

First meeting of Equinet Evaluation Lab

Monday 1st June 2015, Brussels, Belgium

Summary Note

Welcome and Introduction of the project

Introduction of the Evaluation Lab Project

Anne Gaspard, Equinet Executive Director

Anne Gaspard, Equinet Executive Director, welcomed the members of the Evaluation Lab and presented the **missions and functions of Equinet**. She underlined the importance of the evaluation work for equality bodies and recalled the publication of the 2013 paper [“Processes and Indicators for Measuring the Impact of Equality Bodies”](#). The preparatory works of this paper showed that many equality bodies do not systematically evaluate their work or have very limited experience with evaluation work.

Anne Gaspard reminded that evaluation is of **key importance for the work of equality bodies**. There is a huge potential in this field, not only in terms of assessing the **impact of their own work**, but also, in terms of evaluating the **impact of the equality and anti-discrimination legislation**. It is also strategic in a context where better implementation of the EU legislation is a key priority at EU level. The European Commission has just adopted its “Better Regulation Package” to improve the effectiveness of legislation at national level. In a context where the European Commission has a key role in promoting **standards** on the independence and powers of equality bodies, evaluation can provide key evidence to support the need for such standards.

Anne Gaspard then went on to present the **Evaluation Lab Project**. The Evaluation Lab is a materialisation of [Equinet’s strategic objective](#) to build capacity and peer support of equality bodies by fostering and promoting innovative approaches. It is a **two-year project** which aims to provide a platform for expert staff members of equality bodies interested and experienced in measuring the impact of their work, or willing to engage in such work. The Evaluation Lab has **two objectives**:

- First, ensure that Equinet members have **better knowledge and tools** to evaluate their work.
- Second, pave the way for **further developing the evaluation work being done** by equality bodies.

The Evaluation Lab is composed of **10 equality bodies** with various levels of experience to ensure peer learning and exchanges of good practices.

Anne Gaspard concluded her presentation by expressing her hope that the project will give new ideas to further develop equality bodies’ evaluation work and implement new initiatives.

SESSION 1 - Building from the 2013 report "Processes and indicators for measuring the impact of equality bodies"

Reminder of the main conclusions of the 2013 report

Niall Crowley, Independent Expert, Equinet Board Adviser and author of the paper "Processes and indicators for measuring the impact of equality bodies"

PROCESSES AND INDICATORS FOR MEASURING THE IMPACT OF EQUALITY BODIES

Niall Crowley

Equality Bodies Doing Evaluation

- Equinet research conducted in 2013
- Twenty eight equality bodies responded to the survey
 - 14 equality bodies had carried out no substantive evaluation of their work
 - 5 equality bodies had evaluated specific projects
 - 7 equality bodies had conducted general evaluations, 2 had evaluated work portfolios

Purpose

- Part of a planning/evaluation cycle
- With a stated view to:
 - Inform choices
 - Enable learning
 - Enhance standing
 - Empower staff

Prior to Implementation of Plan

- Establish indicators
 - Input, output, outcome indicators
 - Proxy indicators
- Establish baselines
 - Data collected by equality body
 - Data gathered through stakeholder engagement
 - Surveys, studies, national data collection systems
- Establish targets for each goal

Indicators

- Relate to the goals, potential, theory of change
- Individual
 - Improve situation of people experiencing discrimination and inequality
- Institutional
 - Enhance organisational performance through equality and diversity systems
 - Improve policy making
 - Support a broad institutional drive for equality
- Societal
 - Public support for and valuing of equality and diversity

During Implementation

- Monitoring
 - Data gathering by the equality body on its work – inputs, outputs and outcomes
 - Focus on indicators
- Management
 - Events to assess progress on goals, indicators and targets
 - Decision-making based on goals, indicators and targets
 - Reporting built around goals, indicators, and targets

After Implementation

- Evaluation Tools
 - Review documentation and files held by equality body
 - Consult and interview stakeholders
 - Survey stakeholders and the general public
 - Fact finding studies
 - Follow-up on foot of cases

Approach and Principles

- Evaluation Approach
 - Self assessment
 - Commission external experts
- Evaluation Principles
 - Part of wider process of planning
 - Simple, realistic and participatory
 - Small number of indicators
 - Assess transformative effect

Discussion on the implementation of the conclusions of the 2013 report

Following Niall Crowley's presentation, participants were asked to discuss the following questions:

Why is evaluation important for equality bodies?

