

Project co-delivered by:



Equality Good Relations Open Conversation Event Report

Event date: 27 February 2018, 9:30am - 4pm

Venue: Norton Park Conference Centre, 57 Albion Road, Edinburgh, EH7 5QY

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Working together to make the Sustainable Development Goals work for everyone



We support people and communities to thrive.

The National Lottery Community Fund

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Equality Good Relations Project (cont..)

Accessibility

- Plain text document available in .doc format & Large Print (on request contact@arcofinclusion.co.uk)
- This document can be translated into different languages by uploading it to Google Translate: <https://translate.google.com/>
- We are working on an easyread version.
- If you need the document in another format, we'll do our best to provide this, please contact@arcofinclusion.co.uk

You can add your comments to the Google docs version available here:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1K6OxDDk5y5R-nxon-_ewU71Wi4CmFOoRd-vB0qfYuz0/edit#

Our only condition is that you are respectful and constructive (but challenge is encouraged).

Purpose

The purpose of the event was to bring people from different roles and perspectives together into an accessible and inclusive space, with a view to identifying shared interests within the framework of the SDGs, and opportunities to collaborate in the future.

Introduction

This event was the culmination of a development project with the aim of building relationships and awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Open Government in wider society, with a particular focus on equalities. More information about the project can be found [here](#).

The event was an opportunity for people with an interest in equality, diversity and inclusion to come together to explore:

- The relevance of the Sustainable Development Goals in meeting the needs of people with diverse needs and perspectives. We will also explore how / whether the Goals have been incorporated by policy makers across the UK.
- How we strengthen the relationships between us, whilst acknowledging our differences, and identify shared interests

Equality Good Relations Project (cont..)

- Opportunities to collaborate in longer term programmes that can have a meaningful and lasting positive impact

Event invitations were sent out widely, with a target audience including:

- People and organisations with an interest in equalities, or who represent a particular equalities interest
- Policy makers
- People or organisations looking to explore opportunities to collaborate on longer term programmes, driven by people with lived experience of diverse needs, perspectives and inequalities

Our approach

The project was co-delivered by Amanda Heenan, from Arc of Inclusion and Sam Tedcastle, from Centre for Good Relations. Amanda's experience and vocation is promoting equality, diversity and inclusion within organisations and building capacity of people in communities to have their voices heard. Sam's vocation is peace building and building good relations, using the principles of civic mediation developed through peace building in Northern Ireland. We collaborated with many throughout the project, with support from Scottish Mediation, Ideas for Ears as our Access Host, and advice about accessible written information from SpeakUp Self Advocacy. (Please also see our Acknowledgements section).

The event was preceded by many one to one conversations, which included members of the Open Government Pioneers Project and Project Board, the Scottish SDG Network and people from a range of equality focused interest groups, policy makers and individuals with an interest in equality and community development. Invitations to participate were sent out to a contact list given on the project [wiki page](#), inviting people to add to the list. These one to one conversations, along with research, listed in the reading list section of the [wiki page](#) along with the [evaluation of the Open Government Pioneers Project](#), informed an initial assessment, which was shared at the event (see Initial Assessment below).

A [web page](#) for the event was developed and [event invitations](#) were sent out in December, with a follow up in early January, via email, through Twitter and on the SDG Network and Open Government online platforms. 60 places were allocated, and the event was oversubscribed with a waiting list, which indicates a strong interest in the themes. A richly diverse group of 51 people (including organisers and facilitators) attended on the day.

Equality monitoring information is being gathered and analysed throughout project.

Equality Good Relations Project (cont..)

Programme

Objectives of the day:

To explore:

- The relevance of the Sustainable Development Goals in meeting the needs of people with diverse needs and perspectives.
- How/ whether the Goals have been incorporated by policy makers across the UK.
- How we strengthen the relationships between us, whilst acknowledging our differences, and identify shared interests.
- Explore opportunities to collaborate in longer term programmes that can have a meaningful and lasting positive impact.

