PERCEPTIONS OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF A GLOBAL DIVERSITY NETWORK

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ABSTRACT
"The motivation is that it is at the heart of our work. It's what matters more than anything, you know, I think EO&D principles, if we get those values, you know, our core values right, as an organisation, if we walk the talk in a sense in all of this, then everything else falls out of it as a consequence. We will build relationships, we will build the right projects, we'll deliver impact, we'll scale up, we'll bring in the income, you know if I get that right. So what motivates me is the feeling that this is the most important thing. The irony is it doesn't feel like that often, it feels like it's a kind of added on organisationally. I'm not convinced the organisation sees EO&D that way, but that's what motivates me. Actually believing, believing in the core values." GDN Representative N1

The research takes place in the British Council which is the UK's principal cultural relations organisation and a non departmental public body with offices in 110 countries.

The British Council has its headquarters in London, where the researcher is based and in 2009 it marked its 75th anniversary. It therefore has a long history and wide international network.

Consistent with the British Council's cultural relations role which concerns itself with building trust and understanding between the UK and other countries, matters of equality and diversity are an important aspect of not only its public face and activities, but its internal workings too. Its geographical spread and consequent diversity raise challenges however. A key challenge with wider resonances, confirmed by the Literature Review, is how to achieve the coherence and cohesion necessary for a shared, organisational identity and an appropriate and viable joined up approach to equality and diversity, whilst also respecting, valuing and managing diversity and cultural difference.

In response, the British Council has, amongst other things, established a Global Diversity Network (GDN) of regional representatives who are deemed to be an important resource in this process. However the Diversity Unit which leads and manages the British Council's equality and diversity agenda and the Global Diversity Network, believe that the Network is not as effective as it could be and the reasons

why this is the case need to be explored. As a result the research has focused on the members. In doing so it has interrogated how they perceive they fulfil their role, the difficulties they face, their learning and development needs and explored in greater depth the perceptions of a contrasting group of strong and weak performers. The perceptions and evaluation of wider stakeholders are also incorporated. The ultimate aim, through a case study and action research approach, is to improve the GDN's effectiveness.

What emerges challenges the alleged research problem and highlights a number of things not previously known or considered. This includes the finding that the Network is perceived by its members and its stakeholders as effective but under resourced and there are gaps in how it has been managed and supported by the Diversity Unit. In addition, the research surfaced the existence of 'ideal' GDN members and no concerns of significance about the relevance of equality and diversity within the British Council's varying operating environments.

A number of recommendations which are intended to support the GDN to be more effective ,and thereby alleviate pressure on the Diversity Unit, as well as contribute to improved, sustainable organisational performance, are proposed. A key recommendation relates to additional resources and addressing the learning and development needs of GDN members by making use of and building on the British Council's Diversity Assessment Framework; this being the potent tool that supports and measures efforts to mainstream equality and diversity organisation wide. Recommendations are at various stages of implementation with some that await Executive Board endorsement.

Dissemination of the research findings will take place internally and externally and internationally. This is in order to add to the limited body of knowledge about the approaches global organisations adopt in managing equality and diversity, revealed both by the Literature Review and the experiences of the Diversity Unit.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The research takes place within the British Council, a non Departmental Public Body headquartered in the UK, with offices in 110 countries and a 75 year history. The purpose of the British Council is to build engagement and trust for the UK through the exchange of knowledge and ideas between people worldwide.

For nearly a decade the British Council has been very actively committed to mainstreaming equality and diversity (E&D) across all its offices and has a small UK based Diversity Unit (DU) of 3 full-time staff, one based in Manchester and 2 in London, leading this process. The Diversity Unit sits within Corporate Affairs, Strategy and External Relations Department and enjoys good relations with the Executive Board. This is assisted by the fact that the Head of Strategy and External Relations is an Executive Board member and the Chief Executive of the British Council champions the diversity agenda generally, and specifically in relation to the Diversity Assessment Framework, the organisation's key measurement tool (Appendix 1.1).

The researcher manages the Diversity Unit in the capacity of Head of Equality and Diversity, and has responsibility for establishing the strategic direction of the British Council's equality and diversity work and driving implementation. In this context the Diversity Unit manages a number of formal internal networks including a Disability and Flexible Working Group and Global mail based network. The largest and most impactful network is the Global Diversity Network (GDN). This was set up in order to ensure that the organisation's approach was not inappropriately UK centric but inclusive of all offices, within a regional cluster of offices structure.

Establishing the network involved a process of negotiation with the Executive Board who had some concerns about its remit, based on a concern about what was perceived, at the time, as the 'campaigning' aspect of equality and diversity. Having

addressed this, the network developed from an agreed, geographically spread total of 20 representatives, focussing on individual countries, to a minimum of two representatives per region, when the regional structure of 13 regions was established. The role of representatives within this covers the entire region and although some countries have their own identified country representatives, regional representatives retain region wide focus and responsibility.

The network is referred to in the British Council's Diversity Strategy and at the time of the research proposal had its own senior executive champion. It is led by the Diversity Unit who establish the roles and responsibilities of representatives and provide direct and ongoing support to them in carrying these out. This includes information and advice support, face to face and virtually by telephone, video conference and email, and a biennial Global Diversity Network conference in different countries. It also includes feedback for annual performance appraisals, and other forms of support.

The Diversity Unit consult with the GDN on an ongoing basis and receive feedback from them about their views on the strategic direction of equality and diversity and the issues that organisation wide and locally need addressing in pursuit of mainstreaming equality and diversity.

The relationship between the GDN and the DU is a direct and in many instances close one, in as much as there is ongoing and substantial communication taking place between them.   It might best be described as a partnership for the benefit of the organisation through the inclusion of all countries.

The researcher manages this Unit in the capacity of Head Equality and Diversity and the Unit manages a number of formal internal networks, the largest and most globally far reaching of which is the Global Diversity Network (GDN). This network is referred to in the British Council's Diversity Strategy and at the time of the research proposal had its own senior executive champion.

Issues of equality and diversity are acknowledged as important components of the work of the British Council and there is widespread belief that the range of cultural relations activities should be informed by and reflect how the organisation's own not insignificant diversity is managed. Without this 'alignment' there is the risk of the organisation not practicing what it preaches or advocates and not 'walking the talk'. In addition, it could reveal that there is no demonstrable capability to lead the planned growth in cultural relations more broadly, jeopardizing this organisational aspiration.

Not only are issues of equality and diversity important to the British Council generally but the British Council aspires to occupy a leadership position in the area of international equality and diversity and to share its knowledge and experience in this area. Amongst other things, this aspiration requires it to embed broadly consistent E&D policies and practices whilst taking account of and responding to its inherent and significant diversity. This arises from its wide geographical spread, its diverse audiences and contacts and its staff, the majority being drawn from the local workforce within operating countries. It means fostering an approach which embraces consistency without unjustifiably diluting or failing to give due regard to cultural and national differences, and other aspects of diversity, or cultural sensitivity.

Key to achieving this and striking the right balance is an effective GDN because they reach out to the whole organisation. Already ongoing engagement with the GDN has helped to ensure that the strategic E&D decisions and actions reflect the shared but also diverse nature of British Council work. In particular this engagement has helped to give meaning to the expressed belief, already referred to, that the way in which the range of cultural relations activities are approached should be informed by and reflect how the organisation's own not insignificant diversity is managed.

The GDN has enabled the DU, on behalf of the wider organisation, to take account of and factor in country and regional perspectives, needs and issues, and to draw on members' knowledge and skills in support of 'balance', whilst also progressing

mainstreaming. Since it was set up though there has been no exploration of apparent problems encapsulated in the following research problem description:

The network is not as effective as the DU feels it needs it to be, with persistent membership gaps, resulting in the DU carrying out a disproportionate burden of work and responsibility in relation to its size and resources and in contradiction to mainstreaming principles and aspirations.

Given that the Diversity Unit had been adopting a somewhat reactive, ad hoc approach to the problems, the research project appeared to provide a good opportunity to investigate and address these in a rigorous way. As a result Diversity Unit staff and some of the 2007 Executive Board team encouraged a focus on GDN members' experiences of their role. In addition, because it is recognised that GDN members do not operate in isolation, it was decided that the research should establish the perspectives of key colleagues and involve their participation. These were identified as all regional and some country directors and also colleagues attending the British Council 2009 Global Diversity Network Conference.   An intention of the research was to explore what would be required to close any gaps between perception and actual performance and identify tangible solutions, as part of improving the effectiveness of the GDN. Ultimately there was a quest for a more effective GDN that is able to contribute to British Council international equality and diversity/centre of excellence aspirations, avoiding UK centricity and as part of this the ethnocentricity referred to in the literature review.

It was envisaged that a more effective GDN would result in greater progress towards mainstreaming equality and diversity and potentially less organisational reliance on the DU, so that the it does not have to contend with the current level of demands. These include responding to the majority of E&D queries even if they are very context specific, commenting on local issues without the necessary context knowledge and experience, influencing colleagues with whom there is a limited, if any relationship,

and training staff groups. Released from such demands it may be possible for the DU to focus more directly on its global strategic leadership role.

The fieldwork which is outlined in Chapter 5 took place during 2008/9 involving three participant groups of Global Diversity Network Representatives and Regional and Country Directors, as well as participants in the 2009 Global Diversity Network conference. Main themes for the research focused on the GDNR role, the needs of GDNRs and perceptions of the effectiveness of the GDN. This was against the backdrop of a related literature review which, although revealing a gap in relation to global diversity networks, nonetheless makes a number of relevant comments about the area of global diversity. These include the existence and development of varying global networks arising from developments in electronic communication technologies, the expansion of businesses beyond their country of origins and shared concerns that usurp geographical boundaries.

The significance of the research to the British Council is the contribution it makes to mainstreaming equality and diversity as there is a strong and direct relationship to cultural relations, its core business. There is particular significance for the DU as it is the group managing E&D on behalf of the Executive Board who mandate this management. Significance extends beyond the British Council to other organisations working internationally and seeking to mainstream equality and diversity across their operations as this, demonstrated by DU experience and the review of the literature, is challenging and relatively new territory in a growing market.

Research question, aim, purpose and objectives
As stated, the research question centres on the Global Diversity Network Representative (GDNR) role – how GDNRs perceive they fulfil their role, what difficulties they face, how Regional and relevant Country Directors understand and perceive the GDN, what participants believe would help to make the GDN more efficient. These are questions that seek to surface what GDNRs do, what they feel about what they do, what development needs they have, and how these might be

met. In addition to this data is sought about how they perceive their performance, what difficulties they face, how motivated they are and what would enhance their motivation, and what the necessary characteristics of a GDNR are and what an ideal GDNR is. GDNRs are also asked to self-assess how they feel they have performed their role. There are also research questions to stakeholders – Regional Directors (RDs) and Country Directors (CDs) - about how they understand the GDN and they are asked to rate its effectiveness.

The specific research aims are to:
Investigate and establish relevant views of Global Diversity Network members and key senior managers, in order to help ensure the network can make a more effective contribution to progressing equality and diversity mainstreaming and achieve full membership.

The purpose of the research was to investigate and address the identified problem through an analysis of the research data in order that findings which would lead to tangible, viable solutions and recommendations could emerge, which could then be presented to the Executive Board for endorsement.
The methodology towards this end is set out in Chapter 4. It outlines the research framework and provides and explanation of the research approach and in particular the research design and its rationale. It conveys the research as an in depth case study in which the findings are used in an action research approach. Involved in this process are key stages and instruments reflected in the following diagram:

| Organisational consultation and permissions | Desk research | Literature review | Questionnaire with scale questions and freetext | Semi-structured questionnaires to support interviews | Consultation at GDN Conference |

In support of triangulation

| Organisational consultation and permissions | Organisational consultation and permissions | Organisational consultation and permissions |

The objective of the research is to achieve a more effective GDN that will result in potentially less organisational reliance on the DU, so that the Unit does not have to contend with the current level of demands. Released from such demands it may be possible for the DU to focus more attention on strategic matters and for the GDN to extend its contribution.

Target audience

The Executive Board is the key target audience for the research and so the research report is to be directed at and presented to them.

The decision to target the research at the Executive Board recognises that at a general level the Executive Board supports the DU, including by mandating much of its work and as part of this, the GDN. Also the Executive Board has mandated leadership and centre of excellence aspirations and as part of this the Doctorate programme of studies. The Executive Board will certainly need to authorise any additional resources arising from recommendations requiring these and will need to do so from an informed position. The Diversity Unit will lead implementation. This will need to be done on the basis of ongoing negotiation recognizing not only the interdependencies involved but the considerable and ongoing changes taking place organisation wide. This includes a restructuring overseas network of offices within which of course the GDN sits.

In addition, as the research is ultimately aimed at improving equality and diversity performance within the British Council and supporting leadership and centre of excellence aspirations, and given that the Diversity Unit has the lead responsibility for E&D and mainstreaming this, the DU are a key target audience for the research. For some time the DU has considered that there is potential for the GDN to be a more highly performing group and, prior to this research, there has been limited insight or understanding, beyond the cursory, into the perceptions and issues for GDN members.   The research provides the opportunity to remedy this, to step back and reflect in partnership with members and colleagues, via the questionnaires, interviews and conference and to develop a platform for further work and improvement.

The research findings will interest all the current GDN members and regional and country director colleagues as key participants, and so they too will form part of the target audience group.

Potential GDN members who will form the pool to refresh the network are also a target audience. They may find it helpful to review the research, or aspects of it, as part of the process of considering whether or not apply to be a GDN member. If they do successfully apply, ensuring their role is informed by the research findings, possibly as part of an induction package, is likely to be helpful.

Also, it may be that the research will interest line managers who take on the role of supporting new GDN members, as well as a range of colleagues in the organisation who because of their interest/involvement in the work of the DU and in equality and diversity, are likely to be interested in the research. For example, country representatives and UK diversity working group members.

The potential target audience should not be overstated as there is information overload within the organisation. This wider group therefore may not make use of the whole of the research, preferring to limit their focus to specific elements of it.

However if there is careful, considered and meaningfully targeted dissemination of the research findings, this will help engagement with and progression of the recommendations outlined in Chapter 6.

As there are an increasing number of organisations developing international equality and diversity agendas, the research is very likely to have broader appeal and interest, beyond the British Council. There is likely to be interest from a range of different bodies – particularly multinationals, large international development agencies, government departments such as the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Department for International Development and internationally focused organisations such as the World Bank, World Health Organisation and International Labour Organisation. The DU is regularly asked for information about its global diversity and implementation systems by such bodies.   In particular, the research is likely to be of interest to a global professional diversity group and the relatively newly formed Diversity Professionals Forum of which the British Council is a founding member.

It is intended that the findings will be disseminated on the British Council's website and beyond. This may take the form of an article/s, blog contribution, virtually accessible presentation or live talk/s. British Council equality and diversity work has been profiled in a range of external publications including Equal Opportunity Review and the Commission for Racial Equality (now incorporated into the Equality and Human Rights Commission) Catalyst magazine and Personnel Today, and these or their equivalents may be appropriate for dissemination. Academic journals such as Equal Opportunities International, the International Journal of Human Resource Management, or Development in Practice, may also be appropriate.

Research project and Doctorate Programme of Studies
The research project is the final part of the submission for the Doctorate in Professional Studies which has involved a number of interlinking components and modules. The project does not therefore stand alone. Rather, it builds on earlier work in establishing a formalised equality and diversity agenda for the British Council

and contributes to academic credits already achieved as part of the Doctorate programme. This work and these credits have determined the size of the project and that it should be small in scale for the attainment of 100 credits at Level 5 in completion of all the Doctorate programme requirements.

Whilst the project is unique with specific aims, it has been not only part of wider academic requirements but also wider equality and diversity activity taking place in a rapidly changing context, typical of much work based research. This fact and the supportive context of an academic programme of studies has added a richness that has been acknowledged by a number of parties.

CHAPTER 2

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The terms of reference for the research which form the basis of this chapter have an ultimate objective of a more effective GDN. The interventions that will contribute to this objective are a key outcome and measure of the success of the research project and are identified and discussed in chapters 5 and 6 where the findings and recommendations are outlined.

The focus of the research as indicated in the introduction was on addressing the problem of a GDN that has not been perceived by the Diversity Unit as sufficiently effective. This perception has emerged as a result of the disparate performance of GDN members resulting in inconsistent communication with the Diversity Unit, failures to deliver as agreed, for example in terms of providing annual feedback to the Diversity Unit, supporting colleagues in the regions, establishing country and regional plans and fulfiling some Diversity Assessment Requirements. Further, the GDN has been beset with the problem of a high turnover of members and a lack of clarity within the Diversity Unit and more widely about what all individual members actually do, as opposed to what was set out for them to do. There was the further issue of a lack of insight into the needs and difficulties of GDNRs beyond a sense that some were very busy with their substantive roles and some received limited, if any, support from relevant managers. Finally, there was the fact that the Diversity Unit was not able to make evidenced based comment on how RDs and CDs, or anyone else, understands and perceives the GDN; how the individual performance of some GDNRs is perceived more widely was on some levels known but little beyond this.

As the Diversity Unit perceived the GDN to be characterized by inconsistent communication, disparate performance and delivery failures, there were concerns about its ability to make an appropriate level and quality of contribution to ongoing mainstreaming plans as well as the organisation's centre of excellence aspirations. Given that the Diversity Unit is London Headquarter based and lacks detailed

knowledge about the wide and extensive range of cultural, national and other differences and issues out there 'in the field', coupled with the especial challenges the literature review highlights of addressing implementation when taking a global approach to diversity, it was imperative for the Diversity Unit to improve GDN effectiveness and address concerns in a sustainable, holistic way. It was believed that considerable potential gain from exploring the issues outlined and establishing a more effective GDN could result. This includes less organisational reliance on and a reduction in the level of demands on the Diversity Unit, with time freed up to concentrate efforts more directly on driving strategy and positioning the organisation where it wishes to be. That is, ensuring balanced attention to the organisation's diversity strategy and developing new and revised interventions as part of this.

There was a welcome response to the opportunity for a research project that could interrogate the above state of play out of which might emerge findings that would identify and establish interventions to improve the Network's effectiveness, address the needs and problems of GDNRs, as well as potentially reduce the turnover of members, which was perceived as having some link to the issue of effectiveness.

The research problem was formally articulated as already indicated:
The network is not as effective as the DU needs it to be, with persistent membership gaps, resulting in the DU carrying out a disproportionate burden of work and responsibility in relation to its size and resources and in contradiction to mainstreaming principles and aspirations.

The aim of addressing this problem through investigations with the participants was to help ensure the network can make a more effective contribution to progressing equality and diversity mainstreaming and achieve full membership, with an objective of a more effective GDN and less organisational reliance on the DU.

The key research questions developed to assist with this process of a level of evaluation to inform a proposal for the implementation of a solution to improve the

function of the GDN, as outlined previously, are:

- *How do GDNRs perceive they fulfil their role in the context of the aims of the GDN?*
- *What difficulties do they face and what are some of their needs?*
- *How do Regional and relevant Country Directors understand and perceive the GDN?*
- *What do respondents believe would help to make the GDN more effective in mainstreaming and embedding equality and diversity across the organisation?*

The research approach was centered on entering into the world of GDN members and generating understandings and insights about how they feel about their role and how they fulfil it, as well as how effective they perceive themselves to be in it.   In parallel and in recognition of the organisational structure and its key stakeholders, the research adopted an approach that allowed for a level of triangulation, again, as already indicated, focused on perceptions.

The research, like any work based research, needs to identify realistic recommendations for implementation, with reference to the specified problem. In undertaking the analysis this objective was held in mind without ignoring the wider learning that would enrich and enhance work related performance, recognizing that the D Prof programme of study concerns itself with personal and professional growth and development and crucially with organisational improvement.   The desire to broaden and deepen understanding, particularly in the context of a new and arguably unique field of enquiry, central to the improvement of performance at a number of levels, sat alongside the key objective of improving the effectiveness of the GDN.

The organisational rhythm of annual mid year UK contracted job moves and rotations was factored into the data gathering process and the timetable of interviews organized accordingly, in order to capture the perceptions of key informants. Flexibility was employed in response to organisational changes. For example, data

sharing and gathering at the GDN conference was deferred but not abandoned as the conference, although scheduled for January 2009, did not take place until the end of April/beginning of May 2009 because of an organisational directive. This was related to trying to address the financial situation resulting from, amongst other things, exchange rate fluctuations which were negatively impacting on the pound sterling.

The terms of reference is the project activity road map in concert with the research methodology and project plan and has a clear relationship to previous academic credits claimed as part of the Doctorate programme. This claim focused principally on learning and development initiatives in support of the strategic objective of mainstreaming equality and diversity and as part of the process related initiatives. The terms of reference for the research project build on this claim and the theme of it and wider goal, addressing a problem that requires attention and has been neglected. This is to be achieved by exploring in some detail the experiences, needs and shared perceptions of the effectiveness of the organisation's key resource in achieving mainstreaming across its global network of offices and operations. This process begins by considering the available literature which is the focus of what now follows.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter focuses on the literature review, the written body of work specific to the subject area of the research project. It begins with a summary of the approach taken to establishing and identifying these and the search sources used in this process. There is then general comment on the terrain of global diversity in which points relating to definition, rationale and approaches are included. This is followed by references to networks, networking and affinity groups. Finally, conclusions are drawn which highlight the absence of contributions directly related to the specific focus of the research project.

Literature review approach

The approach to the literature review was to seek to identify material on global diversity networks within organisations and sectors, or in the public sphere, or on any global staff networks, as well as global or international staff affinity groups or support groups.

It was considered that this approach would extend the net wide enough to capture any material specifically related to the Global Diversity Network, from which a decision could be made about any items to review in detail. Informing the decision was the fact that a synopsis of literature items included with previous Doctorate module submissions, in addition to an initial pre research project search, did not surface any material specifically focused on the research area, and limited material on the implementation of global diversity.

Seven principal search sources were used. These included academic published reports, academic funded research (ESRC, Joseph Rowntree), academic articles and book reviews (Equal Opportunities International, Journal of International Relations and Development), human resource practitioner and professional bodies, key authors publications and journals, relevant books and British Council documentation.

Selected search tools included university library sources – Business Source Premier/Complete, IBSS (International Bibliography of the Social Sciences) and ESDS (Economic and Social Data Service) and JSTOR Arts and Sciences Collection 111, as well as British Council electronic archives.

Despite extending the net to try to capture relevant material, no relevant contributions emerged. Nishii & Ozbiligin (2007), providing the most useful material of that reviewed, perhaps best encapsulate a key reason for this through the following remarks:

> *"Surprisingly, however, 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 & Ozbiligin (2007:1883)*

This perhaps curious position, in as much as it is said to be untypical of the organisational sciences, is confirmed by others including Hobbler & Johnson (2004) and Sippola & Smale, (2007). Before returning to comment further on this state of play and because the literature review did highlight a number of useful points, significant space is dedicated in this chapter to the useful points from the literature, beginning with what the literature tells us is meant when talking about diversity, followed by the rationale for exploring the area of global diversity and related approaches.

There is no coverage given to literature concerned with the notion of effectiveness. The research project is a small one and decisions about use of resources have to be made within that context which necessarily limits what can and should be explored. Also, importantly, the focus on effectiveness is with reference to the perceptions of the participants, not with reference to external measures. Further, as the research concerns itself with the real world of work and the organisation through key and other colleagues has been significantly engaged in it, the decision to reflect the useful points from a review of the literature concerned with material on global diversity

networks has been, on some levels, an 'organisation led' one. The primary reason for this is the keenness of colleagues to enhance their knowledge of equality and diversity; as one of them said in the context of a discussion about the progress of the research:

> *"I am not surprised there is nothing written or researched about a network like ours. I could say a lot about why I am not surprised, like the fact that from what I've learnt our approach is unique. If you remember even when we were wanting to support the EMDG (Ethnic Minority Development Group), it was called this wasn't it, and those organisations came to speak with us, their approach to diversity was very different. But it's good if you let us know whatever you find out as the information will help us to kind of appear more professional and knowledgeable. We might not want to read it as a literature review if this means it's very wordy because I have said a lot about there being too much to read, but if you can package the main points that would be useful. Or you can do two things – upload the literature review and upload the main points, and then people can choose."*
> GDNR N25

1. Defining Diversity

Workforce diversity management generally "refers to initiatives that capitalize on the personal diversity in a firm's workforce (involving '"visible" characteristics such as race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, age, or disability, as well as "invisible" characteristics such as thinking style, level in the firm's hierarchy, professional background, or functional affiliation) as a "strategic approach to business that contributes to organisational goals such as profits and productivity" (Egan & Bendick, Jr., 2003: 702). Amongst other things, entrenched, long held, negative attitudes resulting in intolerance and unjustifiable discrimination are barriers but increasingly it is recognized that institutional barriers, including institutionalized discrimination and/or organisational culture exist (Prasad et al (ed) 1997).

There is broad consistency amongst authors and the diversity definitions they offer (Kandola & Fullerton, 1998, Ely & Thomas, 2001, Kirton, 2002) whatever the geographical, or other, context. Indeed at the British Council diversity is defined within this vein and so the literature supports the British Council standpoint, as might be

expected, because in fundamental terms it would be curious not to be talking in a manner consistent with an externally driven agenda. However British Council experience of debates, not over the broad definition of diversity, but on the specific areas and read across from this, specific groups, within the definition, notably race and ethnic and sexual minorities, is not reflected in the contributions reviewed. This may be to do with the fact that there is not only limited research knowledge in comparison to practice, but limited written contributions about the practice and issues of global diversity.

In terms of a definition of global diversity, Nishii & Ozbilgin (2007) suggest this to be "quite amorphous" making reference to the 2006 Annual Conference for the Society for Industrial and Organisational Psychology programme poster session on 'global diversity' which was used to "tie together a large body of disparate research, with many papers in the session not even containing a global or international focus" (Nishii & Ozbiligin 2007:1884). They tackle the definition issue head on perceiving global diversity as concerned with managing diversity across countries to understand how each country might define and conceive of it from differing perspectives, as well as looking internally at management practice.   In doing so, they touch on important questions about processes and desired outcomes for organisations operating in differing geographical and cultural contexts. A key assumption about potential 'lack of fit', a theme that runs through the general global diversity literature, is evident.

Of especial relevance to the British Council in all of this, given its cultural relations role, is the desired outcomes.   Having said this, British Council offices outside of the UK have not openly confronted the outcome of improved employee diversity organisation wide because largely speaking, in substantial terms, British Council offices operate as relatively distinct units with limited diversity derived from outside the specific context, except perhaps where its Teaching Centers are concerned. This is particularly so as the number of UK contracted (non teaching) staff in a given office is limited and not infrequently is in a minority of one. So what offices are dealing with is the context specific diversity as opposed to 'imported' diversity. This is changing

somewhat as part of regional working and within regions, greater movement of staff who are not UK contracted but locally contracted. Already this trend has raised new and unforeseen diversity issues concerned with managing emerging truly multicultural teams, resonating with issues raised by the literature review and increasing the importance of this research to these organisations.

Frequently defintions of diversity make no explicit reference to business goals because they adopt a literal translation approach, not what is aspired to from this. The definition used by the British Council's is however overtly organisationally rooted. This is something that would need to be addressed in any distinct, complete, comprehensive and overarching definition of global diversity. The instances of lack of reference to business goals, potentially and arguably, reflects something of a tendency to lose sight of these in terrain concerned with individuals and groups, the treatment they receive and their rights and entitlements. This is something that comes through from the fieldwork. For example, a number of the Regional Directors made reference to the need to strengthen alignment of the E&D agenda with business goals:

> *"I think it is important to strengthen diversity awareness and commitment in the context of business drivers for the organisation. There may be a training element for several individuals re working for diversity in an organisational and business context, not a campaigning context. "*
> RD N14

> *"I think that work has been too internally focused to date, with little built into our external programmes which are the heart of our business."*
> RD N39

> *"If we could work up some examples of how diversity is good for business and how diverse, equality driven organisations are successful organisations and it shows in their balance sheets, then I think we could sell EOD much more effectively within the organisation and give it a much stronger, more central position for all of us."*
> RD N15

2. The rationale

The literature search provides confirmation that the global diversity material is relatively recent, spanning not much beyond a decade and focused on Human Resource Management including within different global contexts (Illes, 1995, Humphries & Grice, 1995, Bae, Chen & Lawlder, 1998, Konrad, Brewster & Suutari, 2005). This focus does reflect that workforce diversity is acknowledged as an increasingly important component of human resource management (Egan & Bendick, 2003), not only within a domestic context. It also corresponds with the period during which the British Council has been giving attention to equality and diversity as part of its work across its globally dispersed offices. However, within this literature we learn nothing about comparable networks.

If we move beyond a human resource focus we find that the emphasis of the existing global diversity literature is on Multi National Corporations (MNCs) and on large United States of America (USA) owned and managed ones. Indeed the overwhelming majority of the literature comes out of, or is related to the USA. For example, Bendick, Egan & Lothjelm (2001) identified workforce diversity management as being in place in up to three quarters of the largest USA corporations and Egan & Bendick (2003:703) define workforce diversity management as "an important component of human resource management in most large U.S corporations." Within this we don't have the detail of practices at the level the research concerns itself with, this being very specific and about activity, perceptions and difficulties but ultimately about improvement.

The more relevant literature that was sourced and reviewed, specifically on global diversity management, although limited in scope, indicates that approaches to this management are increasing, supported by the promise of competitive advantage (Joplin, Janice & Daus, 1997, Layne, 2002, Damstadter 2006, Vallario, 2006) and positing that such management is possible. The literature is at the general level and makes no contribution to the research aims and questions beyond a broader contextual contribution. This confirms, in particular, an absence of the detail that the

research project is concerned with and an absence of knowledge to draw on and critique. It also potentially tells us that those in the field are not writing about their experiences. This may be to do with the fact that this is a fairly new field and /or with the fact that practitioners may find it hard to write for a range of reasons. These could include time and skills and the frequent separation between, crudely speaking, those that 'do' and those that 'intellectualise and write'. It may also signal something about the newness of the roles of those working as specialists in E&D and therefore the extent to which the related knowledge base has developed to support these roles.

Various reasons are given within the literature for the developing practice of global diversity management. These contradict the notion that homogeneity equates with greater efficiency/performance. What is increasingly asserted by practitioners in the field and beyond (Thornhill et al 2000) includes that future organisational challenges and an ability to respond to these will come from greater workforce diversity and an increased variety of skills, experiences, cultural dimensions and values. Not only do Florkowski (1996) and Schneider & Barsoux (2003) concur with this but they cite the effective management of a global workforce as critical in achieving business benefits and international competitive advantage.

Challenging questions about the 'fitness for purpose' of various global diversity management approaches are raised with Agoc & Burr (1996) seemingly igniting this debate by questioning how the USA diversity management rhetoric, premised on a melting-pot metaphor, contrasts with the mosaic metaphor of employment equity programmes of Canada. The contrasts are somewhat crudely represented with the similarities and what can be 'borrowed' being insufficiently explored. Other questions are raised too taking us back to the earlier reference to homogeneity versus diversity. In particular questions about performance and whether indeed culturally related international firms enjoy greater efficiencies than culturally diverse multinationals and do outperform heterogeneous ones (Kandola & Fullerton, 1998, Palich, Gomez-Mejia 1999,) clearly at odds with 'the benefits of diversity' mantra.

Egan & Bendick Jr., (2003:702 - 703) posit 3 circumstances that "coincide to transform the matter of the global management of diversity into a practical concern in the near term", namely the:

- Extensive interrelationship of many multi-national European and US operations
- Relative similarity, comparative to say Asia, of cultural attitudes toward employment discrimination between the USA and Europe
- Increased attention to diversity issues arising from powerful demographic, legal (and here they in particular have in mind Article 13 of the European Community Treaty) and political developments associated with continuing EU integration.

They conclude that there is a need to adapt "in complex ways to each employer's corporate culture, strategic objectives, and degree of organisational integration, as well as to the operating environment of the host nations where these firms operate" (Egan & Bendick Jr., 2003:703). They address the issue of the extra-territorial reach of US anti-discrimination laws, mirroring issues being confronted by the British Council such as, for example, whether it is legally permissible in a given context to undertake ethnic monitoring and affirmative actions. Also, and a particularly useful aspect, is some of the demographic and political development detail they cite, although they do not unpack the nature of the extensive interrelationships of many multi-national European and US operations to which they refer (Egan & Benedick Jr., 2003) at a level of detail to potentially make use of and apply to any aspects of the research project.

The fact that Egan & Bendick Jr., (2003) suggest that global diversity management is an increasingly immediate practical concern, alongside the gap in related research, with debates about definitions and where this terrain of practice sits, suggests that the research is timely and valuable if viewed in the context of current debates and issues being confronted. It is recognized though that there are difficulties extrapolating out from the research project. This is because it is so specific and takes place in an organisation with particularly unique features as well as having a focus on a specific

problem. Having said this, it does as is argued at different points, have a wider contribution to make.

3. Approaches

Decisions about the 'what and how' of achieving the integration of various aspects of diversity are covered in the literature and there is reference to design and delivery aspects (Joplin & Daus, 1997; Egan & Benedick, 2003; Sippola & Smale, 2007). Multi domestic, or multi local, largely decentralized approaches under a mixed model approach that combines standardization, usually at the philosophical and strategic level, and adaptation, at the implementation level, emerge.

Informed by a review of relevant literature Franklin (2008), in researching the approach to developing and implementing diversity strategies across 13 international organisations as part of determining what constitutes best practice in diversity management for international organisations, identifies 20 shared elements of such practices, combining strategic and implementation levels. These were irrespective of the organisations' area of business. This is most useful in terms of demonstrating the common aspects of approaches across these international organisations variously situated. At the philosophical and strategic level the shared elements predominate but were also evident at the implementation level. The British Council who participated in this research was able to confirm their practice as broadly consistent with that of others at the level of shared elements, informed, as indicated, by the literature, which added an important external validating reference point.

The organisational structures referred to in the international management literature appear to be focused on a multi domestic, global and transnational model with the latter being more interdependent than the former (Ohmae, 1989, Walton, 1999). Such structures will, of course, be a determining factor in any approach to the management of diversity that is adopted. What will also be a determining factor is the nature of the business and the literature highlights that in the context of global diversity the business is generally, but not always, for profit.

The barriers highlighted include barriers at the regulatory, normative and cognitive levels according to Sippola & Smale (2007) who make reference to the work of Kossek & Lobel (1996). Ethnocentrically oriented approaches are identified by Ferner et al (2004) as inappropriate and resulting in significant barriers and resistance of a cultural and institutional kind. Consistent with this theme in describing their study of TRANSCO (Sippola & Smale 2007) report that "In general, however, the broad remit that diversity and inclusiveness was shown to cover, by TRANSCO, made typically reserved Finnish people begin to feel noticeably uncomfortable" (Sippola & Smale 2007:1910). It highlighted that "When they see how significant the issue is; that it concerns everyday life between people, they become embarrassed, shy (Sippola & Smale 2007:1910). Similarly, middle managers started to voice concerns about whether these types of discussions would require them to 'reveal who we really are' to their colleagues and subordinates. The questioning of people's values and norms regarding diversity and inequality was also shown to be a painful experience for some Finnish organisational members" (Sippola & Smale 2007:1910).

Whilst the TRANSCO study because of its 'window in' through its broad descriptive nature was so interesting, it did not reveal how any problems and challenges were surmounted. Despite this it gave the best insight into policy implementation at a global level of all the literature reviewed. In it was transient reference to diversity co-ordinators charged with responsibility for integrating diversity locally using information based approaches. What it was possible to glean from this approach identified it as perhaps most approximating a GDNR role. We learn that "With full responsibility for the integration of diversity into the local subsidiary, the Finnish Diversity Co-ordinator is actively involved in meetings with other Diversity Co-ordinators to discuss ideas and to develop informal benchmarks. These discussions and other corporate communications are then filtered into local management team, HR and departmental meetings" (Sippola & Smale 2007:1906). This aligns with the 'actively on the ground' GDNR in communication with other GDNRs, although these within a British Council

context are globally dispersed dealing with varying and wide ranging issues, some very, or entirely context specific.

The general approach to emerge from the literature is one of global consistency at the philosophical level, but reliance on a predominantly multi-domestic approach at the level of actual implementation of policies and practices. This is against a backdrop of unique institutions, demography and culture and arising barriers and challenges. This contrasts with the British Council's approach and the contrast owes much to having a Global Diversity Network for the purpose of shared ownership and joint and joined up working for progressing the Diversity Strategy in pursuit of mainstreaming. It also reflects the fact that the nature of the British Council's work concerns itself not only with individual customers buying say exams or English Language services, but also engaging at institutional and broader society levels and with issues of attitude and impressions of and towards the UK.

4. Networks and networking

Literature relating to staffing networks and affinity groups, because they invariably focus on single issues – that is, ones that members share in common such as gender, disability, parents and carers, or sexual orientation, has no material contribution to make to the focus of the research. This is because what has come out of the search and review confirms that whilst some such groups cross geographical and national boundaries, the issues concerning them are generally employee driven and individual, or group identity, focused. This is particularly highlighted by the Organisation of Resource Counselors Worldwide survey (2007) into Employee Networks, the only survey that the literature review surfaced. It is however acknowledged that affinity groups can and do make a meaningful contribution to business goals (Vernon, 2008). They are, in some instances, strategically relevant in terms of improving the pipe-line (pool of employees who can potentially be promoted) of say women or racial/ethnic minorities, but do not generally occupy a strategic position, tend to be limited to the concerns of members including for professional development and broader opportunities, and do not contribute to a mainstreaming

strategic objective. However, there is some indication that these networks can benefit the company by enhancing its reputation as an employer of choice, enhancing organisational performance as a result of improved individual performance, and acting as business adviser to the organisation, through changing internal work policies, or influencing external product development (ORC Worldwide, 2007).

Within the British Council

Given the work based nature of the research it seemed particularly important to undertake a search for any relevant British Council literature. The initial approach was to review the searchable list of items stored. Given that paper archives have largely been disbanded and where they exist are for unique items stored off-site, it is not surprising that this did not throw up relevant material. In parallel, an internal electronic archive search was undertaken.   This surfaced a 2003 study into the role of networks, as opposed to networking, in support of the British Council's strategy of the time, with the status of a confidential document. It highlights that networks are an important tool in response to the organisation's aspirations, suggesting that "Creating a network needs to be a deliberate strategic decision that considers the alternatives available and confirms that a network is the optimum approach for achieving the specific outcomes required" (British Council, 2003:3). Certainly creation of the GDN was a deliberate strategic decision with a specific purpose in mind; less attention though was given to outcomes.

The study also highlights that, not only within the British Council but across other organisations, both public and private sector, there is no common understanding of what a network is, with networking and networks being used interchangeably. It deems networks as a corporate asset because of the energy they release and the potential for members collectively to achieve more than they would individually. Networks are deemed to be good mechanisms for learning too, with the potential to become self sustaining but with a need to meet face-to-face and, for success, to have a coordinator or manager. The perspective that a "core group of activists is invaluable as the seed corn on which a network can be grown" (British Council,

2003:4) is shared by the study and has resonance for the research, given what the data has revealed about the perceived effectiveness of the network and what it has achieved.

Networking, as already indicated above, is described in the study as the individual cultivation of relationships, contrasted with networks as "a group of people who have a collective identity and who recognize that they are part of a network" (British Council 2003:4). The following working definition of a network is suggested to promote understanding across the organisation of what a network means:

> "A group of named individuals who interact face to face and virtually to exchange experience; share learning; build their and our knowledge and expertise; who work together to further specific objectives; and who benefit by their association with the British Council, the UK and each other" (British Council 2003:4).

Within the paper it was commented that use of the term *community* would help avoid confusion between groups focused on internal, as opposed to external relationships. This point was not pursued and use of such a term would raise its own challenges given the multiple usage of the word community.

This British Council study, in particular the definition of networks, as contrasted with networking, is a little gem of an otherwise disappointing review. Not only does it demonstrate the organisation's formalised interest in and attention to networks at a point in time, but confirms them to be a corporate asset and outlines why. Further, it highlights the need for a deliberate and strategic decision having considered the alternatives. In particular it makes reference to the specific outcomes required from networks. This is a point of significance given that the data to emerge highlights a concern related to outcomes which is addressed as part of the recommendations. Generally, it communicates an alignment between establishing the Global Diversity Network and where the organisation was in its thinking, although this was not known at the time to the researcher who is the one that set it up. Also there is an alignment with how the organisation defined a network and how it operates and how this holds

for the GDN. The status of the document, or more importantly the ideas contained within it, in the context of the current strategic direction of the British Council, is a matter for clarification.

Conclusion

As already indicated, the literature review did not surface any material on networks comparable to the GDN. However it did surface and has examined material related to the wider context of the research on themes of definition, rationale, approaches and networks. Part of the reason this material has been included is because of the encouragement of some of the research participants who, as the fieldwork shows, constitute a group in quest of knowledge about equality and diversity. Another reason is the fact that the material had not previously been identified or examined by the researcher or others working in and alongside the Diversity Unit. Given that the research principally targets an internal audience, it means that the literature review can make a contribution to deepening knowledge and understanding about the general terrain of global diversity. This can aid reflection on the conceptual underpinnings of the British Council's equality and diversity journey and future plans.

In general terms, the literature review although limited because GDNs as understood within the British Council are unexplored, suggests both agreement and disagreement with the researcher standpoint with respect to this terrain of practice. This has been shown, for example in relation to the broad definition of diversity applied and with some level of agreement on the generally acknowledged benefits of managing global diversity. In addition, experience thus far confirms that at the philosophical level consistency is possible but at the applied level a more textured and on some, but not all levels, a multi-domestic approach is required. The British Council's own experience and the field work for the research has surfaced strong evidence that consistency at an applied level is entirely possible and from this are indications that the applied level problems highlighted by the literature review may be to do with, for example, exaggeration or an absence of investment. The latter potential reason may be the significant one because with the exception of description of TRANSCO, the

literature review reveals little about the applied dimensions and the investment of resources. The exception to this is the contribution of Vallario (2006) who tell us that:

> *"According to a recent European Commission survey conducted by the Confederation Board and Focus Consultancy, 83% of the 900 respondents agree that diversity policies make good business sense." "Yet nearly half of all companies participating in the survey have not implemented diversity policies, particularly those in southern Europe and some new EU members" (Vallario & Waller, 2006:51).*

Whilst the literature search and review supports the argument that global diversity practice is relatively under developed, it is not absolutely clear what the definition of under development is or whether this is being compared to say, context specific global diversity practice.   This includes the fact that reference to context is given scant attention within diversity literature generally, with much of the North American and UK and wider Europe literature seemingly ignoring this. This perhaps suggests an assumed global applicability, or that commentary is restricted to the context of the works in question, with correspondingly insufficient attention to globalisation trends.

