British Council UK
Equal Opportunity & Diversity
Workbook

**Integral to cultural relations and
creating opportunity worldwide**

**"Equality and diversity are at
the heart of what we're trying
to achieve as an organisation."**
Martin Davidson, November 2012

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Cultural relations

For over 75 years the British Council has been working in the field it defines as cultural relations. Over this time the understanding of this field has evolved. In its early days the British Council focused on providing a showcase for Britain overseas. More recently the emphasis has been placed on the development of influence and understanding. The specific British Council approach to cultural relations is to engage with networks of selected contacts to develop relationships based on trust and dialogue. Culture, conceived in its broadest sense, provides the context for this engagement, but it is in the development of the relationships where the British Council adds value.

On the one hand, most – perhaps all – of the things that divide the world today are cultural as much as political and economic, and the importance of understanding and accepting difference grows greater day by day. **Cultural relations is about building long-term, trust-based relationships between people – relationships that help to counter prejudices and stereotypes on all sides.** On the other hand, the changing place of nation states in a world where borders mean less, and mobility and multiple identities are part of many people's life experience, means a changing role for cultural relations.

Organisations, such as the British Council, must continue to develop a role that is more than just national self-promotion. But cultural relations is not a soft option. Security specialists and soldiers think as much about (broadly defined) culture as about force. What we can do is to strengthen the cultural infrastructure of familiarity and trust across the world – a job governments cannot do. Building trust is rather abstract: what we actually mean (since we control only one end of the transaction) is earning trust; demonstrating our trustworthiness.

This means imbuing all our work with conscious mutuality – keeping always in mind, giving concrete expression to, listening, reciprocity, openness, self-awareness, dialogue, and being prepared to negotiate our own positions. It means keeping an eye on the long term, on consistency and on active, response-seeking, communication. This links cultural relations closely with diversity agendas and means that – as well as being an analysis of intercultural communication and business – 'cultural relations' implies significant change in the way we relate to each other within the British Council globally, both internally and externally.

Our work at the British Council concerns itself with working with

Cultural relations

difference and doing so on the basis of building meaningful and enduring relationships across different cultures premised on respect. We can't do this if we do not have a commitment to equality, inclusion and valuing diversity and managing this constructively and effectively. Given that equality and diversity are about equity, fairness and inclusion, their opposite – inequity, unfairness, exclusion – significantly undermines work with different cultures and the mutuality, appreciation and trust that are part of this and, of course, cultural relations. It is not enough for commitment to equality and diversity to be tacit (accepted and understood without being openly expressed). With a tacit approach you can't be sure exactly what it is that is accepted and understood. So commitment has to be formalised and identifiable. This provides clarity and meets the external and internal demand for evidence of the ways in which the business case and moral, social and legal obligations that are a part of an equality and diversity agenda are being addressed.

The British Council's leadership, including the Board, Executive Board, Global Leadership Team, and Country Directors, believes that our cultural relations role requires us to be explicit about where we as an organisation stand in relation to equality and diversity matters and specify what work we are doing in this area. This includes reflecting on the multi-ethnic and multicultural, diverse nature of the UK in operational activity and winning recognition for this. In addition, it means ensuring our workforce is representative of the UK population in terms of race, gender and disability and where we can and it is judged appropriate, in other countries in which we operate. The British Council's leadership also believes that 'mainstreaming' and sharing responsibility for equality and diversity among all staff, those on temporary assignments, consultants, contractors and suppliers are fundamental to the development and progress of the organisation and an important part of strengthening and developing our cultural relation work and achieving our ambitions.

No culture can live if it attempts to be exclusive
Mohandes Gandhi,
Indian Civil Rights Leader

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Links to our values

Our core values link to our endeavours to achieve a fair and inclusive organisational culture. They should guide the way we behave both towards each other and how we do our work in the different countries in which we operate.

Valuing people means
- ☐ We treat people with courtesy and respect.
- ☐ We listen to what people have to say and respond helpfully.
- ☐ We give people the opportunity to use and develop their talents.
- ☐ We value diversity.

Valuing creativity means
- ☐ We encourage people to develop new ideas in an environment of trust.
- ☐ We are resourceful and innovative in our approach.
- ☐ We actively seek and present the best in creativity.

Valuing integrity means
- ☐ We are honest.
- ☐ We are consistent both in what we do and what we say.
- ☐ We take responsibility for our actions and decisions.

Valuing mutuality means
- ☐ We wish to learn from and share with other people.
- ☐ We put effective relationships at the heart of our work.
- ☐ We work towards common goals.

Valuing professionalism means
- ☐ We are true to our values and keep our promises.
- ☐ We take pride in what we do.
- ☐ We accept individual and collective responsibility for delivering work to a high standard.

How do we 'live' these values?

How the values are put into practice and lived underpins how we implement equal opportunity, promote diversity.

**We have become not a melting pot but a beautiful mosaic.
Different people, different beliefs, different yearnings, different hopes, different dreams
Jimmy Carter, 39th President of the United States**

EO&D – the wider context

Globally:

- Massive increase in 'people movement'
- Changing demographics
- Huge advances in technology
- Politics of recognition
- Urbanisation trends, new encounters & tensions
- Polarised & segregated communities

What else would you add?

UK:

- What kind of UK are we representing?
- What are the major equality issues in the UK?
- Key issues highlighted by Fairness Review

How does this compare with your perceptions?

**The thing about equality is
you don't see it until you believe it.**

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Equality in Britain – Fairness Review

The Equality and Human Rights Commission is the public body set up (www.equalityhumanrights.com) to

- challenge discrimination,
- protect and promote equality and respect for human rights, and
- encourage good relations between people of different backgrounds.

Every three years it is required to report to Parliament on progress towards a society that is at ease with its diversity, where every individual has the opportunity to achieve their potential, and where people treat each other with dignity and respect.
The findings are contained in the first of its triennial reviews, some of which are outlined here for interest.

Other countries, to varying degrees have equality related data and of course there are some global measures such as the Gender Equality Index, the Human Development Index[1], the Global Diversity Readiness Index[2], the Spirit Level[3] and others.

On many objective measures, Britain is a far more diverse society than it was a generation ago. Britain is a country increasingly at ease with its diversity, proud of its heritage of 'fair play', and supportive of the ideals of equality and human rights.

However, the evidence shows clearly that whatever progress has been made for some groups in some places, the outcomes for many people are not shifting as far or as fast as they should.

Particular groups, including Gypsies and Travellers and some types of migrants, are still likely to encounter negative attitudes. Although mainstream attitudes towards other groups may have improved, many people experience instances of prejudice. And some groups of people are on average much more likely than others to fare badly in education, in work, and in public life. In other words, there is a gap between what we think society should be, and what it actually is; between ideal and reality, between our aspirations and our attainments.

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[1] The Gender Equality Index and the Human Development Index are on the UNDP website, http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/gii/ 'last accessed November 2012)
[2] The Global Diversity Readiness index, http://www.shrm.org
[3] Wilkinson and Pickett (2010), *The Spirit Level, Why Equality is Better for Everyone*

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Main EO&D challenges for Britain

The 15 most significant challenges for Britain, identified in the Equality and Human Rights Commission's first Triennial Review

These, out of all the different challenges and inequalities in modern society, are felt to be the most significant and the most urgently in need of resolution.

- Close the differences in health and life expectancy between the highest and the lowest socio-economic groups.

- Close the infant mortality gap between ethnic groups.

- Close the performance gap in education between boys and girls.

- Reduce the level of ethnic and gender segregation in education.

- Close the qualifications gap for disabled people.

- Reduce the disparities in educational performance by socio-economic background.

- Close the gender pay gap faster and further.

- Close the ethnic and religious employment and pay gaps faster and further.

- Close the employment gap for people with disabilities.

- Reduce incidence of hate crimes on all protected grounds and increase conviction rate.

- Reduce incidence of homophobic, transphobic, disability-related and religiously motivated bullying in schools and workplaces.

- Raise the rate of rape convictions further.

- Reduce the rate of repeat domestic violence offences.

- Reduce the rise of the need for and cost of informal care, and to increase autonomy, choice and control for both carers and those who receive care.

