

## Equality and diversity information report

### *January 2012*

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[HR equality data](#) is available here.

# 1. Message from DFID's Diversity Champion



**Diversity is central to our values and approach in DFID.** Building equality and diversity into our day-to-day business is a core part of being an effective employer, but also a core part of being a world class development organisation – it helps us deliver.

The past year has been an important one for equality and diversity as we have adopted a new equality framework to address the changes brought in by the Equality Act of 2010, and the corresponding Public Sector Duty of April 2011. As in all areas of our work, we also want to work smarter, and in line with the spirit of the new legislation, we are now much more focused on outcomes rather than on process.

This report captures how consideration of equalities and diversity is being included in our programme work and service delivery efforts – through our country teams, our policy work, and our work with civil society and others. This report also reflects on our efforts to embed diversity in corporate systems and employment practices.

Overall we have a strong story to tell across many aspects of this agenda – more girls in school, more women in jobs, action to address disability, work with faith groups, and tackling laws that criminalise homosexuality. There remains, however, much to be done. We want more staff to feel confident in dealing with diversity, and in recognising the value it adds. Our Equality and Diversity Team will be working with the business to facilitate learning and the application of good practice and innovation. We also want to enhance our efforts in areas such as disability, and in ensuring that all staff have appropriate development opportunities across the business.

Looking ahead, 2012 is going to be another busy and important year for DFID, but also for the UK as we host the Olympics in London. Sport is itself a great equaliser, and an area where DFID also has a role to play. Since 2007 we have contributed £12.7m to International Inspiration, which is the international legacy programme of the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. This will enrich the lives of 12 million young people of all abilities. We have a real opportunity to making serious progress during 2012 on embedding equality and diversity, and I look forward to reporting even better results in the next round.

## 2. Background and our approach to equality and diversity

DFID leads the UK Government's effort to fight global poverty, working from UK headquarters in London and East Kilbride and from offices in 36 countries overseas. Tackling inequality, capitalising on our rich diversity and enhancing inter-cultural understanding through strengthened relationships with our partners both in UK and across the world are critical to achieving our mission. We recognise that valuing diversity is playing to our strengths. Diversity was put forward by staff as one of the five core values which are integral to everything we do. Commitment to equality and diversity is not only a moral imperative but it also makes good business sense. We are constantly striving to provide a more enabling environment in which all can fulfil their potential.

We know that institutions which take diversity seriously are more resilient, more creative and more flexible. They enable staff to feel valued, manage change and deliver more effectively. Embedding good equality and diversity practice in all we do is not only a core part of being an effective employer, but also of being a world class development organisation. DFID has always been keen to go beyond what is required by legislation, as tackling inequalities is our primary mission in reducing world poverty. In our programme design and implementation across the world we have a good record of systematically considering equality and diversity.

DFID's overall aim is to reduce poverty in poorer countries, in particular through achieving the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

- MDG 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- MDG 2: Achieve universal primary education
- MDG 3: Promote gender equality and empower women
- MDG 4: Reduce child mortality
- MDG 5: Improve maternal health
- MDG 6: Combat HIV/AIDs, malaria and other diseases
- MDG 7: Ensure environmental sustainability
- MDG 8: Develop a global partnership for development

**DFID's Business Plan** sets out a number of priorities for the Department aimed at supporting achievement of these goals. These are to:

- Honour our international commitments, including scaling up our spending on official development assistance
- Introduce transparency in aid
- Boost wealth creation
- Strengthen governance and security in fragile and conflict-affected countries
- Lead international action to improve the lives of girls and women
- Combat climate change

DFID's three other major areas of responsibility and priority are to:

- Respond to humanitarian disasters
- Deliver on obligations to the Overseas Territories
- Influence the global development system

As an employer, we also have objectives to ensure that:

- All staff are valued and enabled to reach their full potential
- DFID has a representative workforce
- Staff are 'equality and diversity confident' and can describe what it means in their area of work
- Equality and diversity is embedded within the organisation
- Proactive consideration is given to all nine equality groups (listed below) in all service delivery activities

### **3. The Equality Act 2010**

The Equality Act came into force on 1 October 2010, simplifying existing equalities law into one single source of Statute. As a public body DFID must comply with the Public Sector Duty which came into force on 5 April 2011 and demonstrate 'due regard' to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, and victimisation in the workplace
- advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups
- foster good relations between people of different groups

The legislation contains nine 'protected characteristics'. These are age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership.

