DIVERSIFYING ROUTES INTO PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

A REPORT INTO SCHEMES DESIGNED TO DIVERSIFY ENTRY ROUTES INTO SECTOR WORKFORCES

FEBRUARY 2020
Diversifying routes into public engagement

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Introduction

This report has been produced by Koreo, on behalf of BSA as part of the National Forum for Public Engagement with STEM, after undertaking research into early career, professional and graduate schemes and networks designed to diversify entry into specialist sectors and careers. This research is to inform discussion and action - learning from other sectors about how they have taken positive action to diversify entry routes and early career workforce. This research sought to identify the landscape of programmes in different sectors, understand the way these schemes operate and develop a set of findings following additional in-depth contributions from experts and those with experience of designing, delivering or taking part in such schemes.

Throughout, this research has been exploring:

- What projects and schemes have been put in place to support people into the workplace in particular sectors and spaces?
- What support is offered within these different entry routes and activities?
- How do these schemes advance people’s careers and opportunities within the sector, including retention and achievement?
- What is the geographic base of schemes and are they mostly London centric?
- How do these schemes support diversity and what does this look like beyond gender including BAME diversity, disability, mental health, class and intersectionality?
- Do these schemes include or how do these schemes compare with volunteering or other more informal routes into the workplace?

For the purpose of the report, public engagement in science and research is defined as ‘anyone working on having, or facilitating, conversations about science and research, whether paid or voluntarily.’ Public engagement encompasses a huge range of roles, experience and working patterns, including organisations who carry out research-related activities such as charities and campaign groups, learned societies, the media, government, cultural organisations, community organisations, museums and discovery centres, think tanks, education and higher education institutions.

It has been previously identified that there are a lot of entry level roles available in public engagement. These typically attract science/social science and science communication graduates (undergraduate or post-graduate) and are usually based in large UK cities or areas with a research-intensive university. Workforce diversity is increasingly a priority for science communication, as the people who work in the sector do not reflect the diversity or science identity of the UK and research shows that public engagement is majority female, and currently under-represents people from BAME backgrounds, those educated below undergraduate level and people with a disability.
About the National Forum for Public Engagement with STEM

The National Forum is a collective of key funders and organisations involved in setting the national agenda for public engagement in STEM. Established in 2014, the forum’s goal is to improve collaboration, co-operation and learning across the sector and to make better collective decisions and accelerate improvements across the science engagement ‘system’. The forum seeks to tackle ‘sticky problems’: known sector-wide issues that can’t be solved by people working in isolation, and that require concerted and collaborative effort over the long term.

The Forum seeks to effect change in three main ways:

- By challenging ourselves to improve our work, using evidence, expert input and intelligence gathering to stimulate innovation and set strategic direction.
- Working with the wider STEM Engagement community to identify areas where we can affect system-wide change through collective action. This is driven largely through our working groups and events.
- Developing tools, resources and initiatives which support change.

About Koreo

Koreo is a talent consultancy dedicated to social change. We develop and mobilise people, organisations and networks to address the defining issues of our time and since 2009 have become one of the UK’s leading providers for organisations with a social purpose. The company was founded on the belief that talent is the fundamental force of social change, that social impact should be at the heart of all work regardless of sector or role, and that collaborative action is the only way to address complex social issues.

We are known for our talent consultancy work across the public and social sectors and our national ventures, which include increasing community power into grant-making (2027), a national graduate scheme for the non-profit sector (Charityworks) and a campaign to change the employment landscape for people leaving university with a disability (Change100).

Clients, partners and supporters include: the Local Trust, The Health Foundation, Care International, National Housing Federation, Rethink Mental Illness, the Mind Federation, the Greater London Authority, Young Foundation, Emily Ashe Trust, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, University of West London Students’ Union, Leonard Cheshire Disability, Metropolitan Housing, Notting Hill Housing, and NSPCC.
KEY FINDINGS
Key Findings

By way of summary of the landscape analysis and wider insight, we have discovered:

There is consistency in approach

1. There is a relatively consistent set of models used across different sectors designed to increase diversity. These includes placement and employment programmes - but this is certainly not the only approach deployed, and not all of these are focused on entry level roles. Networks, campaigns, board and senior leadership diversification & equality and diversity training are all observed at varying scales - either as stand-alone interventions or as part of a broader package of opportunities within a particular organisation or across a given sector.
2. A paid placement and development programme including mentoring and some form of research project is a particularly common model, but these utilise varying lengths of time, investment, level of role, employer support and supervision.
3. Mentoring and coaching is seen as a vital component and one of the most well-received interventions as part of programmes – and this is seen as helping establish and build trust, support and insight for and from participants.

There is difference in language and focus

4. There is also a range of different definitions related to diversity used – with an inconsistency in the way terms are applied and focus areas are targeted. For example, some are structured by category of protected characteristic such as gender, ethnicity, disability and sexual orientation whilst others, and arguably a growing number, are much broader in scope and utilise cross-cutting themes like socio-economic status or class.
5. Some schemes and programmes are set up and driven based around responding to legal drivers, such as reporting and disclosure requirements on workforce diversity, but others are more mission driven with a defined purpose depending on sector factors or a particular lack of diversity. Some of these exhibit a campaigning or activist tilt – but these are often communicated and articulated differently dependent on these themes and factors including timescale (for example some have long-term ambitions to fundamental alter the profile of a sector, whilst others are more focused on bringing individuals into a single organisation).
6. Many use self-definition to determine eligibility based on protected characteristics such as gender, race, disability or sexual orientation, whilst others use specific requirements - such as the Jerwood Creative Bursaries for example, which uses proof of maintenance grants while at university to determine eligibility.
Most are talent rather than access programmes

7. Most programmes are also referred to as ‘talent’ rather than access programmes with a focus on the individual bringing their skills and experience (including lived experience) into the role/organisation/sector. To this effect, some also have varying levels of entrance requirements, some at degree level, while others are more competency-dependant based on relevant experience.