The following answers were given by various participants:

- To get additional funds and increase financial resources
- Because evaluation is a requirement set out in the legislation
- To improve the work of the equality body
- To evaluate the impact of the equality body at organizational/societal level

What are the barriers to evaluation work?

The following answers were given by various participants:

- Lack of financial and human resources
- Absence of baseline data
- Absence of data (for instance, gender disaggregated data)
- Lack of willingness and evaluation culture
- Staff members under pressure

What factors make it possible?

The following answers were given by various participants:

- Defining baseline indicators
- Defining indicators which can be reviewed every year
- Working in cooperation with different bodies (NGOs, government bodies...)

Discussion on the Evaluation Lab purposes and activities

How to reach Equinet members who are not part of the project?

Several ideas were proposed by participants, such as a conference, a publication and a newsletter. To start with, summary and outcomes of the Evaluation Lab will be published in a relevant Members' Bulletin (Equinet internal newsletter).

What would be useful to do?

The following ideas of activities and topics were proposed by the participants:

- Discussion on how to overcome barriers to evaluation work
- Use case-studies on the work done or currently on progress of equality bodies (E.g. preparation of strategic plans)
- Individual/institutional/societal framework: decide on common indicators
- Peer review

What could the Evaluation Lab offer to equality bodies?

- Interaction with Equinet Working Groups.
- Organisation of a conference or a training based on the information gathered during the meetings

SESSION 2 – Workshops

Workshop 1 – Measuring the Impact of Equality Bodies: Ideas and Approaches

Eileen Lavery, Equality Commission for Northern Ireland

Measuring the Impact of Equality Bodies: Ideas and Approaches.

1. Introductory Comments from the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.

The primary consideration is how do equality bodies measure, not just the **outputs**, but also the **impacts** of their activities? This is limited by matters the Equality Body can measure and the adequacy of this to assessing how have they performed. It is not of course easy to establish the impact of an Equality Body as it is not always clear what component of social change an Equality Body can take credit for. Nevertheless, despite the complexities and the unavailability of data, the search for measurements of an Equality Body's impact is worthwhile.

Measuring changes in society as a consequence of an equality body's efforts can be very difficult and accordingly equality bodies are often criticized for measuring what can be measured rather than measuring what matters. Of course measured change in the position of an equality group may not necessarily be as a consequence of the work of an Equality Body; things may get better but apportioning credit for this social change is not always simple.

At the most basic level Equality Bodies aim to measure **value for money**; they will seek to assess the success of the programmes of work they have completed in terms of the resources they have put to this work (a value for money exercise). In the main these programmes of work will be two fold;

- They are directed to supporting those with equality and human rights responsibilities to meet these **responsibilities** and
- Secondly supporting those with rights (women, minority groups, disabled persons etc.) to access their **rights**. A discrimination complaint which succeeds in court may seem momentous but it is only with the promotion of the clear responsibilities as set out in the legal decision and the subsequent work to ensure that employers / service providers revise their practices as a consequence of the judgment that the win is in fact ground breaking.

2. Benchmarks and baselines of inequalities

All measurement starts with establishing the baselines; these are usually the comparative position of the equality groups

- What is the median annual income of men and women of migrant and indigenous people (equal pay and pay gaps)
- In employment what proportion of senior executive jobs are held by women or other marginalised groups (employment status)
- How do persons with disabilities succeed in school and college and in employment (educational and career attainments)

Baselines set out the degree of disadvantage and on occasion allow for the establishment of **goals** ; for example in Northern Ireland the Government measure of successful educational outcome is that all school children at the end of their 5th year in second level school will have achieved good results in 5 subjects

at GCSE. The educational results in previous years showed that this target was particularly difficult for some marginalized groups including working class Protestant boys. Generally Baselines and Benchmarks will be set by using publicly available data sets usually collected by Government statistical services through such means as the Population Census. The Census of Employment which is Europe wide and accordingly allows for intra country comparisons can be of great value in setting bench marks. (NB as some European countries cease collecting data which is for specified surveys and rather make use of administrative data sets, cross country comparisons can become more problematic).