This report fulfils part of our Public Sector Equality Duty obligations but our aim has always been to meet and, where possible, to go beyond our statutory obligations in embedding equality into everything we do. As in previous years we are always looking for areas to improve. Whilst the Act emphasises less bureaucracy it is correspondingly more action and outcome focussed. We are therefore required to show evidence of compliance, which means focussing on outcomes and real achievement rather than just process and plans.

### **4. Our approach to equality and diversity**

#### **On corporate systems**

An important part of our work this year has been to disseminate within DFID the key messages arising from the Act, emphasising how it strengthens our existing values and priorities and how it will inform our future efforts. The legislation puts an emphasis on outcomes rather than process, on action rather than bureaucracy and we have sought to review our existing practices and where appropriate to update our processes. As part of the dissemination process DFID has implemented an eLearning programme for staff, called Same Difference, to support their understanding of equality and development.

One example is our approach to equality impact assessments. We have undertaken a mini audit of our existing equality screening approaches and looked to learn lessons from both internal and external practice. As a result we have adopted more simplified and streamlined methods and a revised equality screening tool.

We are taking on board lessons emerging from a November 2011 Development Assistance Committee summary of 26 evaluations on embedding gender which identified six areas where action was seen as essential in the embedding process. These were sustained leadership, incentive and accountability systems, resources, procedures and practices to support mainstreaming and measuring and reporting of

results, with equality seen as contributing to, not competing with, aid effectiveness and other key priorities.

The Equality and Diversity Team within DFID has started to work on this agenda through the delivery of workshops to be rolled out across DFID. The workshops will also help develop good understanding and build up a comprehensive and measurable evidence base on which to assess progress.

The Equality and Diversity Team has also developed closer ties with DFID's Communications Division to improve how we publicise our equality and diversity work and make it more transparent.

### **On employment matters**

We have revised the equality and diversity element of DFID's corporate induction programme, recognising the importance of new staff being made aware of equality and diversity as an organisational priority and what requirements this brings for individuals and business units in the organisation. All new staff have received this induction. The equality and diversity material is also embedded in the resources made available to country offices to induct staff who are recruited and appointed overseas.

Within DFID's new Learning and Development Strategy, equality and diversity has a higher profile. There are improved e-learning products and a new language learning strategy is being developed (that includes an emphasis on enhancing intercultural awareness). We have developed and piloted a successful co-coaching programme in partnership with the Scottish Government for junior staff and under-represented groups. The Learning and Development Strategy places strong emphasis on increasing access to learning and our e-learning programmes support staff with non-traditional working patterns or for whom classroom based learning is not suitable.

Monitoring equality and diversity in the workforce enables DFID to examine how employment policies and processes are working and to identify areas where they appear to be affecting certain groups of staff disproportionately. It is also a legislative requirement and can lead to the development of better and more informed decision making. Our information on staffing profiles for the protected groups is contained in our [Departmental Progress Report 2011](#). An updated report giving figures and analysis for the year to date will be available by early spring.

DFID is currently investing time and resources into developing an electronic HR system. This will greatly improve our capacity to provide real time information on workforce equality and diversity. It is expected to go live from November 2012.

### **DFID's diversity networks**

DFID has three staff-led diversity networks: Black and Minority Ethnic groups (BME); Disability; and Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Transgender (LGBT).

