Internationalising Diversity Management: The British Council’s Diversity Assessment Framework

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Foreword

Over recent years it has become increasingly clear to me that the British Council cannot meet its organisational aim without truly understanding how to manage equality and diversity effectively. As an international cultural relations organisation, striving to bring together individuals and groups who might not usually get the chance to share with and learn from each other, we need to ensure diversity is at the very heart of all that we do. Working with colleagues, partners and customers in so many countries of the world, we have realised that we not only need to be able to explain our commitment to equality and diversity, but also ensure our actions match up with our espoused values.

The Diversity Assessment Framework helps us track the return on our investment into equality and diversity. By assessing evidence against a set of prescribed indicators, it shows where progress is being made, helps our country and regional offices develop and share good practice with each other, encourages us to work with new audiences and partners and, ultimately, helps us to learn more about the rich diversity that is inherent in work that supports cultural relations.

I never dreamt when I was asked to champion the Diversity Assessment Framework, or the DAF as it has become known, that this tool would become so significant and would enable us to measure progress, to highlight areas for development and, ultimately, to demonstrate the extent that diversity is embedded in our organisational culture. I've been greatly heartened by the extent to which colleagues working all over the world have engaged with the DAF and the organisational learning we have witnessed as a result.

I believe that a strategic approach to managing diversity internationally depends on a number of key elements. These include specialist diversity leadership; clear alignment to the needs of the business; senior level buy-in; communication to build and sustain understanding that leads to a critical mass of support; clarity about how to address issues and concerns, taking distinct contexts into account; and comprehensive measures and metrics to track progress and demonstrate engagement. The journey continues, as does our learning.

Martin Davidson CMG
Chief Executive Officer, British Council
Introduction

In 2000 the British Council appointed what it then called a Diversity Manager. Typical of many other organisations, irrespective of sector, the post was part of its human resources portfolio. Shortly afterwards, the decision was taken to move the equal opportunity and diversity (EO&D) brief and to form a strategic EO&D team, known as the Diversity Unit. This began more formal recognition of the central role EO&D plays within the fields of cultural relations and public diplomacy, particularly when viewed in the context of the British Council’s work in over 100 countries and territories across six continents. Organisational values of integrity, mutuality, creativity, professionalism, and valuing people also support the belief that EO&D belongs at the heart of what the British Council does.

A particular challenge for the newly created Diversity Unit was to find a way of weaving EO&D into every aspect of the organisation’s work, a process that we call ‘mainstreaming’, which has become a central pillar of the British Council’s approach. The next key challenge was to find a way of measuring progress towards this goal. In response to this need, the Diversity Assessment Framework (DAF) was developed, and it is this which is the focus of this publication.

In what follows, we aim to provide an insight into the DAF’s development and implementation and, in doing so, contribute to the wider diversity management discourse.

Chapter one will set the DAF in the wider context of the British Council’s EO&D work; chapter two will provide an overview of the DAF itself and offer the reader an understanding of how it is operationalised; chapter three will highlight the key changes and adaptations that have been made since its inception; while chapter four stresses the impact the DAF has had on the organisation’s culture and wider learning. Finally, chapter five will provide concluding remarks, exploring the application of global standards for equality and diversity.

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1 A broad term defined by the British Council as ‘the building of engagement and trust between people of different cultures through the exchange of knowledge and ideas’.
2 Public diplomacy is defined by the 2005 Carter Review as ‘work aiming to inform and engage individuals and organisations overseas, in order to improve understanding of and influence for the United Kingdom in a manner consistent with governmental medium and long-term goals’. The term is further explored in the British Council publication Options for Influence (2008).
Chapter one

The British Council and equality and diversity

The British Council’s stated purpose is ‘to build trust and engagement for the UK through the exchange of knowledge and ideas between people worldwide’. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that equal opportunity and diversity (EO&D) is considered central to everything that the organisation does. Trust and engagement (on both a local and global level) are conditional on an ability to display respect for diversity and foster mutual understanding when navigating the complexities of cultural difference. This ability is part of the competence and, indeed, confidence of working in cross-cultural contexts.

Inequality, whether perceived or otherwise, can undermine this process and harm the fragile relationships vital to effective cultural relations. Inequality breeds mistrust and creates tension, conflict, rage and unrest. It obstructs access to resources, dampens hope, restricts economic and social growth and consigns many people to the margins of society. It must therefore be challenged and organisations such as the British Council are in a unique position to be part of this process.

Diversity and ‘the encountering of difference’ is of course an inevitable and increasing reality of modern life. Globalisation has been the principal driving force behind this, increasing, as it has, inter-cultural interaction and what some would call ‘cultural proximity’. For the British Council, globalisation raises new questions in the context of its cultural relations endeavours. There is undoubtedly a need to create shared approaches to global challenges, but this cannot come at the expense of the richness inherent in diversity. Different cultures approach challenges in different ways, and for different reasons. We therefore need to value, respect, understand and learn from this, rather than trample a path to homogeneity.

The British Council’s Diversity Unit

The Diversity Unit sets and drives the strategic direction of equality and diversity for the organisation. It does this by working with colleagues at all levels to ensure an approach that is global, consistently applied in core ways and, above all, practical. In developing the DAF, it worked hard to ensure alignment with the corporate scorecard, where the DAF forms a key component of the leadership perspective.

The Diversity Unit sits within Corporate Affairs, under the umbrella of Strategy and External Relations. It works with the Chief Executive’s office and with members of the Global Leadership Team (GLT) to ensure that a top-down approach exists to complement the bottom-up activity of a broad network of colleagues around the world.
The Global Diversity Network

The Diversity Unit draws on various resources and contributions, including from specific groups with mandated responsibilities, in particular the Global Diversity Network (GDN). This comprises representatives (known as GDNRs) from all the regions around which the British Council organises its global presence. They have become increasingly important in implementing and revising the DAF to ensure a fit-for-purpose tool that encourages organisational change and improvement.

The British Council’s EO&D framework

We have conceived of an overarching framework for our EO&D work, outlined below. It encapsulates business, moral and legal strands, with a predominant but not exclusive focus on seven main areas of diversity. Mainstreaming acts as a central thread and we acknowledge our endeavours as a process not an event, consistent with our values and human rights principles that support inclusion.

Figure 1

British Council EO&D Framework

![British Council EO&D Framework Diagram]

Programme Areas

Operational Activity

Global Services

Supporting Inclusion & Human Rights

A process not an event

Aligned to our values

Achieving impact for the UK
Chapter two
The DAF process

As already highlighted, the Diversity Assessment Framework was developed to respond to a particular need – to support and evaluate activity to mainstream equal opportunity and diversity within the organisation. It is a multi-level, cumulative, evidence-based tool developed on the basis of consultation and piloting. Indicators span a number of levels, illustrated below, using the scale from the 2009/10 DAF.

**Figure 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 1: Embarking</th>
<th>Level 2: Progressing</th>
<th>Level 3: Performing</th>
<th>Level 4: Mainstreaming</th>
<th>Level 5: Leading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There is basic evidence of EO&amp;D performance</td>
<td>There is adequate evidence of EO&amp;D performance</td>
<td>There is strong evidence of EO&amp;D performance</td>
<td>There is substantial evidence of EO&amp;D performance</td>
<td>There is comprehensive evidence of EO&amp;D performance that is seen internally and externally as exemplary</td>
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Although there have been changes, the basic premise of a cumulative scale that focuses on basic processes and standards at the early levels, progressing to higher performance, remains.

The DAF is now firmly embedded and currently each year British Council directorates around the world undertake an evidence-based self-assessment exercise in order to evaluate their performance. This is subject to rigorous central scrutiny and the results are fed into the organisation’s final reporting and evaluation mechanisms.

**Levels and indicators**

Each level is comprised of supporting indicators, which act as building blocks towards mainstreaming. Appendix A includes samples of level one indicators from both the 2007/08 DAF (which saw 11 indicators at each level) and the 2009/10 DAF (which had five per level).
Early levels focus on ‘basic’ performance, which cover HR processes such as recruitment, induction and job descriptions; resourcing and facilities issues such as contracts and emergency procedures; in addition to marketing, communications and online presence. They also look at staff development, service delivery and, significantly, leadership.