- Close the 'power gap' in public bodies on all protected grounds.

http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/key-projects/how-fair-is-britain/online-summary/significant-challenges/

How could the work of the BC contribute to overcoming some of these challenges?

Understanding the terms

Equal opportunity – focused on legislating against unjustified discrimination

It means treating people fairly, removing barriers to equal opportunity and redressing imbalances.

Diversity – harnessing and maximising potential to the benefit of the organisation

It's about recognising the value of the collective mix of differences and similarities between people and seeking to harness this richness in a changing local, national and global context.

Equal opportunity and diversity are interdependent. Diversity builds on equal opportunity and embraces its principles of equity but has a broader focus.

Generally speaking equal opportunity and diversity are distinguished in these ways.

Equal opportunity	Diversity
Externally initiated	Internally initiated
Operational	Strategic
Legally driven – focus on specific differences	Driven by business – focus on a much broader range of differences
Quantitative focus	Qualitative focus
Group focus	Individual focus
Difference = problem	Difference = asset
Reactive	Proactive
Supported by narrow knowledge base	Supported by pluralist knowledge base

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A changing discourse

[_____] mean providing people with choices and options on the basis of their skills, abilities and qualifications. People should not be disadvantaged or denied access to employment or to services because of their age, disability, ethnicity, religion, sex, sexual orientation or any other irrelevant factor. Everyone should be free to develop their abilities and make choices without being stereotyped or unfairly excluded. It means that all individuals have equal value irrespective of these attributes.

[_____] follows on from, and is closely linked to, equal opportunities. This is about the need to look at the way different groups are enabled to gain entry to employment and make use of services such as education, health care and work. Providing it means ensuring that any unnecessary barriers are removed which could unnecessarily prevent individuals from taking up opportunities.

[_____] is about impact and results and focuses on policies that either have an equal impact on different groups or intend the same results for different groups. An example is aiming for a balance between men and women not only in the workplace, but at senior management level, or as members of parliament.

[_____] is about fairness and justice in employment, education, health and other services. It takes individual circumstances into consideration. It is about allocating resources fairly and it may mean treating individuals or groups differently according to their needs, but in a way which is of an equivalent quality to others, rather than treating everyone exactly the same.

[_____] recognises that everyone is different in a variety of visible and invisible ways. Differences should be recognised, respected and valued. The differences may include, but are not limited to, differences protected be anti-discrimination legislation. So, fixed and unalterable characteristics like ethnicity are covered, as are flexible and chosen ones like innovation, creativity, thinking and learning styles. In an organisational context the focus is on valuing the different contributions that individuals can make, for the benefit of the business.

Equity   **Diversity**   **Equality of outcome**

Equal access   **Equal opportunities**

A changing discourse

[_____] is increasingly used alongside or in place of equality and/or diversity. One reason for this is because it describes a central outcome the equality and diversity agenda strives for. This outcome is a workplace, or society which includes everyone, so no one is left feeling on the margins because they are in a minority.

[_____] The things we as humans share, which are numerous at an experience, physical and emotional level, for example. It is not about having the same experiences but experiences that have elements and dimensions that are recognisable and sufficiently familiar. A focus on these shared aspects, what we have in common and our common humanity, has rich potential to build bridges and understanding and cooperation, with the implication that a focus on our differences can be divisive and in some instances destructive.

[_____] This has a link to commonalities. Multiculturalism has been criticised for contributing to divisions between people and communities. It is perceived as having emphasised the need to respect and acknowledge differences and provide for them at the expense of interaction and integration.

[_____] is the view that all beliefs, customs, and ethics are relative to the individual within his own social context. In other words, "right" and "wrong" are culture-specific; what is considered moral in one society may be considered immoral in another, and, since no universal standard of morality exists, no one has the right to judge another society's customs.

[_____] is about dialogue between different cultural groups; a sense of openness and interaction involving contact between groups in order to reduce prejudice and improve intercultural dialogue and communication.

Cultural relativism   **Inclusion**   **Interculturality**

Commonalities   **Beyond multiculturalism**

Myth busting

EO&D is <u>not</u>:

- about reducing standards

- a distraction from more important business issues

- just about behaviour & attitudes of others

- just about language & being 'PC'

- about positive discrimination and favouring women and minorities

- irrelevant to cultural relations

Any other myths to add?

Which of these myths have particular traction in your team?

The return on investment

- ➢ Improvement in and expectation of transparency

- ➢ More equitable relationships, some organizational barriers dismantled

- ➢ Improvements in staff profile – reflective diversity

- ➢ Improved understanding of partners and customers

- ➢ More consultation informing decision-making

- ➢ Ability to more confidently deal with challenges related to diversity

- ➢ More profound understanding of the countries we work in

- ➢ Better management of risk including external complaints

- ➢ External recognition and acknowledgement for the quality of our cultural relations work and the account it takes of diversity and difference

- ➢ Seen as a global leader on equal opportunity and diversity issues, enhancing our reputation and brand with partners and customers

- ➢ Global Network who can confidently talk about these issues to external partners

What other returns can you identify?

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Our EO Policy

The British Council has had an Equal Opportunities Policy (EOP) since 1984. It was last revised in May 2011 and can be found on the Diversity intranet site and the British Council website. It starts with a statement encapsulating the essence of the policy. This conveys that we are committed to equality of opportunity and positive action to promote this, and that unjustified discrimination in retention, training and development of staff and in other areas on the basis of irrelevant factors is not acceptable in the British Council. In some instances it will be appropriate to openly display this statement, for example in reception areas or other areas where our programmes and activities take place.

The policy should be viewed as an internal and external declaration of our commitment to equity, an explanation of how this is translated into practice within the organisation and a framework to support us to ensure the fair treatment of all staff, those who work on temporary assignments, contractors, consultants, partners and customers and help us to avoid unwitting offence and breaking the law.

SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

> Central to our cultural relations work

> Helps ensure related principles and standards are built into how we do things

> Builds consistency across the organisation in terms of programme work and our internal offer

> Covers issues that affect us all, including but not only

  o Recruitment and selection
  o Performance and development
  o Pay and conditions
  o Who we choose to work with

> Is relevant to way we treat staff, customers, partners, third party suppliers, etc.

> Requires all of us to ensure our behaviours are aligned to the organisation's values.

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Our EO Policy statement

As the UK's international organisation for educational opportunities and cultural relations, our work involves providing opportunities between peoples of the UK and other countries which develop relationships that lead to trust. Engaging positively with the diversity which is an inevitable part of this and doing so with equity contributes to both what we want to achieve and how we want to achieve it and is in line with our core values.

Our Equal Opportunity Policy originates from the United Kingdom (UK) because the British Council is an organisation with origins and headquarters in the UK. **The Policy applies in the UK and elsewhere where the British Council operates wherever local conditions allow. Where practices and legislation are more developed and extensive we meet local requirements.** Notwithstanding this, all staff, as an organisation wide behavioural standard, irrespective of their work base are required to ensure their behaviour demonstrates respect for the fundamental human right of every person not to be unjustifiably discriminated against on grounds of perceived difference within the terms of this policy. **The policy also applies to third parties that work with us such as clients, customers and suppliers.**

We are committed to equality of opportunity and inclusion, and to positive action to promote this. We believe that an Equal Opportunity Policy helps to ensure that there is no unjustified discrimination in the recruitment, retention, training and development of staff on the basis of gender including transgender, marital status (which includes civil partnerships), sexual orientation, religion and belief, political opinion, ethnicity/race, work pattern, age, disability or HIV/AIDS status, socio-economic background, spent convictions, trade union activity or membership, on the basis of having or not having dependants, or any other irrelevant grounds.

We also believe that an Equal Opportunity Policy benefits employees and potential employees, partners, clients and customers and helps achieve dignity at work, as well as contributing to providing the best possible services to all stakeholders.

We progress our Equal Opportunity Policy through our Diversity Strategy and through a commitment to mainstreaming equality and diversity principles and practices and monitoring our progress.

