



Zero Tolerance for Racial Discrimination

After climbing a great hill, one only finds that there are many more hills to climb.

– Nelson Mandela

Some two weeks following the appearance of racial graffiti in the public area of the Legal VPU on the 6th floor of the MC building, Bank Group senior management sent out a strong note of condemnation of the incidents to all staff via email.

Some staff criticized the reaction as belated. Chief among them were members of the Bank-IMF African, Caribbean, and African-American Societies. One member admitted to being “totally disappointed that management action to denounce the acts was so delayed.” Another said that management “needs to give more than lip service to these serious issues and to be more proactive.” Key executives of the three Societies, speaking on behalf of their constituencies, largely

agreed that management should have issued an early, unequivocal statement that racism and racial discrimination are unacceptable under any circumstances, but even more in an institution whose very mission is improving the economic and social status of the global poor.

Several staff applauded the strong zero-tolerance message against discrimination of any kind. One staff member commented, “I am very proud to be part of an organization that takes such matters so seriously; it shows at times like this that tolerance is our best asset and we should encourage and embrace difference.” Another wrote, “Thank you for paying attention to these issues! They are very important! In particular, such organizations as ours should set the highest standards of conduct and serve as an example of diversity and inclusion.”

Penned by Hasan Tuluy, VP of Human Resources in the Bank, and Dorothy Berry, VP of Human Re-

sources and Communications in the IFC, here is their communication to all staff replicated in its entirety:

“We want to update you on incidents of graffiti within Bank premises, of which some of you may have heard already.

“Last month, two pieces of graffiti, written in ballpoint pen, were found in the public area of the Legal Department on the 6th floor of the MC building. One of these contained a racial slur and the other a derogatory remark telling all foreigners to go home. Such acts are hurtful to all of us and even frightening to some of our colleagues, and we deplore them.

“Anne-Marie Leroy, the General Counsel, took immediate action, reported the incidents to Security for investigation, sent an email to all Legal staff, and held a follow up townhall with staff. As she wrote in her email, “Rest assured that such despicable acts will neither be dismissed nor go unnoticed.”

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Q & A with Anne-Marie Leroy

Senior Vice President and General Counsel



SVP and GC Anne-Marie Leroy joined the World Bank in March 2009. Most recently, she was a partner of the Paris Office of Denton Wilde Sapte LLP where she was in charge of the Department of Public Law. This is not Ms. Leroy’s first stint at the Bank: from January 1995 to May 1998, she served in the MNA Region as a senior public sector specialist, working on public management issues in Lebanon, Morocco, and Tunisia.

Q: Please share a little about your own professional journey.

A: I have worked very hard to get where I am now, but the merit is not entirely mine. I’m the product of very supportive parents and a quality school system, and I was blessed with a very supportive husband.

Q: The role of General Counsel in the Bank serves as advisor to both the President and the Board. How has your experience been so far in this dual role?

A: As you say, this is a dual function. I am the Counsel to both Management

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“As we have hundreds of visitors each day and there is no security camera in that area, we do not know at this time if the graffiti were written by Bank staff, but the investigation is ongoing.

Upon learning of these incidents, the leadership team discussed and reaffirmed our commitment to the Bank’s zero tolerance for discrimination of any kind. Bob Zoellick asked all vice presidents to follow up with managers and staff to make it clear that we will not accept such behavior. As Zoellick said in an article on diversity on the Kiosk, “We need to treat every staff member with dignity and respect. We cannot and will not tolerate discrimination.” Since then, Ngozi has been in constant communication with the head of the Bank/Fund African Association. The Office of Diversity Programs has scheduled an additional meeting for her with that group, the African-American Association and the Caribbean Association to listen to and address their concerns.

In an organization such as ours, we value and draw our strength from the diversity of our staff. In turn, we expect a workplace that is inclusive, respectful of differences and where each individual is treated with dignity. We will accept no less.

To ensure this message is clear, we are asking your managers to meet with you to discuss the above issues, and to reaffirm the fundamental principle that we all value our diversity. In the meantime, our Office of Diversity Programs will engage a broad cross-section of the organization into discussions on the wider diversity and inclusion approach in the coming weeks.”

Staff Reactions

What exactly were the racial slurs? Who could possibly have written

them? Could it have been a Bank staff? Was it sprayed on the wall? Was it a ballpoint pen? Why did management not inform staff immediately? What caused the delay?

These questions and many more animated a hundred water-cooler conversations in the days and weeks following the incidents. Theories abounded.

Since then, senior management has asked managers to reiterate to staff that the Bank is a responsive organization; where issues arise, the institution has policies and systems in place to address these challenges.

