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Equalities Office

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Women Take Part organisations and structures research report

Research undertaken by Sue Robson,
Jill Bedford and Sue Gorbing



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Women Take Part: Organisations and structures research report

Women Take Part is a piece of work funded by the Government Equalities Office, looking at the participation of women, in particular under-represented women, in governance and decision making, in both community and public life

Women Take Part has been collecting information about two sides of the story

- **'what works'** in terms of approaches, initiatives and learning models that encourage different groups of women to become more involved, **and**
- **'what needs to happen'** so that structures, policies and organisations work in ways that encourage the recruitment and support of more women

This paper reports on research with organisations and structures carried out from December 2007 to February 2008. The sections are:

- 1. Introduction:** sets out the basis for the research and includes the draft typology
- 2. Methodology**
- 3. Findings of surveys and interviews:**
 - 3.1 How organisations position themselves on the typology in relation to awareness and strategies around gender and women's participation
 - 3.2 Characteristics of the typology levels
- 4. Summary**

I Introduction

The research focuses on the values, cultures, attitudes and actions of organisations and structures which act to block or encourage women's active critical involvement and participation in the public spheres of civil and civic engagement. A typology or model of organisational journeys was developed and tested for relevancy and meaning and the findings were used to populate the characteristics of the four levels.

Organisational journeys: a typology

<i>Level Zero</i>	Our organisation treats everyone the same
<i>Level One</i>	We recognise that there is a disparity between men and women in our organisation
<i>Level Two</i>	We recognise issues of gender inequality in our organisation and are willing to do something about it
<i>Level Three</i>	We are changing our structures and policies to actively encourage women to take part

2 Methodology

The methodology contributing to this aspect of the work involved:

- Desk research and review of literature
- A survey of organisations
- Follow up interviews with individuals

The typology is drawn from a study of the following:

- a typology of citizenship¹
- the Take Part Network National Framework for Active Citizenship Learning²
- women’s journeys to active critical citizenship developed through the Women Take Part research project

Information drawn from the desk research and review of literature has been incorporated into this chapter to illustrate and reinforce key issues raised through the survey and interviews.

Organisational Survey

22 out of 30 surveys returned – 73% response rate

The purpose of the organisational survey was to test out the typology of four levels and gain a snapshot of those organisations’ positions on gender and women’s participation.

The survey examined: whether they recognise issues around gender; how seriously they take these issues and whether they are doing anything to increase women’s participation, including that of under-represented women, both within their organisations and in their external work.

The survey was emailed to a cross section of 30 civic/civil/government and non-government organisations, eliciting 22 responses, including:

- 6 Government departments and agencies
- 6 Local organisations (non-Governmental)
- 5 National voluntary sector infrastructure organisations
- 4 National voluntary sector organisations
- 1 Agency that remained anonymous

Of the eight that did not respond to the survey, 5 were Government departments’ and agencies and the three remaining were: a local organisation, a national infrastructure organisation and a national voluntary organisation.

Organisational Interviews

12 out of 17 interviews conducted – response rate 71%

1 Westheimer, J. and Kahne, J. (2004) What kind of citizen? The politics of educating for democracy, *American Educational Research Journal*, Vol. 41, No. 2, pp. 237–269

2 www.takepart.org

The purpose of the interviews was to interrogate the responses to the survey to gain more qualitative and in depth information on the four levels of the typology and to populate these levels with empirical information. 17 civic/civil/government and non-government organisations were approached for in depth interviews and 12 responded, including:

- 3 Government departments and agencies
- 1 Local organisations (non-Governmental)
- 3 National voluntary sector infrastructure organisations
- 5 National voluntary sector organisations