Please familiarise yourselves with our EO Policy and use it to inform your work. You can find it at: http://intranet.britishcouncil.org/Site/Diversity/Documents/EOPolicy.doc

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Our Diversity Strategy

Vision Statement

Equality and diversity lay at the heart of our cultural relations ambitions and contribute to the mutual trust, respect and understanding we strive for on behalf of the UK. **They are integral to our brand, our reputation and our success.**

Our vision is to use our unique position and increasing knowledge and experience to make a leading contribution to international aspects of equality and diversity. We will work energetically toward this by a mainstreaming approach whilst highlighting what our collective efforts can achieve for individuals, communities, organisations and nations. Using our increasing understanding, our emphasis will be on the potential of equality and diversity to help create more inclusive societies that contribute to greater security and stability in the world where shared aspirations can flourish.

We will draw on the rich diversity of the UK and our workforce, partners, friends and contacts worldwide to nurture existing programmes and activities around shared interest and ambitions. We will develop new relationships and partnerships that deliver co-operative advantage and impact for the UK.

The diverse contributions and considerable talents of our staff and those we work with worldwide will be harnessed to provide the very best practices and services we can, in line with our organisational values and human rights' principles
http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/

Diversity and Cultural Relations

The way we manage diversity internally and the standards and behaviours we display make the most potent comment about our cultural relations competence.

Ultimately we are striving for an organisation where everyone who comes into contact with us feels valued and respected. This helps enhance our credibility and reputation and contributes to the process of developing trust for the UK.

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Diversity Strategy objectives

We have three overarching objectives which are aligned to an Action Plan. They are:

1. Growing capability & leadership

Leaders exist in different roles and particularly but not exclusively in senior roles. They play a crucial role in driving progress in diversity and enhancing our reputation and impact. Therefore our emphasis, going forward, will be on nurturing and developing diversity leadership capability, engagement and role models.

The result will be leaders equipped with a clear understanding of how diversity principles and practices, translated into the internal and external day to day work they lead, supports cultural relations.

2. Fostering inclusion

Greater inclusion is an important diversity outcome. To achieve this we intend to improve the involvement and representation of women, and in some instances men, as well as minority ethnic and disabled people in our workforce and activities. We will also nurture an organisational culture where people working and engaging with us feel respected and comfortable being themselves, free from unjustified discrimination.

The result, with an emphasis on the UK, will be an organisational and participant profile representative of broader society. In addition, there will be expanded opportunities for under-represented groups internally and externally to participate and contribute.

3. Performance, impact and legal compliance

Measuring our performance and identifying the contribution to our aspirations to make a leading contribution to international aspects of equality and diversity is crucial in evaluating our effectiveness and impact. Going forward we will therefore identify mechanisms for measuring the extent and quality of the contribution and distinct impact we aim to make. In addition, we will ensure we comply with our legal obligations.

The result will be improved performance against our own diversity standards, derived from national and international benchmarks, compliance with legal obligations and effective management of diversity related risk.
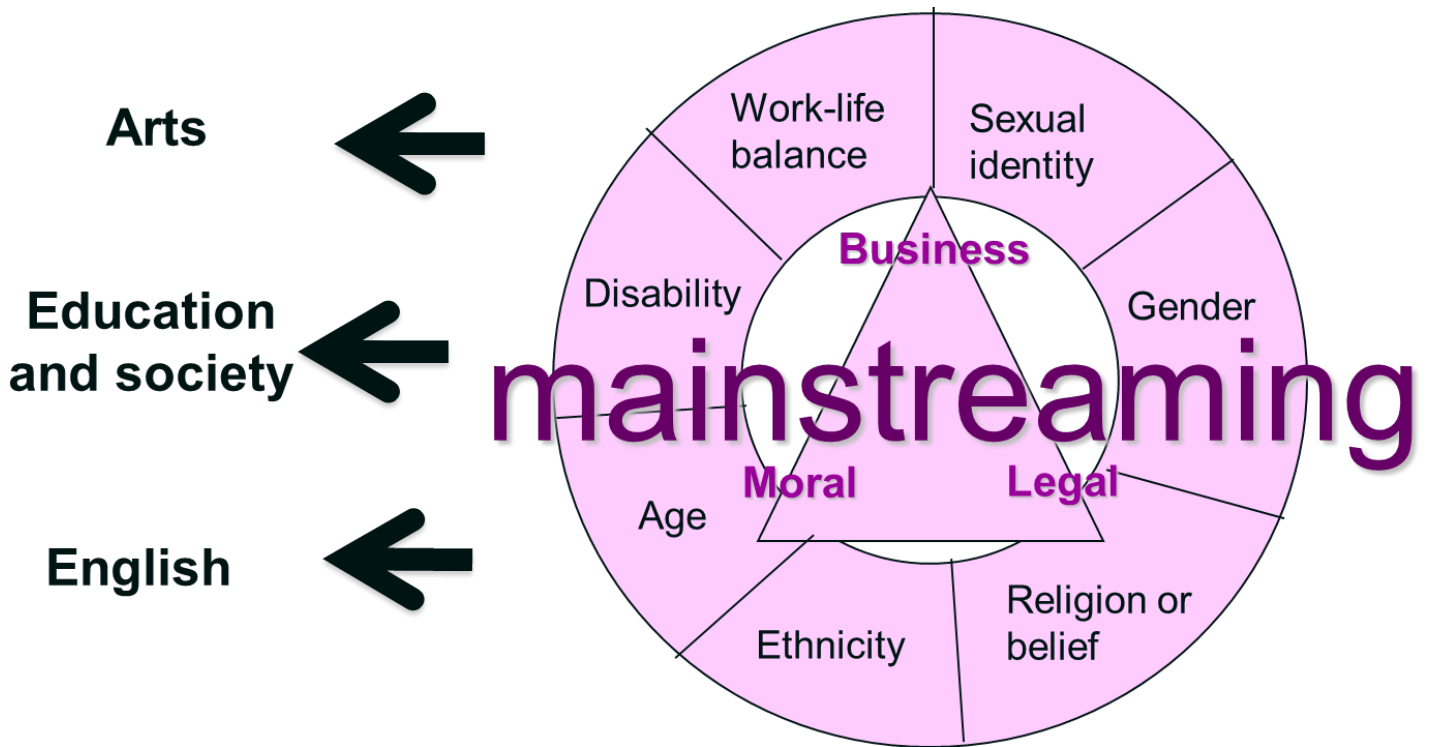
Responsibilities

We need to share responsibility and require accountability, particularly from those with influence, authority and resources in order to sustain progress.

You can read the Diversity Strategy in full at:
http://intranet.britishcouncil.org/Site/Diversity/Documents/Diversity_strategy_2010newdesign.doc

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Our current EO&D framework

Strengthening cultural relations through intercultural working

Arts ← Education and society ← English ←

(Circle diagram: **mainstreaming** — Business, Moral, Legal; Work-life balance, Sexual identity, Disability, Gender, Age, Religion or belief, Ethnicity)

- A process not an event
- Aligned to our values
- Achieving impact for the UK
- Supporting inclusion and human rights

"The best way to manage diversity is to ensure that it is built into all processes and functions, considered as part of all policy decisions, and present in the planning of all programmes from start to finish. This is what we mean by mainstreaming diversity"
Robin Rickard, Country Director, Vietnam

Our current EO&D framework

Understanding the 3 strands

There are many reasons for embracing diversity in an organisation. These reasons can be grouped into three main categories - business, moral (or ethical) and legal. These three are complementary and reinforce each other.

Legal strand - drives and helps ensure compliance with equality legislation, carries the threat of being unlawful if not adhered to.

Moral strand - has a focus on our shared humanity, linked to values and ethics and the desire to 'do the right thing'.

Business strand - is about the benefits that come from attending to diversity, including a motivated workforce (who tend to work harder), pleasing customers (who will promote the organisation to their networks), attracting people to the organisation (ensuring it is possible to recruit from the widest possible pool), and an enhanced British Council brand and reputation.

Some examples of the benefits of diversity are that it:

➢ brings in different ideas which can help develop the business, increasing creativity and innovation

➢ creates a greater understanding of existing and potential customers and improves communication with them

➢ improves understanding and ability to be successful in a global and diverse context

➢ enhances the organisational image amongst a wider range of people

➢ helps the organisation become an 'employer of choice'

➢ reduces the risk of a legal challenge of discrimination.

**People are pretty much alike. It's only that
our differences are more susceptible to
definition than our similarities**
Linda Ellerbee, Journalist

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Conscious competence

You'll be looking for opportunities to enrich your understanding and effectiveness in working with the increasing diversity around us. Being able to recognise the limits of your knowledge and competence is important. The following models can help you explore your own knowledge and competence and challenge you to increase them accordingly.

