

**Glossary**

**Foreword**

**SECTION ONE UNDERSTANDING THE BACKGROUND**

**The Context**

**A Perspective from the Pilot Agencies**

**SECTION TWO THE STEP BY STEP PROCESS**

Understanding the Layout

**Step 1 Prepare your organisation**

Introduce EDI

Establish the Benefits

Adopt a Model for Change Management

Things to Consider

Checklist

**Step 2 Audit your organisation**

Apply the Continuous Feedback Cycle

Know your Areas of Enquiry

Amend the Matrix

A Three-Stage Formula for Success

Things to Consider

Checklist

**Step 3 Examine your Findings**

Consult Widely

Guard Against Problem Solving Too Early

Things To Consider

Checklist

**Step 4 Develop an Implementation Plan**

Seek Approval

Establish an Implementation Planning Group

Formulate a Plan

Decide Monitoring and Evaluation Techniques

Things to Consider

Checklist

**SECTION THREE What Happens Now?**

Mainstreaming the Process

Continuous Improvement

Training

Long-term Relationships

Promote, Reflect, Sustain

# Glossary of Terms

*Definitions to be developed:*

**Best Value**

**Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland**

**Change Agent**

An individual appointed to lead and develop this process within an organisation.

**EDI**

**Equality Commission**

**Equality Scheme**

**Human Rights Commission**

**New Targeting Social Need**

**Programme for Government**

**Project Team**

**Section 75**

**Stakeholders**

**The Belfast Agreement**

**The Executive**

**The JEDI Initiative**

**The Youth Service Review**

# Foreword

Congratulations! You are now in possession of a very useful tool to enable you and your organisation to begin the process of ensuring that the EDI principles of Equity, Diversity and Interdependence underpin and promote organisational policy and operations.

JEDI Policy Group has striven to ensure that the material in this pack is as easily accessible as possible.

We are enormously grateful to the “change agents” of the nine Voluntary and Statutory youth organisations for their pioneering work and feedback which has ensured that this material and guidance is rooted in practice. We are also indebted to Justice Associated who played the key role in developing the model for EDI policy development with the nine organisations. An essential coordination and linking role was performed on our behalf by Stella Gilmartin and, latterly, by Norma Rea, of the JEDI staff team.

Much effort has gone into this production. We believe it will make a withdrawal contribution to the development of a Youth Service embracing and practicing principles vital to a healthy Youth Service family.

Gerry Devine  
Chair  
JEDI Policy Group

# Section One

## UNDERSTANDING THE BACKGROUND

The following section introduces the background to this publication.

The 'Context' section reflects on the core values of the youth service in Northern Ireland and how recent global and local changes impact on the outworking of these. The need for youth sector agencies to respond to this changing context is highlighted. The paper closes with an exploration of the role played by the JEDI initiative and, more particularly, the process outlined within this guide in creating and developing this response.

The youth sector agencies who have piloted the process of putting the values of Equity, Diversity and Interdependence into the policy and operations of their organisation then provide their perspective.



# The Context

## Core Values

The youth service policy review, 'A Youth Service for a New Millennium' (May 1999), aimed to provide a policy framework for the Northern Ireland youth sector which it defined as "all those organisations and projects whose primary purpose is the personal and social development of children, young people and young adults". This concentration on personal and social development means that the youth service is about assisting the development of rounded, social beings able to play a full part in:

- The family and other caring and considerate roles
- The community as active and concerned citizens
- The economy as workers able to engage effectively with others

Or, as the Youth Service Review puts it, the goal of the personal and social development of young people is that they can take up "their full and critical role in Northern Ireland's future." (par.4.6).

Alongside the schools, the family, faith communities and other social institutions, the Youth Sector has a particular role in nurturing the personal/social development of young people, preparing them for their future life as social human beings. To fulfil that role, the Service needs to be fully aware of contemporary social reality and likely future trends faced by young people. It needs to ensure that its structures, policies and practices are able to support the development of young people in their new world.

## Global Influences

The world is changing rapidly. As the economy becomes more global, there is a pressure towards conformity and sameness. At the same time, and in reaction to this pressure, new searches for distinctive identities are emerging, as a re-emphasis is placed on the local, the regional, the separate, the different.

There is a trend towards the free movement of labour. Local populations are becoming more diverse in their geographical and ethnic origin. With this trend, so the needs of local youth populations are becoming more diverse.

These changes are accompanied by rapid social change. Social roles and relationships are less determined by the rules and expectations of society. The notion of a 'freedom to choose social roles and identities' is celebrated. The pressure, uncertainty, and in some cases, isolation created by this notion is rarely highlighted.

## Local Changes

Society in Northern Ireland is trying to emerge from 30 years of violent political conflict. However fragile the present peace process may be, perceptible changes have occurred. A set of social decisions designed to encourage inclusion and a peace society have been taken. Not just in the Belfast Agreement, but in a raft of decisions taken by the British and Irish Governments, Secretaries of State, devolved Government Departments and other public bodies,

a pattern of developing a new society can be discerned. The Programme of Government agreed by the Executive is directed towards social inclusion and equity as well as overall economic and social development.

A particular example, of direct relevance to the Youth Service, is “New TSN”. The concept of targeting social need in the application of every government policy and measure is fundamentally directed towards inclusion. It calls for public action to be directed towards those in most need, defined either geographically or by membership of some particularly disadvantaged group.

Other examples are the establishment of a united Equality Commission, the Human Rights Commission and the wide consultation around the drafting of a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland. Policing and the criminal justice system are also undergoing major reform. The details of many of these changes are controversial but the overall direction is towards overcoming division and creating a peaceful society.

This said, 30 years of violent political conflict have left their mark. Deep divisions based on differing identities and allegiances and on differing perceptions of the nature of equity, justice and democracy continue to plague every layer of our society. Work to reduce social division and sectarian conflict remains a priority for those committed to the creation of a peaceful society, albeit a challenging one.

## **Responding to Change**

Such is the scale of social change that the issue is not whether the Youth Service responds to it, but how.

**How can the youth service ensure the changing needs of young people are addressed?**

**How can it meet the challenge of contributing to the creation of a peaceful society based on equals?**

**How can those working with and for youth make a positive response to change?**

**How can the youth sector make a difference?**

There are a number of pointers to the way forward. First, the Government and many social institutions have adopted a policy direction designed to build a peaceful and united society. Second, the core principles outlined in ‘A Youth Service for a New Millennium’ (May 1999) give a lead in terms of positive citizenship. Third, the JEDI youth sector partnership proposes the linked concepts of equity, diversity and interdependence (EDI) as a way of meeting the general challenge of helping to build our new society and of positively contributing to peace where we live.