Entry level schemes are part of the solution, not the solution

8. Regardless of the specific intervention, participants and those with experience in running such schemes strongly believe that they should not be seen in isolation, and that impact requires overarching strategies and organisational cultures that enable people to thrive. Accessibility, organisational structure, processes and wider communications strategies are all deemed incredibly important to create an environment which allows any scheme to work effectively and ensure people stay and progress rather than exiting the organisation or sector after the scheme ends or due to other issues.

9. Developing a sense of partnership and responsibility at all levels is also seen as a fundamental factor in the success of schemes, particularly employment programmes – and offering training and development opportunities that apply to the employer, as well as the employee. These are seen as particularly effective at ensuring that such schemes drive organisational and sector-wide change rather than just act as an avenue to diversify workforces where the onus is on the individual to either adapt and ‘fit in’ with or be the sole agent of challenge and change to existing structures within the organisation or sector.

Impact data is patchy, and attribution is difficult

10. There is also a general lack of impact statistics regarding these schemes and programmes, which also compounds a difficulty in attributing change to particular schemes or programmes given they are often not the only intervention deployed in a particular organisation or sector - with many different opportunities and factors intersecting with each other at the same time.

11. Monitoring of retention and progression is not routine, with the majority of information available only related to satisfaction/quality of the programmes. Some schemes also operate with a long-term ambition and therefore many of these schemes have not operated for long enough to be able to accurately demonstrate or measure their impact at this time.
12. Most formal programmes tend to use a competitive selection process which is seen as an important feature – including in giving employers confidence and ensuring participants are seen as valued and members of staff in their own right.

Programmes are where the work is, and that is often in London and cities

13. Schemes often revolve around city-based employment centres – albeit some have a broader reach or outreach element included as part of their mission or framework. We would suggest however that this metropolitan bias largely reflects the UK’s more centralised economy and institutional set-up. Many of these interventions are also driven by employers, funders or sector bodies that are based in London or other major UK hub cities for example.

There are clear opportunities for the Forum to learn from existing practice

14. Given the number of schemes deployed in many different contexts, it is clear to see how such interventions and their relatively consistent structure could easily be applied into the STEM and science research public engagement space. The Forum should consider the benefits of a coordinated sector approach including in co-creating and determining the purpose, best application and effective monitoring of any such programme(s) and intervention that may be developed.
Methodology

This research project has taken the form of three stages of engagement — firstly, the desk-based development of a landscape analysis providing an overview of programmes across different sectors, then a set of one to one interviews with key stakeholders and experts, followed by the production of this written report including its recommendations.

Approach

We have approached the project drawing on our record as practitioners with a long track record of designing and delivering entry level and emerging talent programmes with a social purpose, as well as also having been part of a series of similar research projects to analyse and learn from best practice across sectors.

The work has been delivered across three key phases:

- **Phase One - Desktop Research** (November-December) within this first phase we sought to develop a framework for the research project and undertake a landscape analysis exercise which identified entry schemes focused on diversification. This landscape analysis was then used to identify several of the key schemes most relevant and impactful. The development of an engagement plan then scoped the next phase of the project, its targets and key questions to surface findings most pertinent to the aims and objectives of the research. At this stage we also met with the project team to playback initial findings and refine the engagement plan.

- **Phase Two - Engagement** (December-January) having produced the initial landscape analysis, we then undertook an associated research analysis through further, more in-depth, desk-based research and through a set of interviews and conversations as structured within the engagement plan. This meant speaking with individuals, organisations, alumni and delivery partners across key schemes to identify key learning, based on the set of questions developed within the design phase and from the project brief.

- **Phase Three – Analysis and playback** (January-February) during the final phase of the work we have brought together the initial landscape analysis and the findings from the engagement process in a written report with recommendations.
From the inception of the project, we believed it was important that the process and the final output were designed in a way that produced a set of insights and findings that are a powerful tool for action going forwards – and have therefore developed and delivered its findings in a format that enables it to be used practically to convene discussion and agreement for future opportunities.

**Key questions**

In discussion with the project team, and feedback provided by the Forum, there were a number of key areas scoped throughout the initial phases to be explored through the more in-depth interviews and analysis, in addition to studying the purpose of these schemes and how they are structured and delivered.

These areas included:

- What, if any, strategic influence these schemes seek to have?
- How is the impact and/or success of such schemes measured and is there any evidence of these schemes creating a lasting change in terms of the diversity of an organisation or an industry as a whole?
- What type of diversity do they explore and how is this defined and structured, and is there any entry requirements or verification processes?
- Are opportunities based around certain geographic regions or cities?
- At what level do these schemes operate and who are they sponsored by?
- To what extent do such schemes affect or are affected by discussions regarding culture and identity and what impact do they have on participants?
- Is there a way of replicating these schemes within science communication where there may be a less clear career path?
LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS
Landscape Analysis

The full landscape review produced by this research is shared in Appendix 1 and was conducted through desk-based online research, as well as peer networking to establish a full picture of the breadth and depth of interventions deployed across different sectors. A summary and brief analysis of this work follows below - including a set of case studies related to different themes of intervention.