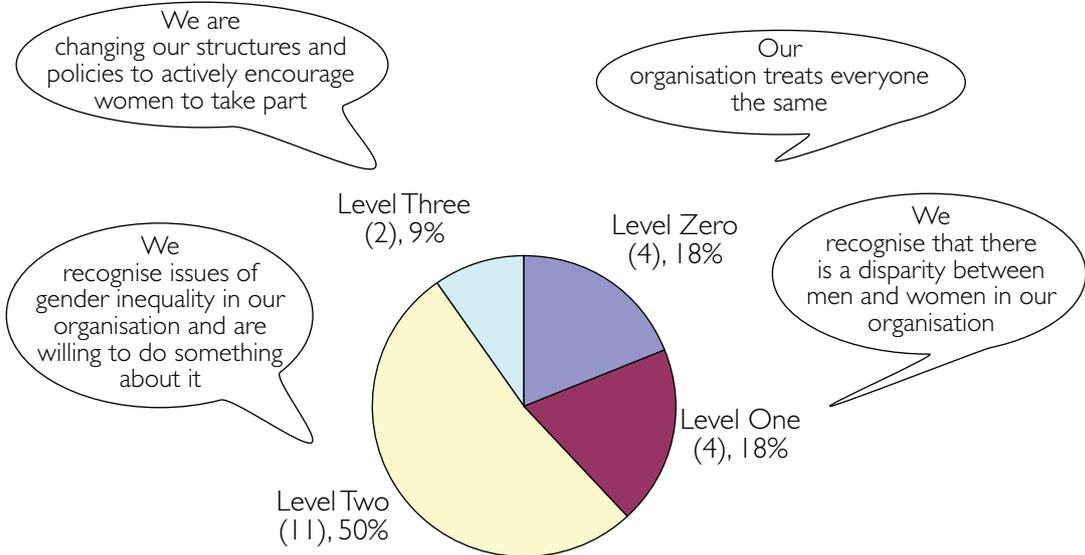
The five who did not respond to requests for interviews were all Government organisations and agencies.

3 Findings of surveys and interviews

This section reports on the views and responses of the organisations that participated in the research.

3.1 How organisations position themselves on the typology in relation to awareness and strategies around gender and women’s participation.

In the survey respondents were asked which of four statements best describe their organisation’s approach to gender equalities and women’s participation in their organisations. The questions relate directly to the ‘organisational typology’ and respondents were only able to make one selection from the 4 options. One organisation did not respond to this question, figures for the remaining 21 are given in brackets:



3.2 Characteristics of the steps/levels

After positioning their organisation on the typology, respondents were asked to explain and give examples of organisational practice which illustrates their rationale for the choice of position. This information has been grouped into characteristics. (*Italics signify direct quotes*)

The four typology levels are presented separately starting with level zero and examples from organisations are bulleted.

Level Zero – treats everyone the same

4 survey responses – 18%

- **Involvement of women – and their role in the organisation – is incidental**

Nothing specific really [to encourage the involvement of women], but there isn't anything that specifically 'un-involves' women either; it isn't an issue that has been pointed out by anyone other than the equality policy in terms of recruitment.

Not specifically, but... some of the job roles, which happen to be filled by women, are to work on/push forward Government initiatives that affect public life.

In terms of our own governance and wider membership there are equal numbers of women, we don't do anything specific.

- **Organisations are unaware of positive discrimination legislation**

If organisations are not clear about what they can or can't do, then the fall back position is that organisations have to treat everyone the same and there can be no differences in the way people are supported or approached.

- **There is a reluctance to specifically target women or particular groups of women:**

[Our organisation] treats everyone the same and is committed to try to find [a position] that is suitable for each individual.

In fulfilling its charity remit [our organisation] cannot target any one group of potential volunteers (e.g. women) at the expense of any other.

The whole sector needs to look at black and minority ethnic women – we are not sure how to influence.

- **Organisations do not have a structural or targeted approach to equalities – or specifically gender equalities**

Our two colleagues who deal with equalities are leaving and there is no-one dealing with equalities at the moment within the [organisation].

Not necessarily argue for more BME women per se, though look at it as part of [the research] and trying to get the multidimensional issue on the agenda more and more.

I think individual workers do more than the organisation as a whole.

The work that [we] do is not gender specific – campaigns are inclusive and fairly wide across all BME communities.

There has been little or no demand for provision of women's leadership for a couple of years – these days women are more like men, there is a good cross section of women on the course and they mix in and do well. If there was a demand we would certainly consider offering a programme for women.

The hours you had to work, the work and the stresses and strain it brought. Meetings involving elected members are often held in the evening and at a senior officer level there is rarely time off in lieu– many women involved in a shadowing course with members and CEOs said – ‘get a life.’

Two respondents indicated that they had been spurred on by the Women Take Part research to look more closely at gender and women's participation in relation to the work of their organisation.

