

Beyond diversity – how do we make major projects inclusive and equitable?

Highlights

Highlights from the Major
Projects Association event
held on 21st March 2023



**MAJOR PROJECTS
ASSOCIATION**

BEYOND DIVERSITY HOW DO WE MAKE MAJOR PROJECTS INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE?

21st MARCH 2023
@KPMG
MAJOR PROJECTS ASSOCIATION

NTA
BUILDING A TEAM
17 PEOPLE
11 COUNTRIES
PROJECT SUCCESS RATE
1/1000

DIVERSITY IS AN OBLIGATION

LEARN ABOUT CULTURAL DIFFERENCE

GENDER BALANCE

DON'T JUST PAY LIP SERVICE

GROUP THINK

SEEK OUT THE BARRIERS (EVEN WHEN IT'S CHALLENGING!)

BIAS AWARENESS

HIS HIS HIS

DON'T LOWER THE BAR...

...WIDEN THE GATE!

COMMUNICATE

LISTEN TO PEOPLE

YES (WHEN YOU DON'T BELIEVE)

COMPLEX PROJECTS

FOCUS LOST

MENTAL HEALTH

ENPOWERED

DIFFERENT PEOPLE, COMMON VALUES

PEOPLE ARE MARKED FOR THEIR CULTURE OR EXPERIENCE

WOMEN ARE OVER-MONITORED AND UNDER-SPONSORED

UNDERSTAND YOUR COLLEAGUES AND THEIR CULTURE

THE BIGGER THE PROJECT THE MORE INVESTMENT IN EDI IS NEEDED. INVEST THE TIME.

ENABLE SPEAKING OUT

DIVERSITY OF THOUGHT

LET'S STRAIGHTEN THE TREE! MORE FRUIT FOR ALL!

I AM AN ALLY

WE NEED MORE OF NG! NO YOU NEED DIFFERENCE YOU CAN'T HAVE A TEAM OF CLONES

PPE INCLUSIVE

ETHICAL VEGANISM PPE PRODUCTS

AGEISM IN JOB DESCRIPTIONS

SUB SHARES

BLM

DIFFERENT LEASES

DATA

THE BASICS NEEDED FIXING

TECH!!!

(LOW COST DOES NOT EQUAL VALUE FOR MONEY)

CONSTRUCTION W. HIGGS

CONSTRUCTION SITE CULTURE

NO PLACE FOR WOMEN!!!

NO WOMEN TOILET ON SITE FOR 2 YEARS!!!

THE SIMPLE THINGS MATTER

300 YEARS BEFORE TRUE GLOBAL GENDER EQUALITY IS ACHIEVED!

CLASH

ALLIANCE

BELONGING

PEOPLE ARE MARKED FOR THEIR CULTURE OR EXPERIENCE

BE KIND

WOMEN ARE OVER-MONITORED AND UNDER-SPONSORED

UNDERSTAND YOUR COLLEAGUES AND THEIR CULTURE

The purpose of the Major Projects Association is to improve the initiation and delivery of major projects. Enhancing the diversity of teams delivering those projects is one route towards that objective. The Association has worked hard to bring this issue to the top of the agenda and has helped to move the dial on greater diversity over the decade that we have been discussing this issue. Indeed, we see significantly more female leaders in major projects than we did just ten years ago. The importance of diversity has been firmly established. But this does not mean that creating diverse and inclusive teams is an easy journey.

This seminar relaunched the Association's work in this area. We heard from leaders who have created inclusive teams – the challenges, realities and the benefits. We also heard from those prepared to share their own stories and to contribute their thoughts about how the Association can support them and the organisations they work within.

Introducing The Inclusion Hub

To form a focus for delivery of our equality, diversity and inclusivity (EDI) objectives the Major Projects Association Diversity Champions have developed the concept of The Inclusion Hub. The aim is that this will be a network through which members, partners and advisers can come together to effect change on the delivery of major projects.

The preliminary vision for the Inclusion Hub is to: **Enable major projects to be enhanced through Diversity, Inclusion and Equity.** Delegates were invited to challenge and contribute to the vision, mission and objectives which evolved throughout the day.

The importance of allyship for EDI

In creating The Inclusion Hub it has been recognised that creating a strong cohort of allies is key to achieving an inclusive society or organisation. However, understanding how to be a good ally or how to create a culture of strong allyship is still an area where many struggle.

'Allyship needs to be an active role. Active in our learning and active in our actions.'

Janet Campbell, HR Director, Restoration and Renewal Delivery Authority

Creating an inclusive team

David Goldstone, CEO at the Restoration and Renewal Delivery Authority, is the Major Projects Association Board sponsor of this initiative. He spoke passionately about EDI being key to the prospects of success on a major project.

Gerry Kasper from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) agreed, commenting that *'The higher the risk the more important it is to invest in EDI up front.'*

There is never a better time to focus on EDI than when establishing a major project. You are recruiting hundreds of people and awarding large numbers of contracts. By embedding such practices as diverse recruitment panels and diversity metrics in supplier contracts you have real power to effect change.