The organisational target in both 2007/08 and 2008/09 of level two, for example, represented a point at which it was felt that a solid foundation had been laid upon which to build future progress. These early levels are also overwhelmingly internally focused, recognising the fact that in order for an organisation to progress its diversity strategy with integrity, it needs to ensure that ‘its own house is in order’.

Level three represents a significant step up for any office. Having addressed what many would consider to be the necessary elements to ensure a solid foundation at levels one and two, level three seeks to demonstrate evidence of an increasingly consistent approach. In 2009/10, for example, the way this was done was to focus on five particular areas, all of which represented, in their own way, a key area of progress. The first was Equality Screening and Impact Assessment, an important requirement for the organisation, not only as part of UK equality legislation, but also to support proactivity. Level three also addresses the issue of access audits for premises and venues, and encourages equality monitoring of staff and customers. The other two areas that the 2009/10 level three indicators addressed were work–life balance (identified as a key issue for many colleagues through annual staff survey results) and the British Council’s values. These values, it is felt, are key not only to the EO&D agenda and organisational culture, but also the aim of improving performance as an international cultural relations body.

The highest DAF levels focus on top-end performance and significant impact. They are about external activity contributing to positive social change, extending reach and engagement to the extent that the British Council is recognised by those outside the organisation as being serious about its commitment to EO&D and keen to work in partnership with others.

Support and guidance

Clearly, given the varied understanding of and familiarity with equality and diversity, it was necessary to unpack for colleagues in some detail the performance requirements inherent in the DAF. To this end, a comprehensive online resource was developed that provides guidance on all aspects. As well as explaining the process itself, it looks at each level and each indicator individually, providing a detailed explanation of the requirements necessary to address each one (where possible, providing examples from previous years).

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3 The ESIA process involves carrying out a formal assessment of all new or revised policies, processes or functions to ensure that they do not have a disproportionate and unjustifiable impact on one or more defined groups.

4 The British Council’s values are Integrity, Professionalism, Mutuality, Creativity and Valuing People. For more information, see our website: www.britishcouncil.org/new/about-us/who-we-are/vision-purpose-and-values/
This online resource is an important support tool and a factor in the DAF’s success. Below is an image of the DAF homepage, taken in December 2009. Screenshots of other sections of content can be found in Appendix B.

**Figure 3**

**Equal Opportunity and Diversity**

In addition to this, DAF workshops take place in a range of regions and countries as part of equality and diversity awareness and development sessions. Personalised advice and guidance is also available by email, telephone, or face-to-face for colleagues visiting the UK. This helps to ensure understanding of the tool across the organisation. Furthermore, it allows colleagues to raise specific concerns or questions and to seek informal feedback on progress, as well as share good practice on an ongoing basis.

**Championing**

It is widely acknowledged that in order to achieve buy-in and progress, authority and leadership influence is required. Typically this takes the form of championing an aspect of EO&D. Consistent with this, the DAF, since its inception, has had a senior level champion, a role of real significance. This has ensured that the DAF, and the EO&D agenda that it drives and supports, remain high on the list of priorities for the organisation, firmly aligned to our cultural relations work.

During the life of the DAF, the champion (at the time of writing the CEO of the organisation) has contributed to both the development and the implementation of the tool, and has been responsible for setting the targets that are instrumental in driving performance. His involvement has also been significant in terms of senior level accountability, particularly on the part of country
directors and regional directors, with the DAF being integrated into the performance management framework.

The assessment process

The provision of supporting evidence has been an important element of the DAF, as has the practice of all completed submissions being assessed in-country and then centrally moderated. This ensures consistency and rigour, elements crucial to maintaining the integrity of the process.

Bearing in mind that the DAF is a process and not an event, colleagues are encouraged to collect evidence over the course of the whole reporting period. In fact, an approach that involves only addressing the DAF in the immediate run-up to the submission deadline has proven to be largely unsuccessful and contrary to the principles of mainstreaming.

In-country assessment involves convening a panel of at least three members. Countries also have the option of including an external panel member, if it is felt that this will add value, and if an appropriate external contact can be identified. The external panel member brings a degree of objectivity and additional rigour to the process and their inclusion also provides an opportunity to share practice and learn from their experience.

A ‘pass mark’ is set for each level. This mark is set at a threshold that demonstrates sufficiency while allowing some flexibility – it is intended to show that ‘enough’ evidence has been provided to demonstrate that the level has been reached. In 2007/08, for example, the threshold was 18 out of 33 (55 per cent) for each level and in 2009/10 this was increased to 10 out of 15 (66 per cent). In both these examples, up to three points could be awarded for each indicator. The number of points awarded is determined by the quantity, quality and relevance of evidence. It is the role of the in-country self-assessment panel to undertake the initial review of the evidence gathered and assign a score for each indicator. This is then sent, with the required submission forms, to the Diversity Unit for central moderation by the moderation team.

Understanding of good equality and diversity practice varies. What colleagues in one country consider to be a level three, for example, may not necessarily be the same as what colleagues in another country might think. Central moderation therefore plays an important role in ensuring consistency and integrity in assessment. It also facilitates organisational learning. This is because a single team review all the evidence submitted from every country, and so are in a good position to identify organisational good and best practice, highlight this for others to learn from, and use it to populate the online resource.

Reporting

When moderation has been completed, individual country reports are generated and sent to each country director (copied to regional co-ordinators). These

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5 In 2008/09, for example, the smallest panel had three members and the largest had 27.
reports contain the moderated scores and any feedback the moderators have provided, either about the submission as a whole or specific indicators. The outcome of moderation can be challenged and further clarification sought.

An annual DAF report is produced by the Diversity Unit that analyses the overall results on a country and regional level and with reference to the organisational targets. This report is discussed at draft stage with the CEO and DAF Champion, and then made available to the wider organisation.

**Performance scorecard**

Since its inception, the DAF score has fed into the organisational reporting mechanism. The corporate performance scorecard is designed to manage organisational performance and is divided into five perspectives: impact, reputation, audiences, management results and leadership. The DAF is one of two measures in the leadership perspective, as demonstrated below:

*Figure 4*

The performance scorecard is scrutinised by the organisation’s Board of Trustees and the Executive Board quarterly, by funding sponsors annually, and forms part of senior management performance agreements. This integration means that there is internal and ‘public’ scrutiny, formalising and highlighting its importance and encouraging participation. It also undoubtedly generates a healthy level of ‘competition’ within the organisation as annual DAF scores are made widely available.
Chapter three

Ongoing review and adaptation

Over time, the DAF has changed in both focus and emphasis. Few would dispute it has had a profound impact on the organisation. It has gradually fostered engagement and shared ownership of the approach to EO&D and its mainstreaming. It now plays an important role in driving, as well as measuring, performance.

‘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*

Although the original intention was to develop a tool to primarily measure performance, over time it became clear that the DAF was actually driving performance. This was partly because of compliance activity initiated because of DAF requirements, but also because of increasing interest in the wider equality and diversity agenda.

The DAF has been regularly reviewed to ensure it remains fit for purpose, which has led to adaptations and amendments. Some changes came as a result of the moderation process, which provides an opportunity to review the overall DAF approach. Others came from extensive feedback from the Global Diversity Network, both in 2007 and in 2009 at their face-to-face conferences.

**Changes to the indicators**

Significant changes have been made to the indicators. They have reduced over time from 11 per level to five as performance has become embedded. In the early stages, countries could note that particular indicators were ‘not applicable’.

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6 The Global Diversity Network members meet every two years for a face-to-face conference where they discuss developments in equality and diversity in their countries and the British Council’s corporate approach to those developments, as well as related equality legislation and good practice. Conferences have been held in South Africa in 2005, China in 2007 and Sri Lanka in 2009.
to them because of their operating environment, local laws, and customs, or because the size of the office rendered the requirements unfeasible. As the DAF has developed, the intention has been to remove indicators that are not generally applicable and to ensure that all the indicators are relevant to every country. Regional EO&D co-ordinators have been essential in this development due to their diverse experiences of living and working in the different contexts. They are therefore better positioned to know what is and is not achievable for economic, social, religious or political reasons. This has led to fascinating discussions, as efforts have been made to steer away from cultural relativism and towards global standards with local interpretation.

