



Equality Matters

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June, 2015

No.2

What about race?

The experiences of Black Staff in NUS

All NUS diversity surveys from 2005 to 2012 have highlighted the lack of ethnic diversity in the workforce of students' unions at every staff level. The findings provide insight into the experiences and barriers that many Black staff face in students' unions.

A large majority (79 per cent) of respondents agreed that their union is an inclusive and diverse place to work. In addition, Respondents also commented on the lack of genuine commitment from unions in promoting equality and diversity.

On the other hand, half of all respondents said their union had taken some action to consider the needs of Black staff, mainly through celebrating Black History Month providing time off for religious holidays and/or celebrating religious and cultural festivals and events.

However, Respondents felt the ethnic diversity of the student movement workforce could be improved through a range of strategies. For example, 65 per cent of respondents stated the need to advertise jobs beyond NUS Connect and have more targeted advertising. Increasing the proportion of elected Black officers was viewed as the second most important way of increasing ethnic diversity.

Participants in this survey commented that one of the main reasons for the lack of Black staff representation is because the student movement is dominated by white staff and sabbatical officers. Which to some, signifies that the union environment is not one that welcomes the Black experience and Black staff. The correlation between the lack of Black officers and the lack of Black student union staff was also highlighted. For some respondents, student politics is associated primarily with white students.

In order to attract and retain a diverse workforce, it is imperative an organisation promotes equality and diversity and is inclusive. NUS recommends that students' unions undertake targeted work to increase the number of Black students running in elections. Also, carry out equality impact assessments (EIAs) to ascertain how union activities and policies impact a diverse range of groups, such as Black staff and officers.

United Kingdom Investor in Equality Diversity (UKIED) Annual National Equality and Awards Conference - 10th July, 2015

(Free conference places)

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This year's conference -The Impact of the Austerity Agenda on Equality & Diversity, will include key note addresses from Dr Omar Khan, Director of the Runnymede Trust, Professor Doirean Wilson, Middlesex University and leading Guardian Columnist Patrick Butler.

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Non for Profit Company, Registered in England and Wales

Suran Dickson speaks on Equality and Diversity

Suran Dickson, Chief Executive of Diversity Role Models reveals her biggest challenges, achievements and most enjoyable aspect in Equality and Diversity.



Starting up Diversity Role Models

There was a lot of bullying in schools, and there was little information to help teachers tackle it effectively. Also young people did not have anywhere to ask questions and obtain information. So I took this to schools to open the conversation really.

Biggest Challenge/Achievement as Diversity Role Models Chief exec.

Setting up the staff. It can be pretty difficult to work so much and still not have enough time to get everything done. Going into a new market was a huge challenge, I had never worked in a charity sector before, so everything was new and I had a lot to learn. It was hard work, but very rewarding. Our biggest achievement will be winning a government funding award earlier this year. Having gained a level of trust from the government in less than four years is quite an achievement.

Future Plans for Diversity Role Models

One key thing is our expansion, as we are currently working towards making sure we can deliver into schools in the tiniest villages, and reach young people who desperately need our help throughout the UK. We already have four hubs which will continue to develop over the next few years. Also our teacher training is in progress to help address the need for young people to be educated and supported in dealing with various forms of bullying.

Discrimination in the society today

Discrimination exists in different sectors in our society. It is improving because organisations like the police and military are now very much involved in the kind of work we do. There is generally more awareness and the society is becoming more educated, as corporate organizations are tackling discrimination in every way they can and genuinely trying to make the world a better place.

Government Impact in reducing discrimination

The government should put some funding into compulsive teacher training around issues like disability, gender inequality. Teachers need to understand the kind of language that they use, leading young people to go down a certain path. That is the next biggest issue we need to tackle across all sectors, as it goes from preschool to senior work places.

Most enjoyable aspect of being CEO of Diversity Role Models

Seeing the results. To see young people in the course of fifty minutes, go from harbouring some quite prejudicial views to going to shaking the hand of their role models to say thank you for coming to talk to us. The level of support over the last four years has also been quite humbling. I think those two are the most rewarding aspects.

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