3. Surveys of Public Awareness and Attitudes to Equality and Inequality

Where large data sets are not available in- country Equality Bodies may consider commissioning customized surveys to identify inequalities and to inform the need for and to help measure the impact of the Equality Body effort.

Public Awareness and Attitudes

The Equality Commission uses surveys regularly to help us understand where we are most needed and overtime to establish our impact. Below are some of the key components of this evaluation work. We regularly (3/4 yearly intervals) survey awareness of inequalities. This provided outcomes such as (33% of respondents said they had been subjected to some form of harassment during the last three years because they belonged to a particular group).

We also use surveys to get snap shots of current attitudes and to compare these attitudes. (In the Eurobarometer Survey when asked was enough being done to fight all forms of discrimination, results at 49% replied yes and these results were similar to those in Northern Ireland while it was slightly higher at 56% in the UK).

A key objective of this attitudinal work is to bring about a change in attitudes. Information on attitudinal change is of course also collected by survey work. Our survey work explores public attitudes towards specific groups; for example how positive or negative do you feel towards specified equality groups such as Travelers; Transgendered; Eastern European Migrants; Lesbian Gay or Bi Sexual Persons etc.

In this survey (Equality Awareness) we also ask 'social distance' questions examining the extent to which people feel comfortable with varying degrees of closeness to members of a 'different' group. These type of questions are more complex to design and require more time to explain to respondents but can be very valuable.

Respondents were asked to indicate their opinion on whether they would mind or would not mind having a member of each group as a work colleague, a neighbour or if one of them was to marry a close relative. The findings were for example 35% of respondents would mind having a Transgendered person as a work colleague, as a neighbor (40%) or as an in law (52%).

We run these surveys every three or so years and although we reconsider each time the data we wish to collect, one important consideration is the ability to compare results across the years so that we compared the data from 2005 with that from 2008. It was quite shocking to learn that negative attitudes had increased for some groups (Trans; Eastern European Migrants and Those with Mental Ill Health) across the years.

4. Measuring the Impact of our work with Employers and Service Providers

A key objective of an Equality Body is to encourage and support those who have equality responsibilities to deliver equality. We, on a regular basis, (every 3 or 4 years) collect data from employers and service providers both public and private and in doing so we aim to evaluate the impact of the equality legislation

and the ECNI support of employers. In addition to attitudes to equality we also ask employers if they have revised some aspects of their policies in the light of the advice we have given.

The evidence from this shows clearly that the services provided by the Commission to employers and service providers are highly valued and overall satisfaction remains consistently high. The Employers Survey has also recorded a high degree of confidence in the ability of the Commission to promote equality of opportunity for all. The survey also allowed the respondents to suggest where improvements to the service could be made to the employers services we already supply.

5. Measuring the Impact of our work with those who believe they have been victims of discrimination (complainants).

Another key element of our work is to support those who think they may have being discriminated against. We run a telephone Discrimination Advice service in which a number of advisors respond to approximately 3000 enquiries each year and offer advice to the caller on their rights and on how to approach an employer or service provider and ask for these rights to be respected. We also advise on the legal remedies available. We regularly then commission a survey of the satisfaction of callers with this advisory service. The results have been very positive with a large proportion of those survey confirming that the service was of value and enabled them to secure compliance with their legal rights.

Each year some 10% of those who made initially calls to our advisory service return to ask us to support them in challenging the what they consider to be discriminatory practice and we select (approximately 20%) some of these cases for legal support. We also every couple of years survey those to whom we gave legal support to establish their satisfaction with our legal service. Again the results of this exhibit a high degree of satisfaction with the service.

6. Using surveys and research to set and measure equality goals (Impact measurement)

The most difficult measurement for an equality body is to measure the impact it has had on society. Bringing about/ contributing to social change is the ultimate and long term objective of Equality Bodies.