Initially, very general indicators were set that could be broadly interpreted. Limited guidance was offered, allowing colleagues flexibility to decide how best to meet them. Feedback confirmed that this was too demanding and required a greater understanding and ‘diversity competence’ than existed. Therefore the indicators were ‘tightened’, as was the accompanying guidance, resulting in greater clarity regarding the sort of evidence required. As confidence has grown, colleagues have begun to find more creative ways to embed good practice, and to actively share their interpretations of the indicators, seeking feedback from each other as well as from the DAF moderators.

A large part of the British Council’s work is undertaken by teaching centres, which have traditionally been viewed slightly separately. As a consequence, when the DAF was first introduced it did not capture any evidence from the teaching centres. This issue was noted and addressed in a range of different ways as the tool developed. Initially, the possibility of entirely separate indicators for teaching centres was explored and earlier manifestations of the DAF actually included one teaching centre-specific indicator at each level. However, this challenged the very purpose of a mainstreaming approach and was dropped in favour of encouraging offices to draw on teaching and exams activity as evidence across all indicators.

**Submission changes**

Other process-related changes include adaptations within the submission process. Initially, hard copy evidence was submitted. Over time, and with the advancement of technology to support this, a move has been made to share all evidence electronically wherever possible, first via CD-ROM or USB sticks, but later via web-based packages such as Sharepoint. This may seem obvious, but problems are still encountered as submissions come from all over the world, and access to the internet and supporting infrastructure varies considerably.

DAF co-ordinators have worked hard to improve the way evidence is collected and submitted. In the very early stages, an individual often worked alone to collect evidence just before the submission date. Not only did this place undue pressure on one person, it also meant the only evidence presented was that which the DAF co-ordinator knew about and was able to gather at the time. Since then, a more holistic and joined-up approach has been adopted in most countries. This usually involves the DAF co-ordinator setting up a filing system that can be accessed by all members of the office to drop relevant evidence into
folders linked to specific indicators throughout the year. A team then reviews the evidence on an ongoing basis, significantly reducing the workload in the run-up to the submission deadline.

‘Although it takes time to complete the DAF report, the DAF made me aware of the seriousness with which our organisation takes EO&D issues. I had never worked in another organisation that had anything like it at all. The DAF is a very democratic instrument, because all colleagues are invited to volunteer to take part, so we have members from the Country Director, to Operations teams to Business Support Services, including interns. By taking part there is a clear feeling of togetherness, as we all work hard towards the same goal. Understanding the DAF makes us aware of what is really needed to ensure EO&D is present in all we do, and guides us towards putting it all into practice. It’s been an experience for life for me.’

*Marilia Matos, Project Assistant, Brazil*

It is a real challenge to determine how the same DAF score (e.g. level two) can be applied to both a country office of four staff that works on one main area (such as education promotion) and a large multi-site country office with a teaching centre and a wide portfolio of work. These issues are discussed extensively during moderation and have led, on occasion, to changes in the submission requirements. For example, it was decided that large country operations should be required to submit evidence drawn from across multiple offices, rather than submit all their evidence from one site, even if that is the main base. This approach encourages greater and more genuine mainstreaming.

**Moderation changes**

In order to ensure organisation-wide rigour and consistency, central moderation of every submission was a feature of the DAF from the very start. This involved a small team working through every submission in detail, reviewing the evidence and the self-assessment comments, then scoring and making changes where appropriate. Although resource intensive, this brought rigour and consistency to the process. It also helped to cement engagement, as colleagues could see the evidence they had submitted was being scrutinised and, on occasion, held up as best practice for others in the organisation to learn from. They also particularly valued the feedback the moderation process provided them with.
The challenge with such strict rigour is in sustainability. While mainstreaming equality and diversity cannot (and should not) be resource neutral, it raises questions about the efficiency of a small team spending time reviewing and moderating all DAF submissions. This continues to be the source of many discussions within the organisation, including with the DAF Champion. In favour of such an approach are consistency, increased reliability and validity of the process, as well as the shared learning from the evidence submitted. Against such an approach however, there is a level of duplicated resources given teams have reviewed evidence in-country, a process which is then repeated by the moderators.

Balancing resource concerns against the advantages of organisational learning, the preferred option has so far been to undertake full central moderation, but to try to include a small number of colleagues from the GDN in the central moderation team each time. These colleagues have been able to gain a real insight into how moderation works and consequently return to their regions better equipped to play a leading role in supporting colleagues to develop their understanding of the DAF tool and process.

This centralised and intensive approach has also supported the Diversity Unit to clearly understand how the tool works in practice; to assess whether any changes were needed to the indicators, levels or other aspects of the process. A full understanding of the DAF enables informed and well-judged amendments to strengthen and improve it to be made quickly and confidently after each submission cycle. Confidence in the DAF process grew across the organisation as, despite (and possibly also because of) the intensity of moderation, colleagues felt assured that their work on the DAF was being taken seriously.

‘Quite honestly, the Diversity Assessment Framework – and the rigorous way it is moderated and the way it has been developed in response to feedback – sets an example and a standard which I think the British Council should apply to its performance measurement and evaluation as a whole.’

*Michael Bird, Regional Director, South-East Europe (2009–current)*

Of course, there is still room for improvement, with the moderation process under constant review. As DAF understanding and confidence grows across the organisation, and self-assessed scores become more consistent, a future move away from a centralised moderation model becomes a more realistic option. Other options explored include:

- regional moderation carried out by GDN members
- intra-regional moderation
- spot checks and audit-type moderation by the Diversity Unit
- clusters of countries working together to have their DAF scores moderated by another cluster team.
Holding levels

Linked to sustainability is the debate about how long DAF scores should remain valid. Is it necessary to require a full submission every year, or can levels passed remain valid for successive years? If so, for how many years? Linked to this is a debate about currency of evidence. What strikes an appropriate balance between rigour and resource efficiency?

Setting organisational targets can help determine the best approach here. An organisational target of level two was set for 2008, which was not met, and so held over until 2009, when it was achieved. This allowed scores to hold for those who had met the target. For example, any country meeting or exceeding level two in 2008 did not need to re-submit any evidence in 2009. Interestingly, some countries, although not required, chose to do so, as it provided them with more feedback about their work.

Reasons for scores remaining valid for a limited number of years are:

- Changes in leadership. The way the British Council is structured (at the time of writing) means that senior managers in countries (country directors) are in post for a relatively short period of time (usually three or four years). Changes in country directors involve changes in leadership direction, and can mean previous priorities being reviewed and revised.

- To avoid complacency. Once a level has been obtained it is useful to re-visit it at least every two years to ensure standards have been maintained. The currency of evidence debate fits here too, as it is felt important to see evidence that meets indicators on an ongoing rather than a one-off basis.

- Changing indicators. As the DAF is an evolving tool, the indicators do change from time to time. Holding levels under the ‘old’ indicators is acceptable for a short period of time, but if the ‘new’ indicators have been developed to address a perceived gap or to ensure an important area is captured, then it is important for all countries to address them; a full submission ensures that this happens.

‘I think the DAF is one of the best monitoring tools we have in the British Council – its application is resulting in some real, tangible progress. It has really helped improve practice (by focusing on concrete ways to achieve this) and change culture.’

*Lena Milosevic, Country Director Kazakhstan (2009–current)*
In summary, the DAF has evolved into a stronger driver of organisational change and EO&D performance than envisaged. It is a tool with key features, built around a clearly defined core structure. At its heart is the evidence-based self assessment that is centrally moderated.

Familiarity with the tool has increased over time and diversity confidence has increased simultaneously. The rigour and consistency of the DAF must remain, yet it needs to be flexible enough to adapt to the changing needs of a fast-changing cultural relations organisation operating in over 100 countries worldwide.

