



The Royal Academy
of Engineering



Equalitec Diversity Forum

Summary report

27 September 2005





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of Engineering



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Executive Summary

The first Equalitec Diversity Forum – Advancing Women in ITEC (Information Technology, Electronics, Communications) was held at the Royal Academy of Engineering on 27 September 2005.

The Equalitec project is described in the context of the European Commission's Equal Programme and the Equalitec Career Model is outlined. The emphasis is on the under representation of women in ITEC and is mainly focussed on the problems of women returners. The strategies for reintegration and progression; the introduction of industrial placement schemes and for the development of soft skills and mentoring are addressed. Plans to overcome the problems of mainstreaming these activities, changing (corporate and workplace) cultures and of recruitment are outlined.

The activities and contributions of some of the partner organisations (Athena, UK Resource Centre for Women in SET and the Daphne Jackson Trust) are described, together with the work packages which they will achieve for the project. Further contributions from the attendees covering the Learning and Benefits of the initiative, the role of the Sector Skills Councils and the Industrial Perspective (including Mentoring Circles and the Diversity Managers Forum) are included.

Three Case Studies of Best Practice are reported from Fujitsu, Unilever, and Pfizer. These demonstrate the need to include Diversity policy in the business plan, to adopt an appropriate corporate culture and to ensure that effective recruitment, staff development, career planning, mentoring and returners' programmes are in place. These points are developed in detail in the reports by three returners. Further detail and wider aspects of problems are then discussed focussing in particular on effective programmes for retention.

Informed by this debate it was decided to focus the next Equalitec Diversity Forum on developing further examples of good practice across the whole ITEC sector and to highlight the business case for diversity.

Note: This report is published to inform partners and the Chatham House Rule should be observed in the further dissemination of any material contained in it.

Introduction

The programme for the Forum is attached at Annex A and the list of participants is at Annex B.

Professor Wendy Hall welcomed the delegates and affirmed the Academy's support for the initiatives which sought to attack the gender imbalance at every level and to encourage women not just to become interested in careers in this area, but to stay in them and to work to the top. She stressed that the whole point about the initiative is about encouraging women. There are many skills gaps in ITEC and there is a need for a much more balanced workforce. "Women have the aptitudes and skills in abundance that the industry needs, and we need to work together to encourage women to take an interest in this sector."

Keynote Address

Dr Elizabeth Pollitzer then gave a keynote address which explained that the Forum has tried to engage as many key players as possible and there are many different ways in which people can become engaged with the project.

Equalitec

"The main motivation for the Equalitec project comes from what Equal itself is about. It is about the reintegration of disadvantaged groups into the labour force. The disadvantaged groups among the asylum seekers and the unemployed that Equal has identified were **women returners at higher skills levels in relation to ITEC**. The main motivations for the project were, to tackle the under-representation problem; to widen employment opportunities by increasing the pool of ITEC skills; to address the problems of career breaks and the issues of returning. Partnership in the project involves organisations that have experience and knowledge, have been working in this area and are trying to understand what is actually going on.

Equalitec is not about finding an answer to the under-representation problem – **Equalitec takes the fact that there are just not enough women choosing to study and work in ITEC, and that when they leave, they are just not coming back.**

The project will show that this is an area that women should take on very seriously – that there are opportunities and that the world is changing and ITEC is changing. On the one hand, it will raise awareness in order to attract women into reconsidering ITEC as an opportunity area. At the same time it will engage key players who have the power and who can change the situation in order to enable women to get in and compete fairly in these areas.

Core issues to be addressed are the present negative image: that current pathways to ITEC careers do not really take into consideration the needs of women who have other responsibilities; that there are fewer opportunities for skills conversion and training and that recruitment and employment policies are possibly biased in a work culture which is a 'macho culture' and male orientated. The issue of work/life balance is critical.

Current indications were that the **time for change had come**. The **key factors** in effecting this were the **needs to change views and attitudes of entrants and employers**.

There is a change. Companies no longer have the luxury to discriminate

against sources of talent but to look for talent wherever it is. In **Equalitec** – hence the name, '**equal ITEC**' – we are not really looking for any privileged approaches but we are really looking to the doors to employment being equally open to everybody, to all talent.

The **target audience** for Equalitec is **women returners**, who have had a career break, or **women who have had to go through a period of readjustment** and who have perhaps not completely given up their jobs, but their careers have definitely been fragmented in some way, because they have taken on some responsibilities.

What we are trying to show to women is that there is a way into ITEC careers, but you do not actually have to have that background because ITEC operates on so many different levels. Much training does not require prolonged intensive periods.

Equalitec Career Model

This career model considers that there are **basically only four choices** that a person can make on their career path. You might get in and get on; or you get out and then get back, and there are some various paths that go around that as illustrated at Figure 1.

Women are the ones who usually end up getting out for a period and then wanting to get back. They either do this around childbearing age, or they do it in the midpoint of their career, when they are trying to reassess what their lives are about. Many men would also like to do that, if it was convenient, because there are obviously penalties associated with getting out. Some 50 per cent of the gender pay-gap is attributed to the fact that women take career breaks. There are penalties and we cannot say that this is an easy way out – just dropping in and out of your career, because getting back is hard.

From our Daphne Jackson Trust experience we know that it is hard, but we also know that it is hard because research was done by Bath University for Equalitec in Action 1. The fact is that most women, when they take a career break, do not just go on maternity leave and remain an employee, but they just leave employment. They are thus outside all of the support networks that are there. We believe that those networks should be there, and professional bodies have a particular role to play. Of course, women's networks also have a role to play here because, if we give women the opportunity to retain and progress their professional skills and keep their self-confidence, then it would be much easier for them then to compete in the labour force.

Every individual, looking at this model, will see that every woman could see how they would go in and out. The arrows on the slide are the incentives and the lines are the barriers – and there are a huge number of reports that can speak about the barriers. There is much less written about the incentives, however – and the Equalitec project is about the incentives. We understand the barriers and we know that they are there, but we also want to create some incentives. Marina Larios will be talking about the objectives of the Equalitec project and these are the kinds of measures that we try to develop, which should act as incentives. Of course, engaging key players in the project would be a huge incentive. The fact that we have as partners the Royal Academy of Engineering, the British Computer Society, and big employers like Pfizer, Fujitsu and Unilever, gives credibility to what we are trying to do. We really appreciate the involvement of partners in this project.

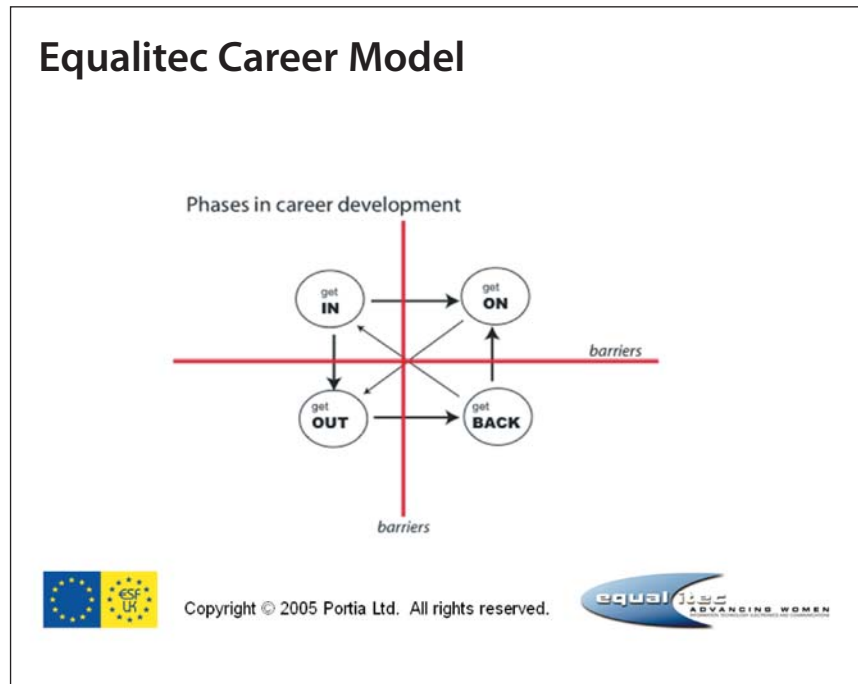


Figure 1

The important point here is that the skills that these women will acquire are essential and highly transferable. They are the door that will open new career opportunities for them, and that is really the way that we see Equalitec. That is the way that we see the participation of partners in the project. This is a partnership and we obviously expect some contribution towards the project but we also feel that the project offers organisations something in return as well. For example, for diversity managers, it offers an opportunity to try out and test whatever schemes are there."

Introduction to the Project and Equal

Presentation by Marina Larios, (Equalitec Overview) WiTEC (European Association for Women in Science, Engineering and Technology (SET)) Director

What is Equal?

"Equal is from the European Commission as part of the European Social Structural Fund. The main principle of Equal is that it is like a lab, testing new ways of tackling all forms of discrimination in the labour market – not only for those in employment but also for those forsaking work. It really looks at supporting interventions that, later on, can influence policy and change.

Equal looks at proposals that are trying to place an emphasis on innovation, looking at the developing partnership (DP), which means all the partners involved. Rather than choosing how many beneficiaries will benefit from the programme, it is looking at changing policy and outcomes.

In the UK in the first round, activities to the value of some £86 million were funded during Action 2. **Equal is the largest European Commission programme looking at equality in Europe.**

Equal Actions

The programme is divided into three actions over three years.

Action 1, the first action, started in September 2004 and finished in June 2005, and this is where we met all our partners and decided what was to be done.

Action 2 has commenced with the implementation, both on a national and trans-national level, and that will last for two years.

Action 3 started at the same time as Action 2, or will start a little later in September 2006: it is all about dissemination and mainstreaming across the partnership.

What will Equalitec Do?

(1) When we talk about the **under-representation of women in ITEC, mainly focusing on women returners, we look at three strategies.**

(a) The first one is about reintegration and progression. When women want to go back, they face two main obstacles. These are hard skills, especially in ITEC, where **technology** moves so quickly, and secondly **soft skills**, concerning **confidence**. We are trying to address both of these.

(b) The second one is to pilot an **industrial placement scheme with job-based training opportunities**, using all the expertise of the Daphne Jackson Trust. We are not trying to reinvent the wheel but, by we will use key players who have been there, doing it, and who have the expertise of certain interventions, and then allow them to pilot these initiatives. What we will be doing – and this is an incentive – will be to provide employers with a subsidy for the salary of the women returners. We are really trying to work together with the employers.

Turning to hard skills and training. Many of our women have been on a career break. **They need training, which we will provide** working with the education sector.

(c) The third part of that strategy is about **soft skills** and it is about mentoring. We are not trying to do only one-to-one mentoring, but we are trying to test new ways of mentoring. We are following some new Scandinavian models on which we have been working in my association in WiTEC. We are using mentoring circles through action learning, and therefore we are trying to experiment about how we can also empower women's groups, for them to deliver this. We are working with companies that already have mentoring schemes, to see whether they can open these to women who are on a career break.

- (2) **Mainstream, and changing cultures:** that is why we are all here. One of our objectives is to build a Diversity Forum to have open discussions, looking at how we can all work together and share good practice – what has worked and what has not. Of course, we obviously need new research on an ongoing basis because, as human beings, we are always full of surprises. We must never assume anything, and find out what are the new incentives that women also need if they are to go back.

It is also about changing cultures and it is about stereotypes. We do not have enough role models of women inventors and innovators. Here, with us, we have Bola Olabisi, the Chief Executive of GWIIN (Global Women Inventors and Innovators Network). Last year we did something extremely successful when we opened a new award for women, in IT and electronics, who can come up with a new invention or innovation. We **raised the profile** – they are **role models** and we are also able to tackle the stereotype that there are not enough women inventors.

- (3) **Recruitment issues.** We will look at **career information** and develop an **online portal for women returners in ITEC**. We want to provide and facilitate more resources – a kind of Yellow Pages signposting women. There is a great deal of information out there and we do not want to duplicate it – we just want to tailor it to the needs of our women returners in ITEC.

As well as women inventors, we really need to provide more exposure to women experts in ITEC or related careers, for two main reasons. First, we need to have more women in the media. We need more role models, and we need to have more women at the board level and sometimes they are not really accessible – not because they are not there, but because they are difficult to find.

Of course, there needs to be an ongoing evaluation to identify what is working and what is not.

Equalitec Partnership

This is a representation of all of you here. When the whole partnership put in a proposal together we wanted to make sure that, in order to have real impact, you need to involve all key stakeholders. In many of the programmes that have been working in Europe, one of the weaknesses has been that we have

not been working with employers enough, or that we have been working with many employers but not with the government. Therefore, **in the partnership**, we have representation of all these sectors – **professional bodies, industry, women's groups and women returners**, because we want them to tell us what they need in order to go back. We also involve public bodies. This is just the representation that we have from professional bodies, employers and organisations that have gender expertise, governmental bodies, education. We are covering all of those aspects.

Working with Europe

Equal is part of the European Commission, which means that we have to work with Europe. In part of our programme, we are working with a national organisation in Amsterdam that looks at women in science, engineering and technology, very much linked to national policies. We are working with Italy, with Associazione Orlando, looking at women in different aspects. This is one of the oldest associations in Italy.

We are trying to look at what has helped and what is working for us, and what is not working with them. If we think about SET graduates in those three countries, in the UK we have 33 per cent of women in SET; in Italy, they have 37 per cent; in the Netherlands it is only 17 per cent. In Holland, they are really struggling and the number of women in IT is dropping. They have very similar issues to us and they are also trying to work with us, to see how we can work together. Something that we have come up with is that we will have the award of Women Inventors and Innovators in IT and Electronics in Italy and in Holland, and they will come and join us in the UK – we want to have this exposure. We will be evaluating the impact of mentoring.

They are not only working with women returners, but some of them are working towards changing the curriculum in universities, to recruit more women in IT – because that is where they have identified the main problem. They are working with young girls – while we are not working with that target group at the moment.

Conclusions

First, the nature of Equal is that it is a laboratory of social change. We will have to undertake ongoing evaluation at every point and it is good that some things are successful, while others are less so, because this is the only way of having much more impact.

Second, we know about the **untapped resource of women returners** because we know that they are out there. They are very valuable and they are eager to play their part in a growing and vibrant economy and we must do our best to facilitate the willingness of many women out there to enter the workplace. We must look at women not as our only target group but as workers, as users and designers in IT. In Italy, they will be looking at the role of women in producing software and how that can have an impact in gender and IT.

The third point is about **changing culture** and we all know that this is one of the massive challenges. This is not only because we all face resistance to change but, when it comes to changing cultures, we really need to think about this as committing to a dream. I attended a very big conference in Baltimore in June, about women in IT, at which about 40 countries were represented. One of the speakers said the following:

'For change, there has to be inspiration and commitment. Remember, we are all gathered here together because you understand the connection between IT and social justice, because you are committed to creating a more equal world.'

