

## **CGHR EDIA Workshop Summary Notes**

The workshop was held at the Wellcome Centre for Human Genetics on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2023. A total of 40 people attended in person, with a further 9 attending on-line.

The meeting opened with a talk by Dr Caesar Atuire, Ethics Lead on the MSc in International Health and Tropical Medicine entitled “Decolonization in Global Health Research: an epistemic agency approach”, followed by a Q&A session over lunch. The talk was very well received, and successfully paved the way for active involvement in the subsequent discussion groups.

The meeting participants then separated into 3 in-person and 1 on-line discussion groups, each with two facilitators/rapporteurs. The participants were encouraged to share their thoughts around EDIA issues in general, but with several specific headlines to encourage discussion. This is a summary of the comments made and points raised:

### **1. Raising the profile of EDIA within CGHR**

- Utilise existing Trop Med and CGHR communication channels to disseminate EDIA information to ensure it reaches the widest audience - new Trop Med intranet that is soon to be launched would be a good channel for EDIA information.
- Utilise existing information and initiatives such as training relating to EDIA from the University e.g., Athena Swan, and the concepts and approaches highlighted in the published report from the “Equity in Academia” meeting that took place in 2019  
<https://www.tropicalmedicine.ox.ac.uk/publications/1181252>
- The working group’s messaging should promote CGHR’s aspirations in terms of EDIA and profile EDIA activities and initiatives. There would also be necessary legal requirements in the messaging.
- Suggestions on EDIA initiatives:
  - regular five-minute focus on individuals showcasing EDIA activities
  - regular talks and discussion groups
  - improve the EDIA focus of CGHR research
  - EDIA to influence CGHR priority settings across multiple initiatives
  - EDIA requirements for grant applications – information and practical resources would be helpful

### **2. Workplace culture – Promoting an inclusive environment**

- Focus should be on positive aspects – i.e creating a welcoming and inclusive work environment for all, not only on policies. Newcomers often find it hard to assimilate. Make more concrete efforts to introduce new people and their work during regular meetings (eg the monthly forum) or in an online format that showcases one or two new people every month or so.

- Ensure all members know about the reporting mechanisms for negative experiences. E.g. the Harassment Advisors who provide support, in confidence, to any member who has experienced bullying or harassment behaviour at work. (Quite a few participants didn't know much about the system and agreed that the current terminology sets a high bar for reporting anything.)
- Organise interactive seminars and workshops in hybrid mode to actively involve all staff and students. (While recognising hybrid events have practical difficulties too.)
- Support additional training on EDIA policies and procedures.
- Learn from other departments of the University about ideas on promoting EDIA.
- Encourage senior staff to participate (in-person if possible) in regular EDIA events. (Senior staff are visible to their groups but broader visibility and support is also important.)
- Ensure senior staff act as role models for supporting new or junior staff, helping them to feel welcome and more confident to voice their opinions.
- Explore funding opportunities for captioning videos of meetings and conferences to make the digital experience beneficial to everyone. (There are legal requirements but little funding to support even simple initiatives)

### **3. Career progression and diversity/representation at senior levels within CGHR**

#### Observations about people in senior positions

- Diversity in CGHR largely coming from partner institutions and not from within UK systems.
- We roughly define senior level as people who have permanent contracts at the university.
- What recruitment practices do we have in place to help encourage more diverse candidates to apply for more senior roles.
- Are people in higher positions interested and engaged in equality and diversity causes and topics? Perhaps if more senior people were fully engaged in this topic greater strides could be made to diversify the senior level of the university.
- When people drop off along the career pipeline, is it proportional? Are more non-white candidates dropping off as people progress in their careers within the university?
- Is diversity factored into hiring and firing in a non-tokenistic way?
- In recruitment, systems exist to view things through a gender lens to ensure language is more inclusive.

#### Proposed solutions

- Think more about the layout and type of spaces to make them more accessible for people with vision or hearing impairment e.g., non-noisy rooms.

- More intentional preparation for people to move through the stages of their career i.e., opportunities for teaching, mentoring etc.
- Make the system more transparent i.e., documents that outline which soft skills people need to be competitive enough for senior positions.

#### Committees / other issues raised

- Criteria for selection of committee members unclear. Also terms of office, committee decisions/outputs are rarely made available
- Engagement with EDIA among senior staff unclear, should be part of their job rather than delegated to those most impacted (ethnic minority or someone with a disability).
- Unconscious bias training can be counterproductive as it makes people come up with other reasons to discriminate against people. Narratives have a better effect, however, pressure on impacted people should be considered.
- Are people in EDIA positions valued and respected? Does it hinder their ability to progress in other parts of the systems if they have a lot of EDIA work to focus on?
- What are the pressures and interests of people and institutions involved in the system? Oxford vs other diverse contributors from partner institutions being put as first author.
- In terms of accessibility, making rooms more accessible, not as an afterthought.
- Focus on non-visible disability (e.g., hearing impairment, neurodiversity and visual impairment) during discussions. More intentional effort should be put into recognising and representing these invisible differences at the senior level.
- Working at home alternative and its impact on career progression.

#### Ideas for the future:

Many participants said how helpful it was to have had such a meeting to raise important topics, and to feel their views were listened to. Lots of people supported the idea of intermittent events organised along similar lines through the year.

Various suggestions were made for guest speakers:

- A speaker to discuss disability in the workplace, and examine how all of us can contribute to making a safer environment
- A speaker from the EDU (or the new Chief Diversity Officer, etc.) to discuss practical ways to promote diversity and inclusivity in the workplace.

<https://edu.admin.ox.ac.uk>

<https://staff.admin.ox.ac.uk/article/university-of-oxford-appoints-first-chief-diversity-officer-as-race-equality-strategy-launch>

- Someone to discuss the recent Oxford University report on “Equity and Inclusivity in Research Funding - Barriers and Delivering Change”. A Wellcome on-line resource on this topic was also highlighted: the “Equitable Funding Practice Library”, that identifies existing practices that can be built on when writing grants and applying to funding calls.

<https://researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk/equity-and-inclusivity-in-research-funding-funding-practice-library>