- **Organisations' accept gender stereotyping in an uncritical way**

We employ more women than men, probably due to the nature of the work... This could be because women are nurtured to care for people rather than thinking of their careers.

- **Individual role modeling is a popular method of attracting women:**

On our website, there are 8 pictures, 4 are of females... we are able to use the views of real [women] to encourage other ladies to come forward.

There are female chairs to inspire other women.

- **There is a tendency for high levels of participation by white women in community activity and for this to diminish further up governance structures:**

Women are generally well represented in participation [at a community level], although generally senior positions [in this public sphere] tend to be male.

In another organisation it was clear that even at a community level there are very low levels of participation [of black and minority ethnic women], although white women's participation is prolific.

- **Organisations acknowledge that women should occupy equal positions in governance structures:**

It is quite clear, however, that governing bodies have to represent the communities they serve and cannot achieve this if they are the sole and stereotypical preserve of middle-class, middle-aged, white males.

- **Organisations encourage others to increase women's governance:**

It is not in relation to [our organisation], but [we] encourage women to participate / get involved in decision making in public life by promoting trusteeship as a positive way to engage in public life, promoting transparent and equal opportunities in trustee recruitment, and promoting good governance principles.

The organisation supported several projects working to increase women's, including black and minority ethnic women's participation.

Level One – We recognise that there is a disparity between men and women in our organisation

4 survey responses – 18%

All the organisations indicating this level have a specific role in increasing participation and empowerment outside of their organisations. Some of their responses were inward facing and others outward.

Inward facing:

- **Organisations do not track women’s participation and involvement in the organisation**

Equal opportunity tracking and monitoring focuses upon the accepted ‘equality’ groups – different ethnicities, disabilities, gender; and this is not disaggregated to provide information about numbers of black women for example, but only black people or women as separate groupings.

Measures are more targeted to BME groups, rather than black and minority ethnic women specifically.

Don’t think the overall organisation has an explicit stance on addressing issues in regard to this issue.

- **Organisations recognise that the general practice and styles of working can benefit women in the organisation:**

[Our organisation] has a general commitment to supporting and empowering staff, for example through our coaching programme. While this policy is not gender specific it does allow female employees space to pursue gender specific training, e.g. assertiveness for women.

We have a facilitated, participatory, flexible and non-hierarchical style of meetings and promote this in public participation.

- **Organisational cultures do not encourage debate and challenge**

It is much more difficult to challenge gender issues in 2008 than it was in the 1970s; you have to watch your back. It....feels dangerous to challenge, there is no recognition of the issues and this goes hand in hand with the competition and relationships.

There needs to be a network where it feels safe to talk, it is not safe to talk and you have to watch your back, there is no consciousness about gender issues and no drive to challenge.

Outward facing:

- **Organisations do not specifically target women as part of their programmes:**

Our work is not targeted at a particular group of people, although we have done a little bit of work on the needs of specific groups.

[We] are generalist and do not specialise unless they have a specialist body to work in partnership with... [We] have no work specific to women or black and minority ethnic women, although we are trying to get funding to do this.

We are working with [a Government department] on a publication which looks at local support for the BME sector.

- **Proactive steps are taken to increase women's participation:**

The setting up of a women's forum was one instance of a space that was created whereby women could define their own agendas...and ran events around women's week.

Joint publication on campaigning locally for Rape Crisis Centres, drawing on the new National Indicator set and campaigning with others to defend single group funding.

- **Organisations support others to increase women's participation:**

One organisation was linking and joining up resources with individual women and women's networks in localities to improve women's participation in civic governance structures.

Level two – We recognise issues of gender inequality in our organisation and are willing to do something about it

11 survey responses – 50%

50% of the organisations who responded to the survey assessed themselves at Level 2. These organisations seek to increase women's participation in civic and civil governance outside of their organisations and seven (64%) of these stated that they were taking proactive measures to involve Black and minority ethnic women within their organisations.

The research reveals the range and scope of proactive measures taken at this level to address gendered inequality.