I turned around and there were all these people from 40 countries thinking, yes, they really wanted to do it, but that it seemed really difficult.

However, the word 'equality' should not be a concept, and I can describe that with a last example of working with a senior manager in Holland in an IT company, when he told me that equality did not mean much to him, until his teenage daughter said she wanted to study IT. Then, he started to look at his workplace from a different perspective."

Partner Presentations

Athena: Swan Charter

Presentation by Caroline Fox, Athena Programme Manager

Caroline Fox gave an overview introduction to the Athena Project. The aim of Athena is the advancement of women in SET in higher education and research and a significant increase in the number of women recruited to the top jobs.

"Since 1999 there have been development grants and projects in 12 universities; local networks in 15 universities; seven universities have won Royal Society Athena Award prizes for good practice, and Athena has published 27 reports and seven case studies on good practice, many of which provide useful examples in the area that we are looking at today. Since 1999, over 60 UK universities have contributed to one or more Athena programmes, and that is a number that is going up.

Athena's work programme has challenged the culture and moved the issue of women's careers higher up the HE management agenda. It has raised awareness and improved understanding of the differences in men's and women's careers. Most importantly, it has encouraged women to expect more of themselves, of the departments and workplaces that they are in, of their universities, and to expand their views of their careers in SET. A key feature is working with partners such as the UK universities and the research councils, and the main professional societies. They include organisations like the Royal Academy of Engineering; the Royal Society – where the project is based; the Institute of Physics; the British Computer Society; the Royal Society of Chemistry, and other organisations like the UK Resource Centre for Women in Science, which you will hear about later on, who provide us with our funding.

(i) Asset: the Athena Surveys of Science, Engineering and Technology. We have run two of these so far in 2003 and 2004 and we have input from 6500 male and female scientists, in 45 higher education and public sector research organisations. A third survey in partnership with the main SET professional societies will be run next year, to include scientists working in industry, so that we can make some comparisons across higher education research and industry.

(ii) Athena SWAN Charter: the Athena SWAN Charter is the latest initiative. It is about recognising excellence in science, employment and higher education and is intended to help universities to work to sustain equitable working environments and to enable them to identify themselves as employers of choice. Identifying yourself as an employer of choice is perhaps a new concept for universities but it is very important. Once again, it is to raise women's expectations of themselves, their universities and their departments. Membership is open to all UK universities who are committed to working towards those aims. A key feature of the charter is in relying on self-assessment teams within universities, who will include early and mid-career men and women. The charter was launched in June this year with ten founder members and we are up to sixteen now with many more universities looking to come and join us."

UK Resource Centre For Women In SET (UKRC)

Presentation by Jane Butcher, Women Returners Manager

"The UKRC is central to the government strategy for women in science, engineering and technology in that the setting up of a central resource centre has flowed out of the Greenfield report in 2002. It is obviously a response, in some ways, to the Roberts review around the supply of skilled scientists and engineers. We will be supporting the government's strategy on science and innovation. As we have heard, it is very much about skill shortage arguments and business cases which are very clear and obvious. The remit is to cover the range of science, engineering and technology, which is incredibly broad. It also includes the built environment and construction professions. We are looking at the areas that the ITEC project are looking at and also at quite a number of others besides.

Its role is to provide an umbrella, a focus, to undertake strategic and delivery level work, so that we will be bringing some degree of coherence and added impact to women in SET initiatives that are already taking place, while also working very much alongside, in partnership with those initiatives. That is very much the role UKRC want to take with the Equalitec project and indeed with the Daphne Jackson Trust, through another of our partners here today.

The UKRC is there to have an employer focus. Most of our products and services are targeted towards employers, in terms of both attractive guides, networking events and kite-marking and awards which we are offering to employers across the whole sector.

Return Campaign

The UKRC, through my own strand of work, is a partner in the Equalitec project. The Return Campaign, is looking to create something of a brand to provide an umbrella and an overall message around the potential and the desirability for women to return to SET careers, or into SET career paths. It is also for employers to look at the changes and initiatives that they might undertake to re-engage with those women and to provide access.

Overall, our statistics base would suggest that there are 50,000 based on the Maximising Returns report of 2002, which claims that only 25 per cent of women with science, engineering and technology qualifications are actually working in science, engineering and technology professions. Therefore, they produced a statistic which says that there are 50,000 women actively engaged in active citizenship, personal and professional development and all kinds of other things, but not working in SET. Potentially, every year around 24,000 women return to work but only about one-third of those actually go back into SET career paths.

The Return Campaign will offer a level of awareness and promotion as an umbrella to other initiatives. There will be elements of new research of our own and ongoing evaluation in a similar approach to that which has been described.

We are providing a central information signposting and referral point through our website, setwomenresource.org.uk. The core of the delivery is an innovative generic returners course, which has been designed and is being run

by the Open University. We have 100 women about to start as the first cohort of that programme in about a week's time. Those women want to return to SET – they are coming.

We are also running mentoring, networking and employer contact links in the region.

The women coming into the services of the UKRC will have reached at least degree level or equivalent. This may well mean that they have been working in jobs for which a degree would have been required, but they have not in fact attained that level of qualification, or there might be others who have obtained a degree but then moved into other areas, having gained a scientific or engineering qualification but then not in fact worked in the sector. There are also those who have worked in the sector for some time, taken a career break, but then are feeling alienated and are finding it difficult to return, either for real and/or perceived reasons.

The scale of the programme is around 1000 women over the next two years or so. Presently, there are about 165 women engaged with the programme to date.

Relationship with Equalitec

We are hoping that the relationship with Equalitec for the UK Resource Centre and the Return Campaign will really facilitate the strategic linkage for both of our organisations and initiatives. We can really see the complementarity of approaches in how we work with employers and in what the Equalitec project is also able to bring by virtue of a greater depth and focus on the specifics of the ITEC sector. There is the extent to which the ITEC sector is or is not different from other aspects of science, engineering and technology – given that we would obviously like to believe that a younger sector might not replicated some of the more entrenched practices that may affect more established industry. There are specifics of the direct referral and progression routes, so that we will have a seamless web through which women contacting the UK Resource Centre are then able to move into the support of the Equalitec project and indeed vice versa.

Getting Back

These are some of the issues which we have set out to tackle and we shall be talking about these as we go along. These are probably becoming familiar to you.

One of the roles for the UK Resource Centre is to provide the focus for the visibility for women as professionals and to look at senior roles and access to leadership, as well as the ability to return to at least a stage of parity, if not indeed an improved status in a career path after a career break.

What do Returners have to Offer?

So the Return Campaign and the rest of the resource centre's activity is really there to tackle some of the barriers which are similar to the Equalitec Career Model. We will promote what returners have to offer to employers which, if you like, **is a rapid return on a pre-existing investment, because these women are experienced.** They know what they are talking about. As well as their own specific experience in the sector that they are seeking to return to, or the experience on which they are speaking to build, they have the rest of their life experience and maturity to add into that. There is the **value of that**

company and industry knowledge and maturity and, potentially, a good deal of loyalty. It can fall into certain stereotypes when looking at advantages and disadvantages that might be specific to the recruitment of certain target groups, but there are aspects of what would characterise women returners of the group, which we can see would really add value to an increasingly value focussed workforce and customer base.

These are some of the areas which you are likely to discuss in a moment, where employers can engage to think about **supporting women returners, and also supporting the workforce. Support for women returners is not necessarily so dissimilar from the support that is required and is core to good management and employment practice,** to retain any employees in these fast moving, developmental sectors.

We are trying to encourage a **greater degree of flexibility and lateral thinking,** and potentially greater consideration of how we can look at part-time work in these areas. This is one of the most obvious gaps in the availability of employment opportunities and it becomes one of the areas where, in some parts of the sectors, employers feel that this is very difficult to offer. I am particularly interested in how we can think about making some jobs and areas within the industries more available, by thinking about part-time work for both men and for women."

The Daphne Jackson Trust

Presentation by Dr Katie Perry, Press and Public Relations Officer

"The Daphne Jackson Trust run a returners' scheme for science, engineering and technology professionals, primarily highly qualified women – predominantly about 75 to 80 per cent are qualified to PhD level. They have to have had a career break of two years or more and, as has been said before, depending on the length of your career break, you need to retrain and you need to rebuild confidence. In the trust, we never guarantee a job after a fellowship but we will guarantee that **we will place people back on a level playing field with the rest of their peers**. They will no longer be disadvantaged because they have had a career break.

The main scheme offers two-year part-time fellowships mostly in academe and there is a 95 per cent success rate in returning fellows to their SET based careers. Some people continue directly on their career path, others diversify. DJT have awarded just over 130 fellowships now, two of them to men – we actually have two current male fellows at the moment. We are actually not a women's organisation but we are a **returners' organisation**. We like to retain that independence and we like to encourage men to come along and talk to us because, increasingly, men are taking a caring role. It is a peculiar thing that scientists marry other scientists – it happens all the time – and often, the female in the partnership is the one who has the better and more secure job and is better placed to stay in employment. We are increasingly finding that men are now taking a caring role, looking after family and looking after children. We are having more and more men coming through – jolly good, I say.

We cover the whole range of subjects within science, engineering and technology and we would like to extend our scheme into industry through **the Daphne Jackson Industrial Associate Placement Scheme**.

The scheme is designed to improve employability by updating and gaining new skills. It is effectively run in the same way as our traditional scheme in that people will be trained as part of their fellowship or associate placement. They will gain on-the-job retraining. Candidates will be graduates and postgraduates or people with equivalent experience in ITEC-related employment. We are looking at them coming back after a career break or people who are unemployed but are finding it difficult to gain employment. Placements are being sought at finding industrial establishments across Great Britain. It will run alongside the existing scheme. It started in July 2005 and it will be running to June 2007. It looks to place 20 women, in companies around the country, who are either taking a career break or are unemployed. Fujitsu and Unilever have already said that they will take placements and there has been a huge response to advertising in local papers in the Thames Valley area."

Discussion

The chair opened a general discussion to clarify and qualify any points raised in the presentations and to receive general comment.

Participation in Equalitec

Several delegates noted that the schemes presented so far concentrated on graduate level candidates whereas the ITEC community had entrants from many diverse career routes a high proportion of which were vocational.

It was agreed that Equalitec is not saying that you have to have a degree. A number of measures are being developed at Equalitec which try to explore different ways to help different people across the whole ITEC skills range. This is why Equalitec is organising a network of partners who will have difference focuses. **No one is saying that you have to have a degree to be a part of this Equalitec system.**

It was also noted that industry required high level business skills, particularly in IT consulting, not just technology/computing, and Equalitec should take account of this.

Learning and Benefiting from Initiatives

It was noted that making more women aware of opportunities was a difficult problem and that more should be done in this area.

Currently there was the Equalitec website www.equalitec.org.uk and the UKRC website. The need to advertise more widely had already been made by the Daphne Jackson Trust, the WITEC Innovation Award and others. The centralising and promotion of all the schemes' initiatives was a central theme in Equalitec.

Employer Awareness

It was agreed that Equalitec should also focus on the need to inform employers of these activities and the availability of well qualified returners.

Joanne Welch (Veredus Executive Resourcing) stressed the key role which recruiters could play in this.

Sector Skills Councils

Kevin Fisher (Learning and Skills Council) drew attention to the work of the Learning and Skills Councils and the extensive network available through the Sector Skills Councils particularly for those following the vocational route and recommended that **SEMTA** and **e-skills uk** should be encouraged to join. It was confirmed that SEMTA and e-skills had been invited to join and any help in achieving this was most welcome. The establishment of Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR) might aid this.

Recruitment of Young Girls

In response to Marie-Noëlle Barton, Director of **WISE (Women Into Science and Engineering)**, it was agreed that there was common ground within this project for raising awareness and providing information about careers and opportunities in ITEC through raising the career profile to girls in schools.

"There is obviously the question about the pipeline, and the leaking pipeline and, if women do not come in, they will not be there. At the same time, however, we see it in a slightly different way. There are many areas of ITEC where you do not have to go through a career with ITEC originally, but you can re-enter at some later stage.

Many girls, making decisions at age 13 and 14, may not think of doing something like this, because it is not a cool thing – it is 'nerdy'. However, perhaps when they are in their mid-twenties or early thirties, they will think about it.

The entry point into the pipeline does not just have to be at school age. There is something about ITEC and the way that it supports businesses, which means that it can be done at some other stages and so we should not really restrict ourselves. However, I agree that there has to be a supply of talent right at the early stages. We also feel that there are organisations like your own, who are focusing on that at that level, so we thought we would just go on some other level."

WiTEC pointed out the importance of **appropriate role models** in this task.

Industrial Perspectives

Amanda Wooding (Smiths Group plc) stated that Smiths Group is a manufacturing engineering organisation which needs volumes of engineers. They are missing software systems engineers in the aerospace business and that is why we need to engage more children in engineering, early in their careers. This will give us a greater population, even when they return later into the market – even whether it is women or young boys.

From the point of view in aerospace it is known that the Airbus of this world will require hundreds of engineers. The biggest problem is that if we do not feed that demand, we will then be outsourcing to other universities that will be in India, China or places like that.

Gordon McLean (Thales) stated that Thales is an international group, headquartered in France, in defence, aerospace, government and professional electronics. They have about 65,000 employees worldwide, 30,000 in France and 10,000 in the UK.

There were a few points which he would like to reinforce. "One goes back to the comment about the reason for addressing the diversity issues being to pave the way for business success and to become leaders in the business. **Everything that is done in the name of the various initiatives here must in some way link back to the business bottom line if it is to happen at all.**

Secondly, there is certainly much to do in terms of the culture. Looking around the room here, the ratio of men to women is about exactly the reciprocal of what I normally encounter in my work environment, and it is a scary situation to be in.

I have spent the last couple of years working in Paris. I notice some interesting differences. I do not have the quantities of numbers to back it up but my perception is that we seem to have a **relatively higher proportion of women in senior technical posts in one of our divisional headquarters in Colombe**, in the roles of system architects, chief system engineers and policy makers in

the engineering side. This is despite the fact that the French business environment is dominated by – and I do not know what the French word for 'machismo' is, but I am sure they have one – it is dominated by the polytechnicians and the membership of the Grand Ecole."

Marina Larios (WiTEC) also considered it very interesting in terms of the European angle in that, for example, Portugal has the largest number of women in science, engineering and technology – almost 41 per cent – followed by Greece and Spain. "Something that is very important is **image**. As you all know, being an engineer in Spain or in Portugal, or an engineer in Brazil where the number of women in IT is quite high, is a matter of status. It is like being a doctor and the culture supports that. However, they still have difficulty in terms of getting women into the workforce – they have a lot of degrees but that does not mean that they are represented in the workforce, because of similar things as happen in France, where it is a very hierarchical society. They would like to know the secret formula, because everyone asks them how they are doing this – and they say, 'I'm not sure, but if you find out, please let me know.'

