“We must keep striving to encourage more girls and young women into the STEM subjects and welcome more women into an area of work that is both so rewarding and so crucial for society.”

**Gregory Hodkinson, Chairman, Arup**
“At Arup, everyone is different and everyone’s perspective matters. Diversity is about acknowledging and celebrating these differences and ensuring that everyone is treated fairly.” Arup D&I Strategy 2015-17.

Arup now recruits from over double the number of universities it did in 2011.

“From my own experience it’s clear that diversity around the leadership table improves decision-making and makes for better and more effective businesses.”

Gregory Hodkinson, Chairman, Arup
Background and objectives

Diversity is essential for Arup as it looks for better ways to imagine, re-imagine and shape the environment. The organisation strives to recruit people with different backgrounds, skills and abilities. It welcomes people who challenge opinions and have new and innovative ways of thinking. Arup is keen to show that it is leading the industry in terms of D&I, being open to discussing difficult issues and reflecting the communities it serves.

Arup invests in diversity, but does not have a full-time, dedicated support team; people get involved and take on officially recognised roles in the D&I steering committee and network groups because they believe in making things better for the company and the wider industry. In the UKMEA region, there is a diversity and inclusion programme manager who has responsibility for D&I as well as having a day-to-day consultancy role within the business. There is also a senior D&I champion who is a director in the business and reports to the board. Arup’s Region Board Chair, Alan Belfield, is also a senior D&I champion. It is felt that being embedded in the business is a more effective way of bringing about cultural change.

Communication is a vital ingredient in our diversity and inclusion work. It is used to gather input from Arup’s staff base, ensuring that its activities are not only relevant to its business but also to its people. For example, Arup conducted a consultation with staff ahead of the 2015–17 strategy and recent staff survey. After all, a strategy is only meaningful if it is truly understood, embraced and actioned by employees, and what better way to gain support than by empowering colleagues to drive activity forward?

Communication was also key to educating employees on the latest research, explaining why it matters, the business case for it and how it affects teams and individuals.

A global approach

In terms of the global approach, Arup has appointed the chairman as the global D&I lead. Appointing a senior individual to lead on diversity and inclusion demonstrates its commitment to building an inclusive culture across the whole organisation. In each of the five regions, there is a diversity and inclusion programme manager and a senior D&I champion at the directorial level. Each region has developed its own strategy that meets the needs of its area, and initiatives are led and implemented at a local level. The key representatives from each region meet every six weeks to discuss progress, updates and next steps.

This year, diversity and inclusion is a key item on the global annual meeting (AGAM) agenda and will be discussed with all directors, which includes a workshop session on D&I.
Specific initiatives

Employee networks
Arup has implemented a number of employee networks to ensure that employees feel supported, included and have a voice. Some of the key networks are described as follows:

Connect Out Network
The Connect Out Network plays a key role in creating a positive environment for all LGBT staff. The network aims to support and help people feel comfortable in the workplace. The network has a steering committee and holds numerous events throughout the year, which are well attended by both staff and clients. Events also provide an opportunity for both internal and external role models to speak to the network about their experiences and careers. For example, Lord Browne (ex BP) spoke at the group’s annual lecture. Arup was the first engineering firm to join the Stonewall Diversity Champions programme in 2012.

In terms of its global reach, the network has worked hard to support LGBT staff who have taken up long-term assignments in countries where it is seen as unacceptable to be gay.

There is also a mentoring scheme attached to the network, and social events such as film nights are organised.

The positive work of the network has been recognised by Stonewall, who presented it with a Star Performer Network Group award in 2014 for its efforts to achieve an inclusive workplace.

Results from the Workplace Equality Index Survey 2014 indicated that 96% of network members consider the workplace culture in Arup inclusive of lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) people. This is an increase from 68% the previous year.

This all contributes to staff engagement and promotion of Arup as a great place to work. Arup is leading an ‘Equality in Construction’ walking group at Pride in London this year, joining several other firms within the industry. This is a first for Arup. Connect Out is aware of four employees who joined Arup recently who specifically cite its dedication to championing LGBT rights as one of the overriding factors behind their choice to join the firm. They felt Arup’s approach meant they would be more comfortable being themselves at work. It is this ability to be authentic in the workplace that creates an environment where everyone can thrive.

Connect Cultures Network
This is the Arup cultural, religious and ethnic diversity network and was launched in 2014. The aim of the network is to foster an inclusive and equal-opportunity work environment that respects individual differences and values what they can bring to the firm, its clients and industry. Connect Cultures focuses on the specific opportunities and challenges associated with cultural difference, empowering all employees regardless of their backgrounds to perform to their fullest potential.

