

Race Equality

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 obliges public bodies in the UK to maintain a framework of standards and principles to ensure that their policies and functions, where appropriate, are relevant to the whole population of the United Kingdom, that they treat everyone fairly and that their workforce is representative. As part of the UK Civil Service DFID's mission and approach is fully consistent with our obligations under this Act. Although UK race relations legislation does not apply beyond the UK, DFID works to apply the spirit of the law in a culturally sensitive and legally appropriate way in our work overseas as well as in the UK.

The department aims to be flexible, imaginative, diverse and reflect, at all levels, the communities from which we are able to recruit. Bringing together and embracing the different experiences and perspectives that exist within each individual helps our creativity and ultimately our ability to deliver our business effectively.

Minouche Shafik, Permanent Secretary, says:

Promoting diversity is both part of our values and central to our global challenge. Improving DFID's performance and productivity is crucial. And this means getting the best out of all our staff, across our global network of offices. It also means creating an inclusive and innovative organisation by recognising, valuing and respecting the different talents of each individual in DFID.

Why Should We Care?

Race equality is fundamental to DFID. Working in offices throughout the world and embracing an understanding of the race, ethnicity, culture and background of our staff and the communities to which they belong enables us to better understand the challenges of social exclusion and poverty reduction. Our analysis shows the impact of exclusion on the grounds of race and ethnic origin on poverty reduction, for example in Brazil where racial background is an important determinant of poverty.

By ensuring that all staff regardless of their race or ethnic backgrounds have equal opportunities within DFID, the wellbeing and productivity of DFID as a whole increases. It also enables us to communicate

effectively with groups and communities with whom we work. Procurement practice within DFID also helps ensure that the supply chain for goods and services cements contractual practice with equalities policy. Feedback to Diaspora groups results in effective and planned consultation.

DFID works closely with external organisations such as governments overseas, multilateral organisations (e.g. UN, European Commission,) civil society organisations, the private sector and other UK Government Departments. In working through partnership, the remit, focus and racial mix of staff is enhanced. Our links with organisations such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund ensure a universal and broad mindset which has and continues to feed into the core of our business. DFID's thriving connections and recently increased budget to work with civil society organisations in the UK and overseas reinforces our commitment to race equality.

KEY MESSAGES - DFID efforts have:

- exceeded the Civil Service targets for the number of ethnic minority staff in our Senior Civil Service
- moved race equality beyond legally bound equal opportunities bringing together different experiences and perspectives that promote creativity and effectiveness
- embraced Civil Society Organisations to enhance and extend our work in promoting social cohesion
- valued and integrated the diversity of cultures and experience within DFID.

DFID's Race Equality Scheme

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 placed a general duty on public authorities to "have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups".

Under the Race Equality Scheme there should be:

- No significant variation in employee satisfaction and turnover levels between staff of different racial backgrounds
- No significant variation in staff achievement levels and training between staff of different racial backgrounds
- Complete equality of opportunity and good relations between racial groups
- Assessment, consultation and monitoring of the figures relating to race equality.

In compliance with the general duty, under the Race Equality Scheme, DFID works to ensure that race equality is a core issue in all relevant policies and services.

The concept of race and the understanding of racial origin, racial groupings and ethnic minority, often varies significantly between countries. Recorded data on ethnic origin often does not exist in the developing world. DFID seeks to find this information whenever and wherever it can.

As UK law is not formally enforceable overseas, UK overseas development policy seeks to apply the principles and spirit of the law. Where local circumstances would be negatively affected by the law, then UK precedents are put aside.

SIX STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

1. **Accountability to ensure that policy and research result in concrete outcomes**
2. **Communications to build capacity through broad and close links**
3. **Culturally rich input from a racially and ethnically diverse group**
4. **Regional programmes to encompass planned consultation with diaspora groups**
5. **Education programmes to increasingly reflect our work with schools and education establishments more broadly**
6. **A representative, racially diverse workforce in all DFID offices**

Ethnic Minority Network

The Ethnic Minority Network (EMN) assists DFID to develop its policies on diversity as these relate to staff from ethnic minority backgrounds; and to

contribute to the implementation of 'best practice policies' on diversity within the organisation. The EMN has three main objectives. These are to:

- establish regular and effective communications with DFID's Senior Management team to discuss and recommend practical ways in which the organisation's policies and practices can be improved;
- assist ethnic minority staff to provide practical support to each other by tackling exclusion, assist career progression, establishing effective informal mentoring arrangements;
- provide a forum for ethnic minority staff to share experiences and learn lessons from each other and from wider experience outside DFID.

Recent Initiatives In DFID

- The ethnic minority staff network is active with an annual budget of £2,500 for seminars and other activities. The network works closely with other Government Departments to share learning on race equality issues
- The introduction of an e-learning package in September 2007, aimed to disseminate knowledge of the legislation and policy surrounding the Race Equality Scheme
- The Strategic Communications Department promoted DFID's development work to focus, in part, on race to inform and improve media strategies
- Relationships with the Foreign Press Association have been built to promote DFID's work to a more diverse audience
- The new Development Awareness Youth Volunteering Programme works to raise awareness and provide practical experience for disadvantaged young people from black and minority ethnic groups
- Interactive DVDs – a creative mixture of legislation and thought provoking case studies. Looking at diversity and equality misconceptions and prejudices to help staff understand why discrimination and harassment happens and how to ensure equal opportunities are present

For further information please email The Diversity Team at: diversity@dfid.gov.uk
Useful website:
Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC):
www.equalityhumanrights.com