It has a **good deal to do with society and status** that an engineer has, or that an IT person has."

Mentoring Circles

Kathleen Hanna (Berwin Leighton Paisner): "I would like to hear more about mentoring circles. Marina mentioned that there were new methods and I would be very interested in knowing more about that, please."

Marina Larios: "I will just tell you very briefly and at lunch time I could tell you more. We have been around almost 20 years in Europe and we have tried to assess and develop new interventions. This does not necessarily apply to gender, but I think it applies throughout cultural change and it is based on a model of action learning. This means that we are talking about shaping experiences. Many of the successful mentoring programmes in which I have been involved are not only for women, but they are for men and women as part of that mentoring circle. It is about action learning. Men realise that they are in that mentoring circle, and how hard it is to combine family and work. We discuss many issues not only about the workforce but more about the changes that they have to go through.

This is very much based on the **mechanisms of action learning**. This proves to be much more effective than one-to-one mentoring, which can be extremely expensive in terms of resources and management. Action learning is what we are doing with many of our Scandinavian partners and it is to train diversity managers within the company to develop those, so that they can have ownership of them."

Diversity Managers Forum

Wendy Hall: "You mentioned the role of diversity managers, which we were talking about earlier. Would you like to pick up on that?"

Elizabeth Pollitzer: "I would like to have some direct feedback. We have identified particular issues. There is obviously empowerment, innovation, mainstreaming and equality of opportunity could apply to lots of things, but we have tried to narrow that down to where we can have some impact. Recruitment is one of those areas.

We have joined the diversity forum of the Recruitment and Employers Confederation. I went to the very first meeting, which was excellent and very interesting. Recruiters have to play a role between what their employers demand and whether they will get the right people that employers want.

What we discussed was actually a suggestion from Jane Millar. **Diversity managers can play a role but we have to learn what they can deliver, and people who have those roles also have to find out how they can have an impact. The suggestion was that we should have a diversity managers' support network, to help diversity managers understand how diversity can work for them, and have the statistics there.** Some people have asked how to compare the figures and whether there are issues and, if so, what they are and whether they can have explanations from organisations like WiTEC. This works across the European Union."

Marina Larios: "We should not forget about SMEs because not all our women in IT or ITEC work in international companies. Secondly, when we talk about ITEC, we are talking about looking across a whole range of organisations, because IT, for example, is really a part of our lives. We therefore should not forget SMEs and they really want to learn from big companies about how they are getting on in terms of retaining talent. The research shows that, all across the world, **women put as a top priority having a rewarding job** – they want to have an impact in what they do. It is not just about money, and that is very important in terms of how we want to retain our women. They leave, and this is open discussion from Hewlett Packard and IBM – they are losing their senior women at the top and they do not know where they are going. However, when you do more research, and I work a good deal with women, they decide to set up their own businesses. They decide that you cannot change cultures, or that it takes too long and involves too much effort, so they create new cultures."

Elizabeth Pollitzer: "If the idea of setting up a diversity managers' network appeals, then please let us know because we will set it up. Perhaps you could let us know what you would like this network to provide for diversity managers. We have to try to target all of those who have some power and who can be agents of change, but we obviously see it as a two-way relationship: we will learn from you, and you can learn something from the project as well. That is our aim – to be innovative. If we can say that there has been interest in such a network, that would be interesting."

Wendy Hall: "We will have the presentations from industry this afternoon, and we will hear from them how it works in that field. Jane will also be facilitating the discussion after that."

Sector Skills Councils

Annette Williams: "I just wanted to pick up on what previous speakers have said – and perhaps I am reopening something that is closed anyway.

Kevin made a point about the Sector Skills Councils. **The UKRC has a sector skills coordinator who is directly working with the Sector Skills Councils that are relevant to the science, engineering and technology occupational sectors and it would be interesting to talk to Kevin about our work in that respect.**

The other point is to support Equalitec in this dynamic and new project. Some of the questions here this morning have opened up the wider discussion about supply issues and about how initiatives need to target young people.

Whilst those initiatives are very laudable and need to go on, **we need to support Equalitec in the focus of their specific project, which is about trying to encourage women back into fairly senior positions.** That is really critical and the point that Marina has just made about getting women into leadership is obviously crucial. There is plenty of evidence to suggest that even where women actually are in a fairly good proportion (take biology, for instance, where there are over 50 per cent of women who graduate in those subjects) when you look at senior positions within that sector, women are not actually reaching those positions. They are actually leaving those particular occupations in which they have qualified.

It is important that there are focused projects that are looking at advancing women in these sectors. Today, we should try to focus our discussion in supporting Equalitec in achieving this very specific remit, rather than being diverted into looking at supply-side issues and how all of this has to be targeted at young people. There obviously are initiatives, the WISE Campaign being an excellent example of that and which the UKRC is supporting, and it is doing that quite ably. We need to focus this discussion, to enable equalitec to take this agenda forward in a very positive way."

Wendy Hall: "If there are no further comments at this stage, we will break for lunch, which will give the opportunity for some informal networking."

Case Studies Of Best Practice

Large ITEC Company: Fujitsu

Presentation by Stephen Alford, HR Manager, Fujitsu

"The Fujitsu corporation is the third largest IT company in the world. Fujitsu Services is a part of that company and we employ 11,000 people in the UK and a further 6000 in the rest of Europe. Their core business is the delivery of IT services to both the public and the private sectors.

The presentation was based on experience at Fujitsu and also partly on some research that they carried out into diversity within the IT sector. It concentrated on the business case for diversity; about how to plan to manage diversity; and the importance of culture as a factor that will either enable or restrict the development of diversity in the workplace.

Business Case

Within Fujitsu, the principal business case for focusing on diversity concerns winning **new business**. Within the public sector, one of the requirements when tendering for new business is being able to demonstrate your commitment to equal opportunities and diversity. Like any other company that is tendering for that work, Fujitsu are required to complete an **equal opportunities pre-tender bid questionnaire**. **Unless the public sector body is satisfied with our response, we may not be allowed to bid for that piece of work. It is therefore critical to our ability to grow as a company.**

In relation to partnership, Fujitsu views itself as its clients' IT partner of choice. Again, within the public sector, government is giving increasing targets to public sector bodies in relation to diversity and so, if it is important for them, it has to be important to us.

However, there are other reasons for focusing on diversity. People think of Fujitsu as an IT company but we think of it as a **people company**, because we are basically selling the capability of our people. To ensure that we get the **best people**, we must be **attractive as an employer to all**, regardless of their background or any other individual differences.

Linked into this search for talent is the fact that we recognise the changing demographics within Great Britain. This will result in an aging workforce which will have a higher percentage of people with disabilities. People from ethnic minority backgrounds will form a higher percentage of the available labour market and also women, many of whom will want to return part-time, will form an increasingly major part of that workforce. Therefore, the trend is towards the development of what can be termed '**family friendly policies**', to enable individuals to balance, on the one hand, the demands of their career and, on the other, the demands about other aspects of their lives that are important to them, will continue.

In relation to **productivity, attracting the best talent** is part of the equation, while **retaining that talent** and **ensuring that employees are performing to their maximum** is the other part of the equation. This will be easier to do in what I would call an **inclusive working environment**, where differences are respected and individuals feel valued for who they are.

The final point in relation to **corporate social responsibility** is that, within Fujitsu, our commitment to diversity extends into the communities in which we operate. Through our charitable support and community relations policy, we encourage our employees to become involved in helping to give something back to society.

Managing Diversity

The starting point was agreeing the business case for focusing on diversity and also ensuring that the related HR policies and procedures would support that.

The next stage consists of the **fundamental building blocks on which you can develop diversity strategy.**

In relation to **positioning**, why focus on diversity? Is it for **business reasons**, or for **legal reasons**, or for **ethical reasons** – or a mixture of all three? Is diversity seen as a bolt-on activity – something that sits out there, and is nice to do, so long as economic conditions mean that you can afford to do it? Or should diversity be an integral part of your business, managed like any other part of the business? Also, what resources will be allocated? Those are some of the questions around positioning.

Concerning **leadership**, **clear support from the top of the organisation is essential** but also, if an organisation becomes successful in its diversity strategy, then that very **leadership needs to be aware that it may have to change its perspective and approaches to work, as other perspectives and approaches filter into the organisation.**

In relation to **management training**, I can illustrate the importance of this with reference to some research that took place in America. As many of you know, in the States, reverse discrimination is legal and so, in theory, there should be a balance in ethnic minorities in the quota system. However, they have found that, where organisations concentrated purely on that and ignored anything else, they may have achieved a more diverse workforce but this was counterproductive to the organisation. One of the key issues that was missing was management awareness and **management capability to maximise the potential of a more diverse workforce.**

Induction involves insuring that all new **employees clearly understand the company's position on diversity** and what we are doing in relation to it, so that there is at least a minimum level of understanding of the importance of diversity within the organisation.

We have joined various employers' bodies and industry bodies. This is because, at the outset, we felt it was important to **look outside the organisation, to gain professional guidance and support**, so that we have the knowledge to make what will be – hopefully – some correct decisions.

Recruitment and selection has a fundamental function in creating a more diverse workforce. Decisions need to be **as fair and as objective as possible, made by using objective criteria.** In other words, it is the best person for the job, regardless of background or any other individual differences.

Monitoring is the gathering of internal statistics to understand what is happening in relation to diversity within the company, whereas **benchmarking**

is the gathering of external information to understand how your company compares with other companies and with industry in general. In other words, it is applying the same professional approach to managing diversity as you would to any other important aspect of your business. If you were launching a marketing campaign or product research campaign, you would look to **see what you have internally** and you would look to **see what the competition is doing** – and managing diversity should be no different.

Then there is the **development of strategies to promote diversity** across the organisation. One way – and I am only suggesting it as one way – would be to **focus on the six areas that are currently, or will soon be, covered by legislation**. For instance, in relation to **gender**, we are completing the Opportunity Now benchmarking survey, so that we can learn from that, and that will then filter into the overall diversity strategy. There is obviously our involvement in the Equalitec programme and, through the **CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility)**, this is working towards female inclusion in the IT sector.

Joe Gardiner (DTI) mentioned **Computer Clubs for Girls (CC4G)**. It is very much about **trying to make sure that girls aged 10 to 14 maintain their interests in IT** because, at the moment, the research shows that, for them, it is the nerdy thing to do and they are dropping out of IT-related subjects and interests. This is obviously creating a problem further down the line.

Culture

In relation to culture, suffice it to say that it is the **impact of the values and norms of the organisation on the behaviours that will either restrict or assist the development of a more diverse workforce**. As the organisation grows, its ability to harness the talent from a diverse cross-section of society – whether that be those differences that are covered by the legislation, or whether that be all those other numerous differences such as personality that makes me unique, and makes everyone in this room unique – will be enhanced or restricted by culture.

For example – and I think Elizabeth referred to this earlier – what has traditionally been referred to as a **long-hours, presenteeism culture is likely to result in a male-dominated organisation**, with little time or thought being given to work/life balance issues. This will mean that the culture will disadvantage women within that organisation.

Fujitsu – the Possibilities are Infinite

Just as we like to think that the business opportunities are infinite for us – and they are – so, to me, it appears that the challenges of developing and harnessing the abilities of a truly diverse workforce are also equally infinite. But then, it is good to have a real challenge in life, isn't it?

It is now my pleasure to introduce Kath Tonkinson, to talk about her experiences as a woman returner with Fujitsu."

Presentation by Katherine Tonkinson, Project Control Office, Fujitsu

I am a project control officer for Fujitsu Services. I have been with Fujitsu for six months, having returned on 28 February. I have been asked to come here and tell you about my experience at Fujitsu.

Background – my Attitude and Aspirations

My background is that I have nine years in IT. I started as a YTS with Digital Equipment many years ago, and I have worked for Dell Computer Corporation, just to name two. I have had careers that vary from personal assistant to the MD, to sales executive.

I then had the fortune to be able to go travelling with my husband for four and a half years, so I have actually had two career breaks because I have also had a career break to have my daughter. Having my daughter has made me realise that I just want more out of life. Before, I just used to bumble around – go out, go to work or whatever – but, since having my daughter, it has really made me want to have a career.

Why Fujitsu?

Why Fujitsu? I felt that Fujitsu was a large IT company that could offer me a career with equal opportunities. It also has an excellent reputation and a sense of realism. I believe that it is honest, straightforward, and it has a commonsense view. I also know employees who still work for Fujitsu, and they spoke highly of the company – which meant a great deal to me, by word of mouth.

My Experience

The most important thing to me is the **work/life balance**. My daughter will be two next month and I have childcare issues which mean that I cannot leave the house before eight o'clock in the morning and I have to be back by six o'clock at night. When I was working in the IT industry before, I sometimes used to turn up to work by seven-thirty or eight o'clock, and still be there at seven o'clock at night. I realise that I just cannot do that now, because I have other commitments. Also, my time is valuable – which I realise since having had my daughter and I want to be doing something with it that will make a difference.

There is also the **flexibility**. Yesterday was a very good example for me. I had just come back from a week's holiday and my daughter was ill yesterday. Had I been in my last company, it would have meant taking a day off work and perhaps being penalised for taking that day off and possibly losing a day's pay. I just phoned my manager yesterday, however, and told him that my daughter was not very well but that there was nothing wrong with me – I had child care there to cover her, so I asked if I could work from home. That was not a problem. For them, they had a day's work out of me, and I was able to work, and my daughter was there and knew that I was there if she needed me. That is just so important for me – something that, were I not a mother, I would not have realised how important it is for some women.

There is also the **training** that Fujitsu have given me. When I was employed, I was taken through the PCO (Project Control Officers) Academy. They looked at my skills and, because I had been out of the organisation for about a year and a half, those skills had deteriorated quite rapidly. You sometimes wonder

whether you can go back and do the job. They looked at what skills I had and then set out a training programme for me, which was excellent. It included things like a refresher course on Microsoft Word, Excel and Access. I have just completed my ITIL foundation certificate a couple of weeks ago, and achieved 35 out of 40 and I am quite pleased with that.

It is also a matter of **working with likeminded people**. I work on the Post Office account for Fujitsu. The Customer Services Director is a man of about my age, with two small children. I work with a number of men of my age who also have young children. I remember that a couple of months ago I had to take my daughter for an injection, and I started to feel guilty about that. But he said, 'Why do you feel guilty? All of us have children of about the same age and we all know what you are going through. Don't feel guilty – we know that you'll make the time up.' It was good to have the guilt lifted.

They do not clock-watch. They do not expect you in at nine o'clock in the morning and to be there past six o'clock at night, putting in the hours. They know I put in the hours and they have given me a laptop and a mobile. If it means that I have to work from home then I can do that. They know that I will do the work, and that is empowering because they believe in me and they know that I will do my job.