Sectors and schemes –
- In total 76 schemes and programmes were identified through the research.
- Interventions were surfaced in the creative and charity sectors given the brief, but further schemes were identified in the legal, media, technology, and digital industries as well as the public sector, in politics and government.

Ambition and strategic intent –
- All programmes scoped ultimately related to promoting diversity into workforces within the UK and taken together exhibit a variety of ambitions - ranging from increasing a particular strand of diversity in an individual organisation through to mission-driven change in particular sector as a whole.
- Many schemes focus on targeting BAME and gender diversity – with some focusing on disability and low socio-economic background. Others, and more recently created schemes, consider ‘cross-cutting’ themes such as class.
- Whilst this research did not study the origins of these schemes, both ‘push’ and ‘pull’ factors have anecdotally been mentioned as the reason behind the selection of these focus areas – including legal changes to reporting requiring action, through to more campaign driven reasons such as strategic shifts to better reflect the communities an organisation or sector serves.

Method and structure –
- Whilst there are some differences in the implementation of interventions, there is a striking consistency in terms of programme elements regardless of cause, size, profile or geography across some key clusters
  - Informal networks and mentoring schemes where open opportunities are created for individuals seeking to work in particular sectors from certain backgrounds to engage, discuss and learn more to get involved.
  - Campaigns which focus on accelerating progress and inclusion through getting organisations and employers to sign up to particular targets or changes in processes such as recruitment and application schemes.
Training and development opportunities which support people to take part in particular schemes or application processes as well as support for employers to be more responsive and adapt to needs and best practice.

Placement and employment programmes which recruit people into a paid role or through a shorter-term internship in a particular organisation or sector alongside a leadership or personal development scheme.

- Within cohort-based employment and placement programmes nearly every scheme follows the same basic structure of a paid work placement supported by regular group learning sessions, self-directed learning (such as a research project and individual support (for example a coach or mentor).
- Employment programmes are also by far the most common intervention, but other formats are deployed – including skills training opportunities and fast-track recruitment schemes for people from certain backgrounds which may be ‘add-ons’ to existing schemes which don’t necessarily major on diversity.
- Programmes and opportunities run for various lengths, with a variety of target audiences.
- For placement or time-limited employment offers we also heard that there is broad consensus amongst those with experience that such schemes should run for 12 months as this is the minimum for a meaningful professional experience which also allows for personal development.
- The success of placement employment programmes in general, and in these schemes in particular, also hinges primarily on the quality of the participant, quality of management and culture at the host organisation. Other programme areas are unlikely to make up for problems in these areas and why a focus is put on ongoing support and individual reflection/coaching spaces. For this reason, individual support is commonly described as one of the most popular features by participants and is seen as essential in the design and delivery of programmes.
- Developing a cohort of peers is also seen as important feature and affects the way programmes are marketed to participants and is also highlighted by alumni networks that are often created when people leave the programme/scheme.
- Some of the more established employment programmes, and arguably the most successful, also offer support and training to the employer, not just the employee/trainee throughout the duration of an employment scheme.
- A range of funding models are used throughout these different types of scheme – where some placements are funded by external organisations or the sector as a whole, whereas others rely on organisations self-funding from their existing staffing and development budgets. More informal opportunities are often sponsored or are run through grants from sector based or philanthropic funders.
Features –

- Where an industry is clearly defined or has a particular recruitment pathway there seem to be fewer schemes on offer, and sometimes less diversity in terms of the types of schemes that are ran. For example, in the legal industry there are less opportunities given the uniform recruitment processes and requirements, whereas in the creative industries for example, where the breadth and depth of the sector, its organisations and scale is far greater, there are many different types of offerings at different levels with different focus points.

- Most schemes focus on entry level roles or support, however some are scoped around ‘career change’ and attracting professionals into a new industry or sector rather than just being focused on those entering the workforce for the first time.

- Similarly, most schemes identified also appear to be targeted at younger people (aged 18-25) which again may contribute to the majority of these schemes being taster programmes or full career-entry placement and employment opportunities.

- Some schemes also seek to attract participants based on offering some form of accreditation or qualification. For example, some more established and front-line based programmes will offer a masters qualification or offer multiple streams for people with different levels of experience in order to attract a wider pool of people.

- Others offer a more generative or experiential programme of work – for example where participants create or coproduce a particular piece of research or work which can contribute to their skills and experience within a particular space or sector. This often creates a better learning experience where people feel more compelled or excited about applying to, or entering careers in a particular sector – and able to ‘get close to the work’ and understand more about roles which may be less obvious or less well defined.

- Likewise, programmes and offers have varying levels of on-going support after completion. Many feature light, self-organised alumni networks which feature communications channels, groups and events offerings, if anything at all.

Geography –

- The majority of schemes are predominantly London-centric.

- The industries themselves may well affect this – for example where they are based, or where power resides within the sector or even society as a whole.

