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# Diversity in Policy and Practice: A Practitioner Workshop

20/21 April 2004

University of Warwick

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Report of Main Themes

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# Diversity in Policy and Practice: A Practitioner Workshop

## 1. Introduction

This report presents the main themes to emerge from a workshop held on April 20-21 2004 as part of European Social Fund Research Project 24. This project is entitled 'Involvement of stakeholders in diversity management: the way forward for equality policy and practice?' The broad project area is in understanding the processes of diversity policy in practice. Broad aims of the project include exploring:

- a) What are the triggers to diversity policy in different organisational contexts?
- b) What stakeholders were involved in developing diversity policy?
- c) What role do line managers have in diversity policy implementation?
- d) What problems and obstacles are faced in implementation?
- e) What successes and examples of good practice can be identified?

A key part of the methodology of the project involves two workshops with practitioners in the field, involving a mix of senior managers, trade union officers and academics. This first workshop aimed to provide an opportunity for practitioners to influence the design and substance of the research, including what areas are investigated, as well as providing a space for discussion and networking. The second workshop (date and location to be discussed at the end of this report) will provide a vehicle for dissemination.

The workshop involved a mixture of plenary and small group sessions. The programme was split into two main sessions, the first concerned with exploring 'barriers to equality within organisations', and the second with exploring 'facilitators to equality and examples of good practice'. Both plenary and small group sessions were tape recorded and fully transcribed.

This report details the main themes to emerge from the transcripts of the sessions, plus examples of typical comments from individual participants, in order to give a qualitative flavour of people's views and opinions. In order to preserve anonymity and confidentiality, names of or personal details relating to the responses of participants will not be used during this report.

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## 2. Participants

### Organisers

Anne-marie Greene	Warwick Business School, University of Warwick
Gill Kirton	Queen Mary, University of London
Deborah Dean	Research Fellow, Warwick Business School
Ivy Cameron	Cameron Woods Associates

### Participants

There were eleven participants at the workshop; six senior managers, three senior trade union officials and two academics.

Names of participants have been removed from this document to ensure anonymity.

### 3. Barriers to Equality and Diversity within organisations

Participants were asked to talk about the main barriers to equality and diversity within their organisations. Four main themes emerged from the discussion.

#### 3.1 Organisational Culture

All of the participants commented in a number of different ways that existing organisational cultures made action on equality issues very difficult. However it was acknowledged that what was meant by 'culture' was often amorphous and varied.

Issues mentioned included; continued prejudice, glass ceilings and sticky floors, examples of harassment and bullying, and inflexibility of working patterns. It was felt that there is a tendency within organisations to create in-groups and out-groups, which often work against groups traditionally facing discrimination (e.g. women, minority ethnic workers). However one participant, a senior manager of a feminised organisation offered an example of how men felt excluded within her organisation.

There was a view from the majority that there is a continued resistance by some managers and employees to long-term implementation of equality policies. Part of this resistance derived from perceptions of challenges to power and influence, a view shared by 5 participants, as indicated by the following quotes:

*One of the biggest problems I think is people who want to retain power. So they don't want to open it up to other groups of people... They like to be able to speak the way they've always spoken, they don't want to have to moderate that because there are women there. They still want to tell racist jokes, because they don't think it's racist [but just think it's funny]. All those kinds of things go on...Senior Trade Union Officer*

*Human beings like being in a comfort zone, And in my experience the majority like to stay in that comfort zone... Therefore if they're pushed to come out of that comfort zone, then that can be a barrier... then there's just general fear, because it's outside of their current field of recognition'. Senior Manager Public Sector*

Participants in both public and private sector organisations also commented on the ways in which informal practices and expectations of work organisation meant that certain individuals could not progress within the organisation. An example of this which was felt to clearly exclude people was the notion of 'pub culture' and the fact that in practice business was often completed outside of work spaces, such as 'on the golf course'.