In reviewing and adapting the DAF, the general principle has been to consider lightening the process as capacity is built within the organisation. Doing it too soon undermines the rigour, yet doing it too late makes the process unnecessarily unwieldy and therefore inefficient. Changes have taken place, however, and the tool remains equally (if not more) fit-for-purpose, which is a definite strength and a considerable achievement.
Chapter four
Organisational change and impact

Since its introduction, the DAF has had a profound impact on the organisation, fostering engagement with, progressing mainstreaming and nurturing shared ownership of the equality and diversity agenda. These and other aspects of organisational change are explored within this chapter.

Fostering engagement

When introduced, the DAF was not universally accepted and its purpose not understood. It took a few years to achieve full participation and even longer for a sense of wholesale engagement. The strong emphasis that the DAF places on evidence and verification created the impression of an ‘audit’ and is one possible reason for this. The moderation process, which frequently challenged (and amended) self-assessed scores, caused a degree of frustration, particularly in offices that believed they were operating at a higher level than their moderated scores suggested. The fact that offices, and various named individuals, were being increasingly held accountable for DAF performance compounded this. Also relevant was the fact that proactive engagement with EO&D was relatively new and undoubtedly challenging.

In addition to the Diversity Unit, three groups of staff (not represented in order of contribution) have been central to fostering engagement. We classify them as ‘early adopters’.

Leaders

The first of these comprise leaders. At the helm of this group is the CEO and DAF Champion, whose role has already been commented on. Alongside him have been significant others (most notably country and regional directors) who have played important roles at a variety of levels.

The engagement of leaders has differed and models of good leadership practice can be identified. There have been, and continue to be, a few individuals who play sophisticated multi-level leadership roles, acting as ‘critical friends’ to the Diversity Unit in terms of offering very detailed and constructive feedback on the DAF process and on proposed changes to it. Those who occupy leadership positions within the organisation, such as country directors, are also occasionally able to combine this with specific and thorough support of colleagues on a regional level. They do this by setting up systems for sharing information, facilitating discussions about the DAF and offering pre-moderation before final submission.

An additional challenge comes when these leaders are in time-bound postings and need to ‘hand over’ leadership when they move on, sometimes to a
different region. If such arrangements are not made, there is a danger that this leadership, and the value it brings, could be lost.

Global Diversity Network representatives

The second group comprise Global Diversity Network representatives (GDNRs). The link between such representatives (particularly active ones with longevity in the role) and high DAF attainment is clear. Many provide leadership at a country or regional level, in differing ways. For example, some GDNRs have developed impressive levels of familiarity with the indicators and been able to provide ongoing, authoritative support and guidance to colleagues at a regional level. Some have developed and advocated innovative models for collecting and organising evidence. Others have taken the DAF outside of the organisation, presenting the framework to external stakeholders as an example of international diversity management in action, and achieving impact and recognition for the organisation. In many cases, the most valuable and lasting impact of a GDNR contribution has been the enthusiasm and dedication that they bring to the whole EO&D agenda. Enthusiastic advocacy is infectious, and having a visible, vocal, informed GDNR can make, and in many cases has made, a huge difference to a region, and to the global network as a whole.

Several GDNRs have undertaken the role of moderator to better understand, in particular, issues of sufficiency of evidence and comparative evidence – comparative to other offices. They have then been able to take this learning with them to their respective regions and share it with colleagues. GDNRs have also made important contributions to structural and process revisions, as already commented.

‘I found moderation an interesting learning process. I learned about other countries’ good practice, and also the challenges they faced, sometimes similar to ours but sometimes quite different. Through this process I have developed a deeper understanding of the DAF.’

Sophie Yuan, GDNR, China–Hong Kong (2003–2009)

Wider group of colleagues

The third group comprise a range of colleagues, occupying different roles across the organisation, for whom demonstrable engagement and contribution to equality and diversity is important. Within this group are those who have also contributed to moderation, acted as ‘critical friends’ and shared good practice more generally.

The collective efforts of these groups of colleagues have resulted in a critical mass of support and engagement with EO&D, with the DAF at its centre.
Increasingly, people appreciate the clarity that the DAF provides in terms of specific expectations in what for many is quite an amorphous and ‘new’ area. They know what is deemed good practice within the organisation and beyond; they’ve assessed how they are performing and have received feedback on their performance, including relative to other country offices and regions. The DAF has set out the performance requirements with sufficient and appropriate flexibility and ‘sold’ itself as a fit for purpose tool that responds and adapts to change and engages a majority of the organisation’s workforce.

Benefits of the DAF

Crucially, the DAF, as part of the British Council’s EO&D efforts, has resulted in benefits in terms of striving to develop approaches and practices that lead to greater sensitivity, understanding and inclusion. Colleagues report benefits of attracting a wider audience, recruiting from a larger and more diverse pool, and developing projects that more specifically address the different interests and needs of the participants. They have seen how this in itself contributes to stronger relationships, greater trust and understanding and, ultimately, strengthens cultural relations.

‘Here’s what I like about the DAF; it’s kind of clever the way it sneaks up on you and changes your behaviour and culture without you realising. Because what started out as a painful corporate exercise has now become completely second nature to us.

‘DAF or no DAF, I’d do it all again next year, because frankly, who couldn’t do with taking a few moments to think a bit about what integrity means and what having personal integrity is about?’

Extracts from the blog of Claire Sears, Country Director Albania, (2008–current)

Four particular changes and impacts arising from the DAF deserve special comment, each of which is now briefly discussed.

Growing diversity confidence and competence

Given the role played by the DAF in articulating the specifics of EO&D and the related organisational standards, in addition to the myriad of discussions that flow from this, an organisational culture has been nurtured that contains a strengthening EO&D discourse. The discourse reflects the now acknowledged centrality of EO&D to the core work of the organisation – cultural relations – as well as other things (for example, varying practices that raise questions related
to terms and conditions of employment, which are largely locally negotiated with a ‘core’ offer). This includes how to interpret what is meant by ‘dependents’, or indeed ‘family member’, or ‘adoption’, given cultural and national variations in understandings of these, and whether or not to pay the travel and other expenses of close male relatives that female employees are required to be accompanied by because of cultural and (in some cases) legal reasons.

Prior to the DAF, conversation and dialogue was more limited; now it is broader and, as a consequence, through the sharing of multiple perspectives, there is a richer, deeper contribution, ensuing confidence and, indeed, challenge.

‘The implementation of the DAF as a corporate measuring tool has catapulted the EO&D agenda to a new level within the organisation. It has given us in South Africa an opportunity to galvanise support among our own colleagues by opening up the discussions and debates relating to issues of diversity and quite often the more challenging issues – like understanding and appreciating the differences between people and different ways of working.’

Jean September, GDNR Sub-Saharan Africa (2003–current)

Leadership engagement

The DAF makes a specific requirement of leaders, in recognition of their power and influence, to demonstrate leadership in EO&D. This has been difficult for many, while others have done so easily. For those that have struggled, the requirement has been a catalyst for reflection and action, and increasingly there has been broadened understanding and engagement.

Leadership engagement and action is acknowledged as a key ‘difference that makes a difference’ in effecting EO&D organisational change. Without the DAF, we contend, the progress made in engaging leaders within the entirety of our global network would not have taken place, and certainly not at the rate it has.

Integration

The important work of and contribution to EO&D that the teaching and exams arm of our organisation makes was arguably, in the past, somewhat marginalised. A number of things contributed to this. The DAF in its original form specifically targeted this contribution and ignited strong engagement with EO&D. This in turn has led to more British Council English and Exams EO&D activity and closer working relationships between the Diversity Unit, English and Exams and other colleagues.
Partnership

The DAF has strengthened the British Council’s engagement with partners, most notably by the requirement to include an external person on the self-assessment panel. This approach has emphasised the maturity of the organisation, in being willing to reveal its processes and practices to someone, invariably with a relevant background, outside of the organisation and seek objective feedback from them. This is evidence of real engagement, is in line with our values and a testament to the desire to share and learn from others in a spirit of mutual respect and openness.