- Some schemes, and particularly funding or public sector models, are offered more regionally – but there remains a metropolitan and city-based focus within these – apart from particular schemes which are based on outreach beyond cities or tailored for more regional communities.

- Similarly, the type of experience and placement offered can also be affected by geography, with lower salaries offered outside of cities, or less attractive working arrangements and environments that may be less accessible.
Entry requirements and accessibility –
- More formal employment programmes mostly operate full independent recruitment processes based on set criteria and entry requirements.
- Others and less formal opportunities suggest they ‘welcome applications’ from those specifically from certain backgrounds and protected characteristics or operate amended recruitment processes tailored to those from more diverse backgrounds.
- Most application processes where they exist seem to be based on qualitative questions and relevant experience with some based on referrals from an employability advisor who helps identify those most likely to benefit.

Impact –
- There is a lack of quantitative, and qualitative, impact statistics, information and reporting across all of the schemes as a whole which makes it difficult to assess the impact of the individual programmes and likewise, which models are most successful at contributing to diversification across industries.
- Quite a lot of schemes are operated separately from their host organisations which also complicates reporting where schemes do not track data (whether retention or progression) across participating individuals and organisations.
- It is also not possible to always attribute impact to a particular scheme, as they are not often operated in isolation from other activities and programmes.
- Similarly, not all schemes feature a clear mission or theory of change where it is obvious to identify the impact that they are trying to have – particularly when there is a variety of definitions being used.
CASE STUDIES
Change 100

Change 100 is a professional development internship programme that connects talented disabled students and graduates with some of the UK’s best-known employers, through paid summer internships.

Purpose
Research by Leonard Cheshire revealed that one in five employers said they would be less likely to employ a disabled person, and of those less likely to employ a disabled person, almost three in four would be concerned they would struggle to do the job. Inaccessible graduate recruitment processes, employer assumptions and a lack of understanding excludes talented individuals from achieving their goals and entering the working world. The mission of the programme is to address this imbalance and improve the employment landscape for disabled people.

Programme
The programme launched in 2013 and has supported over 400 young disabled people and over 130 employers through internship placements.

- An inclusive application process for candidates is run and ensures adjustments are made throughout. The process involves an initial application form and an assessment centre.
- Employers are sourced across the UK to partner with Change 100 and host interns over the summer – working with a range of sectors and with employers of varying size.
- Participants selected for the programme identify what workplace adjustments they may need on placement and a full induction day is run for all interns.
- Leonard Cheshire runs disability equality training to all employer partners before the internships start and deliver bespoke sessions on each individual intern and their workplace adjustments.
- Interns are given a safe environment to gain valuable work experience and build their confidence through their placement, as well as learning how to manage their disability or health condition in the context of work.

Impact
- 96% of interns stated their Change 100 experience improved their confidence in the workplace
- 89% agreed that their Change 100 experience helped them understand their disability in the context of work
- 89% agreed that their Change 100 intern had a positive impact on their team
2027 is an employment programme that offers a 12-month salaried role to those from a working-class background to enter and have a wider impact within the grant-making sector in the UK.

**Purpose**
In a relatively static sector, the 2027 programme seeks to bring a campaigning drive and focus to putting community power at the heart of grant-making. Ensuring organisations better reflect and serve the communities they work with and for, the programme believes that greater diversity in key decision-making roles in foundations and trusts can help those organisations make better and more effective decisions. 2027 brings diverse talent with frontline work experience from working-class communities into the heart of teams to have a wider impact on transforming the sector over a 10-year time frame.

**Programme**
The programme offers a 12-month salaried (up to £25,000) placement at a leading foundation/trust open to frontline workers from working-class communities alongside a wrap-around leadership development programme.

- A comprehensive selection process targets candidates with the skills that grant-makers are looking for as well as the earned and lived experience that will add additional value to the foundation.
- A cohort of 15 associates per year over the course of 10 years, launched in 2018, sees people take up UK-wide placements.
- An extensive professional development programme led by industry experts facilitates learning, and develops knowledge, understanding and skills of the grant-giving sector for participants – creating and giving a platform to diverse leaders.
- In addition to the programme of support on offer to the individuals engaged in the programme, support is also be given to the host grant-makers to get the most out of their new team member and reflect on how their practices can best build on frontline and lived experience.
- There is also a 2027 campaign for better governance which encourages foundations commit to ensuring that a minimum of 40% of their trustees identify as from the communities they most exist to serve by 2027.

**Impact**
- 2027 seeks to lead the way in a sector-wide shift in organisations being more equitable and responsive to and for the people and communities they serve.
- The focus on class has consistently delivered a highly diverse cohort.
The Weston Jerwood Creative Arts Bursary is a funded fellowship programme which creates 15 year-long placements to expand organisations capacity for artistic production and engages organisations with a clear offer, not just an ask.

Purpose
With only 14% of artists being from a working-class background, the Jerwood Creative Arts Bursary is aimed at career starters from low socio-economic backgrounds to improve their participation and visibility in the arts sector. With arts, media and museums crucial in creating representations of individuals, communities and society, the workforce in these occupations, whether class origin, gender and ethnicity is important to ensuring good, well rounded representations on page, stage, and on screen, as well as in galleries and museums.