We recognize the complexity of this in Northern Ireland but nevertheless we have made an attempt to set out the key inequalities and to measure progress in addressing these.

We establish longer term plans over a 3 or 4 year period (corporate plan) and from these we draw up annual plans (business plan) for each year. In the current plan, which we initially drew up to cover the 3 year period but then extended to 4 years, a key element was to update work we had done some years ago on stating the key inequalities in our society. This work on key inequalities is focused on impacts that is contributing to the journey from inequalities to equality in Northern Ireland.

In 2007 across each of the equality grounds we had set out, mostly from existing research, the key inequalities in each of six areas which we believed must be addressed in Northern Ireland. These areas were

- | | | |
|------------------|---|-------------------------------|
| Education | Employment | Health and Social Care |
| Housing | Participation in civic and public Life | Prejudice |

In preparing our statement of Key Inequalities we aimed to identify and highlight some of the most pressing inequalities which need to be addressed and to encourage others to act to address these also. These

statements of key inequalities were mostly created from existing data sets for example population census, school leaving results, regular surveys of employment etc.

Now quite a few years later we are committed to revising our Statement(s) of key inequalities and to measuring our work to address the key inequalities.

The measures of success vary in terms of effort and sophistication

- Has the statements of key inequalities been up dated
- Has the level of public awareness of key social inequalities increased
- What is the level of stakeholders' (public authorities, employers etc.) acceptance and adoption of specific actions to address key inequalities
- To what extent did ECNI make use of the information in its publications, in responding to consultations and in disseminating the information about the key inequalities.

It is clear that the nature and complexity of these measurements varies quite considerably; some are simply about the actual completion of the output e.g. 'did ECNI update its statement on key inequalities?'. Lest you are interested we are still working on these Statements and indeed we are somewhat behind but aiming to catch up this year.

The dissemination objective is more complex to measure as it is about the reputation of ECNI as an expert in equality and inequality. Measurement will also seek to find out if the ECNI is seen as an expert by key stakeholders especially arms of government and did these public bodies use the knowledge of key inequalities in planning major Governmental programmes.

The work also addresses non-governmental stakeholders including those organizations representing the equality groups and asks if these bodies are accurately informed about the key inequalities and if they use the information in their lobbying.

The final objectives are of course did the work of the Equality Commission and of all others with potential influence bring about improvements in Northern Ireland's Key Inequalities?

THEORY OF CHANGE APPROACH

Niall Crowley

A Theory of Change

- Equality bodies as necessary and valued institutions of social change
- Identify the change the equality body seeks
- Analyse how this change happens
- Establish the link between activities of the equality body and outcomes
- Establish the link between the different activities of the equality body

A Theory of Change Approach

- Identify long-term goal or goals
 - A good clear outcome
- Identify the intermediate outcomes
 - The outcomes or preconditions for the goal or goals to be achieved
- Outcomes are the building blocks to bring about the change desired

A Theory of Change Approach

- Backward mapping and connecting outcomes
 - Flesh out preconditions back to the initial conditions
 - Ask the question “What causes this outcome?”
 - Focus on cause and effect
 - Create a causal pathway

A Theory of Change Approach

- Document assumptions
 - Explain the change process
 - About the links between the outcomes
 - About the reasons interventions achieve outcomes
- Identify interventions
 - The types of intervention that bring about outcomes
 - Each outcome is tied to an intervention
- Establish indicators
 - Measure implementation and effectiveness

An Example

- A process that is participatory, reflective, realistic and simple
- What is the long-term goal or goals of your equality body?

An Example

THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION

An Example

- What are the preconditions for this goal to be achieved? or
- What intermediate outcomes need to be achieved?

An Example

THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION

Good practice by employers & service providers
Strong equal treatment legislation
Public awareness and support

An Example

- What causes this outcome?

An Example

Strong equal treatment legislation

Infrastructure Reporting Positive duties

An Example

What causes this outcome?