## The JEDI Initiative

JEDI aims to increase the ability and confidence of youth organisations and young people to be at ease with difference, acknowledge one another as equals and promote improved relationships between all. It expresses and develops the youth service's deep concern for community relations in youth work practice. It is not simply a question of playing 'catch up' to social change but of taking a conscious decision to initiate a creative and positive response to this change, and to chart a clearer direction for the future.

JEDI is a partnership which brings together various parts of the Northern Ireland Youth sector. Representatives from the Youth Council, the Education and Library Boards, YouthNet (NI), the Northern Ireland Youth Forum, the Department of Education, and the International Fund for Ireland (Community Bridges Programme) sit on its various groups. It is directed by a Steering Group. Its work has been divided into the following thematic areas, policy, practice, training, and research and evaluation, with each theme carried forward by a different working group.



JEDI has the following twin aims:

- To develop a coherent strategy for community relations youth work and education for citizenship within the Northern Ireland youth sector;
- To embed the inter-related principles of equity, diversity and interdependence into the ethos, policies and programmes of the youth sector.

These aims are not just about designing new strategies for the delivery of good community relations or education for citizenship programmes within the youth sector. They are about proposing a positive and active commitment to the structural, operational and practical requirements to delivering this work. As the JEDI briefing document puts it, "It is crucial to develop the understanding that community relations is not a peripheral activity of the youth service, but is fundamental to the values and ethos of youth work".

However, if youth sector agencies mirror the social environment that surrounds them, they run the risk of maintaining segregation, excluding the vulnerable and being inadequate their support of the development of young people in their new world.

Recognising that translation of the EDI principles into the structures and operations of the youth sector could provide a vehicle for exploration, reflection, change and development on this issue, the JEDI Policy Group initiated a pilot policy development process across nine youth sector agencies to develop an understanding of how this could be achieved.

This Step-by-Step Guide is a product of that work. It draws out the learning outcomes of the pilot process to propose a flexible model of change for youth sector organisations.

## The Policy Development Process

The process of putting the values of Equity, Diversity and Interdependence into the policy and operations of your organisation starts from the understanding that organisations are not neutral mechanisms. It becomes clear that the way they are organised internally – their values, policies, priorities and procedures – will have a direct impact on the nature and quality of the work they do. The task, then, is to examine an organisation – its purposes, policies, structures, means of communication, personnel, deployment of resources, location, forms of governance and so on – in the light of the EDI principles.

The process involves interrogating structures and organisational cultures; not just as a paper exercise but honestly appraising the way things actually work. It will include making decisions on how the EDI principles interact with and complement the basic reasons for existence of the organisation, planning to change those aspects deemed necessary to readdress and engender the commitment and support (including resource allocation) necessary to make it happen.

In conclusion, the process this guide describes is a practical way of incorporating equity, diversity and interdependence as basic values and guiding principles within organisations. The process will make a difference to the way they work and it will improve the way organisations respond to a changing world. How much difference? How much improvement? This is up to those who take the process forward.

# A Perspective from the Pilot Agencies

When we became involved in the JEDI pilot policy development process our organisations had recognised the need for change emanating from the external environment and felt the time was right to initiate a change process within our organisations. It is probably fair to say that at the start we did not know a great deal about EDI and the function of JEDI. Therefore, a great deal of work had to be done by each of us, and our organisations, to reach an understanding of the principles of EDI and their implications.

**While each of our organisations was unique in terms of structure, size, capacity, functions, culture and ethos, we all had in common a commitment to the fundamental principles of Equity, Diversity and Interdependence.**

Putting EDI principles into practice meant something different for each of us. As we became engaged in the policy development process, the diverse nature of our organisations meant that different approaches were adopted in order to begin to embed EDI into the policies and practices of each of our organisations.

**Each of us customised the audit framework to suit both the needs of our organisations and our stakeholders. This made the process manageable within the varying capacities of our organisations and led to greater ownership of the process.**

The process was a learning experience for us. It was challenging and sometimes painful, but ultimately rewarding and has advanced change within our organisations. We now have a greater understanding of EDI, of our own organisations and stakeholders, and those groups not currently engaged in our organisation. We also gained a heightened awareness of other organisations in the sector, particularly those involved in the pilot.

Throughout the pilot process we met regularly as a collective, sharing problems, ideas, and experience. This provided tremendous support for each of us helping us to maintain momentum, generate motivation and commitment. It also created a sense of responsibility to the youth sector as a whole, as well as each of our own constituent groups in relation to EDI. The collective created a sense of what interdependence means and the benefits to be gained from working collaboratively. The diversity of the group has created a richness of experience that is quite unique.

We acknowledge that what we have engaged in is only the beginning of a long-term process. One of the major successes for each of us is the commitment within our individual organisations to continue.

We would like to commend the work done by Justice Associates in piecing together each of our individual experiences to produce a comprehensive account of the process we were collectively engaged in to produce this guide.

This guide should be viewed as simply that – a guide to beginning a process of change. Alongside this guide your organisation will need a comprehensive package of awareness raising, training and support. This said, we would encourage all organisations in the youth sector and beyond to rise to the challenge of EDI by engaging in this process of policy and organisational development.

# Section Two

## THE STEP BY STEP PROCESS

The following section outlines the step-by-step process of putting the values of Equity, Diversity and Interdependence into the policy and operations of your organisation.

- Four steps are outlined:
- Prepare your organisation
- Audit your organisation
- Examine your findings, and
- Develop an implementation plan

The steps have been designed to ease your journey through what is a complex process.

Each step will have little meaning without a commitment to organisational change and development as a response to social change; commitment that is about actively developing your organisation to make a positive contribution to improved community relations and citizenship through its structural and operational functions.

The process must be underpinned throughout by the qualities of reflection, communication and understanding.

# Understanding the Layout

Differing styles of text have been applied within each step to help you distinguish the range of information presented. Statements and paragraphs in bold, but set within the text of the document, highlight central issues around which most of the discussion in a particular section hinges.

“Statements presented in text boxes of this style were expressed by the youth sector organisations who piloted the process. They have been added to emphasise the very real experiences which have informed the discussion in a particular section.

Information contained in text boxes of this style are colour coded to link with appropriate working papers in the second document of this guide.

These documents mainly provide further background reading and tools to support and develop a particular aspect of the step-by-step process.



# Step 1 Prepare Your Organisation

The purpose of the preparation stage is to:

- Introduce the concepts of Equity, Diversity and Interdependence to your organisation
- Establish the benefit to your organisation of participating in this process; and Adopt a Model for Change Management

## Introduce EDI

Although Equity, Diversity and Interdependence (EDI) are now more widely recognised as underpinning values of a pluralist society, it is important to establish what is meant by, 'embedding the principles of EDI into the structure and operations of an organisation'.

**Equity** - A commitment to fairness, including the redressing of any identified undesirable or inequitable balance. This might include examination of such things as allocation of resources, involvement in structures of power and levels of participation of all groups in society.