09:30	Registration and refreshments
10:00 – 11:00	Welcome and introductions Overview of the process and findings so far Initial exploration of SDGs
11:00 – 11:15	BREAK
11:15 – 12:30	Further exploration of SDGs – their relevance and resonance
12:30 – 13:15	LUNCH
13:15 – 14:30	Equalities discussion Exploring lived experience and shared interests
14:30 – 14:45	BREAK
14:45 – 15:45	Explore opportunities to collaborate in longer-term programmes that can have a meaningful and lasting positive impact. Illustrative summary Next steps What next?
15:45 – 16:00	Closing circle
16:00	Close

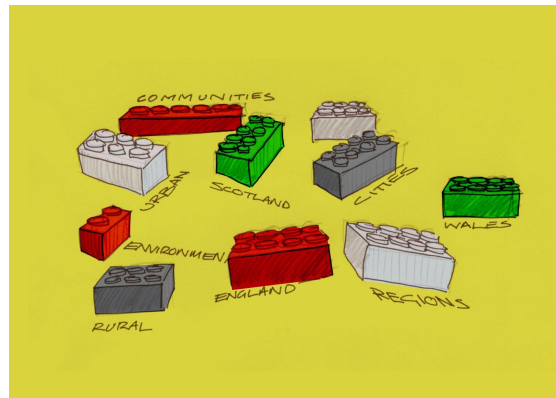
Equality Good Relations Project (cont..)

Initial Assessment

Overview and findings of the process so far

This session was presented as a dialogue between Amanda Heenan and Sam Tedcastle, facilitated by Abdul Rahim. Unfortunately, a technical problem meant that the accompanying slides couldn't be shown.

The presentation slides can be found [here](#).



A link to a youtube video of the presentation can be found [here](#) (however, the audio quality is poor). The [transcript](#) of the discussion can be found here.

Sustainable Development Goals Discussion

A short, introductory [video](#) was shown. Participants were asked to sort through the SDGs and select those that resonated most with them.

Discussion captured why people were drawn to particular goals. Goals were clustered in themes.

Discussing the Goals:

Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Strong institutions and 17 Partnerships for the Goals

- Basis for everything else – we need peace, justice and strong institutions to achieve the others
- Need – transparency and space civic conversations



for

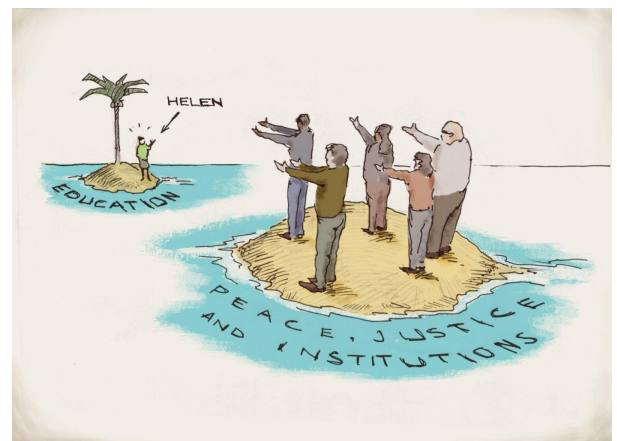
Equality Good Relations Project (cont..)

Goals 6 Clean Water and Sanitation, 7 Affordable and Clean Energy and 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities:

- Common threats – goals connected
- Can't be looked at in isolation
- Needs a bottom up approach
- Environment goals: life below water and land. Climate change values. Need to value natural world
- Bear in mind that all human activity impacts on the environment
- Agree everything is interlinked

Goal 4 Quality Education:

- Education is essential
- All of the topics are important and we won't understand what they are if we don't know about them
- Understanding the process to get change. Need education in this process
- It's a big ask for teachers to understand and meet the needs of diversity



Goal 5 Gender Equality:

- Can't be done by women alone
- Family structures
- Big international movements, setting people up to fail

Goal 3 Good Health and Wellbeing:

- Connected to poverty
- African colleagues concern was about mortality rates
- In the UK we have relatively good health care
- How do we converse with people from diverse backgrounds?

Equality Good Relations Project (cont..)

Goal 1 No Poverty:

- Relieving hunger and addressing poverty – will contribute to tackling climate change
- Each of the areas needs to have an awareness of all the other areas

The group noted that no one had specifically selected Goal 10: Reduced Inequalities and people said that it is because reduced Inequalities was felt to be a relevant/crucial goal – but it was simply that attendees were generally people who are directly involved in tackling inequalities so the event provided an opportunity for them to explore with others how this theme is/could be threaded through the other goals.

The importance of being able to measure progress and impact was stressed, and there should be a focus on the interlinked impact across all the goals. So for example, initiatives to tackle climate change should also assess their equality impact, impact on poverty, wellbeing education etc. We need to find out more about what tools there are to do this and how this can be strengthened.

Equalities Discussion

Three participants shared powerful stories about their experiences relating to equality and inequalities. Participants were then asked to discuss their own experiences with a focus on barriers, solutions and actions to achieving greater equality and inclusion and making progress on the SDGs.

Barriers:

- Resources needed to deliver SDG's
- Advantage is often invisible
- Challenge often in recognising disadvantage others face
- The language often used to describe people and groups can often be alienating and does not resonate e.g. "hard to reach", "disadvantaged".