Overall, the absence of relevant literature correlates with the under developed and early stages of approaches to managing diversity across geographical boundaries by multi-national and international organisations. With an increase in managing diversity globally arising from globalisation and forges into increasingly new markets though, the knowledge gap will need to be addressed. This is called for because amongst other things, it will accelerate learning and improve organisational business performance. As Egan & Bendick Jr. (2003) highlight, commenting in this instance from a USA perspective, "issues of discrimination and diversity often present themselves in forms and with priorities quite different from their counterparts in the United States, and initiatives addressing these issues must be implemented in widely varying legal, political, and cultural environments. Even firms that are well-established in overseas markets may not be knowledgeable about these issues in every nation where they have employees and may become overwhelmed by the range of issues across the multiple countries in which they operate" (Egan & Bendick Jr. 2003: 702).   In this context, and with reference to the terrain covered within this

chapter, it is perhaps not surprising that there is a literature gap. What this gap signals is that disseminating and making available the organisation's journey, reflected only in part in the research project, to enable others to learn from and engage with it, is relevant and timely.

The literature review lends overall support to the relevance and value of aiming to improve the effectiveness of the GDN, as part of improving and sustaining improvements in the area of equality and diversity, addressing the inevitable challenges and to sharing practices. Sharing practice is a recommendation for the research project that the findings of the literature review endorse and which will be included within chapter 6.

The literature review surfaced a modest amount of material on employee networks/affinity groups, some of which have been referred to. In addition, the literature search process, although this is not commented on, confirms that there is a prevalence of campaigning and other networks that span geographical boundaries aided by increasingly sophisticated communication systems (Stone and Maxwell (eds.) 2005, Moghadam, 2005). There is no doubt these systems assist groups, affinity or otherwise, to develop and be sustained and they certainly help the Diversity Unit work with and manage the Global Diversity Network and help the representatives interact with one another.

Thus far organisational knowledge and information about the area of global diversity has been focused on formal and informal benchmarking and knowledge sharing amongst contacts and peers in the field, primarily but not exclusively at the strategy development level, of the kind the literature review highlights was undertaken by Franklin (2008). This has been driven by the general organisational practice of establishing what others do. Also at play is the fact that ultimate decision makers want some assurance that what they are signing the organisation up to is aligned with what is deemed sensible and practicable by other relevant organisations. This is consistent with the British Council's Executive Board requirement that benchmarking

data should be included when the case for decisions they are required to ratify is being made.

There is clearly a need to ensure that a rigorous approach is applied to work based projects and a literature review is consistent with such an approach. However, out of the experiences of this research project comes a question about the extent to which the traditional literature review approach, as overwhelmingly described, is 'fit for purpose' and appropriate for research that takes place in the real world and one that seeks to fix a specific organisational problem. It may be that there should be overt encouragement if not a requirement for literature reviews to include benchmarking reviews within a rigorous framework. Such reviews would be equally, or perhaps more likely, to support the organisational learning that is such a distinct feature of work based research and to ignite especial interest, particularly for those charged with strategy development and/or endorsement, and more directly meet organisational needs and approaches. This holds for searches into relevant internal documentation given the highly relevant nature of what was surfaced. An encouragement to review the "Grey Literature" as described by the European Association of Grey Literature Exploitation 2001 and others (Gray 2006) is consistent with this suggestion. Understanding of this classification of literature is something that will be brought to the attention of the GDN in the context of a desire for knowledge development. Alongside this will be encouragement to share what emerges from any searches across the GDN.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The focus of this chapter is on the methodology used for the research. The aim within it therefore is to provide an explanation of the research approach, and in particular the research design, and to highlight the rationale behind these.

The preceeding literature review for the project highlights an absence of studies and indeed references to networks comparable to the GDN. As a consequence there is a gap in information and insights into the role they might play, the specific activities they might undertake, how they are perceived and how individual members and the wider organisation might interact, against which to compare, contrast or learn from. Whilst the research cannot meaningfully address this gap because of its limited scale, and as a work based study its very specific nature, it has a contribution to make to what is currently a somewhat empty landscape. From this contribution subsequent contributions may be encouraged and importantly the British Council will have gained greater understanding and insights and a more rigorous basis for related recommendations and decisions. This backdrop does not signal a specific approach to the matters of concern. Indeed various approaches were considered. In this context there has been a review of a range of research focused literature (Silverman 2000, Desai and Potter 2006, Denscombe 1998) extensive use has been made of the work of Gray (2006) given that it is clear, accessible, comprehensive and highly relevant to the work based research nature of this work.

Research framework

Research is not simply a process of identifying an area for investigation supported by methods which generate insights and lead to action. Rather, it comprises a number of elements which if there is to be coherence, as an aid to rigour, need to come together. This 'coming together' recognizes but also identifies factors influencing the

research process and cycle, its direction and decisions related to this. Consistent with this, Table 4.1 below provides an outline of connections between the research methodology and key elements of the research process.

Table 4.1: Key elements of the research process - framework for the research

Epistemology
Constructivism - acknowledging the research concerns itself with the different meanings that participants construct in their interactions in the world of work whilst fulfiling the 'same' roles in different geographical locations
Theoretical perspective
Interpretivism - acknowledging the research falls within the domain of social as opposed to natural sciences, deals predominantly with the actions of individuals and is primarily qualitative
Research approach
Inductive as the aim is to identify what the research infers and thereby assist in constructing theories and models from its empirical data for the specific work context and potentially more broadly
Research methodology
Principally qualitative but a small amount of quantitative is included
Timeframe
Cross-sectional – *snapshot* approach; data collection at a point in time given the nature of permission obtained shaped by the duration of the study period and the time and resource allocation deemed feasible in the context of organisational priorities and requirements
Data collection methods
Participatory methods - questionnaires and live, recorded, interviews

(Adapted from Saunders Et Al., 2000, quoted in Gray 2006:30)

The research has adopted a phenomenological approach and paradigm acknowledging, for example, the world as socially constructed, concerned with the study of individuals, focused on meanings and trying to understand what is happening, using samples and primarily qualitative methods, with the researcher a party to the area of study.   A particular challenge, not unique to work-based research but certainly fundamental to it, relates to laying aside current understandings derived from being part of the area of study, and opening up self and the organisation, to new understanding and meanings.   This research approach is about understanding the actual phenomena. It has been an acutely felt challenge as the area of research is one that is integral to the work of the Diversity Unit. Participants in the research process, through the work of the DU and GDN, are known to the researcher and in some instances reasonably close working relationships exist. Laying aside understandings in these circumstances and looking afresh, to some extent for all the individuals concerned who are also of course part of the organisation, has required ongoing awareness and attention.

The research is an indepth case study in which findings are used in an action research approach through iteration and consultation to interrogate findings and to secure acceptance. Set out in more detail below in the sections on research approach and research design, the overall research stages and instruments were:

- Organisational consultation and permissions
- Desk research
- Literature review
- Questionnaire with scale questions and freetext
- Semi-structured questionnaires for use with:
  - Global Diversity Network Representatives
  - Country Directors
  - Regional Directors
- Consultation at Global Diversity Conference

Triangulation of data was possible from drawing on three different sources looking at the issue from varying perspectives as well as from using the multi-methods of structured questionnaire, semi-structured interview, and presentation and interrogation of data at a global conference. The benefits of this are that the findings from one source or method used have been reinforced by the others, increasing confidence in and validity of the findings.

Research Approach

The literature review provided no insights or steer of significance to inform the research approach beyond the fact that given the absence of comparable studies, or specific, identifiable gaps, it has been valid to conceive of an approach that appears to best address the research problem and the questions that come out of this, with consideration to the available resources. Having said this, it should be acknowledged that the review did highlight the implementation challenges for organisations operating internationally, linked to the under developed and early stages of approaches to managing diversity in these contexts. The TRANSCO study (Sippola & Smale, 2007) in particular whetted the appetite for further information about what other organisations who are serious about implementing diversity policies do and ignited workplace discussions, underscoring that moving beyond the development of policy to implementation is where the 'real' and challenging work is.

As the research is part of a professional work based study programme it falls within the province of social sciences. This province is said to be rather woolly and imprecise, as it does not usually produce definitive laws in the same way as the physical sciences. However, it can explain a lot about behaviour in organisations and has the same ability as physical science to provide knowledge (Denscombe 1998, Silverman, 2000). The related projects are often associated with, and suited to, description and detail and to small-scale studies (Denscombe 1998) and an action research methodology. For these reasons an approach was adopted which reflected the common features within all action research that Gray (2006) describes. These include research participants involved in a democratic partnership with the

researcher, research which is viewed as an agent of change and data that is gathered from the direct experiences of the research participants.

Out of this and the explanations the research provides about the facts of the GDN related experiences and perceptions, may be a contribution to generalizing about the specifics of their experiences and perceptions. As a result of this the research adopts an inductive approach.

Gray (2006:375) with reference to Coghlan (2001) comments on 'insider action research', a *type* of action research which is often undertaken as "part of an academic programme of study such as an executive MBA" (Gray, 2006:375). This research is one "in which managers are engaged in action research projects in their own organisations". As Gray (2006:375) notes, "One of the advantages of adopting insider action research is that managers have an intimate knowledge of the organisation being studied – they know its culture, its jargon and its personal networks. They can participate freely in discussions or merely observe what is going on without people necessarily being aware that they are being researched." However, and this is rightly acknowledged and there is reference to this, "it may be difficult at times to maintain a sense of detachment and it may sometimes prove difficult for an insider to cross departmental, hierarchical or network boundaries" (Gray 2006:375). Given the reason for the research and its context this is the *type* of action research adopted.

As action research concerns itself with practical problems and with change, and as part of this "seeking information on the attitudes and perspectives of practitioners in the field" through a participative approach (Gray 2006:243), its selection as a methodology is particularly appropriate. Further, it is, as has already been mentioned, work based and therefore invariably small scale, addressing an identifiable problem that needs a solution.

Already data has been gathered and analyzed and has been the subject of review, and, consistent with close and ongoing collaboration, the subject of discussion. This

has been between the researcher and colleagues from within Diversity Unit and across the Global Diversity Network and beyond; for example, extending to the Global Leadership Team and Executive team and in some instances key contacts in the field. Change has been part of this process and there will be further change, reflecting the overlapping cyclical process of action research (Gray 2006).

Research Design

The scale of the research is small given the specific nature of the problem it concerns itself with. There are other reasons that have determined the scale of the research which include the fact that the research is work based and taking place as part of ordinary, ongoing organisational life, with finite resources influenced by the duration of the programme of study as well as organisational priorities.

A cross-sectional *snapshot* approach characterizes the research, adopted because the data has been collected at a fixed point in time by factors referred to above including those of resource and time constraints.   The research is also characterised by an approach that is primarily qualitative, with some of the qualitative features identified by Halfpenny (1979) of soft, flexible, subjective, political, case study, speculative and grounded, suitable for work based, professional studies and projects typical of organisational research generally (Gray 2006). A researcher preference for the analysis of words and images rather than numbers, and for inductive, hypothesis generating rather than hypothesis testing research, was also taken into consideration. This is consistent with the aim of a piece of research that assists in constructing theories and models from the data for the specific work context, and where possible beyond. Having said this, the research has, though, made some use of numeric data and therefore there is a quantitative dimension to it.   These elements were confined to ranking understanding, performance and effectiveness; overall they formed a small part of the methodology. This confirms a pragmatic research design and approach and one that could help with the management of the data. Thinking ahead, it was recognised that a lot of data would be generated by the research and this would create data management problems. If, for example, the insights into how the GDN's

performance was rated could be captured through a quantitative representation, and this seemed appropriate, this would assist with data management.

The research was designed and developed so that:

a) There was an opportunity for the initial stage of the research to be piloted, including within different countries.

b) Data could be gathered from all required participants irrespective of geographical location, during the course of the working day in a medium that met the preference of the participants, recognizing that all respondents had to put time aside for this as engaging in the research, although related to it, was not part of the normal course of work.

c) Primarily qualitative but also quantitative data could be collected from the 3 research participant groups – GDNRs, RDs and some CDs, with some modest initial data being collected from DU staff.

d) A level of triangulation could take place – perceptions of difficulties and solutions for these could be gathered from the 3 main respondent groups involved.

e) There was nothing foreseen in the fieldwork arrangements that meant the organisational rhythm of staff moves and national and other holidays, in particular Chinese New Year, Eid and Ramadan would interfere with and negatively impact on the data gathering process.

f) The field work could evolve over a period of 18 months, with the first data gathering, analysis and discussion stage in some measure informing the next stage, consistent with an action research approach.

g) There could be discussion of the findings from both stages with a wider 'interest group' including research participants at the Global Diversity Conference, again consistent with an action research approach. This discussion could itself contribute to the analysis and researcher understanding and potentially inform recommendations.

h) Use could be made of the relevant insights to come out of the research and these could translate into actions and recommendations and ultimately an improved outcome, consistent with the organisation's ambitions for its equality and diversity agenda.

Methods

The safe, familiar, appropriately pragmatic action research methods of questionnaire, interviews and case study were employed. Others, which would undoubtedly also have been appropriate, in of course the context of a different design, were considered. These included soft systems methodology and the Delphi technique. They were not pursued as the insights required, could it was perceived, be generated by the familiar methodologies and there was a nervousness about venturing into new terrain alongside managing the demands of the programme of study, which sat alongside a demanding full-time job.

Questionnaires

The questionnaires consisted of a mix of requests for factual information, for example location and length of time employed in the British Council, open questions with room to write in text responses, and a rating question asking participants to rate their own performance on a scale of 1 – 5, with an odd number used to provide an option for neutrality. The mix of styles was decided upon so that the participants neither had too much to write nor got bored or into routine answers, which is a danger with too many scale questions. In addition, the responses to the self-rating question provided quick quantitative data which at a glance showed the overall self-assessment of participants.

An open ended approach, through mainly instructive requests such as "please list…", "please identify…." and following a request for a rating "please outline your reasons…." was adopted as part of questionnaires. This has the value of providing an appropriate steer whilst also allowing space for participants to answer in their own words and also at a length that they determine, supported by the fact that an

electronic email questionnaire design did not restrict this but allowed for as much text to be inserted as desired.

Ease of distribution is a significant value of electronic email questionnaires, in particular for a geographically dispersed organisation that communicates electronically routinely. There are other advantages too. This includes the ease with which it is possible to track the response rate of a geographically dispersed group and follow up and prompt the non responders. This is supported by the fact that the organisational practice of evidencing who responded when, through the 'email trail', frequently acts as an 'incentive' to ensure a reply within the requested timescale.

A significant disadvantage is the confidentially concerns they raise and the data security risks posed, necessitating careful attention to this area and assurances. This is highlighted in the discussion on ethical issues.

In adopting an open ended approach, there was an attempt to ensure as much neutrality within this as possible, in particular given the very real tendency for researcher bias as a result of the work based nature of the research and relationship between researcher and participants. So, for example, instead of requesting that participants list the difficulties they face in their GDNR role, they were asked to list *any* difficulties they faced, hopefully conveying that there is no assumption that they do face difficulties.

Semi-structured interviews
Kvale's (1996) breakdown of the word interview into 2 parts – *inter view* highlights the dynamic and exchange nature of the process. These factors make it an especially suitable method for establishing a dialogue between researcher and participants about a shared area of interest and activity, of significant organisational relevance.

Acknowledging that an interview is not an everyday conversation and that "it has a specific purpose" and that "it is often question-based, with the questions being asked

by the interviewer" (Cohen, Manion, Morrison 2007:349), interview schedules with a level of structure to guide the conversations and bring consistency of focus were developed. At the same time there was sufficient flexibility to allow and indeed encourage participants to share as widely as they wished. 'How' and 'what' questions were frequently used.

Interviews with GDNRs lasted between three-quarters and one-and-a half hours with most somewhere in the middle. They were undertaken by another DU staff member whom, given their role and length in post was less familiar with the GDNRs and visa versa. This was an attempt to bring a little more objectivity to the process and to potentially 'free up' participants to talk more candidly, given, in addition to other factors, that the researcher originally conceived of the GDN and in most instances was of a more senior grade. Interviews with RDs, all of whom are a more senior grade than the researcher, lasted in general approximately three quarters of an hour and were undertaken by the researcher.

All interviews, with two exceptions, one due to equipment failure, the other due to not securing permission, were digitally recorded. They were transcribed verbatim, except for words and fillers such as 'um' and 'er' and 'you know', by a service outside the DU experienced in audio typing and research interview transcription and familiar with the subject of equality and diversity. Each interview was transcribed by one person and fully checked by a second person before returning to the researcher for a full read-through.
Use of this outside service aimed to bring rigour to data collection as well as releasing time within the DU.

Sampling
Typical of much qualitative research, a purposive sampling method was employed in order to "acquire in-depth information from those who are in a position to give it" (Cohen, Manion, Morrison, 2007:100) and consequently, in keeping with research studies that take place within the workplace, there can be no claim that the sample

was representative. This non-probability sampling of a group that simply represents itself is typical in small scale research and could be said to constrain generalizing out from the research (Cohen, Manion, Morrison, 2007:113). It is however consistent with the available resource, research problem and desired outputs and outcomes, and from what the literature review surfaced, is unique as seemingly the only work of this nature.

All GDNRs were included in the first stage of the fieldwork focused on GDNRs. The second stage involved a smaller number comprising two groups split into five high and five low performing GDNRs. All GDNRs who attended the conference in Sri Lanka heard a formal presentation of the research findings and with other conference participants discussed them and two of the high performing GDNRs were the subject of 'live case study interviews'. All RDs were included in the field work focused on RDs. A small number (5) of all CDs employed within the British Council participated in fieldwork focused on CDs.

Piloting
The research activity began in earnest at the point GDNR questionnaires were piloted with 3 ex-GDNRs and 1 RD. Given the relative newness of the RD role, there was only 1 person who had held the role but was no longer fulfiling it and was therefore available to participate in a pilot.

The aim of the piloting was principally to increase the reliability, validity and practicability of the questionnaire as well as other highly relevant points usefully summarised by Cohen, Mannion, Morrison (2007). This includes the elimination of ambiguities, time taken to complete the questionnaire and identifying questions that were too difficult or remote from the experience of the participants. Piloting led to relatively minor modifications.

Semi-structured interviews were not piloted as they related to the data to come out of questionnaires and there was therefore confidence that the interview format was addressing issues.

Data Collection

Data collection spanned 18 months with 6 separate and overlapping phases reflecting 3 research instruments. November 2007 when the proposal was presented for assessment was, in effect the start of the research time table. Following piloting the fieldwork began in earnest in March 2008, generating 64 distinct pieces of original data:

1. Electronic questionnaires issued to:

Diversity Unit staff (2) excluding the researcher

These sought a rating for each of the GDNRs with a supporting rationale, without any team discussion. This data was gathered during January 2008.

All Global Diversity Network Representatives (21)

This data was gathered from all GDNRs through a general email approach. This was decided upon as it was considered that the fact that this was something all relevant colleagues were being asked to participate in, supported by the most senior level of the organisation, might encourage participation. The email went out to all of them as a group on the 3rd March 2008 (Appendix 3.1) with a 5th April deadline.

In it was an outline of the relevant details of the request for their participation, signaling that there would be subsequent requests for some. Reference was made to confidentiality issues and a deadline of a month was provided. This was followed on the 8th May, 2008 with a deadline of 18th May, 2008 and was followed up again on the 28th May, 2008 and again on the 11th June, 2008 with 4 who had not responded.

From this quantitative and qualitative data was elicited. This included profile data with reference to gender, disability status, sexual orientation, nationality and ethnic origin,

age and other background data related to their GDN role. In addition were the questions about fulfiling the role and their development needs (Appendix 3.2).

All Regional Directors (12)

Data was gathered from all RDs through a general email approach that also went out to all of them on the 3rd March, 2008 (Appendix 3.3) with a 5th April, 2008 deadline. It outlined relevant details and requested their participation, signaling that there would be subsequent requests for some. Reference was made to confidentiality issues. This was followed up with 2 of those who did not respond until a response from all was secured.

From this quantitative and qualitative data was elicited. This included profile data with reference to gender, disability status, sexual orientation, nationality and ethnic origin, age and region of responsibility. In addition to this were questions about the GDN, becoming aware of it, rating it, understanding what it does, contact with GDNRs, knowledge of GDNR difficulties and 'solutions' to these and a general question related to improving the British Council's equality and diversity work (Appendix 3.4).

All questionnaires were issued and returned electronically, as already stated, a familiar medium of communication for the organisation and one it is at ease with. In part as a result, there was ultimately a 100% response rate.

Analysis of the questionnaires helped in finalizing decisions about whom of the GDNRs to ask to participate in semi-structured interviews and what questions to pose. It also led to decisions about what questions to ask RDs and a change in plan to request an interview with all RDs rather than just 2 of them. This change came about because the GDNR questionnaires revealed the problems for GDNRs which required solutions and it seemed important to explore these with all RDs given their role as regional leaders and so potentially as the most significant parties in solving problems, as well as other reasons which are commented on later.

2. Semi Structure Interviews – face-to-face and telephone

Semi-structured interviews took place either face-to face or over the telephone, with a majority of interviews taking place over the telephone, taking account of course of time zone differences.

The focus of interviews was on additional information initially covered in the questionnaires to enhance the quality of this and also on new information.   This new information was determined by the DU and wider discussions and curiosity.

Regional Directors (12)

As already indicated, interviews took place with all RDs rather than just the 2 proposed. This is because it was deemed by DU colleagues and the research consultant to be opportune to interview all of them, rather than just a couple for reasons already been stated. In addition, the data that emerged from their questionnaires was not very informative, due it was surmised to very busy participants conveying the minimum, or given their somewhat distant role, an absence of depth to their insights. However, they were very quick to respond and positive about doing so and this was felt by DU colleagues and the research consultant to be something to build on and an opportunity to explore ways of keeping them as a group informed about E&D and engaging further with them. Interview questions therefore focused on eliciting further information from questions already asked and trying to identify solutions to the difficulties of time and limited resources identified by GDNR respondents, as well as on the issue of engaging with them. Interviews took place during the months May to July 2008 with two exceptions where interviews ran into September 2008.

Global Diversity Network Representatives (10 comprising 2 'strong' & 'weak' performing cohorts)

As already indicated these interviews were informed by the analysis of the completed questionnaires and DU ratings. In doing so account was taken of where they were positioned in relation to the spectrum by the DU. In addition the analysis of self rating

and details of activities (nature and level of activity) they undertook relative to the role was taken into account. Allowance was made for some level of under and over rating. This means that if there was a disjuncture between self rating and evidence to support this, DU rating was prioritized. The conclusion of this process determined who should be interviewed as part of the two contrasting groups of high and low performers, as well as the focus of the interview questions. Access was obtained by approaching each respondent directly.

Interviews built on questions already asked and probed the issue of GDN characteristics asking participants to identify an ideal GDNR. Enquiries related to the operating environment were also made. A total of 10 participants were interviewed rather than the 8 proposed in the project plan as this captured of those clearly at opposite ends of the spectrum. To have kept it at 8 would have been artificial and omitted a clear high and low performer and not made use of the outcome of analysis. Interviews took place during the months of July and August 2008 with one interview running into September 2008.

Relevant Country Directors (5)
Questionnaires were distributed to Country Directors who in this capacity had a line management relationship with a GDNR in September 2008. They were completed by the following month. Questions were focused on their relationship and contact with the GDNR, their perception of difficulties faced and how effective or otherwise the GDN is, as well as what might improve effectiveness.

3. Global Diversity Network conference for GDN representatives
Thirteen out of the original research participant group of 21 are still GDNRs and 10 of them attended the conference. Full GDNR participation in the conference was not possible due to a range of reasons, for example, maternity leave and resource issues. Conference participants included other staff too. For example, country representatives, staff from BC Sri Lanka the hosting office, the Sri Lanka Country Director a participant in the research, staff from India, the other country in the region

and the originally agreed conference venue, Regional Director for India and Sri Lanka, another participant in the research, DU staff and Country Director BC Hong Kong and Regional Director designate India and Sri Lanka. For the opening morning of the conference, the British Council's Chief executive was in attendance. This is a rich mix with a high level mandate provided by a Chief Executive prepared to travel to participate and the Regional Director and Regional Director designate.

The conference outlined in a formal session the findings that had emerged from the research and provided an opportunity to think about and discuss and comment on these (Appendix 3.9) as a feed into further analysis   It also invited all participants to visually map what an ideal GDN would look like and in doing so to take account, in particular, of the difficulties shared with them that had been revealed by the research. It further presented two case studies in the form of live interviews of two GDNRs identified through the research, by peer research participants as ideal GDNRs (Appendix 3.10/11). One of these was male, white and UK contracted, the other female, black and locally contracted. Both fulfil Country Director roles although of markedly different size offices in markedly different countires. The conference programme also built in a response to some of the knowledge and skills needs identified by participants. These were knowledge sharing and practice skills sessions which participants had said formed some of their needs (Appendix 3.9).

The implementation of the design, through the field work and generation of primary data, has been challenged by the rhythm of the organisation, something referred to earlier on, and in particular, by its response to global markets. Notably, there has been an unforeseen impact arising from changing financial exchange rates which led the January 2009 GDN conference to be cancelled and rescheduled in April/May 2009. Already there had been a venue change from the original proposed one of India, driven by affordability that could not be addressed without compromising security. Then increasing political instability in Sri Lanka, the revised venue of the conference, led to uncertainties and questions about the conference taking place at all, with corresponding implications for the methodology. These 'real world issues'

presented not insignificant negotiation and organisational challenges but did not ultimately compromise what was proposed.

The process of analysis

Analysis is invariably ongoing. Having developed a research project and committed a significant period of time to it, rarely does it cease in some way to be a part of what the researcher thinks about and mulls over. This is arguably intensified in the case of research that takes place in the real world where the research is a part of the normal course of work and concerned with addressing a problem that needs fixing.

The approach to analysis can be said to have involved 3 main and interconnected elements; that is each element does not standalone from the other elements as a discreet activity but interconnect and inter relate:

a)   Review - of which immersion and reflection are a part

Eyeballing and reading through the raw data, letting it 'wash over' and infuse and 'speak' for itself. Getting a real sense of what it is conveying in broad and holistic terms. Resisting the temptation to link it to the specific, known individuals and engage and relate to it based on this.

Reviewing the organised data - alone and with others (DU colleagues, professional consultant, a doctorate student from another discipline) at points in time and as part of an ongoing process. Standing back from it and questioning – the words, the phrases, the themes and what they might mean and be conveying, recognizing that these will have a culturally determined element. So considering if the emphasis on knowledge that emerges as a need is fundamental to fulfiling the role of GDNR and/or confidence in the role. Or is it to do with the organisational emphasis on knowledge, and/or related to the link between knowledge and qualifications and the status given to qualifications, particularly higher level ones said to be apparent in many countries amongst the educated, middle class internationalists, arguably reflective of many British Council office staff teams; or indeed a combination, or something else.

b) Organisation – identifying patterns and themes

Electronically cutting and pasting of individual responses so that all those relating to specific questions could at points be reviewed together and it was easy to move from a 'total picture' of one group of data to such a picture of another group of data.

Highlighting and underlining for later grouping the key words, phrases and ideas expressed. Noting occurrences of key words, phrases and ideas – such as 'lack of time' which became a recurring theme, the GDNR role as a 'journey' and a 'positive one', as well as a 'positive perception of the GDN'. These occurrences were then cut or transferred into longhand and sorted into broad groupings.

The process of again reviewing, standing back, repositioning and reorganising data then took place involving a research student from another discipline to 'check' perception and discuss this as part of sense making and efforts to bring a modicum of objectivity.

Analysis did not just involve identifying commonalities and themes. It was noted where no themes appeared to emerge. For example, there was limited reference to the DU and to the themes of equality, prejudice and discrimination and combating this as part of the GDNR role. 'Tensions' in the role and the notion of being a critical friend and conscience that researcher and Diversity Unit experience and Kirton, Green and Dean (2007) confirm exist did not emerge as a theme. There are likely to be several reasons for this including the predominant instrumental approach to the role confirmed by references to and examples of a focus on the role related tasks, in particular training and awareness and the Diversity Assessment Framework, as opposed to a focus on organisational culture change.

It was noted where there was contradictory data – that is where some of the participants called for something and others stated this is something they would not wish for, or to which they made no, or limited reference. For example, in terms of

what RDs believe to be an appropriate response to difficulties, or might find useful as part of remaining informed about E&D, and contrasts between face-to-face updating opportunities and written summaries.

The concept of time poor, overloaded workers with limited resources at their disposal emerged from the analysis. This outcome of content analysis, as an example, has to be set alongside the difficulties the literature review tells us organisations operating internationally have in translating their policies into practice within their local operations. This has to be considered and potentially linked to the emphasis on stripping out work that does not contribute to the bottom line and is deemed 'nice to have'.

c) Sharing and discussion – of emergent themes
Presenting formally and informally emergent themes to immediate colleagues and the Chief Executive and other senior colleagues, including some of the broader Global Leadership Team (of which RDs who participated in the research are a part), academic adviser, professional consultant, GDNRs and GDN conference participants and other Doctorate and PhD students. Utilising this process to inform analysis and in particular emergent recommendations.

Strauss and Corbin (1998) helpfully outline the purpose of analytic tools stressing their role in avoiding "standard ways of thinking about phenomena" and of particular relevance to this research study, listening "to what people are saying and doing" Strauss and Corbin (1998:93). This has added resonance in the field of work based research because of the very real danger of layering the data with assumptions arising from what already seems to be known because of course, what the GDNRs do on some levels is known and opinions not only exist about this but have determined the research. The inbuilt methodological triangulation used by gathering and analysing qualitative and quantitative data, mostly the former, through questionnaires and interviews from three different sources – the RDs, GDNRs and CDs assisted in avoiding standard ways of thinking. So did the corroboration of findings sought from

the ten research participants and others who attended the GDN 2009 Conference. Drawing on these different data sources and methods resulted in a refinement of the emerging themes and greater clarity and confidence in conclusions reached and relevant and practical recommendations.

Researcher role

We are told by Strauss and Corbin (1998), Silverman (2000), Denscombe (1998) and others that analysis is given limited attention in the context of prolific research themed literature.   Having said this Denscombe (1998) and others (Cohen, Manion, Morrison, 2007, Bell, 1998) provide a helpful steer.

Denscombe's (1998) remarks on analysis as a "process of interpretation" in which "the researcher's self plays a significant role in the production and interpretation of qualitative data" are helpful. So are his comments that "The researcher's identity, values and beliefs cannot be entirely eliminated from the process and "Amongst practitioners of qualitative research there is a general acceptance that the researcher's self is inevitably an integral part of the analysis, and should be acknowledged as such" (Denscombe 1998:208).   Arguably this is especially true in the context of research in the real world and work based learning related research, where the researcher in the context of this research project, for example, is an indivisible part of the process. This brings with it significant dangers of basing interpretations on what is known about the key parties in the research, on first hand experience of the problems the research seeks to address, and on opinions of the causes and potentially most effective solutions to problems. Surrounding this are issues related to negotiating how best to present the emergent data and protect it from being infected by any unhelpful aspects of the organisational culture – blame and value judgement aspects, for example.

Questioning has been a useful analytic tool. Again with reference to Strauss and Corbin (1998) there is a need to ask good questions including who, when, why, where, what, how and how much and with what results? The purpose of this

questioning is not to generate data but to generate new ways of looking at the data. This in the context of sharing and discussing the data (point c above) generates its own challenges as sharing the data and discussing the analysis of it and the findings emerging, results in differing perspectives being proffered which themselves need consideration and adding to the analytic process. This is a problem when the data is more widely 'owned' as has been the case in this particular work based project; there have been some related frustrations for the researcher as a result of this. At points this has tipped into a questioning and review of who is the researcher and what is their role, arising particularly from assistance in the process of interviewing GDNRs. A brief and condensed example here might be helpful:

The research generated data on the activities GDNRs undertake and commentary about performance – a level of self evaluation. The researcher analyses this and presents it to the team. A team member expresses surprise at the generally positive perception of the role to emerge from analysis and requests further detail, specifically the raw data from which conclusions are drawn. Part of what is asked is who were the ones saying these positive things and what exactly were the forms of expression? There is related presentation of the data, interrogation of it and some discussion of cultural norms in responding to questions for wider and formal usage. Specific reference is made to potential impact on professional relationships of 'negative feedback' and some reference to the cultural lenses through which questions are interpreted, however seemingly neutral and open ended the presentation of them might be, as well as how individual GDNR perception framed and focused they are – 'you have undertaken', 'you perceive you have fulfiled', 'you feel you have performed' (italics for emphasis). The team member questions further, including how it is possible to ignore the seeming 'mis representation' of perceptions and the positive framing of these. This is asserted based on what is known and in the view of the team member, unequivocal contra evidence. So the disjuncture between what the data reveals and what is known about working relationships and colleagues' performance as part of the process of engaging with the GDN is surfaced and is

something that cannot be reconciled. Or more accurately, there was no attempt to reconcile.

The challenge of all parts of the process of analysis has been considerable. The 'relentlessness' of it, compounded because it is about the real world and real world activity, taking place all the time and consequently hard to 'separate out' from daily working life. A key question has been - when do you stop analysing? It was one posed and helpfully responded to by 'at the point you have the solution'. Whilst this might act and did indeed act as a useful and relevant 'theoretical end point' it however did not bring about a literal end point to the process of analysis. This continued during the writing up process although of course not with the intensity and formality referred to above and will no doubt continue beyond it. It continues, in particular because of the insights and dialogue generated from the research and the DU immediate and wider team engagement in it and impact on the work of the DU and its planning.

A level of comparative analysis took place. The focus here was on the performance of the GDN, the difficulties they encounter and the potential solutions. What were the similarities and differences in respect of these between what GDNRs themselves were saying and RDs and CDs, whom they engage with, including in some instances, through a line management relationship? The shared perceptions to emerge were somewhat surprising. This is primarily because there was an assumption of the GDNR role as a rather lonely one with limited understanding and appreciation of it. Insufficient appreciation of the wider engagement and progress made in mainstreaming and embedding E&D across the organisation may underpin this 'surprise', in addition to the emergent potency of the Diversity Assessment framework (DAF) the key measurement tool. This is because the focus of engagement, that is the discussion and formal meetings, between GDNRs and RDs and GDNRs and CDs, is clearly and unequivocally the DAF.

Researcher position and ethical issues

There is inherent bias within qualitative research as we are all subjective creatures, irrespective of our commitment to, or quest for objectivity. In the context of work based research, as already commented on, this subjectivity is arguably heightened. This is as a result of the challenges of undertaking research within one's professional domain with the attendant ongoing relationships and scrutiny of organisational practice of which the researcher is a part, frequently a key part, given the seniority of many of them.

The role of the researcher within the process and indeed within organisational research generally, raises a number of questions and dilemmas. In the context of this piece of research issues confronted included the subjective position of the researcher, the challenge of exploring the effectiveness of a group comprised of colleagues, the headquarters and UK based position of the researcher tainted by the organisational dynamics and connotations and perceptions of superiority, the loss of original sponsor as a result of restructuring and senior staff moves.

The challenges, including of objectivity and minimising the negative impact of power disparities related to the 'insider' researcher role, were in part addressed by drawing on assistance with data gathering from a Diversity Unit colleague. This assistance as already indicated was premised on an informed but power distance position that on some levels is closer to the core participant group from which additional data was sought. Also though, Diversity Unit team members were fully involved in the research, bringing alternative ways of doing and looking at things. The professional consultant to the research and questions and queries of GDN participants made a contribution to addressing these challenges.

Ethical issues and challenges centre round:

- Agreement and free will in terms of participating in an organisationally mandated, supported and welcomed piece of research, led by the senior manager

responsible for the field of enquiry. The high response rate and sense of researcher confidence in an ability to attain this rate attests to how potent this mandate can be in terms of ensuring or encouraging participation.

- Confidentiality and data security in terms of managing the boundaries of these within a context where the piece of research is 'owned' by the organisation, participants are know 'research subjects' and the data, its control and interpretation, analysis and use is influenced by this. How open participants feel able to be and the impact on them of being subject to performance and other judgements and evaluations, is influenced by the attention given to confidentiality and data security. As one participant said "Remind me how many of these interviews you are doing and how come it's that number in comparison to the number that belong to the network? Incidentally how many people filled in the questionnaire, it's just that I am interested in the sample?" This appeared to reflect something of a concern about whom they were potentially being compared to and evaluated against. This is more pronounced as other participants, arguably untypically in research generally, are known colleagues.

- Representation - in terms of how the researcher represents participants, these being not only the researcher's colleagues but also the colleagues of other people in the organisation. Arguably, particular sensitivity is called for regarding an honest, respectful representation because of the potential to be relatively easily identified. In addition some participants are being represented as low performers 'against' high performers. This was uncomfortable and as a result required guidance and encouragement in order not to avoid this. In any event it was a manageable difficulty.

The above impacted on the approach in a range of ways. In terms of participation use was made of the 'mandate' from the highest level of the organisation but the request for participation was framed in terms of exactly that, a request, not a requirement. There was some allowance for the pace at which participants

responded with no implied criticism if this fell outside the time frame given and reminders were constructively framed. Confidentiality issues were given careful attention and assurances provided about the security and use of data. It was made clear that the provision of sensitive data was optional and would not be linked to individuals. It was recognized that identifying features relating, for example, to specific roles and countries within relatively small cohorts, could not entirely be eradicated and indeed in some instances there was a need to surface these. This holds when identifying an ideal GDNR which was the basis of a live interview at the GDN conference. It also holds in identifying two groups with differing performance levels. Overall, the impact on the approach was to avoid negative labeling and a focus on negative criticism of individuals, and focus on the outcome required and the contribution of the whole research process of investigation and enquiry to this end.

Validity and reliability

Qualitative research has within it inherent bias as a result, for example, of the subjectivity of respondents. However, as validity can take many forms, qualitative research can address validity, including through honesty, depth, richness and scope of data achieved (Gray 2006, Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). It is acknowledged that threats to validity and reliability cannot be totally erased. The aim nevertheless is to minimise invalidity and maximise validity (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007) and in the process ensure the research is effective and worthwhile. This is why piloting and different methods were built in, and the analysis was opened up through sharing and discussing the findings with colleagues, taking account of their feedback and perspectives.

Denscombe (1998) suggests that broadly speaking validity means that "the data and the methods are 'right'." He continues, "In terms of research data, the notion of validity hinges around whether or not the data reflect the truth, reflect reality and cover the crucial matters. In terms of the methods used to obtain data, validity addresses the question, 'Are we measuring suitable indicators of the concept and are we getting accurate results?' The idea of validity hinges around the extent to which

research data and the methods for obtaining the data are deemed accurate, honest and on target." (Denscombe, 1998:241).

The data collection techniques and approaches were relevant to the research aims and questions and have the potential for different levels and quality of data to be captured. Bearing in mind that since the launch of the GDN no related research, investigation or even evaluation had taken place prior to this, the research design allows for a reasonably thorough approach given available resources and the project size.

Conclusion

The research design and instruments aimed to ensure alignment and a level of coherence between the problem and the investigation of the problem. It built on previous Doctoral academic work and held firmly in mind the desire to use the research process and approach to reflect on and improve organisational performance in a spirit of cooperation. Building into the methodology an opportunity to feedback to participants the emergent findings, enable discussion of these and in turn factor in the results of discussions was an important part of this cooperation. This in turn, as appropriate, has informed the DU work plan, even where this is not linked to specific formal recommendations.

Overall reflection on the methodology concludes that it was appropriate and fit for purpose. However a modified approach which would have enabled greater specificity and focus in aligning the questionnaires to the GDN aims and tasks, and in aligning the questions posed to each of the participant groups would have been desirable. Having said this, the reality is that the DU has lost sight of the tasks which were developed in 2004 and have made no discernable reference to them. In addition, at the outset of the research more attention should have been given to clarifying issues of effectiveness, moving beyond effectiveness with reference to the extent to which GDNRs fulfiled the specified GDN purpose. In particular, and this has arisen because of the researcher's lack of experience of work based research, the research process

has become somewhat unwieldy. It has not been possible to 'contain' the research and to have clear boundaries and parameters around it. The RD and GDNR interviews drifted into exploring areas the DU considered of general value and importance in improving general understanding and working relationships, generating data and the analysis of this, and indeed points of action not clearly related to the research problem and questions. This drift and containing this has been a problem compounded by the level of excitement about the insights being generated. With this excitement came what might best be described as an eagerness for more information and insights and desire to use the research as an opportunity to glean this.

The methodology has sought to address a real problem and to analyse this and make appropriate changes consistent with modern research (Gray 2006). Addressing a real world problem in a direct way and leading and managing the research process has not only positioned the researcher as an internal change agent but has also deepened the researcher's understanding. This is in contrast with a detached role evident in other research paradigms (Gray 2006). In particular it has strengthened the researcher's professional identity in what is an emergent field of practice, with no widely recognized distinct professional body. Interacting with the literature within the field of study, in addition to managing a small scale study as a senior manager and professional leader, is a significant part of this. Of course with this comes what might be described as the 'messiness' and problems of for example, drift already referred to. Nevertheless, meaningful recommendations which are outlined in Chapter 6 have come out of the methodology employed and there is a sense of methodological success because of this with the research attributed as adding real value to the work of the DU as attested within Appendix 3.12.

CHAPTER 5

PROJECT FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This Chapter outlines the key findings that have emerged from the analysis of the data. There are four of these directly related to the research questions and each of them have additional elements. A further four findings, which although not directly related to the research questions, are included. This decision has been arrived at drawing on discussion with Diversity Unit colleagues given their significance to the work of the Unit and perceived 'general interest factor'.

The chapter begins with an overview of the 'diversity profile' of research participants and establishes a pattern for presenting subsequent findings that involves background comment, followed by the relevant data and related discussion, then summary remarks.

