, inclusive policies, engagement with diverse voices, investment in capacity building, and monitoring inclusivity in their practices.

In conclusion, the interviewees gave a valuable account of their experience and knowledge of the subject of interest. However, it is considered that the concepts of decolonization and anti-racism are not as predominant in development work in Nigeria even if the tenets exist. It is proposed that more scholarly and development research be invested in these topics to better understand the Nigerian context.

ONLINE FORUM

During the interviews, the consultants became aware of a global online forum where scholars gathered to discuss “Decolonization and Decoloniality”. Centre LSD took advantage of this forum to further learn about the concepts and contemporary scholarly works. Presenters at the forum, which lasted over 5 hours and has been published on YouTube^[1], included Prof. Sabelo J. NDLOVU-GATSHENI (Zimbabwean), Prof. Oyeronke OYEWUNMI (Nigerian), Prof. Shose KESSI (South Africa), Prof. Nelson MALDONADO-TORRES (Puerto Rican), Prof. Julia SUAREZ-KRABBE (Colombian) and Prof. Walter D. MIGNOLO (Argentinian). The forum was moderated by historian, Prof. Toyin FALOLA, an endowed professor of history at the University of Texas. One of the key take-away from this forum is that more organizations are beginning to program around and discuss issues of decolonization and antiracism. The ripple effect of this is that more

persons will become aware of these concepts and how they play out in our day-to-day operations at both organizational and person level.



Dr Otiye leading the discussion at the validation meeting

4.3 Focus Group Discussion

To buttress the submissions from both the desk review and the KII, the Centre conducted a total of 5 FGDs, with 48 participants drawn from 17 organizations across Nigeria. These organizations were specifically Christian-Aid implementing partners. Discussions at the FGD commenced with an exploration of the concepts of decolonization and anti-racism. Participants demonstrated a nuanced understanding of decolonization, tracing its origins to the partitioning of Africa by European powers in the late 19th century. This highlighted the struggle for self-governance, and participants emphasized the ongoing relevance of decolonization in achieving economic autonomy and cultural sovereignty. Participants shared their personal experiences or observations on these concepts in their community work and made shocking revelations of classical examples of racism taking place in Nigeria.

The discussions explored the global dimensions of colonialism, poverty, and development practice, revealing the complex interplay of power dynamics. Participants highlighted the exploitative relationships between foreign elites and African nations, emphasizing the systemic barriers that hinder progress in decolonization and anti-racism efforts. The focus group discussions provided valuable insights into the complexities of decolonization and anti-racism, highlighting the interconnectedness of historical legacies, global power dynamics, and local development efforts. While participants demonstrated a deep understanding of these issues, there were notable gaps in the discussion regarding concrete strategies for promoting inclusivity and addressing systemic barriers.

Moving forward, there is a need for continued dialogue, advocacy, and action to advance decolonization and anti-racism agendas in Nigeria and beyond. By fostering critical consciousness and building strong partnerships, stakeholders can work towards transformative change and create a more just and equitable society for all.



A cross section of participants at one of the FGDs

4.4 Validation Research Findings in the Decolonization and Anti-racism Manual

On the 11th of June 2024, a hybrid validation meeting was organized by Centre LSD with the primary aim of validating the research findings on decolonization and anti-racism and gathering feedback from key stakeholders on the final output of this research. The research was validated by key stakeholders who participated in the KII, FGDs, and the entire research process. Christian-Aid, relevant Centre LSD staff, and the key researchers were among the key participants at this validation.

The validation of decolonization research had 4 main sessions of opening remarks, **welcome remarks**: The main presentation on "Introduction to Decolonization and Anti-Racism in Social Practice", a presentation of a video clip on decolonization and anti-racism in social practices, and conclusion and recommendation.