The last point I would like to address is about **feeling valued**. Fujitsu have taken some of the senior people within the community within which I work and trained them to be Henley coaches. I have been given a Henley coach – I am a PCO, which means that I am at the bottom, hoping to work my way up. I have been given someone at the top, who is trying to give a little back to her colleagues. I get to sit down with her once a month, or however often I want to sit with her, to air my views. If I have a problem I can discuss it with her, because she has a couple more years of experience than me and she is where I want to be in five or ten years. It has been great.

Feeling valued – they actually asked me to come here today and speak to you"

Large Global User Of ITEC: Unilever

Presentation by Helen Toogood, Vice President, Unilever IT Academy

"I would like to thank you for inviting me to be here today. This is an issue that is very close to my heart and one that I feel very passionate about. I am very passionate about doing whatever I can to try to resolve this.

I work for Unilever. Just to set the scene, Unilever is a company that has a global spread. It employs 200,000 people across the globe. The IT organisation that runs Unilever globally has about 4000 people in it and they are positioned in all parts of the globe. We have our data centres in Latin America, North America, Singapore, Durban in South Africa, and then in Europe we have St David's Park in the Northwest of the UK.

As to the products that Unilever makes, you might be aware of things like Persil; Dove; Bird's Eye; Wall's Peas; Fish Fingers; Cif; Timotei; Carte d'Or; Magnum – I am just thinking of my personal favourites! We have something like 400 brands, of which we focus on 14 top ones at the moment, Dove being one of them, and then Hellman's, Marmite and so on. Before I joined Unilever, I did not have a clue about what they did, but it is all of those brand names, which we produce and market.

A brochure has been produced by our Corporate Responsibility people and this will be distributed in December. It has been produced by Corporate Responsibility in Unilever and it addresses the gender issue across the whole of Unilever. It highlights the senior **reciprocal mentoring programme**, of which I am part, that has been established in Unilever. Copies of this will be available for you to look at.

The article is based on my experience as part of this scheme and, as a couple of HR executives in Unilever who have had a chance to see the preview have said, it makes a tremendously powerful statement. When it actually hits Unilever, it will be very powerful for us to move forward.

While I have the time with you now, I would like to share some extracts from a case study that I have been writing over the last three years, because this explains my situation and what I went through. This is part of the heart of it. There is a deeper issue that we also need to look at, which is within ourselves and how we deal with it. Also, as people have already mentioned, there is the cultural issue. As you have said, many people have left the IT organisation because the culture is just so difficult to change, or because it will take so long to change. As senior IT people leave, if some of us do not make a start to try to change that culture, we will never turn it around and it will always be like that.

I will read you a couple of extracts from this case study. It is called 'Surviving Maternity Leave!' These are my musings over the last three years. First, how many people here have actually taken maternity leave? So those of you who have taken maternity leave will relate to what I am saying and those of you who have not may feel the same as I did before I took maternity leave, and you may be surprised at some of the things I am going to say. You might not think they are as deeply entrenched in me as they are.

When I left Unilever on 24 December 2002 to start my maternity leave, I was Vice President of Customer Management, Unilever GIO. In this role, I regularly

travelled the five continents, developing the desired culture and a customer-focused service ethos in one of Unilever's first ever global shared services. I had also already started the mentee/mentor programme with Rudy Markham, who is one of the top four in Unilever. He is the finance guy and in fact he is the right-hand man to Patrick Cescau, our CEO. The reason we were doing the mentor/mentee programme was because of the issue of senior women leaving Unilever. So he was not mentoring me to get a better position, but I was mentoring him on how he can tackle the problem of Unilever not having enough senior women.

On that day, I could move the world. I could do virtually anything to get a result – so what happened three months later? I realised that I am a mere mortal and that, when that baby cries, you are as powerless as the next person to resolve the issue, and yet you want to resolve it more than anything else in your life before! Had Unilever not tied me into that six-month returning to work contract, I would have resigned the week after my baby was born. For the next three months I cursed the contract but for the last three months I saw it as a blessing because it forced me to face the obstacles and find a resolution which works for my family and my career.

I had begun my maternity leave with the best ever possible backing. My boss had said, 'Helen, we will work with you in whatever way it takes to get you back. What do you want? You tell us, and we will work together.' But what did I want? This was a question that would bug me for the next six months. At that stage, I knew exactly what I did not want. I did not want full-time work, and I did not want to travel too often anywhere far from home, including the three-hour journey to my old office base which was in Crawley, around the M25.

The next three months of my maternity leave saw me project managing the total refurbishment of our house. It saw hospital visits and antenatal classes. There was the NCT – the **National Childbirth Trust (NCT)** – a **support group** of new parents in the same locality, and my lifesaver. I was meeting other professional women who were going through the same emotional journey as I was, but how differently we all concluded, with only two out of the seven having gone back to their previous employment. All that lost talent! Two have started their own business together, one was made redundant, and two were lawyers who found it absolutely impossible to go back to their old jobs and have chosen to stay at home with their children – one of whom, I might add, had to take a legal package.

I had occasional conference calls back to the office with Rhodora and with Rudy. I had lunch a couple of times with girls from the office and telephone gossip on an infrequent basis.

The birth, as with all births, was amazing and unique and a very emotional, family shared experience. I had congratulatory cards from work, including flowers and champagne, which left me feeling very grateful but very guilty – very guilty at the thoughts that were going through my head. I could never leave this baby and go back to work!

The next three months saw an awful turmoil of emotions. I can't go back to work. We don't need the money – or, rather, we can exist without the money if we change our lifestyle. I am a mother now, and I cannot think beyond the next five minutes. I could never hold down a business conversation. I am hopeless! I cannot even understand what a baby wants and how to solve its

problem, so how can I run a business? None of the others from the NCT group are going back and I must be mad. I would be a bad mother. He needs me. But I would have to pay back all that money! And I've spent it! So I am going back to work, but how? The issues were:

- 1 **Flexible work** – Do I do five half days, or three full days? Do I work from home or do I change my office? What do I need to work? What are the tools I require? What does the role require? What is the role? OK, start the other way around ...
- 2 **Childcare** – Do I need a nanny, or a nursery, or a childminder? What role will my husband take? Who can I trust? All those horror stories! By scouring agencies in the Good Nanny Guide, we found the perfect nanny for us. She works three days a week and we enrolled with Nannytax, because we are not employers in the eyes of the Inland Revenue.

Back to the flexible work. As I had already stated I would be returning part-time, we had shaved my role into three, and left me with the third for which I had always had the most passionate energy. We thought we could manage it with minimal travel on three days, so I went back as Vice President of Enterprise Culture for **Unilever Global Infrastructure Organisation**. The minimal travel bit was going to be a real challenge for me. My style, since joining Unilever, had been very face-to-face in the different parts of the globe. However, in my past career in IBM I had had the vast experience of delivering a global role whilst a travel ban was in place, through use of technology. **As a board member of the GIO, therefore, if anyone was going to make this flexible working work, it would be me.**

So, **wherever I lay my laptop, that is my home!** There was a survey of my home office environment, a laptop which could connect via dial-up outside of the Unilever network – remember, I wrote this three years ago, so this was all OK then – and I had a hot desk in Crawley. I used to camp in people's offices when meeting with people with whom I needed to interact. I have never been office-phobic or territorial and **the technology today should allow me to link wherever I need to, which is far preferable to the hours that I used to spend logging on from hotel rooms.**

I have **nanny cover** from eight o'clock to six o'clock on a Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. She is **flexible to change and to work extra** if we have planned it in advance. We put that in to stop me just staying late at the office. She will also stay late at night, but she does **not live with us**, which is something that we felt very strongly about, and I will be home at six o'clock every night to bath my son and put him to bed. I wrote this three years ago! The strict discipline was something that I needed. Throughout a 24-hour period, as we said earlier, someone in our global organisation will always be working, so emails, instant messaging and teleconference calls can happen whenever I dictate and someone will be there if we need to plan calls at later stages within that 24 hours.

Overseas travel will happen once or twice a quarter and my husband and I agreed that whoever gets the time in the diary first will be the one who travels, and the other one stays at home – so it is a rush.

The next heading that I have here from three years ago is **guilt**. One of the leading emotions on returning to work is that of guilt. It is not the guilt of leaving my son at home but the **guilt of being able to have both:** I can have a

demanding job and still have **the time I want with my family**. I know that there are colleagues of mine and people in the wider Unilever who think, 'She cannot be a VP, she cannot be a board member and work part-time.' I also get a sixth sense of those who thought that by having a child and working part-time, I was now 'out of the running' for any of the serious career positions.

My commitment to Unilever, my family and myself are to prove that this will work. Together we will find a way of measuring output and not the hours or location. My way of dealing with the guilt has been to remind myself constantly that I am now paid for 60% of the output I used to give. I am dedicated to making this work for the sake of women in the future who may feel the pressure more strongly and compromise what they really want.

The caveats I would put on this experience are that I am fortunate enough that the role can be flexible. I am fortunate to have an excellent nanny and we are prepared to spend most of my income on childcare. I have a husband who wants me to progress in my corporate career as much as I do.

That was three years ago. In March 2005, I had baby two. How life changes. After two months back at work, I realised that I was pregnant again! We had always wanted two children and my age dictated that, if we were going to have two, they would have to be fairly close together. So we were overjoyed.

The first two months back at work had been full of turmoil. After everything I said before, we had a new boss, who had been brought in from the external market with a view to re-engineering IT in Unilever. This was exactly what Unilever needed but the obvious nervous power struggles commenced amongst my colleagues.

As soon as I could meet with my new boss – Neil Cameron, Unilever CIO – I told him that I was pregnant again. He was delighted and gave me some very personal advice. It was evident that he was going to make huge changes in the organisation and so we agreed for me to do project work for the next four months. I compiled a document of my skills and my interests and of my non-interests. My underlying concern with him was that he had never seen me 'in action' – he had never seen me working at full potential and therefore I did not think he would rate me in his new organisation.

The birth of my second son was as emotional as that of the first – although I had it all planned with a Caesarean, he came three weeks early. The following four months were a complete blur to me and trying to juggle feeding with the circus tricks of a 15-month-old were probably the hardest four months of my life ever – despite having a nanny to help. The last two months of my maternity leave, however, were fantastic – a time that I will treasure for ever and be eternally grateful to Unilever for enabling me to spend that time with my young family. I would just note here, to make you all jealous, that Unilever's policy on maternity leave is to pay full pay for 40 weeks.

My attitude to returning to work this time, in March this year, was dramatically different. My sons love their nanny and the time they spend with her and all their friends when I am at work. There are no tears when I leave and I trust her implicitly. They are in much safer hands with her. I really needed to get my life back as well and this time I had no guilt. I have a newfound confidence and mindset – I will not tell you the terminology I use for it, but it is rude! – to cut through the bureaucracy and politics, I just physically no longer have the time for it.

I have **got my work/life balance right now** – it is just right for me – **but I have to work hard at it every single day**. I know that I have it easier than many and I have the support to make it work, from my husband, my nanny, my boss and, above all, from one of the most senior people in Unilever, Rudy Markham, through the **Reciprocal Mentoring Programme**. I was to take advantage of all this support that I have to make a stance and help others who may not be so lucky in having that backing.

I would like to end by selecting two quotes from the brochure, which you can read, and which make powerful statements as far as I am concerned. Rudy says it is:

'developing a more profound understanding of where the issues lie and how important they are to solve. A lot of the issues revolve around the signals that male managers send out – usually, but not always, through thoughtlessness – that can undermine women. For example, women have told me that they thought working part-time damaged their management credibility. Clearly if that is the perception, then that is what we have to address.'

Rhodora, who is also featured in the brochure makes a statement. She was our Global Diversity Manager and she said:

'I realised this wasn't just a promotion or retention problem. It is also a development issue. When you get to the top of a company you need to learn how to bring on others in the organisation who are different from you, otherwise you will only recruit people who are in the same mould. This isn't particular to Unilever. It applies to all people who reach the top of organisations. Everyone on the board recognises that the next generation of leaders needs to be different from the one that precedes it, which is why every member of the board has voluntarily signed up to the reciprocal mentoring programme.'

Thank you."

Wendy Hall: "That was fun – thank you very much for sharing that with us. I have a question: 'I still want to know what your current job is? What is the IT Academy?'"

Helen Toogood: "The **IT Academy** is a traditional IT Academy where we develop the IT skills for IT people in Unilever. We are growing it because we believe that, in Unilever, we have to change. We are **developing the traditional IT skills for IT people and we are also developing business skills for IT people as they move away from pure technical skills to being consultants to big business**. We need these consultants to be people who have the skills and the confidence to be able to do that.

The third area that I am working on is as an IT Academy, providing the learning and the education for the whole of Unilever, on what they need to understand about IT in order to include IT in business decisions and thought. So IT is not just a delivery but it needs to be integral. If you take companies moving forward in the world now, IT is integral to any decision that is made – a new way of trading, a new way of marketing, a new way of doing business will have IT in it. We need to educate our own business people, who do not want to know the first thing about IT but just deliver it and get it done – but they need to know more about it than that."

Wendy Hall: "How many people are you responsible for?"

Helen Toogood: "I have about ten people that I line manage, but I co-opt many people from around the globe to work with me. This is one of the networking things that work so well for women because, once you have developed those networks of people, we seem to be better at doing that than – a lot of other people."

Large Pharma User Of ITEC: Pfizer

Presentation by Trish Lawrence, Diversity Initiatives Manager, Pfizer PGRD

"Thank you for asking me to come today – I am here to support Jo Turner, who is our first Daphne Jackson fellow. Pfizer was the first organisation to be an industrial sponsor and then Elizabeth asked me if I would introduce Jo. I would like to say how much I have learned this morning and I echo everything Stephen and Helen have said because those philosophies apply to us too.

Diversity Initiatives at Pfizer PGRD

I have been asked to talk briefly about some of the initiatives that we have at Pfizer. Pfizer is a pharmaceutical organisation – we are about 130 worldwide and we are US owned. We are No 1 at the moment but this is where the issue lies: we will not stay at No 1 if we are complacent.

I do not know whether you know much about us. We are in research and development and we actually produce medicines for patients. We make everything from TCP right through to Viagra – quite a range.

I joined Pfizer about four years ago as an HR manager, which has stood me in really good stead because it means that I understand all the issues that our line managers face. For me, diversity is about enlightened management, so I feel that this has set me on the path to a real understanding.

Ten years ago, Pfizer realised that there was a gender issue and a Gender Working Report was written at that time. They were fully aware that, with the girls coming through university, our staff at Sandwich, totalling about 2700, is about 44 per cent female and 56 male, so you can see how concerned we are. I am sure you have read in the papers how well the girls are doing at university in the sciences, and they are coming through.