The network aims to increase awareness of the cultural diversity that exists within Arup to encourage greater inclusion, foster inter-cultural understanding, challenge preconceptions and value difference and the opportunities to innovate that this can bring. An example of this is an event called Islam@Arup, which explained over a series of lunchtime presentations in each office the significance of Ramadan to the Muslim faith.

In addition, Connect Cultures assists HR, the Diversity Steering Group, Arup’s leadership and individuals by providing information on issues relating to cultural diversity and advocating positive change in the firm’s operations. The network holds internal events, including awareness-raising around the benefits of cultural exchange through long-term assignments.

The network holds events where external speakers are invited to share their experiences. For example, David Lammy, MP for Tottenham, came in to talk about his background, experiences and career. This was particularly relevant because Arup has been involved in a regeneration project in Tottenham.

Connect Cultures has also initiated Arup involvement with the Horizons Mentoring Programme, which seeks to inspire male black minority ethnic youth in South London to consider a career in engineering. The network intends to continue this work with Horizons in the years ahead, influencing the diversity of Arup’s recruitment pool.

Connect Women Network
The women’s network is well-established and has been running since 2009. The network has hundreds of members (both men and women) and frequently runs events that are attended by both staff and clients. Arup believes that one of the key factors that make the women’s network successful is that men are also invited to attend and efforts are made to ensure that men do not feel alienated. In five years, over 2,000 staff and over 400 non-Arup people have attended more than 40 events held by the networks. Above all, they encourage active participation and raise awareness of important issues.
Events provide an opportunity for open challenge and debate. For example, one recent event was held in the style of a governmental debate, with directors passionately arguing for and against measures to increase female membership on the Board. The event was fully attended, by men and women, of all grades and ages, with the chairman and deputy chairman in attendance, keen to hear and debate in an open forum an important issue for the firm to consider.

The network has also hosted a speed mentoring event in London. This involved fifty junior to mid-grade women who were matched with ‘speed mentors’ based on their individual preferences such as male/ female, from the same profession, etc. ‘Speed mentors’ were at the director or associate director level and spent five minutes with participants to discuss topics such as career advice, options, challenges and success factors. They were then rotated, providing each participant with the opportunity to speak to three mentors. The event facilitated relationships and was friendly and informal. Following the success of this event, several informal mentoring arrangements have arisen, and there are plans to repeat the process in other locations.

In addition, the network has been instrumental in showcasing female role models in the firm by providing more information about the career journeys of senior women. Interviews with senior women in the firm about their work, path to success, challenges etc. have been videoed and staff can access these via the intranet.

Recruitment
To ensure objectivity, consistency and fairness in its selection processes, and to increase the diversity of the talent pool, Arup has run recruitment skills workshops for 200 hiring managers. Workshop subjects include the importance of fairness, equality and understanding and minimising the impact of unconscious bias. There has been a conscious effort, in particular by the graduate recruitment team, to make managers aware of the risks associated with drawing a large number of candidates from a small pool of universities. They have already seen some positive impacts; for example, 26% of graduate hires were female in 2011, and this has risen to 36% in 2014. They have also increased the number of nationalities from 19 to 33 and widened the pool of graduate universities from 33 to 74.

Unconscious bias and inclusive leadership
Arup has focused on improving career opportunities through an inclusive leadership development programme. It encourages senior staff to recognise their own unconscious biases and teaches techniques to counteract them. Arup introduced the unconscious bias and one-to-one inclusive leadership coaching after re-evaluating its approach to gender diversity. Statistics showed that women’s potential for senior roles was often overlooked. The firm, therefore, was keen to increase the number of females from 25% to 35% of the workforce and ensure that 15% of its leaders are women.

These clear goals reinforce Arup’s strong ethos of fairness and equality. The firm aims to create an environment ‘where each man or woman is respected for the job they do, and is doing his or her best because the atmosphere is right’.

Paul Sharp, head of resourcing, learning and development, explains: “We recognised that we could become a more effective organisation by better understanding how we make everyday, split-second decisions”. The programme aimed to give leaders the personal insight to be more successful in their roles. The programme used implicit association tests (IAT) which seeks to uncover subconscious links, for example, between ‘family’ and ‘females’ and ‘careers’ and ‘men’.

Initially, the IATs were used with Arup’s top team to help them explore their personal biases. They then received one-to-one coaching to enable them to make sense of their own biases and to identify when they are most likely to have an impact at work and what they can do to eliminate this. Board members discussed the key themes with around sixty senior leaders before they took part in the workshops.