Solutions:

- Breaking objectives/tasks into things different groups in society can contribute to
- Reaching beyond identities to reach out to other identities to address common threads of experience/disadvantage
- Think about building on existing initiatives and collaborating
- Building relationships with people with different experiences

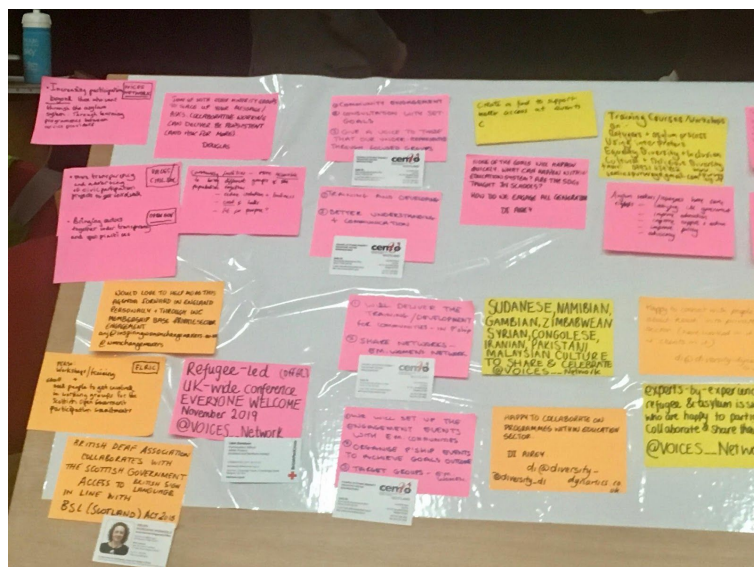
Equality Good Relations Project (cont..)

Actions:

- Get lived experience of equalities people into spaces where SDG/open government work is already happening
- Recognising where improvements need to be made
- Give people freedom to be human
- HUMAN first! Space goes beyond identity to focus on human spirit
- Need people working on this who have shown they look beyond labels
- Break down barriers to make this relevant and accessible
- Accessibility should be insisted on rather than requested
- Focus on impact and outcome rather than just activity
- What difference does it make – so what? – Regular surveys to measure change
- UN convention on human rights – has changed attitudes (stigma and harassment)
- Compassion in abundance solves problems – listening to people and be attuned to environment

Bids and Offers

Throughout the day, participants were asked to note and 'bids' - things that need to be specifically addressed, and 'offers' things people / organisations could contribute. These were gathered as shown in the image below. Further work is needed to sort through these and follow them up (this is beyond the scope of this phase of the project, but will form part of our recommendations for follow up).



Equality Good Relations Project (cont..)

Access and inclusion

One of our key principles was to turn a spotlight on access and inclusion from the very beginning of the project, and build this consciously throughout the process. This included any written information sent out before the event, meetings held before the event and meticulously considering access of the physical space at the event. We aimed to follow the principles of the [Hearing Access Protocol](#) and allocated a specific role of Access Host to be a point of contact before and during the event. An access audit was done of the venue, with improvements made to the audio equipment as a result. We also allocated a quiet room for anyone who needed it for prayer, or to have some quiet space in what we knew would be a lively environment throughout the day. We also took great care in developing the workshop plan, balancing access needs with creating different ways of generating dialogue and building relationships between everyone in the room.

We engaged two electronic note takers. This was generally viewed as extremely helpful, both to people with hearing issues, but just in general to help people to follow dialogue and instructions. Two BSL interpreters were commissioned to support participants whose first language is BSL. We also arranged for freestanding acoustic panels to be placed in three locations to provide quieter areas for group discussion and networking, to aid those who find hearing conversation difficult when lots of other people are speaking at the same time.

Support with travel costs was also provided on request, and we took care to provide sound travel and location information.

Vegetarian, vegan and gluten free choices were provided for lunch, with regular refreshment breaks and opportunities for networking.

We included specific feedback about accessibility in event feedback, to assess the impact of our focus on accessibility by participants' experiences. The table below shows how this was rated by those who completed feedback forms:

<i>On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being highest and 1 being lowest, please tick the option that fits best:</i>	5	4	3	2	1
<i>Did you feel included and were you able to participate in:</i>					

Equality Good Relations Project (cont..)

Icebreaker / introductory activity	75%	11%	11%	3%	-
Information sharing / plenary sessions	68%	28%	3%	-	-
Break out / buzz groups	64%	36%	-	-	-
Informal breaks and networking	63%	34%	3%	-	-
The event overall	83%	14%	3%	-	-

5. Was the information provided useful and accessible?	Yes	No
Before the event	76%	24%
On the day	97%	3%

In the main, participants felt included and able to participate, and also appreciated the focus given to access and inclusion on the day.