#### 3.2 Lack of embeddedness of equality and diversity

While participants noted that many organisations now had equality policies in place, an endemic problem noted by the majority of participants was that equality and diversity issues were not embedded within organisational practice. Here the distinction was drawn by many between surface policies which simply paid lip service, and policies that were firmly rooted in organisational practice. One senior trade unionist spoke of 'the silo of equality and diversity', where equality and diversity issues were seen as the responsibility of a small group of very committed people within an organisation and not taken seriously or seen as important by the majority:

*When I moved from equality and diversity into Head of Health, I was congratulated... and somebody actually had the nerve to say to over a drink one day, 'when you used to come and talk to us about equality and diversity, it was a real turn-off'. And what I've noticed in that, in this real job, I have to struggle to embed equality and diversity'* Senior Trade Unionist

A problem stated by many participants was of getting wider buy-in to equality and diversity:

*You can be building the greatest structure, policies and procedures above ground, but if all these termites are going around eating away at the foundations, the whole thing just collapses'* Senior Manager Private Sector

As well as the people involved, the 'silo' effect also related to the way in which equality and diversity policy was felt to be separated from ordinary business issues. Therefore equality and diversity was something 'done' by the HR department, or the Diversity Manager or Diversity Team, rather than relating to core business issues, and thus owned by everybody.

*Until it's threaded through everything and becomes a natural part of every lesson that recruits have to go through... it's never going to be meaningful... Why do we have a.. EO diversity policy that's separate? Because it puts these things in a little block all on their own. Whereas it should be part of the general way we work'* Senior Manager Public Sector.

### 3.3 Middle/Line Management

The majority of participants talked about the line and middle management level as being a particular area of resistance to equality and diversity within organisations, which was a particular problem as it was these managers who most often had responsibility for delivering policy. The reasons for this resistance were various. Part of the resistance related to prejudice and discrimination and also to fears of loss of power which were discussed earlier. However other issues were specifically mentioned:

#### 3.3.1 Lack of communication

Relating to point 3.2 above, line/middle management were seen as key actors to get buy-in from to equality and diversity issues, but were often missed out from the communication agenda:

*'There are people in organisations who are key actors, and they're not always the people at the top. Often it is the line, or other sorts of key people in getting things done. And no-one's attempting to generate their support. So they're not buying into it. And then they are blocking'* Senior Academic

#### 3.3.2 Lack of management skills

While all the participants considered equality and diversity to be a key HR issue, it was noted by four participants, that a key problem was lack of HR training, and specifically equality and diversity training for line managers:

*'... one large problem with that group is that they don't really know what they're meant to do.. to do this diversity stuff... therefore it means they get very defensive.. and .. at the end of the day you could have great top level buy-in and you can have real champions.. but if you don't tackle that group that operationalise stuff nothing... changes [s]'* Senior Manager Consultancy.

*'... things like harassment.. managers don't know how to deal with it. They will actually let things pass.... Most managers become managers because they're good at their technical discipline... we don't generally tell them that now as a manager they have to manage people. And they have no skills often to manage people'* Senior Manager Private Sector

*'.. everything that's tested in, they're tested in the competencies required for that role... Nobody has put in these competencies, you will manage. We assume that.. because they've passed their exams and they've done a selection process... all of a sudden they've become managers...'* Senior Manager Public Sector

### 3.3.3 Demands on line/middle managers

While the lack of skills and training was acknowledged, participants were also keen to recognise that managers often did not have or were given the time or resources to be trained:

*'there's no doubt that... even if there's willingness, it is quite difficult for some of them to actually get the training they need properly [because of ] time'* Senior Manager Private Sector

*'they're the ones who are supposed to carry through these policies and implement them.... That the [equality and diversity] saints pass down. But you know what are their worries? Equality and diversity, it's a cross I have to bear. It costs lots.. I haven't got time, I've got piles of work... very good reasons often.. a lack of investment in this area of management is a [barrier]'* Senior Trade Union Officer.

## 3.4 Problems of Measurement

There was debate about the difficulties of measuring equality and diversity outcomes and the methods of measurement.

First participants commented on the nature of equality and diversity targets and the requirement for monitoring. For some, the requirement to monitor led to a level of over-bureaucracy and 'red tape' which in itself was a barrier to equality action. One Senior Academic spoke of the 'tyranny of measurement'. Here a view shared by about half the group was that what was being measured was not addressing the real issues of discrimination and inequality:

*'..my sense is that a lot of procedure is fundamentally barrier... what you get is a kind of ethical distortion.. so people are complying with the measurement in a way which allows them to do things very superficially for public consumption, because much of the measurement is external to the organisation... actually this isn't measuring what really is delivering the service or addressing this issue or addressing this aspect of inequality'* Senior Academic

*'what we're doing is actually spending time [dealing with targets]... How many females we get through the recruitment process. Rather than, how are those females progressing through the service?... And the reason they stick on the recruitment is because it gives them the answers they want'* Senior Manager Public Sector.