An overview of the role related activities GDNRs undertake, reflecting their account of what they do, follows the profile findings. There is then a focus on the difficulties GDNRs face and their needs. How they are perceived and what would be helpful in making the GDN more effective proceeds findings on GDNR characteristics, attention being given to E&D, cultural norms and attitudes and information and awareness needs of RDs.   .

It will be recalled from the Methodology chapter that we are dealing with data from three participant groups and from two of these, data collected in two stages by two methods, as well as some data from the 2009 Global Diversity Network Conference. Not all of the data to emerge however is of direct relevance to the research questions and more has emerged than anticipated for the size of the project. However, despite this, and the not inconsiderable challenges of synthesising the data, the Chapter endeavours to reflect the rich contribution of participants and do some justice to these, ultimately in support of the recommendations which can make a difference and effectively address the research problem.

Who are the research participants; what is their 'diversity profile'?

They are GDNRs, RDs and CDs and on some level a diverse group who also share some characteristics.

Background

The 'diversity profile' of research participants provides an insight into their wider backgrounds telling us a modest amount about their origins and their group profile. No firm conclusions are drawn from this, not only because numbers are small making it impossible to draw firm conclusions, with even tentative conclusions proving difficult, but in particular because there is no external benchmark to draw on. However, where a level of relevant internal diversity data exists reference is made to it.

Given that the benchmark data gap was evident at the final stages of the research design there was some deliberation about whether to pose related questions. The conclusion of these deliberations was that an emphasis on reflective diversity in the context of a wider E&D discourse and British Council practice, which gives importance to this, made it professionally and personally difficult not to do so. However consideration had to be given, and indeed was given, to the inherent sensitivities; not only cultural sensitivities, which include differing perceptions of what is personal and private information to be carefully guarded, but also in terms of requesting, using and storing the sensitive and personal data of colleagues who are known to the researcher. This was something that was carefully considered in the course of piloting and DU team meeting discussions and has been referred to as part of ethical consideration. It led to the conclusion that the data could be sensitively handled, securely stored and participants, especially GDNRs, would probably be receptive to providing this given their role. In any event it was felt that there would be some interesting findings, as well as formal confirmation of what is seemingly know. So diversity profile data was pursued and this is outlined below in Table 5.1 using

percentages given the small numbers involved and the related identifiability issues. Gaps reflect non responses.

Table 5.1: GDN Diversity Profile

GDN Diversity Profile		
Age	20 - 35	36 - 45	46 - 65
	6 (30%)	5 (25%)	9 (45%)
Disability	95% do not have a disability		
Ethnic Group	23% white (white, Caucasian, European, Slavic) 10% Jewish 9% Asian 5% each of all other ethnic groups		
Gender	76% women		
Religion	Buddist 10% 28% Christian Hindu 9% Jewish 10% 13% Muslim 15% do not hold a religious belief (Atheist, Humanist) 10% did not reply 5% All religions		
Sexual Orientation	85% heterosexual 10% lesbian or gay		
Dependants	50% have dependants 45% have no dependents		
Reduced Hours Work	76 % do not work reduced hours		

Regional Directors

We have confirmation that none of the RDs have a disability, the majority is Christian, white, heterosexual, has an average age of 51.9 years and has dependents.   They have a profile aligned to that of the wider British Council UK contracted diversity profile – white and Christian majority, within the above age group and at a senior level, male.

Country Directors

This group is also mainly male, Christian, white and heterosexual. The majority does not have a disability or dependents and their average age is 49 years. Again there is some consistency with the wider UK contracted organisational profile.

Both groups are unremarkable in terms of their profile. Whilst there is no real value in a comparison with the GDNRs, the most notable difference is that of gender profile. The largely female gender profile of GDNRs is consistent with the UK contracted and wider organisational profile. There is also a difference in terms of broadly shared ethnic group, comparative to the GDNRs for clear reasons relating, for example, to categorization, nationality, roles.

Global Diversity Network Representatives

At the time of embarking on the research GDNRs comprised 21 people working in 20 countries and 12 regions undertaking a range of jobs. Only one held a teaching role although these roles comprise approximately 25% of all British Council staff. The limited teacher representation reflects the fact that the teaching arm of the British Council's work is somewhat separate from the rest of the organisation and teachers are rarely released to make wider contributions because of the 'bottom line' nature of what they do.

Four of the roles held by GDNRs are wholly focused on the area of Human Resources (HR) and a majority of other roles have a clear HR dimension given the senior or general nature of them – deputy director, office manager and resource manager, for example. There was no conscious decision to target HR colleagues, indeed regions and countries make their own decisions about who to recruit into the role. The percentage in an HR role does however appear to indicate that the GDNR role is perceived to be an appropriate fit with HR, confirming a more widely know organisational view. This is consistent with the fact that E&D issues are viewed as principally concerned with internal and HR matters within domestic and global companies. Further, it is true that the E&D agenda involves, amongst other things,

how staff are recruited, deployed and treated (Kossek & Lobel eds., 1996, Chmiel 2000).

In many but not all ways, GDNRs are a diverse group. There is a limit to this diversity because none are disabled, most are women, heterosexual and do not work reduced hours. There is though considerable diversity of nationality, ethnicity, religion and belief. Age diversity and dependent responsibility sit somewhere in the middle and we find resonances with what we know of the organisational profile, or aspects of the organisational profile. For example, the majority of UK based staff for whom the most comprehensive and reliable data exists are also mainly non-disabled and heterosexual, and there is good reason to believe that this profile prevails across the organisation as a whole given the findings of the pilot into global monitoring (British Council Global Pilot Monitoring Report, 2007).

A majority (59%) of all British Council employees worldwide are reported to be female, a more modest number than holds within the GDN. In considering why the GDN has attracted a higher percentage as representatives it has been suggested by colleagues that the E&D agenda appeals to women's worldview and concerns and they are as a consequence early adopters, with men coming on board later as the profile of the agenda has grown. These are broad generalizations that are not interrogated but offered to provide an insight into some of the related beliefs and perspectives that prevail.

As highlighted by piloting, representing the ethnicity profile of a diverse group of colleagues who have 'self defined' rather than placed themselves within constructed categories, and who are based in a range of environments from which come huge variations in ethnic categories and notions of majority and minority groups, is a challenge. There is limited meaningful comment to be offered in this context except perhaps that it is of some note that the main 'ethnic group' is white, followed by 'Asian' with Jewish being defined as both an ethnic and religious group and also white. Self classification ranges from broad groupings such as white, Caucasian,

European and Slavic which contribute to the 'white' grouping, determined as such from deliberations, with the attendant problems acknowledged, to Latin American and not applicable. It's a mixed, interesting, complex picture with underlying issues, including how GDNRs themselves approach ethnic monitoring and what informs this, particularly as it is not an established practice in most of their operating environments.

Members of a number of the main world religions and members of no religion are represented amongst the GDNRs. There is therefore some religious diversity amongst them including people who do not hold a religious belief and some who did not consider this to be a question warranting a response, as well as a respondent claiming their religious belief to be 'all' encompassing:

The religious diversity has a relationship to the ethnic diversity given the linkages between the two but it has not been considered possible by the Diversity Unit or the GDN to move beyond reporting on the findings of these aspects given the small numbers involved, as well as the range of problems in using proscribed or self classification for a geographically spread group and where this would sit in terms of priorities and relevance.

Half of GDNRs have responsibility for dependents. In the absence of organisation wide dependent responsibility data there is little comment of meaning to be made. What has been raised as something of a surprise is that so few have what they would deem to be wider dependent responsibilities given the fact that these hold in many cultures where there can be strong interdependence.

Broad age groupings were used to establish the age profile of GDNRs because this is common, good practice and because in addition to providing an overview, offers greater anonymity.

The age profile of GDNRs falls predominantly within the 46 -65 range. This covers those both established in their career and at the end of it. It is the broad, predominant

age bracket of many staff for whom we know the age profile but is an older profile in comparison to the overall age profile of the regions where we have piloted equality monitoring.

The overwhelmingly female profile of the GDNRs has been the subject of discussion since the inception of the GDN, so this is not new data. However what is new is the snapshot the research provides of members participating in the research and their diversity. In addition, because the research is about change and improvement, it has catalyzed action to try and help ensure that, where possible, the GDNR role attracts more men and in particular those working within the teaching network. Greater gender diversity and participation from those based in a wider variety of roles, particularly without any HR links, will it is believed, help ensure related perspectives are identified, understood but also reflected in the issues identified for attention and in what GDNRs do. So there is a recommendation that regions recruiting to the role insert a statement aimed at encouraging men and those based within the operational (including teaching) streams of the British Council to apply for the GDNR role.

Summary

It is acknowledged that there is a limit to what can be deduced from the profile data for reasons touched on including the small numbers involved and a benchmarking gap, as well as the snapshot nature of the data, given the turnover within the network. However the data has illuminated, for example that self classification amongst a group working closely with E&D issues is viewed in a greater variety of ways. In addition fewer than might be imagined have dependant responsibilities, some group profiles conform with established organisational profiles – RD and CD profile, many more women than men act as GDNRs and wholly operational (including teaching) staff are in limited numbers. These latter points are of sufficient concern to warrant a recommendation.

At this point we leave the profile data behind and move now to look at the key research questions and their findings.

RQ1. How do GDNRs perceive they fulfil their role in the context of the aims of the GDN: what do they do and how effective are they?

They have a positive perception and undertake a range of tangible and shared actions.

Background

The GDNR role is a relatively new one within the organisation. It initially emerged in 2003 as part of the development of the organisation's equality and diversity agenda, this agenda itself being relatively new, although piecemeal related activity and initiatives had been taking place.

In responding to the challenge of conceiving of and implementing a more rigorous approach to E&D for the whole of the British Council, it was considered important for this to engage the diversity of staff from across the organisation. In particular, it was important to have formal engagement with colleagues from a geographical spread and range of operating environments, whom were themselves diverse in a range of ways. This includes in terms of cultural and ethnic backgrounds and differing perspectives and experiences, in order to help ensure an approach reflecting the 'ingredients' axiomatic to equality and diversity. One devoid of this has the real danger of being ethnocentrically oriented and inappropriate, resulting as highlighted by Ferner et al (2004) earlier, in significant barriers and resistance of a cultural and institutional kind. It also has the danger of the types and levels of discomfort to which Sippola and Smale (2007) refer with reference to the TRANSCO Finnish staff. Whilst a GDN does not entirely guard against these dangers, it was perceived as a necessary part of helping to minimise them.

Having set up the GDN there has, as we know, been no systematic investigation into any aspects of it, including how GDNRs perceive they fulfil the role. The Doctorate study programme provided an opportunity to address this so has really engaged colleagues. This is not only because of the insights to be gleaned but also the opportunity based on these to identify relevant interventions. In the absence of

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access into insights and understandings of how colleagues view their performance of the role, as Kirton, Greene and Dean (2007) highlight, we are in the terrain of conjecture. Not only that, any recommendations will be rooted in the space left and invariably misaligned in terms of need.

There is of course increasing understanding and acceptance that the 'occupant of the terrain' is best positioned to talk about, comment on and reflect back, the world they inhabit. This is evident in how General Medical Practitioners, counsellors, therapists and countless others approach diagnosis, and managers approach supervision and performance management (Thompson 1996). It is the terrain of critical self reflection that Schon (1983) has made such a strong contribution to.

Finding 1.1
They undertake four main activities largely consistent with requirements of their role.

As already indicated, the research sought to explore how GDNRs perceive they fulfil their role in the context of the aims and purpose of the GDN. It was considered important to explore their perceptions in terms of both what they do, and as part of this, how effectively they do what they do.

The starting point of what they do was considered to be a helpful one for the later 'rating' of their performance and generation of some modest quantitative data. Identifying the 'what' is an acknowledged useful precursor to reflecting on the 'how' (Kolb 1976) and informed the design of the research questions and positioning of these. Also of course, any comment on effectiveness has to be with reference to both what is required and what one actually does. The usefulness of this concrete entry point was supported by the outcome and feedback from piloting.

The data generated in response to GDNRs being asked to specify the activities they had been undertaking directly related to their GDN role revealed these to be varied and tangible. The conclusion of analysis is that they fall into the four predominate

categories outlined below, supported by a few illustrative points, followed by some discussion.

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1. Training and awareness raising activity

Regional and country advice and consultation and engaging leaders

Sharepoint site development and management

Developing awareness raising material including mail shots, posters, mouse mats

Engaging external contacts

> *"I co-delivered training with JF in Chiang Mai and Bangkok, tailored to the wider Thai context of our offices throughout Thailand."*
> GDNR N4

> *"R and I have provided a total of 16 training workshops for over nearly 300 staff in China region. We also shared our experiences with colleagues in East Asia Region."*
> GDNR N2

> *"Organising EO&D training and focus group discussions for the Romanian and Bulgarian office."*
> GDNR N16

> *"Briefed colleagues, partners and consultants on local, regional, UK and British Council equality and diversity issues."*
> GDNR N17

> *"Public engagements to talk about our equality agenda: Out in Africa (Gay and Lesbian Film Festival); City of Cape Town – Diversity in the City.*
> GDNR N8

All respondents are engaged in the provision of some level of training and awareness raising activity, undertaking the actions summarized. A factor in this engagement, as a starting point, may be the ready availability of and access to a range of British Council E&D learning and development resources which enjoyed strong investment because they were viewed by the researcher as an important part of establishing and progressing the organisation's agenda. In addition to this is the existence of a dedicated E&D learning and development post. This is a specific resource they can draw on that also makes financial resources available to support E&D activity, in

addition to the financial resources they can negotiate at a local level. Facilitation training which was made available to some of the GDNRs is also likely to have been a factor in all of them undertaking training and awareness activity, with the increase in demand for this being related to a requirement of the Diversity Assessment Framework.

Sometimes training and awareness extends to external contacts within the operating environment. Surprisingly here the numbers are of some significance with 9 out of 21 citing this, so nearly half, from varying countries. This arguably reflects an appetite within an external audience for related information, as well as GDNR perceived capability and willingness. However more investigation to establish the detail and circumstances of what was provided and to whom the offer is delivered is needed before firmer conclusions can be drawn. What they collectively do with an external audience potentially contributes to positioning the British Council as an organisation with knowledge and experiences to share, in a context the literature tells us, where a knowledge gap exists. This is consistent with the overall aspiration of the organisation to make a leadership contribution to international aspects of E&D.

The differing methodologies indicated, like local electronic sharepoint sites, mailshots, mouse mats and posters, perhaps reflects the international nature of the organisation and its resultant heavy reliance on and use of ICT. In addition to this is the frequently highlighted limited time available for colleagues to absorb new information. Also there is the oft repeated point that many offices are based in countries that are not reading cultures, with limited familiarity with E&D and this requires a range of approaches to 'messaging' and an emphasis on creativity.

It is suggested that a number of factors come together that result in all GDNRs providing training and awareness activity. For example, experience confirms that training and awareness play an important role in efforts to mainstream E&D. They are central not only to the British Council's Diversity Strategy but also to the purpose of the GDN and the development of a dedicated role for this purpose highlights this.

Further, we know that investment in training and awareness generates solid evidence in support of applying the 'all reasonable steps defence' organisations can avail themselves of where there are instances of alleged unjustified discrimination. Perhaps of most significance is the fact that, as we shall see later on, RDs make resources available for learning and development and this will include resources to hold events and undertake travel to attend them. It is unsurprising therefore that all GDNRs engaged here because of the strong support for them to do so and normative nature of the activity.

What does not come through is any detail about activity involving consultation, advice and engaging leaders. This raises questions about what this might be, in particular given that this forms a significant part of the Diversity Unit's work and there is no substantive evidence of this being provided at a regional and country level. Despite attempts to follow this up at interview stage, no further insights were revealed and in fact some level of confirmation that the DU is the main source emerged. A means of encouraging GDNRs to provide advice and consultation and engage leaders is likely to be important in terms of confidence and capacity building as well as alleviating demands on the Diversity Unit.

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2. Regional strategy and local action plan development and progression activity

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"Prepared Regional Action Plan for East Asia."
GDNR N21

"Planning for regional Diversity Champions team."
GDNR N20

"Help in issuing a guide for NENA (Near East and North Africa) region countries to help implement NENA EO&D strategy."
GDNR N18

"Led EOD in SEE (South East Europe) including wrote strategy and organisation of a 2 day training event for people from all 16 SEE countries."
GDNR N1

Findings support the conclusion that the way in which a significant majority of GDNRs are fulfiling their role is overtly mapping on to the British Council's still relatively new regional working model. Responding to and addressing regional issues, included within which is much DAF related activity, specified and not specified as such, is consistent with the purpose of the GDN and their representative role within it, this being a regionally focused one.

A closer examination of what is entailed under the heading of regional activity reveals that they do this in a variety of ways. This includes writing or contributing to E&D plans, undertaking not only DAF but also training and awareness activity already mentioned, as part of adopting the increasing regional approach to all of the organisation's work. This approach is influenced by a decrease in the size of many country operations and a desire to achieve impact and share resources at a regional level.

Geographical regions globally are coming together in a myriad of ways, notably the European Union, but also the Arab League of Nations and the Union of West African and Latin American countries, for example. So the British Council's approach has some consistency with this. It also confronts the related challenges of balancing individual country needs with wider group needs, and as part of this ensuring that country size, or other means of influence, is not the determinant factor in setting the agenda. It is a complex 'coming together' where E&D is concerned with a balance to be struck between what is unique to countries in the region and what is distinct. This is something GDNRs so inclined could explore.

It might be expected that something would be revealed from the data set as a whole about the problems and difficulties of fulfiling a regional brief and the transition to this. This has not however emerged in spite of the fact that some of the GDNRs have been in a transition process from essentially country, to regional representative and regional working is still relatively new. It can reflect any number of things including

complete acceptance of such working, comfortableness with it or no reference to regional working in questions asked.

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3. Contributions to wider corporate activities:

DU led E&D activity including attending and hosting conferences, consultation exercises and research

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"I have given direct input into the development of a number of our EOD policies/documents/processes like the religion and belief guide, the anti-racism guide, the gendered nature of cultural relations and the overseas equality monitoring pilots."
GDNR N1

"Hosted the first major GDN conference in Cape Town in 2004."
GDNR N8

"Took part in the EO&D conference in London on 26th February 2008."
GDNR N22

"Volunteered to be a part of the DAF/Scorecard working group and of the Values working group."
GDNR N30

"I tried to make contribution as much as possible. For example, when Jane was conducting an EOD survey, I not only did it myself, but also encouraged external contacts to do it. When I received enquiries from Diversity Unit I tried my best to help. I contributed case-studies to Anti-racism Guide. I participated in various discussions. Our workshops on disability and practices of recruiting disabled students formed good contribution to Equality Scheme. And I gave a presentation on China at the Diversity Conference in London. I also volunteered to work as one of the DAF moderators.
GDNR N2

Whilst all activities specified by participants, in broad terms, support mainstreaming and the key purpose of the GDN, half of them are contributing at a wider corporate level. These include contributions to Diversity Unit led activity, for example, research into areas of gender and organisational values and to corporate conferences. Those doing so are the more established, and in the view of Diversity Unit staff and on some level endorsed by the research, stronger performing members – the ones that can

either be relied upon or who have the motivation and/or confidence or make the time. So the percentage arguably has some alignment with the presence of such members within the Network as a whole. This corporate level engagement makes it own contribution to helping ensure that a UK centric perspective does not prevail and an inclusive approach is fostered, given that it seeks out and therefore allows for and takes account of network members' views, experiences and skills. However, clearly not all members are making a corporate level contribution and it might be assumed not all are in a position to do for reasons referred to already and commented on later.

The fact that reference has been made to this level of contribution suggests that they consider it noteworthy. Certainly in the view of the Diversity Unit it is a contribution that adds meaningfully to 'internationalising' the agenda and this fact is widely known and so may influence the weighting they give to it.

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4. DAF specific activity

Advising, collecting and logging activity, various, setting up panel, submission of evidence

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"Participated in moderating the DAF in 2007 and 2008."
GDNR N21

"Collecting evidence and finalizing DAF returns under the supervision of the Country Director."
GDNR N22

"Following up on the result of the DAF in 07-08."
GDNR N30

That DAF activity is the least cited activity by participants is both surprising and unsurprising. It is surprising because of the ground swell in organisational focus on the DAF during the course of the research which one might have expected would have found its way through in to the findings. However the fact that this has not happened is accounted for by the lapse of time between doing the field work and following this, the process of analysis, acknowledging that there is an ongoing

dimension to analysis (Denscombe1998). It is unsurprising because has been no specified DAF task identified for GDNRs and no reference to the DAF in the GDN's purpose. This purpose was developed at a time when the DAF did not exist but also, the purpose of the GDN has not, as already stated, been substantially reviewed or revised.

There is a strong belief that were the research to be undertaken at this point in time, participants citing DAF specific activity would be 100%. Indications of this are seen in the references to DAF as part of other areas of activity. In particular though this is because the role of the DAF as a key measurement tool for the organisation has risen significantly and it has become firmly embedded as such. In response, there is wider evidence that DAF focused work is being reflected in what GDNRs do and are required to do. This claim is further supported by, for example, the increase in requests for attachments to the Diversity Unit to learn about the DAF and an increase in DAF related questions and queries being handled by the DU, an increase in visits to the DAF section of the Diversity Unit intranet site, as well as requests for workshops which have the DAF as a sole or key focus. Further, evaluation forms from the 2009 GDN conference provide evidence that the sessions on the DAF resulted in particularly strong and energetic engagement. It was, with one exception, the session to receive the highest rating as the most useful session of the day in which a significant amount of time was scheduled for it.

Summary
With the exception of 2 participants, GDNRs cited between 4 and 13 activities they had been engaged in, all of which are consistent with the GDN's overriding purpose of progressing the British Council's E&D strategy though a mainstreaming approach.

The range of activities cited by individuals is accounted for not only by the variation in activeness but also variations in how this is expressed, with some choosing to use broad headings such as "provided country leadership" and others not insignificant detail, including of leading at a country and regional level. So whilst at no point was

specific reference made by participants to the GDN purpose, the findings show that in broad terms an understanding of the role has been conveyed, acted on and consequently imbibed. The data set as a whole, however, suggests perhaps that there is a somewhat inadvertent aspect to this and it is subject to the individual interpretations of the role and of course engagement in it. It reinforces the need for more thought to be given to what the network is seeking to achieve through its members and to more active and relevant management of the network. A review and revision of the aims of the network and plan for managing this is therefore called for.

A purpose and activity gap revealed by the data is that of mutual advice, assistance and support for members. There are likely to be several reasons for this gap, one of which may be the turnover amongst members. With many leaving, it is reasonable to assume, most have limited opportunity to understand, engage and immerse themselves in the role sufficiently to not only understand it and fulfil it, but to grow in it to then be of assistance to others. This is compounded by some of the difficulties they encounter which are commented on later, in particular the difficulty of sufficient time for their GDNR role, yet alone one imagines, for supporting others. In addition the terrain of E&D is new to many, if not the majority of members. Reinforcing this perhaps, is the evidence presented later on that they deem their living and working contexts to be ones where, generally speaking, less attention is given to E&D issues than in the UK, with a decade ago very little, if any, attention being given. These factors, in addition to their identified knowledge and skills needs and E&D as a relatively new organisational agenda, are likely to result in limited capability and capacity to provide 'peer' support. It raises the issue of how realistic this aspect of the GDNR role is and is something to be reflected on as part of the research project recommendation of a review of the GDN's aims. It also began to challenge how realistic it is to expect that the GDNRs can do more to release the DU to focus on strategic issues.

Given that the literature review revealed no material on networks of the type that form the focus of this study, it has not been possible to compare and contrast the kinds of

activity undertaken by similar global diversity network members.   The Sippola and Smale (2007) study provides an indication that within TRANSCO a network of employees have responsibilities with some similarities to the GDN. However as little more than a reference, there is an absence of detail to enable further comment. The attempts to contact TRANSCO to establish what information exists on the Diversity coordinators role cited in the study, and whether they work to a role specification has not produced results and was abandoned.

It is important not to discount a relatively simple potential explanation for the lack of reference by the GDNRs to the GDN's purpose when reporting their activities - simply that the questionnaire itself made no reference to this. It is especially important given the evidence of differing approaches to fulfiling the role and differing levels of support and management engagement, alongside capacity challenges and turnover, that the whole area of managing the network, with a move from a largely reactive to a pro active approach, is given more attention.

Finding 1.2

They perceive themselves to be effective

There has been some consideration of what GDNRs have been doing as part of exploring how they fulfil their role, with the aims of the GDN being the 'reference point'.   Now we turn, still as part of considering how they perceive they have fulfiled their role and with a focus on the first of the research questions, to an evaluation of the extent to which they consider themselves to be effective. The ratings they give themselves are presented below and there is discussion about how they describe and convey how they have fulfiled their role. Later on the perspectives of the other research participants are introduced.

We find, in general terms, that Global Diversity Network Representatives believe themselves to be what could broadly be claimed as effective in their role.   In response to the request to rate themselves on a scale of 1 – 5 according to how well they believed they had performed their GDNR role, the following variations emerge:

Table 5.2: Performance rating

1	2	3	4	5
2	6	5	7	1

Newer members and a small number of established but less active members rated themselves at the lower end. More active and established members rated themselves higher; these being members who proportionately hold more senior positions and, as we shall see later, constitute the 'ideal' group. The data suggests an even spread of those at either ends of the mid point with about a quarter within it.

As a result of the above, coupled with the qualitative data, it is reasonable to conclude, in response to the first of the research questions that GNDRs hold, in general terms, a positive perception of how they fulfil their role:

> *"I feel I have done my best so far, but having only effectively been involved very recently, I believe there is much more I could do."*
> GDNR N22

> *"I think I have done a full job, taken the role seriously, tried to be a team player rather than act in isolation, and have received positive feedback from a range of others about the way I have carried out the role."*
> GDNR N4

> *"I feel I have tried my best within the constraints I operate in.   I have given my own time and effort to progress the agenda in the offices and regions which I have worked in and currently work. I feel I have inspired colleagues when it comes to mainstreaming it and challenged people to think and act at a number of different levels."*
> GDNR N24

There was a minor level of seeming 'under rating' and 'over rating'. Where relevant this was addressed and explored in interviews as there was some interest in understanding what may lie behind this, in particular because the self ratings were at

odds with peer perceptions. This means that the individuals were either perceived to be part of the ideal GDN group but rated themselves at the lower end, or were not perceived to part of this group and rated themselves highly.   There are a number of factors at play here including the extent to which peer performance is known, determined by, for example, visibility and length of time in the role. In addition, it appears the ratings are a part of the individual's distinct approach, with some cultural resonance in terms of not overstating one's worth or contribution, or indeed being comfortable doing so and considering this to be valid:

> *"Usually I under estimate. I think that what I do is not enough and I need to do better, and this is my personality and my culture. I always feel I need to do better and that I need to do more, so this is why I rank myself quite low."*
> GDNR N18

> *"I was obviously feeling very positive and full of self-esteem that day. I know that I have really done my best with it so I think it's a 4.5 because although I rated myself a 5, it sounds like you are……..4.5 leaves room for improvement."*
> GDNR N1

> *"I think I am doing an OK job compared to other GDN members. But there is an area I need to improve myself so that's why and that is how we think. For example at a conference I wish I could make more contribution. Sometimes the thing that holds me back is I don't know enough about this area, especially the UK, things are so complicated. For my country I can discuss a lot about my country but outside it, for example there were discussions about things in South Africa, racial discrimination and social unrest or in other countries. I know very little about there so I can't contribute a lot.*
> *Actually in this area I don't have the experiences. Everything I know I learnt from my current work."*
> GDNR N2

If the mid point group can be assisted to improve performance and 'join' the higher point groups this could result in a marked improvement in overall GDN performance. The real difficulty of translating this into action is the fact that already between the point of fieldwork, analysis, drafting and re drafting a significant number of GDNRs has been lost. The focus therefore has to be on supporting performance in the role

and addressing difficulties but also noting what is satisfying about the role, this being the focus of what follows.

Personal and professional satisfaction
There can be no claim of a relationship between personal and professional satisfaction, motivation for the role and a perception of being effective in it. However analysis of the data reveals that GDNRs who clearly find their role personally and professionally satisfying also describe themselves in terms of being highly motivated. These factors cannot therefore be discounted when trying to establish what leads GDNRs to a generally positive group view about how they fulfil their role.

As part of the personal and professional satisfaction that comes through, many GDNRs talk in terms of personal and professional enrichment, a journey of discovery and an extended world view:

> *"I think it's exciting. Your horizons, they are so much wider. You know what is happening outside there. And you are part of this very good network, all these tight knit people and you keep learning things. For example, within the GDN network, training is organised, for example facilitation skills training. So professionally it's a development opportunity and you are learning new things. So that's the positive side."*
> GDNR N1

> *"Being a GDN member gave me a lot of experience, gave me a lot of background and exposure to what is happening in other countries regarding EO&D. It also gave me belief in EO&D and being a GDN member also helped me to be stronger in facing problems and challenging things in our office."*
> GDNR N2

> *"I am proud to be a GDN member. It's been fulfiling on a personal and professional level."*
> GDNR N21

> *"Sometimes controversial, often illuminating, always thought provoking."*
> GDNR N16

"The GDN is one of the most inspiring, empowering, inclusive, democratic and transparent networks I have been involved in the Council."
GDNR N19

"I am personally passionate about GDN role. It has given a fuller meaning to cultural relations. All in all it has been a fascinating journey."
GDNR N4

"I think the work the network does is critical to our business success. It's the heart of our values and the way we do business. Our people. It just cuts through everything. I think that's kind of one level of it. I think another level of it, personally if you like, I've also had a, you know, I worked in equal opportunities before I joined the Council. So, it's a, sort of, it's a person, professional interest, it's a personal interest. It's a personal lens through which we view the world, it's a particular, it's a personal lens through which we view the world and we are in the world. So there's sort of a personal sense of having a contribution to make, I think. In terms of interest, history, passion, plus the business side of it."
GDNR N1

"I've performed my role with passion, caution, enthusiasm and alongside my core job. Not a bad performance."
GDNR N24

"So in summary I would say I perform my role confidently and enthusiastically with full commitment."
GDNR N30

"I am proud of some activities, but I know there's much more to do."
GDNR N6

"It's something different from my normal duties. Raising people's awareness in something that they don't really think about on a daily basis. Talking to other people in the network, which is always interesting, and sharing perceptions and views in different countries, which is always valuable. It is quite satisfying – I wish I had more time for this. But I do what I can."
GDNR N3

Summary

Overall, group perception is positive both in terms of role perception generally and performance in the role. The overall positive and satisfying reflections provide a constructive basis for developing, managing, supporting and responding to the acknowledged challenges for the Network. This is asserted because they highlight

and indeed confirm, in general terms, a positive view of the role, so it is arguably not the role per se that presents difficulties or is problematic for them. It suggests that it is likely to be possible therefore to attract new members, an important consideration given the high turnover of members the network has to contend with. It also suggests a positive basis for supporting members, in particular, if the failures in managing the network referred to earlier and the difficulties which will be referred to, can be addressed. Indeed, there is ongoing evidence that attracting colleagues to the role in 'interest factor' terms is possible; no regions have reported a failure to attract applicants and whilst numbers applying do not appear to be significant, they are evident. Problems centre on other matters which are discussed later on. Relevant to this point is the Diversity Unit belief that the area of E&D is not one where, in general terms, organisational knowledge and confidence is high and where the 'status' of the agenda is certain; all factors which may impact on attracting applicants, including of a significant number to apply to be a GDNR.

Finding 1.3

They consider themselves to be well motivated but believe there are things that could improve this

Motivation for the role amongst both cohorts of performers with whom an in-depth interview took place, is high. Notably, 3 out of 5 low performers are at the lowest end of motivation suggesting a relationship between these. However none of them rate their motivation under 3. None of the high performing group ranked their motivation under a 4. The operating environment does not appear to determine motivation, or indeed higher or lower performance, as no link between this and the extent to which GDNRs say they are motivated emerges from the analysis. For example, motivation is high amongst GDNRs in China and yet the operating environment is rated rather low in terms of engagement with the agenda: likewise for Georgia and Egypt.

Various reasons are given for the strong motivation amongst the GDNRs including:
- value ascribed to E&D work

- perceived benefits of diversity

- personal interest and the interest of local companies

- progress being made

- positive feedback including from RDs, CDs and external contacts

- contribution to meeting strategic objectives

Some of the above are reflected in the following quotes:

"My current motivation is high. I am absolutely motivated about being on the GDN, about diversity work, personally and professionally. So I feel very motivated. It's not to say that there aren't things that would make me feel better about it, but you know, motivation itself, I mean that's a 5 for me. It would though motivate me more if there was more engagement from senior management of the organisation with it. It would motivate me more if, in my region, more senior people, acknowledged the work that people do here, and the role that diversity plays. So, my experience is that quite often I get more positive feedback from people on the GDN network, and the Diversity Unit, than I do from colleagues that are, that I actually work with. So yes, those things would motivate me more."
GDNR N4

"I am motivated by the networking with other members and getting information because that is information that is good for me as a person. It's good for the organisations that I'm working with, the contacts that I come across, and for my colleagues as well. Because they see, when there are issues around within the organisation they will still come to me and they want to discuss."
GDNR N5

"The motivation is that it is at the heart of our work. It's what matters more than anything, you know, I think EO&D principles, if we get those values, you know, our core values right, as an organisation, if we walk the talk in a sense in all of this, then everything else falls out of it as a consequence. We will build relationships, we will build the right projects, we'll deliver impact, we'll scale up, we'll bring in the income, you know if I get that right. So what motivates me is the feeling that this is the most important things. The irony is it doesn't feel like that often, it feels like it's a kind of added on organisationally, I'm not convinced the organisation sees EO&D that way, but that's what motivates me. Actually believing, believing in the core values."
GDNR N1

"Because I think the purpose is good. I believe in the purpose. I'm, I appreciate the diversity in the world myself. And I think it's very personal and idealistic. That is what drives me. Also I feel proud that I am doing something interesting like this. I put myself at a 4. I think if, if that would be my main job that would be, that would motivate me. More time to spend on it would be helpful. Maybe not as motivation, but for practical reasons it would be very helpful."
GDNR N6

"I would like to continue in the role because I think it has a very meaningful aspect to it."
GDNR N7

"First of all, learning new things motivates me. It is a new area, a new and exciting area. It's a hot topic among companies in China. Generally, usually, people are interested in this. And once they understand what it is all about they are very keen to know more, to work on it. So that is very exciting. Also it is kind of a professional development opportunity."
GDNR N2

"I think it is doing more activities where we actually put into practice the different ideas of diversity and more the implementation of it rather than at the policy level. And I think we have got the policies all right, OK they can be tweaked here and there, but the policies are good policies that we have got. It's a question of how we begin to implement those in a very practical way and I suppose the assessment is one practical way of doing it. There are far too many people who still see that as an exercise that they need to do once a year or once every two years rather than something that is built in to the work that they actually do."
GDNR N8

"I think the main reason for my motivation is that you see the benefits of it. How it can compliment the work and how you can get the best out of it. And living in a place like X, you know, multicultural, different walks of life, all kinds of things like that, it really helps. You are looking at the benefits for what motivates you. Each individual feeling that they are valued or whatever. So then the office becomes a much better place, everyone is working towards the same goal, team spirit and all that sort of thing."
GDNR N22

There appears to be something almost deeply personal, but with a professional link behind the motivation GDNRs report. Is this something intrinsic within people similar to the qualities of an ideal GDNR to which reference is made later on? Is it to do with

the relationship between E&D and cultural relations coming through? Is it something else and if so what and is this something that can be nurtured? In all likelihood it is a combination, with the personal motivation acting as an engine behind the E&D work GDNRs do on top of full-time, substantive and in instances, senior roles, if what the data set as a whole is taken together and what it appears to tell us is considered. Certainly without having taken a rigorous and systematic approach to the GDN and GDNR role, highly motivated members have emerged who believe themselve to be doing arguably akin to their best in the circumstances. This and what emerges from the fieldwork suggests that the area itself is the attraction and the basis for engagement, more so than how it is formally managed, although more rigorous management may be an important element of 'nurturing' the motivation and getting the best from this.

Improving motivation

Continuing the theme of motivation, GDNRs were specifically asked to identify what would help improve their motivation. In response they cited being able to interest and engage others, including managers, but also finding solutions to the issue of time for the role, as well as identifying ways of meeting their information and learning and development opportunities. So whilst the area itself may be the magnet, there are things that would strengthen motivation, and arguably for those not particularly motivated, if the improvements were in place they might constitute a motivational/engagement 'tipping point'. This may have a corresponding positive impact on performance in the role and GDN effectiveness. The theme of 'what would help' is picked up later in an examination of difficulties and what might reframe these.

Conclusion

A positive picture emerges from an exploration of the first of the research questions and one that is different from what was imagined which was perhaps a group who would acknowledge they could be doing more, in part, if they were more motivated to do so.   We find though that Global Diversity Network Representatives are active in different, concerete ways despite the additional E&D responsibilities alongside full

time jobs. Generally speaking they feel they are effective and performing well, are motivated and could be motivated further. This again has implications for the 'less than efffective' characterisation of them and assumption that they should and could do more which would then release the DU from demands on it, including ones that are context specific and which as GDNRs they might be best positioned to deal with.

There are specific actions that can and have been identified in response to the findings and as a result three related recommendations are proposed incuding utilising the DAF.

RQ 2

What difficulties do Global Diversity Network Representatives face and what are some of their needs?

Difficulties of time, overload, involving others, resources and knowledge and skills needs.

Background

There was awareness within the Diversity Unit that GDNRs were facing difficulties in performing their role. However establishing the nature of the difficulties presented a number of problems. This was because different GDNRs cited different issues, at different points in time. Also, in addition to the turnover of GDNR members, there was fairly limited communication between some of them and the DU. The turnover in particular meant that it was a challenge to understand and build up a picture of what was going on.   Further, a group of GDNRs were clearly performing very well and were held in high esteem for this by the DU and in some instances their peers. Against this backdrop the research provided a good opportunity and one that would not ordinarily be available, or have the rigour academic research can provide, to establish not only the difficulties that GDNRs face but also to identify what their needs relative to their role are.

No discussion of the needs of GDNRs has ever taken place although fairly early on in the life of the GDN and prior to the GDN conference in South Africa, a need for facilitation skills training was identified and responded to. Hence the reason for this research question currently under discussion.

Whilst there are positive findings about how GDNRs perceive their role and performance which have already been referred to, the research data has confirmed that GDNRs face difficulties. Some of these are very context and person, situation and circumstance specific, and this has made it hard to identify common themes and concerns. In addition, some difficulties have emerged not in response to specific questions about difficulties, but in response to other questions and the data have had to be interrogated to capture this and ensure that a role difficulty is being communicated, as opposed, for example, a general or specific frustration. Interrogation and analysis of the data has been necessary to identify points of convergence for GDNRs, RDs and CDs and to present the difficulties as a shared and holistic picture, out of which meaningful recommendations can be proposed. Three main difficulties emerge from this endeavour. They are the primary and widely acknowledged and shared difficulty of lack of time for the role and overload, followed by the difficulty of involving a wider group of colleagues and finally a resource difficulty. Each of these is now discussed in turn.

Finding 2.1
GDNRs identify three main difficulties
1. Lack of time and overload
Not surprisingly, because this is an acknowledged organisation wide difficulty that comes through in staff surveys and other ways, lack of time and overload emerged as the key difficulty GDNRs confront.   Eighteen of them, together with 9 RDs, cited this difficulty in response to specific questioning and 100% of both groups made some reference to it within the overall data set including from GDN conference contributions. There was only one related reference from a CD which may be to do with the fact that some of the GDNRs are themselves CDs; this as will be recalled is

the reason there are a reduced number of CD respondents. Also much of the Diversity Unit management engagement has been with RDs, not CDs.

Overall, the difficulty of taking on the additional GDNR duties was perceived to be bordering on something akin to overwhelming and acts as the main barrier to them fulfiling their role, or fulfiling it as effectively as some might or would wish to:

> *"Lack of time is always an obstacle, with a full plate and competing priorities at work. I often found I had to devote my own time to my GDN tasks. Even so, sometimes office priorities had to take precedence over pre established GDN commitments, which was frustrating for me."*
> GDNR N16

> *"Time is an obstacle. I would love to do more, encourage others to do so – particularly on the programme side."*
> GDNR N1

> *"Having enough time in the day. There needs to be less reliance on good will and personal commitment and more formalized recognition of the work needed to progress this agenda."*
> GDNR N26

> *"Time constraints and conflicting priorities."*
> GDNR N33

> *"Time and workload. Although EOD is only 5% of my JD, actually I find I have to put in much more time into it. Colleagues are also very busy with their work and EOD is something on top of everyone's job."*
> GDNR N2

> *"Pressure of time – to do everything that is proposed and to do them to a level of quality that meets my own standards and those of others. Not enough time to do the job properly in-country."*
> GDNR N8

> *"Time. Time. Time. And energy! Being busy with day to day work activities, regional projects and so on, one needs extra effort and strong motivation to accomplish goals that are generally not considered as main job."*
> GDNR N6

93

> *"Simply time…Hopelessly submerged in a series of high importance tasks (including GDN work)."*
> GDNR N25

RDs echoed the theme of time saying:

> *"Make it a core role with time requirement."*
> RD N28

> *"Time; it tends to be on top of the job."*
> RD N11

> *"The large and growing workload imposed by the rest of the Council to deliver on other agendas."*
> GDNR N27

> *"Finding adequate time to fulfil their role."*
> GDNR N9

> *"Time – this is a part-time role."*
> GDNR N32

> *"Lack of sufficient time to fulfil their roles as they often have other demanding daytime jobs to do."*
> GDNR N29

> *"Too much expected of too few."*
> GDNR N39

Four participants, some of the most active and experienced, further commented about the lack of time their job allows for them to develop knowledge in terms of internal and regional best practice. So lack of time is impinging in different ways, including in development terms which obviously takes and requires time.