Programme
The bursary backs 50 host organisations to create 50 paid, year-long creative living-wage fellowships

- The bursary works in partnership with leading arts and cultural organisations to discover how an inclusive, intersectional approach to recruitment, talent development and organisational change can future proof their mission.
- Participants take part in an 18-month Organisational Change programme and placements are offered across the country.
- All fellows qualified for full maintenance grants while at university as an entry requirement which measures low socio-economic background.
- The programme gives people the skills and confidence to work in a sector where they have been underrepresented - helping them realise their capabilities.
- The scheme encourages institutions to take more responsibility for increasing diversity in the industry in terms of class, ethnicity, gender, disability - more diverse recruitment process with the programme offering mentoring, network building, funding for independent projects and international experience.
- The bursary model enables employers to become part of the development process as well as the trainee – with training also offered to the employer in advance of the trainee starting and funding used to ensure participation.

Impact
- Since 2010, has worked with 110 of the UK’s leading arts organisations
- 90% of fellows said the programme raised their aspirations and increased their confidence
- 90% are now currently either in a job or have set up a freelance practice
The Creative Mentor Network offers mentor programmes as a training offer to organisations and as a way of connecting people in different spaces – building strong networks.

**Purpose**
The Social Mobility Commission’s ‘State of the Nation’ report shows social mobility in the UK has remained ‘virtually stagnant’ since 2014. The Creative Mentor Network seeks to make the creative industries more socio-economically diverse and inclusive by supporting young people from low socio-economic backgrounds into careers in the creative industries through mentoring. Mentor programmes are to provide career opportunities for young people; leadership and inclusion training for employees; and access to diverse talent.

**Programme**
Creative Mentor Network programmes are based on fortnightly mentor meetings where mentors support the mentees they’re working with and the programme helps mentors to support sustainable change.
- Mentees are encouraged to grow their understanding of the creative industry labour market (the jobs available, the routes in, and the skills they need to be qualified) and build their network of professional contacts.
- People develop the soft skills (confidence, resilience and self-awareness) they need to leverage their understanding and networks.
- The overarching aims of the programme is to enable mentors to also develop their own coaching skills, and through that to create a more inclusive working culture within their organisations - becoming advocates for diversity in the creative industries beyond the CMN programme.

**Impact**
- Since 2014 over 400 young people supported through mentoring programme
- 90% of mentors feel more equipped to nurture others from diverse backgrounds
- 84% of mentors said they felt more confident raising an issue about diversity
- Network of over 400 mentors
- 74% of mentees have a better idea of the job they want and the steps they need to take to get there
- 91% mentors said they were more aware of the issues facing young people from lower socio-economic backgrounds and the barriers they face when entering the creative industry.
BAME 2020

BAME 2020 is a campaign which aims to increase the number of graduates from BAME backgrounds working in the marketing, media and communications industry. They inspire interest by using targeted messaging to inform about career paths.

Purpose
BAME 2020’s campaign mission is that 20% of the young talent entering marketing, media and communications each year comes from BAME backgrounds and that 20% of leadership roles are filled by BAME talent. The campaign is advocated by BAME2020 Advisors who are sector leaders, champion ambassadors, and ensure that the campaign’s initiatives are taken back into businesses. The campaign hopes to challenge the belief that MMC careers are not seen as a serious choice by many people from BAME backgrounds.

Programme
BAME2020 operates with a network of ambassadors who advocate for BAME professionals within their organisations across a network of advisors (senior marketing professionals) with quarterly events; training for recruitment agencies and more designed as a long-term programme committed to sustainable change.

Advocacy Academy

The Advocacy Academy is a transformational movement which operates leadership programmes across a number of areas from intersectional feminism through to racial equality

Purpose
The Advocacy Academy is for young people from South London who are passionate about creating a more fair, just and equal society. A calendar of programmes range in length from a few days to six months.

Programme
The Advocacy Academy operates a flagship Social Justice Leadership Fellowship. This prestigious six-month course consists of over 400 hours of interactive workshops, speakers, debates and real-life scenarios, where advocates develop the knowledge, skills and confidence to campaign for change for the rest of their lives. The Fellowship includes three residential retreats, weekly evening gatherings, and intensive campaign coaching.
Campaign Bootcamp

Campaign Bootcamp is a training opportunity for people to take their own work forward and develop their skills in an entrepreneurial way.

Purpose
Campaign Bootcamp offers an opportunity for people who currently feel excluded from decisions made about their lives. Programmes look to support people who don’t or can’t access an existing campaign with a particular focus on: refugees/asylum seekers and migrants, working class and low income people as well as BAME (Black, Asian and minority ethnic) communities/people of colour.

Programme
Everyday Activism, the organisation’s main programme, trains groups of people most impacted by injustice in campaigning skills and strategies. Trainings take place in the communities where participants live, and the structure of the training sessions (length and number of sessions, dates, location) is tailored to the needs of the group.
Defining diversity and focus