Inward facing

- **Organisations work to increase women's employment in the organisation, examples include:**

- ✓ Development schemes aimed specifically at women and other groups who are under-represented.
- ✓ Mentoring schemes, reverse mentoring schemes and plans to introduce a co-coaching initiative
- ✓ Systematic ways of looking at recruitment processes, covering all the equalities strands, where recruitment is targeted, placement schemes
- ✓ Supportive policies in place for women with care responsibilities; extended maternity leave beyond the statutory period
- ✓ Unquestioned family friendly environment where care issues are accepted

We used to have an under representation of women at senior level, and encouraged women to apply. We are now at 50% at senior level.

- **Organisations work to increase women’s participation in their governance**
 - ✓ Active recruitment policy for trustees to fill the gaps identified through a skills and knowledge audit/Board development process
 - ✓ Processes for discussion at Board meetings in smaller groups
 - ✓ Actively support a women’s forum as a member of the organisation and encourage two of its members to join the Board
 - ✓ Approached a female colleague from a member network in the hope of addressing the gender imbalance of the Board

- **Organisations work to involve black and minority ethnic women in employment and governance**
 - ✓ Black and minority ethnic placements
 - ✓ Actively recruit through ethnic media and promoting a flexible way of working
 - ✓ Target black and minority ethnic organisations to ensure Board is representative
 - ✓ Active recruitment policy for trustees to fill the gaps identified through skills, knowledge and experience audit/board development process

We do take positive steps to recruit and encourage the involvement of black and minority ethnic women, however it is variable e.g. our recruitment encourages women and ‘BME’s’ to apply, but not specifically female ‘BME’s’.

- **Organisations recognise ‘gender’ as a key strand of equalities**
 - ✓ *The Equality Standard for Local Government*³ has a wide take up by Local Authorities
 - ✓ One Government agency stated that it was trying ‘to get equalities into Local Area Agreements, guidance on LSPs etc’

It would be ideal if we could give (black and minority ethnic) women more consideration. There used to be a conference over a weekend but it has been changed to a day event as childcare and home responsibility were a problem – especially for women.

There are good proportions of Muslim women on the...schemes and a good cross section of religious groups and churches. Congregations of Black Churches are growing but women’s role within them is not changing this is something that [we are] looking at.

- **Organisations recognise the significance of role models**

We have not found it difficult to attract women to the organisation as the Head of ...Schemes and the Communications Director are both black and minority ethnic women

Outward facing

- **Organisations work to ensure that women are represented:**
 - ✓ At public meetings always ensure a representative panel in terms of gender
 - ✓ If asked to attend women’s groups, always try to ensure that a female member of staff represents the organisation

³ <http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelId=5145192>

- ✓ Encourage women to participate in public appointments and hold a number of awareness raising events. Currently working on a 3 year strategy to encourage more women appointments
- ✓ Commission training for senior managers and politicians and try to get greater representation of women or of women's issues
- ✓ Work with partner organisations always ensures that BME under-representation and women's under-representation in public life is a clear aim of the organisation. In funding bids, it is an explicit aim, and shapes our working practices and that of our partners

On Black and minority ethnic women – We work with and lobby political parties, MPs, and Councillors to ensure better representation in the decision-making process. [Our organisation] has spoken at party conference about this issue; we have had individual meetings with Deputy Labour Leader and Council leaders and are always pushing this agenda forward. We also try to ensure that this message is also promoted through the media. We have participated in hundreds of media interviews and have also engaged in private meetings with journalists and broadcasters.

Providing workshops [for women], and introducing them to how [Local] Strategic Partnerships in our area work and relate to each other, and what policies and strategies are out there that they may want to link in to; also providing one to one and group support to individuals who take on representative roles.

We have raised the issue of gender imbalance in the Board of our LSP, and it's working groups, on a number of occasions.

We have raised the issue of diversity of membership in the Board of our LSP, and it's working groups, on a number of occasions.

We have run a very successful MP Shadowing Scheme which has produced 3 BME women Councillors and enabled two women graduates to stand at the last general election

- **Organisations develop and disseminate good practice:**

- ✓ Developed a diversity toolkit
- ✓ (As an) Advocate for Community Development, promote critical reflection and wider analysis of the location of power within society: through our network development work
- ✓ Equality and Diversity policy and action plan. This is promoted to all our partners and is seen as our minimum expectation of them in terms of how they work with us
Level 3 of the Equalities Standards involves Local Authorities in committing to disseminating and promoting good practice in equalities across partnerships.