The conscious competence model explains the process and stages of learning a new skill (or behaviour, ability, technique, etc).

Unconsciously incompetent – oblivious, totally unaware

➢ the person is not aware that they have a particular deficiency in the area concerned

➢ the person might deny the relevance or usefulness of the new skill

➢ the person must become conscious of their incompetence before development of the new skill or learning can begin

Consciously incompetent – aware of own limitations and unsettled by these

➢ the person becomes aware of the existence and relevance of the skill

➢ the person is therefore also aware of their deficiency in this area, ideally by attempting or trying to use the skill

➢ the person realises that by improving their skill or ability in this area their effectiveness will improve

Consciously competent – can do it but only when concentrating

➢ the person will need to concentrate and think in order to perform the skill

➢ the person can perform the skill without assistance

➢ the person will not reliably perform the skill unless thinking about it - the skill is not yet 'second nature' or 'automatic'

Unconsciously competent – internalised, comes naturally

➢ the skill becomes so practised that it enters the unconscious parts of the brain - it becomes 'second nature'

➢ the person might now be able to teach others in the skill concerned, although after some time of being unconsciously competent the person might actually have difficulty in explaining exactly how they do it - the skill has become largely instinctual.

Conscious competence

Diversity area	Unconsciously incompetent	Consciously incompetent	Consciously competent	Unconsciously competent
Age - includes younger and older people who are often discriminated against because of their age				
Disability - includes visible and invisible disabilities, which might be related to physical or sensory conditions, learning disabilities or mental health conditions				
Ethnicity - relates to colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins				
Gender – includes men, women and transgender				
Religion/Belief – any religion including lack of one				
Sexual orientation – includes gay, lesbian, bisexual and heterosexual				
Work-life balance – includes healthy balance between work and other areas of our life and flexible working approaches				

➤ **Where would you position yourself in relation to the different diversity strands?**

➤ **Why do you position yourself there?**

➤ **Does this exercise prompt any action on your behalf?**

Diversity Performance Grid

Where would you position yourself on the diversity performance grid? What can you do to move yourself towards the right hand side of the grid?

Discuss your strengths and weaknesses with a colleague.

	Unacceptable	Weak	Average	Strong
Setting a personal example and *creating shared purpose*	Participates in overt or covert sexist, homophobic, racist, ageist or other negative behaviours. Views employing disabled people as full of problems. Stereotypes in the area of diversity as default position.	Adopts a silent or neutral personal and professional position around diversity issues and negative related behaviours. Does not reveal own position/stance or look for any opportunity to engage share with other around the issues.	Makes modest, primarily low level efforts to show support for diversity principles and engage in and respond to diversity issues. Usually refers diversity issues to others to address without fully considering if own actions could appropriately address them. Unable, rather than unwilling to motivate and engage others around diversity issues.	Challenges and confronts covert or overt ageist, homophobic, racist, sexist, or other negative behaviours in self and others. Consistently displays congruent behaviours and attitudes that support diversity. Raises questions and queries to support improved rigour in thinking and actions, including challenging generalisations and stereotypes – positive and negative.
Being open and honest and *connecting with others*	Refuses or is resistant to engaging or discussing issues of diversity with colleagues, partners or contacts.	Unwilling and/or uncomfortable in expressing feelings about diversity issues and engaging in related discussions.	Prepared to share some diversity related views if there are indications of shared support for them from others. Adopts a 'playing it safe' position.	Willing to disclose self and learn from others. Consistently treats people fairly and with dignity and respect.

Where would you position yourself on the diversity performance grid? What can you do to move yourself towards the right hand side of the grid?

Discuss your strengths and weaknesses with a colleague.

	Unacceptable	**Weak**	**Average**	**Strong**
Developing others and *working together*	Denies the development and support needs of under represented groups or individuals. Does not identify any diversity related development needs for self or others in line of management.	Neutral in support for under represented or marginalised groups or individuals. Does not pursue or identify opportunities to work with others on diversity issues, including relevant diversity focussed groups and teams.	Includes diverse individuals in some aspects of work and gives some attention to developing others and working together in the area of diversity but is not consistent about this.	Consistently capitalises on diverse skills and backgrounds. Recognises team's diversity problems and gaps and takes pro active action to address these.
Achieving our vision and *making it happen*	Does not support the aspirations of the British Council's diversity agenda. Is overtly negative about them with colleagues and contacts. Unable to identify any personal action to support progress.	Passive in response to the British Council's diversity aspirations and supporting activities. Has not given consideration or is unclear about aspirations and own/team/department role.	Modest advocate of the British Council's diversity aspirations and supporting activities. Has given consideration to own/team/department contribution and taken some action but not sustained this and allowed drift.	Strong advocate of the British Council's diversity aspirations and activities that support it. Takes action to deliver change needed, including in achieving diversity related targets. Is positive and takes congruent personal action and ownership.

Where would you position yourself on the diversity performance grid? What can you do to move yourself towards the right hand side of the grid?

Discuss your strengths and weaknesses with a colleague.

	Unacceptable	**Weak**	**Average**	**Strong**
Being accountable **and holding others accountable**	Avoids mandatory training. Circumvents organisational processes that support diversity - e.g. recruitment and selection and other HR processes and requirements of the Diversity Assessment Framework. Persistently avoids identifying diversity related deliverables or performance improvement activities for self or others.	Engages in mandatory training as a chore and tick box exercise. Engages in DAF as a compliance tool. Makes no effort to identify diversity related deliverables or performance improvement activities for self or others.	Complies with mandatory training willingly. Is receptive to diversity related data and contributes to analysis. Willing to set performance related deliverables and improvement activities and takes some related but inconsistent action.	Takes a consistent approach. Includes relevant and appropriate diversity deliverables and development in performance portfolio of self and others. Ensures mandatory and required diversity training has taken place. Commissions/suggests bespoke training for team if appropriate. Tracks relevant equality data and supports any relevant targets.
Planning and *Shaping the future*	Does not acknowledge the role of diversity issues in the look and feel of the organisation going forward and the activities it undertakes and how it undertakes them.	If diversity issues relevant to shaping the future are raised there is a passive response, looking to others to take action.	Is reactive in approach but willing to discuss and factor in diversity issues raised in shaping the future activity.	Takes a pro active approach to including and addressing diversity issues in planning, especially at strategic level. Meaningfully considers support and resource implications.

Maintaining the Status Quo

Please read the summary of behaviours that help to maintain the status quo, resulting in the perpetuation of inequality.

Maintaining inequality	
Denial	Refusal to accept any inequality exists or viewing it primarily as the personal prejudice of a few, extreme, irrational people.
Omission	Ignoring the inequality dimension of social interactions: not seeing the relevance of equality in most situations and relating to others as if equality issues do not exist.
Decontextualisation	Accepting inequality exists in general terms but somewhere else 'out there'; refusing to believe it permeates everyday life, which includes working life.
Taking a non-differentiated approach	Treating groups that are affected by inequality as if they are the same as those who are not. Negating people's specific experiences of inequality.
Dumping	Placing responsibility for inequality on minority groups and taking a 'blame the victim' approach.
Patronising	Deeming as superior the ways of majority or advantaged groups and tolerating the way minority or disadvantaged groups do things – 'they are entitled to their quaint ways'.
Avoidance	There is an awareness of inequality as a factor in social and working relationships and interactions but opportunities for confronting this are avoided. It usually means flinching at unfair and prejudiced behaviour but keeping quiet about it.

Step 1

Can you think of any examples of where you have seen any of these types of behaviours either in individuals, or in teams, or within organisations?

Step 2

What suggestions do you have which could challenge such behaviours?

What suggestions do you have for behaviours which would promote equality and inclusion?

Equal opportunity and the law

The law in context

The British Council's policies and processes are based on meeting its strategic objectives, business needs, its values and Code of Conduct, compliance with the law and a commitment to equality of opportunity and managing and valuing diversity.

As explained earlier, our Equal Opportunity Policy holds wherever local law and customs allow. In countries where legislation is more extensive than within the United Kingdom (UK), we adhere to such legislation.