Theme and focus of diversity

- There were multiple comments about how there is a lot of ‘noise’ about diversity but not necessarily always a consistent or clear response. For example, one careers advisor noted that – “A lot of noise is made about the need for diversity, including from a disability perspective, but not a lot is done. From a disability perspective, it’s often low on an employer list of issues to tackle. It sits well below Gender, BAME and other protected characteristics.”
- These ‘vertical’ areas of focus (particularly around legally defined protected characterised as given by the Equalities Act) seem to be more obvious and widely established. There are therefore far more schemes that operate around these areas, and particularly around gender, BAME and LGBT diversity. This may be more appropriate for individual or particular organisations rather than sector-wide responses, unless where there is a particular specific diversity issue identified.
- Therefore, some of the more emerging and forward-looking mission-based responses are looking at some variation of class/socio-economic factors which is more cross-cutting and helps to avoid this ‘prioritisation’ issue.
- The definition of ‘class’ however was raised as something that can be as difficult as choosing one particular strand of focus – for example, judging whether individuals qualify for a programme because of previous receipt of free school meals or tax credits, whether it is self-defined or post-code or other factors. It was noted that there is no national-level consistency in the way that class is identified and is complex, given there have been very different attitudes towards class observed in different parts of the country. For example, on some programmes, class has been identified as a point of pride in the North West for example, whereas this is much more complicated in lower social economic communities in other parts of the country and could be seen as something which discourages an applicant from applying.
- This issue of definition is not just an issue related to class alone, with other areas where there is not a binary presenting multiple factors of engagement. However, class was considered particularly broad – given people transcend class and others who see class through a knowledge lens. This makes it very difficult and complicated, which warrants more thought and potentially experimentation.
- A number of people also commented that closing the “distance between the sector and the communities it serves” is becoming an emerging narrative.
Self-definition

- One issue explored through the interviews was also that of setting entry requirements and authentication for people’s entry onto programmes on the basis of particular characteristics through self-definition.
- Some programmes don’t ‘validate’ self-identification - whether BAME or class. Guidelines, or key questions are sometimes used in messaging or within application processes to help people have a clear understanding of what that particular characteristic means to help them self-identify.
- One programme manager commented: “Self-identification starts with a clear definition of the diversity issue that you’re trying to respond to. We needed to know what our organisational definition of "working class" was, even if we were relying on people self-identifying as it provides a framework for our understanding about the problem we’re trying to solve and to encourage people who may not identify initially as working class to enter the programme.”
- In terms of whether self-identification causes issues, another commented that “People under-identifying is much more common than people self-identifying and the programme not being suitable for them.” “We’ve had almost no problem with people claiming that identity wrongly and have now made it normal practice to check in with people to confirm who this programme is for and why. That’s been successful.”
- Some schemes are also ‘in-addition’ to wider programmes that aren’t solely focused on diversity – where there are multiple entrance routes for those who do not want to self-identify through a particular entry route. This allows participants to instead apply for the main entrance route as this is still open to them.
- On disability programmes, self-identification also touches on wider ‘disclosure’ issues. A senior leader within a disability programme said that “We encourage our candidates and our employers to not be frightened of ‘disclosure’ however, ‘disclosure’ can easily be interpreted as a negative word. So instead of ‘disclosing a disability’, we want more people to talk about ‘sharing information’ – changing our language can lead to more positive conversations and perspectives.”
- This was raised as particularly important, given disability remains an issue some sectors/employers are not willing to tackle on their own – for example, one advisor suggested; “I think this is because implementing reasonable adjustments, and modifying cultural behaviours is more challenging than some of the quick wins seen in other areas. It requires significantly more change and action.”
- Whilst there was a lack of schemes and programmes centred on mental health as a particular issue, some mentioned that this could be an area of self-identification or focus in the future – “Probably the most strong link between social class and disability is in mental health.”
Geography

- As stated earlier in the landscape analysis, the provision of schemes can be geographically based and biased. For example, London remains the biggest pull - particularly in terms of BAME representation – but many suggested this could just reflect the wider economy and the centralised nature of the UK.
- Where disability and widening participation is the focus of schemes some people consistently raised that elements such as relocating, or mobile working styles such as consultancy can be difficult and again is a key reason why some roles are mainly based with a particular connection to city
- Others suggested that the north is massively undervalued throughout the UK economy, and that where schemes don’t necessarily factor in geographic disparities that there may be concern they do not adequately or effectively respond to issues of access.
- “The Social Mobility Commission has added geography as an important lens through which inequality can be understood”

Reflecting diversity in the process and design

- Programme directors and former participants raised that it is important that schemes are representative of the people you are trying to attract. For example, schemes designed to promote BAME participation often use BAME majority assessors at assessment centres, utilise blind application techniques and tools all designed in creating a level playing field throughout the process that promotes confidence and models best practice.
- Similarly, wrap-around support such as access to mentoring and coaching throughout application processes can help ensure that applicants are able to reflect on the experience and raise issues.
- Similarly messaging and communications was highlighted as important when offering a programme that helps signal to people that a particular scheme is relevant and for them.

Making an intervention strategic rather than about an isolated individual

Strategic intent

- There was a recognition of commitment and discussion concerning diversity, but that people were “looking for different things” and that while there is a focus on employment and entry schemes, given their practical ability to give people a tool, the conversation really needs to be more rounded and broad.
• Some felt there was “a risk that people who are leading the diversity agenda are not people from diverse backgrounds themselves, or people who have lived experience of the issues they’re talking about/working on. The sector should be doing more to support the leaders who live these issues and to enable them to lead on the agenda themselves and ensuring organisations and sectors are representative at every level.”

• Others commented more on the depth of commitment and ensuring that any scheme is not seen in isolation.

• For example, one diversity expert commented that, “One of the things that makes programmes around entry level talent successful is that they provide a practical mechanism which people can latch onto to ‘do something’ about a problem they know they don’t necessarily have an answer to. What’s stark though, is how much the focus is on schemes and one-off interventions, when the fundamental issue is about company culture, and that is a long-term project which will require some real discomfort, which many aren’t prepared to take part in.”

