

## **Abstract**

It is falling increasingly to international organisations and institutions to provide a coherent and workable global value system which embraces difference internally and externally with compliance expected from every level of the organisation. International human rights conventions and statutory regulations require compliance to human rights principles putting such organisations at the forefront of cultural relations. A global values framework gives them the opportunity to shake off colonial pasts and to strive to make a good business case for adherence to such principles. As principles are more challenging to enact than to formulate, to support this values portfolio, research is needed into how principles can be enacted in every day matters of the organisation. Current literature highlights the use of storytelling as sense-making and, as such, has become a growing trend in the use of the narrative approach across disciplines and professional sectors. Its contributors are from anthropology, education, linguistics, translation studies, literature, politics, psychology and sociology, organization studies and history. This chapter surfaces the link between local and grand narratives through an ethno narrative approach contextualised within a recent study of EDI<sup>1</sup> and specifically Global Diversity Management

## **A cautionary note from history: new lamps for old?**

Narrative, storytelling and ethnography fall into the qualitative basket of research approaches. Embracing qualitative approaches to research as being reliable took considerable time. They were, in a sense, tolerated in the fields of anthropology, geography and analytical psychology because everyone loves a story and that is what they were to many - adventurous, naughty, exotic windows into 'the other'. But to the early story gatherers these accounts of lives, rituals and beliefs held within them the complexities of the human condition and the diversity of meanings made of the human's place in the world. Accumulated stories became accumulated knowledge and functioned paradoxically to both facilitate and challenge the hegemony of paradigms in the West and the political, social and economic behaviours they generated as indicators of civilisation. As Cope (2010) points out, it was geographers who opened up large swathes of the world by gathering stories from indigenous peoples about their environments, putting them together into a narrative of

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<sup>1</sup> Equality Diversity and Inclusion

geographical routes and locations making it possible for the commercial, political and religious power zealots to exploit the other and the places they inhabited for gain.

The history of 'writing the world' necessitates a critical look at the two Cs that underlie geography in its infancy: colonialism and capitalism. The two went hand-in-hand as powerful European states of the fifteen century and beyond began to systematize their methods of production, consumption and exploitation, creating new demands for goods and labor and simultaneously meeting those demands by developing new supplies (furs, sugar, cotton, human slaves etc ...(p.27)

Cope goes on to quote the geographer and historian D.N. Livingstone's observation (1993:170) that

There is something to be said for the claim that geography was the science of imperialism *par excellence*.

Much like the geographers, the work of a later field, that of social anthropology, whose researchers sought to study 'primitive' society to better understand their own, was soon expropriated by colonisers for their own purposes. Anthropology's chosen method of ethnography, a form of storytelling, became, for the colonisers, a convenient form of intelligence gathering for purposes not intended by anthropologists. At the same time many anthropologists became advocates of the rights of 'the other' that is, those whose existence was being threatened by the grand narratives of colonialism and capitalism. This gave rise to the term 'salvage anthropology' as anthropologists found the purpose of their work, in many cases, was becoming more about preservation of traditional artefacts and practices before their inevitable annihilation by modernity. Their experiences of the other led several to advocate on issues in their own countries. Price (2004), in his exploration of FBI archives, exposes how anthropologists were treated in the USA during the Cold War because of their stance on human rights and freedom of inquiry for which they were labelled 'communist' or 'Marxist' and many punished for their 'un American' attitudes.

Today, few American anthropologists engage in activities designed to threaten the status quo of American or international patterns of inequality at the level of past anthropologists like Jacobs, Morgan, Swadesh or Weltfish. Instead the discipline is awash with post modern reflectionists, many of whom skilfully critique the manifestations of hegemonic power in subjects both ideographic and universal but few of whom actually confront the political-economic power bases that generate and support these structural exhaust features of the contemporary world. (p.349)

Since Price's expose fifteen years ago of a time in American history that preceded the technological revolution, the world has become interconnected and global. However exploitation and discrimination remain. Cultural relations, cultural diplomacy, legislation on diversity and international agreements have moved into this vacant space about which Price was so worried with nomenclature that promises an era of more enlightened approaches. While commercial interests and political alliances in this new era remain the primary motivators, the proselytising of particular religious beliefs and their related values has now been replaced by negotiating for a global set of values that everyone can adhere to while respecting local values in communities. These may differ considerably from the global grand narrative which sees, in theory, the commercial and political advantages in diversity as it widens the pool from which excellence can be drawn. As employees in global organisations tend to work globally and live locally, it is attention to this interface which can produce some learnings for strategic and tactical choices.

