Championing Inclusion:
Lessons learnt from leaders who nurture inclusive workplaces that value diversity
(Executive Summary Only)

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About the Clore Social Leadership Programme

The Clore Social Leadership Programme develops leaders with a social purpose so that they can transform their communities, organisations and the world around them. This research report is published as part of Cordelia Osewa-Ediae’s Clore Social Fellowship. As part of the Programme, each Fellow is required to undertake a piece of practice-based research. The aim is to help develop Fellows’ skills as critical users of research and contribute to the evidence base for the sector as a whole. The research focus, methodology and output are chosen by the Fellow.

About Cordelia Osewa-Ediae

Cordelia is a Strategy Consultant and Programme Director. She is passionate about social justice and issues that affect young people, women and immigrants. She has worked with the Metropolitan Police, University of Greenwich and NSPCC to support communities, nurture talent, promote diversity and contribute to social change. Her past roles have also included being the Operations Director at The Adab Trust and Business Development Manager at UK online centres. A keen social researcher, Cordelia is a contributing author to a global multidisciplinary forum, the World Association for Sustainable Development. She also mentors young people and leads interventions aimed at developing young women.

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Without question, I am indebted to my mentor, Clare. Her energy, wisdom and warmth constantly challenge and motivate me to do better and aim higher. I could never thank her enough.

I also owe thanks to several Fellows, colleagues and Clore staff – David Hopkins especially - for engaging me in numerous stimulating conversations about inclusion, diversity and social integration. Finally, I owe special thanks to my boys for consistently inspiring me.
About the Leaders interviewed for this study

**Julie Bentley**

Julie is the Chief Executive of the leading UK charity for Girls and Young Women – Girlguiding. Prior to joining Girlguiding in 2012, Julie was CEO of the sexual health charity, FPA. During her tenure at FPA, Julie was a member of the Government's Teenage Pregnancy Independent Advisory Group and the Independent Advisory Group on Sexual Health and HIV. Her previous roles have included being CEO of The Suzy Lamplugh Trust, Director of Corporate Services for the substance misuse charity ARP and Assistant Director of the voluntary sector settlement Charterhouse-in Southwark. Julie is also a Trustee of Shelter. In 2014, Julie was voted 5th on the Women's Hour Game Changers list. In the same year, she also received the Third Sector Award for Britain's most admired CEO.

**Sharon White**

Sharon White is the Chief Executive of the Office of Communications (Ofcom). Ofcom is the communications regulator in the UK. Prior to joining Ofcom, Sharon was the Second Permanent Secretary at HM Treasury. Her previous roles have included being Director General for Public Spending at HM Treasury and Director General at the Ministry of Justice. Sharon has also had spells in Washington, with the Downing Street Policy Unit, the World Bank and The Department for International Development (DFID). Sharon was the first woman – and the first black person – to be appointed as a permanent secretary at the Treasury.

**Simon Blake**

Simon Blake OBE is Chief Executive of National Union of Students. The National Union of Students is a voluntary membership organisation comprising of 600 students’ unions in the UK. Prior to NUS, Simon was Chief Executive of Brook, the young people's sexual health charity. He has previously worked at the National Children’s Bureau where he held a number of positions including Assistant Director of Children’s Development and Director of the Sex Education Forum. In 2004 Simon was seconded to the Department of Health as an advisor on children’s public health. Simon is also currently the deputy chair of Stonewall.
Sue Owen

Sue Owen is the Permanent Secretary for Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). The Department’s priorities include growing the economy, connecting the UK, encouraging participation, sustaining excellence, promoting Britain, supporting our media and ensuring social responsibility. As Permanent Secretary, Sue is responsible for the overall management of the department. Her previous roles have included being Director General of Strategy at the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP); Director General for Corporate Performance, at the Department for International Development (DFID); Director, EMU Policy, Euro Preparations and Debt Management at HM Treasury and Counsellor Economic at the British Embassy in Washington. Sue has also acted as an Adviser on family policy with Downing Street’s Policy Unit and as a Lecturer in Economics at University College, Cardiff. In 2014, Sue became the Civil Service LGB & T Champion and in July 2015, she became overall Civil Service diversity champion.