Whilst in the Northern Ireland context the main issue in the area of equity is inequity on the basis of someone's religious and political beliefs, equity issues are also concerned with gender, (dis)ability, social marginalisation, ethnicity, age, and sexual orientation. On a wider level, this concept includes the notion of human rights and the responsibilities that go with them.

**Diversity** - Encourages respect for and expression of the range of identities represented by the youth of Northern Ireland, and those who work with them in the youth sector.

Diversity could be a source of celebration and interest, not fear and suspicion. It is about moving beyond the "neutral" environment to one where diversity is valued and used creatively.

**Interdependence** - Recognises and explores the ways in which our individual paths are intertwined. It is about building new relationships between the various people and groups who make up the population of these islands.

These three principles are the building blocks of a pluralist society that functions in a sustainable and positive way. As such they are also the building blocks of behaviour at the individual, institutional, political and cultural level.

## Inter-Relating Equity, Diversity and Independence

It is paramount that all three values are inter-related. An emphasis on one in isolation may be to undermine the others. For example, simple equity arguments can support a concept of separation that ignores the long-term necessity to build an integrated and cohesive society. Diversity arguments can be and have been used to cover up inequity. Interdependence can become the means of ingraining either dependence or failing to address the negative divisions that exist.

**Introducing the concepts of EDI into your organisation in a balanced manner represents the first challenge of this process. The concepts underpin many sensitive issues in Northern Ireland. Deep emotions regarding political and civil matters, including anger, sorrow, fear, or embarrassment, can intrude into mundane situations and disrupt working relationships, or even close friendships. It is important to be aware of this at the outset.**

Traditionally, we have dealt with the potential disruption by an exaggerated politeness that steers well clear of such issues as politics, sectarianism and religion in company where people are not at all sure of the background and views of others. (This is, of course, a version of common practice in all societies around divisive and fearful issues.) The habit of polite silence creates the tension and anxiety that has characterised our public life as much, if not more, than overt violence. This approach has affected the practice of all agencies here.

One of the benefits of this process will be to help organisations counteract the culture of avoidance. Understanding what EDI means to your organisation is the first step towards this.

“Equity, diversity and interdependence are not simple concepts – discussion and reflection on the implications for the organisation are essential.”

### **EDI for Organisations**

Organisations that work to embed EDI principles find ways of acknowledging the tensions that presently exist within their own policies and operations and develop practical actions to begin to address these.

They acknowledge that, just as organisations are both consciously and unconsciously shaped by their environment, so they can effect positive change within their environment by their behaviour and the decisions they take.

Adopting a change model informed by an understanding of equity, diversity and interdependence and working at the three crucial levels of policy, structures and procedures is a crucial step in playing a part to address the divisions in society.

# Establish the Benefits

Beyond understanding what EDI means to your organisation, it is important to understand the practical reasons for embedding EDI into the policy and operations of your organisation.

At the macro level, changes in our political landscape have sought to strengthen the rights and safeguards for equality of treatment of many sections of our society. The Agreement on which our political structures rest emphasise the need to promote a culture of tolerance and mutual respect at every level of society.

At the organisational level the business community has begun to recognise that conflict is bad for business and therefore anything that contributes to long-term economic and social stability is valuable. Similarly, organisations working in the voluntary sector have recognised that the resources that have been used up in dealing with the effects of the conflict could, had the conflict been avoided, have dramatically changed the social conditions in which many of the most marginalised live.

This document is a product of the JEDI Initiative, a partnership that recognises the need for a strategic response to this changing context within the youth sector in Northern Ireland. Just as those involved in the JEDI initiative had to establish the benefits of EDI at macro level, establishing the benefits of EDI for your organisation is also important.

A range of reasons why organisations may become involved in the process of embedding the EDI principles in their structures and operations is listed and repeated throughout this document. This is not accidental. Though a lot of emphasis is placed on the preparation phase, appreciating the relevance and importance of EDI to your organisation is not a one-off revelation. It is a developing process. It is important to re-think and reassert the rationale for engaging in this exercise during every phase in it.

## The Business Case

There are many reasons why it may be important and relevant to get involved in this process. Central to these must be the recognition that:

- 1. It expresses the central priorities of youth work.** The goal of the youth service is the personal and social development of young people so that they can take up “their full and critical role in Northern Ireland’s future.” (Youth Service Review). That future is one of current and increasing diversity. So this process offers the opportunity to examine present provision and to identify and adapt policies and operations to more effectively meet this goal within this changing context.

**While ‘collectively’ the following may be used to develop a business case, this first point is a priority for any youth organisation.**

Other elements of the business case for EDI may recognise that:

- 2. It increases participation.** If an organisation improves access for all groups to its operations and services, and it is sensitive to the differing needs of disparate categories of

young people, it will provide an opportunity to extend the number and variety of people using it. In other words, it will increase access and encourage diversity in participation by young people.

3. **It better places organisations to contribute to a fairer society.** A range of duties and activities are being demanded of public and public-funded organisations. These include equality duties (especially the Section 75 obligations), new Targeting Social Need, Best Value and the requirement to consult widely (especially with young people). Commitment to a process of continuous organisational improvement under the EDI mantle should enable a smooth, mainstreamed response to the demands of public accountability in such areas.
4. **It has the potential to improve cost effectiveness.** There is a danger that new initiatives or the demand for change can throw an organisation into confusion with the relentless 'need to respond' resulting in new mechanisms and processes which can lead to duplication and the 're-inventing the wheel' syndrome. Embedding EDI in your structures allows your organisation to take control, to set the agenda and respond quickly and effectively to changing demands. This process also builds capacity within the organisation, lessening the need for outside support from the "experts" in each new initiative.
5. **It makes a significant contribution to human resource development.** This process increases staff skills across the range of equality issues and in the management of change. It can increase the recruitment pool leading to a richer and more diverse workforce benefiting from the synergy that different experiences and backgrounds can bring. It can also improve labour relations, treating everyone equally and fairly and cutting the likelihood of equality-based cases being taken against the organisation.
6. **It may create opportunities for new funding.** Criteria relating to experience and skills in community relations and equality issues are often included in funding application forms. More positively, an organisation that has steeped itself in the EDI principles will recognise the potential for new initiatives, will develop innovative ideas and will be better able to access funding designed to support equality and diversity.

Draw on the above to develop your 'reason for embedding the principles of equity, diversity and interdependence in your organisation'. This will help to:

- Identify clear advantages of the process
- Inspire other stakeholders within the organisation to become involved
- Motivate those involved, particularly at times when extra energy may be required to adopt new techniques/procedures

**It is important not to underestimate the time that it may take to prepare for this process**, especially if you are part of a large organisation. It will, however, be time well spent, avoiding the need to keep explaining the process each time a difficulty arises.