Local and global organisations have already begun to explore how equality, diversity and inclusion can be brought to life in the workplace and how its socio/political and economic benefits can be facilitated and demonstrated. However the world has also shrunk, population is increasing and the competition for jobs is still exacerbated by fear of the other and who that other might now be. There is also the fear of conceding values of the local – culture, belonging, tradition, safety, identity – to the global anonymity of merit in the pursuit of employment. Organisation policy makers of diversity and its management find themselves in a delicate balancing act of redressing historical and current discrimination, respecting the local, recognising inclusion of one can be exclusion of another and making decisions in the best interests of the economic viability of their organisations. While this may be possible to achieve at the policy level, based on a set of human rights principles which might conflict in some aspects with the pursuit of commercial success, it is on the everyday ground of practice that tensions, contradictions and individual and tribal competition are played out with different levels of intensity. This is not new. An organisation who works hard at change strategies to create a culture of belonging for everyone, creates a family dynamic and like all families it is vulnerable to divisions motivated by, among other things, rivalry, fear and a challenging of parental control. As the British Council has stressed, there remains the constant misunderstanding among several

staff that equality, diversity and inclusion is about accepting and respecting the other, not a requirement to become the other. Getting underneath what is played out is a worthy focus for research for without knowledge of the multiple unspoken variables, principles cannot be brought to life in every day practice. In this chapter we present one way that has yielded significant results for a number of organisations.

## **The Commerce Paradox**

Many organisations are now paying less attention to the grand narratives of the range of countries and systems where they do business and focussing on the cultures of their own organisations which are a microcosm of local and global collisions. Pinker (2011 p.682) refers to value spreading organisations as 'gentle commerce'. Drawing from Mueller's ideas on merchants (1999, 2010) he goes on to say

As far as I know, in the vast literature on empathy, cooperation and aggression, no one has tested whether people who have consummated a mutually profitable exchange are less likely to shock each other or to spike each other's food with three-alarm hot sauce. I suspect that among researchers, gentle commerce is just not a sexy idea. Cultural and intellectual elites have always felt superior to business people, and it doesn't occur to them to credit mere merchants with something as noble as peace (p.684)

Such organisations who venture along this path are seedbeds for complex cultural change which, due to the nature of global business, have a better chance than nations of spreading a coherent value system even if the sole reason why an individual might be disposed to subscribe to this new order is because it will secure them employment, even if those values conflict with local and personal ones; even if the motivations of commerce are economic power.

In order to harness this considerable potential for change, traditional research methods of surveys and questionnaires generally benchmark the issues but often replicate the

limitations of the research apparatus itself. A questionnaire, for example is a pre-prepared tool delivered on line or by a human being eliciting confirmation of what is for the most part already visible rather than the human agent cast as listener, the appreciative audience whose attention stimulates increasing layers of story and hence revelation of what is hidden. There is no doubt that organisational research is needed to map out what is not only visible but what is hidden, what connects the past, the present and the future ( Boje 2008) and surfaces the tension threads between the local narrative of the employee and the grand narrative, in this case, of the organisation. Findings from such engagement can inform change strategies that do not focus on implementing change but on providing the conditions for enduring change to be possible.

A recent research project by the British Council<sup>2</sup> explored exactly this in a small group of local offices in five countries with diverse ethnic, religious, historical, cultural and geographical differences. The British Council uses a diversity framework tool to evaluate their EDI policy in practice but had come to recognise from its various encounters with local staff that there was much that remained unspoken but was significantly present as an influence on achievement, compliance, contentment and belonging. They consulted with an academic research team with backgrounds in diversity matters and together collaborated on the development of an ethno/narrative approach to surface the underlying tensions in an atmosphere of safety achieved through three key components of the research: the engagement of an outside team; the guarantee of anonymity and confidentiality for participants and the use of an open, non- interventionist, non- judgmental approach. It was anticipated that a narrative/storytelling method would fulfil the requirements of that third component and elicit stories and illustrations of individuals and groups in their work and their lives, surfacing the resonances and contradictions which arise when diversity values come into play. The researchers initiated the individual and group conversations with one open question – *what is your experience of working with the EDI policies required by your employer?*