It is crucial that all staff understand the thrust of any equality legislation applicable in the country in which they are working and that they operate within such legislation and its requirements. For example, some jurisdictions require that all documentation relevant to an employment dispute is translated from English into the appropriate national language.

However, staff are not expected to have a detailed knowledge of the law. Advice and support within the UK can be obtained from Human Resources and Legal Department. For colleagues based outside the UK, advice on national legislation may need to be obtained from a local lawyer.

Individual and employer liability

Under most systems of law, an employer is legally liable for the wrongful acts its employees commit in the course of their employment. The scope of employer's liability can be very widely drawn and it will usually include any act of unlawful discrimination. **An employer can therefore be held liable for any action or lack of action that an employee takes in the course of his or her employment: this may include incidents occurring at off-site work events, staff parties or other sorts of work-related social events.**

In addition to this an individual employee may be held to account by a fellow worker for an act of unlawful discrimination and may be sued by them. The British Council and, on occasion, individual members of staff have been sued for alleged breaches of equality legislation.

What follows is a broad overview of current UK legal aspects of relevance to the area of equality and diversity. **Please note that equality legislation now extends beyond employment and the workplace into the areas of education and training in the broadest sense, and also into the wider provision of good and/or services.**

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The Equality Act 2010

What is the Equality Act 2010?

The Act harmonised and brought together many previous pieces of UK legislation and also widened the scope of discrimination law in important respects. The Act makes it unlawful to discriminate against anyone on grounds of certain personal characteristics.

Where does it apply?

The Equality Act 2010 applies across England, Scotland and Wales. Each of the three countries have separate statutory equality duties for many public authorities. The equality laws of Northern Ireland contain broadly similar provisions.

Protected Characteristics

The Act identifies and lists "protected characteristics". These are personal aspects or characteristics of an individual which attract legal protection and cannot be used as a reason for the individual receiving less favourable treatment than someone who does not have the characteristic in question.

Age

The Act protects people of all ages. However, different treatment because of age is not unlawful direct or indirect discrimination if you can justify it, ie if you can demonstrate that it is a proportionate means of meeting a legitimate aim. Age is the only protected characteristic that allows employers to justify direct discrimination.

Disability

The Act has made it easier for a person to show that they are disabled and protected from disability discrimination. Under the Act, a person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities, which would include things like using a telephone, reading a book or using public transport.

The Act puts a duty on employers to make reasonable adjustments for staff to help them overcome disadvantage resulting from an impairment (eg by providing assistive technologies to help visually impaired staff use computers effectively). The Act states that it is discrimination to treat a disabled person unfavourably because of something connected with their disability (eg a tendency to make spelling mistakes arising from dyslexia). This type of discrimination is unlawful where the employer or other person acting for the employer knows, or could reasonably be expected to know, that the person has a disability. This type of discrimination is only justifiable if an employer can show that it is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

The Equality Act 2010

Additionally, indirect discrimination covers disabled people. This means that a job applicant or employee could claim that a particular rule or requirement you have in place disadvantages people with the same disability. Unless you could justify this, it would be unlawful.

The Act includes a provision which makes it unlawful, except in certain circumstances, for employers to ask about a candidate's health before offering them work.

Gender reassignment
The Act provides protection for transsexual people. A transsexual person is someone who proposes to, starts or has completed a process to change his or her gender. The Act no longer requires a person to be under medical supervision to be protected – so a woman who decides to live as a man but does not undergo any medical procedures would be covered.

It is discrimination to treat transsexual people less favourably for being absent from work because they propose to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone gender reassignment than they would be treated if they were absent because they were ill or injured.

Marriage and civil partnership
The Act protects employees who are married or in a civil partnership against discrimination. Single people are not protected.

Pregnancy and maternity
A woman is protected against discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy and maternity during the period of her pregnancy and any statutory maternity leave to which she is entitled. During this period, pregnancy and maternity discrimination cannot be treated as sex discrimination. An employee's period of absence due to pregnancy-related illness must not be taken into account when making a decision about her employment.

Race
For the purposes of the Act 'race' includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins.

Religion or belief
In the Equality Act, religion includes any religion. It also includes a lack of religion, in other words employees or jobseekers are protected if they do not follow a certain religion or have no religion at all. Additionally, a religion must have a clear structure and belief system. Belief means any religious or philosophical belief or a lack of such belief. To be protected, a belief must satisfy various criteria, including that it is a weighty and substantial aspect of human life and behaviour. Denominations or sects within a religion can be considered a protected religion or religious belief.

Discrimination because of religion or belief can occur even where both the discriminator and recipient are of the same religion or belief.

Sex
Both men and women are protected under the Act.

Sexual orientation
The Act protects bisexual, gay, heterosexual and lesbian people.

The Equality Act 2010

Prohibited Conduct

The Act sets out the various types of conduct or behaviour which equality law prohibits.

Prohibited Conduct and which protected characteristics it applies to	Age	Disability	Gender reassignment	Race	Religion or Belief	Sex	Sexual Orientation	Marriage/ Civil partnership	Pregnancy and Maternity
Direct Discrimination Someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Indirect discrimination Occurs when a rule or policy that applies to everyone particularly disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Harassment Unwanted conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Victimisation Treating someone less favourably because they have, or are believed to have brought a claim under the Act, given evidence or information in connection with a claim or alleged that another person has contravened the Act.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

The Equality Act 2010

Prohibited Conduct and which protected characteristics it applies to	Age	Disability	Gender reassignment	Race	Religion or Belief	Sex	Sexual Orientation	Marriage/ Civil partnership	Pregnancy and Maternity
Discrimination by association Less favourable treatment because a person associates with another person, such as a relative or close acquaintance, who does possess the characteristic.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Discrimination by perception Less favourable treatment because a person is perceived or thought to possess a certain characteristic, although in fact they do not.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Harassment by a third party Harassment carried out against an employee by someone who is not a fellow worker, for example by a customer or client. The employer can be held liable for harassment by a third party if it has occurred on at least two earlier occasions and the employer failed to take reasonable steps to stop it.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No

The Equality Act 2010

Positive Action

The Act permits positive action in a situation where individuals such as employees or job applicants share a protected characteristic and suffer a disadvantage connected with that characteristic, or if their participation in a certain activity is disproportionately low. Positive action may then be taken in order to enable or encourage them to overcome or reduce the disadvantage or to afford them greater participation in the relevant activity. For example, if members of one gender or of a particular ethnic group are under-represented at a particular level in an organisation, steps may be taken to encourage them to apply for posts at the level in question. Steps may include advertising jobs in media targeted at the group or adding welcome statements to job advertisements.

In selecting between two candidates who are considered to equally meet the criteria for a particular job or promotion, an employer is allowed (but not required) to appoint the candidate with a protected characteristic, if they reasonably believe this group to be disadvantaged or under-represented in the workforce or if their participation in an activity is disproportionately low. The candidates must be of equal merit – an employer is not allowed to appoint a less suitable candidate purely because that candidate has a protected characteristic.

Occupational requirement

Direct discrimination may be justified in exceptional situations where it is an "occupational requirement" that a job applicant or employee has a particular protected characteristic and it is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

For example, if a butcher has to prepare halal meat (meat that has been prepared in a way that is consistent with the Muslim faith), it might be justified to insist that this role is performed by a Muslim; where an actor is required to be of a particular race for reasons of authenticity; or where someone providing intimate personal services is required to be of the same gender as the recipient of those services.

Equal Pay

The Act retains the principle that it is generally unlawful to discriminate between women and men in terms of payment for the same or broadly similar work, work of equal value or work rated as equivalent under an objective evaluation system.

It also makes "pay secrecy" clauses unenforceable. These are contractual provisions which prevent employees from disclosing information about their pay to colleagues.

Other relevant legislation

Northern Ireland

We are required in Northern Ireland to promote equality, under the Northern Ireland Act 1998, section 75, in nine specific areas, i.e. between men and women, between disabled and non-disabled people, between people with dependants and those without, and between people of different religious beliefs, political opinions, racial groups, ages, marital status, and sexual orientation. That involves having an Equality Scheme in place, a Disability Action Plan, reporting annually on staff profile in relation to community background, sex and occupational classification, and preparing a triennial review of recruitment, training and promotion practices. in order to determine whether fair participation in employment is being secured by both Protestants and Roman Catholics.