2. Wider involvement

Getting colleague buy-in and dealing with the lack of interest and/or participation was mentioned by half of the GDNRs and most CDs with comments such as:

"Some staff are still resistant to the agenda and do not see it as important to them and their work in the BC."
CD N35

"Lack of interest from colleagues."
GDNR N30

"I have encountered resistance from other CDs – but I think this is changing slowly. EOD is still seen as a bit of a 'fringe activity' not really core to our business."
GDNR N1

"Need to constantly motivate colleagues to engage with the EO&D agenda."
GDNR N8

"Getting buy-in from the colleagues in the country and the region is difficult."
CD N36

This was supported by 5 RDs. They referred to a lack of management familiarity with reasons for giving this priority. This particular reference suggests the business case for diversity may not have reached the managers, or alongside competing demands, there is insufficient reason for them to give particular attention to E&D, not even in the context of a cultural relations role. Hence a leadership guide (Appendix 4.1) has been developed. This was formally considered at the conference and is due for revision.

The area of E&D is tainted in a number of ways with notions of 'political correctness'. It can be seen as not aligned with the local culture, a passing fad and perhaps of especial relevance here, an area that is not core business but a 'nice to have' or intangible benefit. Although it is recognized and acknowledged, for example, that improved workplace relationships and other positive things can result, whilst important, they are not easily quantifiable, hence the nomenclature 'intangible benefit'. For all of these and other reasons E&D can be seen as problematic:

"It needs to be 'sold' as it includes 'sensitive' areas, sometimes is seen as politically correct' and sometimes as ethnocentric. We need to promote EOD in a way that is attractive and empathetic to the full range of attitudes and values that are reflected in our 7,000 plus strong workforce. This is a big challenge."
CD N 35

"Not getting enough support and "air-time" with CDs and indeed RD. CDs in particular must demonstrate visible interest and support, refer to the GDN during staff meetings, ask for updates, ask for meetings with representatives. There is a delicate balance sometimes between what can be implemented in the UK and what can be overseas i.e. respect for local cultural differences which may impede implementation of some practices which are current in the UK."
RD N32

"We need to sell the value of EOD much more convincingly to all within the organisation. It's good for people – we all want to be treated equally and have our diversity respected. It's good for compliance – a lot of EOD policy is not optional but is a legal requirement. It's good for business – diverse, equality driven organisations are successful organisations and it shows in their balance sheets."
RD N15

Not only is there a buy-in issue but also an issue as one GDNR respondent described it of:

"Managing different stakeholders and keeping them on the same page and everyone turning to me."
GDNR N4)

This is a reference to juggling demands and being the local focal point of responsibility for this area.

A persistent issue is that of growing organisational capacity, something already referred to, so that colleagues can act independently of the Diversity Unit and are more able to draw on the GDNRs and their own resources. Internal discussions have highlighted that in areas of 'risk' or where there is overt accountability there is something of a pattern of dependence of those deemed to be the specialists. Even if the capacity and capability of GDNRs improves and they can act more independently of the DU, there is the danger if wider ownership and capability does not ensue, that they will become saturated as it is to them people turn for all the answers and to take all the lead and responsibility:

The top down working atmosphere, constant changes and instability and perhaps lack of importance given to the agenda by some parties, also contribute to the buy-in challenges individual GDNRs shared. The perspectives of RDs was encapsulated in the challenge articulated in terms of *"making their voices heard in a very noisy environment,"* alongside some reference to the increasing demands on CDs, particularly those managing small offices and in that context contending with significant bureaucratic demands from the centre – the London headquarters of the British Council. The absence of country representatives was also sometimes referred to as such representatives are not present in a significant number of countries.

3. Resource gap

Alongside time and overload, resourcing E&D emerged as a further key difficulty and one that was cited by 6 GDNRs and 4 RDs:

> *"I don't have a budget for Diversity Work. When I want to host an EOD networking event with other organisations, I don't have the budget for catering."*
> GDNR N2

> *"We need additional resources and inputs."*
> GDNR N7

> *"Allocation of a budget for EOD work in country to also allow coordinator to have meetings/networking time with others in the region and attend annual meetings – this has not been possible as there has not been money for it."*
> GDNR N20

> *"Budget to cover a percentage of my post costs (5 per cent does not offer sufficient chance for impact I feel, so a higher percentage would be preferable) to devote to EO&D."*
> GDNR N24

It is perhaps surprising that more GDNRs did not make reference to financial resources but clearly this is not the most pressing issue for them, time resources as we have seen, are.

RDs play a significant role in the management and allocation of budgets and some have a dedicated budget for learning and development to draw on. As the budget

readily available for E&D does not, it appears, extend beyond related learning and development activity however, this may account for both why this difficulty was identified by some of the RDs but not more GDNRs and as already proposed, why learning and development is an activity many engaged in as part of their GDNR role.

It is worth noting that there is significant variation in the size of budgets across regions and this, in addition to the instances where no budget exists and aspirations are high, is something that has been communicated by GDNRs and been the subject of discussions within the GDN. This has extended to the GDN conference and helped shape the response incorporated in a regional DAF.

Finding 2.2

They propose three main suggestions to address their difficulties

Although strongly motivated, respondents as illustrated above articulate 4 main difficulties. In response to these, the following suggestions, which fall into 3 main areas, emerge:

1. *Messaging* the corporate agenda primarily internally but also in a couple of instances beyond, to stakeholders and partners. Nineteen mentioned this as well as making reference to the need for consistent CEO and EB messaging and RD and CD engagement and management support:

   "I believe a comprehensive training in this regard might be of great help in terms of cascading the ideas and have this process internalized by all staff and even stakeholders and partners so that they will observe E&D as part of BC corporate policy while dealing with this organisation."
   GDNR N23

   "Chief Executive's and Executive Board's constant messaging and support and engagement is crucial. RDs and CDs sit up when the CEO speaks ….more "switched on" CDs please too – colleagues that really, truly believe in this and don't just do it because they have to!"
   GDNR N1

2. *Sharing best practice* and what works elsewhere – cited by 8 with reference to doing so in the context of induction, greater communication and knowledge sharing across the GDN:

Sharing with colleagues for the Global Diversity Network best practices in terms of their roles, the results they have achieved, involving and getting colleagues interested and committed to the topic."
GDNR N30

"I would like to have some kind of one to one interaction, discussions with other GDN members to see how they are managing their roles – perhaps some kind of "induction" programme for new members."
GDNR N37

There were also references to continued investment in the Diversity intranet site and from some GDNR and RD participants (7), reference to effective planning and sustainable approaches. Improved effectiveness of GDN conferences was mentioned by 2 participants with the clarification that it is not that these are ineffective but continuous improvement should be an aspiration.

3. *Resources* reflecting further corporate prioritization, specifically by creating a full-time role was mentioned by 6 GDNRs, as well as additional resources to support various activities:

"It would be great help to have at least one person in the region devoted full-time to EO&D."
GDNR N6

"Create an EO&D full-time job."
GDNR N18

"Some additional resources and inputs."
GDNR N7

"Allocation of a budget for EOD work in country to also allow coordinator to have meetings/networking time with others in the region and attend annual meetings – this has not been possible as there has not been money for it."
GDNR N34

Finding 2.3

Whilst there is an emphasis on knowledge needs, others also exist

To help ensure a structured approach with some rigour, consistent with aspiring for validity, GDNRs were initially asked to identify needs in terms of knowledge and skills, as well as any other things. This was then followed up at the interview stage. The findings are summarized below.

Knowledge

Aligned with the general approach to the area of equality and diversity as well as the emphasis placed on the skills of thinking within the organisation where much of the work is focused on education, learning and knowledge sharing aligned with the British Council's charitable status and Charter, virtually all (20) GDNRs articulated a knowledge and information need, saying for example:

> *"I think my knowledge in this area has to be developed and broaden greatly."*
> GDNR N23

> *"More in depth knowledge on the core topics of EO&D."*
> GDNR N30

> *"Deeper understanding of the 7 areas."*
> GDNR N21

> *"Although I have done some reading/studying on the theme, there is still a world of information I still lack."*
> GDNR N22

> *"Keeping up to date with UK EOD agendas."*
> GDNR N4

> *"Access to interesting and thought-provoking articles relating to any of the 7 areas of diversity."*
> GDNR N8

> *"New developments UK legislation, terminology."*
> GDNR N19

Five mediums emerged as key ones in meeting these needs:

Face-to-face exchanges including shadowing and attachments

On line and higher level learning

Conferences and discussion forums

Knowledge sharing of external practices

Reading material

Global Diversity Network Representatives who were interviewed expanded further on the above:

"I want to ask you whether there are short courses, not Masters degree, that takes too much commitment, too much time. But shorter ones, where I can learn lots of things. I also found my trip, the Diversity Unit organized my trip, to BT, and the Employers Forum on Disability, really, really, valuable. One visit to this and I have been referring to these two experiences so frequently when I talk to people that helps so much. So I hope GDN members could have this kind of opportunity to visit this kind of organisation. Here because we are regarded as advanced, if you visit other companies, you don't see much, but in the UK there is so much you can learn, you can see. "
GDNR N2

"I've wondered about doing something more formal. I mean, you know, a qualification or a diploma or something like that, you know, a course or something, around diversity issues. So you know, I haven't decided to do that yet, but that's a possibility for me…I think. That would actually take me another step further. I'm starting….that's a potential additional development need."
GDNR N4

"It would be good to know what is happening in other countries, what other countries do. Because the evaluation was very useful for me, because reading reports from China, really showed me what you can do. So, hearing information about what is happening in other countries is a good thing, but I wonder if it can be done in a way that is not too time consuming. I wouldn't want to read a long report from each country, for example. Maybe short success stories or something like that would be useful. Because I really enjoyed certain bits from the long submission

that Beijing office did, that was enough. It's good but it needs to be
excerpts of things, not the long report."
GDNR N3

Consistent with the action research approach within an organisational context that
has been adopted for this particular project, the GDN conference responded to some
of these as well as the comparatively more limited skills need by providing two related
and substantial sessions. These included a review of more established and recently
developed on line resources (although not at the requested level), the opportunity for
face-to-face exchange and discussion forums and throughout the conference as a
whole, some level of sharing of external practices. This included good practice in Sri
Lanka in different areas of E&D and such practice from elsewhere in the British
Council, and in particular the UK (Appendix 3.9). This attracted positive written
feedback summarized as follows in the feedback analysis report:

> *"The highest score was given for the skills practice session. Here,*
> *delegates felt that the case studies provided interesting perspectives from*
> *different regions/countries, and offered them a rare opportunity to face*
> *situations they had not encountered before. Reflecting on a common*
> *preference found in the evaluation process, this session was credited for*
> *allowing interaction and relationship building. Many delegates also*
> *commented on how this session provided tips they could take back with*
> *them and include in their office activities and training programmes."*

> *"The common response was that more time was needed for skills practice*
> *and related discussion, plus the inclusion of more case studies in future.*
> *This suggests that the next conference could give a whole day to skills*
> *practice."*

> *"I wanted more time for skills practice."*

> *" It would be great to devote even more time to skills practice. I got so*
> *many ideas to take home with me."*

> *"Case studies definitely – it would be better if more day to day issues*
> *were discussed and the appropriate solutions were shown and how to*
> *handle them for all participants."*

The overall data set revealed a strong need for opportunities to learn from the work of GDNR colleagues (a gap referred to earlier) and the work being undertaken in other regions, with a majority of respondents citing this:

> "The good work happening elsewhere in the BC on diversity."
> GDNR N7

> "More knowledge about activities and what's happening in other countries/regions around the areas of gender, ethnicity and disability and what we can do to meet the Council's obligations."
> GDNR N37

> "Opportunities to liaise more with other members of the network and learn about their experience."
> GDNR N16

> "Sharing good practices within the network as we do – I learn a lot this way and hope to continue so."
> GDNR N34

> "Learning from best practice in other regions."
> GDNR N4

What comes out of the analysis of responses is knowledge needs predominantly at the information level; so the need to develop their knowledge of the work of others but also of the UK's E&D agenda and intercultural working. However knowledge of a theoretical nature, of say structural inequality, E&D in the context of organisational change theory, or knowledge about overarching concepts that can and do inform E&D such as 'natural justice', 'least detrimental alternative', 'balance of probabilities' did not emerge. It may well be that these are unknown to participants and is the reason for a lack for reference to them. Or it may be that they have focused on the 'knowledge must have' as they see or glean this and then frame it in 'applied' terms.

A question about how their knowledge needs might be met resulted in 6 respondents articulating higher level and accredited knowledge needs:

> "By undergoing a specialization or Masters Course or an attachment with EO&D Unit in SG."

GDNR N22

"Undertaking a Doctorate."
GDNR N26

"A level II or III specific on-line training course focused on members of the Global Diversity Network."
 GDNR N30

This does suggest an interest in relevant theory and perhaps challenges the earlier comments about knowledge that is information and experience sharing focused.

Skills

Fewer GDNRs (12) articulated a skills need as opposed to a knowledge need. What was articulated falls under the umbrella heading of 'messaging', that is getting buy-in, in particular facilitating and training in a multicultural context, this being the most frequently mentioned skills need, as well though, as interesting and engaging others including a range of colleagues, amongst them CDs. For example:

"Training and facilitation skills."
GDNR N7

"Facilitation and training in a multicultural context."
GDNR N19

"Presentation skills."
GDNR N23

'Virtual working' skills reflecting the virtual working nature of much of the work of the GDN, although identified by only 2 respondents, is of course highly relevant to the GDN and in the related comments the point about clarity in terms of responsibilities comes through:

"Because GDN group most of the time, we don't see each other. Well I met the GDN group just once in my life, in Beijing. And apart from that we just work by sending e-mails. And now we may have this platform that

you discussed with us of Sharepoint. It seems that people don't want to use it for discussions. So, this is what I mean. We need some training on how to efficiently work virtually. That would help us. That would be a good. That would equip us with some skills. Because when, if it is one-way communication between a country and UK, and Spring Gardens, it works. Because usually it's about things, it's not about discussing things, it's more about exchanging information – this is what you have to do, this is what we did. That is the old-fashioned way that it happens. This is my feeling. But if you want people from different places to co-operate you need other skills. It's not just exchanging emails, it's about making action together."
GDNR N6

"And I see that many things happen in the e-mail but not much happens outside the e-mails, in real life. The communication is, there is a burden of communication and responsibilities when it comes to action, responsibilities are not clear."
GDNR N6

The conference, as already indicated, made some response to the analysis and findings and as part of this built in a skills session set at different levels with differing foci, including dealing with conundrums, making the case for diversity and handling the media/in the hot seat sessions. As already commented too, this received positive feedback and, from some, a call for more.

The responses to the question about how needs might best be met underscored the familiarity with approaches not predicated on face to face encounters, with a majority of people calling for on-line training but again as already indicated, beyond a basic level. In addition, there is an induction into the GDNR role need and need to learn from other GDNRs about how they fulfil their role and the activity they undertake within the region:

"Opportunities to liaise more with other members of the network and learn how they approach and execute their role, what's behind what they do. This is unknown for us, most of us I would say, as there is just so little opportunity to find out. You must have heard us all say this so many times. We are in different countries, miles away from one another and drowning in work. What is it that the good ones do, and some are particularly good." GDNR N17

This, in particular because it chimes with the mutual advice, assistance and support that is part of the GDNs purpose and was a gap, is something that was explored in the context of semi-structured interviews beginning with seeking to establish if there were GDNR's who were perceived as fulfiling the role optimally, followed, if this was the case by delving into what qualities they display and activities they engage in. The relationship of this exploration to the research questions is not strong but does make a contribution to establishing what respondents believe would help make the GDN become more effective and began to emerge as of some importance to GDNR respondents and Diversity Unit staff.

Summary
The GDNRs are a motivated group. Generally speaking they enjoy their role, the learning they derive from it and the contribution it enables them to make.

Virtually all of them want to enhance their knowledge and some want an opportunity to develop their skills.

They confront four key difficulties which other research participant groups (RDs and CDs) also recognize. These difficulties focus on time and the absence of a rigorous 'mandate' for their additional work and additional duties. The overall data set screams out 'overloaded', 'need more resources, more buy-in, more knowledge sharing', in the context of a sustainable approach, particularly given the constant cycle of change at a range of levels, including at leadership levels.

The suggestions proposed in response to the difficulties is helpful. However, it must be acknowledged that there is no majority view about these within the context of a discreet focus on them. Even though the Global Diversity Network conference factored in further exploration of the issues through discussions and activities, in addition to responding to expressed needs - achieving buy-in aided by a pre conference task of focused dialogue with RDs to assist with this, with a report back to conference participants - no majority view ultimately emerged.

As GDNRs comprise a changing population with varied levels of competence and confidence this, in particular, means a review of needs, at many levels, will be ongoing. Identifying a sustainable and appropriate means of responding to this reality therefore warrants careful consideration and so will form part of a consideration of the future shape of the GDN towards an improved, sustainable structure.

RQ 3

How do Regional and relevant Country Directors understand and perceive the GDN?

Although understanding is rated as good, varied levels of this hold and there is a positive perception of the GDN.

Background

From a tentative start the GDN is now internally acknowledged and established, as this research on some levels attests.   There was however no formal launch of the network and messaging of its existence and role within the organisation. It was not created, as remarked upon in Chapter 2, as "a deliberate strategic decision that considers the alternatives available and confirms that a network is the optimum approach for achieving the specific outcomes required" (British Council 2004:3). Rather, it was more evolutionary. It did though begin following the ratification of a paper to the Executive team, which was revised twice before being accepted amidst some concerns that it would have a 'campaigning' focus, resulting in tensions between managers and their teams.

As it was deemed that the research project should establish how the GDN is understood and perceived by Regional and relevant Country Directors, this is a further research question. The focus is on these colleagues because of their status as important stakeholders able to influence and contribute to the effectiveness of the GDN, or indeed detract from this.

Earlier comments have highlighted the positional power of RDs and the control they have over resources. This is also the case for CDs who manage a GDNR, although of course comparative to RDs, to a lesser extent. The working relationships between GDNRs, RDs and CDs, as we have seen, enable them to have some insight into the difficulties GDNRs face, and this relationship has shaped their perceptions of the GDN's performance.

Understanding of and engagement with the GDN

There is no shared source of understanding of the GDN. It appears that RDs recall having picked up the existence of the GDN through various means and express this in different ways which when analysed are able to be categorized as follows:

Engagement with Head E&D - 2

Corporate messaging – 3

During the course of work overseas – 3

Through GDNRs - 3

No response – 1

They said, for example:

> "I have been aware of the network for the last few years and was an early supporter of regional participation in the GD network."
> RD N10

> "Through Fiona's presentations and attendance at GLT meetings from way back in 2004 (or early 2005?) and at the Regional Directors' Development Programme meetings when regionalization was starting up."
> RD N14

> "Through my work with the British Council overseas."
> RD N38

Having encouraged them to locate the point at which they became aware of the GDN, they were then asked to rate on a scale of 1-5 their understanding of the role of the GDN. This came out quite high, with one exception, all ratings being 3 and above

and a rating of 45 out of possible 60, translating into 75% showing that they rated their understanding as strong. This is despite the reasons they were invited to provide, arguably not clearly corresponding with the rating. For example, some ratings of a 3 were supported by the following reasons:

> *"My current knowledge is improving rather than detailed."*
> RD N15

> *"I am not active in the network, although I read some of the email correspondence aiming to keep myself informed."*
> RD N28

For some of the 4 ratings, comments were;

> *"I've been involved in a number of events, but could play a stronger advocacy role."*
> RD N14

> *"Interest, and earlier involvement in GDN events. Slightly out of touch this and last year."*
> RD N39

Further, ten of the respondents stated they could know more and only two stated that their understanding was good. These comments do not align with the overall high group rating. There are likely to be a number of reasons for this. Perhaps, for example, it may be to do with a relationship between those that hold these senior roles and erring on the side of high self rating, linked to wishing to be seen to know about the area of E&D and/or feeling they should. Having said this, RDs are having a regular and not insignificant amount of contact with their GDNR and it is this that may be determining the rating they give for understanding the role of the GDN. This contact translates, over the preceding 12 months, where the amount of such contact is specified (4 didn't specify although invited to do so), into between 3 – 38 hours using a range of mediums – face-to-face, closely followed by telephone, then email and the less frequent video conference contact. These mediums are consistent with those predominantly used in the organisation. The reasons for contact centre on DAF

related work and the regional strategy for this, cited by 8 respondents, with 2 making specific reference to discussing the GDN role. The majority does not believe this to be sufficient:

> "No, it is not sufficient. I still find it hard to generate a great enthusiasm amongst some senior colleagues in the region to mainstream EO&D into their thinking. However, I also need to give a stronger lead to this issue in the RMT and have started to work on this. The X region however has been very successful in developing large scale projects that have a strong diversity focus. These include the Migrant Integration Index (MIPEX), the Inclusion and Diversity in Education project, Open Cities and Our Shared Europe."
> RD N10

> "No, there is much more needed. I have only recently taken up my role and EO&D work needs much more development in the region."
> RD N38

> "No we are not doing enough but time is a huge constraint."
> RD N9

Although this time with GDNRs is insufficient, this has not detracted from the scores given for level of understanding of the GDN.

Country Directors consider that they have a very good understanding of the BC's GDN and what the representative does at a country level (there were 2 optimum points for this), rating both at 21 out of a possible 25, saying, for example:

> "I am inherently interested in the Council's Diversity agenda as it accords with my own world view. I have therefore taken an interest in the detail of our GDN."
> CD N40

> "X is an active member of the network, and I am also on the mailing lists myself. We also talk frequently about EOD issues, and I have spent time in London with Fiona. I haven't spent time to be really clear about the exact aims of the network."
> CD 41

There is regular, face to face contact between the CDs and the GDNRs, averaging at 12 hours over the course of a year:

"We meet weekly and probably spend about ten minutes of that meeting on average talking about EOD related issues. So about 12 -15 hours I suppose. We discuss a mixture of things – X's EOD role. How local projects like the good practice group are going, what our internships are achieving. And what is going on externally."
CD N41

"Difficult to say. I would estimate about 1 hour a month. Discussions have centered on disability and the built environment – ongoing audit of our own premises; visa for same sex partners and the upcoming conference which is bringing us into contact will all sorts of local groups concerned with different aspects of diversity."
 CD N40

An effective GDN

Characterization of the GDN as less effective than it should be was not, generally speaking, supported by this data set. Indeed participants, including Diversity Unit staff, GDNRs themselves and Regional and Country Directors, were positive, to varying degrees, in their rating of GDN effectiveness. So what might be the reasons for the unexpected outcome?

One reason might be the fact that the Diversity Unit, in particular given its small size, but also because of its largely reactive approach to the GDN, had a firmly held view of a problematic and under performing GDN. This may have been determined by insufficient appreciation of the contribution and impact GDNRs are making 'out there in the global field' compounded by the fact the Unit is centrally located. A further compounding factor could be the high turnover levels in the network and the amount of work directed at the Unit perceived to be appropriately targeted at GDNRs. In addition to this is the disparate levels of activity and performance across the GDN as a whole, with some members being notably more active than others; all of this making it difficult for the Diversity Unit to establish a sense of progress.

Together these factors are likely to have shaped what the research findings tell us is a distorted and somewhat inappropriately harsh and negative, or skewed perception.

It is suggested however that other reasons may be at play which explain the rating difference between the Diversity Unit comparative to other respondents. This is that perceptions of effectiveness may have been subject to confusion regarding who constitutes the GDN and its activity. This is because the network is established and managed by the Diversity Unit, so a blurring of who effectiveness is attributed to may be at play. Is it the GDNRs or the DU, the DU being overwhelmingly viewed as highly effective supported by ongoing references to this effect from a range of sources given its small size; or is it a mixture?

Further, there is the issue of timing. Between the project proposal and undertaking the field work there was a Diversity Assessment Framework submission and considerable E&D activity, DAF related or driven. This engaged GDNRs more than previously and required them, in many instances, to provide a professional steer they had not been providing. For example, as an expectation of more consistent regional performance became articulated by Regional Directors, activity to support this took place. This included GDNRs working closely with some of the countries in their region to support DAF related performance and attainment and as part of this, coordinating workshops, messaging and providing advice and guidance. Also though and this goes back to the earlier comment about the distinction between the GDN and the DU, the DU led and managed the whole DAF process with little input relatively speaking from GDN members, in terms of managing the various elements of the process. However the GDNRs profile was, as indicated raised as part of the DAF process, so the two have, it is suggested, to some extent, become intertwined.

Table 5.3: GDN effective in progressing mainstreaming

DU	GDNR	RD	CD	AV
51%	58%	64%	72%	65%

Country Directors who share the same geographical location as GDNRs and arguably because of this and their line management responsibilities work comparatively more closely with them, although a small participant group, rated GDNRs the most highly saying:

> *"We'd never get anywhere without this network! The important think is that the network has the right relationships with senior management across the regions, and can demonstrate that this work can be an important strand of our work in ICD (Intercultural Dialogue)."*
> CD N41

> *"The approach to the GDN is very professional. The Diversity Assessment Framework which has been developed, though demanding, is a good way of measuring progress towards becoming a more diversity engaged organisation. Over recent years, awareness of diversity issues and their importance to us all has risen exponentially."*
> CD N40

The rating given is some reflection of a perception that:

> *"Determination around EO&D is explicit and in evidence around the Council because of the network."*
> CD 36

Regional Directors with increasing interaction with the GDN also gave a reasonably high rating, remarking:

> *"I get a sense that there is a lot of good work going on from discussions with colleagues and from what I read."*
> RD N27

> *"It has been quite effective but this takes time and commitment of a wide range of leaders."*
> RD N38

> *"A slight sense of it being a club – some members not sufficiently pro active in engaging others."*
> RD N28

"I think the GDN has made good progress in raising overall awareness of diversity issues. However, the impact of the GDN's representatives at regional level is not always as strong as it should be as they are sometimes middle management staff that does not always get the support they require or deserve from more senior colleagues."
RD N10

"I believe the GDN has made significant achievements in raising awareness of issues around the Council and in gaining the commitment of individuals to change. I have moderated the 4-5 rating I would give for its achievements downwards because I believe that this reliance on a few individuals, not refreshed by new joiners to the network make it unsustainable. I also think that work has been too internally focused to date, with little built into our external programmes."
RD N29

This is a positively oriented endorsement from members who constitute a significant proportion of the organisation's global leadership team and all of the core overseas element of it. They are a team crucial to the future life of the GDN given the role they play in mandating E&D work and releasing resources for it.

There was however a minor and emergent view of disparate performance, not perhaps unexpected for a network comprised of people with different substantive roles, differing lengths of membership and operating in differing contexts including regions of different sizes, as well as quite a high turnover, encapsulated in the following statement:

"If more people did more then we would achieve more in the network."
CD N42

"It operates too much within itself and does not have sufficient impact on the overall BC team. It is good that it is there and I do not promote the abolition of internal networks. But we might make too many assumptions about what internal networks can achieve."
CD N35

Deliverables and accountability

A focus on the GDN and GDNR role and the area of effectiveness has identified the need to make the purpose of the network much clearer and more transparent and to ensure accountability for delivering specific things:

> *"We need more clarity and much clearer and more challenging objectives about what we want to achieve from our EOD work, both internally and externally and from the network."*
> CD N41

> *"I'd like to know more about what they actually do e.g. do they really spend 5% of their time on diversity issues, is this built into their job plans, do they help with the staff survey, how do they work as a team? This is something the regional EO&D coordinator must do and I must develop a system with her to get regular feedback and updates on the implementation of our new strategy."*
> RD N39

> *"I wonder if an issue is that they do not have a very clear idea of what they are to deliver and what their responsibilities are. Perhaps we should identify specific outcomes and charge them with delivering them."*
> RD N12

> *"Give them a clear vision of what their destination is, and then they'll know they have got there."*
> RD N11

> *"People will get frustrated if they are not clearly working towards something and it is hard in this area to see the progress. Measures are very helpful including in sustaining communication."*
> CD N35

> *"I'd like to know more of specifics like how spend 5% of time, how they work as a team."*
> RD N29

Whilst GDNRs are clear about the activities they have been undertaking, unlike 9 of the 12 RDs, only 1 of them made reference to deliverables and accountability. Given that this is an obvious and inappropriate gap and there is organisation wide, a trend of

increasing focus on accountability for specific deliverables, a related recommendation is proposed.

Summary

RDs have come to their understanding of the GDN in different ways and although there does not seem to be a concern about this from the DU and GDNRs, it is considered, by the DU appropriate as part of managing the GDN from here on in to ensure RDs and CDs are made formally aware of it and that this is reiterated at relevant intervals. This is not only because of a desire to 'level up' and help ensure more shared RD understanding, but also because of a likely positive benefit from this, which may include greater RD engagement and support.

With the exception of the researcher's rating of GDN performance (at 37%), overall, GDN performance received a positive rating from respondents. This, as table 5.3 highlights, includes the rating given by Diversity Unit staff (other than the researcher). Indeed when asked to rate each GDN member formally and independent of any shared discussions, other DU members revealed a rating which does not reflect a perception of under performance, despite persistently talking about performance in deficit terms.

The research indicates that in spite of various shortcomings, including in how the network has been managed by the Diversity Unit, it is now clearly established and working and is viewed as having made a positive impact.

This has led to reflections on the notion of performance shortcomings and ineffectiveness, something the research is not thus far revealing. In fact the research is challenging this and showing differing performance levels and positive perceptions of effectiveness, alongside a number of very real difficulties. From this arise questions about the root of these with the answer pointing to a range of things, including the Diversity Unit's management of the network and the 'bolted on' approach to GDNR roles and responsibilites. In addition, it is recongised that the

Diversity Unit has failed to take a broad enough range of steps to support and improve the GDN's effectiveness. This may in large part be to do with the lack of knowledge and experience of networks and how to manage, assess and evaluate them and things to take account of in this process. Also at play is the all too frequent reactive approach driven by pressing demands and focusing pro activity on other areas in a large portfolio of work for a small Unit.

In spite of this, varying aspects of the GDN do warrant review and revision including aims, objectives, induction, additional resources to support their role, ongoing management and support for GDNRs and identifiable deliverables. With these in place it may help the DU to feel and experience the GDN as more effective and to alleviate a perhaps rather sloppily and superficially apportioned weakeness to it.

RQ4
What do participants believe would help to make the GDN more effective in mainstreaming and embedding equality and diversity across the organisation?
Support for the GDNRs and aligning E&D with operational work.

Background
A quest for improvement lies at the heart of the research project. Already the absence of rigour in managing the network and the gap in clarifying deliverables has emerged. Also to emerge are recommendations that will assist with the problem the research project seeks to fix. Surprisingly and pleasingly a positive perception of the GDN is revealed too. Against this backdrop there are challenges for the above and final research question. This includes the assumption of ineffectiveness within it, but also the fact that there is insufficient knowledge amongst RDs and CDs, primarily about both the GDN and how it operates, but also the 'state of play' regarding mainstreaming E&D across the organisation. This has led to their somewhat limited responses. Nevertheless there are tangible suggestions to report. As part of the efforts to insert rigour into the research process, these have been separated out from the range of suggestions to emerge from various sources since the research activity

began which reflects the reality of the dynamic nature of real world, work based research.

The tangible suggestions are dominated by supporting the GDNRs and aligning E&D with operational work, which alongside reference to other suggestions are now the subject of discussion.

Supporting GDNRs and a tie with operational work
Given the intended and actual role that the GDN and GDNRs play in mainstreaming E&D across the organisation and the shared perceptions of some of the difficulties they confront already commented on, all participants the research tells us, believe that supporting the GDNRs by addressing their difficulties would be the most helpful intervention.

In addition to confronting the especial difficulties outlined of being overloaded and not having time for the role as well as not having sufficient resources, there is the difficulty of not having a rigorous mandate for their work. Nurturing this mandate and selling E&D more effectively and positioning it as central to programme work/large scale projects and cultural relations, also came through as being helpful in making the GDN more effective in mainstreaming E&D organisation wide. The third sentence of the following quote from an RD captures what the analysis concludes research participants believe will be an outcome of giving more attention to the link between E&D and our programme work:

> *"I think we are working towards a much clearer tie in of BC operational work with EO&D. There is a strong link in ICD (Intercultural Dialogue), but it could also be there in KEC (refers to Creative Knowledge Economy). Seeing EO&D as a part of our way of working in our programme areas will be a strong way of improving our work in the area. People will probably need to see what this looks like as well – so we may need to start showing this in reports on web sites, on project outcomes and in BC news – but let's get away form the 'politically correct' approach (i.e. we are doing this because it is worthy), and move to a more hard-nosed 'this delivers results' approach. We should also reflect the diversity of BC operations as well and not fall into the trap of thinking that only one profile*

> *attracts attention (e.g. poverty in Africa – this is a valid and legitimate profile but we deal with much more)."*
> RD N12

> *"Recognition and resource allocation to GDN as a global operational project would make our full role easier to fulfil overseas."*
> GDNR 22

Programme, or as it is sometimes called, operational work, is seen as the 'real work of the British Council, the central or corporate services being acknowledged necessities, but lacking the external interface and status. In this context it is not surprising that half of all RDs and CDs made reference to aligning E&D to programme work sometimes simply saying as another RD did:

> *"Linking it with our programme work would automatically help at least the GDN to be perceived as more effective and in reality probably actually more effective."*
> RD N11

Country Directors expressed the same idea in different ways:

> *"Establish an external EOD project as a global project under intercultural dialogue. This allows the EOD network to be able to offer senior managers a great way of achieving important corporate objectives."*
> CD N41

> *"EO&D need to be more operationally integrated."*
> CD N35

Six GDNRs, all of whom are in operational roles also made the link referring variously to the fact that E&D is still seen, as one of them put it, as a "fringe activity."

The wider mandate which formed part of the support for GDNRs is something the majority of all participants made reference to: RDs and CDs more so than GDNRs who focused on their immediate concerns and related solutions. The general call was for senior British Council members to champion E&D or RDs or CDs to do so. Related to this they had much to say, for example:

"There is still little support from top management – except with the DAF as it was seen as mandatory from higher authorities and was a last minute struggle. We need this. Without it we can't get as far as we could. I truly believe we need to see a clear acknowledgement from country top management that EOD has a place in the directorate and needs mainstreaming in what we do consciously. "
GDNR N34

Chief Exec's and Exec Board's constant messaging and support and engagement is crucial. RDs and CDs sit up when the CEO speaks…more "switched on" CD's please too – colleagues that really, truly believe in this and don't just do it because they have to!!"
GDNR N1

"More engagement with RDs and regional leadership not only by me and, the GDN but the DU too."
GDNR N4

"The process of engagement is moving along slowly but at a pace that is far more meaningful. It would help if we set aside more time to engage colleagues and in this I include senior colleagues across the organisation. We should congratulate ourselves on what we have achieved but it is right that we think about what more we could do."
GDNR N25

"Continued explicit championing by all senior staff, including myself leading to recognition that EO&D is not just another agenda/chore listed on the Country Delivery Plan but a climate change in our whole way of doing things."
CD 42

"You and I both know that if you have leadership around certain agendas, they get done. And if you don't have leadership around them, you know, they don't get done. So you know, there's quite a simple equation around this."
RD N9

*"The Agenda needs RD ownership to push it along. It is an issue an RD has to own. I don't think we are giving enough time at our senior management level to discussing some of these agendas. I think the DAF was a huge breakthrough but it doesn't stop there. We need to look at what's going on in the outer world. What's happening in industry? What's happening in government about this agenda? Where do **you** see the next frontier for us? I am calling all CDs back this December, not just the RMT. I'll call all CDs back for this because I think that they need to understand this December. Many of them have been engaged but I am hoping it will be what we did in Berlin. In the same way we get together at RDs meetings or CDs meeting, we would not think, it would be unthinkable not to be discussing our programmes, our financial systems, our HR. Well to me this is absolutely underpinning all those. So why are we not talking about it? "*
RD N10

"I think Martin's leadership and championing together with you on this agenda is …..David Green started it obviously….important I think. He needs to be more visible though and I get the feeling that it would be good if he could in front of the RDs, could make a really positive and powerful statement. Yes he's very busy and all that but it is important."
RD N39

"Target CDs and the entire matrix management structure and results should follow."
RD N38

"In a nutshell it needs commitment from a wide range of leaders."
RD N16

"I think you should be more proactive Fiona. It's absolutely universal that everybody says, and many people are right even, that they haven't got any time and they are overworked etc., etc. etc. There is no such thing as not being able to carve out the odd hour or two of one's time at random points in a working month, a working year, or whatever. It can always be done. Do you remember JB? Were you in the Council with him? He was DG, a wise guy. I remember him once saying to me – never ask a favour of someone who doesn't have much to do, because they will never find the time. And it's absolutely true. You can always make the time. And I think the answer to the query, your question, from my perspective , is you need to take the blinkers off the leaders, the RDs in the overseas case, one by one. And then, even if it is just a couple of times a year, touch base and say – right, well, you are at position X in your voyage, the next steps are X,Y and Z. Here is how we think you could do it, do you want any help? I 'm extrapolating from my own situation, but that's certainly what I would appreciate – you have convinced me of the need. The scales have been taken from my eyes, now logistically, is how do I and my GDN team, what do we do next to take things forward? It's a kind of general dialogue. Coming back to your question you should be targeting CDs.
RD N11

These particular findings, amongst others, were presented to the GDN conference. In addition the conference was presented with the proposed recommendations in response to these of a revised DAF framework which built in support for the GDNR role and resources, as well as Guides to support the linkage between operational work and E&D and leadership in E&D. All were scrutinized with considerable energy and the area of leadership was explored further in the live interviews. Additional work has since been done on them but for the leadership guide work is outstanding.

They are incorporated within the recommendations and appendices and reflect the action research nature of this research project – that this (and other reported actions) has taken place within the research process itself.

Other suggestions to help make the GDN more effective in mainstreaming E&D across the organisation were offered but only in every instance by 2 or 3 respondents. These included communicating activity through e.g. BC Life, the intranet and DVD (already taking place), rewarding and celebrating positive actions as well as increasing the focus on achieving consistent DAF performance across a region, rather than at a country performance level:

> *"Have an award dinner in London for colleagues who have really achieved with Martin making some sort of presentation. Not low-key like the story board Oscars. Invite externals too to raise our profile with them and bring externals in. It would recognise that colleagues have made an effort and they have tried hard. It gives them a chance to meet other colleagues who have also worked on this. It builds a bit of community spirit and you have yourselves and others, some external people as well doing this. "*
> RD N10

> *"Make it a celebration not a fear. I think it's the thing that EOD suffers from, you know, almost since the area started, which is people suddenly sort of feel they are on the wrong side of the agenda. And if they feel they are on the wrong side, then people are in…oh, you know….well I suppose, that then, it's this awful thing when….it's funny, you know, thinking back to…I remember an experience I had….(goes on to recount personal experience)." There's an um…you know, it's this sort of thought police type of thing where they are not quite clear but they want to do the right thing but the agenda is constantly changing. It's bit like saying, you know, people in complete ignorance would call…you know, people 'mongoloid' rather than Down's syndrome and people, you know, that language changes around it in EOD, so that Cerebral Palsy becomes I can't remember which it is now, I think it moved recently from Cerebral Palsy to Cerebral Palsied…these sorts of terms, I can't, you know, it's that sort of thing when people suddenly go 'Oh I am not quite sure where I am.'*
> RD N9

> *"If the region doesn't have DAF consistency it doesn't have a result and no averaging. Look at how we are doing around the world and build on the investment and the returns of the DAF. In time the level of consistency across the organisation will increase and we will improve; that means the GDN too.*
> RD N15

Summary

As stated, the tangible suggestions in support of making the GDN more effective in mainstreaming and embedding E&D organisation wide are dominated by supporting the GDNRs and aligning E&D with operational work. In addition to this is the need to address their especial difficulties of being overloaded with insufficient time and other resources for the role and the absence of a rigorous mandate for their work. Nurturing this mandate through not only revising its aims and managing it more effectively but also making RDs formally aware of it in a consistent way will be addressed through recommendations that have been signaled, as well as through further work with RDs which is shortly to be given attention.

As the research has also highlighted that the GDN could more effectively mainstream E&D, positioning it as central to programme work/large scale projects, the supporting guide referred to has been developed and shared at the GDN conference and has since been revised and launched. This is alongside the leadership guide referred to which responds to a call was for senior British Council members to engage more with E&D.   Feedback from the conference suggested a need to widely circulate the mainstreaming in programme work/large scale projects and strive on an ongoing basis to achieve engagement with it. This has already been responded to and remains an ongoing action point.

5. Additional insights and findings

Background

As reported, the research was designed to do a number of things. This includes generating insights from different British Council participant groups about how the performance of the GDN is perceived and what they believe would help to improve it, as well as how GDNRs consider they fulfil their role.

The deeper and 'second stage' engagement with two groups of GDNRs and Regional Directors, as described earlier, not only contributed to this process and the resultant

findings already outlined but generated additional data of interest and relevance. This, although not directly linked to the research questions warrants inclusion because, as in the case of the first of the additional findings they:

a) respond to questions posed by Diversity Unit and other British Council colleagues, particularly colleagues in attendance at the Sri Lanka Global Diversity Network Conference
b) answer questions the Diversity Unit has been asking as it grapples with further developing its equality and diversity work.

Four findings of this nature are briefly (because they fall outside the research questions and the research project is a small scale one) presented in this section.

1. The first of these is about the requisite GDNR characteristics and the notion of an ideal representative because of the contribution to helping make the 'doing' of the GDNR role more concrete and demonstrating the possibility of 'optimum performance'. This finding is particularly selected for comment not just because of the interest already highlighted but because it does have a relationship to the research questions.

2. The second is about the impressionistic attention now being given to E&D in GDNR operating countries compared to a decade ago and compared to the UK. The finding is selected for comment because it answers a question frequently framed in terms of 'does this have meaning for our operating environments'?

3. The third is about cultural norms and attitudes which act as a barrier to mainstreaming E&D. This is something persistently referred to in the context of the challenges of 'internationalizing the agenda' and the subject of much internal debate. It is touched on in the literature review in the context of global/local deliberations and by a few of the participants.

4. The fourth relates to what would support the information and awareness needs of regional directors. Given their considerable positional power and influence they are acknowledged as having a crucial contribution to make to progressing mainstreaming organisation wide. Therefore keeping them 'on board' and informed and engaged is considered very important. However, they are extremely busy and their regions have differing issues and needs and so a 'one size fits all' cannot be assumed to be appropriate.