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<sup>2</sup> Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An investigation into international contexts (January 2018) Professor Paul Gibbs, Associate Professor Kate Maguire, Dr Alex Elwick Middlesex University and Professor Alison Scott-Baumann, SOAS, London

The findings revealed layers of tensions from a minority which were more to do with generic office politics and issues of fairness, to deeper issues of compromising their own values to uphold those of the British Council, the latter only occurring in relation to two of the values: sexual identity and religion. Furthermore struggles with these seemed to trigger comments around neo-colonial intentions and lack of training of executives and international staff on local history, understanding of religions in the context of community and belonging and lack of political sensitivity in countries where religion and state are not separate. There was also the dissonance between 'moral' values of the organisation supporting communities to practice such values and the business values which were necessary to maintain a viable presence in these countries. The reasons behind some of these views were complex, idiosyncratic and ideographic in some cases and also chimed uncomfortably with shadows from the past which continue to exert both explicit and nuanced influences on individual and group behaviour of employees, partners and the global organisations themselves who may never think of themselves as colonial or neo colonial but can be perceived as having patronising and paternal attitudes. However what was evident across the five countries was a deep enjoyment of their work, freedom to explore difference in other cultures and pride in achievements of value to the local including more elected female government representatives, women being successful in football in a traditional culture, attention to disability being 'the right thing to do', significant contributions to education and youth and art as a way to dissolve all kinds of differences. The deeper level findings which further demonstrate the value of this approach to diversity management is given, by courtesy of the British Council, at the end of this chapter following on from the literature and the method of analysis which can be used and adapted for other type of organisations.

## Introduction to Narrative Inquiry

If it is true that fiction cannot be completed other than through life, and that life cannot be understood other than through stories we tell about it, then we are led to say that a life *examined*, in the sense borrowed from Socrates, is a life *narrated*.  
(Ricoeur 1991)

Narrative analysis takes the story itself as the object of study. The focus is on how individuals or groups make sense of events and actions in their lives through examining the story and its linguistic and structural properties (Riessman, 1993). The approach enables the

capture of social representation processes such as feelings, images and time. It offers the potential to address ambiguity, complexity and dynamism of individual, group and organizational phenomena.

Each culture has its own stories and metaphors that are useful for learning a new way of thinking about how to act well, understand each other and make better sense of our lives. Increasingly, narrative is being used at the organizational level to clarify goals (Yang, Kang and Johnson 2010), to understand cross-cultural meanings (Howard 1991) and to improve mutual understanding in therapeutic settings (Hall and Powell 2011).

Current literature highlights the use of storytelling as sense-making and, as such, has become a growing trend in the use of the narrative approach across disciplines and professional sectors. Its contributors are from anthropology, education, linguistics, translation studies, literature, politics, psychology and sociology, organization studies and history. Anthropology has employed ethnographic<sup>3</sup> approaches and examined narratives in the form of life histories and, in turn, anthropology has been refigured to explore business practices including diversity (Qirko 2012). However, narrative differs from ethnography and textual analysis. Ethnography places an emphasis on exploring the nature of particular social phenomena and, increasingly in more recent times, working primarily with unstructured data, investigating small numbers of cases (maybe even a single case) in depth and detail. This may be followed by interpretation of the meanings of the data and critical reflections upon the purposes and motivations of social actions and human interaction with others and with artefacts. Such engagement allows individuals to reflect and reconstruct their personal, historical and cultural experiences (Gill 2001).

The capturing of stories and analysing them, therefore, may lead to a better organizational understanding and yield a far deeper insight into the complexity of life within the organisation, especially in terms of cultural relations both inside and outside the organisation which relies on local experiences to bring to life and disseminate its value principles yet at the same time function as a business that generates income. Moreover,

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<sup>3</sup> Van Maanen's 1988 publication, written from the point of view of anthropology, gives a critical introduction to the ethnography of storytelling, both as subject matter and as an ethnographer's written form.

narrative can be used to facilitate organizational change or promote learning. This is achieved through:

- presenting stories within an organisation, as the sense-making enabled through narratives promotes understanding throughout the organization;
- eliciting these stories, particularly those where things go wrong; and,
- applying the methodology; stories told can be actively reshaped and retold to promote the values and culture desired by the organization.