‘The DAF has no doubt been the main driver for mainstreaming EO&D into all we do across the region, and the progress we are making is evidence of that. Apart from its internal value, external companies who have been exposed to it have asked to use some of our methodology, [and have asked us] to visit them and talk to their senior managers, which we did.’

Roberta Kacowicz, GDNR, Latin America and Caribbean (2007–current)

The DAF indicators at the higher levels have also prompted engagement with a new group of partners; including local equality bodies, minority-owned businesses and organisations supporting under-represented or marginalised groups. This in turn has led to new and exciting opportunities for the British Council to undertake work with new audiences and become better known across different countries as an organisation committed to equality and diversity.

In summary, the DAF has been acknowledged as a key tool in fostering engagement with EO&D and there is comment later on the international aspects of this. Its design, involving a wide number of parties, has contributed to this, as has the fact that it reflects, in most instances, 12 months of wide-ranging activity and a commitment to improved or, as a minimum, sustained performance. This has wider resonance. It communicates potently to the organisation the role that stipulated performance standards plays, the support and clarity they bring and what can be achieved by cumulative efforts, in addition to allowing for local adaptation and interpretation. Aspects of the DAF framework have been adopted in relation to another key organisational area, the environment, and a substantial number of colleagues no longer experience the ‘grey fuzziness’ associated with EO&D.

The fact that the organisation can identify its rigorously assessed EO&D performance and, at both corporate and individual leadership level, report on this, influences, drives and determines organisational change and impact.
‘The DAF is pushing our understanding of diversity issues in the East and West Africa region. It is making us look not just at our internal working, but at our programmes and how we work with our customers. This has been extremely challenging but it isn’t just the ‘right thing to do’; it will also make us more effective in delivering cultural relations.’

Philip Goodwin, Regional Director, East and West Africa (2006–2008)
Chapter five

Contributing to an international understanding of EO&D

In seeking to mainstream EO&D and position them at the heart of an organisation’s culture, those with an international network of offices and operations face significant challenges. A key challenge and question, addressed in this final chapter, is whether it is possible to set global standards for equality and diversity. Answering this goes to the heart of the ‘fitness for purpose’ of various global diversity management approaches. In this context are deliberations about the melting pot metaphor of, say, the USA, contrasted with the mosaic metaphor of employment equity programmes elsewhere, such as Canada.

Established thoughts about managing EO&D globally

While there is shared understanding of the concepts of EO&D and broad consistency about their definition it is notable that:

‘Unlike some other areas of the organisational sciences in which research knowledge exceeds or precedes practice in that area, research on global diversity at present lags behind practice, even though global diversity practice is still relatively undeveloped.’ (Nishii and Ozbilgin 2007, pp. 1883-1884)

Beyond a human resource focus, the emphasis of existing global diversity literature is on multi-national corporations. The global diversity management literature, although somewhat limited in scope, indicates that approaches to global diversity are increasing, supported by various reasons, including the promise of competitive advantage. (Joplin and Daus, 1997, Darmstadter, 2006)

What we know about the current situation in relation to international aspects of EO&D is that there are multi-domestic, or multi-local, largely decentralised approaches. That is, international organisations, in the differing countries in which they work outside of the headquarters office, have decentralised EO&D and are implementing it in a variety of ‘locally determined’ and adapted ways.

Challenging the established approach

Against the above background, the DAF, we contend, is unique and innovative. Not only does it seek to both adopt and foster a persistent approach to embedding EO&D across different operating environments and cultures, it also allows for flexibility and responsiveness. It achieves a balance between shared core standards and approaches in support of fundamental principles and values (such as fairness and transparency, and appropriate flexibility). Out of this, a particular benefit is the innovation and the creativity and insights it encourages and unearths.
It would not have been possible for a single small team, based at central headquarters, to have developed anything comparable to the DAF without the considerable, sustained involvement of others. The efforts of early adopters and an ever-increasing number of advocates ensures a collective voice which translates into a real belief in, and enthusiasm for, the framework.

It is a mainstreaming tool, both prescriptive and flexible, not only providing clarity about requirements, but also strong support in meeting these in a way that is meaningful and realistic, yet also has ambition. It is sensitive to the operating environment, has been developed over time and, importantly, draws on real examples from different countries. This is at the root of its ability to transcend the particularities of cultures and customs, be relevant and have meaning in different parts of the world.

**Challenging our own perceptions**

We have already commented that our work in EO&D is a process not an event. We recognise and acknowledge that we don’t have a claim on expertise and are engaged in a journey of ongoing learning with not insignificant challenges, translating what is often characterised as ‘the rhetoric of diversity’ into tangible practices. One of the things we have especially learnt in the context of the theme of this chapter is that environment ‘receptivity’ is a less significant factor than we imagined. On the contrary, seemingly ‘EO&D-hostile’ environments have, arguably, embraced the DAF more readily than seemingly ‘receptive’ EO&D ones. When we interrogate why, the answer is found in leadership, commitment and understanding – factors related to where the locus of control resides, synonymous with the notion of ‘where there is a will there is a way’.

On this theme we might have expected, for example, our offices in Iraq and Afghanistan to resist or highlight a range of barriers, and our offices across North America and Western Europe to experience no problems while easily demonstrating high levels of performance. However, this was not the case. Indeed, early adopters and high performers came from differing parts of the world – China, Brazil, Egypt, Germany, Iran, South Africa – only Germany from Europe where EO&D is on the radar in many ways.

The relevance of equality and diversity, in our view, transcend all parts of the world and it is entirely possible to work towards embedding these irrespective of country or continent, although not necessarily at the same rate and in the same way.

**Locally appropriate excellence**

There has been much interest in our journey. In response, colleagues have shared and spoken about it to partners and contacts in a range of countries, all with positive feedback. In doing so, they have tailored their communication about the essence of the DAF so that it has greater cultural relevance. This is further evidence of the ‘cultural literacy’ that we aim for. As an example, in Nigeria, communicating the DAF drew on the analogy of building a house with reference to a necessary foundation on which different floors or levels are
added to develop the house, a culturally appropriate image in a country where many people build their own homes.

Finally …

Our experience and the literature tells us that the general approach to managing EO&D within international organisations is of global consistency at the philosophical level, but with reliance on a predominantly discrete local approach at the level of actual implementation. We know through our ongoing ‘DAF journey’, however, that with strong investment, commitment, leadership and a joined up, mainstreamed approach, a beneficial consistency can be brought to and attained at the level of actual implementation.

Undoubtedly, in a rapidly changing world, organisations need to be vigilant in ensuring any measures remain relevant. Our experience highlights this and accounts for the revisions already made and those that will invariably follow. This is with the ultimate goal of supporting us to mainstream equality and diversity in a way that is attuned to and consistent with business delivery.
References


Appendix A

DAF levels and their indicators

Appendix A contains a list of the DAF levels and their indicators from both 2007/08 and 2009/10, to offer a snapshot of what the DAF aims to capture at each level.

2007/08 contained the largest number of indicators (a total of 55 – 11 per level) and 2009/10 the fewest (a total of 25 – five per level).

Level one – ‘Embarking’

2007/08

1.1 All job adverts include EO statement.
1.2 EO Policy and Diversity Strategy forms part of induction.
1.3 EO&D is built into all internal and external recruitment and selection.
1.4 Job descriptions contain EO&D-related duties and standards.
1.5 Terms and Conditions of Service (TACOS) refer to EO&D.
1.6 Some internal material is produced in official language/s of country.
1.7 There is reference to the Integrated Equality Scheme on the country website.
1.8 Emergency procedures address EO&D issues.
1.9 British Council services are delivered in a way that reflects British Council values.
1.10 Visitors’ notes make reference to EO&D issues.
1.11 The administration of teaching and exams effectively addresses the specific needs of candidates.