5.1 Characteristics of a GDNR and ideal GDNRs

The data tells us that relevant GDNR participants perceive that the necessary characteristics for the role of GDNR fall into 4 main categories namely:

- Openness – of mind to learning but also to constructive criticism; so being curious and approachable as well as receptive and willing to share experiences
- Commitment – to the E&D agenda and getting things done, having an interest in and passion for E&D and being persistent
- Ability to make a difference – someone who has or makes time, is confident, assertive, has positional authority and/or skills in using what level of authority they have, possesses advocacy skills, an ability to identify and use resources effectively and organisational and management skills
- Evident values – of honesty, integrity and congruence, walks the talk in terms of British Council values and the values enshrined in the E&D agenda and is empathetic.

It is notable that these characteristics are not what might be termed 'technical' ones concerned with specialist knowledge and experience of the field and key skills such as communication and analysis and problem solving. The closest any of the above comes to this is the 'ability to make a difference' and in relation to this it appears that the emphasis is on negotiating the specific organisational terrain. This is one in which positional authority counts for much given the hierarchical character of the organisation: it has a close relationship to accessing resources.

It is suggested that the emergent ideal characteristics could usefully be examined in the context of a foray into the terrain of 'virtue ethics' (Devettere 2002). This considers the identity or character of an individual as opposed to their actions – being, rather than doing - and sees morality as derived from intrinsic values. It is beyond the scope of this study to explore and examine this further, in particular as this finding does not specifically relate to the research questions. However it is of note and something to usefully be followed up in the context of organisational debates on the area of values and the undoubted relationship to equality and diversity and cultural relations; in particular, looking at roles of this nature further, perhaps as a research theme.

A persistent but unsolicited contra indicator, not linked to specific questions emerged as inaction or silence – that is, there is no discernible activity being undertaken by them and no one hears anything from them. This makes sense in the context of the 'activeness' reflected within the list of desirable characteristics and serves as a contrast. It highlights the importance of a GDNR who has the time and/or motivation, coupled with the element of necessary support to act, be experienced and heard.

Is there anyone we know displaying these characteristics?
In order to avoid the above characteristics remaining at the abstract and generalized level, the participant group was asked to consider if the GDN comprised anyone whom it was considered to epitomize an ideal GDN member. If this was the case, they were asked to identify them.

A number of GDNRs were referred to as well as two Diversity Unit staff members, although clearly not representatives, reflecting perhaps something of a muddle in terms of perceptions of role, a point already referred to in the context of perceptions of GDN effectiveness.

The GDNRs identified were, with one exception, female, consistent with the overall gender profile of the GDN. They were based in China, Egypt and South Africa, so

very different operating environments and comprised, with one exception, the nationals of those countries.   All, again with one exception, are locally contracted staff. The Directorates in which they are based are high DAF achievers and all had been identified by the Diversity Unit and peers as part of the strong performing cohort.

Whilst limited claims can be made as a result of this data, it does point to the conclusion that the characteristics of an ideal GDNR cannot be attributed to a specific context, national origins, gender, contract type etc. A much larger study is needed to examine further the range of variables that might determine 'idealness'. It does appear though that a level of seniority as well as an ability to make things happen may play a key part, rather than only the character of the individual. This is asserted because all of those defined as ideal, have a clear level of positional power as a result of holding positions of some seniority. This supports them in making things happen and coupled with the characteristics, which correspond with the four groupings, acts as a potent and relevant mix.

5.2 *The impressionistic attention now being given to E&D in GDNR operating countries compared to a decade ago and compared to the UK*
It was recognized that the research presented an opportunity to tentatively explore and establish the attention given to E&D in operating countries compared to a decade ago and to glean an insight into the wider context in which GDNRs undertake their role.   Underneath this was an interest in how this compares with the UK and whether the UK experience is one that other countries might learn from given the British Council's role in showcasing the achievements of the UK. Interesting insights emerged.

A local increase in attention to E&D comparatively less pronounced than in the UK
The GDNRs interviewed perceived there to be a general increase in the attention given to equality and diversity issues locally in comparison to a decade ago and set this alongside their perception of the attention the UK gives. Table 5.4 summarises this.

Table 5.4: Perception of attention given to EO&D locally compared to 10 years ago

	Now	**10 years**	**UK**	
Georgia	0	- 0	3.5	
China	1-2	0 (or minus)	4-5	
China	2	1	4	
South Africa	2	More than this	3 (self 2)	
Egypt	2	0	4	
India	2-2.5	1	4	
Kenya	3	1.5	4.5	
Sri Lanka	3	2	4-5	
Poland	3	1	5	
Russia	3	1	5	

There is a perception that more attention is given to equality and diversity issues in a majority of countries with a British Council office and GDNR, compared to 10 years ago. The following reasons were given in support of ratings:

> *"World opening up due to communication channels and connectivity and educational settings including disabled people, leading to greater awareness."* (Egypt)

> *"Society opening up, greater individual freedom, government commitment to diversity, fast rate of economic development against the background of quite a mono cultural society and issues that flow from that."* (China)

> *"Gap between policy and implementation, differential attention to areas of diversity – race and disability cited as different ends of the spectrum, general awareness based on people's experience."* (South Africa)

> *"Greater public awareness – gender, age, sexual orientation (people coming out although it is illegal) mentioned and government action, specifically gender."* (Kenya)

> *"The fact that it is not perceived to be a major issue in the parts of Indian society that the British Council engages with."* (India*)*

"Very, very low priority with exceptions related to minorities, minority language and race conflict issues." (Georgia)

"Attention given to disability and 4 main ethnic groups and their religious holidays. No education and gender problems with gender and employability having changed for the better." (Sri Lanka)

*Issues are enshrined in labour law but not widely known, sexual orientation area new, related to changing and un secure political situation (*Poland*)*

*Still quite low importance, disabled access in public services, xenophobia (not race), emergent age discrimination attention (*Russia*).*

Generally speaking, the UK is perceived to be several steps ahead in terms of the attention given to equality issues. It is only South Africa, with its history of apartheid, which led to heightened action in some areas of E&D that is said to have taken a step (unquantified) backwards:

"The question around racism would have been uppermost in people's minds before 1994, for example. There was more awareness around it. Around issues around sexism as well, people were far more aware of sexist behaviour or practices and therefore it was more spoken about." "Obviously we wouldn't want to discriminate so there is a lot of lip service paid to it, so whether that's progress or whether it is sliding back, it makes it difficult to say, thinking ten years. I should think we have regressed rather than moved forward."
GDNR N8

This limited data tentatively suggests that issues of equality and diversity are relevant to the countries in question. It further tentatively suggests that there is a local context receptivity and readiness to respond to equality and diversity issues and indeed countries are responding.

Respondents gave the UK a high rating for its equality and diversity work and supported this with the following points:

Diversity of UK culture and response to that and longevity of discourse

General population awareness and established organisations and lobby groups

Freer, better 1st world society

More openness around EO&D issues, freer society and joined up activities strengthening views and awareness

UK diversity and good EO&D base

UK further ahead with respect to law and benefits like paternity leave and within wider culture

Regulations and Northern Ireland

Press reports and communications from the Diversity Unit

Given the link between E&D and cultural relations, which includes, as already noted, promoting the achievements of the UK, this perhaps should be explored further identifying what the UK has to share of its own related experience that other countries may wish to draw on. This means that avenues for exploring how best to share further what the UK has learnt and achieved, if this is of interest, should be given attention. This admittedly does to some extent take place in a range of ways but could arguably be given more thought through using virtual means and proposing more creative ideas that help to reach a larger audience than is possible through the traditional medium of conferences. The key thing is to develop approaches that match stakeholder and audience needs. It links with the exploration of what external audiences have an interest in and want.

3. *Cultural norms and attitudes act as a barrier to mainstreaming E&D*

As already indicated, the barrier of cultural norms and attitudes is something persistently referred to in the context of the challenges of internationalising the E&D agenda something which is the subject of much internal debate. It is touched on in the literature review in the context of global/local deliberations and it is acknowledged that the distinctiveness of individual countries indicates a need for a 'tailored approach'. At the same time Franklin's (2008) research tells us that there are shared

approaches adopted by international organisations although it does not detail how this responds to the barriers in question.

Despite the general impression that there is now greater attention to E&D in the operating environments of the GDNRs interviewed, the research revealed perceptions of constraints due to differences in culture and social behaviour creating difficulties in messaging policies emanating from the UK. It would be too strong to label this a contradiction, especially as it was something that was touched on by only 2 of GDNRs with whom interviews took place. Of these one operates in a society highly divided on religious and nationality lines, likened on occasions to an apartheid state, the other in a country deeply suspicious of the UK.

It is given attention because in addition to the above references and 4 inferences emerging from GDNR questionnaires, four of the five CDs and 4 RDs made reference to this, citing variously the localized issues encountered of attitudes and resistance and cultural norms but also relevance to their work and the British Council's work:

> *"Some staff are still resistant to the agenda and do not see it as important to them and their work in the BC."*
> CD N35

> *"In some EO&D areas there are still cultural confusions and ignorance and some staff see some standards as Western impositions. It includes 'sensitive' areas, sometimes seen as 'politically correct' and sometimes as ethnocentric. We need to promote EOD in a way that is attractive and empathetic to the full range of attitudes and values that are reflected in our 7,000 strong workforce. This is a big challenge."*
> CD N42

Some RDs raised the issue of an approach that fits the local environment and local 'constraints'.

> *"There's a delicate balance sometimes between what can be implemented in the UK and what can be overseas i.e. respect for local cultural differences which may impede implementation of some practices which are current in the UK. "Sometimes the country context is not conducive."*
> RD N39

"Huge amount of intolerance in our offices and, the internal agenda is huge."
RD N9

"X office is so polarized around ethnicity. Experience of X and Y offices is actually understanding of diversity issues is very low level."
RD N38

Concerns relating to cultural norms and attitudes that seemingly pre occupy the majority of CDs and some RDs perhaps suggests that concerns are rooted in their 'outsider' position as white UK contracted nationals, invariably heightening awareness of and sensitivity to cultural differences.

Some GDNRs made reference to the relevance of E&D to the British Council's work. This was an undercurrent theme to emerge perhaps linked to the barrier of cultural norms and attitudes given that the E&D agenda concerns itself with these. However, conversely, it may reflect an organisational failure to recognize the centrality of E&D to cultural relations. As one GDNR and an RD stated:

"EOD is still seen as a bit of a 'fringe activity' not really core to our business."
GDNR N1

"The offices are very busy and this is not seen as a priority."
RD N38

There are a number of issues to further unpack arising from the above including the extent to which the barriers are those of perception, or translate into something concrete. Clearly there is some knowledge of the specific E&D mainstreaming barriers including those related to jurisdiction, with what is permissible, or not, Saudi Arabia being frequently cited. There is also a developing understanding of the role a retreat to cultural relativism plays as a means of avoiding engaging with and promoting E&D, including as part of upholding the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and challenging the notion of cultural barriers.

This research finding supports the need for further and wider conversations about barriers aligned to our aspiration to mainstream equality and diversity in the context of our cultural relations work. Whilst no specific related recommendation for DU action is proposed because of a range of constraints and a need to focus recommendations on key findings, this particular finding does give encouragement to further and wider conversations and will be formally reported to the newly established Cultural Relations Leadership Board.

4. Regional Directors request an individually tailored approach to engagement with them

The research took the opportunity to try and establish the information and support needs of RDs all of whom, as already outlined, completed questionnaires and participated in interviews. Not only are the Regional Directors part of the organisation's Global Leadership Team, and so a powerful professional group, they are important gatekeepers of resources and support, and largely speaking, the research confirmed, are strong Diversity Unit allies. This was evident by their willingness to participate in the research, the generosity displayed in making themselves available, as well the quality of their engagement and the content of this which confirmed a broad commitment to issues of E&D. Capitalising on this by thinking about post research engagement therefore seemed important.

Mixed needs and preferences

Analysis of the research data has identified mixed messages concerning the best response to the information and support needs of Regional Directors and no discernable link between any stated preferences and personal characteristics, such as gender or age, or variables such as size of region being managed and number of GDNRs within a region. This has led to the conclusion that amongst this relatively small group, there are distinct information and support needs.

Preferences varied from an annual DU briefing to the Global Leadership Team as a whole, to direct contact with the DU initiated by the RD as needed, as well as annual face-to-face meetings with each RD, built into job descriptions:

> *"Update me/us at one of the two GLT meetings every year on the issues facing the organisation, how we are performing, if we are going backwards or forwards and where senior managers could be more engaged. "*
> RD N39

> *"Through an annual f2f meeting built into job plans."*
> N32

> *"From time to time supplying information about how other big organisations are doing who are saying EO&D has really made a difference to their work – e.g it improves staff morale, we are showing greater retention and it benefits us in these way – are doing."*
> RD N10

Annual written briefings twice or four times a year were largely rejected because of the thought of an additional communication load on top of what they currently have to contend with. Selected communications, for example on E&D issues relevant to their region, which takes place in an ad hoc way, would be welcome by some:

Overall and in spite of an opportunity to review the questions that would inform the interview stage beforehand, RDs struggled to articulate needs and how these might be met. Not surprisingly therefore, coupled with the diversity of approach to and engagement in the E&D agenda, as well as diversity of relationships with GDNRs in their region, a personalised approach appears to be called for.   Whilst understandable, this presents a number of problems and from a Diversity Unit perspective is therefore not an attractive proposition. The problems involve the following:

   a) The resource implications of tailoring information and support needs including because jobs rotate and so appointments are time limited. This means an ongoing renegotiation will be required

b) The inevitable inconsistency in nature and level of support arising from a tailored approach that draws on the range of 'preferences'

c) Linked to the above, the probable inconsistency in information sharing at the very least in content terms and inconsistency in quality of relationships established

d) Questions about how able RDs are to determine what they need to know and should know, given their limited knowledge and ability to provide appropriate leadership on E&D.

Having said this, as capacity building of the GDN and its representatives is an overarching research aim, in part to alleviate the demands on the DU, it is perhaps appropriate to give more consideration to ways of supporting the specific information needs of RDs drawing on the relationship between the RDs and GDNRs. Doing so is relevant to and supports advice and consultation as a means of engaging leaders and extending buy-in.

Conclusion

The research has enjoyed a high response rate from a group which as a whole is diverse, although there are, as we know, some 'stereotypical' profiles within this. This rate is likely to be due to a number of factors. These include the mixed-mode design and relatively easy-to-complete questionnaires within this, as well as carefully negotiated interviewing timetable, particularly required given time zone differences and the amount of travel people undertake. Researcher credibility and positional authority and confidentiality assurances are additional potential factors. Probably of most significance in the very high response rate is the fact that the research is about the organisation's work and for the organisation and its improvement in a way that personally affects some of them and so may have real meaning for them.

The research has examined four key questions and revealed some unanticipated findings. These include the nature of GDN related work that representatives do and the fact that they face three main difficulties. In addition to this are findings about

what might help in response to these difficulties and the fact that amongst other needs, they have a need for knowledge about E&D.

Perhaps of most surprise is that the GDN is perceived to be effective in progressing E&D maintreaming. This is attributed to the GDN and GDNR role having to date been unexamined, and reflections on and evaluation of, for example, its effectiveness having centered round a level of frustration emanating from the DU. This frustration has its roots in the demands on the DU versus the resources it has available, arguably displaced on to the GDNRs, compounded by turnover levels. Both the turnover and varying performance of GDNRs served to reinforce the sense of an under performing GDN that does not sufficiently move forward and make the organisational contribution envisaged. However, given their clearly identified needs, some of which have broad agreement and centre on additional resources and improved support and would be best met by these, GDNRs could not reasonably have been expected to do more. Rather, as a group they are performing effectively by their own assessment and that of other parties, seemingly by dint of their level of interest and motivation, bringing some shared elements to the respective approaches to the role, in the absence of what could be said to be sufficient steer from the DU. In particular, they are largely fulfilling their role in the context of the GDN aims and objectives and doing a good job.

As the research has not revealed an 'under performing', 'ineffective' GDN in terms of progressing mainstreaming and so positioning the organisation where it wishes to be, the envisaged solution to the demands on the DU has required re thinking. The research data points to further engagement between CDs, RDs and GDNRs and DU staff as potentially being helpful in this process. This includes because RDs and CDs can make more resources available for E&D and leadership at a local level, potentially easing the central leadership the DU provides and the work this entails. Also, as the data has shown, their engagement and support is seen by participants as crucial in addressing problems faced by GDNRs.

The research has gone beyond the key questions. In doing so it has shown that there are GDNRs deemed by their peers to be ideal, not determined by the operating environment or other factors, like a level of shared history, government structure, legal framework or demographics, but perhaps by the virtue ethics they bring to the role and their positional power. This may then result in facilitating greater traction and buy-in and lead to effectiveness and set them apart from other GDNRs.

The research, with the acknowledged limitations, did not reveal significant concerns about the relevance of E&D for the varying operating environments. Indeed there is some evidence of the increasing general relevance of the agenda and no indications of specific areas of conflict although these are known to the DU and within the GDN. They relate to gender roles, to the role of religion and the way in which it bumps up against, for example, sexual orientation, amongst others. This is an area where there is much interest and conflicting opinions and well as limited information.

The literature review has revealed no comparable roles within international organisations concerned with E&D. TRANSCO with their local diversity co-ordinators charged with discussing ideas and developing informal benchmark come the closest. No material that might translate into a blue print for a GDNR role exists however, either for the DU, or the GDNRs. The general British Council examination of networks has been assigned to archives, highlighting that evolving and building the Network is a unique journey of discovery, against a backdrop of emerging attention to global diversity, characterised by coherence at the philosophical level and a multi-domestic approach to application and implementation.

The conference made limited contribution to shaping or determining the findings but acted as a space to share these and test them out and contribute to recommendations. It generated data that has not been commented on but has made a contribution to the work of the DU. For example, there were contributions about a potentially revised operating structure for the GDN and how to bring creativity to engagement within it.

CHAPTER 6

RECOMMENDATIONS

The previous chapter gave an indication of the recommendations coming out of the findings that were presented and discussed. Within this chapter these are clearly identified and organized into 5 overall groupings principally around the research questions. They are summarised within a framework at Table 5.1. This framework largely links research aims, findings, recommendations, action taken and verification, as well as action outstanding, proposed timetable and sign off responsibilities. For recommendations not related to the research questions there is a modified approach.

Given the work based learning nature of the research project which takes place in the 'real world' it is, perhaps, especially important that careful consideration is given to the feasibility of recommendations proposed. Not only is this 'real world' dynamic and changing, but it has known parties, and generally in terms of this particular research, as well as specifically in relation to the recommendations, a known, already engaged audience. So the research recommendations are not for strangers 'out there', presented at the end point of submission solely for an academic award or wider readership or circulation. There has therefore arguably needed to be more of an emphasis than is found in much research generally on the art of the possible and what will gain buy-in and agreement because of effective argument, evidenced and 'sold' as able to make a difference and address the problem which the research seeks to fix. This need for 'realism' has informed decisions about what recommendations to identify and propose, although central to the recommendations is what the fieldwork has revealed and the analysis of data has concluded, in response of course to the research questions.

Many of the findings have already been given some level of consideration by a number of stakeholders but in particular Diversity Unit colleagues, the Global Diversity Network, some Country Representatives, the Chief Executive, and to a lesser extent other members of his Global Leadership Team. In addition there has

been some related action taken. Action taken however has gone beyond that related to the recommendations presented here. For example, a number of colleagues, following the conference, returned to their offices and included aspects of the research findings in their own presentations on the conference (Appendix 5.1). As there was much interest in the characteristics of an 'ideal' GDNR and the live interviews of two such members, this aspect was particularly included (Appendix 3.10, 3.11). It is something that remains of real interest and relevance and will continue to be an area the DU engages in with GDNRs and others. For example, the work currently being done on cultural relations leadership will tap into what has emerged from an exploration of the characteristics of an ideal GDNR. In addition, a planned profiling GDNRs initiative will also draw on this, as will revisions to the selection criteria for GDNR and country representatives.

The findings when formally presented to the Executive Board will not be a 'surprise package'. Ongoing organisational engagement with and discussion of the findings, including with the Chief Executive, amongst other things, including presentation of findings to the global conference, has been too strong and sustained for this and it has been established that there is already agreement about their appropriateness. However it is appropriate for them to see and view the recommendations in the 'round' and a formal presentation will assist this and is timetabled for the first quarter of 2010.

We shortly turn to Table 6.1 which as already indicated encapsulates all the main recommendations to emerge from the research, some supported by verification. Some action has been taken in relation to these and are completed.

Table 6.2 that follows captures the small number of recommendations - secondary recommendations - which are signaled by the research but are felt to fall outside it. Recommendations for areas of related research, perhaps in the context of an academic study which are signaled by the research are an exploration of virtue ethics in the context of professional E&D roles, in addition to more detailed research about

actual implementation approaches adopted by international organisations. The research also suggests that more attention could usefully be given to encouraging the use of grey literature in the context of work based learning, as well as ways of evaluating the use and relevance of this and making optimum use of it.

Table 6.1: Recommendations for areas of related research

1. Research question			Findings		
How do GDNRs perceive they fulfil their role in the context of the aims of the GDN			Variously, largely positive although less so than RDs and CDs, with motivation, personal & professional satisfaction, consistent with GDN aims with the exception of mutual advice & support		
Recommendation	Action taken	Verification	Action outstanding	Proposed timetable	Responsibility
1.1 Encourage & facilitate GDNRs to provide advice & consultation to each other & share best practices	Creation of dedicated GDNR Sharepoint site	Screenshot 1.1.a	Clarify & reinforce mutual support/ advice dimension of GDNR role.	As part of development of Induction Programme for GDNRs & as necessary	GDNRs & DU
	Encouragement of use of GDN mailbase to post relevant queries & requests	Related communication & post examples 1.1.b	Incorporate buddying for new members into induction and as needed	March 2010	GDNRs & DU
	Update of diversity intranet site to better support	Related communication 1.1.c	Establish a rotating GDNR timetable of a tip a month for other GDNRs	April 2010 onwards	GDNRs & DU

	recommendation				
1.2 Encourage GDNRs to provide advice & consultation to leaders & to further engage them adopting a joined up approach – DU/GDNRs/CDs/RDs	GDNR presentation and briefings	East Asia Regional Leadership presentation 1.2.a	Need for ongoing action	Ongoing	GDNRs & DU

2. a) Research Question			Findings		
What difficulties do GDNRs face?			Principally lack of time associated with but not restricted to taking on additional GDNR duties Lack of resources & lack of senior buy-in.		
Recommendation	**Action taken**	**Verification**	**Action outstanding**	**Proposed timetable**	**Responsibility**
2.a.1 Review & revise GDN aims & build in time for GDNRs	Review & revision undertaken	Revised draft GDN aims document 2.a.1.a	Gain Executive Board sign off	February 2010	DU & Executive Board
2.a.2 Review and revise DAF to include a regional element with specified resources and RD support.	Review & revision undertaken	Regional DAF indicators 2.a.2.a			
2.a.3 Develop plan for proactively managing GDN with ongoing review of GDNR needs	None	None	Development of plan	March 2010	DU & GDNRs
2. b) Research Question			Findings		
What are some of their needs?			Resources for E&D activity, wider colleague buy-in,		

Recommendation	Action taken	Verification	Action outstanding	Proposed timetable	Responsibility
			greater E&D knowledge & skills in messaging/getting buy-in & engaging leaders in particular		
2.b.1 Mandate resources in revised DAF with regional element	Revision undertaken & mandate included	Revised DAF communication 2.b.1.a			
2.b.2 Create immediate opportunities to meet knowledge and skills needs at differing levels	GDN conference sessions	GDN conference programme & feedback 2.b.2.a	Further action to be formally outlined to include a virtual learning dimension in consultation with E&D learning and development consultant	April 2010 for coming financial year	DU with E&D learning and development consultant
2.b.3 Establish GDNR Induction Programme to include E&D identified required knowledge & skills and opportunities for a period of buddying from more experienced GDNRs.	None	None	Development of Induction Programme with inbuilt buddying	March 2010	DU & GDNRs
2.b.4 Create ongoing opportunities for GDNRs to improve knowledge and skills especially at a higher	Attachments & joint working activity - ongoing	GDNR testimonials 2.b.4.a	Ongoing opportunities provided	Ongoing	DU, RDs, CDs & GDNRs

level & learn directly from the DU through joint working opportunities & attachments in the Unit at various stages of the role					
3. Research Question			**Findings**		
How do relevant RDs & CDs understand & perceive the GDN?			That it exists & supports corporate efforts to mainstream E&D with lack of clarity about the specifics of what they do. Perceptions are positive, more so than the GDNRs themselves		
Recommendation	Action taken	Verification	Action outstanding	Proposed timetable	Responsibility
3.1 On an ongoing basis highlight the existence of the GDN, what it does and its contribution organisation wide. Profile GDNRs on intranet site	BC Life article profiling GDN & conference	Article 3.1.a	Use of opportunities as they present themselves Develop & upload GDNR profiles & track gender & role profiles to feedback to relevant parties	Ongoing April 2010	DU & GDNRs DU with GDNRs
3.2 Target some communications at RDs &CDs	E-communication to RDs	E-communication to RDs 3.2.a	Ongoing messaging	Ongoing	DU & GDNRs
3.3 Build GDNR responsibilities and accountabilities into revised & new DAF indicators	Requirement for deliverables included in regional DAF	Regional DAF document 3.3.a	Translation into performance agreements	Outstanding inclusion to be completed by April 2010	GDNRs, RDs & CDs

4. Research Question			Findings		
What do respondents believe would make the GDN more effective?			Align E&D to operational work Support GDNRs		
Recommendation	Action taken	Verification	Action outstanding	Proposed timetable	Responsibility
4.1 Develop guide to support the link between E&D & operational work.	Developed with some GDNRs whilst research still ongoing & presented & discussed at GDN	Guide & communications 4.1.a	Keep under review Endeavour to incorporate key elements more formally into planning process	Ongoing April 2010	DU, GDNRs, Global Leadership team DU with Executive Board agreement & support
4.2 Encourage engagement with above	Launched internally post conference. Targeted Global Leaders communications Loaded on to Intranet Site	Communications – OB , to Programme Leaders 4.2.a Email to Executive Board member 4.2.b South East Europe communication Intranet site screenshot 4.2.c	Ongoing encouragement	Ongoing	DU, GDNRs, Global Leadership team & potentially Executive Board

Table 6.2: Secondary Recommendations

5. Other recommendations not directly related to the research questions			
Recommendation	Action to be taken	Responsible	Timescale
5.1 Identify the distinct information needs of RDs	Establish from respective RDs	DU & GDNRs	Ongoing
5.2 Incorporate for information only, not as a basis for selection, the research emergent characteristics of an ideal GDNR and country rep.	Statement to be developed	DU	For use in March 2010 & beyond
5.3 Develop a statement for RDs & CDs to draw on when recruiting new GDNRs or country reps. encouraging men & those in operation & teaching streams to apply. Highlight that it is not an HR focused one	Statement to be developed	DU in consultation with GDNRs	For use in February & beyond
5.4 Explore with Cultural Relations Leadership Board barriers to mainstreaming E&D and retreat to cultural relativism	Raise as agenda item when Board starts operating	FBE and participating GDNRs	At relevant point in time, probably 2nd or 3rd meeting, given 1st meeting likely to deal with administrative matters

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION with REFLECTIONS

The research as has been outlined had an ultimate aim of improving the effectiveness of the GDN and its representatives, in order to alleviate the demands on the Diversity Unit. In support of this and in the context of a literature gap, it asked a number of questions of three participant groups who on some level work together on E&D matters. It revealed that GDNRs have a positive view of their role and largely align this to the aims of the GDN but are overloaded and require more time and resources for their GDNR role and greater leadership buy-in and engagement. It also revealed a mistaken assumption that the GDN is ineffective but unearthed some pointers to enhance its effectiveness. There were numerous other revelations too, not specifically related to the research questions, some of which have been included. This has led to a number of recommendations some of which have already been acted on.

The research process has spanned three years and in this time the organisation has undergone major change. At the time of writing it is in the process of restructuring in a significant way leading ultimately to the reduction of five hundred posts, principally from the UK. This has meant an extra workload for the Diversity Unit as a key player in leading and managing related E&D considerations. However this has not detracted from the research process because of the acknowledged contribution, not only to its work with respect to the GDN, but in terms of the value of taking time out to explore critical problems and premise this on an evidence based and wider, more inclusive approach.

Equality and diversity as an area of work is challenged by the fact that a considerable amount of rhetoric surrounds it. Indeed, even many in the field when talking together make some level of reference to rhetoric and idealism. Translating the rhetoric into reality and concretizing what it involves and what it seeks to achieve and how, is an important part of moving beyond this and highlights why the DAF is so important.

During the course of the research and data gathering which has spanned nearly 36 months, the ongoing organisational commitment to and investment in the DAF as the key mainstreaming tool has meant issues of equality and diversity are truly becoming mainstreamed. This supports the mantra that 'what gets measured counts and what counts gets measured'.

The relevance and importance of the DAF has led to a corresponding relevance and support for GDNRs and therefore what the role of the GDNRs concerns itself with and requires. What cannot at this stage be disentangled in this is the Diversity Unit and its own acknowledged high performance.

The process of analysis and stage of research activity and analysis has highlighted the DAF as a powerful tool and magnet which can assist in addressing the GDN performance related problems and difficulties. This finding and conclusion has been shared, agreed upon and already informed organisational developments and changes. The DAF has been revised and extended and the model applied to the measurement of the organisation's environmental work, with ongoing explorations about extending it to other areas.

Specifically revisions to the DAF have taken place that build in potential solutions to the key problems of time and resources and leadership support, something already highlighted. However more is anticipated. For example, the suggestion of celebrating achievement "make it a celebration, not a fear", to come out of the research from the RD participant group, has steered thinking towards selecting a winner out of DAF submissions for a range of categories. It might be necessary to invite supplementary information but it is in this way, as an example, that the research been helpful and no doubt will continue to be. It is beyond the specific recommendations and indeed findings. It is about the totality of what comes out of dedicated, sustained time to look carefully and more rigorously at a problem involving

a range of colleagues that is its real strength, satisfaction and a determinant of its success.

Having said this there have been frustrations and challenges. These include the fact that the research has felt far too large for something defined as a small research project and it has generated considerable data not related to the research questions. This throws up questions including what to do with this, if and how to represent it. For example, the research revealed some concerns about ethnocentricity most overtly from Country Director UK national respondents. These chime with a wider discourse and perhaps the fact that they are increasingly the only UK contracted staff member and not infrequently the only UK national, or one of a small group. As a result of this they are likely to be acutely aware of and concerned with day to day, work and non work based issues of cultural difference, and challenged by how to address attitudes and beliefs, culturally based and inconsistent with the espoused organisational position. It confronts them in particular with balancing respect for the culture in which they work and live and critically examining it and challenging oppressive beliefs and attitudes, whilst avoiding perceptions of UK centricity and ethno centrism. Having said this, where if anywhere, to do we take this rich thread?

Although it was expected that the data as a whole would surface the E&D 'fear factor' - the fear of getting it wrong which acts as a persistent sub text revealing a gap in understanding that results in a fearfulness of being seen as incompetent in the area, or worse, labeled as racist or sexist or something else, this did not come through. Regional Directors made indirect reference to it perhaps to do with it being a particular issue for them as the most senior globally mobile tier of staff with inevitable expectations relating to their knowledge and understanding, set alongside relatively limited day to day interaction and participation in and with the UK. This is because they move jobs around the British Council's global network spending long periods living outside the UK. Discussion about this point suggested that it informs the concerns they raised about the strategic approach of aspiring to mainstreaming E&D. Despite all this and the fact that RDs were less than clear about their information

needs as a source of support, it is felt by a number of colleagues that this and other issues warrant further interrogation and in fact for some, are of more interest and relevance as they see it, than issues of GDN 'performance' that the research has focused on.

The fact that some action in relation to recommendations has already taken place, supported by verification, confirms how 'fit for purpose' the research has been and this is a measure of its success.   Its success is evident in a number of other ways too. For example, the CEO in his testimonial confirms its success, and there is success as a result of unsolicited reference to it by other colleagues in a range of roles and at a range of levels and as a consequence the wide engagement it has achieved (Appendix 7.1).

There are weaknesses to report however and this includes insufficient focus on the research questions in conducting semi-structured interviews and being side tracked by matters colleagues wanted examined. The result is both additional data insufficiently focused and more superficial data than would have been gleaned were focus to have been retained. Depth has been sacrificed for breadth and has compounded the problem of managing large amounts of data within a small scale project being undertaken alongside the normal course of work.

A further weakness relates to the lack of effective consideration about how to best use the opportunity provided by the GDN conference to add to the analysis of the data presented there and indeed to the data itself. Again being side tracked was an issue. So for example, dedicated space was made available to consider what sort of network the GDN should be and what structure would support this. A particular driver behind this was the heightened awareness as a result of the research project of our own inexperience of managing networks in the absence of an embedded organisational approach to engaging with and growing and nurturing these, confirmed by the literature. This resulted in interesting and valuable contributions but not research question focused ones.

In general, on reflection, the approach to use of the GDN conference in the context of the research activity was not sufficiently focused on an interrogation of key research questions and emerging findings. Rather it drifted into a range of other concerns.   If a complete summary of analysis and emerging recommendations had been available to be circulated, this may have made some difference and contribution to focus.

It was most positive that arrangements were in place to ensure verbatim recording to support later analysis of this aspect of data gathering, however the analysis revealed insufficiently focused data, some tangential, some personal, to make use of even though this was perhaps on some levels to be expected given the very large group at different stages, including of engagement with the GDN. It was however not helped by the approach adopted for the reasons set out. In sum, managing and synthezing the different elements had clear weaknesses and missed opportunities.

A final weakness of some significance relates to the area of GDNR turnover. It has been a worrying fact that turnover is so persistent. At this stage of writing half have now left since the research project began. There were assumptions about why and a desire to stem the flow and a sense that if the GDN were more effective this would be achieved. However these assumptions were not fully tested because the means of doing so was not appropriately considered. As it transpired, the reasons for leaving the GDN when examined and not drawing on any research project generated data, were various and not at all related to the GDN and demands. All members left the organisation and in doing so their role, so the research findings have no direct contribution to make to addressing turnover.

As a dynamic process, the research data, analysis and emerging findings have been and no doubt will be the subject of ongoing discussions within the Diversity Unit and between the Unit, principally the researcher, and the wider organisation including GDNRs, country E&D representatives, RDs, general managers, Diversity Working Groups and close external stakeholders, for example Board members and two

consultants who work closely with the British Council. It is not therefore a case of 'the research concludes, the findings are presented and deliberations about which findings, if any should be adopted, then take place.' The dynamic and highly relevant nature of the research but also the fact of it being work based and its methodology, in particular that it has been informed by perspectives of different cohorts, as well as the presentation of findings to the conference, has meant related judgements and decisions are ongoing. This has the particular benefit of timeliness and appropriateness. The research, as part of the natural course of work, although dealing with an especial conundrum and problem to be solved, fits into and is a part of the real world, having generated insights which would not normally have been possible in the absence of a rigorous programme of study.

Reflections

There are numerous personal and professional reflections and identifiable personal and professional growth to come out of an intensive process in which considerable resources are invested.

The over riding reflection is that it has been a daunting process. The challenge of managing a rigorous, self directed programme of study alongside a very demanding job, which itself requires high levels of motivation and capacity for self direction, given the absence of a road map for mainstreaming E&D globally, has resulted in an overall feeling that despite strong support with all facets I have not been nurtured by the process. What I mean by this is that the journey is so very individual, the requirements and demands so very particular to the area of work one is engaged in, and the programme structure and inevitable time limitations and challenges such, that it is a lonely, very self directed journey with constraints on engagement with other students. On top of this and of real significance have been the, I guess ineviatable, personal challenges of life that sit alongside.

What was I expecting? In all honesty I can't say specifically, particularly as I have never come across anyone who outside my fellow student cohort has studied a DProf. I guess I expected that it would be similar to my MPhil and there are

similarities but there are also significant differences. My MPhil was altogether a much lonelier journey. My DProf journey has involved others in significant ways and has a meaning to it because it is highly relevant and the insights have shaped in tangible and significant ways the overall direction of the organisation's E&D agenda and the related steps taken. Further I have had access to resources I did not have when undertaking my MPhil. These are positive elements, significantly so. However, the sense of not being nurtured, having to draw on ones own resources, dig deep, remain focused is a strong one. This is probably to do with the fact that the D prof because it is workbased, has a very public element – it is with the organisation and for the organisation and that increases the pressure and perhaps therefore detracts from a sense of being nurtured. Awareness of the loneliness of the journey probably accounted for strong encouragement from my Advisor to get in touch and remain in touch with other students. One in particular, but others in different ways, have provided peer support. It is probably why the consultant role is a part of the programme and an invaluable part of it.

My understanding of workbased learning at DProf level has improved immeasurably. Learning by doing accounts for this. I now feel 'I get it' and was able to represent the nature of my programme of study as the wider context for my presentation of research findings, with a clarity I did not have, even at the stage of embarking on the research element.

Moving to a more direct focus on the research and what emerged from this there is an overall feeling which borders in some measure on embarrassment. How I failed to even recongise no induction was being provided for GDNRs and there was no rigour to addressing their development needs is baffling and bordering on negligent, given how basic this is. I account for it because energy was directed primarily at establishing the Network and then keeping it going in fundamental terms, with support and development focused on the biennial conferences. Further, energy was directed and indeed is still directed at getting 'buy-in' for the agenda in the context of an

ongoing round of new challenges and changes and new staff to whom the fundamental messages have to be repeated.

A key insight to emerge is that responsibility for the less than effective network lies principally with the Diversity Unit. On reflection the Unit has failed to take a broader range of steps to support and improve effectiveness. Turnover problems have been conflated with ineffectiveness when they require disentangling.

I have always recognised myself to be a 'finisher' and the particular challenges over the course of the programme has confirmed this.   Despite considerable insecurities reinforced by the negative feedback following submission of my first draft, as well as other challenges, I was able to focus on the things in my favour. This includes the outstanding support of my organisation and senior and other staff within it,and the way in which there has been unstinting organisational involvement and ownership of the research.

Although the research has been challenged by the dynamic nature of working life and adapting to this, sometimes getting it wrong, or not quite right, and in the process unearthing insights of substantial and varying significance, some to be pursued at a later date, it is this 'realness' that makes it not only unique but also optimally relevant . It's encapsulated for me in the key distinct elements of 'insider' interrogation supported by academic rigour, in a context of change and response to change, in pursuit of greater organizational effectiveness, synthesising multiple resources and contributions, in particular contributions from research participants.

The insider interrogation, in this context of change and synthesis, involves the review and from this re negotiation, at least temporarily, of relationships. This is because a new dimension has been introduced. It involves interrogation which has a depth and rigour that would not normally exist, and new roles of researcher and participant whilst 'usual' roles are maintained. These invariably involve issues of destabilisation, renegotiation and power, so there is a temporariness and new power dynamic, layered over already established power dynamics that have already been referred to.

The insider researcher role can be said to be incompatible with the role of researcher and the notion of being objective, because of course as an insider researcher, one has a personal involvement and investment in the research. Whilst acknowledging this, I felt able, probably assisted by identifying that there was a problem that needed fixing, to engage in the research and fulfil the role of researcher, unencumbered by significant concerns about the findings and treading on people's toes. The greatest difficulty, already referred to, was defining some colleagues as less than effective.

Of course for participants there were issues related to the positional power I hold in literal seniority terms, and/or, in terms of a process of examination and evaluation in my role of researcher. It was for this reason that I introduced a more, but not entirely neutral party to assist with data gathering through interviews from the two GDN groups. In addition, my approach of transparency and negotiation and commitment to acting on a basis of ethical considerations sought to manage these issues as effectively as possible.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

APPENDICES RELATED TO RESEARCH

Appendix 1.1: The Diversity Assessment Framework (DAF)

What is the 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.

It enables us to manage the 'balance' between the 'central' and 'local' decision-making and accountability referred to earlier and contributes both to supporting our core standards and to the evaluating our related activities. The DAF is also linked to our Performance Scorecard, with results being captured on an annual basis from all our directorates, aggregated to produce an overall organisational result, reflected in the leadership score.

How does it work?

The DAF takes the form of a continuum of five levels, each consisting of a number of indicators reflecting performance around a specific area of EO&D. The levels range from Level 1, *Embarking*, to Level 5, *Leading*.
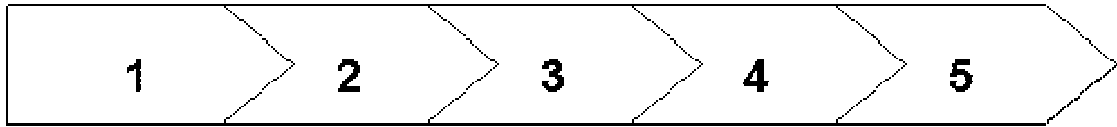
Level 1: Embarking	Level 2: Progressing	Level 3: Performing	Level 4: Mainstreaming	Level 5: Leading
There is *basic evidence* of EO&D performance	There is *adequate evidence* of EO&D performance	There is *strong evidence* of EO&D performance	There is *substantial evidence* of EO&D performance	There is *comprehensive evidence* of EO&D performance that is seen internally and externally as exemplary

Countries assess their performance against these indicators, providing evidence to demonstrate the indicator has been met. Using a scoring system of 0-3 points for each indicator, countries obtain a level by achieving a threshold set each year by the organisation. As the scale is a cumulative one, countries must pass Level 1, before they are able to progress to Level 2 and so on.

The Process

The DAF process is not static but continually evolves in response to the changing internal and external environment. However, the core structure remains constant, with 3 main stages:

The submission is **compiled** by the country office (led by a DAF co-ordinator) over the course of the year. Each indicator is individually addressed with an explanation of how has been met, supported by evidence. The submission is then **assessed** by an in-country panel of at least three people, one of whom is external (i.e. not a BC employee). The panel review the evidence and score each indicator in accordance with the guidance notes. The points are then added up, with the total for each level determining how the country has scored overall. The completed self-assessment form is then sent to the Diversity Unit, along with all supporting evidence which is centrally **moderated** to ensure rigour and consistency across the organisation.

What happens to the results?