**Even though the business case may be established there is one important fact that must be recognised - change is a complex and ongoing process that will require a great deal of effort and dedication if it is to be successful.**

# Adopt a Model for Managing Change

Whilst sustained commitment is essential to the achievement of real change, critical to this commitment is the adoption of an appropriate model for managing the change.

There is an absence of models appropriate to different sectors of the community and this, in turn, obstructs the emergence of strategic approaches to EDI. “How” to apply the principles of diversity, equity and interdependence to real circumstances in different organisational contexts is a complex and individual experience. Although the principles remain consistent throughout, the actual form that their application will take is entirely dependent on the context.

## A General Model

This said, a model for managing change can be built around the following distinct phases:

- Preparation
- Organisational Audit
- Examination of Findings
- Development of an Implementation Plan

**Paper 1 in Document Two gives an example of a project structure or schedule**

You will need to fill in the details and amend the process to reflect the nature and structure of your organisation. You will also need to incorporate time to reflect on what is being discovered at each phase and the impact of what is planned. This will ensure that the change is internalised, understood, accepted and owned by everyone involved.

**“Strict timetables can be a practical problem but are also a strength. There is a need to create a sense of urgency, a need for a result and, at the same time, a need to give time and space to get it right.”**

Throughout the journey it will be helpful to remember some of the important features of any sort of change. Seeing change as ‘a process’ will allow you to consider the development of a strategy for success. It will require that you undertake change as a deliberate and planned response to a series of issues.

**Paper 2 in Document Two provides a short summary of some of the key features of change and how to handle it.**

It is crucial to recognise at the outset that putting equity, diversity and interdependence at the heart of the organisation's value base will take time and resources, cause some discomfort and challenge the organisation.

## Management Support

You will need to have the support of senior staff within your organisation. The process of change will withstand the difficulties that arise if it has a level of authority behind it. A clear understanding at management level will also assist in incorporating implementation plans into the organisation's development plans.

## Project Team

**It will be necessary to create an EDI project team to plan and oversee the process of change and to ensure all aspects of the implementation plan are completed.** The team will act as a resource focus to make things happen (training, policy papers, etc) and will be responsible for agreeing tasks, mechanisms and time-scales for progress on work.

It is recommended that the project team includes representation from different levels and sections of the organisation and, where possible, service users. This will provide a range of perspectives on emerging issues and reinforce ownership of the change. The team should reflect the diversity of the organisation.

*To assist this group, it may be useful to establish a written agreement on things such as:*

- Aim of the project
- Underpinning values and working principles
- Time and other resources required to complete the task
- Structure of the project in terms of membership of the project team, arrangements for agreeing the agenda for each meeting and taking and distributing minutes
- Procedures for resolving differences of opinion
- Communication with the rest of the organisation

## Change Agent

A 'change agent' will be essential. This is an individual appointed within the organisation to lead the project team. It will be this person's task to ensure that tasks agreed by the project team are carried out. The change agent will also co-ordinate the project team and oversee liaison with the wider organisation. S/he should have the authority to take the process forward in the organisation and be familiar with the organisation's policies, processes, structure and key decision making mechanisms.

**"The change agent needs to have sufficient clout in the organisation – the support of our senior management was crucial to our success."**

It is strongly recommended that the change agent has previous experience of EDI and change management or that s/he has the opportunity to access training and/or external support in these areas prior to commencing the work.

**“It is absolutely vital to give enough time for everyone involved to understand the process.”**

## Stakeholders

People need to own the change. It is, therefore, crucial at the outset to leave room to consult with all stakeholders. All actions will be recognised if they emerge from internal consultation and discussions. This process will help all stakeholders to become familiar and comfortable with the process of change. It should also promote reflection on the change as an important element in creating true change, particularly in terms of the culture of an organisation.

## Methods of Communication

The use of focus groups, seminars, informal discussion groups, conferences, and newsheets, offer a range of communication methods which may be built into the process, as appropriate, and where resources permit.

Language is an important factor to consider when attempting to develop ownership of the process through communication. Inappropriate language will become a barrier to change. The language and, in particular, that used to describe the concept of EDI will vary according to the nature and culture of the group. For example, a focus group of young people will discuss EDI using different examples and language than that used by the governing body of the organisation. Each discussion needs to find its own examples from the day-to-day issues that affect the group of people involved in it.

**“We had to translate the concepts into plain language and with practical examples that would be meaningful in the lives of our members.”**

## External Facilitation and Support

In essence the organisation is embarking on a form of self-assessment. This process can be very effective but it also has some weaknesses. To compensate for these it is strongly recommended that the organisation consider engaging some external support. For example, at the outset external support and guidance may be used to facilitate a more neutral environment as you work to identify 'your' business case and introduce EDI to your organisation.

As internal consultation begins, discussions can expand, and sometimes become difficult or beyond the knowledge of those leading the discussion. Here again, external support and guidance may be used to enable your organisation to pause, reflect, and to resume when new thinking will allow the discussion to move on.

# Things to Consider...

## Take Small Steps

Embedding EDI principles into an organisation is a long-term project and views and attitudes are likely to mature and develop as the process unfolds. For this reason it is important to break the process down into stages. This will also create the necessary balance between 'task' and 'reflection' and maximise the opportunity for people to understand and own the new developments.

Similarly, if the change is designed for incremental implementation there will be time to explore fully the problems before moving to find solutions, thus avoiding an incomplete understanding of what needs to change. In this way adjustments can be made and success in one stage will maintain motivation to enter into the next stage. This will also help to prevent the use of limited resources on any parts of the process that prove less successful.

## Acknowledge enthusiasm

- Acknowledge enthusiasm and good ideas. Long-term change needs all the positive energy it can get.
- Find ways to create and publicly acknowledge helpful participation.
- Create landmarks in the journey of change and acknowledge when milestones have been met. This helps people to remember how far they have come and encourages them to continue with the task.
- Return to the initial implementation plan from time to time to refresh the process and ensure that nothing is being overlooked that may impact on the likely chance of success.

## Be Prepared for Resistance

Resistance may come in different forms and result from different reasons. It will be important to address resistance in a strategic and supportive manner. This will ensure that the work continues to be outward looking and has value to the organisation.

*The following may help you to address resistance:*

- Your 'business case' should help to demonstrate why resistance should be addressed.
- A strong awareness raising/training phase at the beginning of the process will also help to deal with resistance.
- Give time and space to respond to all genuine concerns raised.
- Good communication will counter false rumours, resentments and promote understanding.
- Ensuring participation and involvement, as noted earlier, will provide a sense of control over the change and this in itself will help to reduce resistance to change.
- It may be beneficial to consider the use of external experts and materials on EDI to help everyone in the organisation to fully understand EDI and change in preparation for the new approach.