In fact, the Bank has a plethora of outlets where staff can seek solutions. These include the WBG Office of Diversity Programs; the Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Group (DIAG) made up of senior managers; the Office of Ethics and Business Conduct (EBC); Mediation Services (MEF); the Office of the Ombudsman (OMB); the new Peer Review Services (PRS); the Administrative Tribunal (WBT); the Integrity Vice Presidency (INT); and the Staff Association (SA).

The Bank’s Chief Diversity Officer, Julie Oyegun, put the effort into perspective: “Since we are all members of the human race, it is extremely important for the Bank to get this right. We are a global role model, have hired and managed talent from across the entire racial spectrum for at least 60 years, and serve a multiracial client base.”

“We have done some very good things which gives one the confidence that we have a lot more to offer!” she added.

The Office of Diversity Programs is launching a Pulse Survey on September 3, 2009. The aim is to gather and assess staff views on progress made on diversity and inclusion in the institution.

The confidential survey will be managed by the Gelfond Group,



Harvard’s Professor Mahzarin Banaji will return to the World Bank in October.

which has collaborated with the Bank since 2002 on successive institutional Staff Surveys. The results will be analyzed and used as a baseline for future surveys that measure progress. Most importantly, the results will inform a series of concrete action plans for implementation by senior management to address diversity and global inclusion gaps across the institution.

“The task of transforming our organizational culture into a totally inclusive global employer of choice is a work-in-progress,” said Oyegun. “We encourage everyone to take the time to complete the survey when it is launched in September as a direct and valuable contribution to bringing about organizational culture change.”

Where do You have bias?

In October 2009, the Bank will once again welcome Harvard Professor Mahzarin Banaji, lead developer of the Implicit Association Test (IAT). During the March 2009 Diversity Month, Banaji presented the IAT in a workshop with senior managers and their intact management teams.

The IAT assessment instrument itself has become somewhat of a global phenomenon. Nearly 20,000 people per week take versions of the IAT, which Banaji developed in collaboration with colleagues Anthony Greenwald and Brian Nosek. The test has been adapted by thousands of psychologists globally, who have written more than 500 published papers on it.

“People like us are the ones who are delaying the change,” Banaji stressed. “If we are prepared—if we understand how our minds work—then [we can get] to thinking more creatively about what we might do differently.”

“I’m asking for a very different kind of awareness, the small decisions on a daily basis,” said Banaji. “It is going to take something deeply conscious to make the change we need.”

The second session with those VPU management teams that did not attend the March event is scheduled for October 26. The workshop will once again be supported by MD Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala and co-sponsored by the WBG Office of Diversity Programs and the Staff Association.

“It’s very easy to use constraints as an excuse for inaction, and hide behind our biases,” said Ngozi, during the March event. “We simply have to acknowledge, then overcome, our biases in order to move forward. At stake is an institution that needs to respond to our clients and deliver.”

The WBG Office of Diversity Programs invites you to take the IAT. Simply type “diversity” or “inclusion” in your browser for a direct link to the IAT website.

The 12 Attributes of Inclusive Organizations

1. Demonstrated commitment to diversity.
2. Holistic view of the employees and the organization.
3. Access to opportunity.
4. Accommodation for diverse physical and developmental abilities.
5. Equitable systems for recognition, acknowledgement, and reward.
6. Shared accountability and responsibility.
7. 360-degree communication and information-sharing.
8. Demonstrated commitment to continuous learning.
9. Participatory work organization and work process.
10. Recognition of organizational culture and process.
11. Collaborative conflict resolution processes.
12. Demonstrated commitment to community relationships.

Source: The Workplace Diversity Network

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and the Board, and it requires from me a constant search for a balance. There could be a wrong perception that the General Counsel advises only Management and just eventually, the Board. In fact, Management meets every day, in very different forums, while the Board meets twice a week. I plan to correct this misperception by engaging more often with the members of the Board and have a constructive exchange of views in areas of common concern.

Q: You served a three-year stint in Bank Operations in the mid-1990s. How did that equip you for your current post?

A: I was a senior public sector specialist working on public management issues in MNA. I enjoyed my time there enormously. I could not have imagined how much it would help me in this position, understanding Bank culture and the reality of Bank Operations as they are carried out in the field.

Q: How are your lawyers similar to or different from typical lawyers in a corporation?

A: With the financial crisis and the subsequent increase in the Bank’s lending operations, our lawyers are working even harder. In this sense, we’re not like a typical law firm or a legal department in any company. We are embedded in the Bank’s activities and when operations expand, our work increases proportionally.

Q: What is the status and future path for Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) in the Bank’s Legal VPU?

A: Generally, we have good diversity in terms of country origin and gender, but one of the biggest issues in my opinion is women and Part 2 country citizens at the Managerial level. This needs to be addressed.