Narrative analysis can forge connections between personal biography and social structure – the personal and the political – although there is a tendency to downplay the role of organizational and societal contexts in shaping the meaning of diversity. This is particularly true in organizational studies of intersectionality. Applied to organizations, intersectionality allows connecting multiple work identities to wider societal phenomena, leading to a more fine-grained analysis of processes of identity construction and the underlying power relations (Holvino 2010) clarified and expressed powerfully by a participant in the British Council research :

*If we can't deal with respect for difference inside we should not be trying to spread it outside...we need to get better at it ourselves, not avoid the dilemmas before we can say we have a right to bring it to others...In our hearts we all want to live in peace and respect each other but that is not the only thing which rules us...  
If we go out and sell this image are we not hypocrites if we can't fix it here first...*

### **Ethno –narrative: helping organisations to learn**

The structural power position of those engaging in the meaning making largely determines the outcome of the process. Understanding the voice of the storyteller is one way to encounter the implicit in the story. Individual voices can be inhibited by peer views that can move towards a 'false' consensus emerging from the complex dynamics of group experience. The host organizational culture has a range of practices and beliefs that may come into direct or indirect conflict with the values and practices of the domestic dominant cultures. Such situations develop complex dialectics that influence the practice that the stories are telling. Boje (1995: 1002) uses the term 'multi-discursive struggle' to describe what he sees as the main characteristic of organizations and their stories when seeking to establish the power of one story over another. Over time, the same narratives conflict with



each other: for example, domestic/international; male/female; and local diversity principles/multinational rules. We would not accept the accuracy of the dialectic that emerges, but this is the way in which many of us think, so it serves the purpose of helping us to see how people are using stories to make sense of their workplace. How then do we understand each other?

Language, then, is viewed as a medium that reflects singular meanings. Stories do not reflect the world out there but are constructed, rhetorical and interpretive (Riessman 1993). As Maggio (2014) states, by just 'looking at a story as the creation of a particular individual rather than intersubjective creation of experience would deprive the study of its anthropological value' (2014: 91). The ethnographic approach builds upon the synthesis developed by Maggio (2014) from the anthropological literature and considers the story at three levels: **the relational** – where dynamics between the people involved in the storytelling situation are considered; **the content of the story** - here the focus is on the action of telling and listening to stories and the reasons why a story is particularly appealing for a particular audience; **the type of storytelling techniques** - how to obtain particular effects; how shared knowledge is negotiated with their audience and the stories formulated accordingly; and 'to what extent they show their personal selves as opposed to making themselves mere medium for the telling of the story' (ibid.). This is captured in the following comment from another participant.

*The professional and the personal are closer in me now. I have changed how I think, how I do my job, my friends think I am crazy, I got my children to watch the Paralympics, I help blind people, I am more aware of mobility issues, the British Council put in a lift and a ramp...  
People can see that we are a place that respects difference...  
Word gets around.*

Current tools of evaluation used by organisations to 'shift culture' have limitations and are not purposely designed to capture the lived experiences of diversity at work although this indeed comes through in various ways. An organisation's particular diversity policy embodies a set of principles and values – *its story* – in an artefact which has emerged from historical movements and responses to international and national legislation such as the United Nations Human Rights Council (2006); the European Convention on Human Rights

Act (1950, 1953), the UK's Human Rights Act (1998, 2000) and events in national cultures such as the Civil Rights movement in the United States and Gay Pride in British culture. In this scenario it is constituted as holding the grand narrative. By adopting an ethno-narrative approach the organisation is creating an opportunity for *its story*, to be challenged through its internal inconsistencies, through questioning its source and coherence, and seeing it through the eyes and ears of those who did not construct that particular story (Derrida 1997) with the purpose of learning about diversity policies' potential to flourish as a medium for deepening understanding between difference in diverse cultural contexts; of being the bridge between cultural diplomacy and civil society and contributing to widening and endorsing the recognition that cultural relations is about what happens at the edges of difference in the local contexts:

*[Respect is] not about superficial acceptance, not about let's 'do' EDI but how one respects difference. I think EDI can be called respect. We are asking everyone to respect the difference of the other without asking them to become the other, people fear they are being asked to give something up which is part of their core beliefs. If people understand that is not what EDI is about they will be less afraid...*

### **Analysing: making sense of narrative**

The purpose of collected stories from the field is to provide rich data for analyses, the findings from which can contribute to i. deepening understanding of diversity issues, challenges and experiences and diversity policy's relationship to cultural relations ii. enhancing the organisation's cultural relations work to create friendly knowledge and understanding between the host and guest cultures and iii. informing the future organisational direction and strategy for diversity.

Stories generate a significant amount of data which needs to go through at least three processes of analysis: firstly an analysis which brings order to the data; an organising frame usually of dominant themes and consensus across different stories; secondly an interpretation of both the dominant themes and the context specific themes using context knowledge, existing literature relating to such issues as organisational dynamics and power structures and thirdly a translation of the findings into recommendations of focus for the particular organisation. Analysing story telling data in such a way leads to a narrative of

what has been hidden giving direction to how such local narratives can be negotiated to unblock the obstacles to the purposes and implementation of diversity initiatives which usually come from the grand narrative of the organisation. Such purposes need to go beyond good intentions and recognise that, if paid attention to, cultural shifts are possible, if uncomfortable for a time. To illustrate this, the following is a selection of the value of emergent themes arising from an ethno/narrative approach for global organisations by courtesy of the British Council whose transparency, in terms of allowing this data to be public, can be considered a criterion of progress in global diversity management. This is followed by recommendations of focus for organisations generally.

### **Effectiveness and Efficiency**

Tension arises from a fundamental contradiction between a dissemination of a values system of caring alongside a business model of income generation in contexts where the values are dissonant with the prevailing cultural norms thereby setting up conditions for compromising on the values

An organisation disseminating a set of values may in some circumstances not be good for business if there is no advantage to be gained from adopting them. Values need to evidence effectiveness and efficiency for businesses

### **Structural ambiguity**

There is an 'inside outside' dissonance between what is expected of internal staff in terms of behaviour and practices and what the cultural context expects. Employees may subscribe to the values while inside the safe space of a value driven organisation and be required to behave differently by cultural value expectations once outside.

The aspiration of a set of values to be adhered to in recruitment, for example, in order to demonstrate fairness, presents both logistical problems and perceived unfairness. Such adherence becomes embedded as an order which begins to reduce the organisation's ability to adapt to changing environments and to recruit on the basis of the skills, capabilities and aptitudes required for the success of the organisation.

### **Colonising values**

Perceived inequality between local and international contracted staff can be conflated with the past, emerging as a new form of, or modified, colonialism. People need good

jobs and an organisation, because of its values and its influence locally and internationally, is perceived as a good employer giving status to its employees. Pride is expressed in having been chosen to work for such a well-known organisation and being able to contribute to its work even when staff find it challenging to 'live' all the values.

Conflict between *desire, aspiration and need* on the one hand and *accepting values which one might not be fully committed to* on the other hand, of not subscribing completely to the value memes that have arrived fully formed into their contexts, can give rise to inner tension, frustration and fear. Cultures do have value systems in place. Knowledge of those and building on them may help to reduce levels of dissonance.

### **Adaptation and Temporality**

Traditional post- and co-figurative cultures<sup>4</sup>, or conformity focused societies, due to an acceleration of time perception and driven by technology and globalisation, are in a transitional stage of change before there has been sufficient time and circumstances to adapt. Rapid change often stimulates passive and active resistance. Yet there is an awareness that if a cultural ecology does not adapt it will become resistant and decay. Identity formation is shaped by cultural DNA transmitted through family. Values from a pre-figurative culture such as the UK can separate the individual from their cultures unless sufficient time is given to adapt

Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit of and for behaviour acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive element of human groups, including their embodiment in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (ie historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values. Culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, on the other hand, as conditioning elements of future action (Katan 1999:16).