We recognise that information provided before the event was not in an accessible format for one participant, and that it would have been helpful to have activity instructions up on the screen. We also recognise that some of the activities, particularly the initial icebreaker activity may have been challenging from some access perspectives, however people really enjoyed it too. We will continue exploring activities which encourage dialogue and developing relationships in an accessible way.

General Feedback

We were delighted with the levels of participation and discussion on the day. We had some lovely, positive feedback. We also know that there are things that could have been done or gone better, and really appreciate your feedback about what we could do better next time. This all informs our collective learning process.

Participants were asked to grade their experience on a scale of 5 to 1 with 5 being the highest and 1 being the lowest.

Equality Good Relations Project (cont..)

Most participants felt that the event strongly met their expectations (87% rated this 4 or 5 on the scale, 13% as 3). 97% of participants thought the event was highly relevant to them and / or their organisations.

<i>On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being highest and 1 being lowest, please tick the option that fits best:</i>	5	4	3	2	1
1. Did the event meet your expectations?	59%	28%	13%	-	-
2. Did you feel that the event was relevant to you and your organisation?	42%	55%	3%	-	-

80% of participants said that they had met someone new at the event that they would like to collaborate with.

The aspects of the day that people most enjoyed:

- All of it (4)
- The gender equality
- The icebreaker (concentric circles). Great for a few minutes of connection with quite a few delegates in a facilitated way (5)
- Prioritising SDG exercise with cards (4)
- Sharing of experiences of those impacted by exclusion and hearing personal stories. (3)
 - The discussion on inequality, cause as an asylum seeker one of the speakers told a story that was really heartbreaking which really related/tells the audience what they are going through
 - Space to share and hear experiences
- Discussion – with different experience (4)
 - Discussions about sustainability and collaboration
 - Group questions/exercises – more thought provoking which was really well done and accessible
 - Open discussion, meeting people. Full group discussion
 - Education discussion
- Meeting new people
- The diversity of views, working in diverse groups (3)

Equality Good Relations Project (cont..)

- Information and assistance from Amanda beforehand. Most inclusive and welcoming environments I have ever experienced

Responses to things that participants would have done differently on the day? (Some people interpreted this as things that could have made the event better and some reflected on their own participations)

- The info could be clearer
- Grabbed the mike and spoken more
- Yes, participating more and giving more idea and thoughts
- Nothing (9)
- A bit more facilitation/enabling for the bids and offers (e.g. SIC's)
- No everything was perfect – bravo
- Used some of the other rooms to do discussions
- There were some different equalities groups missing from the group – would be good to get their perspective too. Could have been opportunity to get a common vision or commitments
- Not driven – parking nightmare
- More focused convo's or next steps
- Asked different questions to different groups and get to relay or write down – share info in network
- More conversation time in groups
- Maybe interpreting for different language
- More mixing up groups and introducing what orgs are in the room
- Not really. Maybe encourage people to get fresh air in the breaks. Warm in the room and we did a lot of work (which we loved)!

Recommendations for next steps

(April to June 2019):

- Build partnerships to take work forward
- Reflection and consolidating with participants on event and preceding engagement
 - What we've heard and learned about people's experiences
 - What worked and lessons learned about the process
 - Analysis of equalities data captured so far and mapping coverage across the equalities spectrum
- Develop a collective clarity on way forward
 - Collate 'Bids and Offers' from 27022029

Equality Good Relations Project (cont..)

- Test and build on suggested solutions & offers
- Co-produce plan for collaborative programme

Acknowledgements

This event and wider project has been co-produced by so many, and it is always a risk of accidentally leaving someone out by naming people and organisations. The event was made possible and vastly enriched by:

- All those who attended and participated on the day and who gave their time and insight in preceding discussions
- Those who shared their personal stories and experiences on the day
- Our team of facilitators who generously volunteered their time (Abdul Rahim, Ruchir Shah, Graham Boyack, Di Airy, David Nasser, David Bell)
- Our brilliant illustrative facilitator, [Kim McGillivray](#), and Sarah Brooke who provided sketchnote that inspired us and kept us going in the early days
- Scottish Mediation who supported with event coordination and kept things running smoothly on the day
- Ideas for Ears as Access Host
- SpeakUp Self Advocacy for accessible information support
- The team at Norton Conference Centre who were so responsive to our many requests before and on the day
- SCVO and Open Government Pioneers Project Partners
- National Lottery Community Fund