They had this report done about ten years ago but it made absolutely no impact because nothing was done. All the research was there and they knew what the problems were and so, 18 months ago, they appointed a diversity leader role, which I was fortunate to get. When I thought about the things that should be done, I was disappointed to see that these had already been thought about ten years previously. Immediately, therefore, I needed to understand the business. For us at Pfizer, the diversity business case rests on the value of creativity and innovation because we want to bring new medicines to patients.

In doing that, understanding what our business case was and talking to the leaders, the first step was **diversity awareness training**. This is just a piece about **letting all colleagues know what the business case was**, and that it is not a 'nice to have', but that it is an actual imperative for our business. Also, part of that training is about **self-reflection on your own behaviours** – how we make our own assumptions, how we do our stereotyping. All of that is fine and we are not asking people to change their values, beliefs or opinions, but just that they should have that awareness and self-reflection, and to keep doing that to challenge their own behaviours. **The key part for us was embedding this into everyday management practices.**

We have a new **mandatory performance management course**, called **Licence**

to **Supervise**, and diversity has been built into that. You could argue that just having a blanket diversity awareness training could be akin to sheep-dipping: how much do you retain, and how much do you really challenge your behaviours? Thus, building it into management practices is really key.

For me, **diversity means really keeping in touch with the people, with my colleagues, to understand what their issues are**. I must not make the assumption that I know what their issues are because they may not be the same as those that faced me as I was coming up in my career.

We held two **women's forums**. There was a **senior women's forum**, where we asked 100 senior women – we did have some – what they felt had **enabled them to reach their positions**, but also what had been the **barriers they had faced**. We wanted them to give us a clue as to **how we could help them**. Out of that, they asked us to look at **four areas**: the **consistent use of HR policies** across site; to look at our **reward and recognition criteria**, which are not the same as they were before because we need to **value different skills** and widen our thinking there. We needed to look at **how we were going to reward people**. Many of the things they asked us to do were actually what men would like us to do as well and so, by talking to women, we will actually help all colleagues and move forward with a **change in the culture**.

We then went on to look at our **immediate level women**, the next tier down, to ask them the same questions, and they felt there were exactly the same issues. Nothing had gone away – they were the **same issues** about **what we really value in people, how to reward them and how to help them**. There is the **consistent use of HR policies, particularly looking at flexible working arrangements, to take that fear factor out** – 'It is not a sign that I am not committed to my career!'

We have also gone on to do **sponsorships** this year. You may have noticed the **CBI women's award**, where we sponsored the science category. This is consistently sending out the message that we mean business around the gender issue.

For me personally with **mentoring**, again this came out of the Women's Forum. Those who had succeeded put such high value on the mentorship that they had received, as well as **proactive management** and **managing their own careers**. With the mentoring, I am sure you will agree that it is the two-way learning. If senior leaders are mentoring more junior staff, the **equal value** is in listening to the challenges that they are facing today and then feeding back into the organisation to affect policies and procedures and then to shift culture. It has even been suggested now that we should do this more overtly and appoint junior mentors for senior managers. This is an idea that may make quite an impact.

We have a **web-based mentoring system**, which is rather like a dating agency. This matches skills with needs and does some matching behind the scenes. It is a framework for a year-long relationship, and so it is very valuable.

On the subject of flexible working, I can speak personally because I have done **reduced time**. I have done **term-time only**, or I have done **job-shares**. I have had a career break for eight years. I feel so strongly that flexible working is a real tool for both attracting and retaining talent. I would like to reach the point where we can actually advertise in roles that 'this role lends itself to a particular type of flexible working'. You will then widen the recruitment pool. **From**

working with other agencies, my understanding is that in the 30- to 40-year-old age group, the work/life balance is the key priority for males and females.

At Sandwich where we are located in Kent, which is quite remote, flexible working is a key tool. So whatever we do, highlighted by women, I hope it will help everybody in the organisation.

Key, once again, are **networks**. When I first took on the role, we had a women's network and, since then, I have developed four further networks. These include a **rainbow alliance**, a **French network**, and a **further education network**. Once again, the further education network is for anybody undertaking part-time study, to mentor each other and to bring in speakers to talk about revision skills, how to tackle dissertations and so on. So a further education network is a little different.

In talking to my business leaders when I took on the role, the **issue of caring** arose. One of my senior leaders on site was himself looking after an elderly parent in Northern Ireland and also a sister with learning difficulties. Thus for him, in a really senior role and having these **caring responsibilities at a distance** – and, as I said earlier, with our location on the east coast of Kent, this is an issue for us – managing specifically elder care at a distance, while you are trying to be effective in your role is a real challenge.

I created the **Carers' Support Network** group and I am concentrating on that – and, as Elizabeth said, you might find that interesting. I have mentioned elder care, but it could be for the care of a partner or for a child with learning responsibilities. To have a caring responsibility – Stephen spoke of the aging population – with something like this, it is a real way that you can help everybody. For women coming back into the workplace – they are traditionally the carers – the idea of this is not just for women having had children, but women specifically with children with learning difficulties, but it is the same help. Our network groups also talk to each other and so people from the Women's Network Group would link in with Carers' Support. This is just one idea that means we really value that network group.

Monitoring and benchmarking are very important. We belong to these organisations to which I am sure the other big companies belong too. Elizabeth mentioned a **network group for diversity managers**. I belong to an organisation called **ORC, Vanguard Group**. I do not know whether anyone else belongs to that but we meet three times a year and it is diversity managers or HR personnel, specifically focused on diversity issues. I find that very helpful. Daily, they send me what they call a 'heads up', which is pertinent things happening in the news or in politics. If you are interested in that, you could look them up on the web – ORC.

As I said earlier, we were the **first industrial sponsor of the Daphne Jackson Fellowship**. At the moment we are going through organisational change and so, as I think Katie would agree, it has to fit in with the business needs of the organisation at any one time. However, as soon as we move through this change, I hope we will be able to take advantage of this scheme again.

Thank you for your time. Let me now introduce Jo, who will take you through her experience when she joined us in April 2001."

Women Returners – A Personal Perspective

Presentation by Jo Turner (Women Returners – A Personal Perspective) R&D Staff, Pfizer PGRD

"I would like to pull together a number of the things that we have talked about today. I am a woman returner. I went through the process with the Daphne Jackson Trust and I now have a full-time position with Pfizer, so this is a success story based on everything that you have been hearing about today.

Career Break – Obstacles

I will start with a list of things that you know already. This is just a list to most people, but these things are real obstacles to people who want to get back into work after a reasonable career break.

There is this **gap**. Things move on really quickly in science and it is impossible to keep up.

There is a **self-confidence dip**: you hit that bottom point and you look up and think, 'I cannot do this.'

Then there is the **network and contacts loss**. You might want to try to apply for lots of jobs, but you have no up-to-date relevant references for anybody to focus on, to help you get back in there.

There are **family commitments and childcare**, which you have all heard about today. These are very central to this idea of trying to get back to work. It can make life very difficult – there is guilt, absolute guilt, to start with, and that is just one of the things. This is one of the main things, and we have all heard this – nearly everybody who has spoken today has mentioned this lack of confidence in people who have been out of the workplace for a long time.

Absence from the Work Environment

I did not have a job for three and a half years and, in my experience, absence from the work environment meant that I felt that I was not valuable enough. **I did not have the confidence to feel that I was important enough for someone to employ me.** This was my attitude, and it was an attitude that many other people had too. That was compounded by the perceived value of skills in my social circle, in every person that I spoke to. They would say, 'You're a mum at home. What have you got to offer?'

Rejected Job Applications

My goodness, I tried for a year and employers want the best person for the job. Let's face it – we do not want to admit to it but people like me, who have been out of the workplace for that long, are not the best person for the job. You have had that gap and you have those other issues, and you have that total lack of confidence. Then there are the family obligations, which make it really difficult because there are **childcare issues**. As was said earlier – there is the nursery, the nanny and the childminder, but how do you go about it anyway? It is very difficult.

For short-term maternity leave and for other things like that, as Trish has

already mentioned, Pfizer has all these network groups, and so on, set up for that, which is absolutely brilliant. They also have a **nursery**.

However, I really want to **focus on the people who have been out of work for a longer period of time**. It is difficult for people to go back after a career break for maternity leave, short-term, but at least they have a job to go back to and they can do something about it. When you have been out for so long, you feel helpless. You also have very low self-esteem – or at least, I did.

My personal circumstances at the time when I was trying to do this were quite desperate. I was a single mum with a small baby and had moved to a new area, and I was trying to do this. My confidence was on the floor.

Choices – for Long-Term Absence from Work

What choices did I have? I did not really feel that I had many. I tried for a year, and I tried everyone. I asked them for a job, I told them I was talented and that I had transferable skills, but it is very difficult to convey that. So my **choices** were to **take a job below my capacity** – I could wipe bottoms in an old people's home, the same as anybody else – but I felt that that would be a real waste. I, and other people, had invested a good deal of time and effort in my training so why should I waste it? My other choice was to **keep on with the job applications**, but every rejection was just another knock back, and your confidence just gets lower. You end up in a complete vicious circle, where you **feel as though you are unemployable**.

Help!

So help – what do you do now? As we all know – from today, especially – there is loads of information out there, absolutely loads of it, but how do you find it? I did not know what I did not know! The other day, I decided to do a quick internet search. I had a keyword, **'women returners': I typed it into Google** and up came this page with everything on it. Every single organisation that has been represented here today was on it, but I did not know that. I had no idea what that key word was at all. It was a simple thing.

Also, because of my circumstances, I had **very limited access** to anything that would have got me out there.

So how did I get a job? In fact, it was through one of those **free newspapers** that is put through your door. The advert said, 'Are you someone who has been out of work for a long time, after a career break or bringing up your family?' That leapt off the page at me – I thought, 'That's me. That's mine. I'm going for that.' That was brilliant, but it was luck.

Facilitators – My Experience

I needed someone to help me and so my first point of contact was the **Daphne Jackson Trust**. They needed to find out my eligibility to apply, so there are criteria that you have to go through, but they do that on the telephone and you know almost immediately whether you are eligible to apply. You then go through the application process and they put me in touch with Pfizer – which was a terrifying experience, but it was brilliant. They talked me through what I would be doing and they helped me to write the outline of a proposal. I was an environmental scientist before and Pfizer was a pharmaceutical company so I had to retrain. I did not just update but I

retrained, which was a very scary thing to do. They helped me to map out a research proposal and I wrote that. It took a long time, so it was a success story, but it was not an easy route, but I think that is now being addressed by the new Industrial placement scheme being set up by the Daphne Jackson Trust – the associates. My experience was that it took a fairly long time with a good deal of hard work.

Pfizer also gave me access to other contacts and I started to get a network together. There was also practical support both from the Daphne Jackson Trust and from Pfizer. At Pfizer I was put in touch with people who could help me with childcare. There were courses I could go on such as time management, and things that would help me to regain my confidence enough to get back in there and do my job. **They gave me training**, obviously, because I had to retrain completely. They also gave me emotional support, which was a big issue because I really needed someone to say, 'You can do it! You are worth something and you can do it!' That was brilliant.

The Role of the Facilitator

From my experience, the role of the facilitator is with people like the Daphne Jackson Trust, and employers who have these policies in place. You have **to help identify the attitude of the candidate**. I thought I was pretty worthless – other people think that you can do it but you just do not know.

They also need to **help you identify your aspirations**. Where are you going to go? When you have this career break, you come out of a job at a certain level and when you go back in – for me at least – it was at a different and much lower level. I therefore had to adjust how I thought of myself in the workplace, and my attitude, of course, to complete retraining.

They also **have to provide practical help**. In a sympathetic placement, does your supervisor have a sense of humour, when you are absolutely terrified, following somebody around the lab with a pipette? You need appropriate training, taking in your previous skills and your transferable skills from your career break into consideration too.

The **advice on managing family commitments and childcare** is of huge importance because you feel incredibly guilty about just going back to work yourself. **Networking opportunities** are very important and luckily Pfizer and the Daphne Jackson Trust have these extensive networks that you can tap into. There is also the question of being available for emotional support and tears.

I have been talking to many women who want to get back into Pfizer as returners. They are really talented and highly qualified women, but they do not think they can do it. All they need for you to do is to be on the other end of a phone or on email, and be there so that there is quality of contact for that individual and they can be encouraged and have their confidence boosted.

With support, encouragement and advice, I managed to **retrain**. I have **built up my confidence**, to the extent that I am able to talk to you today but, four years ago, I would not have been able to do that. I would not have been able to walk through that door without cringing.

I have **re-evaluated my career aspirations** and so I have gone in a completely **new** direction, with which I am really happy. I am now in full-time employment, which is the ultimate aim of the Daphne Jackson Trust – to make

you good enough to be back in the employment market, where somebody actually wants to give you a job.

So, what did it Take?

So, what did it take? **Determination is the bottom line.** We have to be very determined and we have to be so determined because **all the systems that we have been talking about today are not actually in place, or they are in place but people do not know how to access them. There are many employers who do not really understand the problem.** It takes a great deal of hard work. I wrote a research proposal which was like an academic proposal for funding, on a subject that I had never ever studied before.

I was willing to change career direction because I was so desperate to get back into science and I did not want to do anything else. I therefore did not really mind which area I went into, as long as it held some fascination.

I had an awful lot of support from my facilitator at the Daphne Jackson Trust. Everyone at the Daphne Jackson Trust, and everyone at Pfizer too, has been absolutely brilliant. They are an enlightened employer. They knew the issue and certain parts of the company put such a great deal of effort in. They now have all these other programmes in place and it is all coming together wonderfully well.

Change 'Luck' to Probability

Then luck. Do you remember the newspaper article I mentioned a little while ago? All we have to do is to change that luck to probability, so that other women can be in the same position as I am now.

We should increase the visibility of the facilitators. It's OK – I know the keywords now, as do you all, but there are other women out there like me who do not. You would not even think of going to your computer, if you had one or if you had access to one, and putting in 'women returners'. All you need is the keyword, so how do we get that keyword out there so that everyone knows that, at any point in their life, when they have had a career break and they are ready to go back to work, they just have to type in one little word and the information will appear, and links to further information.

That would lead to more employers promoting diversity initiatives. I am not aware of the current statistics of companies that are doing this, so I cannot comment on that. However, the bottom line for me is that the information is out there for women who were in my position, but the awareness of it is not. That is what we have to do, and that is what we have all been saying today.

Acknowledgements

Let me thank everyone for listening, and everyone at the Daphne Jackson Trust and Pfizer because, as well as having a job, I now have lots of friends. Thank you."

Discussion Session

Led by Dr Jane Millar, Migration Research Unit, UCL

Jane Millar: "Before we start this session, I would like to thank Kath, Helen and Jo from the bottom of my heart – as I am sure you all will – for taking such trouble to give us such an honest and emotional insight into their experiences of returning. It is my job to get you all talking once more and I hope that will happen.