*'the process can sometimes subvert the outcome.... The Race Relations Act for me has quite sensibly, a sort of performance management framework. But. organisations are very good at being perceived to be operating a performance management framework, but actually when you look below that... what's actually happening to them, that's quite different'* Senior Trade Union Officer

Participants also discussed the problems of 'one size fits all' policies that emerged from such measurement and targets, rather than having specific policies relating to the organisational context.

Clearly this links into the discussions presented earlier about the separation of equality and diversity policies from mainstream business.

However, while some participants we keen to argue that measurement and external targets were a barrier, others felt that it was important that measurement and targets existed:

*'..sometimes statistics don't tell the whole picture, well I think we know that. But.. you do need to [measure] and have checks and balances... in a sense they're our levers in creating some change'* Senior Trade Union Officer

*'I think there is still a big issue about getting people to actually just see at all. Which is where I guess things like audits are quite important, because at least they reveal the need for asking questions... people might.. then sit down and explain away everything it shows, but at least it's got some data that people can actually say 'well why?'* Senior Academic.

*'I am fed up ... that we don't even start with the basics of having audited information about where we are'* Senior Manager Consultancy

*'we need to measure what is happening, but if that's all we do, if all we do is count the beans and do nothing else we're wasting out time. But we need to have the beans counted and we need to take action as a consequence of that and prioritise..'* Senior Manager Public Sector.

There was also a discussion of the role of legislation and formal regulation. Some participants were adamant that formal regulation had to underpin policies for them to have any practical meaning. For example on the issue of equal pay, one participant commented:

*'unless it becomes mandatory, unless we say that the Equal Pay Act.. is strengthened by a requirement to audit, I can't see any progress'* Senior Trade Union Officer

And even though formal regulation could be seen as a barrier of sorts, it was still necessary:

*'.. the way the law works.. those people have to have enforcement placed on them. Which is sad in itself because the whole thing ties them up and they're unable to function, and it can be quite non-productive. But one has to demonstrate that certain things will not be tolerated.'* Senior Manager Public Sector.

Others felt that while legislation was necessary, it was of itself, insufficient and had to be accompanied by meaningful action at workplace level.



## 4. Facilitators of Equality and Diversity

In the second section of the workshop, participants were asked to reflect on the barriers discussed earlier, and to talk about ways that these barriers could be overcome, and general facilitators to equality and diversity.

### 4.1 Effective Leadership

Most participants spoke of the need for organisational leadership of equality and diversity issues, however what was meant by leadership differed.

Five participants were clear that there had to be ownership and leadership of equality and diversity issues at the top of the organisational hierarchy:

*'Commitment at the top... It's almost become a sort of cliché now.. [but] there really has to be some commitment at the top, and not just commitment, it has to be driven. And seen as really important'* Senior Academic

*'..champions and supporters are great, but only if you've got the leadership backing it up. And if you haven't then it means nothing. To the extent that you can actually challenge people over it and they'll say 'yeah so?' because they know that the top level isn't going to do anything about it.'* Senior Manager Public Sector

*'Senior level commitment... if you've got someone like that in an organisation who you can really get on board .. it makes a huge difference.. it means people are more likely to listen.'* Senior Trade Union Officer

The support of very senior management was crucial, to give the equality and diversity agenda legitimacy, to enforce behaviour change and to make the kind of necessary political and cultural challenge that would lead to positive outcomes. Top commitment was thus important in supporting people designated as diversity and equality champions:

*'... being somebody in that field is terribly isolating... quite often you're the only person in the organisation that's fighting the battle'* Senior Trade Union Officer

One senior academic spoke of the need for such leaders to have:

*'moral courage.. [to] challenge the political reality of what organisations are about.. You can't do it without leadership, you can't do it by saying to the poor old HR department-'make all our managers [do]'....That will only come through leadership'.*

Part of this leadership also involved giving direction to the policy framework. In particular there was discussion within two of the smaller groups about the confusion of the terms 'equality' and 'diversity' which was felt to impede progress:

*'there certainly needs to be some articulation of the various things that diversity can include. And that's not a definitive list... but some clear idea.. that I think is really necessary because nobody really knows and as a consequence they work from their own definition which may be entirely wrong'* Senior Manager Public Sector

For four participants, legislation was crucial here in providing direction to senior executives, and in particular two participants were strongly in favour of proposals for a Single Equalities Act. This it was

felt would mean that there would be consistency of treatment between the different groups covered by legislation and give clearer direction:

*'unless you have this overarching principle then it becomes muddled. I find speaking to people that they find these different Acts very confusing... [A single Equalities Act would] shift the political agenda.. it means you couldn't pick and choose this kind of inequality or aspect of diversity that is flavour of the month'* Senior Academic.

## 4.2 Involvement of multiple stakeholders

However, while having leadership at the most senior levels in the organisation was crucial, it was not sufficient, and just as important was efforts to ensure that people were involved throughout the organisation.

Partly this related to the dangers of relying on one or only a small group of people, and to the silo effect talked about as a major barrier. One Senior Manager spoke of the positive outcomes she had gained from an initiative she led to increase the number of women promoted to senior levels:

*'..By the time I left 18 months later, ever single one of those women was on a specialist path. But, the down side of it is that the minute I left it reverted straight back to the way it was before'*

So the majority of participants commented that 'leadership' of equality and diversity issues also had to come from all levels of the organisation. There was specific comment made about line managers, and people at non-managerial levels.

### 4.2.1 Getting Line Management Involved

Believing that lack of buy-in from line managers was a particular barrier to equality initiatives, participants had ideas about how to get them more involved.

First, there had to be more understanding about *why* line managers were often so resistant, which may then lead to actions that might facilitate their involvement:

*"I went into one organisation where a chap, quite high up who [was] committed to equality but [he said] 'the problem is our line managers'.. but he never went on to say 'and why are they a problem?.. [we need] to hear them talk about why it's a problem, rather than just casting them as the bad guys.. you often find it's not necessarily the individual but the way the organisation is structured and they way they're expected to operate in the organisation makes them a barrier '* Senior Academic

Second, in order to be able to understand what was causing line managers to be resistant, there had to be appropriate fora for discussion and appropriate language used that did not isolate individuals, but made them see why equality and diversity was a central part of their everyday jobs as managers:

*'if I'd used the language that I use at policy level , I'd lose them in two seconds. This has to be about what they do and how they do it and why they do it... So the language is all important and has to be gauged at every level'* Senior Manager Public Sector

One Senior Trade Union Officer discussed how she had deliberately chosen not to deliver traditional tutor-led equality training for line managers, but instead allowed them space to have a general discussion about their problems with the equality agenda so that an action plan to overcome these problems could be drawn up.

Four participants also spoke specifically about the need for performance indicators and appraisal criteria that considered equality and diversity objectives in order to gain buy-in from line managers. However it was also seen as important that this did not become a 'tick-boxing' exercise but related to much more qualitative and substantive measures:

*'... people have got to know that someone is watching and is interested. It can be partly a performance indicator or it can just be that... what you're doing in this area of equality and diversity is something that people are taking an interest in and it will affect you'* Senior Academic.

#### 4.2.2 Getting non-managerial employees involved

Like the line managers, many participants thought that it was crucial that there were communication mechanisms and discussion fora that allowed people at lower levels within organisations to get involved and take ownership of equality and diversity issues.

*'...coming up with mechanisms to find out how people are feeling on the ground and what their experience is, is quite important. I mean I'm not overly fond of ... workforce surveys... but having those kinds of mechanisms in place where people can have real debates about it'* Senior Trade Union Officer.

*'...some of the things I would say that I think are being effective in organisations generally have been initiatives which have been more grass roots... I've seen some very effective networking where it's peer groups together so they actually, it's a very empowering thing'* Senior Manager Consultancy.

Another Senior Trade Union Officer related an example of how successful had been a scheme to get people to act as disability champions, and equal pay representatives:

*'when you see a woman shop steward or a women's learning rep, woman disability champion... that actually creates space for people to see that there is potential and encouragement.. it's that investment in people'.*

Part of this also involves ensuring that non-managerial employees had the confidence to bring into the open, and constructively challenge discriminatory practice and behaviour, a crucial part of changing the organisational culture:

*'that way it gets challenged from ground level up through first line management. And that's much more effective than me going out... and saying 'you're not doing this right'. Senior Manager Public Sector.*

### 4.3 Equality Audits

Understanding the levels of inequality (pay gaps, unequal treatment, extent of the glass ceiling etc) within the organisation was seen as crucial by all participants as a starting point for equality and diversity strategy and policy. However there was dissatisfaction with many of the common ways that such audits occurred.