# Checklist

- Has your organisation had time to understand the principles of equity, diversity and interdependence?
- Does the model you have planned allow time for reflection in the organisation as well as practical tasks?
- Does the senior management of the organisation actively support the vision and purpose of the change?
- Have you established a project team and made explicit the task that it will oversee and how this will be done?
- Have you thought about the potential resistance to this change in your organisation and how it might be resolved?
- Have you identified the possible successes of this work and considered ways to esteem this in the wider organisation?

When you have customised the process to suit your organisation and considered all the ways in which you can influence this change process to ensure its success, then you are ready to start the job of auditing your organisation's current stance, in policy and practice, on equity, diversity and interdependence.



## Step 2

### AUDIT YOUR ORGANISATION

The purpose of this step is to develop an understanding of where your organisation is in terms of the practice of equity, the welcoming of diversity and the recognition of interdependence. This will give you an organisational baseline – a basis on which to decide where you want to go and what needs to be done to get there.

There is little point in teaching young people about equity, diversity and interdependence if your own organisation includes elements of discrimination, exclusivity and divisiveness.

*Your task is therefore to:*

- Examine your organisation – its purpose, policies, structures, means of communication, personnel, deployment of resources, location, forms of governance etc.
- Honestly appraise the way things actually work
- Question the extent to which all these aspects of your organisation, in their structure and practical operation, represent and embody the EDI principles

### Apply The Continuous Feedback Cycle

There are different ways of analysing organisations. In this instance it is felt the continuous feedback cycle is the most suitable, as it lends itself to a continuing process of audit and planned change in the years to come.

*This process will begin with an initial audit to examine the following systems of your organisation:*

#### 1. Stated positions (policies)

These will include everything from the mission statement and constitution to staff recruitment and development policies. In other words, this category includes every aspect in which your organisation says in principle what it wants to do. You may note that actual policies include ones that are unwritten as well as those formally written down.

#### 2. Plans

At every level, these are the medium in which your organisation says what it is going to do.

#### 3. Operations

What your organisation actually does in the real world.

#### 4. Evaluation and Monitoring Systems

The methods your organisation applies to check the extent to which its practice creates outcomes that equate to its aims and purposes.

The audit process involves an examination of these four organisational aspects to see to what extent they match up to the principles of equity, diversity and interdependence. How you choose to do this will depend upon the size and structure of your organisation. It will be a complex and, at times, difficult process.

# Know your Areas of Enquiry

Fundamentally, the audit will aim to find out the extent to which any aspect of the organisation may impact differently on people. For this reason, the standard equality categories can serve as the framework for analysing the different aspects of your organisation.

The standard equality categories are those that are included in current legislation as grounds on which discrimination is unlawful. They are: age, marital status, sex, disability, responsibility for dependants, political opinion, religion, race and sexual orientation. You may also wish to include the category of “social marginalisation,” meaning all those who through poverty or other social experience tend to be excluded from the mainstream of society.

This framework should enable you to begin to consider how the policies, plans and operations of your organisation impact on people depending on their age, their race, their political opinion, religion, gender, sexual orientation etc.

*Depending upon the category you are considering, useful questions might include:*

- Does this aspect of our organisation exclude, disadvantage or just impact differently on those differentiated by this category?
- Can we see or envisage any barriers our organisation might create to full engagement of the range of people with us and us with them?
- Are there any features of our organisation that positively welcome, encourage

**“It was a painful process but generated ownership amongst all those taking part.**

Gathering both qualitative and quantitative data will help you to answer these questions clearly. You may wish to approach those groups who represent the equality categories to provide their perspective on a particular aspect of your organisation. This is not to suggest that these categories exhaust the implications of the EDI principles. However, they do provide an excellent starting point.

Throughout the audit process remember the following: **Take nothing for granted; Look with fresh eyes at the familiar.**

# Amend the Matrix

A sample matrix for the audit process is outlined in document two of this guide. It will appear, at first glance, to be a complex document. Do not be put off. It represents a complete audit to cover every aspect of an organisation. This is a big job, and a continuing one. Select, through a process of prioritisation, those aspects you wish to explore in this 'initial audit'.

**A sample matrix for the audit process is provided in Paper 3 of Document Two**

**Cut down and otherwise amend the framework to suit your own organisation.** In general the task will be to analyse various aspects of your organisation in terms of the areas of enquiry highlighted in the previous section.

	Areas of Enquiry.....				
Organisational Aspects					

**Remember the full audit will be too big a task to carry out at one time. It needs to be prioritised and planned for as suggested in the following section.**



# A Three Stage Formula for Success

The main activities for this step can be summarised as follows:

## Stage 1 "Preparation"

- a) Examine the Areas of Enquiry; get assistance with definitions if necessary; ensure that everyone understands the implications; check if the organisation is prepared in principle to undertake an audit across all these areas. If there is an area with which the organisation is unhappy and wishes to leave out, prepare and record a rationale for that decision.
- b) Decide which Organisational Aspects will be dealt with in this audit. Some of the criteria which may be used are: resources available, activities already programmed (make the audit work for the organisation), aspects that have the biggest impact on an organisation, areas that are clearly deliverable.
- c) Draw up a timetable for the audit of those aspects left out – to be included in the final implementation plan.

## Stage 2 "Task"

- a) Assess the character of information required in each intersection (or box) within your selected aspect of the matrix
- b) Devise suitable information-gathering methodologies
- c) Allocate information-gathering tasks.

**See Document Two, Paper 4 on Methodology for further information**

- d) Collate returned information and write up/organise in a succinct, accessible form.

## Stage 3 "Reflection"

- a) Organise "subjective" or "reflective" aspects of information-gathering. These may involve meetings, surveys, focus groups, themed discussions and may be directed at stakeholders, categories of involved people, geographical groupings, etc. It may be possible to combine aspects of this with the process described in (b).
- b) Organise a process (workshop or other method) to allow Project Team members and (probably) other stakeholders to reflect on:
  - the significance and personal meaning (in work terms) of the EDI principles in general ,and
  - the audit process in particular.

# Things to Consider...

## Remember your reasons

This is the most central and most difficult part of the whole exercise. It may appear time-consuming and prove controversial at times. It will be important, therefore, to remain conscious of and committed to the reasons for doing it. In other words, reflect on the business case you developed in step one. The only way to respond to resistance and cynicism will be to use the believed and coherent reasons why the exercise is a positive and necessary element of organisational growth and development.

## Stay Focused

**Avoid** the audit becoming a task in political correctness. It is not a paper exercise designed to make sure the right language is used and the proper formalities are observed. To go down this road is simply to promote the culture of avoidance; a culture which works to maintain the practices that nurture exclusion<sup>4</sup>.