2009/10

1.1 EO&D is built into internal and external recruitment processes, including induction.
1.2 Job descriptions and performance agreements contain EO&D-related duties, standards and deliverables.
1.3 EO&D forms a part of the country’s online presence.
1.4 Emergency procedures address EO&D issues.
1.5 The working environment communicates a commitment to EO&D and inclusion.
Level two – ‘Progressing’

2007/08

2.1 Country office is taking regional EO&D action plan forward.
2.2 Training and development plans address EO&D principles.
2.3 EO&D is assessed as part of the country’s Business Risk Management.
2.4 EO&D is clearly represented in the services and programmes the country delivers.
2.5 Job and/or development plans contain EO&D-related objectives.
2.6 Contracts for supply of services include reference to EO&D.
2.7 Marketing and publicity material reflects the diversity of the UK.
2.8 Country Director demonstrates leadership and engagement with British Council EO&D agenda.
2.9 Plans to address the EO&D index in the staff survey are in place.
2.10 Previous DAF action points have been addressed.
2.11 EO&D INSETT materials are in use in the teaching centre.

2009/10

2.1 All staff have undertaken some specific EO&D learning activity (lasting at least four hours) over the last 12 months.
2.2 Marketing and publicity material reflects the diversity of the UK.
2.3 EO&D is clearly represented in the services and/or programmes the British Council office delivers.
2.4 Contracts for the supply of goods and/or services include reference to EO&D.
2.5 The Country Director demonstrates leadership in the area of EO&D.
Level three – ‘Performing’

2007/08

3.1 Equality screening of policies/functions is taking place.
3.2 Planned or actual access audit of British Council premises.
3.3 Named staff have responsibility for progressing EO&D and this has been widely communicated.
3.4 Flexible working arrangements are available to different groups of staff.
3.5 Activity supporting the application of British Council values is taking place.
3.6 Efforts are being made to promote gender, ethnicity and disability equality.
3.7 EO&D issues are considered in the planning of staff meetings.
3.8 There are plans in place to attract diverse staff at different levels of the organisation.
3.9 EO&D is reflected in the delivery of British Council events.
3.10 At least 60 per cent of staff have attended a face-to-face EO&D workshop or completed the EO&D online course within the last three years.
3.11 Lesson themes within classes address EO&D.

2009/10

3.1 Equality screening and impact assessments of policies, programmes and services are taking place.
3.2 Access audits of British Council premises have been carried out and findings have been/are being acted upon.
3.3 Work–life balance is actively promoted within the office.
3.4 Activity is taking place that reinforces British Council values and encourages their application.
3.5 Equality monitoring of staff and customers takes place and a report analysing this in the context of local issues has been produced.
Level four – ‘Mainstreaming’

2007/08

4.1 Diverse staff (as a minimum, locally contracted men and women) are reflected in the senior management team.

4.2 Diverse staff have the opportunity to contribute to country-level decision making.

4.3 The British Council’s seven areas of diversity have been considered at a country level.

4.4 Staff survey equality index results are in the upper quartile.

4.5 Equal pay issues are considered as part of pay reviews.

4.6 The office actively contributes to EO&D initiatives within the region.

4.7 The Country Director is acknowledged as driving progress with EO&D among British Council colleagues in the region.

4.8 An external disability advisory panel is in place drawn from disabled people’s organisations and/or others with a personal or professional interest in disability issues.

4.9 Plans and targets are in place to extend the diversity of stakeholders.

4.10 Diversity-themed research has been undertaken with customers and partners.

4.11 Diverse staff are reflected at different levels within the teaching centre.

2009/10

4.1 The British Council office works with one or more local organisations to explore aspects of the UK approach to EO&D, which support mutual learning and enhance cultural relations.

4.2 An ongoing EO&D issues log exists that details the issues and challenges that have arisen over the past year, placing them in the appropriate cultural context and reporting actions taken, solutions reached, and points of learning gained.

4.3 The British Council office has taken action to support EO&D mainstreaming, which has been acknowledged and disseminated organisation-wide by the Diversity Unit.

4.4 There are internships and/or other initiatives in place that specifically support the employment and inclusion of under-represented groups within the British Council office.

4.5 The British Council office has reviewed the procurement of services and has diversified its supply base to include small and medium enterprises owned/managed by under-represented groups.
Level five – ‘Leading’

2007/08

5.1 Invitations to present on equality and diversity are accepted.
5.2 Staff survey equality index is 90 per cent or above.
5.3 The office acts as a role model for other organisations, influencing positive change in the area of EO&D.
5.4 The office promotes good relations between groups in conflict.
5.5 The office has taken an innovative approach to responding to disadvantaged groups.
5.6 The office supports the inclusion of disabled people in public life.
5.7 The office develops EO&D initiatives that others in the organisation can learn from and effectively implement.
5.8 The EO&D work of the British Council office is acknowledged by the Diversity Unit as exemplary within the organisation.
5.9 The British Council office works with the Diversity Unit to progress the corporate EO&D strategy and agenda.
5.10 The British Council office has reviewed the procurement of services and has diversified its supply base to include small and medium-sized businesses owned/managed by under-represented groups.
5.11 There is comprehensive evidence of EO&D performance in the teaching centre that is seen both internally and externally as exemplary.

2009/10

5.1 Contributions about the British Council approach to EO&D have been made at external events or conferences.
5.2 Contributions about the British Council approach to EO&D have been made to external publications.
5.3 The British Council office acts as a role model for other organisations, influencing positive change in the area of EO&D, and receiving external recognition.
5.4 There is an active network of external EO&D contacts in place who work with the British Council office to share good practice, which strengthens cultural relations.
5.5 The British Council office has developed a product, activity or initiative that is acknowledged locally and by the Diversity Unit as innovative.
Appendix B

Online resources

Appendix B contains screenshots of the DAF online resources, found on the British Council intranet. They have been developed, along with the tool, and offer support and guidance about all aspects of the DAF process. These particular screenshots are taken from the 2009/10 DAF.

Equal Opportunity and Diversity

I am pleased to welcome you to the Diversity Assessment Framework area of the Diversity Intranet site. These pages aim to provide comprehensive support as we seek to improve and strengthen our equality and diversity practice, with a focus on improvements in our related performance scorecard result.

I have been delighted with the progress that colleagues have made with the DAF over the last 3 years. After encouraging results in 2008, the 2009 results showed 100% participation and an achievement of the organisational target of level 2 which I, as Chief Executive and Champion of the DAF, set 2 years ago. It was great to see South Africa join Beijing on level 5, and half a dozen other countries achieving level 4.

It has also been tremendously encouraging to see how colleagues around the world have engaged with the EO&D agenda through the DAF and sought to increase their knowledge and understanding of it, in the context of its importance to our cultural relations role and aspirations.

The DAF home page (above) features an introduction from British Council Chief Executive and DAF Champion Martin Davidson, as well as a comprehensive explanation and guidance about all aspects of the process. An important part is the What is the DAF? section, shown overleaf.
Equal Opportunity and Diversity

Diversity Home > Diversity Assessment Framework > What is the DAF?

The Diversity Assessment Framework (DAF)

As an international organisation, we face the issue of managing the balance between ‘central’ and ‘local’ decision-making and accountability. In relation to diversity, ‘relativists’ hold that, because every country operates within its own specific socio-political context, there is nothing to be gained from, nor is it possible to develop, common tools. This is a position that we are seeking to challenge. Organisations do have to set certain standards regardless of culture, nationality and other areas, in order for core issues and values relevant to them to be addressed across contexts. This helps to support necessary organisational coherence and cohesion. The task is therefore to develop approaches that can reinforce our position and support the message that diversity is an important core organisational value and activity with requisite standards, without being over-prescriptive or ethno-centric. The Diversity Assessment Framework (DAF) is a tool which has been developed for this purpose.

Why do we have the DAF?

The purpose of the DAF is to evaluate our progress in mainstreaming Equal Opportunity and Diversity (EO&D) across the organisation. It shows up strengths and weaknesses, highlights development opportunities and supports risk management with respect to EO&D. It also supports our Diversity Strategy and assists in the achievement of common standards, as well as contributing to the monitoring of progress against our Integrated Equality Scheme.