### **Gained in Translation**

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<sup>4</sup> Maguire (2015) The eminent 20<sup>th</sup> century anthropologist Margaret Mead postulated three types of society in transition: the post figurative in which certainty is the norm and society conformity focused. Nothing is expected to change over time; the co-figurative when society is forced to respond to change due to external influences like colonialism and technologies causing disruption and uncertainty; and pre-figurative when society tries to mitigate uncertainty through prefiguring the future through ideologies, utopias etc

Language is a transmitter of cultural memes. Language is also what challenges them. History literally means story of the wise man though it is often that of the victor. Language is power. In translating the world's most powerful language, English, we need to be clear of the purpose – “a wish-to-know and a wish-to-understand, rather than a wish-to-control perspective” (Toury 2006:57).

The value set of EDI is a cultural artefact therefore *its story*, and terms within the story such as ‘mainstreaming’ and ‘sexual orientation’, are either linguistically difficult to translate or culturally fraught with problems. In response, the stories from the front line have translated the imported, cultural artefact into a story of respect, fairness, acceptance. Art and metaphor are used to facilitate understanding for themselves as well as ‘translating’ the imported artefact to others.

### **Collusion, Compliance, Compromise, Loyalty and Alienation**

Stories of compliance without internal belief and stories of compromise. Compromise is contextually judged as positive, as in reaching a point of coexistence between oppositional or polarised positions, or negative which is more closely akin to a negation of power for short term gain, a situation which renders little satisfaction to the players being rarely more than a diluted accommodation. The latter does not remove the tensions but can increase them as compromise in itself does not resolve the differences. At best it is pragmatic in the short term but more often it gives the illusion of resolution without attention to the underlying emotions and behaviours of difference which then persist.

There are stories of conversion and of alienation. Some people are genuinely changed through working with Diversity but aspects for others are requiring something of them, which feels like collusion with another culture and betrayal of their own. Cultural shifts are for the most part slow processes of adaptation. The most successful are those which build on beliefs and practices which already exist in the culture which is being influenced to shift by internal or external influences. There are many stories of loyalty to the employing organisation but also the need to keep secure employment. There was a vicarious enjoyment of the freedom the organisational space offers for part of the day and for others it was the realisation of the disabling aspect of cultural traditions and a desire of freedom from them.

Prioritisation of Diversity areas of action is the choice to adopt or adapt to that which most resonates with the cultural norms or rising local trends; the options which require the least amount of compromise, and are a visible and impactful outcome of effort. Compromise needs to be seen as temporary. It may not yet be satisfactory to any party in the dynamic but it can shift over time if it is recognised as a step in a process and not a resolution in and of itself (see above).

Alienation in the context of being separated or separating from traditional identity through knowledge and awareness can be equated to migration and the hazards which accompany this form of movement that is forced or brought about by a complex series of factors and events. The unfamiliar landscape can be full of unanticipated dangers and joys. Expectations cannot be the same. It takes time to settle. Some migrators never do.

### **Projection and Perception**

Perceptions and assumptions misdirect feelings about what is and is not and are informed by a complex range of factors from the personal to the professional, from tradition to modernity, from a sense of self in the world to fear of loss of identity and support, from righteousness to doing what is right.

There are examples of projection onto the organisation for it to be what staff cannot yet be. It is held up to higher scrutiny to live the values which it seeks to disseminate and to do more to raise awareness through more creative and resourced activities. Like all projections, it lays responsibility on another for what cannot yet be achieved or tolerated in oneself. Through the organisation living its values, others are encouraged to try. The worthiness of Diversity principles is not what is in doubt but how they can be lived outside the organisation as well as inside. The most contentious area, at all levels, is sexual orientation and its conflation with deeply held religious beliefs. It has to be recognised that it is only this one which caused the greatest dilemma and anxiety. There is a powerful role in raising awareness by something just being there, visible as a principle, a human right, rather than having immediate expectations of it having to be acted upon and lived. Latency and abeyance are rational strategies in achieving cultural awareness and change. They can contribute to creating the conditions for understanding to take place at some point. Sexual orientation as a human right being in a set of

principles, principles which have on the whole been accepted, is in itself a powerful act of raising awareness.