The BME network meet every two months bringing together DFID ethnic minority staff to discuss issues such as mentoring and support, improving performance and motivation, the impact of restructuring on ethnic minority staff and their promotion prospects, working with line managers and reflections on the people survey. It has organised several meetings with the other Civil Service Race Equality Networks over the past year jointly organised under the banner of the Sharing Information Working Group. In December DFID hosted a seminar on leadership with Dr Peter Bonfield, Chief Executive of Building Research Establishment (BRE). It was well attended by DFID staff

and staff from other Departments. The network is in regular communication with DFID's Diversity Champion and has contributed to the Equality and Diversity Team's work, for example, by providing updates for the Inter Ministerial Group on Equalities.

DFID's LGBT network contributes to policy and works on individual cases.

The next year will be important in seeking to revitalise the membership of the Disability Network and linking in to other work DFID is engaged in on the disability agenda. DFID is participating in the Civil Service Disability Task Group looking at how to improve the experience of disabled staff. Further details of DFID's service delivery work with civil society regarding disability is given below.

Whilst making a valuable contribution to enhancing DFID's equality and diversity efforts we are aware more needs to be done across all three networks. A number of issues have been raised over the past year and are being addressed. All the networks are keen to reach out to new staff as well as to those who have been in DFID for a while. To help attract more members we will provide more open recognition of the positive contribution staff networks make to achieving our organisational objectives.

There are also faith groups which meet regularly within DFID such as Christians in Development.

## **5. Embedding equality and diversity**

In terms of service delivery, equality and diversity is central to all of our work. The success of embedding gender has provided lessons for other aspects of the equality agenda. The role of girls and women is particularly critical to our mission, and has been a key theme of our work over the last year.

### **Girls and women**

Across the developing world, girls and women continue to bear a disproportionate burden of poverty. We know it is possible to take effective practical action that enables girls and women to fulfil their potential. We also know that the benefits of investing in girls and women are transformational – for their own lives and for their families, communities, societies and economies. Empowering girls and women has multiplier effects for economic growth and achieving all of the MDGs.

Delivering results for girls and women is at the heart of UK development assistance. Leading international action to support girls and women is one of six DFID Business Plan priorities. Building on the commitments in the Business Plan, DFID launched in March 2011 a new Strategic Vision for Girls and Women setting out how we will achieve transformational change for girls and women in the poorest countries. By 2015, we will:

- Save the lives of at least 50,000 women in pregnancy and childbirth and 250,000 newborn babies; allow at least 10 million women to access modern methods of family planning:
- Support over nine million children in primary education, of which at least half will be girls, and 700,000 girls in secondary education:
- Help 2.3 million women to access jobs and 18 million women to access financial services:
- Work in at least 15 countries to prevent violence against girls and women.

Examples of current programmes addressing the needs of women and girls are:

- In Pakistan, DFID has supported provision of obstetric care in 408 hospitals and health centres, midwife training and contributing to an additional 670,000 deliveries conducted by skilled birth attendants:
- In Nepal, around 100,000 jobs were created for women through DFID funded rural roads programmes and the Livelihoods and Forestry Programme:
- In Bangladesh, over 6,000 women in urban slums are earning their own income via small business grants. DFID has also provided income-generating assets (cattle, sheep, goat or poultry) to over 200,000 women through the Chars Livelihoods Programme:
- DFID support has contributed towards an increase in the number of girls in school in Afghanistan by 200,000 and an increase in girls' attendance in schools in the Pakistani provinces of North-West Frontier Province and Punjab by around 9%:
- DFID support has enabled over 1 million girls in Nepal to receive scholarships in 2009/10:
- Over the last 18 months DFID has been working in partnership with the Nike Foundation to catalyse innovative ways of empowering adolescent girls and giving them a voice in their own development. We are doing this through an innovative joint venture called the Girl Hub that is currently working in three countries – Rwanda, Nigeria and Ethiopia.