**Promote and encourage** a hard-nosed, realistic examination of every aspect of your organisation, warts and all, to check the extent to which – in theory and practice, in writing and reality – it fully expresses a commitment to equity, welcomes diversity and understands interdependence.

**Remember** the aim here is to openly acknowledge the practices that reduce this commitment, and arguably also the accessibility of your organisation or service provision, and also its effectiveness.

## Give the Process Time and Space

It is also important to give people in your organisation time and space in which to come to terms with the difficult matters that the audit is to examine. Clearly, the reality that we are living in a deeply divided and contested society means that these issues are going to create discomfort and tension. Issues can grow and broaden. What might seem to be a simple matter can develop into a major debate.

**It is important to stress again, therefore, the significance of the “twin track” approach of task and reflection.**

The audit itself is likely to involve gathering qualitative data through discussions and consultations amongst staff and stakeholders. There may be opportunities for reflection but they must be carefully handled. Consideration and planning will be required to facilitate understanding on the expression of anxiety and resistance to open and safe discussions on difficult topics.

## Be realistic – plan for the long term

It is unlikely to be practical for an organisation to carry out a comprehensive audit in one go, so prioritise the activities you wish to audit. The following criteria may help you to do this. It is also important to remember that this should not be a one-off exercise. If the process of embedding the EDI principles in an organisation is to be effective, it will evolve as a long-term process – with the initial audit marking the beginning of a process of self-examination and continuous improvement that will continue into the future.

## Build on Existing Procedures

In general, you should make this process work for you. It should complement existing procedures rather than cutting across them. This may mean making it part of the annual planning process or combining it with a periodic reflection on your organisation's vision and role.

Newer organisations might see the audit as a developmental rather than an evaluative process. In other words, it could be seen as a way of building up policies, plans and operational practices rather than of examining ones that are already there. Again, the point is that this audit should not be seen as an extra burden but as part of a necessary process of improving the performance of your organisation.

In terms of other equality, fairness and rights processes and duties and responsibilities such as the Equality Impact Assessments demanded by Section 75 of the Equality Act and the Targeting Social Need process, this exercise will improve your ability to carry out such duties and responsibilities but is more about the organisation itself than what it does. It concerns itself with the policies, plans, character of operations and evaluation procedures rather than with programmes or active policies.

**Paper 5 in Document Two provides further discussion on the role of the JEDI Initiative in relation to other relevant policies.**

## Don't rush – no quick fixes

The audit is about stocktaking not problem-solving. If you come across something difficult or embarrassing or uncomfortable, don't ignore it or try and stick a plaster across it. Keep your nerve; know that there will most likely be more positive than negative results, wait until you see the full picture. Keep the "what needs to change" process separate from the "where are we now" process.

*There is no set formula for the outcome of this process. For every organisation the focus of efforts and the conclusions reached will be the result of a combination of factors:*

- Where the organisation is now in respect of any given issue
- The thoughts and feelings of the organisation's stakeholders about the issue
- The extent of change that might be required
- The likely resistance to any proposed change
- The degree of benefit likely to be felt from any proposed change
- The processes and resources necessary to get from where the organisation is now to where it wants to be

## The Audit Report

*The Audit Report is the document that the organisation will use to prompt discussions and decisions on changes designed to improve its EDI policies and procedures. It should include the following-*

- The aspects of the organisation that have been considered in the Audit
- The aspects of the organisation that have not been considered and why
- The methods that have been used for data collection
- The parts of the organisation which have been involved in the process, time-scales and constraints
- The findings of the Audit
- The issues that have been identified from the findings (and perhaps options for consideration)

The document will need to be detailed enough to give a good feeling for the complexity of responses to the issues and yet succinct enough to be a useful tool for subsequent discussions across your organisation.

The type of document and the detail it contains will reflect the nature and culture of the organisation. As it will be designed to prompt discussion the methods and styles used for conveying and considering the findings should be carefully considered.

**Remember, Paper 4, Document Two, Paper 5 contains hints on writing up qualitative data.**

It will be appropriate for your audit report to be presented to the governing body of your organisation as a record of work carried out and resources expended. Formal feedback, either in summary or in full, to staff and other relevant groups should also be arranged.

**“The audit highlighted the extent to which things happen informally in our organisation. Policies need to be made clear and put down on paper. Making the areas of enquiry explicit means that issues that haven’t been raised in our practice are addressed. The process is one of ‘artificially’ raising issues that have not yet come up in the organisation and game-playing possible responses.”**

# Checklist

*Have you remembered to:*

- Develop a thorough and widespread understanding of the audit process throughout the organisation?
- Give people in your organisation time and space in which to come to terms with the difficult matters that the audit is to investigate?
- Prioritise and agree areas of enquiry and organisational aspects?
- Record any findings you have not dealt with at this time and the rationale for it?
- Agree appropriate methodology?
- Draw up a plan for the carrying out of the audit that takes account of any other relevant processes (eg Section 75 work)?

## Step 3

### EXAMINE THE FINDINGS

You are about to go into the “challenge” phase of the process, where your organisation considers the results of the audit and decides what needs to change. This step also provides a space between completion of the audit and production of the plan.

By this stage a massive amount of work may have gone into the audit, and a huge range of issues may have been raised by it. Do not let process overload swamp your ability to see where to go to next.

This step consists partly of an analysis, partly a questioning of the audit findings. In other words, the findings need to be translated into challenges for the organisation. It is likely to be members of the project team who will undertake this task.

**“Throughout this process you’ve got to give people time for reflection about the implications – otherwise there’s no ownership. It’s particularly important when you’re looking at what needs to change.”**

#### Consult on your Findings

There is no set format for consulting on your findings. However, it is your responsibility to ensure, as far as possible, that your organisation does challenge and stretch itself in a process of self-examination and that space is given for reflection.

**“We had difficulty in organising the audit findings in a user-friendly way. We resolved the problem by grouping varied kinds of feedback under common themes. Once we had done that, we were able to consult a wide range of stakeholders about what we needed to change.”**

Use methods to engage and facilitate an easy examination by all stakeholders. Consideration will also be required to develop the most effective means of engaging all stakeholders in an honest and forthright discussion of these. A range of methods may be needed to ensure effective consultation and it is to be expected that given the involvement of the whole organisation, different levels of debate will ensue.

This step is an opportunity for everyone in the organisation to discuss the findings of the audit, to agree with them or not and to request clarification/more information if necessary. It is also an opportunity to develop an understanding of the issues that are the most important/most urgent for your organisation. This understanding will inform the next stage of the process – the plan. It is here too that you need to think about what might be the unintentional consequences of subsequent changes and how they fit into the overall strategic direction of the organisation.