An Example

Reporting

Accessible Procedures
Legal and Personal Supports
Signposts
Capacity to exercise rights
Culture of rights

An Example

- Explore assumptions in relation to each outcome and link

An Example

- Identify interventions required for outcomes:
 - a) Hearing cases
 - b) Mediating cases
 - c) Follow-up cases
 - d) Provide legal advice and support
 - e) Support good practice
 - f) Communication to the general public
 - g) Communication to rights holders
 - h) Research and surveys
 - i) Policy recommendations

An Example

- Indicators
 - Efficiency: Inputs
 - Implementation: Outputs
 - Effectiveness: Outcomes

Conclusions and ways forward

• Next meeting of the Evaluation Lab: key topics and priorities

Participants were asked to share their ideas to start designing the agenda of the next meeting of the Evaluation Lab. The following topics/questions were proposed:

- Discussion around case studies and specific evaluation methodologies, and quantitative and qualitative indicators used by equality bodies.
- The general methodology of evaluation work could be explored. The evaluator for Equinet under PROGRESS could be invited to give a general presentation on evaluation methodologies from a basic and general starting point.
- Explore, identify and agree a small set of indicators that all participating equality bodies.
- Explore work done on 'Voice' in Finland and Norway to see if it could be used by equality bodies in evaluation of communication work.
- Use the work on strategic plans currently being prepared by equality bodies (Note: equality bodies from France, Northern Ireland, Czech Republic, Macedonia and Albania are currently preparing a new Strategic Plan), as a focus for discussion and learning, while ensuring that the focus of the project should not shift to strategic planning, only insofar as these are important elements for the evaluation work and cycle and include elements that are to be used in evaluation.
- Explore potential for a peer review exercise and how this might be approached as a methodology.
- Explore how to implement an evaluation culture in equality bodies which do not engage in such work.
- Explore potential to get support and resources to engage in evaluation.

The second meeting of the Evaluation Lab will take place in January 2016.

• Brainstorming on the project of handbook

A handbook will be published at the end of the project. Two main ideas have been shared by participants for the focus of the handbook:

- Shared indicators
- Case-studies by equality bodies preparing their strategic plan

• Conclusions and ways forward

A roundtable was organised where members shared their impressions on the first meeting.

Follow up actions:

- Creation of an [online platform](#) by the Equinet Secretariat – the platform is accessible with a login access and password communicated by email.
- Continued exchange between members of the Evaluation Lab, sharing information about plans, tools, processes and results.
- Organisation of a second meeting in January 2016

ANNEX 1 – LIST OF PARTICIPANTS



First meeting of Equinet Evaluation Lab

Monday 1st June 2015 – 09:00 – 16:00

Location: Equinet Offices / Belgian Interfederal Centre for Equal Opportunities
Rue Royale, 138 - B-1000 Brussels

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Evaluation Lab Members

BUSHATI	Vilfrida	Commission for the Protection from Discrimination, ALBANIA	Frida_bushati@yahoo.com
FIDALGO	Maria do Rosário	Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality, PORTUGAL	Rosario.fidalgo@cig.gov.pt
KVASNICOVA	Jana	Public Defender of Rights, CZECH REPUBLIC	Jana.kvasnicova@ochrance.cz
LAVERY	Eileen	Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, NORTHERN IRELAND	Elavery@equalityni.org
MARTIN	Clément	Defender of Rights, FRANCE	Martin.clement@defenseurdesdroits.fr
PAPADOPOULOU	Andriani	Greek Ombudsman, GREECE	papadopoulou@synigoros.gr
PEREIRA	Tiago	Commission for Equality in Labour and Employment, PORTUGAL	Tiago.pereira@cite.pt

REDJEPI	Almira	Commission for Protection against Discrimination, FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA	almiraredzepe@gmail.com
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Equinet Board Advisor

CROWLEY	Niall	Independent Expert	niallcrowley1@gmail.com
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Equinet Secretariat

COOKE O'DOWD	Sarah	Communications Officer	sarah.cookeodowd@equineteurope.org
GASPARD	Anne	Executive Director	Anne.gaspard@equineteurope.org
KÁDÁR	Tamás	Senior Policy Officer	Tamas.kadar@equineteurope.org
MACHACOVA	Jessica	Project Officer	Jessica.machacova@equineteurope.org
TOPOLOVEC	Mihael	Communication and Policy Assistant (trainee)	Mihael.topolovec@equineteurope.org
VAN VUUREN	Tamieck	Legal and Policy Assistant (trainee)	tamieck.vanvuuren@equineteurope.org