We are moving towards – at a very early stage – a very ambitious project, thinking about the real practical issues. Someone referred this morning to the good, the bad and the ugly about actually getting women returners back – and in this case our focus is on women returners, although that is not always the case. You will all have realised from the discussion that our focus is not necessarily just on women, and our focus is probably not even necessarily just on the issues of IT electronics and communications but it is much wider than that.

Perhaps, as a focusing device for our discussion, we could think about what Elizabeth raised earlier today – the **transition points**, or **barriers**, the places where those good, bad and ugly examples will be. On the one hand, there are women who are in a good and hopefully sustainable, skilled perhaps, job in IT, who are starting to think that they might like to get out and not do it any longer, and then there is the issue of retention. It is vitally important to try to retain women, even while they are on career breaks in some way or other. So what about the issue of retention?

Retention

We have also **focused today on the issue of women returners** and that is where we would really like to engage your discussion. This is one of various elements to quite a complex pathway through a career which, for many women, means continually reinventing themselves, as our last example has shown. So not only is it about how women who have exited these jobs get back into them, but how employers encourage them to re-enter the workplace. How are they pulled back in for re-entry? How, even if they have not been in those jobs, do they progress within them to more senior roles, so that they have some sense of added value through investment in their own training, their development and so on and so forth?

I would like you to think about your reflections on the honest presentations that we have had today, and on your own experiences as well, when you have perhaps either been in the position of being a woman returner, a woman in IT or, indeed, any or many of those roles. **What kind of incentives might you have felt there were, promoting you in a particular career choice? What are employers up against when they want to retain you and you are hell-bent on going? Four and a half years around the world sounds lovely, but what kind of interventions might have kept the employer's link going? What might be instrumental in getting women to return back into the workplace? What might help women to recognise, or empower women to take hold of their skills and recognise their value, and progress within their jobs?** That takes energy and commitment.

What are the kinds of challenges? We are on to the ugly side here, talking about the difficulties. We have heard a **good deal about mentoring schemes**

today, and I have come away with the notion of **how varied the different approaches to mentoring are in different companies and groups. Why some and not others? What are the advantages of some? What are the difficulties of setting up these schemes? Are there any? Is it all easy? If so, why are there not more of them?**

What are the challenges at these various stages? And who is responsible at each stage? How do we get the various schemes and the various actors, and the individuals themselves, and industries and intermediaries – and there, I would include women's groups, industry bodies, representative associations, recruitment agencies and so on, and the public sector? Where do their responsibilities lie in that space of getting women to embrace the opportunities and benefit from engaging in an IT career?

I would encourage you to come out and say your piece or, if you have anything that you would like to add to the afternoon, or indeed the morning, session – if you have a burning issue, we would like to hear from you. Would anyone like to add to the debate?"

Juliet Webster (IPA): "I would like to add something that might be a provocation, but it might also belong in your challenges column. This relates to the fact that, particularly in the last session, we talked a good deal about individual companies' good practices and the experiences of individual employees – women who have returned and some of the positive experiences they have had.

Let me now be a little negative and raise the **issue of the working conditions**, particularly in the IT industry as a whole, which pose a challenge for us in the project in trying to get women in, retained and back in. There is growing evidence that the **working conditions – the long hours and so on that we see – are working conditions not peculiar to IT but they are spreading across the whole of the labour market.** We could see the IT industry as a pioneer in bad practice, if you like, as well as in good practice.

I am interested to know **what the good practice companies are doing** – some of whom we have heard from already – **about not just working hours, but the pressures of having people on client sites, needing to answer to very immediate problems of clients.** These are companies that are driven, as we all are, by the needs of meeting customer demands and so on. **What are they doing about straightforward discriminatory management practices, which all too often still exist? What about discrimination?** There are things like managerial career paths which seem to work in such a way that it means that the IT profession changes its stripes – just as women seem to be dropping out in mid-career or at childbirth.

There are many factors at work which are preventing women from coming back in, or from staying in the IT sector. Many of these have to do with **the actual conditions of work in the sector itself.** I just wanted to return the discussion to that challenge."

Jane Millar: "There is a challenge for the employers in particular there. Perhaps I could gaze at one meaningfully."

Stephen Alford (Fujitsu): "I am afraid I could not avoid that look! I have a couple of comments. I agree that there is a very long way to go, especially in the IT sector. Perhaps I could just mention two or three **things that have been happening** in our own company.

I can remember back in 2003, or whenever the legislation came in about family-friendly policies. In those days, I was a regional HR manager in the North of Ireland and, as well as launching that policy, we deliberately held **awareness sessions for managers and employees**. The immediate reaction of managers was that they could not do that – everyone works 37 hours a week, and that's that. So we explained it and worked through it, and **within a year we had ten per cent of a 400-person workforce working flexi-hours as a result of that**. This taught me that you can have all the policies in the world, but unless you **explain how to implement them in practice**, you might as well not bother writing them. So that is one point.

Secondly, in relation to recruitment and selection, coming from the North of Ireland, because of our own significant problems, for the past 20 years we have had leading edge practice in relation to that. We have had to, because the legislation is different, and we are now implementing that across here in Great Britain within Fujitsu. By the start of next year, **unless managers within Fujitsu have been through the recruitment and selection training and have been certified as being successfully through it – because there is a test at the start and at the end – they will not be allowed to recruit on their own and there must be someone who is certified with them**. That is simply to look at all areas – coming back to this whole area of objectivity and fairness, the best HR practice.

Finally, in Fujitsu we have **broken down our workforce by skill base**. We have **professional communities**. Kath is in the **project community** and I am in the HR community, while others are in, say, the **software development community**. We have done a great deal of work around the competencies that you need to develop your career so that we try as best we can to **eliminate the prejudices, or the halo effect which means that only certain people can do certain jobs**. It comes down to whether you have the **competence to do the job**.

There is a **mixture of education, training, and continuing to work at developing practices that will eliminate that invisible, almost institutional discrimination that can exist in companies.**"

Helen Toogood (Unilever): "This has to be done by each one of us – **it is only people who can change the culture, and we cannot expect the culture to change itself**. One of the key points for me was that I interviewed a guy, who is listed as one of our high performance people in IT, for a job about two or three months ago. He was at work level two, and I asked him where he wanted to be in the future. He said that he wanted to get to work level three and then he saw himself staying at that level. I asked him why he did not want to be at work level four, the next stage up, and he said that, quite frankly, it would interfere with his life. He had a young child and a wife, and he saw his future as being a father who is not away all the time.

I asked him, if I could explain to him that work level four did not have to be like that, would he be interested? He said, 'Absolutely, but I have seen no examples of work level fours who do not work all the hours God sends. They are away from their home and they have to be on a plane and they are travelling.' I therefore addressed that with the IT leadership team, the central part of which I am a part of, and I have challenged them to **add vitality into their mission statement**, into their being, into their behaviours and into everything else. Otherwise, we just will not have anybody of any substance getting into the IT organisation.

We need to develop **role models of people who are successful**, who are not geeks and who are not boring, and who have some element of excitement about them, which people might want to be like in the future. On the other hand, one of the things that the mentorship programme has highlighted for me is that you cannot just expect people to be like that because they find it very difficult. I am therefore putting my energies into helping the leaders to become more what we call – it is a big thing in Unilever – it is **vitality**. It is a matter of creating role models, but helping people to become role models as well."

Haifa Takruri-Rizk (Salford University): "I am a researcher researching all the issues that we have been talking about today, and others too. I would like to pose a challenge. We heard this morning that only 25 per cent of SET graduates actually go into SET careers and the challenge is to find out what sort of experiences those graduates – women graduates – face at university. Are those experiences putting them off carrying on into SET careers? Or is it the employability into SET careers putting them off? I do not think they all try to find jobs in SET – perhaps some of them have had a bad experience and have not tried to find jobs, but others did try to find jobs but were not successful for one reason or another.

At the moment, we are researching the organisational cultures and the working practices, especially in the engineering industry in the North West of England. Once we find what we are going to research about – because we have just started – I hope we will be able to disseminate that. **We have just finished a problem on finding many of the barriers that women face when they go into employment in engineering."**

Jane Millar: "I should like to come back to you on that and bring in some of the recruiters. When I have been going around, asking questions of companies, particularly in IT, science and engineering companies, I find – and I do not know whether this is replicated across the piece – that many employers, not only in SET, but SET employers are competing with other companies, such as management, accountancy and so forth, for very highly skilled and trained people who are adept in particularly disciplined ways of thinking. **There is a real competition out there for very well-skilled, well-trained minds. That is an issue. I do not know whether the recruitment people would like to comment on that."**

Joanne Welch: "I deal with the more senior levels, but I will try to address the **graduate level**, because there is an indication there of the extent to which we expect graduates in one subject to stay within that subject when they move on. I am an English graduate and there was no way that I was ever going to work in English.

I would like to recount a situation in which I found myself last week. I went to visit a UK branch of a US company who were looking for some process engineers. The whole industry is quite static at the moment but they are desperately trying to bring people in to respond to the growth that they can see in their particular industry. They are essentially trying to cannibalise their own – they are looking to the competition, to try to bring them in.

There is no real long-term thought as to where this talent will come from. What do they do? **They get stuck and they bring the recruiters in, but we cannot solve a problem when those individuals are not there to actually recruit. It really comes down to the long-term – how can you bring individuals in at different stages in the pipeline, as referred to earlier, to take**

a long-term view of this and not see the recruiters as a solution to an ill that has been a long time in the making."

Katie Perry: "I would like to make a point about when people are in a career and they are thinking of going out. What incentives are there to keep them there? It is my experience that, when I went on maternity leave, there was **absolutely no incentive to keep me. I wanted to work part-time when I returned, but they said no: 'I'm sorry, but it will be too much administrative hassle for us to have to have two people fill your job.'**

Whilst we hear a great deal at meetings like this about the excellent schemes that happen in the Fujitsus and the Pfizers, who are among the world's top three companies, the **problem exists for a great many people who work in smaller companies, for which there are no incentives.** In fact, once somebody decides they want to leave, they are quite happy to wave goodbye and say, 'Off you go!'

Something Helen said really strikes a chord with me. It has been traditionally thought that it is women who want a good work/life balance once they have families but that is not so. **Men want as good a work/life balance as women do, and they are the ones who need to kick against the long hours culture, as well as women."**

Jane Millar: "A number of points were raised there. I do not want to lose the point about **the long hours culture.** You talked about two other things as well, in terms of responding to client needs in the industry and how that imposes particular strictures on what can be achieved within flexible working arrangements and also on managerial career paths. Perhaps you would like to elaborate a little further about what you meant on that last point."

Juliet Webster: "The point I was making about managerial career paths arose out of the fact that I was very struck by the slide that Elizabeth showed this morning, with the **grid of barriers** – points at which people enter and leave the industry. Some work that I did a while back – and I am sure this will be news to many of you – was about women's progression within the industry. What we found, and I think this is familiar stuff, is that the IT profession and the IT career changes during the career pathway, so that most people who enter at a **young** age are, in the IT industry, particularly **concerned with technical work.** As their **career progresses, the technical skills that they need become displaced to a certain extent by the need for business and managerial skills.** In a sense, they leave the technical work behind often, and may move **first into things like team leadership and then into management positions, or higher management positions.**

It struck me, when I was listening to Elizabeth, **that that sort of process seems to be occurring just at the point in time in women's lifecycles when they often drop out of the sector – upon childbirth and then in midlife.** It is very interesting that there seems to be this confluence of these two points and I just wonder, once again, what the good practice companies are doing to tackle that issue, that people are dropping out of technical work. It seems to me that the issue is not necessarily about renewing technical skills, because we are talking mostly about returners here and people who are coming back after a career break. It is about other **issues to enable them to come back in at levels at which they left, and not taking them down to the bottom of the career ladder again.** That was the point I was trying to make – that there is perhaps an issue that we have not thought of there."

Jane Millar: "Does anyone have anything to add on that? Is this something that companies are tackling? Are they changing their management career paths to better advantage women in a particular way?"

Helen Toogood: "For us, within Unilever, where IT is not our core industry, we are very much looking to **re-skill our own IT people, to have more business consulting skills**. That is really what part of my job is about. You are absolutely right and you have raised a very good point. When women are coming back to work, even if they want to come back to the level at which they left, they may **want leadership skills**. Something we have said with Equalitec is that we do a project management skills course – much of our work is around projects and their managements, and so there are project management programme directives and so on. So I think you are right."

Stephen Alford: "This is an issue that I had not thought about, in relation to the work within diversity. All I can say to you is that, **the better the practice in terms of career mapping, regardless of who you are career mapping for, then the easier it should be for women coming back in**. You can point out that there are the competencies that you need to move from this role into that role – say, from a purely technical role into a management role. Then, if you do not have career mapping, people do not know what they need to help themselves to advance into that role. I had not really thought about it from that point of view – I understand the point you are making but **it is down to really good practice within organisations in terms of how you progress people and assess them for the next role in the organisation**."

Could I just pick up on one point that was raised about graduate recruitment? If the lady would like, I could give her the contact, because she works near our Manchester office. Two years ago, we did an analysis of our graduate intake and the number of females was less than ten per cent. I was not involved, but it was a lady who works up in Manchester. She worked closely with one of our recruitment partners and they suggested that, when they did an analysis of all the **blurb** that we sent round the universities, it was **not very appealing for female graduates to read**. They therefore **rewrote it in a way which, they said, was much more interesting to female graduates**. The result was **nearly a 50 per cent split in the next year's intake, male/female**. What was totally unexpected was the **40 per cent ethnic minority uptake in terms of graduates as well**. Thus, **in terms of attracting female graduates, there is much work to be done about how you market yourself, and what terminology you use to make yourself an employer of choice**. From the business point of view, that is what we need to do to attract the best talent."

Jane Millar: "It would be worth having a look at that, in terms of before and after. That is something that could be shared quite widely. This is something that comes up over and over again. There is the issue about how technical jobs are described and presented, and whether they are presented as being attractive in any way. Perhaps, if you get in touch with the partners – as you are – and swap that information, that would be a good insight into some of those difficulties."

Let us focus for a while on **motivation and incentives**. I should explain that I wrote a report in 2001 – the first report I ever wrote – on women in IT. This was also the first time that I had received hate mail from women, saying, 'What the hell are you trying to do, forcing us to take up these awful jobs?' This made me address the issues of the culture of work very seriously. This is something that we are engaged in here, from the bottom up, trying to change.

Also, there is a commercial reality to employing more women. There has to be a good business case for employing more women and there has to be a good business case for diversity, writ large. We have heard from a couple of employers who – from your point of view at Fujitsu – have a clear commercial imperative to up your diversity initiative, in order to gain access to public sector money.

