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Submission in Response to the Call by the Permanent Forum

Salifu Dagarti Foundation (SDF) is a UK registered charity which works on 3 Continents: Africa, Asia and Europe. SDF values transnational work and networking because of the impact this has on work in very different locations. The charity works with all communities but specialises in the needs of Africans whether born and based on the African Continent or in the Diaspora. SDF welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the Draft Resolution on the Promotion and Full Respect of the Human Rights of People of African Descent as per UN Resolution A/RES/76/226 which set up the Permanent Forum.

Human Rights of Africans are trampled upon because of a distinct type of Racism which has its roots in the Crime Against Humanity that was the Trafficking and Enslavement of Africans. SDF prefers the term Afriphobia, with an I to describe that very distinct form of discrimination which attacks the very humanity of Africans. SDF joins sister organisations throughout the world in rejecting the use of afrophobia, a subtly racist term which reduces the serious racism experienced by African People to an issue of hair. Durban I rightly found that Enslavement of Africans through chattel slavery was a Crime Against Humanity because it was predicated on dehumanising a whole branch of humanity. The world is still trying to unravel the horrific web that Afriphobia has woven.

Education

Schools

SDF's casework in the UK highlights the prevalence of Afriphobic attitudes in the school system. Unfair exclusions, punishing the wrong child for the mistakes of another (because we all look alike), not giving young people their right grades or encouraging them to use their skills and talents is part of the lived experience of young people in the 21st Century. To make matters worse, parents are juggling 3 or more jobs so they can keep a roof over the heads of their families and food on table and are often absent when their children start experiencing difficulties with the system. Often when SDF gets involved in Advocacy and Support, matters have escalated. The need to juggle several jobs is itself a result of Afriphobia as Africans do not always get the jobs that their qualifications and skills entitle them to expect.





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Universities

Matters do not improve when young people survive the challenges of the UK schooling system and enter UK universities. They now have to contend with their contributions in lecture halls being dismissed, because Africans are not intelligent enough to say anything useful, their work being marked down and being accused of plagiarism when they submit original work. These examples are all based on lived experience. Through Advocacy, appeals are lodged and requests are made for work to be remarked. It is not unusual for a 40% grade to receive 80% when marked by another lecturer. Afriphobia has depressing consequences

Finances

Dealing with the challenges caused by Afriphobia is made worse by financial stress as African Heritage students who are not on scholarships from countries of origin, face severe money challenges in paying fees, living expenses and transport costs. Diaspora Africans find themselves dealing with similar challenges their parents faced with the only advantage being that they have the right accent when dealing with employers and landlords on the phone.

Another issue facing Africans is Financial Exclusion. Difficulties are put before them when they want to open bank accounts, whether personal, business or organisational. These barriers cause additional stress for people trying to make a living in a hostile environment.

Healthcare System

The Pandemic laid bare the Afriphobia in the health system. Africans and other minorities faced a higher death rate in the UK and many theories have been advanced. Africans form the bulk of frontline worker, often low-paid, so tend to seek overtime and work long hours. Tiredness and lack of recovery time, rest and relaxation makes them more vulnerable to aggressive disease. For those in the health system, evidence from our Advocacy work is that they were more likely to be given shifts in Covid wards, without adequate protection. From the patient perspective, the unfortunate evidence from our casework is the neglect Covid patients faced when admitted. In one case, where the patient had dietary needs, she was left without food and had to call family to bring in food and drink. The neglect seemed to be driven by Afriphobia such that healthcare professionals forget their training and the oath they had taken.





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Afriphobia faced by the Siddi People (Ethnic Africans in India)

First SDF needs to make it clear that the Siddi are not the Dalits or untouchables. They are considered even lower than the so called untouchables. The Siddi are ethnic Africans who have lived in India for several centuries. SDF has been told that they have been in the forests before India became a country and that they are the original inhabitants of the sub-continent.

They face several challenges: exclusion from education, exploitation at work and opportunities, theft of their land through marriages where women are exploited. SDF has identified strategies which would improve their quality of life:

- (i) Giving them pride in their identity as ethnic Africans and connecting them to the Global African Family.
- (ii) Securing their land and helping them farm it in a sustainable and ecologically safe way
- (iii) Developing agro-industries to provide a step change in income and eradicate their poverty
- (iv) Securing their rights as already enshrined in Indian Law but which they have to negotiate through local power brokers





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Afriphobia faced by Africans on the Continent

It is unfortunate that Africans on the Continent are not immune from Afriphobia. It is not unusual for non-African to be given preferential treatment when it comes to financing from the banks or access to land and other resources. The Pandemic of Racism has to be tackled head on if we want to be successful in promotion the human rights of Africans.

African-led organisations with links to the grassroots need to be resourced so they can transform the situation on the ground. If young people are undertaking the perilous crossing of the Sahara and the Mediterranean, it is because they have few options and see travel to the West or the Middle East as a way to make a living.

Solutions

Resources

Change is possible if African-led organisations are resourced to develop African solutions. It is imperative that we create intergenerational spaces where the generations can learn from each other and young people can implement ancestral ideas which not only preserve the environment but produce abundant harvests.

Protection from Environmental Vandals

In pursuing these solutions, it is important that African farmers are protected from the Environmental Vandalism that comes from ill-thought, well-meaning solutions which devastate the landscape and take the Community backwards by creating dependency instead of independent sustainable living.

Linking young People Globally

Creating spaces where young people from Africa, Asia and Europe can meet and share lessons about resilience and survival will go a long way to creating the confidence that Africans need to claim the full human rights they are entitled to enjoy. In those spaces, crafts, practical skills, language and culture must be shared to create vibrant Communities of Practice. Discussing and Acting together on the problems of our time and localities will help bring about the transformation we need.





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As Martin Luther King rightly said “**no one can ride your back unless it is bent.**” We must acknowledge that Afriphobia is so pervasive that the victims have imbibed the false narrative about themselves. Correcting historical narratives, restoring ethnic pride is a first step in creating the fertile soil needed for African to obtain and enjoy their full human rights. As we eradicate Afriphobia, we need to replace it with **Afriphilia**, a love of Africa, Africans and things African.

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