New programmes are also being developed to support girls and women across the four priority areas of DFID's Strategic Vision for Girls and Women, to:

- Delay first pregnancy and support safe childbirth;
- Get economic assets directly to girls and women;
- Get girls through secondary school; and
- Prevent violence against girls and women.

DFID country offices are also developing new programmes to strengthen the enabling environment for girls and women, for example to:

- challenge social norms and behaviours which perpetuate inequality, including by engaging with boys and men;
- increase girls' and women's participation in decision making and leadership;
- and strengthen legal frameworks.

There is strong senior leadership commitment to continue to mainstream gender across all other areas of our programme – including climate change, governance, peace and security and HIV – and to monitor and evaluate the impact of this work. A gender team provides a central coordination role, working closely with research and evaluation colleagues to establish and maintain a strong evidence base to inform future policy and programming.

## **Religion and belief**

Religion and belief together form another of the nine protected characteristics in the Equality Act.

The diversity of DFID's staff means that many of the world's religions are represented across the workforce and we are also actively engaged with faith groups in our service delivery. Faith groups make an important contribution through provision of services, humanitarian assistance, empowerment and accountability, building peaceful states and societies, changing beliefs and behaviours, building support for development and global advocacy. DFID has worked with faith groups for over 40 years including:

- Christian Aid, to improve the health of more than 2.5 million people; empower 200,000 producers/labourers and enhance community resilience of 200 communities;
- the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD) to improve the livelihoods of more than 400,000 women and men; improve the resilience of 300 communities (63,000 households, 315,000 women and men) and improve the quality of life of 160,000 beneficiaries and clients living with and affected by HIV;
- World Vision to improve access to essential services benefiting more than half a million people in 10 countries; strengthen national and community-based mechanisms for child protection in more than 11 countries; increase the protection of 200,000 vulnerable children in 11 countries and improve maternal, newborn and child health at the family and community level in at least 8 countries; and
- Progression to improve the capacity of 71 faith based organisations resulting in more accountable and responsive services being provided to more than 1.5 million people in 6 countries.

Religion and belief also feature in our work with the European Commission. The EU Council Conclusions in February 2011 reaffirmed a strong commitment to the protection of freedom of religion or belief. We anticipate further work with the External Action Service to develop an EU toolkit along the lines of the FCO freedom of religion or belief toolkit and work is being undertaken to strengthen the freedom of religion language in the EU's draft human rights strategy.

The Secretary of State announced earlier this year at the General Synod of the Church of England that DFID would establish a working group to identify how to build on our partnership with faith groups. Work is in progress to produce the equivalent of Practical Partnership Principles. These principles will be used to produce an implementation plan with specific measures to strengthen DFID's work with faith communities. This will result in faith groups more effectively delivering services, particularly in conflict affected and fragile states.

The Equality and Diversity Team has also started to engage with organisations such as the London based Co-Exist Foundation which aims to improve relationships between religious groups. It is seeking to promote, encourage and support engagement between Jews, Christians and Muslims both individually and through their respective communities through dialogue, education and research.

## **Disability**

Poverty is both a cause and consequence of disability. Global evidence suggests that disabled people are generally among the very poorest and have fewer opportunities to escape poverty than other people (for example, schools may not accept children with disabilities and employers may not hire adults with disabilities).

People with disabilities are estimated to make up 10% of the population in developing countries, and a much larger proportion of the chronically poor in every country across the world. DFID supports disabled people through a variety of means – through country programmes, through multilateral agencies such as UNICEF and the European Commission, through the Global Poverty Action Fund, through our work with Comic Relief and through strategic Programme Partnership Arrangements with organisations like Action for Disability and Development (ADD) and Sightsavers:

- Our support to ADD (£1.34m in 2011/12) has helped disabled people in Africa and Asia to organise and challenge discrimination in all walks of life:



- Through Sightsavers (£3.7m in 2011/12), DFID is helping to eliminate avoidable blindness and promote equality of opportunity for the visually impaired:
- DFID also supports the Disability Rights Fund (DRF) alongside Ausaid and other donors. The DRF supports Disabled People's Organisations (currently about 200 organisations or networks) in the south to advocate for the human rights of people with disabilities to take forward the new UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (£1.3m in 2010/13):
- DFID is funding the cross-cutting Disability Research Programme carried out by the Leonard Cheshire Disability and Inclusive Development Centre. This is a 3 year research programme looking at key policy knowledge gaps about disability and poverty. It also aims to strengthen capacity and development of methodologies to include disability issues into mainstream research and development programmes.