Some of the recommendations from participants at the validation meeting were:

1. That there is a need to explore ways to take the research findings to Radio stations and media houses so that it can reach a wider audience.
2. Centre LSD should extract a concept note from the research, which could be used as a project on decolonization and anti-racism such that the knowledge on this can be widely spread to both development and non-development practitioners.
3. That Centre LSD has a convening power and a presence in the six (6) geo-political zones of the country. It is suggested that the centre uses its convening power to spread the knowledge from this research to the sub-national level.
4. A Participant also recommended that the research findings should be disseminated across the whole of Africa, using various platforms and meetings of Centre LSD, Christian Aid and other partners.
5. That the product of this research should be used to engage the national orientation agency and the Ministry of Information who have the statutory obligation to disseminate relevant information as well as reorient the Nigerian citizens.



A group photograph of participants at the validation meeting

4.5 Dissemination Workshop

This is one of the highlights of this project and a very important one at that. One of the agreed next steps from the validation meeting was that Christian Aid alongside CLSD, will develop a communication plan that will guide the dissemination of this research. This is aimed at increased understanding on practices that promote decolonization and anti-racism at work targeting development practitioners through targeted social media campaigns and a hybrid dissemination event and to increase awareness of and accessibility to evidence and learning resources produced by the research.



Dr Umesi Emenike in one of the FGD

4.6 RESEARCH PRODUCT CONTRIBUTIONS

The findings from the research and development of a learning curriculum on decolonization and anti-racism validate the multifaceted impact of a well-developed decolonization and anti-racism manual. Below are some of the research contributions to organizational learning around decolonization and anti-racism:

- I. Contribution to the body of knowledge. This well-researched and thoroughly documented manual will serve as a valuable reference for further future research/study by Christian Aid or other development partners.

2. Availability of a detailed and accessible manual that will serve as a comprehensive guide for understanding and implementing decolonization and anti-racism practices within and outside the Nigerian context.
3. Gained insights from some stakeholders in the development sector, who participated in this process, agreed with and willing to integrate decolonization and anti-racism content into their operations and practices.
4. One key result is that this research has opened a vista of scholarly discourse and exploration of decolonization and anti-racism topics. Other organizations can build on this research for further future work in this area. Like in the areas of educating and training on how to identify and mitigate elements of decolonization and antiracism in programming and implementation.



Participants of one of the FGD

5.0 LESSONS LEARNT

- Recognizing and addressing the power imbalances that exist due to historical systemic factors is key as development partners programme around the concept of decolonization and anti-racism. This helps address the subtle interplay of these duo in organizations as well as practices in Nigeria.
- Continuous education on the histories and contributions of marginalized groups is also very key as these two concepts of decolonization and antiracism are relatively new

programming areas for development partners. This widens the knowledge margin of citizens and in effect helps stem the effects of decolonization and antiracism in Nigeria.



6.0 RECOMMENDATION FOR CHRISTIAN-AID

Christian aid should work with Centre LSD to disseminate widely, the findings from this research study, so that more development partners as well as citizens can understand and identify elements of decolonization and antiracism in operations and even day-to-day interactions.

7.0 OBSERVATIONS

The main observations during this project are:

1. The subjects of discourse--decolonization and anti-racism--appear to be novel subjects for many of the respondents. This caused several nominated respondents to decline to speak on the topic.
2. Without prejudice to reflections from the respondents, it does appear that many respondents could not nuance or relate the topics to their everyday experiences or were too shy to do so as the comments received were more academic than practical. However, we must concede that these are not topics that Nigerians can easily relate to, and outcomes of the research may be affected if respondents have to be led into their responses, even if they readily agree with the suggestions.

8.0 CONCLUSION

In this research, we found out that the subject of discourse--decolonization and anti-racism--appears to be a novel subject for many of the respondents. This has a crucial role to play in the decolonisation of its citizens. The findings from this research further shows that the concepts of decolonization and anti-racism are not as predominant in development work in Nigeria even if the tenets exist. It is proposed that more scholarly and development research be invested in these topics to better understand the Nigerian context.

Given that decolonisation of, and through, quantitative methods teaching (learning curriculum) is both possible and necessary, we argue that such efforts in the development/humanitarian sectors (Global South/Global North) can be augmented in many ways. Our suggestions are for continuous education on the histories and contributions of marginalized groups as these concepts of decolonization and antiracism are relatively new programming areas for development partners.