Wales

In Wales the British Council is subject to the Welsh Language Act 1993. Every public body providing services to the public in Wales has to prepare a scheme setting out how it will provide those services in Welsh and ensure that, in the conduct of public business and the administration of justice in Wales, the Welsh and English languages should be treated on a basis of equality.

This is because, at the last count, 575,730 individuals could speak Welsh, some 20.5% of the total population of Wales. The Welsh government believes strongly that Wales's history, culture and social fabric are inextricably linked to the Welsh language and that any Welsh speaker in Wales, should be given the right to receive public services and communicate in Welsh.

In practice it means that any services we provide, such as marketing material or content on a website should be provided to the public in Wales in Welsh and English. **Our Welsh Language Scheme describes how we will do this depending on how appropriate and reasonably practicable it is to do so in each circumstance.** http://www.britishcouncil.org/wales-about-uswelsh-language-scheme.htm

The **Data Protection Act 1998**, protects an individual from improper or unauthorised use of personal data relating to her/him and gives individuals a general right of access to their personal data.

The **Freedom of Information Act 2000**, gives individuals the right to request information held by public authorities.

The **Human Rights Act 1998**, incorporates the European Convention on Human Rights into UK domestic law.

Human Rights

Human rights assert the equality and dignity of everyone and are therefore an important part of an equality and diversity agenda. Our work at the British Council, by its very nature, engages us in debates about universalism and cultural relativism and raises questions about whether human rights are universal or whether humanity is too diverse for this to hold. Our own EO&D agenda makes a link with human rights and we work with the debates and varying perspectives in the course of our work.

The Human Rights Act 1998 (also known as the Act or the HRA) came into force in the United Kingdom in October 2000. It is composed of a series of sections that have the effect of codifying the protections in the European Convention on Human Rights into UK law. These rights not only impact matters of life and death, they also affect rights in everyday life: what you can say and do, your beliefs, your right to a fair trial and other similar basic entitlements.

All public bodies (such as courts, police, local governments, hospitals, publicly funded schools, and others) and other bodies carrying out public functions have to comply with the Convention rights. This means, among other things, that individuals can take human rights cases in domestic courts; they no longer have to go to Strasbourg to argue their case in the European Court of Human Rights. The Act sets out the fundamental rights and freedoms that individuals in the UK have access to. They include:

- the right to life
- freedom from torture and degrading treatment
- freedom from slavery and forced labour
- the right to liberty
- the right to a fair trial
- the right not to be punished for something that wasn't a crime when you did it
- the right to respect for private and family life
- freedom of thought, conscience and religion, and freedom to express your beliefs
- freedom of expression
- freedom of assembly and association
- the right to marry and to start a family
- the right not to be discriminated against in respect of these rights and freedoms
- the right to peaceful enjoyment of your property
- the right to an education
- the right to participate in free elections
- the right not to be subjected to the death penalty.

Case Studies

A way into a case study:

- ➢ identify the problem or challenge
- ➢ understand and interpret the data or given information
- ➢ analyse information
- ➢ recognise assumptions and inferences
- ➢ think analytically and critically
- ➢ exercise your judgement
- ➢ take and defend your decision or view
- ➢ understand your interpersonal relationships with colleagues
- ➢ communicate your ideas and opinions.

Think about & discuss:

- is a protected characteristic involved?

- has there been any prohibited conduct?

- answer the questions and draw conclusions from the cases.

Case Studies

1. You are asked to advise Sanjay, a Project Manager. One of his staff, Rose, has been refusing to take any part in organising a forthcoming arts event featuring works by LGBT artists from around the world. Rose has stated that the works to be exhibited contain emotional and sexual content which in her view condone and celebrate same-sex relationships and that this is offensive to her deeply held Christian beliefs. She has quoted biblical passages which she says support her view. Sanjay has told Rose that, if she continues to refuse to participate, she may be disciplined. In response Rose has stated that, if she is disciplined or forced to participate in the exhibition, she will have a claim for unlawful discrimination on the grounds of her religion. A group of LGB colleagues in Sanjay's department have made it clear to him that they view Rose's behaviour as a breach of the British Council's EO Policy and they expect him to discipline Rose if her refusal continues. Although the work in question clearly falls within Rose's job description, Sanjay is now considering allowing her to "opt-out" of this and any similar events in future in order to avoid further confrontation.

- What advice will you give Sanjay regarding Rose's position and her possible claim of unlawful discrimination?

- How will you advise him to proceed?

2. Joe's line manager Eddie comes to see you for advice. In the course of a recent office discussion about politics, it came to light that Joe is a member of an extreme right-wing national political party whose policies advocate, amongst other things, repatriation of immigrants and preferential employment rights for workers of British origin. Many of Joe's work colleagues feel uneasy about his declared political affiliations and some think that his party membership is clearly incompatible with the purpose and ethos of the British Council. Several minority ethnic colleagues feel threatened by Joe's political opinions and have asked that action of some kind is taken. Joe has already told Eddie on a number of occasions that it is his human right to belong to whatever political party he chooses and not be discriminated against on such grounds. Eddie is proposing to begin disciplinary proceedings against Joe with a view to requiring him either to give up his party membership or to resign from the British Council.

- Do you endorse Eddie's proposal? If so, why? If not, what different action, if any, will you advise him to take?

- What will you take into account when giving your advice?

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Case Studies

3. You have just run a recruitment exercise to fill a senior post in a Department headed by Sunita, one of the few minority ethnic Departmental Directors in your organisation. The final shortlist for the job consisted of 2 candidates: Alex, a black male who already works in the Department, and Becky, a white female who is an external applicant. Following an interview panel, both candidates appear equally matched in terms of skills, qualifications and experience to do the job in question. After much discussion, Sunita tells you that she has decided the post should be offered to Becky: she says that her Department is badly in need of "new blood" and that Alex's track record is patchy. A few years ago he brought a grievance against his line manager alleging unfair race discrimination during his annual appraisal: his allegation was not upheld but the whole affair has made working relations in Alex's Unit difficult. Sunita feels that Becky has just the right personality to fit into her senior management team.

- What will you do next and why?

4. You manage an exchange programme. You receive an email from Sandra, a successful applicant to a three-month exchange scheme, asking if her grant can be increased by 400 Euros because she has Coeliacs disease. Sandra explains that gluten-free food is much more expensive in Portugal, the country of her placement, so she is asking for the extra grant so that she is not financially penalised because of her condition. You are aware that the grant money allocated to each student is spent, so you will have to approach the scheme sponsors to ask about this extra payment.

- What will you want to check out before you approach the sponsoring body?

5. A group of scholars from North Africa came to the UK for a week-long event hosted by a British Council office. The scholars were all Muslim men and the event organisers all women. On arrival, the visitors shook hands with the male colleagues who greeted them but not the female colleagues who greeted them. During the visit one of the men, out of respect for the women, did not make any eye contact with any of the female organisers and only spoke to them through another member of his group.

- What do you think about this situation? Would you, as organisers, want to do anything during the visit?

- Can you think of any other similar situations that could occur? Would you do anything differently in terms of preparation for projects visits from other similar groups?

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Understanding our approach

Equality monitoring

We have been carrying out equality monitoring of our UK-contracted staff since 2001.

We collect and monitor our staff profile, in the UK, in terms of age, disability, ethnicity, gender, religion/belief, sexual orientation, working pattern and having dependants. We look at the general staff profile by payband and department and we also look at performance management and promotion.

We collect and monitor the data of internal and external job applicants at every stage of the recruitment cycle – application, shortlisting and selection. We also collect and monitor the date of those who leave the organisation each year.

Equality monitoring helps us evaluate the effectiveness of our equality policies and helps identify under-representation, which we can then consider how to address.

Our offices outside the UK are beginning to monitor their staff profile and also in some cases some of their audiences and project/programme participants. This helps them to see who we are working with and which groups we are not reaching.

Equality monitoring helps us to:

- ✓ Identify under-representation

- ✓ Take action to address findings

- ✓ Review the effectiveness of our equality policies

- ✓ Ensure we are working with different sections of society

- ✓ Eliminate unjustified discrimination

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Understanding our approach

Equality screening and impact assessments

Whenever we introduce new policies, revise existing ones, introduce new ways of working or deliver activities in a different way, we need to ensure we have considered the needs of diverse groups of staff and customers. Equality Screening and Impact Assessment is the formal name given to this process of consideration.