First participants felt that it was important that there should be no 'one size fits all' audit mechanism as auditing in organisations was at different levels of comprehensiveness. Some still required basic statistical information on numbers of women, minority ethnic., disabled employees and where there were located in the organisation, whereas others could focus more on patterns of promotion and pay. In addition, audits could not only focus on basic statistics: through better communication mechanisms with

, more qualitative audits were required that looked at the outcomes of practices and structures within the organisation.

*“[As an example], a very large management consultancy. It was only through doing really quite detailed focus groups, what they discovered was that.. [in] the sector that was seen as critical if you wanted to become a managing partner, they weren’t getting assignments. And you’ll never uncover that from quantitative data”* Senior Manager Consultancy

Second, most participants thought that it was crucial that auditing did not become an end in itself, in other words, the auditing had to lead to action to address the patterns and trends found. This related back to discussion about measurement itself being a barrier to equality action:

*“what we currently do is measure misery. We measure how many people are not getting to what level at what stage and what their income is... And we go to companies and say ‘You’re not recruiting enough women, you end a target... what we don’t measure is what is the infrastructure that is in place to enable that improvement”* Senior Academic

Therefore attention has to be focused on what the implications are of audit data for changing structures and practices. As an example, one Senior Public Sector Manager related how once she discovered the level of business that was being conducted in the pub between senior male colleagues, she put in place protocols that challenged this, by requiring that all business is done at formal meetings and minuted. One Senior academic called this a *‘transparency agreement’*

*‘you’re never going to stop people talking about work [down the pub]... But what you can do is make them accountable and transparent. And that means that... they may well have discussed what they like in the pub, but the protocol would require them to go back through the appropriate group [to put] that decision through’* Senior Public Sector Manager

#### 4.4 Mainstreaming equality and diversity

The majority of participants commented that in order to avoid the major barrier of the ‘silo effect’, equality and diversity issues had to be seen as relevant and important to ordinary business concerns. In particular participants wanted to move away from the conventional mode of dedicated diversity training

*‘...the language has to be all inclusive and one of the things I have talked about... is actually presenting some workshops across my division, with a title not about diversity, but the title being ‘How to improve your performance... not how do you treat black people, It’s about how do we deliver what everybody needs, every section of our society”* Senior Manager Public Sector.

*‘the best bit of diversity training I’ve ever done wasn’t diversity training. It was police sergeant training and critical incidents training, because it’s buried in the work, front-line work.. the critical point [is] getting it in the work that people do’* Senior Academic.

For two participants, this meant that auditing and monitoring activities needed to happen as part of mainstream management practice, rather than as special auditing carried out by the specialist equality manager or the HR department.:

*‘What you’ve got to do is think through a simple process which will enable it to happen on a regular and reliable basis. So we don’t want the Rolls Royce version. Sufficiency.. Is all that is necessary. If it’s overcomplicated the line manager won’t do it... the pay roll will say we can’t programme it in. So it’s got to be sufficient in terms of what it reveals’.* Senior Academic

Thus participants engaged in a discussion about whether a business case approach to diversity was seen as a help or a hindrance. A prominent view was that separating the social justice case and the business case for equality and diversity was unhelpful:

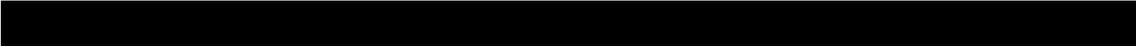
*'The business case is business practice. I've spoken to a number of senior [managers]... I think they're uniformly of the opinion that it's a moral decision. The difficulty for them is understanding how to get morality into daily practice'* Senior Academic.

This then relates back to the earlier section relating to communicating to line managers and non managerial employees and getting buy-in to equality and diversity action because it is seen as contributing to good business practice. Another Senior Academic felt that you could make a business case which embraced a social dimension:

*.. I think there are multiple business cases that can be made in particular circumstances... [the] reputational image of the organisation [is a] positive business factor [but it] brings in the social justice*

However it should be noted that there were a few critical voices that were more cautious about relying on a mainstreaming and business-led approach. It was seen as important that attention was still placed on the moral imperative to take equality action beyond simple and quantitative business gain.