Apologies

FELLA	Marisa	Interfederal Centre for Equal Opportunities, BELGIUM	Marisa.fella@cntr.be
GIBNEY	Sinéad	Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission, IRELAND	sgibney@ihrec.ie

ANNEX 2 - AGENDA OF THE MEETING



First meeting of Equinet Evaluation Lab

Monday 1st June 2015 – 09:00 – 16:00

Location: Equinet Offices / Belgian Interfederal Centre for Equal Opportunities
Rue Royale, 138 - B-1000 Brussels

OBJECTIVES OF THE FIRST MEETING

The first meeting of the Evaluation Lab aims to:

- Introduce participants to the Evaluation Lab and assess and discuss their experiences in evaluating the work of their equality body
- Discuss the implementation of the evaluation methods proposed in the 2013 paper and if possible, propose other evaluation methods
- Share participants' expectations regarding the project
- Discuss specific aspects of evaluation work through workshops
- Define next steps and common actions of the Evaluation Lab

PREPARATORY MATERIALS

- Equinet Paper "*Processes and indicators for measuring the impact of equality bodies*", Niall Crowley (2013) – available here: <http://www.equineteurope.org/Measuring-the-impact-of-equality>
- Evaluation projects done or planned and methods used or planned to be used within your own equality body

AGENDA

Welcome and Introduction of the project

09:00 - 09:10

Welcome and introduction of the Evaluation Lab Project

Anne Gaspard, Equinet Executive Director

09:10 – 09:40

Introduction of participants

Tour de table - participants will introduce themselves and explain their expectations towards the Evaluation Lab (3 minutes per participants)

SESSION 1: Building from the 2013 report "Processes and indicators for measuring the impact of equality bodies"

09:40 – 09:50

Reminder of the main conclusions of the 2013 report

Niall Crowley, Independent Expert, Equinet Board Adviser and author of the paper "Processes and indicators for measuring the impact of equality bodies"

09:50 – 11:00

Discussion on the implementation of the conclusions of the 2013 report

Why is evaluation important for equality bodies?

	<p>What are the barriers to evaluation work? What factors make it possible? What approaches make it effective? - <i>Tour de table</i></p>
11:00 – 11:15 - COFFEE BREAK	
SESSION 1 (continuation): Building from the 2013 report “Processes and indicators for measuring the impact of equality bodies”	
11:15 – 12:00	<p>Continuation of the discussion How could the Evaluation Lab help participants to deepen their approach to evaluation or to engage in new approaches to evaluation? How could the Evaluation Lab promote a practice/culture of evaluation across Equinet members?</p>
12:00 – 13:00 – LUNCH BREAK	
SESSION 2: Workshops	
13:00 – 13:45	<p>Workshop 1 – Measuring the Impact of Equality Bodies: Ideas and Approaches Establishing the Benchmarks or Baselines Use of research and surveys to set equality goals and to measure the gains <i>Facilitated by Eileen Lavery, Equality Commission for Northern Ireland</i></p>
13:45 – 14:30	<p>Workshop 2 – The theory of change approach What changes can equality bodies seek to achieve? How can evaluation help to stay on target? <i>Facilitated by Niall Crowley</i></p>
14:30 – 14:45 - COFFEE BREAK	
Conclusions and ways forward	
14:45 – 15:15	<p>Brainstorming on the project of handbook (to be published at the end of the project) Brainstorming session on the objectives, key ideas and timeframe <i>Jessica Machacova, Equinet Secretariat</i></p>
15:15 – 15:45	<p>Next meeting of the Evaluation Lab – key topics and priorities Participants will be asked to share ideas to start designing the agenda of the next meeting of the Evaluation Lab (second half of 2015) <i>Jessica Machacova, Equinet Secretariat</i></p>
15:45 – 16:00	<p>Conclusions of the meeting and ways forward <i>Niall Crowley and Equinet Secretariat</i></p>
16:00: CLOSING OF THE MEETING	