- We are looking to identify any potential negative impact, that is, any possible way the proposed change might disadvantage one group over another group. We should then seek to remove this disadvantage, if that would be possible.

- We are looking to identify any possible way the proposed change might promote equality for disadvantaged groups.

- We are particularly concerned to identify any ways of improving opportunities for disabled people, because we recognise that worldwide, disabled people are an especially disadvantaged group and we are keen to take conscious action to address this.

The categories we consider are listed below, but there may be additional ones that are included, given the particular context (for example related to geographical location, language, tribe, etc) or the particular policy (for example working pattern, payband, etc):

- Age
- Dependant responsibilities (the day-to-day care of children, elders or others)
- Disability (physical, mental, learning, sensory)
- Gender, including transgender
- Ethnicity or race (including national origins and colour)
- Marital status/Civil partnership
- Political opinion
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- British Council values

By noting possible negative impact and seeking to change this, and by highlighting possible opportunities to promote equality, we will ensure that the changes we make as an organisation have equality and diversity principles built into them from the outset. This is what Equality Screening and Impact Assessment helps us to achieve.

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Understanding our approach

Equality screening and impact assessments exercises

Exercise 1

It is proposed that the weekly team meetings be conducted via video conferencing and from 0900–1100 in the morning, as at least two team members are based in East Asia. The status of meetings has changed; there is an emphasis on compulsory attendance when previously attendance was expected but looser. The team is experiencing significant pressures and in order to deliver has to work together much better and much more effectively (or its relevance will be subject to further scrutiny).

Exercise 2

A move to smartworking is being discussed which would involve colleagues in a particular office hotdesking, using a laptop instead of a desk-based PC, having a clear desk policy and an understanding that desks will be provided on the ratio at 80% of staff numbers. There will be breakout space, bookable meeting rooms and creative space provided to create a comfortable atmosphere.

For each of these exercises, please hold in mind the aim to enhance equality and foster good relations between different groups, as well as to include disabled people and mitigate potential inequality.

Through a discussion together identify any relevant equality data that should be borne in mind and review this. Identify potential negative impact and any opportunities to promote equality and note these.

Understanding our approach

The Staff Survey enables colleagues to comment on different aspects of the organisation. There are several questions that are relevant to EO&D and the results for 2012 are listed below:

British Council - All Regions

	Americas	East Asia	EU Europe	Middle East and North Africa	South Asia	Sub-Saharan Africa	UK	Wider Europe	British Council 2012
Base Size	211	1095	910	741	975	349	631	304	5216
Equality & Diversity: Fairness									
Where you work, management applies the British Council's recruitment policy and procedures strictly as specified	68	59	63	64	64	72	50	75	62
The British Council values all staff equally	43	54	48	55	60	53	37	64	52
Where I work people are treated without discrimination	69	70	71	67	67	69	78	83	71
Employee Wellbeing									
I achieve the correct balance between my work and personal life	62	56	58	54	62	66	66	63	60
The organisation is genuinely interested in the wellbeing of its staff	44	51	45	50	56	54	42	65	50
The organisation provides help and support mechanisms to help people manage their work/life balance	44	46	42	46	53	54	49	63	48
Right amount of work	45	53	48	48	50	48	47	45	49
Values									
Valuing People	65	71	67	66	70	67	65	77	68
Integrity	53	60	53	56	55	55	49	66	56
Mutuality	54	63	57	60	65	65	54	73	61
Creativity	50	61	54	53	61	61	45	70	57
Professionalism	52	62	56	57	58	60	51	75	58

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Understanding our approach

Diversity Assessment Framework (DAF)

The Diversity Assessment Framework was developed to support and evaluate activity to mainstream equal opportunity and diversity within the organisation. It has gradually strengthened engagement and shared ownership of EO&D and mainstreaming. It measures performance against specific indicators, using a combination of evidence and signed assurance statements. There is moderation to ensure consistency across the organisation.

The DAF applies globally with the exception of the UK because of its unique structure. However, we continue to press for something similar in the UK. For more information please visit our DAF site.

"The DAF has been pivotal in mainstreaming the EO&D agenda throughout the organisation as a whole. The framework has enabled our office to engage fully with complex EO&D issues that would not have surfaced otherwise. The DAF is structured in such a way that everyone in our directorate can feed into it and it is this sense of shared ownership that makes it so successful and such a valuable tool."

Julia Tobias, Project Manager, Israel

Essential Level	Good Practice Level
Recruitment and deployment	Working culture
Induction	Stakeholders
Job requirements	Contracts
Working environment	Equality monitoring
Leadership	Planning and delivery

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Understanding our approach

Library of Living Books

Our Library of Living Books was developed to support intercultural learning and awareness and improve understanding and appreciation of diversity in an atmosphere of inclusion.

The Library of Living Books provides an organised and structured way for staff to speak to and learn from another member of staff with particular experiences or from a specific cultural or linguistic group and a formalised process and message of support to do so. The Library may well contain a colleague who has experiences and insights that would help others with their work and their wider cultural understanding and has the flexibility to accommodate this at people's pace.

Staff can join the library as living books and make themselves available to be 'borrowed' by another person, or group. A living library will only be built and developed by the support of volunteer living books who can be borrowed. Whilst on 'loan' living books need to share aspects of themselves in the spirit of an open and hopefully rewarding conversation. The conversation can take place face to face, by video, tele-conference or Skype (for distant readers).

Living books volunteer their time for conversations that will be, as a guide, around half an hour - perhaps 15 minutes for 'reading' – that is hearing from the book about their background and experiences usually based on some prompts about specific areas of interest, and a further 15 minutes discussion involving some direct and specific questioning, perhaps focussed on what was shared. This will be at a mutually agreed time between the 'borrower' and the 'lender'.

Consider becoming a Living Book!

Understanding our approach

Guide to Mainstreaming EO&D into programmes and projects

Our Guide to Mainstreaming E&D into Project Development and Delivery was developed by the Diversity Unit with members of our Global Diversity Network. This document suggests ways of mainstreaming EO&D principles and issues into the development, delivery and review of our programme work in a systematic and comprehensive way.

This guide is a response to the increasing demands for guidance about how to mainstream equality and diversity principles and issues into the development, delivery and review of our programme work in a more systematic and comprehensive way. In the process, it aims to strengthen the quality of our work, consistent with our purpose which is, of course, to build engagement and trust for the UK through the exchange of knowledge and ideas between people worldwide and to support us to be inclusive and fair in the delivery of our programmes and to evidence our organisational values.

The guide focuses on the development and delivery of projects, including encouragement to consider, for example:

Cultural relations:	Development:	Delivery:
Collaboration	Diversity of:	Communications
Co-existence	participation	Access
Partnership	views	Avoidance of
Dialogue	location	stereotypes
Inclusivity	Shared approach	Respect
Shared ownership	Involvement in	Selection
Mutual respect	design	Monitoring
International trust		

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Understanding our approach

Issues Log

The aim of an issues log is to support organisational learning about equality and diversity issues and challenges experienced and/or dealt with by staff in their work and to improve practice and competence.

An equality and diversity issues log summarises issues that have arisen from across the organisation. Data is gathered and analysed by the EO&D co-ordinator from the experiences of staff showing how equality and diversity issues were dealt with, what solutions were reached, what the learning points are, and how such a situation might be either avoided or dealt with in the future. These can be a wide range of issues which, if not collated centrally, or at a more localised level, would go largely unacknowledged and unknown with the missed opportunity of wider learning and sharing. Maintaining an issues log builds equality and diversity learning into the work of the organisation and of improving confidence and competence, interest and engagement.