The moderated results are then fed into the organisational Performance Scorecard, ensuring that EO&D forms part of the evaluation of the organisation's overall performance. Individual reports are sent to country directors and a final report is compiled bringing together all the results from across the organisation and summarising the key points. This report is discussed and finalised with Martin Davidson, who champions the DAF. It is then made available across the organisation, with results then being analysed at a regional and country level, as well as organisationally.

What are the outcomes?

The outcomes of incorporating diversity assessment and evaluation into the scorecard include greater clarity about our performance and progress towards mainstreaming. Every DAF report is analysed and action plans produced with a view to the future. Action plans at a country and regional level help us to identify areas of improvement, to widen our reach, provide better customer service and increase our understanding of diversity at a UK, international and local level. Our approach to diversity, through our operational work and employment practices, is a core foundation to achieving the organisational outcomes. Approaches to monitoring and evaluating diversity globally are new and undeveloped and, partly because of this, particularly challenging. Now in its 4th year, the DAF is breaking new ground and attracting external interest and recognition. Our continuing success in developing a meaningful and comprehensive approach support us in being acknowledged as making a leadership contribution in this field and assessing the impact we strive for.

Regional DAF element

In recognition of the fact that many decisions which affect individual countries are actually taken at a regional level and that much activity now takes place at a regional level through large scale projects, this year will see the introduction of a regional element to the DAF. In consultation with the Global Diversity Network and other senior colleagues, we have produced a series of indicators which we will be piloting in all regions as part of the 2009/10. Responsibility for the regional DAF lies with the regional GDN reps and regional performance will not affect individual country scores.

Appendix 3.1: Email to the GDN

From: Bartels-Ellis, Fiona (CA)

Sent: 13 March 2008 15:52

To: Names deleted to observe confidentiality

Subject: GDN QUESTIONNAIRES for research project

Dear Colleagues

I am undertaking a course at Middlesex University which is being supported by BC because the BC leadership has agreed with the aspiration to position the organisation in a leading role in international equality and diversity practice. The GDN in my view is crucial to this aspiration and so my research is focussed on the GDN with an overall aim of improving the effectiveness of the GDN. I am therefore seeking your engagement and support and am requesting your help. The help at this stage is based on completing the attached questionnaire which is not very long, by the 14th April, 2008 and sending them to me.

You will see that there is a request for personal and background data in line with general equality practice. I am asking for this information so that I can analyse and report in broad terms with respect to these matters. For example, how many men and women are in the GDN, the average age of GDN members. If there are any bits of information you don't want to provide you can just put a line through that bit.

I will maintain strict confidentiality in respect of your personal data, however I ask your permission to allow Stella Markoulaki to see questionnaires as she is assisting me with the research by creating some tables from it. Stella worked full-time in the Diversity Unit and currently acts as a consultant for us, primarily supporting our web and intranet site. She understands the importance of confidentiality and is thoroughly committed to this. If sharing it with Stella acts as barrier to you participating I will of course understand and handle your questionnaire and personal data myself; and of course there is no obligation to supply personal data, as I have already indicated, if you don't want to. In any event no identifying details will be shared or revealed and I will ensure no one other than me, and if you agree Stella, can access the data. To this end it will be stored electronically with access restricted to me and/or Stella.

Some of you have not been GDN members for long, nevertheless it is still important from my point of view that you complete the questionnaire. I will need to follow up the questionnaire with some interviews and so will be in touch about these in the coming months. I will also be approaching RDs and some CDs with questionnaires and will be conducting interviews with them.

If things go to plan, that is if field work is completed on time, I will present the emerging findings at the next GDN conference. Please send completed questionnaires to me by 14th April 2008 and finally many, many thanks in anticipation of your support and involvement.

Regards

Fiona

Appendix 3.2: GDN Questionnaire

The following personal equality data will not be used in any way to identify you. The purpose is to ensure that I have consulted widely and can report the overall mix of people who have contributed to the study. If there are any equality monitoring categories that you would prefer not to respond to, just leave those individual ones blank.

First Name	
Last Name	
Nationality	
Current job title	
Current grade	
Country you work from	
Length of time employed by the British Council	
Age	
Disability - Y/N	
Ethnic Group - as you choose to define this	
Gender	
Religion or belief	
Sexual Orientation	
How do you define your Global Diversity Network role	
How did you become a Global Diversity Network member – *e.g. volunteered, elected through open competition, asked directly by*	
If you work reduced hours (less than the usual full-time working hours for your office) please specify	
Do you have dependents (*that is do you provide some level of day to day care for: elders, children or other*) please specify	

1. Please list the activities directly related to your GDN role that you have undertaken.

2. Please identify words and/or phrases to reflect how you perceive you have fulfiled your GDN role to date.

3. Please rank yourself on a scale from 1 – 5 (5 being the highest) according to how you feel you have performed your Global Diversity Network role to date.

1	2	3	4	5

Please outline the reasons for the rating that you have given yourself:

1. Please list here any difficulties you face in fulfiling your Global Diversity Network member role.

2. Please list here what you consider would help you overcome these.

3. Please list here any development needs related to your GDN role you have:

Development Areas	Development Needs	How could these be met?
Knowledge		
Skills		
Other		

Please return this questionnaire to Fiona Bartels-Ellis by the 5th April 2008. Thank you.

Appendix 3.3: Email to RDs
From: Bartels-Ellis, Fiona (CA)
Sent: 03 June 2008 08:09
To:
Subject: EO&D RD questionnaire

Dear Colleagues,

I am undertaking a course at Middlesex University which is being supported by BC because the BC leadership has agreed with the aspiration to position the organisation in a leading role in international equality and diversity practice. The GDN in my view is crucial to this aspiration and so my research is focussed on the GDN with an overall aim of improving the effectiveness of the GDN.   However the GDN does not operate in a vacuum so data is being requested from RDs which is why I am seeking your engagement and support and am requesting your help. The help at this stage is based on completing the attached questionnaire which is not very long, by the end of this month and sending it to me.

You will see that there is a request for personal and background data in line with general equality practice. I am asking for this information so that I can analyse and report in broad terms with respect to these matters. For example, how many men and women are RDs, the average age of RDs etc. If there are any bits of information you don't want to provide you can just put a line through it.

I will maintain strict confidentiality in respect of your personal data, however I ask your permission to allow Stella Markoulaki to see questionnaires as she is assisting me with the research by constructing tables. Stella worked full-time in the Diversity Unit and currently acts as a consultant for us, primarily supporting our web and intranet site. She understands the importance of confidentiality and is thoroughly committed to this. If sharing it with Stella acts as barrier to you participating I will of course understand and handle your questionnaire and personal data myself; and of course there is no obligation to supply personal data, as I have already indicated, if you don't want to. In any event no identifying details will be shared or revealed and I will ensure no one other than me, and if you agree Stella, can access the data. To this end it will be stored electronically with access restricted to me and/or Stella.

I will need to follow up the questionnaire with a small number of interviews and so will be in touch about these in the coming months.

Please send completed questionnaires to me by the end of this month and finally many, many thanks in anticipation of your support and involvement.

Regards

Fiona

Appendix 3.4: RD Questionnaire

The following personal equality data will not be used in any way to identify you. The purpose is to ensure that I have consulted widely and can report the overall mix of people who have contributed to the study. If there are any equality monitoring categories that you would prefer not to respond to, just leave those individual ones blank.

First Name	
Last Name	
Region responsible for	
Country based in	
Age	
Disability - Y/N	
Ethnic Group - as you choose to define this	
Gender	
Religion or belief	
Sexual Orientation	
Do you have dependents (*that is do you provide some level of day to day care for: elders, children or other*) please specify	

1. How did you come to learn about the British Council's Global Diversity Network?

2. How would you rate your understanding of the role of the British Council's Global Diversity Network on a scale from 1 – 5 (5 being the highest)?

1	2	3	4	5

Please give the reason for your rating:

3. Please rate your understanding of what the British Council Global Diversity Network representatives for your region do on a scale from 1 – 5 (5 being the highest)?

1	2	3	4	5

Please give the reason for your rating:

4. How much direct contact with your GDN regional representatives have you had in the last 12 months? Please specify this in terms of number of hours with each of your representatives, listing them below by name and number of hours:

5. Please identify if this was (please add **X** in all that apply):

Face to face	
email	
telephone	
video conference	

Please identify the reasons for the contact.

Please comment on whether you consider this sufficient or not.

6. How would you rate the effectiveness of the British Council's GDN in helping to progress the British Council's equality and diversity work on a scale from 1 – 5 (5 being the highest)

1	2	3	4	5

Please explain the reason for your rating:

7. Please list any difficulties you consider GDN representatives face in fulfiling their role.

8. Please list what you think would help to overcome these.

9. What action do you think could be taken to improve the British Council's equality and diversity work?

Please return this questionnaire to Fiona Bartels-Ellis by the 5th April 2008

Appendix 3.5: Email to request interview and email confirmation of interview

Appendix 3.5a: Initial Email

From: Bartels-Ellis, Fiona (CA)
Sent: 24 July 2008 17:11
To: Name deleted to observe confidentiality
Subject: Interview re GDN

Dear

I know you are very busy but I would like to know if you would be prepared for X to interview you (telephone or face-to face) as a follow up to the questionnaire on the GDN you kindly completed. This should take around 3/4 of an hour and can of course take place at your convenience.

The aim is to explore issues related to the GDN and your role further as a contribution to improving the effectiveness of the GDN. The findings will be presented in Sri Lanka.

Please let me know.
Regards
Fiona

Appendix 3.5b: Email confirmation of interview

From: Bartels-Ellis, Fiona (CA)
Sent: 23 July 2008 10:08
To: Name deleted to preserve confidentiality
Subject: Briefing note for telephone interview

Dear X

I am grateful to you for agreeing to give me your time tomorrow and look forward to speaking with you. I'd like to tape our conversation and get it transcribed later but am happy to just take notes as we talk if you aren't comfortable with this – let me know.

I thought it might be helpful if I set out in broad term the points I want to talk about. Hence this summary note, which may/may not want to read beforehand and/or refer to during the course of our conversation.

My focus is the Global Diversity Network (GDN) as this is one area that I have to work on to help ensure improved progress in driving the corporate strategy of mainstreaming EO&D organisation wide.

1. You rated your understanding of the role of the BC's GDN (on scale of 1 – 5) as **4** and attributed this to involvement in a number of events, with reference to the fact that you could do more.   In this context it would be helpful to find out:

- Any further comments you have about how you've developed your understanding of the role of the GDN

- What if any general things you believe could help Regional Directors to develop a good/strong understanding of the role of the GDN

- If you think any of the following might be of help in strengthening RD's understanding of the role of the GDN and indeed the EO&D agenda:

 *joining the diversity mail base in order to have access to some of the EO&D information that gets circulated around the GDN and wider diversity mail base

*having a one off, or an annual face to face or other medium briefing about the BC's diversity strategy and key initiatives, including those involving the GDN from the DU

*receiving twice, or 4 times, yearly briefings from the GDN reps. on agreed areas; this might include what the GDN is doing

*UK as well as region specific diversity issue updates at specific intervals

*other things ……

(I want to make sure I establish if anything in particular has helped your understanding of the BC's diversity agenda more generally and your positive attitude to it that I can learn from/build on).

2. Re the effectiveness of the BC's GDN in helping progress our EO&D work. The response to questionnaires from RDs has revealed an overall high rating and the GDN is clearly considered effective in progressing our EO&D work.

However, getting 'air-time' with RDs and CDs (not sure we have sufficiently tackled getting CDs on board) and making themselves heard in a very noisy environment and growing workloads, as well perhaps as the limited level of confidence and visibility of GDN members and ensuring consistent and vocal support for them, including ensuring they make reference to the GDN reps. in various meetings and briefing etc., meet with and get updates from them, as well as making them accountable for deliverables, were highlighted as difficulties and a response to these. Added to this is the issue of how effectively the GDN involve other colleagues.

- Is there is anything you would like to highlight or add in relation to the above?

3. The overwhelming problem GDN members say they encounter is that of insufficient time to fulfil the role.

- Do you see a viable solution to this and if so what is it/what might be the best approach to considering a viable solution to this?

4. Resources are also an issue and differing approaches to this are emerging.

- Do you see a viable solution to this and if so what might it be?

Look forward to speaking with you tomorrow.

Regards

Fiona

Appendix 3.6: Email to CDs

From: Bartels-Ellis, Fiona (CA)
Sent: 04 September 2008 13:42
To: Names deleted to observe confidentiality
Subject: GDN and CD questionnaire

Dear

Thanks very much indeed for agreeing to answer some questions related to the GDN.

I will be in Botswana during the week of the 13th October unfortunately but will be back at work next week although essentially out of London until 19th. We can set a time after the 19th to go through the attached questionnaire on the 'phone which I have constructed as most people preferred an electronic approach. Let me know what times suit you.

By the way the 'background' questions are optional. You don't have to respond to them if you feel in anyway uncomfortable doing so. Just for your information I observe strict confidentiality with respect to the data and store it securely and restrict access to it to Stella Markoulaki who is assisting me with the research and myself, and I can restrict it just to myself on your instruction with no significant problem. Also I won't identify who has supplied any of the responses to the questionnaire at any point.

Regards

Fiona

Appendix 3.7: CD questionnaire

The following personal equality data will not be used in any way to identify you. The purpose is to ensure that I have consulted widely and can report the overall mix of people who have contributed to the study. If there are any equality monitoring categories that you would prefer not to respond to, just leave those individual ones blank.

First Name	
Last Name	
Country responsible for	
Age	
Disability - Y/N	
Ethnic Group - as you choose to define this	
Gender	
Religion or belief	
Sexual Orientation	
Do you have dependents (*that is do you provide some level of day to day care for: elders, children or other*) please specify	

1. How would you rate your understanding of the BC's GDN on a scale from 1 – 5 (5 being the highest)?

1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

    Please give the reason for your rating:

2. Were you involved in the selection/identification of the GDN rep. who is of course a member of your staff? Y/N. If Y how did you decide?

3. Please rate your understanding of what the GDN rep. and your staff member has done at a *country level* on a scale from 1 – 5 (5 being the highest).

1	2	3	4	5

4. Please rate your understanding of what the GDN rep. and your staff member has done at a *regional level* on a scale from 1 – 5 (5 being the highest).

1	2	3	4	5

5. What impact do you think having a GDN rep based in your country has had on a scale from 1 – 5 (5 being the highest)?

on the office?

1	2	3	4	5

Please identify:

Positive aspects	Negative aspects

on the region?

1	2	3	4	5

Please identify:

Positive aspects	Negative aspects

6. How much time in the last 12 months have you spent with the GDN rep. staff member discussing EO+D related issues? Please specify in terms of number of hours and issues discussed.

7. Please list any difficulties you think GDN reps face in fulfiling their role.

8. Please list what you think would help to overcome these difficulties.

9. How would you rate the effectiveness of the British Council's GDN in helping to progress the BC's EO&D work on a scale from 1 – 5 (5 being the highest)?

1	2	3	4	5

Please give the reason for your rating:

10. In your opinion what would make the GDN more effective?

Please feel free to add any other comments:

Appendix 3.8: Questionnaire for GDN members' semi-structured interviews

Introductory remarks

As I think you know Fiona is doing a piece of research into the GDN as we believe the GDN is crucial to our mainstreaming aspirations.

You've already kindly filled out a questionnaire and we are now following this up with semi-structure interviews with about 10 people – a mix of broadly more active and less active members based on responses and Diversity Unit knowledge to try and better understand experiences and perspectives better, to ultimately inform the direction of the GDN.

The findings will be anonymised and shared at the January conference and will shape the organisation's management and support of the GDN.

As indicated, I will be taping the interviews and my thanks for agreeing to this and indeed agreeing to be interviewed and as a result making this contribution.

I have a handful of questions around which the interview is structured but please feel free to talk as fully and frankly as you wish to. Nothing you say will be attributed to you as an individual.

My first question is a general one related to your country context.

1a Can you tell me a little bit about your perception about the attention being given to EO&D within x country generally?

(Clarify and probe where this perception comes from getting them to be as specific as possible - e.g. why do they say what they say, can they share specific examples etc.)

1b On a scale of 1-5 (where 1 is low and 5 is high) can you rate your perception of the attention being given to EO&D issues in the country in a general sense. By this I mean by government, campaigns and campaigning organisations, the media and general discourses – public and private.   Explore why.

1c Thinking back ten years ago (local staff will know this, UK contracted might not) what might the rating have been? Explore why.

2. How does this compare with the UK? What's your perception of the attention given to EO&D issues in the UK and what's your rating?

Explore the why and where their perception comes from.

3. Turning now to the GDN and your role. To what extent do you think the GDN meets its purpose, its purpose being:

- to support the mainstreaming of equality and diversity throughout the Council

- to undertake particular projects and initiatives to give meaning to mainstreaming

- to progress the Council's Diversity Strategy

- to provide advice, comment, information and feedback to the Diversity Unit – *this is something I am particualry interested in hearing your comments on*

- to be a source of mutual advice, assistance and support for members.

On scale of 1-5 how would you rate the GDN in this regard? Explore reasons given to concretize.

4a How long have you been a GDN member?

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4b Does the role meet your expectations; that is, is it what you expected it to be? (Probe and get them to be concrete specific).

5a What's it like being a GDN member? What are the positive and negative elements? The benefits and dis benefits if you like. The frustrating and satisfying bits.

(Try to establish if they are getting anything personally or professionally out of being a GDN member or if it is bringing additional difficulties they are struggling to surmount and find the point of. Make reference to their initial questionnaire. Try to ensure they focus and are concrete specific.

5b What motivates you in your role? What might motivate you more?

How strong is your motivation on a scale of 1-5, with 5 being very strong?

5c Are there any personal qualities you consider crucial for a GDN member and if so why?

5d Are there any experiences – professional and personal you consider crucial for a GDN member and if so why?

What comment would you like to make about yourself in relation to these?

There's potentially a lot in these questions. Try to probe and get them to be concrete specific.

6a Do you have time set aside for your GDN role? If so, where is this captured, and how much time has been agreed?

6b Do you use the time set aside for your GDN responsibilities in a specific way? (i.e. Is there a structure to the way you fulfil GDN work or does it differ from month to month?)

7. Thinking about your own performance and how you have fulfiled your GDN role, you used the following words and phrases to describe this……………..(Refer to questionnaire)

Can you expand on this please? Prompt them to explain further. Try to get them to be concrete specific.

8a You ranked your performance on a scale of 1 -5 as   and said this was because

Can you say a little bit more about this……

8b What is the key barrier to improving your own performance?

Probe to get specifics, focusing on them – the personal, not general level.

8c In the spirit of being solution oriented, what is the key ingredient to improved performance?

Probe to get specifics, focusing on them – the personal, not general level.

9a You said the following about your development needs in the context of your GDN role and your skills and how they could be met…….Is there anything you would like to add?

9b You said the following about your development needs and your knowledge and how they could be met…..Is there anything else you would like to add?

9c There was the opportunity to highlight additional development needs and in this context you said……Is there anything else you would like to add?

10a Who supports you in your role? 10b Is the support helpful? 10c What would make it more effective?

11a Who do you believe you are accountable to, (if indeed you feel you are accountable to anyone?)

11b How is this accountability demonstrated (through performance evaluations, etc)?

My final question relates to the 'ideal' GDN member.

12a Is there an ideal GDN member in your view? If so what characteristics, what features, what activity and level of activity, what role would this encapsulate?

12b Is there a current, or are there current example/s of such a member and if so what's their name?

12c What is it about their circumstances, them as individuals and/or their role that contributes to this 'ideal'?

12d What are 'must have' ingredients of the ideal and why?

Many thanks for taking time to talk with me about your GDN role. Is there anything we haven't covered that you think important to share at this stage, remembering that our focus is on improving the effectiveness of the GDN as a whole?   Probe.

We'll present the finding in Sri Lanka in January and I look forward to seeing you there.

Appendix 3.9 (Verification 2.b.2.a): Programme for GDN Conference, Sri Lanka 26th April - 1st May 09

Coding: Fiona's sessions on GDN research, sessions led by Sri Lankan partners, sessions on skills development for the GDNRs and sessions on explaining the leadership document and explaining the Guide to Mainstreaming EO&D into programmes and projects.

Aims

To provide an ongoing face to face forum for the Global Diversity Network representatives to:

- help strengthen their understanding of the British Council's equal opportunity and diversity strategic direction and its links to cultural relations;
- reflect on the organisational research into what makes an effective Global Diversity Network and address the findings;
- contribute to improving the Diversity Assessment Framework, ensuring it is closely aligned to the organisation's strategic direction and able to deliver maximum impact;
- position the GDN to develop deliverables that will effectively support Regional Director leadership and individual country performance in equality and diversity.

Sunday 26th April

Time	Session
Up to 1600	Arrival and check-in (Cinnamon Grand Hotel)
1700-2130	Cultural show followed by dinner at the Mount Lavinia Hotel. Transport provided

Monday 27th April

Time	Session	Led by
0845-0915	Practicalities, housekeeping and ground-rules	Robin Rickard
0915-0930	Formal welcome from CD SL and ISL RD	Gill Westaway, Rod Pryde
0930-1000	Introduction to the week from the hosts. Setting the context – in very general terms	Gill Westaway
1000-1100	Welcome and challenge for the week from CEO, including Scale of Ambition, organisational direction and consequent revisions to the DAF	Martin Davidson
1100-1115	**BREAK**	
1115-1200	The big picture – the external context and relevancies of the DU research to cultural relations	Jane Franklin
1200-1230	Discussing volunteering	Guido Jansen, Ruth Gee

1230-1330	**LUNCH**	
1330-1500	Fiona's research into the effectiveness and direction of the GDN	Fiona Bartels-Ellis
1500-1515	**BREAK**	
1515-1645	Questions and challenges arising from Fiona's research	Fiona Bartels-Ellis
1645-1700	Reflection on GDN role and identifying action points so far	Robin Rickard
Evening	Free	

Tuesday 28th April

Time	Session	Led by
0855-0900	Warm-up/ energiser	Robin Rickard
0900-1045	UK EO&D update – based on the Equalities Review and understanding the 7 areas (aim to cover 4 here? Disability, age, religion and race?)	Jane Franklin, Fiona Bartels-Ellis
1045-1100	**BREAK**	
1100-1230	DAF overview, reflecting on 2009 results and proposed way forward	Magnus Slingsby
1230-1330	**LUNCH**	
1330-1445	Proposed regional indicators	Fiona Bartels-Ellis, Magnus Slingsby
1445-1500	**BREAK**	
1500-1530	Understanding disability	Sunethra Bandaranaike
1530-1600	"Accessibility for Humanity: The Way Forward"	Dr Ajith Perera
1600-1630	Accessibility: The BC perspective	Carol Wong, Randa Kamel
1630-1700	Reflection on GDN role and identifying action points so far	Robin Rickard

| 1830 | **Travel to BC** | |
| | | |

1900	Performance by Sunera Foundation	Sunethra Bandaranaike
	Performance/play called 'Uniformity Limited' by 'Kids @ Play' on diversity aspects conducted by Prof. Neluka Silva	Prof.Neluka Silva
	Dinner	

Wednesday 29th April

Time	Session	Led by
0855-0900	Warm-up/ energiser	
0900-1015	Equal Ground – sexual orientation presentation	Equal Ground
1015-1100	BC experience based on sexual orientation (back to the 7 areas)	Fiona Bartels-Ellis
1100-1115	**BREAK**	
1115-1230	Level 1 and Level 2 indicators in detail	Magnus Slingsby
1230-1315	**Lunch**	
1315-1330	**Travel to BC**	
1330-1445	Level 3 indicators in detail	Jane Franklin, June Jackson
1445-1500	**BREAK**	
1500-1615	EIA practice exercise	Jane Franklin, June Jackson
1615-1715	Performing at levels 4 & 5: panel discussion	Robin Rickard
1715-1730	Reflection and identifying action points so far	Robin Rickard
Evening	Free	

Thursday 30th April

Time	Session	Led by
0855-0900	Warm-up/ energiser	Robin Rickard
0900-1015	Learning from the Sri Lankan teaching centre	Krys Joyce

1015-1045	What does an effective GDN rep look like?	Fiona Bartels-Ellis
1045-1100	**BREAK**	
1100-1145	What does an effective GDN rep look like? (continued)	
1145-1230	EO&D training: Strategy and corporate approach	Leah Gilbert
1230-1330	**LUNCH**	
1330-1415	EO&D Training Toolkit	Leah Gilbert
1415-1445	Skills practice: 1. Case studies – tackling difficult issues 2. Media grilling – handling the pressure 3. Selling EO&D – achieving senior buy-in	Leah Gilbert Fiona Bartels-Ellis, Jane Franklin
1445-1500	**BREAK**	
1500-1615	Skills practice (cont.)	
1615-1630	Reflection on the day	Robin Rickard
1630-1700	Presentation on Diversity in Literature	Prof. Neluka Silva
1830-1900	**Travelling to Director's residence**	
1900-2200	Writers' evening (Literary Works) and Dinner	Gill Westaway

Friday 1st May

Time	Session	Led by
0855-0900	Warm-up/ energiser	Robin Rickard
0900-1030	Looking at leadership – what does a bought in manager look like?	Fiona Bartels-Ellis
1030-1045	**BREAK**	
1045-1145	Building EO&D into programme work	Sujata Sen
1145-1230	Guide to support building EO&D into programmes	Roberta Kacowicz
1230-1315	**LUNCH**	
1315-1330	**Travel to BC**	

1330-1445	Reviewing the GDN research recommendations – where have we got to and what is next?	Fiona Bartels-Ellis
1445-1500	**BREAK**	
1500-1545	EO&D quiz	Magnus Slingsby
1545-1615	Evaluation of whole week	Robin Rickard
1615-1630	Diverse images	Robin Rickard
Evening	Free	

Appendix 3.10: Jean's Interview

What does an Ideal GDN member look like?

On the morning of the 4th day of the GDN conference, Fiona ran a session on the idea of what an ideal GDN rep looked like. As part of this session, Fiona interviewed Jean September and what follows is a transcript of that session:

Fiona: Jean September is the British Council Country Director, Cape Town, South Africa. She has been an original and longstanding global diversity network representative. She has been a really strong supporter of this agenda and her immersion in issues of equality pre-dates her employment with the British Council. South Africa has an apartheid history and Jean has been an activist in the movement. She has got a very strong track record and brings a very interesting perspective. She was also our first global diversity network representative to host a conference, in South Africa. Some will remember vividly in all sorts of ways the way in which inequality debases us, dehumanises all of us. I remember Jean taking us to work on Robben Island for the day. As well as visiting Nelson Mandela's cell, it was being part of that horrid environment in which you say the different menus for black and white prisoners. The white prisoners got a bit of meat as part of their diet, the black prisoners didn't. I remember the man who showed us around who had been a prisoner there talking about a punishment that they used to meet out. This punishment was they dug a hole in the sand and they buried the person in the sand up to their neck. Now, while we were there the sun was hot. You are in that island and there is a lot of white stone around, so there is a lot of reflection. So, they dug a hole, put the prisoners in there for the day with sand up to their neck. Of course they call out for water, and what do they offer them? They urinate in their face, in their mouth. This whole inequality business really does de-humanise us all. Jean set up a conference that exposed us to those sorts of experiences, took us to district 6 and other visits. So, it is really a pleasure and honour to have her here. She hates fanfare, but she was one of three people in this room cited as an ideal GDN representative.

I mentioned earlier the necessary characteristics of a global diversity network representative.

They were encapsulated in this comment 'virtue-ethics'. These virtue-ethics are said to be the moral character of the person, carrying out the action and the necessary motivation. Their moral motivation to act as they do. So, they are doing their work, but there is a moral imperative behind them doing their work. They are acting because they think it is right to do so. And people said that these virtue-ethics were necessary characteristics of a global diversity network representative. And you have to have these, some people believe, in their lives, in order to flourish. You can do your job, but your job has to have this dimension in order to really flourish. So, you know that it's your job to do, but it's the way in which you do it that's so important.

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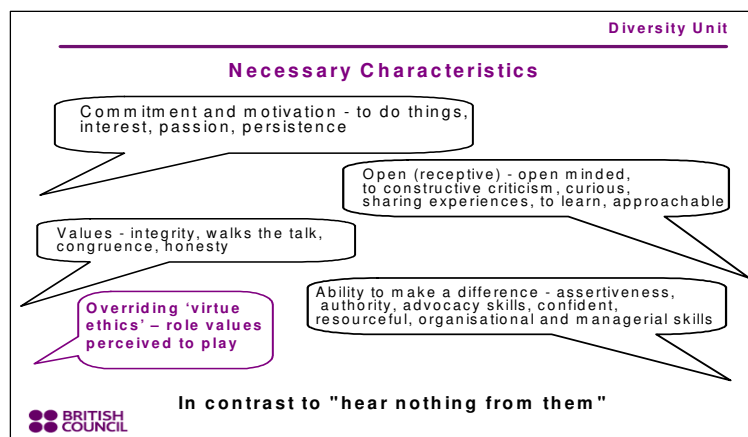
Fiona: And I want to ask Jean a little bit about these characteristics that came out of the research. I want Jean to give us a sense of an ideal GDN representative in terms of knowledge, skills and values, but also to make some comment about these necessary characteristics. So, Jean, are you surprised by these characteristics? Are they characteristics you agree with?

Jean: I agree with the set of characteristics. Just on the basis of those characteristics, maybe just one or two general comments from the outset. I think that all of us sitting here, our comfort zones are challenged in terms of the equality and diversity agenda whether it's on a personal level or a professional level. Secondly, the normal 'day-to-day' flow within the organisation will also be disturbed as it has elements of a change agenda. As individuals where do we position ourselves in terms of this kind of change we want to bring about? Example : Imagine how we live and work with difference. And everybody, I believe, who engages with this agenda, is on a journey - an interactive, creative learning process that we go through. We all start at a particular point and make a conscious decision of how we want to engage with the equality and diversity agenda.

And in a sense we are almost forced to take a stand. We need to think differently about what it is that we are doing. And once we have chosen to engage with the questions around inequality, social justice issues, we need to then begin to say: what are those characteristics that we need in order to tackle some of those issues. And being in an organisation like the British Council, which is incredibly hierarchical. And it is a question of where you find yourself in this structure. Now, irrespective of where you find yourself in the hierarchy, what are those characteristics that you need to be effective in the organisation and stay true to the values of the diversity agenda. If you have a different view, how do you present that view? Is there enough space, is there an enabling environment in order for you to express those views. And I must say, more often than not, I find myself as part of the minority voice. Do you become assimilated within the organisation? Or do you believe so strongly in what that idea is that you are prepared, irrespective of who the audience is – the hierarchy within the organisation – are you prepared to voice that? And I think that's probably one of the first things that as a GDN representative that we all need to grapple with. How comfortable are we with ourselves? How confident are we? And sometimes you may think it's a really silly idea, but it's based on one of those values that you really believe in. And, just digressing a little, in terms of my own history, before life in the British Council I used to teach but I was also a trade unionist and a social activist. You needed to take a stand. And you weren't quite sure where it was going to end up, but you believed that the stance you were taking was right. And I think those sorts of principles and values that one has is the personal journey that everyone goes on. And that's scary. When you start on that personal journey, you are not quite sure where it will lead. And I think it's that kind of commitment that is needed.

Secondly, in terms of being open and being honest with what you say and what it is that you do. Because, if there is a disjuncture between the words that come out of your mouth and your actions people are not going to believe that you are sincere about what it is that you are doing. And that's probably the hardest thing to do. I'll give you an example. On a Saturday morning you may be on the walking down the street somewhere and you see a colleague with family members who works in the same building as you. Out of the corner of your eye you are almost sure the colleague sees you, but they walk past. Why? What happens? What does that say about the kind of relationship, the kind of trust that you have with colleagues. In our South African context it would be racism. Now, I can go back to work on the Monday

morning and pretend that it hasn't happened, or we can find a way of addressing it. Once it is articulated you can't take it back !

Fiona: Can I ask you to explain why it might be racism, why you say that, in your context?

Jean: In South Africa in 1994, with the first democratic elections in the country, we saw the end of an institutionalised racist state. The legislation disappeared but the segregated living areas, attitudes and behaviours of the different 'racial' groups remained in tact. During the apartheid years, people were divided into four main categories you were either enfranchised or you were not. All white South Africans were enfranchised making up less than 15% of the population. And all the other groups, were disenfranchised, I refer to them as black – i.e. Asian, African, Coloured, mixed race – I hate using that term. In South Africa today you can't find a single person who supported apartheid. And I think it's all been internalised in terms of denial, in terms of shame, and so nobody talks about it. But every single day you actually experience racist behaviour as it's still part of the fabric of society, it's a daily occurrence, but people don't recognise it for what it is.

Fiona: The necessarily characteristics that you touched on are some of the ones that came out of here, you noted that I think – the congruence, the honesty, the openness, that kind of thing. I was trying to get you to talk about the knowledge, the skills, the attitudes, and I think you have touched upon some of that. So, I want you to say a little bit if you can, Jean, about some of the contra-indicators. What kind of person do you think should not be a GDN representative?

Jean: I think a person who is unable to articulate the issues around diversity and specifically the seven areas identified by the British Council including the inequalities around socio-economic issues.

The person needs to be fairly comfortable with her/himself in terms of the content /knowledge and confident enough to admit that you don't know.

Whose responsibility is it to become more knowledgeable about the E+D agenda ? Does it become your own responsibility to learn a little bit more about the area where you feel you are on shaky ground, or is it the organisation's responsibility solely to do that? There is a view within the organisation that – "if I need to acquire a new skill, the organisation needs to provide it". I have a different view to that. Yes, the organisation can provide a minimum kind of set of skills, but it is up to the individual to decide that this is something that they feel strongly about and this is something that they want to know more about, and therefore the onus is on the individual. And I think bringing that experience into the workplace then enriches the debate.

Fiona: So, a contra-indicator is a lack of willingness to develop one's professional knowledge and competence? Because nobody is going to be confident to articulate the seven areas…well, some people might be, but I think that's a journey. But a contra-indicator is a lack of willingness to attend to your continued professional development in this area?

Jean: Probably the second one is not being curious. Not being curious about the things that you don't know. And quite often we don't know what we don't know. How do we then begin to engage in order to find out what it is that we don't know? And it's only by articulating that that we would be in a position to be far more competent in those areas that we don't actually know anything about.

Fiona: Can you comment on the difficulties that the global diversity network representatives face? There are a range of difficulties that GDN representatives said that they face – have you any comments about what we can do around these difficulties?

Jean: The operational support work and the programme activities need to complement each other, so I don't see the two as functioning separately. And diversity issues are embedded in all aspects of our work. So, for me it's not a bolt-on to what it is that we are doing, it's actually what it is that we do. So, when we talk about issues around diversity it is everything that we are and everything that we do as well. And I find it very difficult to separate the two. So, when we do, for example, activities in South Africa particularly around our programmatic work it would be around a particular theme. So last year we used disability as our programme theme and we used the performing and visual arts to highlight issues of disability, gender, socio-economic justice, race, homophobia…..

Secondly, how do we treat all our colleagues with respect ? If you think back to your office – do you greet everybody every morning? Example : Does everybody greet the director and other senior managers in the same way as the person who makes the tea ? I think we need to look at what kind of respect we give to people who work with us as colleagues, and how we value everybody. What is your relationship with the driver, for example?

Fiona: So, do you not accept these difficulties? Are you challenging these?

Jean: Yes…Because I think these are all the obvious things that people would use as stumbling blocks in terms of moving forward. I mean, if we agree with the notion that if one is optimistic – and optimism is a political act – then what is cynicism then? Is it just maintaining the status quo of the organisation? And I think in the realm of cynicism all these things would be part of it. You put stumbling blocks in your own way in order not to progress further. But if you are optimistic about it, you would always find a way of working around it. There is no barrier or problem that can't be overcome or solved.

Fiona: Very interesting, thanks Jean. I want to move on to just show the aims of the global diversity network:

To support mainstreaming of EO&D throughout the British Council.

To undertake particular projects and initiatives to give meaning to mainstreaming.

To progress the British Council's diversity agenda.

To provide advice, comment, information and feedback to the DU.

To be a source of mutual advice, assistance and support for each other.

And in the context of these aims, I was wondering, and this is the question to Jean, I was wondering what this signals in terms of deliverables. Should we propose that global diversity network representatives and country representatives take responsibility for certain indicators? For example, 2.1, which is about training, or 3.1 which is about equality screening and impact assessment? I think 3.1 may be an indicator to take responsibility for, and 3.4, 3.5, some of the higher ones. Or should it be left to the GDN representatives as individuals within their countries in negotiation, to make the decision about what the deliverables are? Because they are at different stages of the journey. I just wonder what your view is around deliverables – two or three deliverables is a message that is coming through very, very strongly through the research. And of course it's part of our proposal around the regional indicators, if you remember. So, I just wondered…Jean ha s done a lot without the deliverables, but we have got other people in the network who haven't done much, to be quite honest. And I was just wondering about your view on deliverables, and what deliverables, in the context of the aims.

Jean: When we had the discussion earlier in the week around regional directors and country directors – one of the key things that came out was that we need deliverables for the global diversity network members. So, I don't think it's even a question of "should we or shouldn't we?". It should be there. It's a question of what should be there? We have two sets of GDN

members, some operate at a regional level and others at a country level. The allocated tasks will be different. But it's also at the country level that I think most of the deliverables would be. So, for example in South Africa this past year we made it compulsory for every single staff member to have one related EO+D performance deliverable out of four or five. There were various EO+D committees that staff could sign up to. For example, a committee on signage in the office. So the deliverable can be a very small doable deliverable for all staff members. And then obviously the country champion for EO&D has a different set of deliverables, to co-ordinate all of that. So, I think it's essential rather than desirable.

Fiona: And more locally negotiated?

Jean: Yes. Just in terms of the equality impact assessment. That's maybe something that we all need to look at and think about making that one one of the compulsory ones that we do as GDN representatives.

Fiona: Moving towards the end now, if you had to share your top three or top five tips for an effective GDN representative, an effective country representative, what would you say to us?

Jean: Be yourself. Be true to what it is that you believe in. And it's a question of how we negotiate and work with our colleagues. And share the diversity agenda as far as possible and make sure it is in our activities as well as in our operational work.

Fiona: I am just going to take questions. Jean has been in the role an awfully long time.

Questions and discussion

Questions: Thanks, Jean, for sharing this with us. Something that I faced very much up until about a year, a year and a half ago, which is the issue of fear. People can be scared to position themselves in terms of their beliefs for fear of actually losing their jobs. I just wanted to ask you in all of our experience if you have ever felt that fear?

Jean: I have been described as many things, and the one thing that follows me in the British Council is the name 'troublemaker'. Quite often I go to Spring Gardens and colleagues I have not met before say: oh, so you are the troublemaker? And one is not quite sure on the basis of what conversations this view has developed ! So, that's not fear, but I find that a little bit disturbing and disconcerting. I think I had the fear when I was a whole lot younger. I used to teach, and it was challenging the education system at the time as a teacher/ activist – over a period of 15 years – you actually build up the skills to deal with it. And for me the job is something that I enjoy doing. If I was not enjoying it, I would not be doing it. And there are certain principles that I hold and if I feel that that's in conflict with the organisation that I am working with, it is not a fear of losing my job, I am very clear about that – that that's the time to leave. So I think that I have subconsciously built that in already. So, I am almost sure if I leave the British Council it is not going to be a long, ponderous decision, it's going to be a really quick decision that gets made. So, in that sense I don't have that fear. Also, the other thing that I have been characterised by is being a disruptive thinker and doer. Which is, you can either think that that's a good quality or you can think it's a terrible quality, but I leave that up to you.

Question: I have a question about negotiating with colleagues. We have done a lot of training, we have done a lot of face to face training, the online training, but as far as I see that training, it's difficult to relate it to specific project work and that I think is the challenge for some of my colleagues. They understand the issues, they see why they are important, but they find it difficult to really integrate it into their work. And I would like to ask you if you have some examples of how you really integrate it into your day to day work, especially around projects.

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Jean: If I can give an example that I have seen over this past week. We have a number of colleagues from the China region in the room. And it's really exciting to see the creativity and doing things differently from a group of colleagues who are fairly new to the equality and diversity agenda. And it's about asking the question. It's about coming and wanting to know more. It's about thinking outside of the box. And I must say I have found that incredibly exciting in this room where colleagues are constantly thinking about what is it that they are going to do back home. Not just as individuals – people do come from different offices in the China region – but it's also how we begin to work together. It's that kind of innovativeness that we need. It's that kind of energy that we need. This agenda is not maintaining the status quo as one knows it, it's actually pushing the boundaries, it's pushing the envelope.

Question: Thinking about all the equality and diversity initiatives you have worked on, post-Apartheid, both in the British Council and outside, can you tell us one in particular that has given you the most satisfaction, that you are most proud of.

Jean: The one that gave most satisfaction is probably the anti-racism work that we did, and framed that within a human rights paradigm – the Unboxed Project – where we worked with 15 – 17 year olds to create a pool of human rights ambassadors with a specific focus on anti-racism. What they needed to do was a community project where they thought that they could make a difference in their community. The community was defined broadly as in their homes, in their schools, where they played their sport, where ever they thought that they were able to make a difference. And although some of them are 22, 23 years old now, they still come into our office and they are a fantastic resource for us in the work we do with young people.

Fiona: I think we have had an opportunity to hear from Jean formally. We are not able to list all the ideal characteristics of a global diversity network representative, but I think you get a sense from Jean and from the research what they are. You have got to go away and think about your deliverables. We are not going to sit down and do a whole pile of shared deliverables. But we are going to look at the regional indicators and the rest of the diversity assessment indicators, and I think you have to bear these in mind when you think about your deliverables, but not reduce your deliverables just to the diversity assessment framework.

April 2009

Appendix 3.11: Robin's interview

Effective leadership in equality and diversity

On the final day of the GDN conference in Colombo, one of the morning sessions focussed on the issue of leadership. After an introduction from Fiona Bartels-Ellis, Caron Sethill, GDN rep for SEE region, interviewed Robin Rickard in front of the conference participants. Robin is Director of the British Council's Beijing office, regional GDN rep for China, and someone identified by many as displaying leadership qualities in this area which are seen as exemplary.

What follows is a transcript of the interview, including introductory comments from Fiona.