• The model presented by the Jerwood bursaries is particularly interesting in this regard, where it provides entry level roles but also along with training to the host organisation. Organisations hire themselves rather than Jerwood doing it centrally, so there is also the opportunity to affect recruitment, selection, and management processes in the organisation directly – using the funding provided as a means to set criteria.

• Most also focused on the need to ensure that any scheme is not isolated from a wider strategy to look at diversity and representation in the round – particularly at board and senior management level where process and culture is set. “A single pronged approach would not work - nor would that be sufficient – we need to recognise that structural issues are a factor both entering but also getting on in organisations and therefore this requires a systemic approach where opportunities are matched with support at each and every stage.”

• Similarly, the level of ambition may also help promote a much higher level of engagement or commitment – “We have been positively radical in our campaigning call and have done that intentionally to make it clear to the sector that we are calling for significant change not nibbling round the edges.”

• “The focus could turn from the individual to the host organisations. The programme could demand more from hosts, including higher financial contributions and firmer commitments to total organisational change rather than just the support for an intern.”
• Intimidating for people being the only working class/BAME programme etc surrounded by people of privilege/difference - therefore strong peer support networks, mentors and coaches are popular additions or elements of schemes and most importantly support within the host organisation. People should have a programme manager/external contact for support and advice.

Ensuring emphasis on organisation not individual

• Wrap around support was seen as key in any employment programme or internship scheme where an individual is placed into an organisation – largely to ensure that the emphasis is not put on the individual to be seen as the agent of change within an organisation simply because of their background.

• For example, in contrast, many university access schemes may improve the number of people going into universities from a lower socio-economic background or BAME identity, but there are far bigger factors that relate to their retention and ability to stay and complete courses when at the institution.

• This is about ensuring organisational policies and procedures are working for everyone, including those from more diverse backgrounds, but not expecting the individual placed in the organisation to constantly raise issues – but instead that the organisation has a strategy to reform its working practices to reflect a wider ambition on culture and accessibility.

• “Although getting in is important, getting on is also where major barriers still exist. There are now several schemes and programmes addressing transitions from education into cultural jobs, but fewer focused on mid-career development.”

• “We need to support long-term change across the arts sector by sharing knowledge, providing expert support, and encouraging take-up of an intersectional approach to equality, diversity and inclusion.”

• “Buy-in from the organisation is important. If the managers and senior managers in an organisation aren’t taking part, then it’s unlikely to make sustained change.”

• “Diversity, equity and inclusion is a conversation about organisational culture as much as anything else and is therefore about how people see the world/their work, and therefore how they do things. As such, this work is very much about changing perspectives at all levels of an organisation, probably starting with senior leaders as that has a trickle down. Therefore, the question of how you engage multiple levels in a scheme feels essential.”

• “Progression, skill set and salary – but also flexible and family friendly hours and accessible workplaces all matter when we’re talking about diversity in the round.”
Important elements of programmes

Inclusive recruitment and selection

- An emphasis was put on the use of recruitment and selection within formal schemes – particularly in ensuring processes are inclusive. As a result of Change 100 for example, a number of host organisations have reviewed their own wider recruitment or graduate intake processes to ensure they do not create additional barriers for disabled candidates where existing issues would cause problems. Learning is therefore often shared from diversity schemes to ensure that organisations are properly fit for purpose.
- Selection and recruitment has also been used to promote the fact that these schemes are about bringing existing talent into organisations – and are not access programmes where standards are lowered or extra training is provided to bring the individual’s expertise or skills up to a particular level, but instead to level the playing field of structurally or inherently oppressive or bias processes where people of talent from diverse backgrounds are disadvantaged.
- “Personal experience is only just one angle, and indeed professional experience defines many elements and focus of programmes.”

Mentoring

- Mentoring has been identified as an incredibly useful tool offered through schemes. “I offer a mentoring programme to help support employability for students with a disability.”
- “A human element of engagement is deeply important.”
- “Mentoring that promotes vertical engagement across levels of seniority can also promote buy-in to the objectives of schemes to support people from widening participation background.”
- “Mentoring was one of the most impactful parts of the programme for me.”

Post-programme communities

- Most schemes operated some form of alumni community which was largely ad-hoc and informal and didn’t necessarily track progression after the ending of the scheme – with participants not feeling particularly involved.
- Some communities were also self-organised – largely consisting of social media networks and groups, occasionally with institutional support in the form of an events offer and package but rarely schemes had a particularly advanced alumni network or community other than volunteering opportunities, rather than ongoing support.
Impact

Ensuring impact as a factor from design

- Some programme directors suggested that they have been working with evaluators from the beginning of projects but had identified a number of issues including “the lack of a baseline for our sector, because many of the organisations are small and relatively opaque in terms of their leadership.”

- Having an indication and well-thought out plan of the scale of intended impact in a Theory of Change is also highlighted as important – including extension areas of growth and wider impacts at all levels. “One thing that did surface was how important it was to affect trustee boards as much as the actual full-time teams, because the executive and the non-executive were at risk of batting the problem between them.”

Timescale of ambition

- Campaign driven schemes that intend to impact a sector as a whole are still largely early in their development (perhaps a couple of years) and so longer-term reporting and information is limited.