The most important element of the online resource is the indicator guidance. Each indicator is unpacked, and the requirements clearly outlined. Examples are provided in most cases, drawn from previous years’ submissions.
Equal Opportunity and Diversity

DAF Level 1: Embarking

1. Level 1 covers aspects of the EO&D agenda considered necessary to create the foundation for a culture of equality and inclusion. Indicators cover standard processes such as recruitment and selection, job descriptions, performance agreements, online presence and emergency procedures, as well as looking in more general terms at the way in which the office communicates its commitment to diversity.

The issues covered by these indicators are relevant to all BC offices and it is expected that all offices, regardless of size should be able to address all 5.

In 2008, 42 countries did not achieve level 1. In 2009, every office met this level with just one exception. In 2010, every country will need to have this foundation in place.

1.1 EO&D is built into internal and external recruitment processes including induction.
1.2 Job descriptions and performance agreements contain EO&D related duties, standards and deliverables.
1.3 EO&D forms a part of the country's online presence.
1.4 Emergency procedures address EO&D issues.
1.5 The working environment communicates a commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.

1.1 EO&D is built into internal and external recruitment processes including induction.

The purpose of this indicator is to ensure that EO&D principles inform all stages of internal and external recruitment and induction processes. This refers to job adverts, mixed short-listing and interview panels, the use of application forms rather than CV’s and an EO&D session built into the induction of new staff. This is important to help ensure fairness and transparency throughout the entire recruitment and selection cycle.

The following evidence is required:

- **Job adverts**
  All job adverts, whether internal or external, electronic or hard copy, web-based or print media-based, should include an EO&D statement. As a minimum, this statement should stress the fact that the British Council is an equal opportunities employer, but ideally should go beyond this, emphasizing our commitment to EO&D and to building a workforce that is reflective of the diversity of society and encouraging applications from under-represented groups. Please see the following examples of good practice from last year:
  - Mauritius Job Advert
  - Philippines Job Advert
  - India Newspaper Job Advert
  - India Online Job Advert

  Please submit no more than 2 job adverts, ideally in different formats (print, web-based, etc) if these are available.

- **Mixed short-listing and interview panels**
  Evidence of mixed short-listing and interview panels is important to the integrity of the recruitment process. Ideally, evidence should show that panels are mixed in terms of gender, payband, department, UK and locally-appointed staff for example, to support the transparency of the selection process and to challenge the notion that all decisions about recruitment are taken by the same homogenous groups. Please see examples of good practice from 2008 and 2009:
  - Hong Kong Interview Panel
  - ‘[No text visible here]’
1.2 Job descriptions and performance agreements contain EO&D related duties, standards and deliverables.

The purpose of this indicator is to ensure that job descriptions and performance agreements include EO&D-specific content. If EO&D is to be mainstreamed it is important that it forms an integral part of people’s everyday duties, standards, and deliverables and is not viewed as an add-on, or simply a compliance element restricted only to the person responsible for compiling the DAF submission.

- **Job descriptions**
  EO&D can be built into Job Descriptions (JDS) in a number of ways. There could be a duty to lead on EO&D, to act as EO&D champion, co-ordinate EO&D programmes etc. Standards could involve ensuring accessibility of services or premises, meeting DAF targets, ensuring adherence to EO&D principles in operational work or HR practices etc.

  Evidence should not be restricted solely to whoever is the designated EO&D lead, but can be incorporated into JDS for pretty much any role (i.e. Country Director, HR officer, facilities manager, project officer, Teaching Centre manager, customer services assistant etc.). Try to reflect this variety when selecting evidence.

  - Nigeria Job Description Director DPE
  - Brazil Job Description
  - Sri Lanka Job Description
  - Albania Job Description
  - Entrea Job Description

- **Performance Agreements**

  Whereas JDS define the role, Performance Agreements (PAs) define the specifics of what is going to be delivered over the course of the year. Deliverables might include carrying out an access audit and acting upon its recommendations, setting up and co-ordinating a diversity working group, advisory panel, championing an aspect of EO&D within the office, running an EO&D event or series of events, or any other concrete SMART deliverable that relates to any aspect of EO&D.

  - Cameroon Performance Agreement
  - Brazil Performance Agreement
  - Germany Performance Agreement
  - Ghana Performance Agreement

If your directorate has only one office, please submit 2 job descriptions and 2 performance agreements. If your directorate contains more than one office, please submit 1 job description and 1 performance agreement from each.

For example, Albania would be required to submit 2 job descriptions and 2 performance agreements from its Tirana office only. Nigeria, on the other hand, would need to submit 4 job descriptions and 4 performance agreements, representing all 4 offices in the country (Abuja, Lagos, Kano and Port Harcourt).

Please pay careful attention to the number of pieces of evidence that you submit. Most submissions should contain 4 pieces of evidence for this indicator (2 JDS and 2 PAs) although multiples might be submitting 6 or even 8 pieces of evidence. If in doubt, check with your regional Global Diversity Network representatives or the Diversity Unit. The standard 3-piece evidence cap clearly does not apply to this indicator.

**Self-Assessment scoring for indicator 1.2**

Submitting the required number of job descriptions containing EO&D duties and/or standards and performance agreements with (different) EO&D-related deliverables can score 3 points. If these duties, standards, and deliverables are all the same, or all related only to compliance issues, 2 points may be more appropriate. Submitting too few JDS or PAs may result in 1 point.

[return to top of page]

1.3 EO&D forms a part of the country’s online presence.

Online communication plays an important part in our work. With the increasing use of websites, intranet areas, SharePoint, and other web-based tools. In the same way that these media are being used to communicate the British Council message, it is necessary to ensure that the EO&D agenda is effectively and visibly communicated as a part of this.

While recognising that both the scale and scope of our online presence varies from region to region and country to country, this indicator has the flexibility to accommodate the different models of online communication. Its purpose is to ensure that both local EO&D activity and the wider corporate approach to EO&D are effectively communicated through what is one of the main communication mediums that the British Council has at its disposal, hence the potential to reach significant audiences both internally and...
Equal Opportunity and Diversity

Diversity Home > Diversity Assessment Framework > DAF level 5

DAF Level 5: Leading

As the highest level within the Diversity Assessment Framework it is necessary to stress that countries performing, or aspiring to perform at this level, need to be aware of the standards required. This is not simply a case of compliance and adhering to guidance – this is about being proactive, innovative, enthusiastic and committed to being recognised as a leader in this field. This is not a level which every office will have the desire, or the means to reach but it presents an opportunity to lead others; to take on a high-profile role and to influence positive change within the different societies in which we operate.

Indicators at this level are rigorous and demanding. Evidence from lower levels should not be recycled here as all of these indicators require a demonstration of high-level activity. Performing at this level demands significant planning, resourcing and leadership and it is unrealistic to expect all offices to be able to reach level 5. However, some countries will be well placed to address these indicators, and the achievement of level 5 in a good number of countries is essential for an organisation with leadership aspirations in the field of international EO&D and cultural relations.

5.1 Contributions about the British Council approach to EO&D have been made at external events or conferences.

5.2 Contributions about the British Council approach to EO&D have been made to external publications.

5.3 The BC office acts as a role model for other organisations, influencing positive change in the area of EO&D, and receiving external recognition.

5.4 There is an active network of external EO&D contacts in place who work with the BC office to share good practice which strengthens cultural relations.

5.5 The BC office has developed a product, activity or initiative that is acknowledged locally and by the Diversity Unit as innovative.

5.1 Contributions about the British Council approach to EO&D have been made at external events or conferences.

A key element of leading on EO&D is to have a very visible external profile. Contributions to external events...
Appendix C

Frequently asked questions

As an assessment tool and globally applied internal British Council process, the DAF comes under a great deal of scrutiny, from both colleagues and external diversity management contacts who we share learning with. This scrutiny often raises specific questions about particular issues relating to the DAF, and this appendix draws these together.

Is the DAF an effective use of resources?