**It is important that sufficient time is allocated to the examination of the audit findings and that the entire organisation has the opportunity to reflect on them.**

**Below:** Two examples of how findings might be challenged and then dealt with.

### Case Study 1

**Audit finding** – 90% of leaders stated that individuals with ambulant disabilities were not making use of the service due to unsuitable premises.

**Challenge** – Involve an external ‘expert’ on disability to assist the organisation identify the type of changes needed to improve the situation.

**Plan** – Make it a priority and describe how you are going to go about doing it.

### Case Study 2

**Audit finding** – 40% of respondents felt that the name of the organisation was divisive and should be changed.

**Challenge** – What is good/bad about the name? What impression does it give to outsiders? Does it reflect that the organisation targets a particular group? Does it therefore cause them to exclude other groups?

**Plan** – Set the debate in motion.

**“As the process of consultation winds out, it is especially important to involve young people. We targeted various groups and tried to make the concepts live for them.”**

### Guard Against Problem Solving Too Early

The danger at this point is to rush in, to get lost in the need to stick a plaster across any difficult or embarrassing or uncomfortable issues raised by the audit, to lose sight of the overall purpose of the process. Remember, your examination of the findings, like the audit process, is about **stocktaking** not **problem-solving**.

Now is the time to step back, take a good hard look at what has emerged from the audit and attempt to re-impose some order upon it. Don’t forget that reflection is a vital part of each stage of the process, perhaps nowhere more so than here.

## Things to Consider...

You may wish to consider whether an external voice would be helpful during this part of the process in order to, for example, generate questions or propositions arising from the audit or to facilitate focus group discussions. Such an external input may be provided by consultants, other organisations with similar characteristics to yours which have gone through such a process, or representative groups of some of the equality categories.

With the passage of time the process will have demanded a great deal of energy with the passage of time, so you are likely to be faced with a dwindling team as other developments and changes take effect. Do not let frustration build up. Consider the use of external support to refocus the process. This should help to reenergise your change agent and the project team in particular.

## Checklist

*Have you remembered to:-*

- Organise the audit findings into user-friendly materials to be presented to your organisation?
- Generate a list of questions and/or propositions to challenge the organisation?
- Identify any external assistance required?
- Decide on the method(s) of engaging the organisation in discussion/debate and instigate?
- Write up the results of the challenge phase?



## Step 4

### DEVELOP AN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The implementation plan will be a set of intentions, probably developed as part of, or in tandem with, your normal planning format. It will detail how and when various aspects of your organisation are going to change.

#### Seek Approval

*At this stage you need to ask yourself:*

- Who needs to give approval for the proposed changes?
- Who needs to be involved in the process of approving changes? and;
- How to involve those concerned with approving the changes?

*When seeking approval you may wish to review the findings to consider what issues are the business of:*

- Your national body
- Your membership
- The young people you serve

You will be particularly concerned with how to present the need for change to those you have not yet engaged in the process.

#### Establish an Implementation Planning Group

The establishment of a refocused implementation-planning group will help to drive the plan forward. At this stage you may wish to enrol the assistance of individuals within your organisation who are familiar with the mechanics of planning. Alternatively, training in basic planning skills may have to be provided.

**“We intend that action coming out of the audit will be implemented in our annual business plan. We will keep the Project Team to oversee the future process, but it will meet less frequently.”**

At the very beginning you may want to consider how this EDI plan is integrated into your overall planning processes without losing its distinctiveness. It may be a timing issue that it needs to stand-alone for a period so it does not get lost. If you decide that this is the case, you should consider if the composition of the existing project team is appropriate to deliver at this level

# Formulate a Plan

You are now ready to formulate a proposed plan as to what needs to change and ideas on how it can be done to take to your organisation to be discussed, debated and hopefully eventually agreed. This process will not only be about dwelling on the shortcomings of the organisation as identified in the audit, it will also be about what it does well.

*The plan, like any good plan, should incorporate at least the following elements:-*

- What needs to change?
- Who within the organisation takes the lead in driving the change?
- What needs to be done?
- What resources are required?
- What is the desired outcome?
- Within what timescale?
- How will you know that real change has taken place? Where is the evidence?

As a process of continuous change, the plan should incorporate monitoring and evaluation processes. These will produce the evidence to demonstrate that real change has taken place in the identified areas and inform the ongoing development of the change process.

**Paper 6 in Document Two provides a sample implementation plan.**

Remember the following issues when developing your implementation plan:

## Prioritisation

*Agree criteria for prioritising the issues to be actioned in the first year of the plan. These criteria might include:*

- Urgency – if it is putting the organisation in a vulnerable position
- Desire for change – the strength of feeling evoked by an issue
- Resources needed to effect change
- Sensitivity of an issue
- Motivation – the need to see a result at an early stage, which will lend credibility to the process

This process will help you to stage the implementation plan, breaking down long-term issues into short-term manageable chunks. Remember to record how the remaining issues will be dealt with, so this information does not get lost

## Activities

A mix of activities should be used in your plan to include those that have a fairly immediate

and visible impact as well as those that are more amorphous. In this way you will be more likely to spread ownership amongst a wide range of people within the organisation, keeping them on board.

For example, you might propose that the organisation begins to raise awareness of barriers to involvement by inviting speakers to open debates on identified issues or by running a training programme on a particular aspect. These more immediate and visible activities may be part of a longer term strategy for change or simply run alongside a proposal to devise a fundraising strategy to implement change. Again, external facilitation might be useful.

**“It is when you come to the implementation plan that the full implications of the process hit home. It is now practice, not just theory.”**

Ensure you also plan to return to the initial audit process either to reconsider any aspects of the organisation that have not been audited, or to reconsider any aspects of the initial audit not addressed in this plan.

### **Format**

The format of the plan should use language, processes and procedures that your organisation understands.

Be SMART. Check that any objectives are: -

Specific Measurable Achievable Relevant within a practical Time-frame.

Allow time for sufficient consultation on the plan to ensure it will be owned and effectively implemented.

### **Decide Monitoring and Evaluation Techniques**

Review your plan to consider what information will be required to demonstrate if real change has taken place as a result of these actions. This information will help you to monitor and evaluate your progress.

Consider how and who would collect that information and how frequently this would happen and when is the most appropriate time for this to happen? Would an external input be useful or not?

This process will enable you to check progress regularly.

The most effective way to apply a monitoring and evaluation process is to integrate it into existing review mechanisms within the organisation, (assuming they exist). This may include reports at monthly meetings, or inclusion in quarterly reports, a half yearly review or at the AGM.

Finally compare the 'before' and 'after' picture. An evaluation of the process should provide a comparison between where the organisation was i.e. the base line information provided by the initial audit, and where it is at any given time in the future.