We have heard about motivation by awareness just of leakage or drain of the number of women. Does it make sense to think about this? Before we can start to mainstream any initiative and have it taken up by employers, then really the **motivation to take those initiatives up has to be grounded in good, commercial rationales, good business sense**. Does that make sense, here? Does it make sense to have a discussion about what that commercial business strength might be? What are your thoughts on why employers should encourage more women into IT, in this case, or into the workplace more generally, in science, engineering and technology? What kind of incentives might be put in place to encourage more employers to do that?"

Haifa Takruri-Rizk: "The first thing I can think of is that **we are losing quite a lot of IT skills in the UK**. Some of the industries here are going to the Far East or to other countries. That is the first point. We are also having to import a large proportion of IT personnel from abroad into the UK, while we could invest in the workforce that we already have. The women form part of that."

Jane Millar: "So there is the wider issue of global sourcing in IT, as a deterrent to inclusion in the UK workforce. Is that your point?"

Helen Toogood: "You are right about the fact that it has to have a **business case**. If it is not increasing revenue for the company or decreasing costs, then no one will do it. I have some charts – although not here with me today – which show the successful delivery of high-performance teams. If you have a very homogenous team, you will get a mediocre result, but you will always have a mediocre result. **If you have a very diverse team, you risk the chance of having rubbish results if they are not managed correctly, but you also have the opportunity for increasing results and having superb results if a diverse team is managed correctly.**

However, there is a whole other ballgame around that, you have to have the right leadership in place to manage – and if you are nodding your head, you probably know more about it than I do. **The business benefit has to be that, if you have diversity, you have a more high-performing team, which will deliver better results, which get you more revenue in the long term. No company will do it, unless it delivers a bottom line.**

Jane Millar: "But the risk is investing in high level management talents?"

Helen Toogood: "Yes, **the risk is managing that diversity because, if you do not manage diversity correctly, you get even worse results than if you had a homogenous team**. People would then just give up, if they had tried it and it did not work. There is a whole range of things around this – it is not just a matter for me of recruiting and retaining, but it is about leading it and managing it. It is the whole culture around that."

Julie Ashdown (Opportunity Now): "Just in the context of the public sector, one of the things that will make a big difference will be the introduction of the public duty to **promote gender**, which is coming in in the **Equalities Bill**. The

DTI are launching a document early next month, which is a consultation paper about that. The consultation period will run from early October until Early January and there is a great opportunity for campaigning organisations who are here to feed their views into the DTI, that we would like to see some sort of requirement for public bodies, whenever they tender – make sure that companies certify compliance."

Jane Millar: "So there is a challenge for another open consultation document. Is that on the DTI website?"

Helen Toogood: "You could **make out a business case that you will lose contracts by not having the right people in place. That will force people to have to do it.**"

Wendy Hall: "I have tried to stay quiet, but I cannot. When I was BCS President, I received letters about a woman's place being in the kitchen. You cannot believe that, in this day and age, there is still that attitude.

In Southampton, the school I run – ECS – is a very research-led university and on our courses we have about 200 undergraduates a year with **about five per cent women on those courses**, which is appalling. These are the **techies**, and they are the **people who are deeply into producing new systems**, learning how to do research in computing and electronics, and going into that sort of industry.

Helen made the point about diversity in the workforce – and that a diverse workforce is an effective workforce, and there are lots of things we could say about that. **The way things are going, as Helen said, it is about project management and it is all back to women's skills.** Also, in the sort of world that I work in, the **graduates we are training will be developing the new products of the future.** At the moment, the people who are really developing these products, whether it is on the software side or the hardware side, it is all merging together in systems and micro chips, but **they are all being designed by men**, and **yet women are 50 per cent of the users.** There is a huge difference from here to there in terms of sales of the gadgets. **I am very keen on designing from the beginning the interfaces, gadgets and devices that appeal to women, straight off** – not down the line, but for us as the first adopters of things. That is my usual answer, when asked that question."

Katie Perry: "I was going to make an amusing comment about what you were saying about women using products that are designed. The Ford Motor Company has got around this by realising that most of the workforce they had designing cars were actually men, and so they have developed a pregnancy belly for men to wear while they are designing cars. They found that, actually, if they cannot get women in to design cars that will suit a heavily pregnant woman, they will make men effectively heavily pregnant – and they hated it! That is just something that Ford has been doing."

Wendy Hall: "One of my PhD students went off to work for Siemens in Princeton. There was the whole idea of listening to the web. We will not be able to use the web by looking at it, but we are moving around so we need to be able to listen to what is on a web page. You would therefore need to have someone speaking 'web' to you – not just the content, but saying that there is a link here, or all that interactive stuff. You have to be able to hear it. There is therefore all this work on audio-icons and so on. They are using the Doppler effect to get sounds that pick up what a sound means as it moves around, between the headsets, with the stereo effect.

I had been listening to my student giving a talk about the work that they were doing on this, and talking about the evaluation. At the same time, I had been listening to some work on the physiological differences between men and women and how women are so much better at hearing three or four conversations at once – because we just use our brains differently. I suggested to him that, because of this research, there must be a difference between the way women hear these sounds, or pick them up, and men. I asked him whether he had tried this out on women, and he said no. I asked him why not, and he said that it was because they did not have any women in the lab! This is where it is at the moment. Volvo have actually had an all-women team design a car."

Helen Toogood: "Microsoft at the moment are looking at products of the future and making them more useable by corporate organisations and one of the things they are looking at is a PDA type of thing. They interviewed me and we came to the conclusion that they are all boys' toys and that Microsoft have not used women in their research before. I asked them to take a photograph of my diary and, when they can reproduce that, that is what I will use – because I cannot get the emotions that are attached to my diary on a PDA. They now actually have a female working for them – not since me, but they have told me this now – looking at how they can appeal to the female market."

Wendy Hall: "Microsoft have no women – they have such a small number of women employed."

Bola Olabisi (GWIIN): "I hope this is positive. We carried out our little research about three years ago, because we were looking for women in the automobile companies. We wrote several letters to various organisations, just looking for women who were coming up with new ideas. The feedback we had – we did not really have that many – and even when we did find those who were in those areas, the women themselves said that they did not really want to come out. They did not want to be in the spotlight – they just wanted to carry on doing what they were doing.

I feel that, somehow, there is something about us as women, so that we feel that we do not want to be in the spotlight. Perhaps that is just a general thing, and perhaps it is a cultural thing, just wanting to keep going. My message is that we should try to blow our own trumpets a little more, and bring all of our achievements out."

Kevin Fisher: "Going back to my years of working in a bank, we did not have a problem with looking at **women in terms of their abilities because they were always far better at marketing**. When they go up in the levels, IT and things like that, it did not matter so much because, the **higher the level you go, the more leadership qualities you have, and we were not so worried about technical skills**. Much has been said about technical skills but, in leadership, you do not necessarily need that – we are looking for more managerial leadership skills.

At that time, I worked in personnel and we had women leaving. You have interventions there, and I thought about how you get the women back. This links in to what has just been said about how you feel about yourselves.

In personnel, I found that there were **two fairly easy ways of getting women back – because we had targets**. We had tried the recruitment consultants, who could not help us because we were not generating our own, so we

thought we had to get our own back. First off, I got the staff to **ring the women up when they were off on maternity leave, to ask how things were going.** That surprised most women, because nobody usually asked them from the company. It was usually the case that we sent them letters about when they had to come back, but nobody ever asked them, and we found that worked quite well.

Then the second way, **to actually get the women back and to achieve some results – and this is possibly a little cynical – we worked on their partners.** If there was a partner, we targeted their partner, because that was a very good way of getting them back. **Otherwise, there were the parents,** and those were the people we actually targeted. **If the lady herself would not come back, then we started to work on the others, and we found that was remarkably successful."**

Jane Millar: "What kind of tactics did you use on the partners?"

Kevin Fisher: "We showed them **how much we appreciated their partner and how much respect they had in the organisation, the status they held, and how good it would be for them to come back, and for the other person to have quality time with the children. We worked on their guilt feelings.** I came from a marketing background – I am sorry! I do not do that any more – that was in a past life. However, it works and those are two effective ways of getting people back, because we often forget their partners. We work on those, and then just simply ringing the women up in the first place, or just contacting them, will deliver quite good results."

Jane Millar: "So – that is **resounding for human contact, networking, mentoring, treating people as social beings.**"

Trish Lawrence: "I have several points to make, because I have been listening to everybody. I hope I get these in the right order – these are just things that I wanted to share with you. I have talked to you about our senior women's forum. As the women were leaving, we asked for a show of hands, to indicate who in the room would like to take advantage of **flexible working arrangements – and 90 per cent of hands went up.** Flexible working is my favourite topic at the moment, so I just wanted to share that with you.

The other thing we learned was that we stress that **it is up to the colleague to come up with a creative solution to the type of flexible working that they want,** because they are the person closest to the role. **They should not leave it to the manager,** who is full of fear – until we get our training in place for them. So it has to be a **partnership, coming up with the creative solution.**

Dare I say that, in our own HR department, somebody wanted to go for a nine-day fortnight. Talking about meeting clients' needs, it was said that this would not work because what would happen when that person was out on that Friday? But what happens when they are travelling, or when they are on holiday? You put in backup. Therefore, not only did I suggest and keep recommending that, to retain this really valuable member of staff – who was a female but without children, but who just wanted to have this day off for her own reasons – but lo and behold, I went on to suggest that they appointed another person on a nine-day fortnight, so we would then have two of them. But you can see where I am going: you have an immediate backup, because they would become buddies. Much of this is about the creative solution, and thinking about how we can make this work because there is such a pay-off. I am really coming back to the question about what incentives people can offer.

There was another question about career paths for women. I am sure that you will agree that many women, to get back into the workforce, will come in at a lower level, and so we are losing talent because they have capability that we are not tapping into. Then there is this other piece about people coming back on reduced time and we talk about how they will learn leadership skills. However, when I talk to women on reduced time, when they have their goals and say they are going from five days to three days, they just immediately do an automatic chop to three-fifths of output – but they do not leave time in that for **influencing skills, network skills and demonstrating what we call leadership behaviour**. Therefore, when it comes to promotion, they say, 'We have no evidence of you doing this', but you have not built in any time for them to do it. This is why I am suggesting that organisations are not actually being honest. I am also sure you will agree about the cramming five days into three issue. There needs to be real honesty with much of this.

The other point about senior roles – talking about the IT, because we have an in-house department – our Head of Informatics, who is a male, has come to me and said, 'Nobody wants my job, male or female. When I try to pinpoint a successor, it is because of the long hours and the travel and whatever.' I do not think we will even be having a gender issue, but it is just that there will be no staff at senior levels – if I go back to my point that those between 30 and 40 who were looking at work/life balance are going to be our future leaders.

Those are all the points I wanted to make there."

Marina Larios: "I would like to make a point about **prevention**. In terms of **resources, this is much better than trying to solve certain issues about helping women to go back**. Something that we have seen with a lot of programmes and evaluation is that, **if women could only be in touch as well when they are on maternity leave, and at the same time if employers could prepare women before they go on maternity leave – I have heard a good deal about some companies that have mentoring schemes. They have women who have just recently returned from maternity leave, to be the mentor of a woman who is about to go on maternity leave. This has proved to be extremely successful.**

Something else we realise is that many women are a part of professional bodies but, once they are on maternity leave, they lose all kind of contact. This has a knock-on effect on their self-confidence, which is one of the main points that we have seen as an obstacle. It is a question about how we work in partnership to make sure that we can prevent those skills from deteriorating. There is no need for women to lose their self-confidence – I think you mentioned that, when you saw other women who had a similar situation in playgroups. It is very powerful, when you have a support mechanism. Within the diagram, this is backing the re-entry/prevention strategy."

Jane Millar: "That is vital. We are hearing a good deal today about the advantages of having women in the workplace, as a vehicle for having access to skills. But, of course, women who have worked in a company are also a vehicle for that unquantified, uncosted element. They are also a **vehicle for specialist corporate knowledge. Companies actually take a long while to select and recruit the right person in the first place, as someone who will fit in. I would imagine that the cost of losing specialist corporate knowledge is probably greater than the cost of retraining.**"

Katie Perry: "This is just a comment, but something I would really like to see

happen. It might possibly address some of the problems that Juliet and others have raised. Going back to graduate level, women do not tend to plan their **career in its entirety – including a career break and coming back. They tend to think of it more in fragmented terms in that they start on a career and then perhaps they have children – and that career then stops for them, and then they re-enter.**

I would like to see women being able to have an element of career-break planning. Then, if they start with a company, they can say, 'Right, map out my career structure.' and that will include a career break of possibly two years or possibly five years. However, the company will know, and it becomes acceptable to speak about having children. If you are a woman, when you go for a job, it is that unsaid worry in the employer's mind, thinking, 'Oh, dear – she's about 25. When is she going to have children?'

I would like it to **become acceptable in our culture that a woman can plan her career, involving a break to have children. Then perhaps you would know that, if you were going to have those children at a time when you would need different skills, you would plan for having those skills when you came back.**

Jane Butcher: "A career break for everyone."

Katie Perry: "Yes, but then the downside of that – and it is something which, as a mother, I see as a downside, and I think Helen would agree – **when you have children, you go through a period of thinking that you do not know what you want to do.** It is all very well to plan ahead, but children have a habit – if you have them – of completely scrambling your brain, so that you do not know for a while what you want to do. I can see the positives and negatives for some people, of being able to plan it all."

Jane Millar: "The whole issue concerns **women being able to own their employability and owning their career profile, and mapping that in a period of lucidity.**"

Katie Perry: "Yes. It is acceptable that a man will decide on his career path, and that is it. He will not have to plan a break to have children. That is it: they can plan their career in a far more structured way than many women can."

Jane Millar: "On that note, let us wind up. I will hand that task over to you, as I have done for the rest of the afternoon. If there are any priorities for action, what would you encourage this project to take forward? We have been engaged in debate here, which means that we are supporting the aims and objectives of this project as a very good thing, but what do we want this project to take forward? What do we want it to do for us and for our concerns? How do we want to help it do that? Is there any response?"

Stephen Alford: "I am not sure that it is appropriate for a mere male to answer that question. Just coming back to Elizabeth's comment, she mentioned something about a diversity managers group. That may be a good idea, but there is another way. Somebody else has mentioned that there is another diversity industry group."

Elizabeth Pollitzer: "It is ORC."

Stephen Alford: "I also belong to one where I meet with the diversity people"

from Capgem, Accenture, IBM and CSC on a regular basis. **The networks are there and, perhaps someone like Elizabeth, or someone from Equalitec, should network with those, rather than creating another network.** You should network with what is there and influence, because they are coming along to the group that I meet with. Not only could you talk to Fujitsu, but you could talk to the other four or five major IT service companies.

The second point is for **Equalitec to consider how you engage with employers.** As with many other companies, Fujitsu has **outsourced its recruitment.** I can give you a model that we have used to recruit people with disabilities up in Manchester. All our recruitment is outsourced and so up there it is **Adecco.** We work with **Adecco** and we work with the **JobCentre Plus,** and we do a return-to-work scheme for people with disability. There is absolutely no reason why Equalitec could not consider working in partnership with the big recruitment agencies like **Manpower, Adecco, Hayes** and so on, and actually selling the concepts to employers through that mechanism.