BRITISH COUNCIL

Taking Action

All Staff

No matter what your role you can make a contribution

✓ Attend EO&D-related external workshops and seminars, conference, and other events and report back to colleagues

✓ Join the EO&D mailbase and share useful information with others in your team

✓ Commit time to looking in detail on the intranet at our EO Policy, Diversity Strategy and the British Council's approach to equality and diversity as well as discrimination legislation

✓ Champion an aspect of EO&D within your team

Customer Service Staff

You are a significant point of contact in reflecting the importance of EO&D to our customers

✓ Identify a list of colleagues who speak different languages to assist if there is a customer requiring assistance and train in basic sign language

✓ Produce key information in different formats

✓ Put up posters and signs in the Front of House promoting diversity

Facilities staff

You create the environment in which all customers can feel safe and secure

✓ Ensure all refurbishment projects incorporate communication of a clear message of inclusion and accessibility to a wide range of people, for example, disabled people and people with young children.

✓ Identify a local disability organisation that can support the BC office in addressing access issues

Marketing and Communications staff

You play a pivotal role in communicating our EO&D commitment to our audiences

✓ Ensure all images used in communications reflect diversity

✓ Review access to our communications for disabled people and speakers of minority languages and implement changes

BRITISH COUNCIL

Taking Action

Programmes staff

You enable every participant in our events to feel welcomed and valued

- ✓ Check all venues for accessibility issues
- ✓ Ensure equality monitoring data (as a minimum in the areas of gender and age) for customers is carried out to identify under- and over-represented groups and results are discussed and acted upon in relation to the local context and local demographics
- ✓ Promote BC's commitment to EO&D to potential partners and gain an understanding of their commitment
- ✓ Provide catering at all events that meets the diversity of the participants

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Senior Managers

Your leadership role is critical to 'walking the talk' of EO&D principles

- ✓ Become involved in external diversity bodies and forums
- ✓ Become personally significantly involved in diversity initiatives, projects and working groups
- ✓ Generally take ownership of each EO&D initiative and champion EO&D
- ✓ Commission Equality Impact Assessments of key policies, programmes and services
- ✓ Discuss and review flexible working with team members
- ✓ Ensure all performance agreements for your staff have EO&D deliverables
- ✓ Ensure all your team have EO&D training during the year
- ✓ Promote the merits of a good work-life balance and initiate activities to back this up

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Teachers and TC staff

Through your efforts each student will feel welcomed and supported in their learning

- ✓ Ask a person with a specific need (e.g. disability or language) to carry out a customer journey and act on the results
- ✓ Create an EO&D lesson plan and resource bank
- ✓ Devise an SEN (Special Educational Needs) policy
- ✓ Hold competitions for young learners on topics explicitly related to EO&D

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Our tools and resources

The resources listed below provide additional information relating to issues raised in the workshop. Note which tools/resources map onto the different Diversity Strategy objectives – developing leadership capability, fostering inclusion and measures and metrics. Some relate to more than one objective.

Diversity website: The British Council's diversity website showcases our work and commitment in EO & D. It presents the tools we use to mainstream EO&D in our work, details of articles and publications that a range of staff have contributed to and identifies useful resources. http://www.britishcouncil.org/home-diversity.htm

Diversity Intranet Site: The intranet site contains information on the 7 areas of EO&D, as well as outlining the work undertaken by the Diversity Unit and the tools we use to mainstream EO&D, including the Diversity Assessment Framework, Equality Screening and Impact Assessment and Equality Monitoring. There is also information on EO Training, the Global Diversity Network and our Disability Advisory Panel, Web accessibility and other external equality networks we belong to. http://intranet.britishcouncil.org/Site/Diversity/Pages/Default.aspx

Equal opportunity and diversity e-learning module: the British Council's online learning tool, which allows individuals to learn about the British Council's equal opportunity policy and diversity strategy and related areas. http://bcnet.britishcouncil.org:8000/learning/elearning_development.htm

EO&D resources toolkit: a resource bank accessible through the EO&D intranet site, containing case studies, trigger tapes, presentations and activities and other resources to support colleagues to deliver workshops and sessions on EO&D. http://intranet.britishcouncil.org/Site/Diversity/EODtoolkit/Pages/default.aspx

Guide to Promoting Disability Equality: developed by the Diversity Unit for all British Council staff and aims to support the organisation to mainstream disability across all our work, acknowledging some of the positive work that is already taking place in this area and suggesting tips and guidance that will support us to further improve our working culture. http://intranet.britishcouncil.org/Site/Diversity/Documents/Promoting_disability_equality.doc

Library of Living Books: developed by the Diversity Unit for all British Council staff and aims to support intercultural learning and awareness and improve understanding and appreciation of diversity. http://intranet.britishcouncil.org/Site/Diversity/LivingBook/Pages/LLcatalogue.aspx

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Our tools and resources

Religion and Belief Guide: developed by the Diversity Unit in order to support colleagues in seeking to ensure that our work reflects good practice in the area of religion and belief. It includes information about dietary requirements, appearance and dress, working arrangements during religious festivals, as well as having a number of useful FAQs dealing with issues such as alcohol consumption at events and the wearing of religious symbols. You can find it at:
http://intranet.britishcouncil.org/Site/Diversity/Documents/ReligionGuide.doc

Diversity Assessment Framework: A multi-level, evidence-based tool to support and evaluate activity to mainstream EO&D within the organisation. It allows a diversity score to be entered into our performance scorecard.
http://intranet.britishcouncil.org/Site/Diversity/daf/Pages/Default.aspx

Global Diversity Network: Works with regional leadership teams and the Diversity Unit to support the mainstreaming of EO&D in all British Council work, both internal and external. It is comprised of identified colleagues from different regions who dedicate a percentage of their time to EO&D work.

Diversity mailbase: A list any colleague with an interest in EO&D can join, to share and receive details of good EO&D practice, seek advice relating to EO&D issues from others and join in debates and discussions about global EO&D issues. To join, please email jane.franklin@britishcouncil.org

Disability Advisory Panel: An external group with significant personal and/or professional experience of disability, which acts as a 'critical friend' and provides advice and support in how to promote disability equality.

A Guide to Mainstreaming EO&D into programmes and projects: This document suggests ways of mainstreaming EO&D principles and issues into the development, delivery and review of our programme work in a systematic and comprehensive way.
http://intranet.britishcouncil.org/Site/Diversity/Documents/Guide_for_ED_in_Progamme_work.doc

UK equality targets: Based on the analysis of UK-contracted staff equality monitoring data, the targets aim to promote activity to increase the numbers of women and minority ethnic staff in senior management positions and to increase the representation of disabled people both in these roles and overall.

Disability Working Group: This small group of staff drawn from different areas across the UK work to help promote disability equality. They produced a video on working here with a disability and were instrumental in us being granted double-tick status, which is a well-recognised symbol that shows we are positive about disabled people.

Our tools and resources

We belong to the following organisations, all of which provide services to members including publications, research, access to events and networking opportunities and help with enquiries about equality and diversity related issues.

Business Disability Forum is an employers' organisation focused on the issue of disability in the workplace. The British Council is a member of BDF and all staff can make use of its services. http://businessdisabilityforum.org.uk/

The Mercer Network serves as a leading resource on equality and diversity issues for major public sector organisations in the United Kingdom. It provides a confidential forum for HR executives and diversity managers to address the broad equality and diversity agenda in employment in the UK in addition to drawing on Mercer's knowledge of relevant developments in continental Europe and the broader international context. The British Council is a member of the Mercer Network. www.orcworldwide.co.uk/networks/breakthrough.html

Stonewall works to achieve legal equality and social justice for lesbians, gay men and bisexual people. The British Council is a member of Stonewall's diversity champions' programme.www.stonewall.org.uk

The following organisations work for equality in the UK. They produce a range of publications, research and fact sheets and other useful information on their websites.

ACAS equality and diversity website: the site contains guidance on age, sexual orientation and religion or belief in the workplace as well as a variety of other resources http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=1363

The Equality and Human Rights Commission is the UK's leading body for the promotion of equality. In October 2007 it took on the roles and functions of the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE), the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) and the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) with new responsibilities for sexual orientation, age, religion and belief and human rights. www.equalityhumanrights.com

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Learning points and follow up

Please note here your learning points:

Considerations
(What surprised me)

Challenges
(What I've learned that made me feel uncomfortable)

Concrete follow-up
(What action I will take next)

What's next for you?

- Join the Global diversity mailbase – email
  jane.franklin@britishcouncil.org
- Volunteer to be on an ESIA panel
- Build EO&D into one of your deliverables
- What else can you suggest?

Thanks for your participation!

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