- **Organisations support and develop women's networks and forums:**

- ✓ Support the women's network as it does other networks
- ✓ Support a women's forum, who have recently undertaken a series of workshops to consider how influential they are

- **Organisations monitor and research women's participation:**

- ✓ Runs a Councillors' census for many years and inputted to recent Commission
- ✓ Research on women in senior management e.g. one of sponsors of 'Room at the Top?' which highlighted institutional sexism, then commissioned further research on a small number of authorities where practice was particularly good

It's also important for you to note that in terms of gender within our executive team it is men who are under-represented (75% female), and our recruitment process encourage men to apply. In terms of our Boad, women are slightly below 50%, although this wasn't the case until very recently, when they were above 50%. We have many other forums for residents, and women are clearly around 60 – 70% of those participating.

Three national non-Governmental organisations have recently conducted research into women's position in Local Strategic Partnerships.⁴

With the selection of [black and minority ethnic] candidates on our shadowing schemes, the gender disparity in decision making positions is taken into consideration and we counter this in the selection of candidates. The results of this process are clear – we have had 30 individuals appointed from our scheme, 70 – 80% of which are women.

- ✓ One Government Agency could quote comprehensive statistics collected over many years about women's position in formal Governance roles i.e. Members of Parliament, Councillors and Chief and Senior roles in Local Authorities

- **Organisations collaborate with Women's Sector Organisations:**

- ✓ Undertakes collaborative work with women's organisations
- ✓ Houses the Black Country Women's development officers

- **Organisations target funding:**

We deliver grants programmes on behalf of government and ensure that there are processes in place which fully support women, including those from marginalised backgrounds

- **Organisations work specifically to increase Black and minority ethnic women's participation:**

- ✓ In relation to our area's community strategy we attracted a group of Asian women to some facilitator training. We then supported them to deliver workshops for women in their community, and ensured that their views were heard alongside those from other community groups and organisations
- ✓ Meets with organisations which support Black and minority ethnic women, at their places of work
- ✓ Takes positive action to involve Black and minority ethnic women in focus groups. Supporting the attendance of Black and minority ethnic women at conferences
- ✓ Develops a diversity policy, involvement in Gender Independent Advice Group, Chair Involvement and Participation of BME Forum, involvement in the development of BME Code of Practice for Compact

⁴ 'Where are the women in LSPs? Women's representation in Local Strategic Partnerships', Urban Forum, Oxfam UK and Women's Resource Centre (September 2007)

- ✓ In terms of our community engagement/empowerment we organise specific events for Bangladeshi women which vary in nature depending on the issue
- ✓ We profile leading BME women on our website and magazine ...to inform and inspire others
- ✓ We run a number of award winning schemes, specifically aimed at individuals from Black and minority ethnic communities to increase political and civic engagement. Our schemes have been set up specifically to address the deficit and provide opportunities for individuals to become decision takers

Level three – We are changing our structures and policies to actively encourage women to take part

2 survey responses 9.5%

Only a very narrow group of organisations identify with this category of the typology and for one of these, the focus is upon employment conditions rather than participation in governance. The other organisation has a specialist remit to recruit and support Muslim people into specific governance roles. Although they have positioned themselves at this level on the typology, much of the research illustrates the contextual and infrastructural constraints within which they operate.

Organisation one – understand the constraints and take action on conditions to improve women’s participation, including Black and minority ethnic women

- Lack of a baseline of the position of Black and minority ethnic women:
One of [this organisations’] complaints is that from day one, they have not been able to get statistics about school governors by faith and gender – the statistics available are by race (whereas we are defined by faith and gender)
- Not being able to access resources
There is a lot of talk about support for Muslim women to get involved but, no funding and, voluntary organisations are struggling to do their work.
- The extent of support required by Muslim women to become involved with governance and the issues they face. One is the lack of provision specifically for Muslim women:
Muslim young people and young women tend to be neglected generally and very few community projects (e.g. in East London) are for Muslim young women.
Mosques tend to be dominated by males and there are not any organisations to represent Muslim women and this is the key to unlocking their untapped potential.
- Lack of access to knowledge and isolation from the systems of decision-making:
A lot of young Muslim women don’t know about the process of being [involved in Governance] and don’t get involved purely through lack of knowledge.
It is a big issue that Muslim parents are isolated ...and many [agencies] are not going out of their way to involve Muslim women. Young Muslim women are isolated ...and tend only to get involved in schools when there are problems. Young Muslim women are sidelined...