Fiona: For some time there has been a request for guidance around effective leadership in equality and diversity. We have never got around to this. We have been particularly, but not solely, concerned about UK contracted staff who are in a globally mobile pool, who move from country to country and who, because of their position, have a lot of power. But latterly the concern has focussed on the fact that the indicator relating to the country directors demonstrating leadership in equality and diversity (2008/9 DAF indicator 2.6) has generated such poor evidence overall.

Obviously, leadership in this area is crucial to making a difference, but there is a lot of rhetoric in the area of diversity. So we are trying to make this tangible to provide a steer for people who are in different leadership positions.

You were asked by us to take this document and in relation to each of the statements about leadership, position yourself and position your country director. That's going to form the basis of a group discussion. And we want you also to identify whether there is anything in there that doesn't seem appropriate, whether there is anything that is missing, and whether there are, out of that document, some headlines – what might be the top ten?

One of the things this network has to do is to is to generate material that supports the organisation around equality and diversity as part of cultural relations. And this will be, when we complete it, the global diversity network contribution to the organisation. And we are going to try and package so that there are some real life stories in there. So, we want you to identify for us people we could profile in there. We already have some ideas.

At this stage what we want to do is to have a conversation between Caron and Robin. Caron, been an important part of our network for its life, and is someone who has a background in and a commitment to organisational development, understands the role of leadership, and is herself a leader in this area. Caron will have a conversation with the person who arguably holds the top position around leadership and equality and diversity aligned to a high profile role in the organisation because of his track record. So, I invite Robin Rickard and I invite Caron Sethill to have a conversation and then at the end of it Caron will invite you to pose questions to Robin.

Caron Sethill in conversation with Robin Rickard

Caron: I first met Robin 4 years ago at the Cape Town conference, and have seen how he has since transformed the China Region into a leader for EOD in our network. Robin, has there been a particular turning point in your approach to equality and diversity, making it as important as it clearly is to you?

Robin: I am involved in equality and diversity in the British Council because I volunteered to be. In terms of my British Council career, that was the crucial moment, when I decided to step forward and volunteer to be involved in the network. I did that because I have a personal and

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professional background in this area. I am originally by profession a secondary school teacher and a special needs teacher. And I was the deputy director in a local education authority responsible for delivering services to special needs children within the context of a wider social inclusion agenda that I was responsible for. I have been, but am not currently, a human rights activist, and I was the international vice chair of Amnesty International. I founded a charity for people with communication difficulties in the UK. So in terms of your question about a particular turning point, this is something I feel I have always been involved in, it has always been important to me in my different career jobs. But when I came to the British Council and moved to the China Region, it coincided, I think, with the rise of the equality and diversity agenda led by the Diversity Unit. So, that was the point was when I stepped forward and volunteered to be more involved.

Caron: Thank you. And what does that leadership involve? What does leading equality and diversity in a region involve?

Robin: I think I have various roles. I don't think people in senior management positions often are just restricted to one role. I think they wear various hats. I am the strategic lead for diversity in the China region. I sit on the China Regional Management Team (RMT) and it's my role there to provide leadership to make sure that at the senior level in the region diversity and equal opportunity are not overlooked and they are incorporated into those discussions and that decision making. Secondly, I am a global diversity network representative like many others in the room. So, I see that role the same way as everybody else does here and the fact that I happen to be an office director is no different to others in the room. I am a conduit between the Diversity Unit and the region in which I work. So, that's a second role I have. And those two combined are formalised for me in my job description. I have 5% in my job description devoted to diversity work which was negotiated with my regional director. But then thirdly I am an office director. In the China region that's the equivalent of a country director. I lead an office of 155 people. And so that role is as the manager, director of an office. And in that role I see myself mainstreaming diversity in everything that that office does.

Caron: Could you say a bit more about how those different elements of your role fit together. Are you ever in a position where there is perhaps a tension between your role in needing to make difficult decisions and deliver strategic change, for example, and your leading role in equality and diversity?

Robin: I think there is quite a lot of tension in balancing those three roles. I suspect there would be tensions just in trying to bring diversity into one of them. What do I face? I continually face challenges to me about the role that I do. It happens to me annually at my performance evaluation, where my line manager, no matter who my line manager is, and my line manager changes like other people's do, always challenge about whether I am committing the right amount of time to diversity as opposed to my other responsibilities. I get challenged around whether it is appropriate for somebody in my role to do some of the things that I do. An example of that would be that I, with Sophie Yuan, have done the training for EOD awareness raising in the China region. And some people, not just other senior managers, challenge whether somebody in my role should be delivering training. If I go to another office to deliver training, staff in my office at all levels sometimes directly have expressed a view to me that I should be in Beijing and not travelling somewhere else.

Caron: So what's your response to that?

Robin: My response to that is to say that I think the advantages of me being a trainer outweigh the disadvantages which are often about logistics, or time, or whatever. The advantages are, I hope, the messaging that it gives of a senior manager working with another colleague who is country appointed delivering awareness raising training. That's a message

to my region that this is an important agenda. And that's something that's worth hanging on to.

Caron: Do you want to talk about any other challenges?

Robin: I find I have to prioritise and select which aspects of all the things that diversity representatives can possibly do – it's a very long list of things – and which ones I choose to do. And, as I said, I prioritise training because I think that has direct and long-term benefits in the region in which I work. But when I don't prioritise something there is a real risk in my role that people will think therefore it's not as important. So, a little example is, I am not very active on the global diversity network mailbase. I don't post things. I don't join in the discussions very much. I just de-prioritise that. Of all the things I could do I don't give time to that. But there is a risk in me not doing that – people will say it's not important to share ideas, the mailbase isn't important, because I am in a senior role. Of course, that is not what I am saying.

I struggle, everybody does, to prioritise time for the diversity agenda. And I make my own decisions about that, about how I can do it. And I often block time and do work on diversity – concentrate on it for an hour or two, and just focus on it as a task like anything else in my portfolio. Fiona has given me feedback that sometimes that means from the Diversity Unit's point of view that it's a bit patchy – they hear from me, then they don't hear from me, then they hear from me again. And I realise that that is not necessarily be as helpful.

I have to be careful about my behaviour as I am in an office director role, because if I believe in walking the talk – I have to try and do it. I'll give you an example around work-life balance. I am married, I am a father of three children, they are all of school age, but they are older, they are teenagers. They go to school at 7.30 in the morning, so I can be in the office at 8 o'clock. I like to go into the office at 8 o'clock, it gives me an hour at the beginning of the day when I can do a lot of things, that suits me. But because they are teenagers they come home at 4.30, they have something to eat, and as they are in exam years, they do their homework. So, there is no great advantage to go home at 5 or 6 pm as I will be at home, the family are busy at other things, my wife works as well. So, I am quite happy Monday to Friday to go into work early and stay late. But I have had lots of feedback that that's a very bad message for staff in my office who see the boss in early and still there when they go home. I could be messaging that long hours is good. What they don't see is that I try to prioritise my family time at weekends. I don't interrupt my holidays to do work. So, for me I balance my life and my work, but because of the position I am in it is not always seen through the same eyes as other people. I think when you are in a leadership role that's a real challenge.

Caron: You have actually just related to the quote at the beginning of the leadership document: 'people may doubt what you say, but will believe what you do'. That's very much reflected in what you have just said. Do you have any more to say about that?

Robin: I think there are some other perceptions that go around about senior managers that work in diversity. I think that diversity is seen in the organisation as maybe a 'soft' area rather than a 'hard' area. And that doesn't fit necessarily with the culture of the organisation. So, in conversations with peers, they are often wondering why more of my focus is not on large scale projects, business deliverables, whatever. Now, I would counter that by saying: look at my track record, look at my office, I haven't dropped the ball on any of those issues either. But there is a culture that says that some things are more important in the BC than others despite what our values say. I am moving from Beijing this year, I am going to be the country director in Vietnam in the summer. So, I was in the senior management recruitment and redeployment exercises this year. It was quite interesting for me to get the feedback from those. When I gave my examples against the competencies of work that I have done I get

much higher scores if I can quote a large scale project or an office move, or a change programme. But if I quote developing and delivering a diversity strategy in the China region or similar then it's marked down by the shortlisters and interviewers on behalf of the organisation as not being as important. So, for me personally that's a challenge for how I develop my career. I think it's an interesting one for the organisation and I think it's certainly probable that other colleagues are addressing this and people are making choices.

Caron: That's very interesting, because our aim for this session is not to have just one or two lead stars in the senior echelons of the organisation, but if it's viewed that you have to make those choices it will be very interesting to see how other country directors pick up the equality and diversity challenge. Talking about country directors, - many of us, despite the fact that we have opportunities to influence ourselves, will be working with country directors and indeed regional directors - assuming that it is not advisable to go back with a combatitive or confrontational attitude, could you give us some insights into how you think it is best to approach the country director to get them on board for the equality and diversity agenda?

Robin: The way I answer that is to try and reflect from my perspective and also from conversations I have with my peers, and by that I mean people who are in the same sort of role as me, the sort of issues that I know they think around the equality and diversity agenda. Some of them are worried about the knowledge issue. There is no doubt about that. Some people are nervous that they don't know enough about the diversity agenda or the seven areas, that they feel they are in a leadership position where they could be asked about something and not be able to answer the question. It is very interesting in the organisation that when you put people into managerial positions it is often assumed instantly that the next day that they will be all-seeing, all-knowing. Not just senior management but junior management as well. And it's just not the reality. People grow into managerial positions and can be helped to increase their knowledge.

I think, just as there are people in this room, I think there are senior managers who are working through personal issues and personal agendas around the diversity areas as well. Some of them are not at the point where they actually feel they can demonstrate leadership around it because they are still working through some of the issues themselves. I think we should recognise and acknowledge that and not let it become a barrier.

Frankly, some people just don't subscribe to the equality and diversity agenda. I am not sure I have come across anyone who completely throws the whole thing out, but I have come across people who don't understand why we might do equality monitoring of our workforce, for example. They completely think it would be an invasion of privacy and that's their unshakeable position.

I think senior managers clearly have other priorities as well in their substantive roles. As I mentioned earlier, people make choices for themselves about their own careers and there are varying degrees of ambition around their British Council career. Some of them will think about it in status terms. So they will opt for, and I think the organisation encourages them, to prioritise their time around hard and quantifiable achievements - large scale projects, the businesses, the other things that I mentioned earlier. They don't see how diversity related work might add value to them in terms of their own career and progression in the organisation. I think some senior managers don't see the connection between diversity and operational work. We shouldn't be surprised about that because we in this group are looking at that very subject this week, this morning. We are not good at making those connections for the organisation. And the senior manager is no different in that respect.

I think quite a few senior managers turn mainstreaming around and say that because mainstreaming is the best way to approach diversity, anything that is explicit about diversity

can't be right. "I don't want to do particular awareness raising activities. I don't want to do diversity projects. I don't want to have a particular focus on the 7 areas. Mainstreaming means it must be all inside everything, unseen, implicit, not explicit." So, I think quite a lot of managers turn that round and it ends up working slightly against the diversity agenda in many local contexts.

Caron: I think you have highlighted some important things that we need to bear in mind when we are discussing leadership. Because the document we contribute to will be a blueprint in a way for how we expect senior managers to behave. So, you have discussed making our country directors and management feel secure in having knowledge to lead EOD and having access to knowledge. Often that access will be through ourselves, I would imagine. Understanding that there may be some personal issues, as we all have, with the EOD agenda; I think maybe reducing the threat for those that don't understand or don't subscribe to all of it. So, I hope that we in our groups can discuss this. Robin, thank you. Is there anything else that you want to say, then I'll open up the discussion.

Robin: I'll just build on your summary, which I think is exactly right. What I would say, I think, to people in this room, is that there are similarities between ourselves and senior managers in many respects, as Caron says, - some of the same concerns that we might have, senior managers have exactly the same concerns. But equally I do think there is a difference between people who are in management positions, at all levels but especially senior management positions. The way I see it is that the organisation is committed to equal opportunity and diversity. We do have policy. So it is non-negotiable about actually delivering on that and making sure that that policy is alive and well. We can't cherry pick. We can't decide that some of the policies are ones that we support and others not. I think if there were a group of representatives discussing environmental issues, or green office issues, they would say it's the corporate policy – lets get on and implement it. You will find that some managers get it more than others. And I think that's true. I think all managers, and there are quite a lot of managers in this room who, although you may not describe yourselves as senior managers, need to realise that this agenda is non-negotiable for all of you as well, I think.

Caron: Thank you very much, Robin. Questions?

Questions and discussion

Question: This has been really a very unique experience, an opportunity to hear about senior management from your point of view. To a certain extent I think it is the role of the global diversity network representatives to make an effort to get the senior managers on board. You mentioned things like long hours, and that you have a good reason for that. To what extent do you discuss this with your team? Do they know why you do this? Do they know about your quality time with your family outside of the office? I think this, together with other things, can make a big difference.

Robin: I think I am fairly open about it. I couldn't say that if we did a survey with all 155 people they would all articulate my view on work-life balance. But I think I am fairly open about it. Other things are linked to that. I am a member of the diversity group. Now, that's a balancing act as well – whether or not the director should attend the meetings. Whether the director in attending the meetings over-influences the meetings or it would be better if the group just got on with it. But I take the view that in a sense it's walking the talk. If we are having a group, and having discussions, I should be part of that, not slightly to one side of that. So, I think through those sorts of channels in my office my views are fairly well known.

Comment: I wanted to say a few words about the training. I think the fact that Robin is one of the trainers for the China region we feel is something very special and we really think that's a very good way of demonstrating commitment to this. I think it does have an impact on

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people's views on this agenda. I am not saying he forces everyone, but I think it's natural that people are more likely to listen to a message from the country director. And we want to be able to continue this model. I think a fair amount of colleagues in the Beijing office understand and view Robin as a role model for work-life balance as well. Because I as a manager sometimes attending work events, we are able to meet Robin's children and his wife on different occasions, I would say most of the colleagues understand that work-life balance is one of the areas we promote in China and that's one of the areas we have been focussing on. And although Robin attends the diversity group, I chair the meeting.

Question: My comment relates to what you said about working in diversity being viewed as a soft area rather than a hard area for senior managers, and I think I would share that view. Would you agree that part of our efforts as a group of people to mainstream the agenda involves changing that perception? Maybe it won't be next year, or the year after, but if we look forward five years maybe we could aspire to an organisation that does put much greater store by an involvement in diversity and a real understanding of the issues? If we believe in the agenda as senior managers we have to strive to change the organisational culture, even though on a bad day that can look pretty hopeless, you have got a good job as director, Vietnam, so it can't have been that damning.

Robin: I not only agree with that, just to be very clear, I think the journey that the organisation is on around diversity, including the senior management journey, is a positive one. Our chief executive has championed aspects of diversity - the diversity assessment framework as an example – highly successfully. I think there are increasing numbers of senior managers who are engaged in different ways in it. I thought the interactions you all did with your regional directors, prior to coming to this conference, was a positive exchange. It feels to me like the GDN journey from London, to Cape Town, to Bejing, to Colombo, we are progressing. I am positive, I am optimistic about it. It's not a negative story, but more work to be done.

Question: Robin, thank you very much for these insights. We are focussing on large scale projects. How do you think we should approach the large scale projects to make sure diversity is included?

Robin: I think this is partly the discussion we are having this morning around mainstreaming. And I think there is a culture shift around that, to make sure everyone thinks about diversity. I also think there are structural things that can be done in a way that will get to it – a checklist allows people to move forward. And I think the programme area leaders are very senior and influential. The way I see it, since the Diversity Unit has been set up, there was an understandable focus on internal processes and positioning. We now as an organisation are more confident about that. We are shifting all of us now towards looking at the benefits that an equal opportunity and diversity approach brings to our external work. And I think it is happening at a time of large scale project programme areas, so let's take that opportunity. Because I think that will really be when this organisation takes off with this in terms of recognition - really having EOD embedded in the operational outward facing work as well as having everything internally in order.

Fiona: I would like to ask you about the area of accountability. I have worked in the public sector in the UK extensively and at one point we had a zero tolerance approach. I don't think the organisation makes its leadership accountable in relation to equality and diversity in the same way as it does to financial mismanagement. Is this just typical of all organisations?

Robin: I think our organisation has been very clear for quite some time about responsibility – saying to people: you are responsible for this, you are responsible for that. But we haven't really been very clear about accountability. Responsibility is shared, in most respects,

accountability is person specific. So, I think we are in catch up mode as an organisation about accountability. By inclination I quite like tools or techniques, strategies for trying to move forward. So, around accountability I do see the new performance agreement system as being helpful in this respect. It does mean that people need to have their deliverables constructed in a way that makes it very clear what they are accountable for and that final column on the page: who are you going to get feedback from? So, I every year have a job plan item or a deliverable around the diversity work that I do. And Fiona and Jane are always in that final column for feedback. So, we have that relationship, as well as receiving feedback from my boss and others as well. And I feel if we pull that together a bit more, and be very clear who is accountable for what, and who is going to give them feedback about the role it will avoid situations where people can negate their responsibilities, push things to one side. That's my hope for the future.

Caron: I am going to close this session by thanking Robin very much. I think what is very interesting is the transition. When you move onto Vietnam, what is going to be the impact on the team and the structure you have set up in China. That will be an interesting thing to observe over the next year.

Appendix 3.12: Research attributed as adding real value to the work of the DU

The research process has been good for the Unit. It's helped us think a lot about the GDN in particular but also about other things. For example, the whole business about making time for our equality and diversity work, especially as we're going through all manner of changes, country offices downsizing etc. This is something I'm particularly aware of when I go to Central Europe where the majority of our smallest offices are located.

I must admit I was surprised that the Network came out so well but then again it is a really good Network with some great people and Sri Lanka made me especially realise this. Shame about the high turnover too - but there are all sorts of external factors involved, and I understand this.

Without the research we wouldn't have thought in the same way about the GDN. You doing this course has made you and us take a thorough, consistent approach to examining the Network - and the results it's produced have been fascinating. We're in a much better position to revise the aims and objectives, for example and introduce the regional DAF element.

Magnus Slingsby, Project Officer, Diversity Unit

Electing to focus on the Global Diversity Network was most definitely an excellent decision. We'd always commented that the GDN was crucial to us fulfilling our aims and mainstreaming diversity across the organisation, and spoken about the importance of ensuring our approach is not inappropriately UK-centric, but still we hadn't taken sufficient time to step back from the GDN and evaluate its effectiveness.

Your research has provided the opportunity to do this and I feel we have learnt a number of significant things as a result of it, that we can go on to build upon:-
* The research has shown that actually the GDN is effective, our original perceptions were not accurate; it is held in relatively high regard by both Country and Regional Directors.
* The research has confirmed, I strongly believe, that the GDN is essential and the organisation won't be able to deliver its aims in the area of equality and diversity without it.
* The research has revealed the extent of the turnover we experience and prompted us to think about how we can mitigate against this, given it is an unavoidable reality, linked to the nature of the organisation and the employment relationship.
* Most importantly, the research has highlighted where we need to invest and how - in establishing and maintaining clarity about the GDN, its role and purpose, its members and their roles and responsibilities and their accountability; in providing support to those GDNRs in the form of induction, training and development, focusing on skills and knowledge; in supporting GDNRs to work with their senior managers, Country and Regional Directors, to ensure their work is recognised and resourced appropriately; and in encouraging and empowering the GDNRs to share good practice with each other and to learn from each other.

The research has also revealed clearly that the DAF is a crucial tool with the power to drive progress and shape action in the area of equality and diversity. The role of the GDNRs in the DAF has strengthened as a result of your research and this feels right. Because of

your research I feel we in the Diversity Unit will be able to gradually move to a facilitation role, steering and guiding the GDN, rather than feeling we have to be at the centre of all they do. This seems to me to be the sustainable way forward and your research has brought us to this realisation much quicker than we might have arrived at it ourselves and has given us evidence and therefore confidence that it is the best approach for the organisation.

Jane Franklin, Deputy Head Equal Opportunity and Diversity

Appendix 4.1: Demonstrating leadership in cultural relations with specific reference to equality of opportunity and diversity SUMMARY

"People may doubt what you say, but will believe what you do"

This guidance is about actively promoting equality of opportunity and diversity as part of cultural relations. It is recommended for managers at all levels within the British Council and aims to support them to provide leadership in progressing equality and diversity E&D).

It recognises that leadership competence in equality and diversity:

➢ Can make a critical difference to the rate and quality of progress towards mainstreaming

➢ Is key to promoting E&D and inclusion as part of cultural relations

➢ Can help develop a critical mass of support that withstands the widely acknowledged negative impact often felt by organisations when, in a cycle of perpetual change, key leaders, who are also sponsors of E&D, leave and in the process take their commitment with them, revealing a 'sponsorship' vacuum.

The guidance goes beyond compliance with equality legislation and internal human resource issues by highlighting what is required of our leaders in order to support the process of E&D mainstreaming as a fundamental and critical part of cultural relations, with acknowledged benefits.

These benefits include:

➢ Strengthening our cultural relations activities and aspirations

➢ Helping to release the full potential of our workforce

➢ Being seen by customers, partners, suppliers, potential employees and the wider communities we work with as a fair, forward looking, ethical, culturally sensitive and as a result competent to work in the filed of cultural relations and increase its growth

The guide is unique to the British Council but draws on the National Occupational Standards for management and leadership which involve managing or working with people, providing them with direction and promoting equality of opportunity.

If applied this guide can generate evidence to meet the Level 2, Indicator 2.5 of the British Council's Diversity Assessment Framework.

OUTCOMES OF EFFECTIVE E&D LEADERSHIP PERFORMANCE

It is our belief that effective E&D leadership performance will produce the following outcomes:

1. Planning and decision-making rooted in equality and diversity principles and in our organisational values, in recognition of the importance of these to our cultural relations work.

2. Personal behaviours, words and actions consistent with E&D in the context of cultural relations.

3. Responsibilities and liabilities under equality legislation and relevant codes of practice, in different operating environments, being known and addressed

4. Diversity needs of current and potential customers are identified, enabling these to be more effectively addressed, leading to an improved diversity audience profile.

5. <u>Our Equal Opportunity Policy and related Diversity Strategy</u> is clearly communicated to all stakeholders, including staff, programme participants, students, partners and suppliers as a matter of routine.

6. <u>Clear and consistent direction and accountability</u> for E&D exists among the organisational leadership.

7. <u>E&D action plans</u> are implemented, <u>regular consultation</u> on them takes place, and <u>required resources</u> are made available.

8. <u>Specialist internal and external E&D expertise</u> is used to support improvements.

9. <u>Different needs, abilities, values and ways of working</u> are taken into account, and where possible responded to in the implementation of working arrangements, resource allocation and business processes.

10. <u>Monitoring of EO&D progress takes place</u>, with the results being reviewed and reported to relevant people, departments, partners and agencies, identifying required actions and changes to practice.

KNOWLEDGE AND BEHAVIOURS WHICH UNDERPIN EFFECTIVE E&D LEADERSHIP PERFORMANCE

The following points, grouped under appropriate headings, have been identified as ways in which effective E&D leadership can be achieved:

Messaging and communication

Utilising <u>communication styles</u> that are appropriate to different people, cultures and situations and encourage debate and discussion that enables full participation. This could include using examples and stories to explain and illuminate, as well as diagrams, pictures, interactive approaches and conveying E&D ideas and concepts that are comprehensible and relevant to different roles and responsibilities.

Setting out your <u>personal commitment</u> to E&D in meetings, events, conversations etc. clearly and leading by example in terms of your behaviour, words and actions.

Acknowledging that equality and diversity are <u>central to cultural relations</u> and <u>publicly and effectively communicating and advocating</u> this.

Motivating, empowering, and managing people

<u>Not confining negative feedback</u> to people you don't like or are not comfortable with but extending this, if necessary, to those you have a positive relationship with.

Not trying to <u>avoid overt negative criticism</u>, including performance feedback, just because this may be perceived as relating to gender, race, culture, sexual orientation, religion, working pattern or age, for example, although it is not.

<u>Recognising the possible negative results of a lack of understanding or ineffective communication</u>, for example, disagreements, misunderstanding about expectations and potential conflicts, then identifying ways to minimise these.

<u>Providing equitable, rather than equal treatment to colleagues</u>, empowering them and upholding their rights, making time available to listen to and support them, treating them fairly, honestly and with integrity and appropriate consistency, including in relation to decision making.

Understanding the diversity profile of your team/s and how to provide working arrangements, resources and businesses processes that respond, as far as possible, to their different needs, abilities, values and ways of working.

Showing you understand individuals' needs, feelings and motivations and take an active interest in their concerns.

Demonstrating awareness that different people have different levels of access to networks and taking steps to ensure new and other staff are able to access relevant networks.

Actively discouraging an imbalance between work and personal life and encouraging good time management practice, rather than a long hours culture.

Encouraging and supporting others to make the best use of their abilities, and demonstrating that you recognise diverse abilities and the opportunities presented by these and diverse perspectives, experiences and backgrounds.

Actively highlighting similarities between nations and individuals; supporting diverse teams and other groupings to recognise what they share and have in common and promoting this in support of our internal effectiveness in cultural relations.

Managing conflict arising from diversity constructively.

Building a culture where people are able to identify and share good E&D practice and celebrate success as part of understanding the value of E&D to our reputation and integrity, sometimes termed our 'intangible assets'.

Self-awareness
Responding to an individual or situation and recognising how far this response is shaped by the gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion, culture or age, for example, of those involved.

Identifying situations you find unclear or confusing and that lead you to negative perceptions when dealing with people from different countries and cultures and taking action, as appropriate, to constructively address this.

Maintaining a position of respect for individuals, in particular when you are unable to understand or empathise with their views or behaviour and applying this understanding to support you identifying strategies to remedy the situation.

Reflecting on the impact of your behaviour, including gestures and use of language, alongside tone of voice, when working with people from different countries or diverse cultures. Then, adapting these to improve intercultural awareness, intercultural working and cultural relations.

Receptiveness and teamwork

Taking time to listen closely to what is being said and potentially implied and if necessary drawing on the knowledge and experience of colleagues who are nationals of the country for guidance and advice about what works best in a given situation.

Seeking feedback from colleagues who are nationals of the country on how your actions and behaviours are being interpreted in order to develop your self awareness and taking action consistent with cultural relations.

Showing congruently that you enjoy working alongside people with different cultural experiences and perspectives from your own.

Consulting on equality and diversity with those who work for and with the organisation, or their representatives, and other relevant parties.

Contextual awareness

Understanding the conventions for introductions and greetings, gestures and other formalities, including the background to them within a range of situations, including meetings and group situations and applying these as appropriate.

Understanding general perceptions of the UK and other countries held within specific contexts and ensuring negative perceptions are not unwittingly reinforced. This can include not stereotyping, ensuring your own fluency, confidence or position doesn't overpower others, and idioms and acronyms and key events and issues do not go unexplained.

Learning as much of the local language/s as possible even if this just extends to greetings and simple communication.

Recognising how differences and similarities between your own and other people's cultural behaviour may change or affect attitudes, expectations, communication and working practices. For example, timekeeping, timescales, decision-making processes, perceptions of status and role, attitudes to men, women, sexual or minorities, communication styles and conventions, business relationships, business meeting conventions, attitudes to emotion and the expression of this, levels of hierarchy and formality. Applying this recognition in order to avoid negative outcomes.

Reviewing the diversity of your team, at all levels, in comparison to the local and/or national population and taking action as appropriate.

Reviewing the diversity of current and potential customers and identifying areas where E&D related needs are not being satisfied and where customer diversity should be improved.

Understanding the image of modern UK held by our sponsors and partners and how our E&D work can potentially positively impact on their overall perception of the British Council and wider UK.

Knowledge and compliance

Understanding the British Council definitions of E&D and different interpretations and perspectives on equality, diversity and human rights, including within different sectors. Evaluating these in ways that are culturally sensitive and reflect human rights principles and practices, and our organisational values.

Understanding the general and British Council specific business case for E&D, why they are central to cultural relations and how to use the case to persuade and influence others and promote cultural relations.

Recognising when the behaviour, words and actions of others does not support a commitment to equality of opportunity and diversity.

Understanding key processes for monitoring, reviewing and reporting on progress in relation to E&D and how best to contribute to this and make use of the ensuing data.

Carrying out benchmarking to identify good practice in relation to promoting E&D and establishing what lessons can be learnt and applied. In particular what the competition is doing to become 'the employer of choice' and what advantage they might gain from attracting the same talent we are pursuing.

Understanding the different forms which <u>unjustified discrimination and harassment</u> might take and the probable effects of not promoting E&D, in particular when aspiring to grow the use of cultural relations.

<u>Understanding how others are deploying</u> the diversity in their staff to address innovation, quality and services.

<u>Complying with E&D related organisational policies and professional codes</u>.

<u>Constructively challenging the status quo in pursuit of better alternatives.</u>

<u>Supporting our employment policies and practices</u> – including recruitment, selection, induction, development, promotion, retention, redundancy, dismissal, pay and other terms and conditions as making an important contribution to our E&D aspirations.

<u>Identifying your personal and professional responsibilities and liabilities</u> under equality legislation and any relevant codes of practice in a given context.

Updating your own knowledge and understanding of modern UK, including its diversity and the E&D issues, challenges, developments and improvements.

Professional and social interaction

<u>Not restricting your professional and social relationships</u> and networks to specific, and in particular, dominant groups, or ex-pat enclaves.

Consistently seeking out a range and variety of views in order to come to a decision.

Resourcing

<u>Drawing on</u> sources of internal and external <u>specialist E&D expertise. Not seeking to avoid use of this expertise for expedient or purely money saving reasons.</u>

<u>Creating opportunities</u> to invest sufficient time and energy into developing productive business, personal and social relationships with diverse people from the countries or cultures you live in, and or interact with in support of cultural relations.

Diversifying your supply base to include small, medium enterprises and diverse suppliers, especially form marginalised groups.

BEHAVIOURS WHICH MAY CONSTITUTE CONTRA EVIDENCE OF EFFECTIVE PERFORMANCE

Whilst there are numerous ways in which effective E&D leadership performance can be demonstrated, this can be counteracted by evidence to the contra evidence:

Avoiding involvement in E&D and not supporting the E&D agenda.

Not connecting cultural relations and E&D.

Denying the existence of E&D issues and their relationship to cultural relations.

Denying the existence of E&D issues and their relationship to cultural relations.

Openly criticising the need to develop E&D related competence in order to better perform in an intercultural arena.

Refusing to accept any E&D-related feedback, regardless of how constructive it may be.

Ineffectively performing in interactions with members of a gender or ethnic group different from your own or with those who face structural inequality.

Colluding with homophobia/heterosexism, racism, sexism, disabilism, discrimination, ageism and other forms of unjustified discrimination by not confronting these or remaining silent, including when arising from relatives and personal visitors in work situations.

Displays unjustifiable discrimination of grounds of age, disability, gender, race, religion/belief, sexual orientation or working pattern, political opinion, HIV/AIDS status, for example.

Not communicating expectations in relation to E&D.

Blaming, dismissing, ignoring or victimising colleagues for their articulated E&D related perspectives, concerns, feelings and needs, including feelings of being unjustifiably discriminated against

Seldom or never presenting self as an E&D role model.

Adopting a neutral position in relation to E&D.

Staying within a relative E&D comfort zone.

Not seeking to develop own E&D competence or that of others.

Examples of specific CD action taken in support of E&D:

> Championed the cause and made all staff know that I regard this as a priority agenda for our whole operation

> Included EO&D matters and promotion regularly in my weekly messages to staff

> Ensured that at least one of my quarterly face to face talks to all staff in each of our three offices has EO&D as its main topic

> Championed EO&D as core to the Council's purpose and vision as well as values – difference, distinction, individuality and specialness are what we are about

> Advocated EO&D as fundamental to our projects and programmes as a well as to our customer services and internal behaviours – thus we have had projects (involving multiple office teams) on, eg, celebrating International Disability Day, Arts and Disability.

> I attend all workshops and public events relating to these projects

> Ensure that all staff (and we have 220 here) take EO&D training. Take the full raining myself.

> Ensure all staff take the BC on-line EO&D course including myself

> Maintain a strong working relationship and mentoring role with the country EO&D rep

> Present sessions at RTMs and other significant regional gatherings to describe the Egypt ambition and achievement

> Advocate the production of EO&D (*Don't Discriminate*) posters, mousepads et al which are visible throughout our offices

> Ensure EO&D is appropriately and prominently in Job Descriptions and Performance Agreements – including my own

> Set up a Values and Internal Communications Team across BC Egypt to address EO&D and other issues

> Championed a robust Child Protection Policy with awareness training for all staff

Generally taken ownership of each EO&D development here and played the role of chief champion

British Council Intercultural competencies

Definition

Inter-cultural competence is the ability to demonstrate respect for, interest in and understanding of a range of attitudes, beliefs and traditions and how these affect and contribute to the work of the British Council and achievement of its purpose and strategy. It describes the ability to contribute to the cultural dialogue needed to develop mutually beneficial relationships. All British Council staff need inter-cultural competence to engage creatively and effectively with customers, clients and colleagues in that dialogue. This competency draws on qualities of openness, cultural awareness, cultural understanding and emotional intelligence and how these are relevant to British Council values.

Why is it Important?

Our customers, clients and contacts see our staff as representatives of the organisation as well as the UK in general. The quality of the relationships we develop with external contacts and with colleagues has a direct impact on perceptions of the effectiveness of our work. This competency highlights the 'cornerstone': 'we listen to and value different ideas and opinions' and is a starting point for the development of a number of related attitudes and behaviours described in the competency dictionary. Inter-cultural competence is relevant to all staff whether they work overseas or in the UK and applies equally to those who are 'globally mobile' as to those who are not.

Lower level 1
Open to new ideas and ways of understanding; demonstrates curiosity and seeks to be well informed about people who have different values, beliefs, opinions and customs; receptive to the positive contribution others can make; observes how others interact and uses this knowledge to deepen understanding of different cultures, environments and perspectives; builds trust and communicates respect for others; is able to deliver messages clearly to ensure shared understanding; motivated to learn and use other languages where the work context presents the opportunity to do so

Lower level 2
Takes the initiative in approaching and meeting new people and actively demonstrates an interest in their different experiences and backgrounds; seeks out, recognises and uses creatively what different people have to offer; uses accurate observation and understanding of local cultural contexts to improve overall performance; recognises when they have made a social 'mistake' and takes steps to avoid long term negative impact; communicates clearly, demonstrating the ability to minimise misunderstandings or miscommunication; makes use of opportunities to improve skills in other languages

Higher level 1
Draws and accumulates lessons from different cultures, experiences and challenges to develop self-knowledge and insight; demonstrates the ability to tackle the unfamiliar or unforeseen creatively and productively to achieve business objectives; uses other languages in business/work contexts; adapts easily to different cultural settings; willing to explore critical differences in perspective to ensure mutually beneficial results; integrates people of different backgrounds into teams in order to achieve business objectives

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Higher level 2
Strategic decision making reflects a broad understanding of cultural issues and perspectives; demonstrates the ability to use ideas and concepts from other cultures creatively and in a way that demonstrates understanding and empathy; is quick to learn about new cultures, using past experiences to 'read' situations and people accurately; recognises and diffuses potential negative impact arising from cultural conflict/misunderstandings; highly effective in developing international contacts for business development

Positive indicators:	Warning signs:
Receptive to new ideas and differences; demonstrates interest in and understanding of own and other cultures	Unreceptive and slow to adapt; has difficulty recognising different cultural norms and behaviours
Observes personal impact in interactions with colleagues and external contacts and adapts behaviour appropriately	Has low levels of curiosity, openness and interest in the possibility of learning from others
Effective in reducing or reversing negative impact	Makes false assumptions and evaluations of people and situations which cause offence and set up barriers to building trust
Recognised as an effective communicator in a range of situations	Conveys a lack of sensitivity; makes mistaken assumptions about the level of common understanding; is perceived as making irrational and inappropriate demands
Uses experience to improve self-awareness and increase own cultural knowledge	
Demonstrates critical self-reflection and judgement.	

Appendix 5.1: Examples of colleagues who included aspects of the research findings in their own presentations on the conference.

A) Taken from China's intranet page

Global Diversity Network Conference in Sri Lanka
Wednesday, 13th May 2009
XX
Communications, Hong Kong
What is a Global Diversity Network (GDN) rep?

An interesting presentation was given by Fiona Bartell-Ellis, Head of the Diversity Unit The review summarised the necessary characteristics of a GDN rep which includes commitment and motivation, being open-minded and receptive, and having the ability to make a difference. Jean September, Director of Cape Town and long-standing GDN member was identified as a role model. She commented that an effective representative should position themselves in the changing agenda, be creative in the learning journey, think differently, be confident and comfortable to voice out and most importantly to be true to what they believe in and push the boundaries.

B) Taken from the Middle East's regional intranet page

XX, Regional EO&D Representative MED, XX Country EO&D Representative, Yemen and XX Country EO&D Representative, Saudi Arabia from MED region attended the GDN conference in Sri Lanka from 27 April to 01 May 2009. The aim of the conference was to help strengthen EO&D Representatives understanding of the British Council's equal opportunity and diversity strategic direction and its links to cultural relations;

- Reflect on the organisational research into what makes an effective Global Diversity Network and address the findings;
- Contribute to improving the Diversity Assessment Framework, ensuring it is closely aligned to the organisation's strategic direction and able to deliver maximum impact and;
- Position the GDN to develop deliverables that will effectively support Regional Director leadership and individual country performance in equality and diversity.

Martin Davidson, the CEO, believes it is a vital agenda for us as an effective cultural relations organisation, 'This is a genuinely transformational agenda', commented by him on the opening day of the fourth bi-annual Global Diversity Network conference. Participants welcomed the opportunity to understand the bigger picture provided by Martin and consider that his participation was a powerful message in relation to his view of the relevance of E&D to our work and the value he places on the GDN.

Appendix 5.2: GDN Research Overview presentation

CDs

"We'd never get anywhere without this network! The important thing is that the network has the right relationships with senior management across the regions, and can demonstrate that this work can be an important strand of our work in IDC."

"It operates too much within itself and does not have sufficient impact on the overall BC team. It is good that it is there and I do not promote abolition of internal networks. But we might make too many assumptions about what internal networks can achieve."

"The approach to the GDN is very professional. The DAF which has been developed though demanding, is a good way of measuring progress towards becoming a more diversity engaged organisation. Over recent years, awareness of diversity issues and their importance to us all has risen exponentially."

"The GDN is one of the most inspiring, empowering, inclusive, democratic and transparent networks I have been involved in the Council."

"If more people did more then we would achieve more in the network."

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Key GDN Contributions

Wider contribution to DU led EO&D activities (50%)

Training and awareness raising activities & disseminating information (100%)

Regional strategy & local action plan devpt & progression activity & engagement (80%)

DAF specific Activity (49%)

Aims

➢ To support the mainstreaming of equality and diversity throughout the Council
➢ To undertake particular projects and initiatives to give meaning to mainstreaming
➢ To progress the Council's Diversity Strategy
➢ To provide advice, comment, information and feedback to the Diversity Unit
➢ To be a source of mutual advice, assistance and support for members.

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GDNR Difficulties

competing priorities

overloaded

other colleagues

under resourced

country constraints

commitment from managers

lack of clarity re responsibilities and deliverables

Membership turnover 42 %
Since January 23%

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Knowledge Needs

➢ "Deeper understanding of the 7 areas."

➢ "More in depth knowledge of the core topics of the EO&D."

➢ "Keeping up to date with UK EOD agendas."

➢ "New developments, UK legislation, terminology."

Greater and broader development of knowledge including of UK agenda and inter-cultural working

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Skills Needs

➢ Presentation / training / facilitation skills,

➢ Buy-in and communication skills including in regional and multi-cultural contexts,

➢ Strategies for sustainability

Other?

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Meeting Development Needs

Knowledge sharing of external practices

Conferences and discussion forums

Active engagement in EO&D work

Knowledge

Skills

On line and higher level training

Shadowing and attachments

Reading material

12f

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Necessary Characteristics

Commitment and motivation - to do things, interest, passion, persistence

Open (receptive) - open minded, to constructive criticism, curious, sharing experiences, to learn, approachable

Values - integrity, walks the talk, congruence, honesty

Overriding 'virtue ethics' – role values perceived to play

Ability to make a difference - assertiveness, authority, advocacy skills, confident, resourceful, organisational and managerial skills

In contrast to "hear nothing from them"

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Notion of an ideal GDNR

➤ 4 local contracted
➤ Established and long serving members
➤ Based in countries achieving high DAF scores
➤ Corresponds with 1 exception with high performing positioning

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Enhancing Effectiveness?

Emergent Conclusions

'Key Ingredients'

➤Begin with 'selection' and clarity of role, including deliverables
➤Induction
➤Resources
➤DU support
➤GDNR self management and country and regional leadership

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Solutions?

Current focus

➤DAF based solution
➤ Regional indicators
➤ Induction programme

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Now over to you ...

➤Your thoughts and feelings, comments, views, insights and questions please.
➤Areas of curiosity, surprise, disagreement?

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Now over to you ...

3.15 – 4.45 – Exercise in 4 groups:

➤ Visually represent an ideal GDN and the core ingredients that support this
➤ Identify up to 5 action points with rationale and named responsibilities in support of this
➤ Make your case to your partner group
➤ Address general responses to Research Presentation ...

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Now over to you ...

General Responses to Research Presentation and Steer:

➢ Structure of GDN
➢ Management of GDN
➢ Resourcing of GDN
➢ Capacity building of GDN
➢ Relationship of DAF to GDN
➢ RD and GDN relationship
➢ CD and GDN relationship
➢ Turnover
➢ Deliverables
➢ Other?

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Now over to you ...

➢ 3.15 - 4.05 - for the representation

➢ 4.05 – 4.30 - making your case

➢ 4.30 – 4.45 – exercise round up

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Appendix 5.3 (Verification 2.b.2.a): Relevant extracts from the Evaluation Report for the Global Diversity Network Conference in Sri Lanka 26th April – 1st May 2009

The conference was evaluated using conference evaluation forms for overall feedback (29 completed) as well as daily evaluations forms for evaluating the sessions of each day of the conference (162 completed). This report outlines the delegate feedback from both.