In our opinion, and based on our experience as well as of colleagues around the world, the DAF is an extremely good use of resources. As far as direct upfront expenditure is concerned, the costs associated with the DAF are negligible, but the incidental costs in terms of staff time are not insignificant. Time committed to the DAF is time that cannot be given to other areas of work. So what this question comes down to is the importance of the EO&D agenda to the organisation, the importance of *mainstreaming* EO&D into all areas of activity, and the effectiveness of the DAF in measuring, evaluating and in steering this.

Given the strength of the moral, business and legal case, EO&D is something that is being taken very seriously across all sectors in the UK and (increasingly) internationally. Mainstreaming EO&D, rather than treating it as an add-on, is the best way to achieve genuine, lasting organisational change. Evidence suggests that the DAF supports this process. Mainstreaming EO&D is not a cost-neutral process, nor is any other critical business objective. Evidence to support the effectiveness of the DAF in driving that culture change is both statistical and anecdotal, and few would dispute that we as an organisation have made significant progress in the years since it was introduced. In these terms, it has been a huge success; meeting targets and strengthening engagement for the overall benefit of an organisation increasingly seen in many parts of the world as a leader in this area.

How crucial has senior level buy-in been to the success of the DAF?

Although in no way diminishing the hard work and dedication of all who have been involved in the DAF around the world, the value of senior level buy-in cannot be overstated. Having the Chief Executive as DAF Champion has been instrumental in ensuring that the DAF stays on the global agenda, while performance has been strong in those regions where the DAF is championed at a regional level (by a regional director or a country director sitting on the regional management team). When a senior manager says something, people listen. Senior buy-in ensures that resources are available and that colleagues at all levels feel supported in investing time and energy in the EO&D agenda.
The hope is that buy-in is just an initial stage on the road to genuine leadership in this area, as senior figures go from being merely transmitters to strong, visible and committed advocates.

**Doesn’t centralised moderation undermine the integrity of the self-assessment process?**

Centralised moderation was introduced at an early stage of the DAF’s development and should be viewed very much as an extension of the self-assessment process which, far from undermining its integrity, further strengthens it. As self-assessment inevitably involves a degree of interpretation, when applied globally, the subjectivity naturally translates to inconsistency across the organisation. Having a moderation panel monitor all submissions to bring a level of objectivity is therefore, we believe, crucial. This is reflected in our organisational approach to performance management and our English and Exams work, for example, and it has been applied very successfully to the DAF in recent years.

In addition to this, the moderation panel always includes representatives from our global network, all of whom are themselves country or regional-level DAF co-ordinators. Taking part in the moderation is a good opportunity for them to develop a more in-depth knowledge of the DAF – learning which they can then pass on to colleagues in their respective countries and regions.

**Moderation sounds very resource-intensive – is there any way it can be streamlined?**

Moderation is resource intensive and we are constantly on the lookout for ways in which it might be streamlined. However, this cannot be done at the expense of the rigour and consistency that has been built into the process and this is always the primary consideration when reviewing our approach. Ideas that have been discussed include random sample moderation, peer moderation, and devolved regional moderation. However, this can only be achieved when the necessary level of capacity-building has taken place, something which is a challenge given the often high turnover of staff.

**What’s the purpose of using targets?**

In 2007/08 an overall organisational target of level two was issued by the DAF Champion. This was part of an ongoing strategy to increase engagement by setting specific goals against which the performance of senior managers (country and regional directors) would be judged. This approach proved to be successful in 2008/09 with a 100 per cent submission rate and an increasing level of engagement at all levels globally. As part of a longer-term strategy of engagement, a 2011 target of level four was then issued.

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7 In 2009/10 the moderation panel included colleagues from China, Brazil and Kuwait; in 2008/09 we were joined by representatives from Armenia, Nigeria and Germany; and in 2007/08 colleagues from a further 12 Countries were involved.
Although it is difficult to know what may have occurred had targets not been in place (and the fact that had been set by the Chief Executive), it is hard to imagine that the DAF process would have been so quickly absorbed into the mainstream reporting culture and, particularly, individuals’ performance management portfolios, without them.

**Don’t people just see the DAF as a tick-box exercise with a focus on compliance and ‘league tables’?**

Obviously, with anything that involves targets and ‘league tables’, the question will arise as to what extent people are concentrating only on the target and not on the agenda to which it relates. Similarly, if people are more concerned with their position in a ‘league table’ (compared with other countries in their region or the world) than with the true extent to which EO&D is being mainstreamed in their countries, the tool becomes considerably less effective in achieving its ultimate goal of positively influencing organisational culture.

The ‘culture of compliance’ that sometimes grows up around an assessment framework is something we need to be wary of. Obviously it is good to aim for and meet targets, and gain recognition (and of course there will always be a healthy level of competitiveness between individuals and countries). However, in general, this is not where the chief satisfaction lies. From the feedback we have seen and from the way in which people engage with this agenda, it is clear that the majority view the DAF as something way beyond a compliance exercise, which we find very encouraging.

**How is ‘poor performance’ addressed?**

The DAF isn’t about rewarding good performance and punishing poor performance – it is about highlighting strengths and weaknesses in order to ensure that resources and support are concentrated in the right area in the most appropriate and timely way. If a country has achieved a low score, we immediately look for the factors behind that and there are usually several possible reasons. For example, sometimes it is because a country has been operating under particularly restrictive circumstances at the time of submission; things have just been left too late; there is a lack of or change in leadership direction; or there has been some misunderstanding along the way. The important thing is that the root causes are addressed openly and honestly, and that feedback is received (and given) constructively and fed into future action planning. The DAF measures diversity performance but also provides a framework in which progress towards mainstreaming can be achieved. All DAF results should be considered in this context.

**How transferable a product is it for other organisations?**

The idea of a multi-strand diversity measurement and mainstreaming support tool for worldwide implementation is something that a number of organisations internationally are very interested in developing. When it comes to whether or not the DAF model can be successfully transferred to a different organisational context, the answer isn’t all that straightforward. One of the
strengths of the DAF is that it has been developed over a number of years to specifically address the needs of an organisation that operates under a unique set of circumstances. To transfer this model wholesale to a different organisation would be of limited value, although there is much shared learning to be gained.

Organisations seeking to develop a diversity assessment framework need to consider:

- what they want to measure
- what questions they should be asking
- how this would work within their own organisational context.

The result might be fairly similar in appearance to the British Council’s DAF, but it could also just as easily look completely unrecognisable.

In short, it is our view that while some of the DAF principles are transferable, the indicators are unique and bespoke and the detail of the British Council DAF would not transfer to other organisations. However, the DAF structure and process could be adapted and used in full or in part. Indeed, within the British Council the DAF has been adapted and our Environmental Management Tool is loosely based on its principles.

Is it appropriate to impose a tool set in the context of a Western European cultural and legal framework on a global operation?

When it comes to EO&D (and indeed to other policy areas such as financial management, corporate reporting, environmental policy, etc.) this should be viewed not as ‘imposing’, but rather setting global standards to be applied in the local context. The British Council is the UK’s principal organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities; therefore, by definition, everything that we do is rooted in a Western European (more specifically British) cultural and legal framework. However we don’t feel that setting standards in equality and diversity is imposing a Western European cultural framework - we strongly feel that equality and diversity stem from human rights principles and notions of fairness and transparency that transcend Western Europe. In the same way that our Equal Opportunity Policy applies globally, we see no reason why, nor have we seen any evidence to support the idea that, the DAF should not. As already mentioned, the DAF is not a static tool; it is constantly evolving to ensure it remains current and relevant, whatever the cultural context, and it has an ‘adaptive’ element within it.

The Global Diversity Network have ensured that the DAF is globally applicable, culturally appropriate and relevant across all our country operations worldwide. They have worked alongside the Diversity Unit, from the DAF’s inception and throughout its development, to support the organisation to develop global standards that can be applied in a locally appropriate way. Colleagues working in some of the more challenging environments have been creative and innovative in taking the principles laid out in the DAF and meeting them in a locally relevant way. They have undertaken activity or developed an approach that others have learnt from. This, we believe, is diversity mainstreaming in action.