'Recruiting for diversity is not about lowering the bar, it is about widening the gate.'

Janet Campbell, HR Director, Restoration and Renewal Delivery Authority

	What it is	What it's NOT
1	Projects and Programmes	Organisations
2	All aspects of Diversity	Just gender and Women
3	For all – Allies and diverse individuals	Just about diverse minority
4	Evidence backed and linked to measurable benefits	Just a talking shop without evidence
5	Challenging the status quo	Just repeating what was done before
6	Practical ways and tools to support MPA members	Just talking and presentations
7	A programme in itself	Just a one-off meeting today
8	Open to ideas - challenge and flex	Fait accompli
9	The right way	Just the easiest in the short term
10	Inclusion and Equity	Just Diversity

Whilst we are aware that our sector is changing, it could be that it will be the power and influence of technology on major projects that will alter perceptions and drive improved diversity. This must include bringing down the trend of an aging workforce. *'I believe tech will save our sector, but we must keep an eye on the basics,'* warned Huda As'ad, UKI Capital Projects Lead at Accenture. *'The challenges of finding a female toilet on-site or getting appropriately sized PPE are still out there.'*

Some organisations are, however, going to great lengths to make the changes that are required to ensure all employees feel a sense of belonging. Sam Daly from Jacobs shared an inspiring list of initiatives from Thames Tideway that went to the heart of how small things can make a big difference, whether it was inclusive PPE design that allowed the wearing of a hijab, to recognising that excessive use of bright colours can impact those with autism.

Creativity in job design was also making a difference with the introduction of more job-shares to encourage women returners, and the creation of narrow specialist roles that might suit hyper-focused autistics.

Katrina Magee, Partner, Major Projects Advisory, KPMG encouraged us to *'Celebrate all our successes, no matter how small, which can help to generate a multiplier effect.'*

Inclusion in action

Freda Quinlan is Head of Ireland's **National Transport Authority Capital Programme Office**. Starting with her own experiences as a female leader in a male-dominated sector, Freda shared her experience of creating a highly diverse department of 17, which as well as being gender balanced contains individuals from 11 countries and 4 continents.

Her tips for success were:

DO:

- Seek out the barriers and understand you may not like what you find.
- Ask yourself – are you prepared to lead a diverse team?
- Communicate how you're doing.
- Be honest about your goals and what you're doing to stretch them.

DON'T:

- Just pay it lip service.
- Shy away from the discussion.
- Make goals unattainable.

The challenge Freda made to 'Ask yourself if you are prepared to lead a diverse team' was a key point that moves the dialogue on from creating a diverse and inclusive team to recognising that managing one is not always easy. Putting a diverse group of individuals together does not automatically create magic. New ways of working and new ways of leading are required to create an effective and high-functioning team.

Richard Whitehead, Chief Executive – Global Buildings + Places, AECOM, built on Freda's point by acknowledging that we need to educate leaders to manage these teams. *'It is unrealistic to expect all line managers to have the specialist knowledge and experience required.'*

'We don't have to have answers to all questions but we do need to be able to have an awkward conversation confidently.'

Gerry Kaspers, Programme Director, Science Capability in Animal Health Programme, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

The power of the personal

The sharing of personal stories from relatable role models are a powerful call to action. Kamal Naufal of KPMG highlighted an approach that makes a real difference to building relationships with colleagues from diverse cultural backgrounds.

- Acknowledge the very real and personal challenge that our colleagues from any background involving conflict have faced and continue to face.
- Realise that most wars span someone's entire life, slowly eroding the inventions, skills and education that a country is known for and creating generations that do not appreciate the potential and richness of their own cultures.
- Make an effort to get to know your colleagues and their culture.
- Have empathy for their unmanageable 'forever here' circumstances.

Empathy was a word that was mentioned several times by participants, with questions around how it can be taught, and how to identify and promote those who demonstrate it.

The simplest approach was considered to be regularly putting yourself outside your comfort zone, to help you understand how others feel and stimulate your ability to empathise with them.

'Key to success is the courage to tackle difficult and sensitive subjects.'

Kamal Naufal, Manager, Major Projects Advisory, KPMG

Points for further discussion

- How do we avoid being seen as virtue signalling and 'woke'?
- How can we create more active allies in the major projects sector?
- How can we develop leaders to manage diverse teams so they are both inclusive and productive?
- What could 'disruption' look like in the context of EDI in major projects?

With grateful thanks to our Diversity Champions for organising this event and to **KPMG** for hosting the day.

Contributors

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Accenture

Advance Consultancy Ltd

AECOM

Arcadis LLP

BAE Systems

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Department for Levelling Up

Gardiner & Theobald

Healthcare Project & Change Association

HS2 Ltd

Infrastructure and Projects Authority

Jacobs

KPMG LLP

Major Projects Association

Ministry of Defence

National Transport Authority

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