*I know people are really keen on mainstreaming, [but] ... a lot of things can be lost... it's one of the elements organisations tend to use when they don't want to do anything'* Senior Manager Public Body



## 5. Examples of Good Practice

A theme coming through the workshop was that it was easy to become very negative about the lack of progress and the barriers to equality and diversity policy implementation. Therefore there was felt to be a real need to celebrate progress made, particularly to encourage people in equality and diversity roles within organisations.

### 5.1 Working differently: Flexible Practice in organisations

#### 5.1.1 Bank: 9-day fortnight.

This was an initiative that emerged from the local team level. As a consequence of an organisational move to a new location, commuting journeys had increased and it was noticed that the team were generally working longer hours. So a debate was held at a team meeting and they agreed to experiment with 9 day fortnight working. The same hours are worked but over a smaller number of days. This has been viewed very positively across the organisation and other teams have now introduced the initiative.

This initiative is positive because it demonstrates:

- a) An initiative which emerged from the team level rather than imposed from above and therefore indicates the communication mechanisms in place to allow debate and discussion.
- b) That work can be organised more flexibly to suit different teams. While a 9 day fortnight might not work for some teams or locations, other flexible work patterns might.
- c) Connections with the diversity agenda around improved work life balance and has the potential to aid those with other time commitments such as parents.

#### 5.1.2 Flexible Working: Consultancy

At a Consultancy firm, an environment has been created where employees are not asked to fit traditional male norms of working. Consequently it becomes a place where women can grow and flourish. This environment involves completely flexible contracts, where employees are not expected to work in the office but can work from home. The basic ethos is that as long as the job is done, it does not matter when and where the work is conducted.

This example is positive because it demonstrates:

- a) That work can be conducted in alternative ways, thus challenging structures that act as barriers to some employees, especially those with care responsibilities.
- b) Connections with the diversity agenda around improved work-life balance and has the potential to aid those with other time commitments such as parents.

## 5.2 Getting non-managerial employees involved

### 5.2.1 Trade Union Representatives

Non managerial employees were encouraged to take on local level union activist roles such as Equal Pay representative, Learning representative and Disability Champion. For example in the Year of European Disability in 2003, a target was set and met to recruit and train 50 Disability Representatives who had no prior experience of workplace representation. As well as leading to improved outcomes for disabled employees at local level and increased numbers of union activists, this also importantly created space for leadership and pro-equality attitudinal skills development amongst the new representatives.

This example is positive because it demonstrates:

- a) That leadership on equality and diversity can be diffused amongst different levels within an organisation.
- b) That involving the union in equality and diversity initiatives can lead to positive organisational outcomes. Therefore demonstrating the benefits of a stakeholder approach.
- c) That positive attitudes towards equality and diversity issues can be developed through involving employees. .

## 5.3 Successful auditing and monitoring

### 5.3.1 Equality Action Plans: Police Force

Sectional Inspectors have been tasked with developing and putting in place equality action plans for their own sections. This covers legislation and good practice, and sets these down in a matrix with clear objectives. These objectives are then monitored on a six weekly basis by the Deputy to the Chief Superintendent, with feedback given to Sergeants and then down to team briefings. Individual officers are then asked to take on tasks relating to a whole range of diverse groups within their sections and then feedback progress up the channel of communication.

This example is positive because it demonstrates:

- a) That equality and diversity issues can become part of ordinary work practice.
- b) Effective monitoring and feedback mechanisms on a regular basis.
- c) That monitoring and auditing does not need to involve statistics and targets but can be qualitative, relatively informal and be based around objectives set in a individual context (e.g. local team level, section level etc)

## 5.4 Building on the business case

### 5.4.1 Creating opportunities from modernisation: Fire Brigade

At the time of the workshop, the Modernisation Agenda within the Fire Service had just begun to be introduced into brigades all over the UK. Part of this Modernisation Agenda involves moving to a role-based rather than rank-based culture, thus focusing attention on the work actually being done rather than the rank attained. Thus the Service will move to multiple-entry recruitment, with some roles being

operational and others administrative and prevention-based. This it is felt may lead to potential equality opportunities, in terms of challenging very long standing practices and modes of recruitment and selection and promotion channels through the hierarchy. Thus, it may allow far more people to achieve promotion and positions of authority who do not fit into the white and male demographic.