## Things to consider...

**This is as good a time as any for the organisation to remind itself of the purpose and the benefits of being involved in such a process and to consider 'the distance it has travelled'.**

If a discrete plan, overseen by an internal 'EDI' group, is not welcome or feasible, at the very least the activities identified to implement change need to be trackable through your existing planning system. In this case advance planning will be required to fit these activities into the current organisational calendar. It may also work for you to use other initiatives within your organisation as a vehicle for this change process.

**People may need reassured that the organisation only needs to do what it is capable of doing. Take 'small' steps, concentrate on a number of key priorities without losing sight of all the issues.**

## Checklist

*Have you remembered to:-*

- Seek approval?
- Include the necessary people in the production of the plan and agree the format?
- Prioritise issues that will be addressed in the plan and decide how the remaining issues will be dealt with?
- Agree the format?
- Consult widely with your organisation?
- Reach agreement on how the planned activities will be monitored and evaluated?

# Section Three

## WHAT HAPPENS NOW?

You have now reached the conclusion of the process to introduce EDI principles into the practice of your organisation. You have established your first implementation plan and everyone in the organisation has had a chance to become familiar with the concepts of EDI and the practical implications of living up to these principles.

The way in which your organisation goes forward with this work will vary enormously depending on such things as the nature of your work, the felt benefit of the pilot, and the resources available to the process. However, this section highlights some things to bear in mind at this important stage.

## Mainstreaming the Process

In the end the purpose of this work is to ensure that the principles of Equity, Diversity and Interdependence are embedded into everything that the organisation does internally and externally. To that end it is important that the work undertaken in the process is “mainstreamed” – becomes part of the everyday consciousness and practice of the organisation.

However it is also important to recognise that this should not be rushed. It takes time for the principles to be internalised. It is recommended that organisations do NOT attempt to move straight from a pilot process to integrating EDI into all aspects of the organisation’s corporate plan. This is because the organisation will be very unlikely to achieve full integration. There is an intermediate stage when the organisation will still be very self-consciously applying EDI principles to new initiatives or existing practice. This may not continue to be done in a separate process as in the first pilot phase but it may still require some form of deliberate oversight of the process and outcomes.

This task will probably be carried out by a group established to take forward this stage of embedding EDI principles (or possibly by the original pilot steering group). The important thing to remember is that this is a long-term change in the approach of the organisation and it takes time to learn how to do EDI in practice. The stage of being “consciously competent” at this task will take time and continuous, deliberate attention.

## Continuous Improvement

The task of applying EDI principles in practice in an organisation is always work in progress. There are always new people arriving in an organisation that are unfamiliar with the principles as they apply in practice and so there is a continuous need to revisit some of the consciousness-raising work that was done in the initial stages. There are also new levels of understanding to be reached about the issues involved in EDI and so old issues need to be revisited with the new insights. For these reasons putting EDI principles into practice is best seen as a continuous improvement model. It will never be a completed task but should be viewed as a regular reviewing mechanism in line with many of today’s quality assurance models.

## Training

It is essential to remember to induct new staff into the work you are doing on EDI to enable them to play a full part in the process. This is particularly important if some of the new staff have come to the organisation as a result of outreach work done with excluded groups. The message of inclusion, welcoming diversity and understanding the nature of interdependence needs to be continually reinforced. It is also essential to review all training delivered in or by the organisation to ensure that EDI values are applied at all training occasions. Training is one of the most important ways in which an organisation can reinforce its value base. Embedding EDI principles in the organisation’s training programme will have implications, not only for the materials you use for training, but also for the way in which training is delivered.

### Long Term Relationships

It is essential to recognise that you will need to maintain long-term relationships with key representative groups if you are to strengthen external support for the improvement of your EDI practice. Key representative groups are those that work to represent the views and interests of

people in the equality categories. The “Guide to the Statutory Duties,” published by the Equality Commission, contains a list of some of these representative groups. These relationships will form part of the continuous review of your practice. They will help underpin and secure the new way of working that will be essential to ensuring that EDI principles are embedded for the long-term in your organisation’s practice.

The approach of these organisations to your work should be one of constructive criticism. It is essential that the groups you choose to help you in the task are truly representative of the views of the groups with which you are seeking closer contact. The way in which you engage these opinions of your organisation needs to remain fresh and avoid complacency. It is easy to miss the small ways in which you can cease to operate in line with an EDI value base and therefore begin to exclude or marginalise.

### Critical Success Factors

It is crucial to identify and promote the critical success factors arising from this new way of working, in other words, the benefits that are considered essential for the project to be regarded as a success. At the outset the organisation needs to identify the ways in which it is likely to benefit from this new approach. These need to be promoted throughout the organisation so that the rationale for adopting EDI principles and applying them in practice is well understood by everyone involved in the organisation. New critical success factors will be identified as the process evolves and the list needs to be revised from time to time. This will then form the basis of any review of the initiative. For this reason include both big and small beneficial outcomes. They will all help to maintain confidence in the process and sustain motivation when the going gets more difficult.

These are some of the things to bear in mind as you continue the process of embedding EDI principles in the practice of your organisation. It is essential to reflect on what you are doing, what is being achieved, and how it is experienced by all those with an interest in your organisation. It is important to remember and believe that the small steps you take now, however difficult and troublesome they may seem, will, in the end, become part of normal practice.

Finally, envision for a moment you and your colleagues working in an organisation that fully applies the principles of equity, diversity and interdependence in everything it does. None of us can have a completely clear vision – we have to be there to see it. It is, however, helpful to try to do so in order to encourage those around us to consider getting involved in this process of change. Here are some of the ways in which an organisation that fully applies the principles of equity, diversity and interdependence might operate.

Equality proofing will be normal and accepted. It will not be an unnecessary chore – it will be as normal and important as keeping to budget. There will be a good, challenging and continuing relationship with representative groups. There will be a culture of fairness in working relationships and interaction with members or clients. People know about each other’s circumstances and feelings and are prepared to accommodate them.

Diversity will be valued and celebrated. For example, it may have been debated and agreed that the staff noticeboard could contain a poster about an Orange Parade, the GAA fixture list, an advert for a Gay Night in a local bar, an invitation to a discussion on disability, notice of a multi-cultural food evening and many more...

The interdependencies between us will be identified and acknowledged. The strength of uniting the best of diverse positions will be recognised. Contentious political and social issues will exist and will be debated, formally and informally, with rigour but with respect for others' opinions.

"What's good for you is good for me" is the principle of all negotiation and internal decision-making. It will be better understood that no one can receive long-term benefit by the deprivation of another. Zero-sum exercises in bargaining will be better recognised as likely to fail in the longer term. Interdependence is understood as effective co-operation and team working where the condition for the development of each is the development of all.

We all have a part to play in achieving this new society in small and large ways, as individuals and as groups and organisations. As with anything that involves a new way of living what we most need is a way to begin and the will to keep going. This guide offers a way to begin. It will be up to you to supply the will to achieve.