The UK is supporting the United Nation's High Level meeting (planned for 2013) on the realisation of the MDGs and other internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities. As policy makers worldwide start to plan for the period to 2015 and beyond, disabled people's organisations are advocating for more concerted action by governments and others to improve the lives of people with disabilities. A report to the Inter-Ministerial Group on Equalities outlines how support for people with disabilities can be taken further by aligning it to the review of the MDGs next year.

Our Civil Society Department is preparing a discussion paper for DFID's Development Policy Committee in March 2012 to assess our work on disability as part of our efforts to make disability well recognised on the international scene.

Finally, International Inspiration, referred to above, aims to enrich the lives of 12 million children and young people of all abilities, in 20 countries across the world.

### **Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues**

Bilaterally and through international fora, we promote tolerance and non-discrimination against LGBT people. We encourage governments to amend punitive laws, in particular those that criminalise homosexuality and changes to gender identity. Quiet diplomacy is often the most effective way to make progress in this sensitive area.

In June, the Government published 'Working with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Equality' to guide our future work. It includes an unequivocal commitment to support LGBT rights internationally. Government ministers have taken opportunities to raise LGBT rights at all levels including at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Perth in October. LGBT is one of the priorities for our current chairmanship of the Council of Europe. The UK played a key role in helping deliver the first UN resolution on human rights, sexual orientation and gender identity, which was adopted, despite fierce opposition, at the UN Human Rights Council in June.

We provide funding to a small number of UK LGBT organisations and smaller groups in partner countries and maintain a dialogue with civil society on how interventions can be effective. LGBT equality is a focus area for DFID's budget support policy, where human rights is a key partnership principle guiding decisions on providing aid to governments.

### **Other work overseas**

DFID Uganda is currently collaborating with the British High Commission and the British Council to develop a cross-institutional Strategy on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. DFID Uganda was a pilot country last year for the roll out of the new training course on bullying, harassment and discrimination'. In December, Handicap International provided

training to the staff on working with people with disabilities. To complement this initiative the office is planning an access audit of all its premises.

## **6. Concluding remarks and priorities for the year ahead**

The last year has been very active in terms of our Equality and Diversity Agenda. This report has highlighted some of the achievements in terms of thinking through what the new Act means in practice, what the Public Sector Duty actually entails and how we can capture the considerable activity around equality and diversity already happening in our service delivery across the world. We have demonstrated in this report some of the actions that have already been taken to roll out the legislation – not just the compliance associated with it but actually embracing the spirit of the new approach: less bureaucracy; more action.

Looking ahead the Equality and Diversity Team will engage more with the wider business to exchange knowledge, make objectives intrinsic to all that is done and demonstrate further results. We will continue to develop our contacts with the diversity community across Whitehall and with civil society groups. We will also seek specifically to ensure that we improve our declaration rates our equality monitoring, our focus on disability and that we ensure equality screening or an equivalent method is applied,

We will roll out a series of equality workshop overseas as well as in the UK and raise awareness of both our individual and corporate obligations..

There has been a lot of action already taken to update our guidance in line with the new Act and we have made a very good start. The next twelve months will be critical in taking this forward and building further on the very good foundations we have laid.

For any queries on this report please contact the Diversity Champion or the Equality and Diversity team at DFID on [diversity@dfid.gov.uk](mailto:diversity@dfid.gov.uk)

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