Q: What are some other D&I issues you’d like to address in the future?

A: I’d like to focus more on the

diversity of legal training and expertise. If we want to serve both the Bank and our clients, we need a diversity of legal traditions, thinking, and backgrounds.

Q: Specifically, therefore, how do you intend to improve on the recruitment strategy in the future?

A: Currently, we tend to advertise and recruit from the top-notch universities in the United States. This helps us attain a wide diversity in national origin as well as a high level of legal expertise. However, it also narrows our pool—our hires tend to be Anglophone, for example. I believe that if we are able to reach out more to European and Canadian universities, then we will get a broader diversity of candidates and broaden our legal culture. There is also a strong tradition of quality legal training in São Paulo, Cairo, Johannesburg, Istanbul, and elsewhere. We need to expand our recruitment outreach to those parts of the world.

Fels: Paternity Leave is Primary Policy Tool for Gender Parity

When President Zoellick announced a goal to attain gender parity among managers by 2012, it set off a firestorm of dialogue and analysis. What is the best framework, the principal obstacles, and the optimal path for the World Bank?

To address these issues and more, the Staff Association's Family Issue Working Group joined the InfoShop to host Dr. Anna Fels—the topic: “Gender Parity in World Bank Group Management: Creating an Environment for Success.”

Fels is the author of *Necessary Dreams*, which delves into ambition in women's changing lives. A practicing psychiatrist, she is on the faculty of the Weill Medical College of Cornell University and the New York Presbyterian Hospital.

During the past 100 years, Fels said, almost every aspect of a woman's life has been transformed. Work policies, however, have failed to keep up. Although women represent 50 percent of the workforce, they do more childcare than their husbands.

What is more, because organizations have failed to update their policies accordingly, they are complicit in the resulting imbalance.

“How is our society going to take care of families?” asked Fels.

Prior advances, both legal and cultural, meant minimizing gender roles and ostensibly ignoring differences, said Fels. But today's solutions require that organizations—and society at large—openly acknowledge biological differences and accommodate them.

“We're dealing with a stage in life for women during which pregnancy, childbirth, and lactation have to be acknowledged,” emphasized Fels. “We're talking about reconfiguring

some of our most basic institutions—child care, elder care, and the shape of marriages... the shape of the workplace itself.”

In the World Bank, for example, the pressures are particularly acute. The average age at which women have their first child is 37, which represents “significant possible risks to themselves and their plans to have a family.”

When they do have children, the lack of better organizational policies leaves women struggling to balance both their careers and their new family responsibilities.

Paternity leave or bust

“What can organizations do at a practical level?” asked Fels. “How can they create a culture that convincingly shows it is taking care of families?”

First, there should be more transparency that staff who take advantage of reduced work schedules or leave options are not punished. [Only two percent of Bank employees take advantage of flexible work programs, other than AWS.]

But that's not enough. Work-life balance committees should comprise 50 percent men. To prove her point, Fels gestured to the capacity crowd. Of more than 100 participants, maybe three or four men were in attendance.

“It is shockingly apparent that women alone are supposed to manage this balancing act!” said Fels.

The kicker: unless organizations offer a strong program of paternity leave, they are complicit in the societal imbalance.

In the absence of a strong program of paternity leave, organizations send a powerful message to the employee: “A child is the wife's responsibility. We do not expect fatherhood to interrupt men's work, or to

be a priority for our male employees. For new fathers, we expect business as usual.” (The Bank currently offers “up to five days” of paternity leave for each childbirth or adoption.)

“It perpetuates an outdated and largely unviable paradigm,” said Fels.

For work, life, and balance

Fels proposed options to improve both the bottom line and gender parity in the workplace, including improved programs in housing, daycare, and health. Employees could opt to pay for the services that appeal to them.

One such option is more housing available near the office, which reduces commutes and permits spouses to see family more. During a lively give-and-take after the keynote, it became obvious that this sort of option would be particularly impactful in the Bank's country offices, where many staff commute long distances.

Another is daycare, which has been proven to reduce staff missed days by up to 30 percent and dramatically reduce costly staff turnover.

A workplace “sniffle room” allows a parent (usually the mother) to stay when a child is too sick to go to school, but not so ill that she requires a parent's undivided attention.

Finally, dedicated physicians (either at work or nearby) reduce commutes and improve organizational health. This increases both work efficiency and time with family.

The choice is clear: a business culture that continues to place “a firewall between work and home powerfully privileges male over female employees,” concluded Fels.

Ultimately, the rewards are manifold. “In this transformation,” urged Fels, “you can provide an international example of gender equality in the workplace.”