One of the problems I now face with getting placements within Fujitsu is that, when I go to managers, they say, 'But this is outside of procedure'. Whereas, when I think about it, if it was coming in through what they are used to, which is their contacts with their preferred partners, although it may cost them a little more, because there would be a percentage for the recruitment agency, believe it or not, they would probably feel more comfortable about doing it that way.

So, rather than creating additional networks, it is a matter of how you better utilise what is there already. That would be my comment."

Jane Millar: "There is an undercurrent of joined-up thinking between all these initiatives."

Elizabeth Pollitzer: "**We have made the link with the recruitment and employers.** I went to a diversity forum and they were very interested in the project. I am really very conscious of the fact that the recruitment processes are biased against your average person who does not really know how companies operate.

There are innovations in recruitment. Many companies are using the website. Naturally, someone like Jo has absolutely no chance. Innovation now, in recruitment for the web, goes on in recruitment, in the way that I would like to see software which will automatically do some psychological profiling, and that is where the applicants are going to be chosen. I think one thing we need to understand and women need to understand, is exactly what is happening during the recruitment process, in order for them to be able to present themselves as someone that the company should look at. But I think recruitment is very difficult.

At the same time, at the **diversity forum that I went to, it was obvious that diversity itself has become a marketing tool for many companies.** Recruiters are now being used as a tool by the employers to deliver diversity, which may be a good thing or a bad thing. But, obviously, you are right – **recruiters at the moment appear to have that kind of controlling power. They need to have access to candidates, they need to get them.**

I went to one very large employer in the City and we talked about this. They were very keen to work with us and they wanted a database of 30,000 women

returners. I said, 'OK, give us some money and we will develop this database – because we already have a database, a placement database, for women students.' That was not quite on the agenda of what they wanted – they wanted just instant access to 30,000 women returners, who had been previously trained or had some experience.

So we have been around. Something that we have learned is that there are organisations that are interested, but they have their own agenda and, somehow, this has to fit into that. Perhaps, slowly, we can show that actually they can be flexible about their own agenda. It is a learning experience for all of us."

Jane Millar: "It is interesting that we have not had examples today from women who have got into IT jobs from being far-flung to the winds. Jo had the Daphne Jackson Trust backing her up and support and mentoring. Kath was introduced to Fujitsu by a friend. How many jobs are actually advertised, of the kind of calibre that we might want returners to go into, on the external labour market, as companies increasingly recruit primarily, first and foremost, through their internal labour market – through their various corporate sites. That is another issue, probably for another day.

Are there any further burning comments about messages for this project, and how they might best take forward their baton of trust for promoting women in ITEC?"

Helen Toogood: "I have a question. Do we have lots of women returners on the books? Or is there an issue about trying to get women returners – identifying them and knowing who they are? Do you have lots of them that know who you are, and are you just waiting to place them?"

Katie Perry: "No, we need to identify them."

Helen Toogood: "If this project is to work, then surely some of the investment or focus needs to go into attracting them."

Jennifer Woolley (Director, Daphne Jackson Trust): "With regard to the Industrial Associates Scheme, we placed an advertisement and we had a response of 25 applicants, whom we assessed, and whom we have put in place and are discussing it with interested industry.

On the issue of returners as such, we have a total of at least 130 eligible inquiries a year, from which we would probably have at least 33 active candidates. We are therefore looking for a similar amount for the Associate Scheme. That is a very good response, from which we hope we will achieve a placement. Our input with the Equalitec project is 20 placements, which we are quite confident we will achieve with the hopeful inclusion of all industry taking part in the scheme. We know that the returners are out there, but we are just trying to make sure that they are aware that we are trying to get them to apply to us. I do not see a difficulty in approaching and achieving the aims."

Jane Millar: "On that note, we will bring the discussion to an end."

Acknowledgements

Elizabeth Pollitzer: "I just wanted to thank you for being here and for making this fantastic contribution. **We have learned a great deal. I must tell you that we have those work packages to deliver and we will be judged on those deliverables. I know that people want some positive views and positive examples and I think you could help us with that,** so please keep in touch. Come back and look at our website. If there is anything that we can do, and if you feel that there is a kind of relationship that has grown, please contact us because I am sure that we can work out a way to work together."

Wendy Hall: "I know that is an important point. You have to get the funding and you have to deliver."

We have had a fantastic day of discussion and debate. We have heard some really interesting case studies. I would like to thank Elizabeth and Marina for making the whole thing happen, and Jane for chairing this afternoon's discussion, and all the presenters. I would like to thank Bob Ditchfield and his team at The Royal Academy of Engineering for organising the event, which I hope you have enjoyed as much as I have.

There will be a report of the meeting which will be circulated.

There will be future events. Thank you for coming."

After meeting note: The second Equalitec Diversity Forum will be held on Thursday 11 May 2006 at The Royal Academy of Engineering, 29 Great Peter Street, London SW1P 3LW (contact: robert.ditchfield@raeng.org.uk)

Equalitec Diversity Forum Agenda

1000	Coffee and Registration	
1030	Introduction by Chair	Professor Wendy Hall CBE FREng
1035	Keynote Address	Dr Elizabeth Pollitzer – Equalitec Director
1045	Introduction to Project and Equal	Marina Larios – WITEC Director
1105	Partner Presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Athena: SWAN Charter• UK Resource Centre for Women in SET• Daphne Jackson Trust	Caroline Fox – Athena Programme Manager Jane Butcher – Women Returners Manager Dr Katie Perry – Press & Public Relations Officer
1115	Debate and Discussion Equality and Employment What impact can <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Equality of Opportunity• Empowerment• Mainstreaming• Innovation have on the attitudes, aptitudes and aspirations of women returners and their potential employers when addressing employability needs	
1230	Lunch and Networking	
1330	Case Studies of Industrial Best Practice <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Large ITEC Company: Fujitsu • Large Global User of ITEC: Unilever• Large Pharma User of ITEC: Pfizer	Stephen Alford – HR Manager/ Kath Tonkinson – Project Manager Helen Toogood – VP IT Academy Trish Lawrence – Diversity Manager/ Jo Turner – R&D Staff
1430	Discussions on Best Practice: Success criteria and scope for mainstreaming	Dr Jane Millar – UCL
1515	Tea Break	
1530	Review of Discussion	
1600	Final Remarks by Chair	Professor Wendy Hall CBE FREng

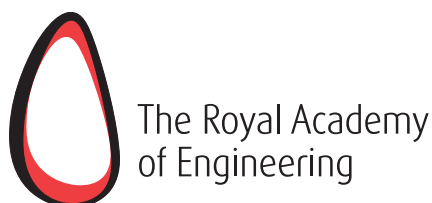
Date

27 September 2005
1000 for 1030

Venue

The Royal Academy of Engineering, 29 Great Peter Street
London SW1P 3LW

22/2/06



The Royal Academy
of Engineering



EQUALITEC DIVERSITY FORUM – ADVANCING WOMEN IN ITEC (Information Technology, Electronics, Communications)

'Skills Needed for Business Success'

Tuesday 27 September 2005

The Royal Academy of Engineering – 29 Great Peter Street, London SW1

• Do you want to address the ITEC skills shortage within industry and provide opportunities for a more diverse workforce to enhance business growth, innovation and competitiveness?

The **Equalitec Diversity Forum** seeks to achieve this and influence cultural change and policy impact.

JOIN US as we address and explore the most critical issues relating to employment, demand for ITEC skills, and gender diversity.

This one day event provides a unique platform that serves to introduce the development plan of the project, engage support from key players, and promote the benefits of the Equalitec Diversity Forum, while creating a broad reaching impact of valuable discussions and best practice case studies from industry.

WHAT IS THE EQUALITEC DIVERSITY FORUM?

The Equalitec Diversity Forum is a critical component of the Equalitec Advancing Women in ITEC project set up to promote and support women's employability in ITEC. The forum serves as a vehicle for reporting on the progress made in achieving the strategic objectives of the project to sponsors, partners, policy makers, parliamentarians, decision makers, industry and government. The principal aim is to encourage transfer of best practice in terms of recruitment and employment policies and practices. The project is funded in part from the European Social Fund, under the Equal Programme.

To find out more please visit www.equalitec.org.uk

Women are under-represented in IT employment. They currently make up approximately 20% of the IT workforce and their numbers are falling steadily.

(Source: DTI – Women In The IT Industry; Towards A Business Case for Diversity – Interim Report January 2005)

WHY ATTEND?

The main focus is to provide a better understanding of the business case and potential benefits of diversity while taking into consideration activities and outputs such as

- the role of ITEC in creating new employment opportunities
- demand for ITEC skills affects economic growth
- how diversity improves recruitment and retention of female staff, reduces labour turnover, and can improve organisational flexibility
- how to access a rich seam of talent by targeting women returners
- the need to invest in ITEC skills as an active enabler of business success
- the opportunities to build up competence at all levels made possible through diversity

- the enhancement of corporate image and reputation through diversity

WHO SHOULD ATTEND?

- Academics
- Business Associations
- Employers
- Policy Makers
- Government Organisations
- Non-Government Organisations
- Trade Unions
- Training Providers
- Professional Bodies
- Women's Groups

For any questions about whether this event is appropriate for you, please do not hesitate to contact us on 020 7227 0513

A map and location details can be found on the Academy website:

www.raeng.org.uk

Do you know that there are many women returners with ITEC or related skills seeking employment right across Britain? – in fact, 50000 women dropped out of the ITEC workforce between 1999 and 2003.

There are only 23% of women in ITEC occupations across all sectors and even fewer at the more advanced levels, where they represent only 9% of the labour force. This imbalance is predicted to continue for the forthcoming years.

(Source: e-Skills and ONS, Labour Survey 2002)

Equalitec Diversity Forum Delegates List

27 September 2005

Chair:	Professor Wendy Hall CBE FREng	Head of Electronic & Computer Science School, Southampton University
Presenters	Dr Elizabeth Pollitzer	Director – Equalitec/Portia
	Marina Larios	Director – WiTEC
	Caroline Fox	Athena Liaison with RAEng – Athena
	Jane Butcher	Women Returners Manager. UK Resource Centre for Women in SET
	Dr Katie Perry	Press and Public Relations Officer, The Daphne Jackson Trust
	Stephen Alford	Manager – Fujitsu Services
	Kath Tonkinson	Project Manager – Fujitsu Services
	Helen Toogood	IT – Unilever
	Trish Lawrence	Head of Diversity – Pfizer Limited
	Jo Turner	R&D Staff – Pfizer
	Dr Jane Millar	Research Fellow – Geography Department University College London
Partners	Debbie Tilley	Coordinator – Equalitec/Portia
	Claire Davenport	External Relations Manager, British Computer Society
	Jennifer Woolley	Director – Daphne Jackson Trust
	Joe Gardiner	Head ITEC Skills Team – DTI
	Joan May	Policy Adviser – DTI
	Bola Olabisi	Chief Executive – GWIIN
	Annette Williams	Director – UKRC
Staff	Jayne Cahill	Fiona Shipley Transcription
	Dr Bob Ditchfield	Director Education Affairs, The Royal Academy of Engineering
Guests	Maria Alexandri	Senior Policy Advisor – OST/DTI
	Julie Ashdown	Account Manager – Opportunity Now
	Marie-Noelle Barton MBE	Director – WISE
	Kirsten Bodley	Regional Director London – SETNET
	Sally Brett	Assistant Editor – IDS Diversity at Work, Incomes Data Services
	Ms Patricia Carter	Head of HR Policy and Strategy – QINETIQ
	Nick Cleave	Recruitment Manager Northern Europe – Motorola
	Kevin Fisher	Policy Manager, Learning & Skills Council National Office
	Jeanette Forder	Account Manager for Local Government, Manufacturing & Transport Opportunity Now
	Kathleen Hanna	IT Project Coordinator – Berwin Leighton Paisner
	Lee Hanna	Recruitment Account Manager, Advanced Resource Managers Ltd
	Anne Lane	Member Services Group Member, SOCITM
	Rayna Lloyd	Project Manager IT, PriceWaterhouseCooper [PWC]
	Gordon McLean	Technical Director – Thales
	Victoria McMillan	Human Capital Consultant, PriceWaterhouseCooper [PWC] – IT
	Shane O'Neill	Executive Director – Goldman Sachs International
	Karen Parsons	Human Resources – Morgan Stanley
	Natalie Sappleton	Research Assistant/School of Computing, Salford University
	Dr Glenda Stone	CEO – Aurora
	Stelios Stylianou	Policy Advisor, Office of Science and Technology/DTI
	Dr Haifa Takruri-Rizk	Project Manager (Women in NW Engineering School of Computing – Salford University
	Helen Tippell	Executive Director – Goldman Sachs International
	Dr Juliet Webster	Business Development Director – IPA
	Joanne Welch	Consultant – Veredus
	Chennelle West	Associate – Goldman Sachs International
	Amanda Wooding	Director of People Development – Smiths Group plc
Ruth Wright	Senior Executive – Education and Training, Engineering Council UK	

The Royal Academy of Engineering

As Britain's national academy for engineering, we bring together the country's most eminent engineers from all disciplines to promote excellence in the science, art and practice of engineering. Our strategic priorities are to enhance the UK's engineering capabilities, to celebrate excellence and inspire the next generation, and to lead debate by guiding informed thinking and influencing public policy.

The Academy's work programmes are driven by three strategic priorities, each of which provides a key contribution to a strong and vibrant engineering sector and to the health and wealth of society.

Enhancing national capabilities

As a priority, we encourage, support and facilitate links between academia and industry. Through targeted national and international programmes, we enhance – and reflect abroad – the UK's performance in the application of science, technology transfer, and the promotion and exploitation of innovation. We support high quality engineering research, encourage an interdisciplinary ethos, facilitate international exchange and provide a means of determining and disseminating best practice. In particular, our activities focus on complex and multidisciplinary areas of rapid development.

Recognising excellence and inspiring the next generation

Excellence breeds excellence. We celebrate engineering excellence and use it to inspire, support and challenge tomorrow's engineering leaders. We focus our initiatives to develop excellence and, through creative and collaborative activity, we demonstrate to the young, and those who influence them, the relevance of engineering to society.

Leading debate

Using the leadership and expertise of our Fellowship, we guide informed thinking, influence public policy making, provide a forum for the mutual exchange of ideas, and pursue effective engagement with society on matters within our competence. The Academy advocates progressive, forward-looking solutions based on impartial advice and quality foundations, and works to enhance appreciation of the positive role of engineering and its contribution to the economic strength of the nation.



The Royal Academy of Engineering promotes excellence in the science, art and practice of engineering.

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