'You can't claim to be putting forward Muslim representatives without women.'

- The added burden of domestic responsibilities remains a key issue holding women back:
In terms of women's participation, when you have a home and a family it takes up a lot of time and arranging of childcare. This I believe is a significant reason as to why a lot of Muslim women with children may not be able to make the commitment [of being involved in governance].

- In some cases even where there is provision for childcare in core budgets in other organisations, it is not made available:

There is also the issue of practicalities for females, [venues need] to be near home and accessible on dark evenings, there may not be crèche facilities and although [the agency] are legally allowed to pay expenses ... few do because the funds come from the [core] budget

- Establish credibility with Muslim women:

[We] reach out to Muslim parents, especially mums and the message gets out very quickly, now we have role models of young Muslim women and they go out and talk to community groups.

- Invest a lot of resources into ongoing advice, information, knowledge and support for them to sustain their position, which is often in adverse circumstances:

The...system is male dominated and elderly and it is those who understand the system, our biggest fear is losing people and we focus upon this quite deeply.

One young woman talked about how she experienced the power relationships and bureaucracy involved:

So far the meetings have never lasted less than three hours and it is a very white middle class arena – this makes it difficult to work out how to fit in and make an impact. There are a lot of policies and procedures to get to grips with. The process is very bureaucratic and there is a lot of paper work – you have to 'follow the rules' (policies and procedures).

Once Muslim women get involved in [governance], they realise that there are other things going on that they can get involved with. For example in Redbridge once Muslim women realised that they can influence [in one area] then they wanted to get involved in other areas such as; equalities policy and budget setting. IG Soc (the IG postcode + society) was set up in Redbridge to push forward this agenda⁵. It involves lots of voluntary projects such as: education, women's issue and youth projects.

One young woman interviewed for this research described how after getting involved in governance in her own community, within a short space of time she took on a governance role in a national organisations:

The [organisation] has a public image of being very male dominated, so they wanted more women and young people to join. Things are getting better although I am the only woman in some meetings ...It is funny how from not doing anything a year ago one thing has led to another.

5 http://www.bbc.co.uk/london/content/articles/2007/04/05/ig_feature.shtml

To sum up the above:

- The positive impact for black and minority ethnic women in some cases remains negligible and this is frustrated by a lack of any baseline data or disaggregated data for Black and minority ethnic women
- Some groups of Black and minority ethnic women do not have access to knowledge or systems of decision making
- Those women who get involved are still faced with adversity stemming from male dominance and bureaucracy and it takes a lot of ongoing support to keep them there
- There is still reluctance to provide caring/ childcare expenses
- More flexible working conditions free up women's time to participate in other activities
- Community level networks of support for specific groups of women are needed as a platform for women to participate
- Role models are essential in 'getting to' other women
- Organisations that seek to support women's participation need to establish credibility with particular groups of women
- Women need ongoing support to maintain and progress their participation if they are to impact upon organisation structures and policies from governance positions
- Childcare and caring expenses are essential

Organisation two – understands and takes action on conditions to improve women's position in employment.

Practicalities

- Many women (and men) in the organisation work flexible hours, which supports their development
- Special leave arrangements for carers which includes support to staff around Childcare and caring support, including reminding them of the childcare voucher scheme etc.
- A job share register
- Don't specifically encourage job applications by gender but in our job applications make it clear we have a flexible working policy etc
- Flexible working policies aimed at women – involving consideration of childcare and other caring responsibilities, job shares, reduced hours etc.

It is mainly women who take up opportunities for reduced hours or job share...If you want women to progress you have to do something about it. Women have other things to consider and they go for different things. The 'long hours' culture is not such an issue for men. We are encouraging women to apply for different posts. We have work-life balance policies – if the job is not flexible then women are not going to go for it.

I work for a charity that has very family friendly policies and are happy to be flexible to accommodate my involvement with outside activities.

