



Facing unconscious bias



Scotland's International
Development Alliance

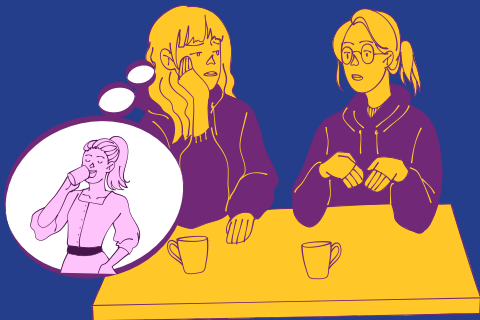
In the international development sector, it's vital to be aware of our entrenched biases and identify how our assumptions affect our work.

Working in fair and equal ways is vital, but it can be hard to identify the subconscious ideas that drive our decisions, and easy to overlook our unconscious bias.

Here are some notes on identifying and addressing unconscious bias, drawn from the recent training held by brap for Alliance members.

What is unconscious bias?

"Unconscious bias" refers to the attitudes and stereotypes that affect our decisions and relationships. They're shortcuts the brain learns to contextualise things in terms of our past experiences and social messaging.



For example, if we meet someone who reminds us of a person we clashed with in the past, we're more likely to treat them as if they're hostile to us.

Different sorts of bias

Affinity

You trust people who are more like you, and you believe the best of them, even in the face of evidence

Confirmation

You give more weight to things that confirm what you already believe, and ignore things that contradict them

Complexity

The more complicated things seem, the less likely you are to question them

Sunk cost

You are reluctant to give up on a way of thinking/working that you've already sunk a lot of resources into

Attribution

When people in your "ingroup" do well, you attribute it to skill or intelligence; when people in your "outgroup" do well you attribute it to luck or external forces..

Only 0.2% of humanitarian aid goes directly to local organisations

DISABLED PEOPLE ARE MORE THAN TWICE AS LIKELY TO BE UNEMPLOYED AS NON-DISABLED PEOPLE.

92% of trustees on charity boards and 95% of charity Chief Executives are white

Female managers earn 22% less than their male counterparts

Ask yourself...

- Who gets funded?
- What is seen as valuable work?
Valuable for who?
- What systems do we take for granted?
Who built them? Why?
- Can everyone access your
events/resources?



We've learnt these
automatic ways of
thinking.

**That means we can
unlearn them**

HOW DO WE START TO ADDRESS BIAS?

- Talk to each other! Seek different views & fresh perspectives
- Think about how you make decisions (and why)
- Make sure you're working with people, not for them - trust people and approach them as individuals
- Be kind to yourself. Having biases doesn't make you a bad person - but it's up to you to do the work to make your interactions fair.

By being thoughtful and deliberate in how we work, we can build a fair and just development sector together!