## **Trust**

The increasing importance of internally motivated behaviour to organisations makes clear why issues of trust and procedural justice are becoming more central to organisational studies. Both trust and procedural justice are social motives, i.e. motives that are internal or socially generated. They flow from within the person, rather than being linked to incentives or sanctions(Tyler 2003).

Trust was considered essential to the implementation of Diversity principles: trust in oneself; trust between colleagues; trust in leadership; trust in the motives of the organisation; trust that the organisation will look after them. Trust is both manifest and absent. Trust is a necessary condition for any contractual or voluntary agreement to take place. It involves elements of risk. Without it safety in others is compromised; its absence can have the effect of silencing others. This raises the question of the role of trust in the implementation of Diversity values: what are the indicators of trustworthiness; how can trustworthiness be increased; what undermines trust; is dissonance the absence of trust; is resonance the presence of trust? Trust is intricately linked to reliability and accountability. If a person is reliable consistently over time and accountable for their actions and views, they are likely to be trusted regardless of their professional, cultural or social identity.

## **Recommendations of Focus for global organisations**

The following are recommendations of focus relevant to global organisations seeking to introduce or improve their Diversity management.

1. To contextualise all Diversity initiatives in the context of international human rights highlighting the number of countries who are signatories to them at the international level. The link between Diversity initiatives and the Universal

Declaration of Human Rights and its subsequent amendments can be made more explicit in the everyday working lives of your staff which can mitigate perceptions of imported or neo colonial values.

2. For senior executives and leaders to embody the values you espouse in your own practices as dissonance between espoused and practised values engenders lack of trust in leadership and management and in the principles which are being introduced or evaluated
3. Frank internal discussions on the balance between effectiveness and efficiency: acknowledging compromises that are made, or need to be made, between embedding the Diversity principles in all that your organisation does versus ensuring that your organisation's activities are sustainable and achievable. When making decisions from a purely moral standpoint, sacrifices may have to be made from an economic standpoint or in terms of efficiency. In circumstances when taking a moral position might undermine a business case, your organisation needs to be explicit in its decision-making and communicate/discuss this with all your staff involved.
4. Give attention to both the values and the skills of staff working in your organisation, identifying where there might be dissonance as well as fully understanding the richness of staff experiences and skills that they can contribute. Highlight potential areas of personal conflict within the mission of an international organisation and a local context. Such an approach counters the critique in the literature of a diminished focus on individual identity when implementing Diversity principles and be aware that there will be instances when the organisation's values or priorities clash with those of individuals working across the country offices. Such dissonance is not necessarily avoidable, but it should be openly acknowledged in moving forward.
5. Consider the different purposes and outcomes of research which is evaluative of a policy using a bounded tool such as a questionnaire which can be valuable and an approach to research which generates a different set of data more appropriate to strategizing cultural shifts
6. Not to underestimate the importance of language and what is lost or gained in translation. Many terms which are used in Diversity frameworks are not easily translatable into local languages because they contain symbolic and historical meanings unfamiliar to host countries where many international organisations are



guests. Understanding is assumed because linguistic fluency is assumed to also be cultural fluency. To think about who is excluded among your staff because they are not expected to speak the language of the organisation (usually English as the universal language of business) such as ancillary staff. You may not notice their exclusion but your staff will and question what is espoused and what is practised and what that means in terms of an environment of trust. Additionally, consideration can be given to potential partners being excluded because those partners are not majority English speakers

7. Spread good Diversity practices and successes across all your international offices through staff initiatives such as blogs and discussion forums. Such a horizontal approach models a peer rather than a paternal approach to Diversity
8. Assess whether your diversity principles need to be staged in certain cultural contexts to give time for staff and the public to adapt over time and seek consultation with local staff about how that might be done

We hope that further interest in narrative research approaches will be stimulated not only by the possibilities demonstrated through this chapter but by a sharing of the literature review which was put together as part of the commissioned EDI report. Stories have many functions, one of them is to take on the form of folklore or parables which are instructive reminders of the difference between awareness and acting upon it and between good intention with insight and good intention without it.

*A writer was walking along the road and saw a monkey jump out of a tree into a river to get a fish which he put on the branch of the tree. The writer said to the monkey 'What did you do that for?' and the monkey replied, 'I was saving the fish from drowning.'* Adapted from an African folktale

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