Support

- Actively participates in a co-coaching initiative to support women's involvement and development
- A flexible worker's network
- Co-coaching – for women, BME and staff with disabilities with potential to go into senior positions– covering different leadership styles, confidence building, career development

The women's issue's network has been in place for three years, originally more senior women tended to get involved, but the mentoring and coaching has helped to involve women at lower grades.

Mentoring is part of what you do within a working day, it is not additional.

Involvement in decisions

- Recently consulted on desire for a women's network
- Plans to consult on a network for carers

Role modelling

- Diverse recruitment boards and always makes sure that there are women on the panels
- Recruitment is open to include all areas of diversity – this involves advertising in the local community such the relevant ethnicity and LGBT press etc.

Women in senior positions

Where women have achieved senior positions it was stated to be having an impact upon the culture of organisations.

There are some 'good women' at Chief Executive level that are bringing about an 'atmosphere of change'.

Monitoring change

One of the things that can make things work is measuring so you can see change. There are year-on-year targets so that you see improvement.

Statistical data supported by staff opinion surveys to assess change – all staff are encouraged to complete the survey.

The number of Black women...is growing although at a slower pace, there are currently only a handful of Black women. The number for BME individuals generally, was 4% but has now increased to 7%. There are now more BME staff in the 'feeder grades' with potential for promotion into senior grades.

4 Summary

The typology appears to have relevance in relation to understanding and making sense of the varied approaches different organisations take to gender equality. It helps to clarify the relationship between organisational values, culture, attitudes and action on gender equality. The research has generated a set of empirical characteristics which may serve to populate the four levels of the typology/journey. Work needs to be carried out to refine the characteristics further, test and investigate its relevance for other equality groups.

Level O

ORGANISATIONS
Descriptor: Organisation treats everyone the same/equally Gender blind processes which lead to gender blind services
Characteristics <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The involvement of women – and their role in the organisation – is incidental• Reluctance to specifically target women or particular groups of women to the point of rejecting positive action (and interpreting it as discrimination towards other groups)• Organisations accept gender stereotyping in an uncritical way• Women congregated in traditional service (administration) and community roles and their representation diminishes severely within management and governance positions• Individual role modeling is a popular method of attracting women• Tendency for high levels of participation by white women in community activity and for this to diminish further up governance structures• Recognise gendered structural inequalities ‘out there’ in society, which they address through an individualised approach• Organisations acknowledge that women don’t, but should, occupy equal positions in governance structures• Encourage others to increase women’s governance but do not reflect this in their own structures and processes• Invisibility of Black and minority ethnic women• Isolation of individual women in positions of power• Absence of reflective organisational learning in relation to gender and power• Reproduce the status quo

Level I

ORGANISATIONS
Descriptor We recognise that there is a disparity between men and women in our organisation
Characteristics Inward facing: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do not specifically target women as part of their programmes• Women have to fit into existing structures, mechanisms and cultures• Organisations provide childcare, transport and caring subsistence• Resources and funding are not targeted specifically towards women• Recognise that general practice and styles of working benefit women in the organisation: general participatory approaches• Organisational cultures do not encourage debate and challenge• Organisations do not track women's participation and involvement• Some gender specific training for women underpinned by a deficit approach to women's skills and abilities (e.g. assertiveness training)• Subtle sexism pervades organisations that is difficult to pin down and difficult to challenge Outward facing: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Proactive steps are taken to increase women's participation outside of the organisation, such as forum's, networks, International Women's Day events and support of campaigns• Generalist approach; may target black and ethnic minority communities but not specifically black and minority ethnic women

Level 2

Descriptor

We recognise issues of gender inequality in our organisation and are willing to do something about it

Characteristics

- Organisations know more about women and issues of gender and power
- Improved organisational environments for women
- Better representation and participation of women
- Easier to raise issues of gender and power in organisations
- More women participating, although Black and minority ethnic women's participation remaining static in some spheres