- Similarly, even where they have been running longer, programmes may not have been set up in a way to track impact and development in a particularly sophisticated way, which is important to factor in.

- “I think people need to be careful about the timeframes they’re operating on, and the extent to which they’re expecting things to be easily attributable to particular programmes or projects. Obviously particular projects can boost indicators quite quickly, but the change we’re looking for will take place over several years and will be the result of culture change in the country as well as the specific organisations and industries. One wider value lies, I think, in an industry coming together and defining an industry-wide response/brand to the issue.”

Measures of success

- Some had a clear feeling of measuring impact and success with a wide variety of statistics – largely related to satisfaction.

- “Ultimately the biggest measure of success for our students is retention at employers and long-term job opportunity post entry schemes. It’s also seeing buy-in and engagement at all levels of an organisation. Poor schemes offer support for the duration of the opportunity, but then once graduates are retained in role, there’s a real issue with continued support.”
• “A good measure of success is seeing a sustained change of representation that filters up to all levels of seniority in an organisation.”

• “There aren’t many schemes that stand out to me as being particularly successful. Some are well managed, like the Civil Service Fast Stream, but then they fall down in post-programme support. Models including mentoring and 1-2-1 engagement, like Change100 have been more successful.”

• “There are a number of statistics we track in terms of entrance onto the scheme and throughout the application process through to placement - such as retention, demographic information and others, but there is a lack of sector wide reporting in terms of long-term impact.”

Lessons from other sectors

• The legal industry in particularly uses data-led analysis to track performance, progression and retention taken from individual law firm HR systems and then analysed at sector level to give an overview of individual routes into and through an organisation and sector as a whole.

• This analysis means that organisations can track individual and aggregated results across different diversity tracks - enabling an organisation to then reflect on its processes to understand more about how it is set up to deal with a more diverse workforce.

• This also ensures that when organisations report top level figures like gender pay gap numbers, they understand with depth how these numbers play out throughout the organisation. Due to the pool of data available from a number of different organisations and sector reach, sector comparisons and benchmarking is possible. The data is also able to be cut through different comparator groups - including graduate intake, university background or other intake characteristics and is used to identify diverse candidates and track progression.

• “This is largely driven by government-required reporting and that has become the major driver for diversifying workforce. This transparency has meant organisations actually invest actively not just in simple measures to report numbers but also actions that help deal with the issue as they know it will be public. That in itself is a driver.”

• The Civil Service Fast Stream may offer other learnings in the space too as these are schemes where retention and progression can be tracked throughout career given the nature of the industry/sector and how clearly it is defined/is a closed market.
Attribution

- In isolation it is hard to prove that a particular scheme has had a defined impact, particularly on particular metrics.
- Most suggested that this is why any diversity work instead needs to be part of a whole strategy related to wider engagement with underrepresented groups within the workforce or other key stakeholder groups and ongoing support not just focusing on entry routes.
- The biggest issue identified is attributing and tracking lasting change – ensuring that talented people are not just placed into organisations, and it is unclear on the ongoing impact and the longer-term impact on both them as individuals but also the sector as a whole.
Recommendations

We recommend given this research that the Forum considers:

1. Building a core group of organisations who are happy to take the lead on the agenda and actively explore the development of an approach or strategy
2. Undertake further research into baseline information across the sector and build out a Theory of Change related to driving diversity into its workforce
3. Build funding relationships into this group from the outset given that this is a particularly strong model for structuring work and change with and within employers as well as delivering an entry route for talent
4. Consider using a funded model which enables the above to be implemented using an opportunity and offer, but also an ask in which employers/the sector as a whole must adjust and develop on a defined timescale
5. Think carefully about impact from the beginning and decide whether the issue of attribution of impact within a particular scheme is an important driver, or whether you would be more relaxed about how you know whether any scheme actually makes an impact
6. Consider further investment and time in engaging with the Jerwood Arts model where training for employers is a fundamental part of the offer and the ‘Time to Shine’ model by the Rank Foundation (albeit this is not related to diversity, however the funded approach is considered particularly relevant)
7. Continue to bring together sector leaders and host workshops about extending diversity strategies across the sector
8. Evaluate the effectiveness of current recruitment routes and processes related to key factors of diversity in line with the diversity strategies
9. Ensure that any scheme or programme has wrap-around support not just supporting people into the sector, but continues with ongoing support
10. Explore the potential for using technology and data to track retention and progression to give impact statistics for programmes and interventions as well as key diversity data across the sector from key anchor organisations so that it can be benchmarked and published

In particular, we believe that the emerging frame and focus of bringing power closer to people and communities is a particularly interesting theme for public engagement roles. Significant work into this has been developed within the civil society sector – where the ‘Civil Society Futures’ report has charted a roadmap for the representation of diversity within the sector and its leadership – but most importantly, also its activities and strategy. The ‘PACT’ frame as developed in the report may also be interesting for the Forum to explore more in-depth to give a framework for any further and new interventions on diversity within public engagement.
Conclusion

We have been delighted to have the opportunity to conduct this research and share our analysis with Forum members. We believe that this research helps identify and create learning from best practice across different sectors – with a particular focus on those schemes which best engage underrepresented groups. We believe there is also a significant opportunity to develop a public engagement workforce which is fundamentally more inclusive, diverse, and representative of the communities it serves and the wider population of the country as a whole.
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