Conference Evaluation Delegate Feedback

Part A of the conference evaluation form rated *Reaction and Satisfaction*, *Aims and Objectives* and *Organisation and Administration*. Here, on the scale of 1 (not all) to 5 (completely), 199 of 287 responses were for 5, and there were no responses at all for 1-2. See *Table 1* and *Charts 1-10* below for breakdown. In particular, delegates were very satisfied with the organisation and administration of the conference, with 25 out 29 scores given to 5 (completely).

Table 1 - Part A of Conference Evaluation Form

Please rate the conference by ticking one number on a scale of 1 (not at all) to 5 (completely):

	1	2	3	4	5	N/A	Total
REACTION AND SATISFACTION							
The content of the sessions was important in relation to the broader vision, purpose and values of the British Council	0	0	0	7	22	0	29
The content of the sessions was relevant to my work and deliverables	0	0	1	11	17	0	29
A good balance of participation, discussion and presentation was achieved	0	0	2	9	18	0	29
AIMS AND OBJECTIVES	0	0	2	5	22	0	29
The conference strengthened my understanding of the EO&D agenda in the context of the British Council and cultural relations	0	0	2	5	22	0	29
The conference defined the purpose and direction of the GDN and my role within this	0	0	2	14	11	2	29
The conference contributed to developing and improving the DAF as an effective tool for driving the mainstreaming of EO&D	0	0	1	10	18	0	29
This conference will be important in supporting me in implementing various EO&D actions in the context of my work, e.g. the development of regional action plans, EO&D-related deliverables, identified approaches to EO&D, training etc	0	0	1	9	19	0	29

ORGANISATION AND ADMINISTRATION							
How satisfied are you with the organisation and facilitation of the conference?	0	0	0	4	25	0	29
How satisfied are you with the accommodation and catering of the conference?	0	0	0	3	25	1	29
Total			11	77	199	3	

Part B of the conference evaluation form asked delegates to indicate what they considered to be the most useful aspect of the conference and why. Here, rather than selecting a particular aspect or session, many delegates chose to list multiple aspects, state 'everything' or make general comments. This cluster received the highest score (22). These comments suggest that many, if not all, sessions were of equal value to the delegates. Examples of such comments are given below:

Example 1:

So many aspects were useful it's hard to choose just one

Example 2:

I found the programme are well-planned and have a good balance of all relevant issues. This is one of the best event I have ever attended in the BC. This is very inspiring and have learnt a lot from this event, the best practice around the world.

Example 3:

The whole conference has been thoroughly thought through, all presentations and practical sessions have been extremely inclusive and ?. Thank you! Lots to take in and even more to carry out back to the office

Daily Evaluation feedback

More detailed feedback was given in the daily evaluation forms, but responses generally reflect the same level of satisfaction as provided for the overall conference feedback above. The feedback was also similar in the sense that many delegates listed multiple aspects, made general comments or stated 'everything' when asked what aspect they found most useful. Delegates also tended to list what they found most useful without providing an explanation of why.

Overall, there were very few criticisms, and these tended to take into account restrictions in terms of time and energy levels. An example of such a balanced response is provided below:

Each session would have benefited from more time as there was great interest in discussion. However, this itself confirmed the relevance of the agenda items selected for the conference programme.

Most comments on 'possible improvements' followed their indication that they felt the activities had fully met their expectations, and rather that criticising the agenda, they referred to other items that could have been added to the agenda if there had more time available,

rather than being critical of the agenda itself. Such comments frequently indicated a wish for more time for discussion, but a similar amount also commented on the intensity of the conference and the level of fatigue by the mi-day stage as a consequence. Some delegates expressed a wish for more practical activities, and this preference was sometimes suggested as a way to refresh or revitalise. Energisers at points within the day were also suggested by one delegate.

Monday

1. What was the most useful aspect of today and why?

Session	Led by	Score
Introduction to the week from the hosts. Setting the context – in very general terms	Gill Westaway, Duncan Wilson	7
Welcome and challenge for the week from CEO, including Scale of Ambition, organisational direction and consequent revisions to the DAF	Martin Davidson	10
The big picture – the external context and relevancies of the DU research to cultural relations	Jane Franklin	8
Discussing volunteering	Guido Jansen, Ruth Gee	8
Fiona's research into the effectiveness and direction of the GDN	Fiona Bartels-Ellis	10
Reflection on GDN role and identifying action points so far	Robin Rickard	3

As the table above illustrates, the score for each session were very evenly distributed, excluding the session on GDN roles. A core of 10 was also received for 'general comments/everything/multiple' aspects. The score of 7 for the introduction specifically related to Duncan Wilson's discussion of the Sri Lankan context, with comments indicating that it was 'good to understand the local conflict and put in context of diversity and EO'.

For Fiona's research on the GDN, one delegate commented that it made them 'think deeply' about how they could be a more effective GDN. Her research results, profile of an effective GDN, and identification of possible trends, were considered by my many to be very important for the development and strengthening of the existing network. It also 'starting us on an honest appraisal of our work in GDN'.

Thursday

1. What was the most useful aspect of today and why?

Session	Led by	Score
Learning from the Sri Lankan teaching centre	Krys Joyce	9

What does an effective GDN rep look like? (continued after the break)	Fiona Bartels-Ellis, Jean September	5
EO&D training: Strategy and corporate approach	Leah Gilbert	
EO&D Training Toolkit	Leah Gilbert	10
Skills practice: 1. Case studies – tackling difficult issues 2. Media grilling – handling the pressure 3. Selling EO&D – achieving senior buy-in	Leah Gilbert, Fiona Bartels-Ellis, Jane Franklin	21
Reflection on the day	Robin Rickard	
Presentation on Diversity in Literature, Writers' evening (Literary Works) and Dinner	Prof.Neluka Silva, Gill Westaway	3

There were 7 general comments for Thursday. The highest score was given to the Skills Practice session. Here, delegates felt that the cases studies provided interesting perspectives from different regions/countries, and offered them a rare opportunity to face situations they had not encountered before. Reflecting a common preference found in the evaluation process, this session was credited for allowing interaction and relationship building. Many delegates also commented on how this session provided tips they could take back with them and include in their office activities and training programmes. This sentiment was also broadly expressed in the positive feedback for the session on the Sri Lankan teaching centre, where delegates expressed how it was 'good to learn from TC experiences and how it is possible to integrate EOD in TC context'. In the feedback for GDN rep session, delegates commented on how it 'is encouraging to hear from people who have had lots of experience in this field'.

Appendix 5.4 (<u>Verification 3.2.a</u>): Message about GDN Conf posted to GLT site

Dear Colleagues

We hope you had a good journey home and are recovering from our week together, inspired and enthused to take forward some of the things we discussed over the week. Thanks to Jean for sending such a great message to us all (which lifted us out of the dull and rainy UK for a moment and back to warmer climes).

We wanted to share with you the message that we've sent to the GLT about the conference. This has just been posted onto their site.

We'll be in touch soon about the revised DAF indicators.

All good wishes
Fiona, Jane and Magnus.

Dear GLT Colleagues
I wanted to provide you with the feedback points following our very successful GDN conference in Sri Lanka last week which coincided with the 60th anniversary of the BC's presence in Sri Lanka, an office as you probably know, with a vibrant operation and approximately 5,000 teaching centre students and 26,000 library members, as well as a huge exams business; the 5th largest in our network we were told.

Gill Westaway and team were fantastic hosts. The planning and execution of all aspects they led on was of an extremely high standard and made a significant contribution to the focus we were able to maintain throughout. They exercised due diligence in relation to the security situation and struck a balance between being alert but not alarmist. They exposed us to the local E&D issues, challenges and achievements and provided a range of opportunities for us to interact and learn from key local contacts and partners doing some very impressive work. Seeing Gill fulfil her varied CD role with congruence, premised on sensitivity to the contributions and issues of the operating environment was consistent with the aspiration of inclusion that is at the heart of the E&D agenda.

The overall feedback drawn from daily and overall evaluation forms is excellent. Participants went away feeling better informed and engaged and with a current insight into UK E&D issues, amongst many other things. They welcomed the opportunity to understand the bigger picture provided by Martin and consider that his participation was a powerful message in relation to his view of the relevance of E&D to our work and the value he places on the GDN. Many things need more debate, discussion and understanding. For example, what we mean when we say we adopt a neutral position in relation to world issues - in this instance the current ethnic conflict. What distinguishes this conflict from other conflicts like those that have taken/are taking place in South Africa and Israel where we have clearly have not taken a neutral position is an important question. I personally struggle to accept the existence of neutrality and believe this needs to be de constructed and properly clarified. One of several points made in relation to Martin's comments about more partnership working was that although we might like to characterise ourselves as neutral, this will not hold for our partners. Food for thought as we increase our partnership working, and as Martin signalled become junior or secondary partners.

The outcomes of the conference included the following:

- An understanding amongst participants of global aspects of the E&D terrain. This included age and religion demographics raising important questions about these in the context of our work. For example, given the prevalence of religious belief globally and

the relationship to culture and cultural relations why we are arguably virtually silent in this area.

- An understanding of the UK equality and diversity terrain with a focus on key organisations, their role, ministerial leaders, the 3 strands and seven areas. As the Equality Bill passed its second reading whilst we were there we took the opportunity to signal key elements. Just prior to the conference Martin received notification from the Equality and Human Rights Commission of the new obligations the bill places on the British Council.

- An understanding of the results of my research into the effectiveness of the GDN and opportunity to comment on and inform these.

- A first hand insight into what research respondents identified as an ideal GDN representative. Jean September was amongst a small group identified as an ideal GDN representative and she at our invitation spoke about the role highlighting the importance of standing true to our values, being agents of change and having a driving commitment to build equality and diversity into our programme work as well as our internal interactions.

- Revised DAF indicators. GDN reps. reviewed and commented on the draft revised indicators , bringing their experience and expertise to our attempts to make revisions that support improvement of the DAF, in recognition of its power to drive change in the organisation. A final version of DAF indicators to be launched over the coming weeks will incorporate their feedback.

- Agreement regarding regional DAF indicators. Again there was review and comment on these and a vote about their introduction. The regional indicators will be launched in the coming weeks, incorporating the feedback of GDN reps.

- Discussion points which will inform the document ' Leading E&D to support cultural relations'. This is being developed by the GDN, partly in response to the paucity of evidence for the indicator 'CD demonstrates leadership in E&D' which reflects the difficulties many CDs are experiencing. It will be made available in the coming months.

- An insight into how Robin Rickard, the facilitator of our conference and another colleague widely identified as an 'ideal GDN rep' as well as a senior manager who clearly demonstrates commitment and leadership in the area of E&D, provides EO&D leadership.

- Additional points to inform a GDN guidance document on incorporating E&D into our programme work , which will be further refined taking account of the feedback and launched over the coming weeks.

- Enhanced GDN member skills through the opportunity to participate in different skills development sessions (including handling sensitive cases, selling E&D and responding to external criticism about the E&D agenda).

- Enhanced understanding of how the Sri Lanka Teaching incorporates E&D into English language lessons.

- Understanding of how BC Hong Kong has approached volunteering and the business and wider potential of this. Ruth Gee RD designate for ISL gave a very stimulating and though provoking interview on this subject which has enthused many people. Ruth and Rod Pryde's presence at part of the conference added to BC senior leadership 'endorsement' that came through so clearly from Martin.

- A clear message that the opportunity to meet and work together is a very worthwhile investment, particularly in the light of the relative infrequency (which is once every two years) and costs of our meeting. Participants struggled with an apparent perception that E&D should be cost neutral comparative to other areas of our work.

- A blog during the week providing an insight into what we were doing and a share point site to house all our material.

- Action points identified over the course of the week by all participants to be finalised on their return to workplaces and taken forward.

A concluding comment is that DU colleagues and I are feeling shattered but very, very happy and raring to build on the success of the conference and the commitment of colleagues.

My thanks to those of you who took time to meet/talk with your representatives beforehand. They all reported what you said and will be in touch with their own distinct feedback.

Regards
Fiona

Appendix 5.5 (<u>verification 4.2.c</u>): Intranet Screenshot of GDN page

Equal Opportunity and Diversity

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Diversity Home > Global Diversity Network

Global Diversity Network

Our Global Diversity Network is made up of two or three representatives from each region, who work with the Diversity Unit in a formalised way. They support their management teams in each region to mainstream equality and diversity - which means they work to help ensure equality and diversity are built into everything we do (both operationally and within such office systems as Human Resources). They have expertise and understanding of the different cultures and contexts in which they work, so they can ensure our corporate diversity initiatives are meaningful and relevant and can be applied in each region. They share good practice so that we can all learn from each other around equality and diversity.

GDN Conference 2009

In April 2009 the fourth biannual GDN conference took place in Colombo, Sri Lanka. About forty colleagues came together to discuss equality and diversity, and we were joined at the opening by Martin Davidson. You can read all about what happened at the conference and what GDN members thought about it by viewing the conference blog.

All conference presentations, plus photographs from the event can be accessed from the GDN Sharepoint site

An article about the Conference also appeared in BC World.

GDN Members

To find out who your GDN members are read below:

GDN Members	Region
Lena Milosevic BC Kazakhstan Suchita Shrestha BC	

viewing the conference ▣ blog.

All conference presentations, plus photographs from the event can be accessed from the ▣ GDN Sharepoint site

▣ An article about the Conference also appeared in BC World.

GDN Members

To find out who your GDN members are read below:

GDN Members	Region
Lena Milosevic, BC Kazakhstan; Suchita Shrestha, BC Nepal; Tanzeela Hussein, BC Pakistan	Central and South Asia
Peter Upton, BC Hong Kong; Medy Wang, BC Guangzhou; Carol Wong, BC Hong Kong	China
Robin Rickard, BC Vietnam	East Asia
Geeta Arora, BC India; Saman Eriagama-Kiel, BC Sri Lanka	India and Sri Lanka
Roberta Kacowicz, BC Brazil; Liz Fishwick, BC Mexico	Latin America and Caribbean
Kashif Chauhan, BC Kuwait	Middle East
Randa Kamel, BC Egypt	Near East and North Africa
Janni Baekkelund Nielsen, BC Denmark; Przemyslaw Tyminski, BC Poland	Russia and North Europe
Inessa Muradyan, BC Armenia; Caron Sethill, BC Israel	South East Europe
Jean September, BC Cape Town; Rajiv Bendre, BC Zimbabwe; Anne Babinaga, BC Uganda; Rabi Isma, BC Nigeria; Chika Idoko, BC Nigeria	Sub-Saharan Africa
Guido Jansen, BC Germany; Sarah Bagshaw, BC France; Kate Anderson, BC USA	West Europe and North America

GDN Mailbase

There is a mailing list that anyone interested in finding out more about equality and diversity can subscribe to. It is a place for sharing good practice, asking for advice from other colleagues and joining in debates and discussions about topical issues related to global equality and diversity. To join the mailbase please send an email asking to be subscribed to ▣ magnus.slingsby@britishcouncil.org

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Appendix 5.6 (<u>Verification 4.1.a</u>): Guide to Mainstreaming Equality and Diversity in Project Development and Delivery

GLOBAL DIVERSITY NETWORK

<table>
<tr><td colspan="5" align="center">**Guide to Mainstreaming Equality and Diversity in Project Development and Delivery**</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">

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

We recommend that it is used as you identify would be most helpful to you. This might be as a checklist to be worked through with the project team, as it suggests what questions to ask, issues to consider and actions to take.

It is not an 'evaluation' tool, so there is no prescribed number of *yes* to make it compliant, but each *no* should be fully considered, and whenever possible, action should be taken.

It is work in progress and we welcome your feedback which should be sent to the Diversity Unit.

</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td align="center">**CULTURAL RELATIONS**</td><td>YES</td><td>NO</td><td>N/A</td><td>Comments/evidence</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="7">Project clearly contributes to growing the use and impact of <u>cultural relations</u>. In particular it should reflect or promote some, or</td><td>Collaboration</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Co-existence (offers opportunities for positive interaction regardless of differences in values and beliefs)</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Partnership</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Dialogue</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Inclusivity</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Shared ownership</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr>
</table>

all of the following:	Mutual respect, international trust and understanding in pursuit of a stable world				
	Opportunities for individuals to develop their talents and fulfil their potential, strengthening individual identity				
	Long-term relationship building opportunities				
DEVELOPMENT		YES	NO	N/A	Comments/evidence
Ensuring alignment with the BC E&D agenda the <u>development</u> of the project	Proposed project partners, contributors, participants represent the diversity of participating countries, for example, in terms of public, private and third/NGO sector organisations, gender, race/ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, disability, age, national origins and other areas of diversity				
	Diversity of in-country geographical base, thinking in particular about urban and rural areas and capital city and beyond, is considered				
	The development of the project has taken into consideration different views, perspectives and perceptions drawn from a diverse range of sources, and the structure has flexible mechanisms to enable these to shape some of the delivery and content of the project				
	The project allows for optimum participant contribution and specific actions are considered and taken, whenever possible, to ensure events are inclusive, such as arranging interpreters, sign language or material available in audio for the visually impaired				
	Small and medium enterprises and new potential contractors are considered as potential service providers				
	Our approach to EO&D has been shared with project partners/funders and their approach is				

		YES	NO	N/A	Comments/evidence
	consistent with ours				
	Child protection issues and assurances have been considered and addressed				
	Health and safety, security and accessibility issues relevant to the project have been considered, identified and provided				
	There is a project quality assurance plan or mechanism in place to help realise our commitment to professionalism				
	Opportunities to demonstrate, reflect or communicate the our work in the area of equality and diversity is built into the project				
	BC Global Diversity Network Representatives and other staff are invited to contribute to project development				
	DELIVERY	YES	NO	N/A	Comments/evidence
Ensuring alignment with the BC E&D agenda the delivery of the project	Creative approaches to the delivery of the project have been considered in support of our commitment to creativity and to minimising the impact on the environment. In particular creative use of technology and other communication approaches				
	All external communications - web or hard copy, relevant to the project uses plain English and is sense checked to ensure that cultural specific idioms and in house jargon are avoided				
	Reference to equality and diversity is made in project communications				
	The images used to promote and market the project reflect the diversity of the UK and of participating countries				
	The project is screened for unhelpful stereotypes of groups of people or countries				
	Marcoms of the project demonstrably targets new				

	and diverse audiences and potential participants				
	Marcoms of the project is timely and supports optimum access to the opportunities the project provides				
	All material relating to the project, if necessary, can be made available in a range of formats on request within 48 hours				
	Any selection criteria related to the project addresses issues of diversity and is open and transparent				
	Visitor's notes that highlight issues of accessibility, cultural norms and values and the demonstration of respect for these and their relationship/relevance to the life of the project are made available to all participants				
	The administration of the project allows for and prescribes the relevant equality data to be captured, recorded, reviewed, analysed and reported, including quantitative and qualitative data				
	Our Complaints Policy is made available to participants and complaints are responded to in line with the Policy and our core values				

Appendix 5.7 (<u>Verification 4.2.a</u>): Office bulletin notice relating to the Mainstreaming Equality and Diversity in Project Development and Delivery guide

Equality and diversity in project development and delivery

Information for anyone working on projects

The British Council's Global Diversity Network is pleased to make available a <u>document to assist colleagues</u> with mainstreaming equality and diversity into project development and delivery.

The document responds to a number of requests for related support and has been modestly 'tested' by a group of colleagues based in the Latin America and Caribbean region and in the UK. It is a work in progress, however, and so we welcome your feedback or suggestions on ways to improve it.

Roberta Kacowicz, British Council Brazil

Appendix 5.8 (<u>Verification 4.2.a</u>) Equality Impact Assessment of projects emails

Dear Colleagues

We just want to commend this example sent by Inessa to you. We've struggled for some time with how to get EOD built into programmes and projects in a meaningful and systematic way, which is what was behind the mainstreaming guidance we drew up working with Roberta and other GDN colleagues http://bcnet.britishcouncil.org:8000/diversity/EOTools.htm#tool2.

Combining it in this way with the equality screening and impact assessment is a creative idea and it is good to see a real example, using an important project, and to see the action that has been recommended as a result which takes account of equality and diversity issues and hopefully will make a significant difference to who the project reaches.

Thanks to Inessa for sharing and to all the other colleagues in Armenia involved in this mainstreaming initiative.

 Jane, on behalf of Diversity Unit

Dear Colleagues,

The important issues of **budgeting EOD activities and aligning our programme portfolio to the diversity agenda and commitments** of our organisation have been in my mind for quite some time and I've been pushing forward the idea of screening our large-scale and regional projects/products a) for making the latter as inclusive and non-discriminatory as possible and b) for identifying activities which can help us make our EOD work and commitment more sound and visible.

 Although regionally it's still in planning stage, I decided to share with you our experience of **EOD screening of the local projects** which I hope can be useful to colleagues worldwide and can give ideas for future activities. There might be colleagues who've had similar experience; I know Brazil has been very active in programme screening, so perhaps we could have some more examples for knowledge sharing.

In Armenia we're implementing an FCO-funded project aimed at raising the role of women in the political and social life of our country. Although the project in itself is addressing gender and has a carefully developed gender-balance strategy to involve men in all the activities, we decided to screen it further to see how other areas of diversity can be addressed and other communities involved.

Our project team with a number of other colleagues to ensure gender/age/grade balance screened the upcoming project activities through **EIA exercise** by integrating a couple of important project-specific questions from the programme screening template developed by Roberta Kacowicz and the Diversity Unit. You can see the screening results **attached**.

As a result of this screening among many of the other recommendations we successfully integrated EOD in our project **radio programme Black & White** the aim of which is to provide opportunities for expressing opinions of women politicians and experts on various social and political issues. Among many of the actual issues we included the **6 EOD areas** to be discussed by experts to raise public awareness and break the existing stereotypes. The programmes are also interactive through our

Facebook page and through public participation in the live radio shows, as well as through opinion polls online and in the public areas of the city. We've already had programmes on **Age, Disability and Sexual Orientation**. These have raised much public interest, there have been calls to the studio with challenging questions and interesting and thought-provoking live discussions. We are currently developing further our website to include all the recorded talk shows with transcripts and translation to facilitate further debate and discussion.

This example illustrates very well how colleagues can make sure there is **funding** available for doing **big and visible work in EOD** despite of in some cases very limited dedicated budget.

I hope this will get colleagues thinking of creative ways of embedding EOD in programmes and will help in future programme screening activities.

Looking forward to hear more similar examples!

Best Regards,

Inessa

Appendix 5.9 (<u>Verification 2.a.2.a, Verification 3.3.a</u>): Regional DAF

Diversity Assessment Framework: Regional Element

The regional indicators reflect the fact that many decisions which affect individual countries are actually taken at a regional level, something also increasingly evident in the delivery of regional activity through large scale projects. They also reflect the importance that regional leadership plays in the mainstreaming of the EO&D agenda, both from the Regional Director and Regional Management Team (RMT) and particularly the regional Global Diversity Network Reps (GDNRs)

As country directorates within any given region have varying levels of influence over decisions made and programme work carried out, it has been deemed necessary to introduce a distinct regional element in order to drive performance at this level, while still maintaining a consistent approach across the organisation at a country level.

Responsibility for completing the regional submission lies with the GDNRs who, with the appropriate level of support from the Regional Director, will ensure that the return is with the Diversity Unit by the deadline of 29th January in order to be included, alongside the worldwide DAF results, in the annual DAF report.

As this is the first year that the regional indicators are being introduced, GDNRs are encouraged to look at the indicators, read the outline guidance, and decide how best to demonstrate that each indicator has been addressed.

Assessment will take place as part of the DAF moderation, with scoring for each indicator being on a achieved/not met basis. This moderation will be conducted by a small panel, led by the Diversity Unit and including colleagues from the GDN, to ensure rigour and consistency. If moderators feel that the evidence submitted, supported by comprehensive explanatory comments, sufficiently demonstrates that the requirements of the indicator are being met across the entire region, that indicator will be awarded. Either way, detailed feedback will be provided for each indicator, and overall, taking into account, where possible, the circumstances of individual regions.

At this stage, regional scores will not affect individual country scores and the two sets of results will appear side by side. If countries do well, but the region does not, this is more of a reflection of regional EO&D leadership performance and it would be unfair to penalise those countries within the region performing well. Of more concern would be a scenario where the region scored very well, but the countries within it did not. This would indicate that the leadership that exists on the regional level has not been filtering through to individual countries. Ideally, country-level performance and regional performance should be consistent, but it will be difficult to judge this until this initial pilot has been completed.

A consultation process will then take place in which regions will be encouraged to provide feedback. We then hope to be able to review and refine the process ready for full-scale implementation as part of the 2011 DAF process.

To view the indicators and outline guidance, click here. Also, completed regional submissions can be submitted using a special Regional DAF Submission Form

Regional Indicators

1. The region has at least two Global Diversity Network Representatives (GDNRs) who have been selected in order to support regional EO&D mainstreaming and they have at least 5% of their time allocated to regional EO&D activity reflected in their job descriptions.

2. Each GDN representative has specific, agreed deliverables reflected within their Performance Agreements and has taken steps to enhance their EO&D knowledge and skills by utilising the induction programme provided by the Diversity Unit.

3. There is a regional EO&D action plan in place, with identified responsibilities and timescales which is being implemented by all offices in the region.

4. The regional EO&D action plan is supported by a budget.

5. The GDN representative has actively contributed to enhanced understanding of EO&D in the region using different forms of communication.

6. The Regional Director actively promotes EO&D regional activity by supporting the role of, and effectively engaging with, the GDN representative and working to ensure DAF scores improve within the Region.

7. The Regional Management Team are held accountable by the Regional Director for ensuring EO&D is mainstreamed and have deliverables to confirm this in their performance agreements.

8. At least one individual has been identified as a regional EO&D champion, or a theme or issue related to EO&D is being championed within the region.

Appendix 5.10: Media interview – handling the pressure

(Approximately 5 minute interview followed by up to 5 minutes feedback session.)

1. The British Council office in Uganda has just launched a touring book exhibition of British Literature. Some of the books that are part of the book exhibition feature gay, lesbian and bisexual themes. One of the books is a fictional account of a British man entering into a relationship with a married top military person from Uganda. This appears to have upset a significant section of the population in Uganda where homosexuality is illegal and where a specific office has been especially set up to combat the promotion of homosexuality in society.

You have been invited to a talk show by Radio Kampala to give an account of why the British Council had decided to bring this exhibition to Uganda.

You have 15 minutes to prepare the presentation. 10 minutes to deliver it including Q&A from the CD and RD, following by 5 minutes feedback from the group observing.

You can use flip charts to deliver your presentation.

Appendix 5.11 (Verification 3.1.a): British Council Article

Globally Diverse Networking

Much is being made of networks within the British Council these days as we increasingly move away from local to regional and large-scale projects. So-called "joined-up working" requires *more* people to plug into *more* projects, programme and groups across *more* countries and regions to feed into more and more aspects of their work to be *more* effective in delivering the BC mission. It's not necessarily *what* you know, as they say, but *who* you know – or more to the point, who you have in your network, that can be the key to success.

One network that has been quietly growing within the British Council is the Global Diversity Network (GDN). From relatively inauspicious beginnings in 2003, the GDN has evolved into one of the most joined-up and effective networks in the organisation. A global network in every sense, the core GDN is made up of representatives from all 12 British Council regions and is supported by a wider mailbase of over 250 colleagues. The hugely-successful recent GDN Conference in Colombo (the network's 4th bi-annual meeting) was attended by nearly 50 colleagues, including 3 Country Directors, a Regional Director, and Chief Executive Martin Davidson.

"The success of the network is in the way it engages people through both their heads and their hearts", says Jane Franklin, Deputy Head of Equal Opportunity and Diversity.

"The issues we discuss are often very challenging on a personal level as well as a professional level, which makes the work stimulating, and it is fascinating to understand the perspectives of others and consider where they sit alongside our own views." The worldwide reach of the network is quite unusual within the organisation, as is the way it cuts right across all sectors of British Council work. Members of the core network include Country Directors, Deputy Directors, HR professionals, E&E professionals, Project Managers, Communications Managers, Administrative Assistants, drawn from both UK and locally appointed colleagues. The wider mailbase is more varied still, drawing in Regional Directors, consultants, teachers and all manner of other colleagues across all paybands and all geographical locations.

It is this extraordinary diversity that is at the heart of what the network is able to achieve. "It is an unlimited source of perspectives, ideas, solutions from personalities shaped by different cultural environments" says Przemek Tyminski, regional GDN rep for RANE region.

Jean September, Director of the BC office in Cape Town and one of the original members, agrees, explaining how over the past 6 years the GDN "has been firmly established as an institution within the organisation. It acts as a resource pool of colleagues who have an understanding of equality issues and are able to articulate the agenda effectively".

The network has been key to the progression of the EO&D agenda and in particular to the success of the Diversity Assessment Framework (DAF) which in 2009 achieved 100% participation as well as its target of level 2.

"The GDN is a successful network because we are all working towards a common goal in making a difference in our own countries and regions in relation to EO&D - we share the same vision and commitment" says Carol Wong, regional rep for CHK. "We see creative diversity initiatives that have been tried in one region and can adapt them for use in our own" adds Roberta Kacowicz, LAC regional rep.

But what of the challenges? One of the biggest challenges, explains Jane Franklin, is the high turnover among the regional network representatives. This is down to colleagues leaving the organisation, either as contracts end, or as restructures take place or as they simply move on to jobs elsewhere. However, this turnover can be seen as a strength and a way of constantly bringing new people into contact with the agenda. It also creates a network with a wide range not only of perspectives, but also of experience and expertise. New members can learn from more experienced members and it was this sense of shared learning that was so evident in Colombo.

"As someone relatively new to this area", says Diala Shibl, EO&D co-ordinator for Saudi Arabia, "it's fantastic to have the opportunity to learn from such an experienced and knowledgeable group of colleagues. It's very empowering."

"This network is about learning, showing and standing for something that is tremendously important to individuals, the British Council as a whole, and the wider context of the world we live in" says Rabi Isma, GDN rep for SSA region.

Asked what it meant to be part of the network, Rabi's answer was simple. "It means the world. Literally.

Appendix 5.12 (<u>Verification 1.1.a</u>): Screenshot of the GDNR Sharepoint site

Appendix 5.13 (<u>verification 1.1.b</u>): GDN mailbase queries

Subject: Images of people with disabilities

From: (South Africa)

Reply-To: Global Diversity Network discussion list

Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2009 16:02:41 +0100

Dear Colleagues

Maybe you can assist? We are in the process of designing new banners and posters for the South African directorate for our project work. I've just looked in the Image bank of BC - use to be called snapshots and now called the assets bank. There is only one image of two male wheelchair users playing a game of basketball. It raises all sorts of questions regarding the visibility of people living with disabilities within our publications and marketing materials.

Am i just looking in the wrong places on our BC website or intranet? If so, please let me know.

Subject: Help wanted: Teachers Room Notice

From: (Poland)

Reply-To: Global Diversity Network discussion list

Date: Fri, 9 Oct 2009 14:00:55 +0200

Dear all,

 The promotion of EO&D is relatively new in our teachers room, and I'd really like to put up a notice on the wall to:

- raise the profile of EO&D
- encourage teachers to promote EO&D in their work.

Has anyone seen anything like this or got any ideas?

I'd like to have something striking a positive tone without being preachy, and any help would be greatly appreciated. If we can come up with a good example, it's something we can all share.

Subject: Work Life Balance

From: (Mauritius)

Reply-To: Global Diversity Network discussion list

Date: Wed, 29 Jul 2009 07:12:25 +0100

Dear all,

I'd like to pull some ideas/views/ good practice info from you on commitment to work / life balance.

I'd very much like to know how this works in different offices. For example, the times at which meetings are held, planning leave, etc. Say a meeting goes beyond your working hours and you have to pick up your child from school, shouldn't it be alright for a person to say that they really do have to go?

People will illnesses, people with caregiver responsibilities, etc..

How does one reconcile work and personal commitments?

Subject: Out of office replies and email signatures

From: (Brussels)

Reply-To: Global Diversity Network discussion list

Date: Tue, 7 Jul 2009 14:56:32 +0100

I would like to make a few starts on the DAF before I leave Brussels. The first thing I would like to do is introduce an out of office reply and signature which communicates a commitment to EO&D.

Could you please send us examples which you may be already using which is

- Appropriate
- Applicable
- Clear to both internal and external customers

Thanks a lot

Subject: Braille business cards

From: (Hong Kong)

Reply-To: Global Diversity Network discussion list

Date: Mon, 29 Jun 2009 17:14:57 +0800

Dear all -

I've seen some external examples of business cards with Braille (a method using 'raised dots' that is widely used by blind people to read and write) which are used by those who run diversity groups in their respective organisations.

I'm wondering in the first instance whether anyone in other British Council offices put Braille on their business cards and if so, how and what has been added.

Subject: Supplier's questionnaire

From: (Germany)

Reply-To: Global Diversity Network discussion list

Date: Mon, 25 May 2009 13:15:24 +0100

Dear all

we are currently revising our procurement procedures. As part of that we are also updating our supplier's questionnaire with questions regarding EO&D policies applied by potential suppliers. Apart from a very general question on whether or not the company in question operates diversity management, I would like to ask some very concrete ones. Could anybody perhaps share questions you ask your suppliers with regard to EO&D?

Thanks a lot!

Subject: Peformance agreement deliverables

From: (Poland)

Reply-To: Global Diversity Network discussion list

Date: Thu, 21 May 2009 15:09:07 +0200

Dear All,

My colleagues in different sections in Poland are in the middle on working on their performance agreements and they have asked me for specific examples of EOD deliverables. Do you have some good examples to share?

Appendix 5.14 (Verification 1.2.a): Email about East Asia Regional Leadership Presentation

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From: Rickard, Robin (Vietnam)
Sent: 18 November 2009 08:06
To: Bartels-Ellis, Fiona (CA); Franklin, Jane (CA)
Subject: Updates

Dear Both,

FYI

1. The presentation I made to the EA Regional Leadership team meeting in Singapore last week. Thanks for many of the slides which I borrowed from you. I think it went well and surfaced several issues which I will write to you about at greater length
2. The Vietnam slides from the EOD awareness training presentation I used in Ho Chi Minh City recently and will use in Hanoi in January. Two staff helped me develop them – one teacher and one national staff)

I am going to BC Japan (Tokyo and Osaka) to deliver training in December and have been informally asked to go to Korea and Malaysia as well – but this will be subject to reasonable workload demands.

Many thanks,

Robin

Appendix 5.15 (<u>Verification 2.b.1.a</u>): Revised DAF communication

From:	Franklin, Jane (CA)
Sent:	07 May 2009 15:53
To:	GDNRs
Subject:	DAF indicators

Dear Colleagues

As you know we really appreciated the constructive way you commented on the proposed DAF indicators and the regional indicators at the GDN Conference. We've now revised both sets of indicators based on your feedback and would like you to see these before they are launched. Please have a look at the indicators and if you feel there are burning issues we didn't discuss, or things we've overlooked, then please get in touch with me as soon as possible, but definitely before the end of next week.

Much of the detail to support the indicators will become clearer once the guidance is developed - and we intend to start working on the detailed guidance next week, before we launch this to the rest of the organisation during the 1st week of June.

Just to let you know about indicator 2.2 - we are waiting for a decision from Martin on this, as he previously reinforced its importance, whilst some colleagues at the Conference felt this one is no longer directly relevant to our work - so we'll let you know the outcome when Martin responds.

With regard to the regional indicators, following your comments these have now reduced to 8. As there were such mixed feelings about piloting the regional indicators, we feel a good approach might be to introduce the regional indicators to everyone this year, but acknowledge that some of them might take more than 6 months to implement, so produce an indicative score this year and a confirmed regional score in 2011. We have yet to determine the scoring system for the regional indicators but are planning to work on this imminently. Grateful for any views that might help us.

Thanks for your engagement in the process as we seek to further improve the DAF.

All good wishes
Jane

DAF indicators   Regional indicators
revised after G...   revised af...

Appendix 5.16: Thank you emails for attachment with the Diversity Unit
From: (United Arab Emirates)
Sent: 11 November 2009 11:49
To: Bartels-Ellis, Fiona (CA); Slingsby, Magnus (CA)
Subject: Thank you and Advice

Dear Fiona, dear Magnus,

Many thanks again for having me over last week! It's been extremely useful seeing what you do and meeting lots of colleagues in different departments and contacts at external organisations. I feel very inspired to make a real change in MED in terms of EO&D!

We're currently reviewing the letterheads and business cards we use in MED and would like add a reference to EO&D. At the bottom of the letterhead it says:

The United Kingdom's international organisation for educational opportunities and cultural relations. We are registered in England as a charity.

We would like to add the following reference to EO&D: The British Council is committed to a policy of equal opportunity and diversity.

Should we add the refence underneath the other sentence? Should it say something else?

Do you have an example of a country or region where they have done the change?

Many thanks for your help

From: (Kuwait)
Sent: 23 November 2009 07:32
To: Bartels-Ellis, Fiona (CA); Franklin, Jane (CA); Slingsby, Magnus (CA)
Subject: Thanks

Dear All,

I have just got back to the office after attending Exams Business reviews. I wanted to thank all of you for you valuable time and efforts added to Linda's and mine attachment programmes in the UK. This time wearing EO&D hat, I found the UK's visit a different learning experience. The meetings with office colleagues in London and Manchester provided an insight how the UK colleagues behave and think, visits to RNIB and to the Exams Officers Association UK provided me an opportunity not only to learn from what these organisations are doing but also it made me clear what I can do in the future. I have now set my own personal and professional targets for achieving success in the vast areas of EO&D.

All of you (Fiona, Jane and Magnus) are great leaders and a valuable resource in this area, more time spent with you seems very little. Once again many thanks for your guidance support and hospitality extended during my attachment week in the UK.

Appendix 5.17: Communication on updated site

Subject: Revised Equality and Diversity website

From: Jane Franklin <Jane.Franklin@BRITISHCOUNCIL.ORG>

Reply-To: Global Diversity Network discussion list <GLOBAL-DIVERSITY-NETWORK@LISTS.BRITISHCOUNCIL.ORG>

Date: Tue, 29 Sep 2009 13:21:48 +0100

Dear All

We've revised our website and would be really grateful for your comments and feedback. We wanted the site to be better signposted and to contain information that clearly explains how we in the British Council understand and manage equality and diversity.

http://www.britishcouncil.org/home-diversity.htm

Please have a look and get back to me with any comments or suggestions for further improvements. Please forward your comments to me rather than replying to the whole list (unless of course you specifically want to reply to the whole list!).

If you previously linked to our integrated equality scheme from your country website, please note the new web address of our IES page. The Web team have built in a re-direct so that the previous links to the IES should still work, but it would be better in the long term if you could ensure the link is amended to the new url http://www.britishcouncil.org/home-diversity-our-approach-ies.htm

Many thanks

Jane

Appendix 5.18: Permissions sought and received from colleagues named as interviewers/ interviewees
(All other names that appear have previously agreed permissions or permissions are not required given the nature of activity which)

From: Rickard, Robin (Vietnam)
Sent: 17 December 2009 09:59

Dear Fiona,
This is fine and I am very happy for it to be included in your research – actually I feel privileged that you consider it worthwhile. Cheers!
Many thanks,
Robin

From: Sethill, Caron (Israel)
Sent: 16 December 2009 00:37

Hi Fiona,
It would be an honour to be mentioned – you can use my name.
Very good luck with completing your thesis.

Caron

From: September, Jean (South Africa)
Sent: 15 December 2009 09:24

Fiona that is fine. You have my permission !

jean

From: Bartels-Ellis, Fiona (CA)
Sent: 14 December 2009 20:41

Dear Colleagues

I want to include the interviews involving you that we did in SL in my thesis which I will soon be submitting for examination. However, given the nature of them and that they were focussed on you as interviewee or interviewer and we transcribed them, you are clearly identified. I am therefore seeking permission to put them in as an appendix and illustrative of the work we did around leadership, without taking out your names or attempting to anonymise them.

You need to be aware that the research will become a public document once it is accepted and so you need to be entirely comfortable about this and give me permission.

If you aren't comfortable I will either anonymise to strip out your names in every instance they appear or not include them. It is entirely up to you and will have no bearing on the outcome of the research for me personally or for the British Council. What I mean by this is, please don't feel under any pressure. I will fully respect the decision you arrive at and be comfortable with it.

Regards

Fiona

Appendix 7.1 CEO Testimonial

7th October 2009

Doctorate in Professional Studies

Fiona Bartels-Ellis is Head of Equality and Diversity and has been undertaking the work based learning Doctorate in Professional Studies at Middlesex University with the full support of the British Council.

As agreed with the Executive Board, Fiona has focussed her research project on the British Council's Global Diversity Network. This network is an important resource for the British Council given that mainstreaming principles and practices of equality and diversity are central to our Diversity Strategy and an important means of enhancing our work in global cultural relations.

Earlier this year I gave the opening address at the Global Diversity Network's biennial conference in Sri Lanka. I know Fiona's research underpinned the conference and content of the conference itself was formulated around some of the emerging research findings. I understand that Fiona's presentation of research findings and the associated conference sessions generated considerable interest, discussion and debate, with nearly all of them receiving the best feedback ratings. A number of those present have taken the findings back to their respective countries and disseminated them further.

In my contribution to the conference I highlighted the importance of the network to the British Council and the contribution it makes to our equality and diversity and cultural relations work. I am therefore of the opinion that the research, which has included all our Regional Directors, key members of our Global Leadership team, as well as some of our Country Directors, is making an important strategic contribution. It is having a far reaching strategic impact, shaping, for example as it has, revisions to the aims and objectives of the network and how we manage it as well our Diversity Assessment Framework of which I am the Champion. The revisions to the Diversity Assessment Framework which were made subsequent to the conference, which address the role of Global Diversity Network Representatives and support for them, are one of the key recommendations I have personally endorsed because of the strategic contribution it makes.

I know Fiona and her immediate and wider team consider the Doctorate Programme to be highly relevant and the success of this particular research has ignited some enthusiasm amongst colleagues for work based academic approaches and increased the value given to evidence- based research.

Martin Davidson CMG
Chief Executive
British Council

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Glossary of Acronyms

CD   Country Director

CDs   Country Directors

DAF   Diversity Assessment Framework

DU   Diversity Unit

E&D   Equality and Diversity

EO&D   Equal Opportunity and Diversity

GDN   Global Diversity Network

GDNR   Global Diversity Network Representative

RD   Regional Director

RDs   Regional Directors