Inward facing

- Work to increase women's employment in the organisation, examples include:
 - ✓ development schemes aimed specifically at women and other groups who are under-represented
 - ✓ mentoring schemes, reverse mentoring schemes and plans to introduce a co-coaching initiative
 - ✓ systematic ways of looking at recruitment processes, covering all the equalities strands, where recruitment is targeted, placement schemes etc
 - ✓ supportive policies in place for women with care responsibilities; extended maternity leave beyond the statutory period
 - ✓ unquestioned family friendly environment where care issues are accepted
- Work to increase women's participation in their governance
 - ✓ active recruitment policy for trustees to fill the gaps identified
 - ✓ processes for discussion at Board meetings in smaller groups
 - ✓ actively support a women's forum as a member of the organisation and encourage its members to join the Board
 - ✓ approaches and invites women to join the Board
 - ✓ Board level Champions
- Work to involve Black and minority ethnic women in employment and governance
 - ✓ BME placements
 - ✓ recruit through ethnic media and promote a flexible way of working
 - ✓ target BME organisations to ensure Board is representative.
 - ✓ active recruitment policy for trustees to fill the gaps identified

- Recognise 'gender' as a key strand of equalities
 - ✓ promote discussion and debate around equality issues
 - ✓ organisations developing equality standards
 - ✓ limited knowledge about Black and minority ethnic women although beginning to address this through research and action
 - ✓ evidence from research and monitoring about women's position, including Black and minority ethnic women's position
 - ✓ evidence of women's representation and participation improving
 - ✓ resources targeted towards women, including Black and minority ethnic women
- Recognise the significance of role models

Outward facing

- Work to ensure that women are represented
 - ✓ at public meetings always ensure a representative panel in terms of gender
 - ✓ if asked to attend women's groups, always try to ensure that a female member of staff represents the organisation
 - ✓ encourage women to participate in public appointments and hold a number of awareness raising events
 - ✓ commission training for senior managers and politicians and try to get greater representation of women, or of women's issues
 - ✓ work with partner organisations always ensures that BME under-representation and women's under-representation in public life is a clear aim of the organisation. In funding bids, it is an explicit aim, and shapes our working practices and that of our partners
- Develop and disseminate good practice
 - ✓ develop a diversity toolkit
 - ✓ an Equality and Diversity policy and action plan; this is promoted to all our partners and is seen as our minimum expectation of them in terms of how they work with us
- Support and develop women's networks and forums
- Monitor and research women's participation
- Collaborate with Women's Sector Organisations
- Target funding towards women

- Work specifically to increase Black and minority ethnic women's participation
 - ✓ support women's development and act as brokers with decision makers
 - ✓ meet with organisations which support Black and minority ethnic women, at their places of work
 - ✓ take positive action to involve Black and minority ethnic women in focus groups
 - ✓ support the attendance of Black and minority ethnic women at conferences
 - ✓ develop a diversity policy
 - ✓ involvement in local equality structures and forums
 - ✓ organise specific events for Black and minority ethnic women
 - ✓ profile leading BME women on our website and magazine ...to inform and inspire others
 - ✓ run a number of award winning schemes, specifically aimed at individuals from Black and minority ethnic communities to increase political and civic engagement

Level 3

Descriptor

Our structures and policies actively encourage women to take part and this has become part of our everyday culture and what we do

Characteristics

- Recognise and understand wider agendas that exclude Black and minority ethnic women, or
 - ✓ Awareness of gaps in data and knowledge and taking action to address this
 - ✓ Knowledge of the religious and cultural context of particular groups of women (e.g. Muslim women) and taking action to address this
- High levels of organisational consciousness and knowledge of women's position and pro-active commitment to changing structures and cultures to address it
- Policies and strategies that take cognisance of women's unequal position (within employment and governance) and provide a framework for positive action to improve it
- Positive action to improve women's position such as spaces and resources specifically for women's development
- Evidence of target setting, monitoring and improved performance in involving women in management and governance
- Outreach strategies in place to target particular groups of women
- Role models of Black and minority ethnic women in senior management and governance positions
- Women, including Black and minority ethnic women participating at every level and influencing decisions
- Understand and take action on conditions to improve women's position in employment
 - ✓ Practicalities – special leave arrangement for caring, pro-active support for job sharing, flexible working that extends to supporting women's involvement with outside activities
 - ✓ Support – taking positive action to support women's involvement and development such as coaching and women's networks within working hours, targeting women in recruitment
 - ✓ Involvement in decisions – consulting staff about improved working conditions
 - ✓ Role modelling – ensuring women are represented on decision-making panels
 - ✓ Monitoring change – setting targets for women's (including Black and minority ethnic women's) involvement in senior positions and routinely monitoring progress