This example is positive because it demonstrates:

- a) The equality and diversity opportunities that may arise from business case agendas
- b) That the business case can be used to invigorate an equality and diversity agenda.
- c) That it will clearly be important to monitor and audit the outcomes of the Modernisation Agenda in terms of equality and diversity.

### 5.3.2 Opportunity 2000 at a University Business School

Business School management were persuaded to sign up to Opportunity 2000 by indicating the reputational advantages that would come from being part of the network. The Business School was bidding for executive short courses for the automotive industry, major banks and blue chip organisations and because they had all signed up to Opportunity 2000, the Business School had an incentive to do so in order to make them a more attractive provider.

This example is positive because it demonstrates:

- a) The fact that a business case can also have a legitimate and serious social justice dimension.
- b) That the business case agenda can provide a convenient lever for equality and diversity action.

## 5.4 Making it fun

One participant who was a Senior Trade Union Officer offered two very good examples of getting the fun back into equality and diversity action and we have decided to leave these as verbatim quotes.

### 5.4.1 Woman of the Year awards

*'Can I just say on the awards thing.. I think we've all been to those conferences and it's so cringe-making. The one thing I [have been] involved in [was the] Woman of the Year.. and that was just so different. The whole approach to being nominated, including a really famous pop star was just so different to anything seen in [a]... celebration of diversity and equality [way]. It was just so congratulatory of everything around them as opposed to the [usual] 'unwilling to take credit for anything'.*

### 5.5.2 SWOMP and OWINE

*'I was sitting at the kitchen table moaning to a mate of mine about ... the lack of profile of women, you know, on public platforms in particular... so, as a bit of fun, we set up an organisation ... Socialist Women On Male Platforms. And we set it up on the basis that there would never be a meeting. That anything SWOMP organised ... would be fun. That it had an edge to it, so that we had and still have, although less frequent because you know, we're all busy, but we'll revive it when we, when it's going to be fun to do so. We have [awards]... and [we invite nominations]. And then another little feature*

*emerged. One woman kept popping up and usually in the Chair position. So we organised a subsidiary of SWOMP, an affiliated group called OWINE. One Woman Is Not Enough. So we have the SWOMP awards and then the OWINE awards, as an appendage to this. And I can't tell you, the amount of laughs and the fun. You know there's a dress culture for SWOMP whenever we have SWOMP awards ... You have to wear ridiculous earrings. And you know, what I want to say about this is that it introduced an element of levity. Where in fact what we were doing was we were, you know, able to laugh able to enjoy ourselves, able to involve loads of people – I can't tell you the numbers. We've got ministers who are members of SWOMP, who are signatories to the SWOMP letter, the nomination letter, you know. And it's just great, and it's fun. But I tell you what, it hasn't half rattled the brothers. It really makes them think. And the OWINE has really put the cat among the pigeons I can tell you. So, you know, I actually think you can be effective by challenging in ways that are enjoyable. And we've had some great fun with it."*

## 6. Concluding Remarks

In summary, the discussion at the workshop was focused around the following major themes:

- **Barriers to Equality and Diversity**
  - a. Organisational Culture
  - b. Lack of Embeddedness of Equality and Diversity
  - c. Middle/Line Management
  - d. Problems of Measurement
- **Facilitators of Equality and Diversity**
  - a. Effective Leadership
  - b. Involvement of Multiple Stakeholders
  - c. Equality Audits
  - d. Mainstreaming Equality and Diversity

Some of these headings look similar to the kinds of language common within equality and diversity industry. However, the value of the workshop and the open discussion facilitated there, is that the qualitative comments and discussions presented in this report under these headings, provide examples of what these barriers mean in real organisations, as well as practical suggestions for how to overcome them.

The first workshop has helped to shape the empirical research that we have conducted in the interim and period, and we owe a great debt of thanks to all the participants. We are now at the analysis stage of the research project and hope to schedule the second workshop for November 2005. We hope that many of the same participants will be able to attend, in order to reflect upon this report in the light of the wider research and its findings, as well as providing an opportunity for participants to reflect on developments within their own organisations.

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