Tunde Ogungbesan

Tunde Ogungbesan is the Head of Diversity, Inclusion and Succession at the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). Established by a Royal Charter, the BBC is the world’s leading public service broadcaster funded by the licence fee paid by UK households. As the BBC’s Head of Diversity, Inclusion and Succession, Tunde is responsible for overseeing the Corporation's Diversity, Inclusion and senior succession agenda to ensure that the BBC meets its goal of being the most creative organisation in the world – and reflects the diversity of the UK in its workforce, on TV, radio and in its content. Prior to joining the BBC, Tunde worked with Shell where he was responsible for leading their global Diversity and Inclusion strategy.
“Management is doing things right;
Leadership is doing the right things”

Peter Drucker
Research has shown that workplaces have a significant role to play in building a fairer society because employment facilitates social cohesion. Several studies have also reiterated the benefits of having a diverse workforce. While this research acknowledges the importance of diversity in the workplace, it goes a step further to posit that workplace inclusion is even more critical in ensuring that all employees feel valued – no matter their difference. This is because nurturing inclusive workplaces that value diversity, not only makes good business sense but facilitates social integration and social mobility.

As a first generation immigrant living in London, social integration has always fascinated me. Working with young people, I have been struck by how many of them lack the confidence to go after their dream jobs. This is often because they feel ‘different’. Even among those in work, some still feel excluded because their workplaces appear to tolerate - not value their - difference.

Evidence does show that certain groups are still excluded from many UK workplaces and this continues to cost us – as a society - dearly. The Social Integration Commission (2014) estimates that long term-unemployment costs the economy approximately £1.5 billion each year, while blocked opportunities in the labour market costs us £700 million annually.

This research was borne out of a desire to explore how leaders and organisations could nurture inclusive organisations that value diversity. By highlighting lessons learnt from leaders who have nurtured inclusive environments, the aim is that other leaders and managers could learn from good practice. The five leaders interviewed for this research were identified by colleagues and peers as individuals who have consistently taken active steps to create inclusive workplaces. Face-to-face interviews were conducted and they all responded to the same questions:

- **Question 1**: Why are you especially passionate about promoting equality?
- **Question 2**: What does Inclusion in the workplace mean to you?
- **Question 3**: In relation to your work to promote equality, what has been your proudest achievement - so far?
- **Question 4**: What are the main leadership challenges you have faced in working to promote diversity and inclusion?
- **Question 5**: What 3 tips would you give to any leader who seeks to make his/her organisation/work more inclusive?
All the leaders interviewed for this study displayed a personal commitment to inclusion and this fuelled their resilience in the face of challenge. Following analysis of their responses, this study makes **EIGHT recommendations** to other leaders seeking to nurture inclusive environments:

1. **Be the role model:** A leader who seeks to nurture an inclusive workplace has to be a visible, credible and authentic champion for inclusion – persevering in the face of challenge. Championing inclusion is akin to championing any change. It requires commitment.

2. **Nurture the Culture:** Proper inclusion can only occur if the organisational culture values difference and encourages diverse opinions. Policies and processes which facilitate workplace inclusion should be embedded in the organisation. The right culture is critical.

3. **Introspection:** The journey towards becoming an inclusive workplace should begin with some honest introspection to assess how diversity is already being promoted in the workplace. The process of introspection should also seek to identify any excluded groups.

4. **Listen Consistently:** Leaders and managers must be prepared to listen objectively. Discourse has to explore difficult issues in a safe, non-judgmental environment that is open to learning.

5. **Communication:** Regular and open communications with internal and external stakeholders should mitigate against situations where certain individuals or groups do not feel valued.

6. **Training:** Regular training of staff should provide an opportunity for all to reflect and learn about how to nurture an inclusive workplace. To engender honest reflection and manage difficult discourse, it is recommended that training should be delivered by external experts.

7. **Auditing:** Data should be routinely collected to evidence progress – or lack of progress - in relation to making the workplace more inclusive. This data should be shared widely.

8. **Succession Planning:** Nurturing an inclusive workplace requires time and effort to change long entrenched attitudes and cultures. Succession planning should guarantee sustainability.

In conclusion, this study acknowledges that leaders who champion workplace inclusion will face challenges. However, the feedback received from the five leaders in this study should provide some insight into how to tackle challenges, drive change and remain resilient. In today’s world, workplace inclusion goes beyond being a ‘nice to have’ consideration. As we navigate uncertain socio-economic waters - especially post-Brexit - leaders should recognise that workplace inclusion not only makes good business sense. It is critical to facilitating social integration and social mobility.