As a result, everyone had thought about the implications of a more diverse workforce, both from a business and personal perspective.
Overall, the percentage of female staff has increased from 30.2% in 2011 to 32.2% in 2015—much higher than the average for members of the Association for Consultancy and Engineering, which is around 20%. The percentage of women in senior positions has also increased from 13.8% to 17.1% during this time.

The proportion of women on the UKMEA Board has increased from 18% to 23% just recently, and they have averaged a 35% female graduate intake, where the ‘pool’ of qualified female applicants is more like 15% to 20% of all graduates. Arup is also one of the Times Top 50 Employers for women.

In terms of the Connect Out Network, the results from the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index illustrate the impact of the network even over its first year of operation, demonstrating its reach in terms of promoting inclusion, tolerance and understanding.

Unconscious bias and inclusive leadership
It is felt that the approach has changed attitudes and behaviour. For example, leaders are making different decisions and are more sensitive to bias as a consequence of this learning. Some people now recognise that the firm needs a way to tap into the potential of the many women who return to work part-time after having a family. Others are involving senior team members when allocating work so that decisions can be challenged and cast the net wider than the usual suspects.

The development initiative, as part of a wider programme of activity, has helped to address some of the challenges Arup was facing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arup workplace equality index - summary inclusion findings</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WEI score</td>
<td>88/200</td>
<td>131/200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEI ranking</td>
<td>257th</td>
<td>145th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The workplace culture in my organisation is inclusive of lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) people</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My line manager supports me as an LGB member of staff</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior management are supportive of LGB staff</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My straight/heterosexual colleagues are well-informed on LGB issues</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would feel confident reporting anti-gay bullying in my workplace</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would feel comfortable declaring my sexual orientation to my employer on a monitoring form</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel able to be myself in the workplace</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are visible and open LGB role models in my organisation</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Challenges
One of the key challenges faced by Arup was ensuring that everyone understands that diversity and inclusion is relevant to them even though they may not be from a traditionally underrepresented group. They have tried to overcome this by seeking views from everyone, making learning from events available to everyone and creating some excitement for initiatives through communication, events and networks.

Challenges for the networks have included trying to find new, interesting and innovative events to inspire others, as this gets harder the longer the network is in operation. Maintaining momentum is often easy in the first few years, and to keep moving forward needs fresh blood and fresh ideas. In addition, what works in one location (such as London) may not work in others (such as the Gulf); as an international company working around the world, trying to support staff in countries or regions that aren’t that gay friendly can prove very challenging.
Hints and tips

- It is important to have senior support and champions for networks. It is particularly useful to find men who will support the women’s network, for example. This helps to encourage all employees to feel involved and see it as something that is relevant to them.
- Review the way you look at graduate recruitment to ensure you are drawing on a wide and diverse pool of talent.
- Bring diversity and inclusion into the mainstream of the business. Get people thinking about it and discussing it, and raise awareness of what actions people can take to help build an inclusive culture.
- At Arup, staff networks are set up, run and lead by staff in their own free time with support and funding from the business. This tends to make the approach more heartfelt and authentic (staff run the network because they want to, not because they have to).
- Different network events have different focuses; some are aimed at LGBT staff only, some are open to the whole Arup world and some are externally facing. This helps support members, engage with others within the company and learn/share experiences with clients and industry as a whole.

Next steps

There are a number of new initiatives as part of the 2015-17 strategy to be rolled out over the next two years. In the coming months, analysis of Arup’s voluntary diversity and inclusion survey, which collated data on all of the Equality Act’s protected characteristics, will help shape and hone future activities further. Participation rates in the survey show that engagement with the diversity and inclusion agenda is high. In the UK, 65% of staff participated in the survey; a reflection that employees understand the importance of understanding the shape, composition and working habits of its workforce.

Arup is looking into starting a Family Network for people with caring responsibilities and families. This will involve hosting informal lunches, facilitating a way of sharing tips for balancing work and personal responsibilities and learning from external speakers about parenting in the 21st century.

HR in the UK is looking to learn from an approach taken in Australia where they developed a parental leave book. This includes information about leave entitlements and arrangements, benefits, return to work, rights and pay. They also want to raise awareness among line managers and ensure they are trained in how to deal with requests regarding shared parental leave.

The firm is also considering implementing an e-module on inclusive leadership to reach more employees.

→ See Appendix 3 for more guidance on specific initiatives linked to this case study:

- Employee networks.
- Global perspective.
- Recruitment and selection training.
- Role of leadership.

→ For useful resources and organisations to support your work, see Appendix 4.

To find out more about the case study, contact diversity@raeng.org.uk