

WOMEN AND EMPLOYMENT ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

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We would like to thank the US Ambassador Louis B. Susman. Also we want to express our deep gratitude to Christian Cali and Esther Pan Sloane of the US Embassy for their support, and valuable contribution without which this event would not otherwise have been possible.

Introduction

This was the first time that a joint partnership event has taken place between Faith Regen Foundation and the US Embassy in London. We are particularly grateful to the US Ambassador for permitting the roundtable discussion to take place at the US Embassy building in Grosvenor Square.

For this first roundtable discussion we agreed that the topic of Women and Employment struck a chord, particularly as in this global recession it resonates strongly with both the US and the UK.

It was agreed that the roundtable discussion would be kept small in order to allow for all delegates to have an opportunity to dissect the questions. The delegates were high powered individuals from the private, voluntary and employment sector and they discussed what the barriers and obstacles to entering the labour market are; what is preventing many women from breaking through the glass ceiling and how retention and promotion are achieved whilst balancing other commitments such as childcare and family life.

Ms Jacqui Henderson CBE kindly agreed to chair the discussion.

Core objectives of the discussion

- ❖ To identify the key barriers and obstacles facing women in the UK and US from accessing job opportunities and climbing the job ladder
- ❖ To stimulate practical, innovative and creative approaches to encouraging individuals to enter the labour market and be successful within it
- ❖ To acknowledge the contribution that women can make to the workforce and the business case for increasing ethnic minority women's employment in both countries
- ❖ To provide an opportunity for policy makers and stakeholders to share experiences and best practice examples of their contribution to tackling ethnic minority women's unemployment.

Recommendations: – that emerged from the discussion

- Strengthen provision of English language classes

- Utilise ethnic media to build positive images of women and portray role models from the diverse ethnic minority communities
- Build better networking opportunities – both mainstream and specialist
- Utilise faith leaders and institutions to promote gender equality
- Promote citizenship values in US and UK
- Hold a conference in 2012 on Tackling Unemployment among ethnic minority women



Background

Women and employment

Women still face inequality in the workplace on multiple levels both in the UK and in the US. Gaps in unemployment rates, pay, opportunities to climb the job ladder and the prevalence of traditional employment sectors still exist, although much improvement has been made since the 1970s.

Government Policies and Priorities in the current economic climate

1. UK perspective

The current UK Administration has stated that its goal during this time of recession is to create more employment and boost the economy. In January 2011, Prime Minister David Cameron has promised to establish the "most pro-business, pro-growth, pro-jobs agenda ever unleashed by a government".

The government has announced that it will cut ESOL delivered in the workplace and the Skills for Life programmes for literacy and ESOL.¹ These cuts have been criticized in that it will create a larger barrier, in particular to ethnic minority women in integrating into British society and entering the job market.

2. U.S. perspective

The US Administration's goal is reduce high unemployment rates with a business-friendly vision emphasizing innovation and exports to other countries. With innovation, clean energy and job creation being the main vision. There is currently a shift from policies that were designed to stabilize the economy after the 2008 financial meltdown to a renewed focus on increasing employment. To help to restore economic confidence and boost hiring, the Obama Administration has put forth a strategy that includes reducing taxes and encouraging business investment.



¹ UK Department for Business Innovation & Skills Strategy Document, November 2010.

Ethnic minority women and employment

There also exists a larger disparity for ethnic minority women who face discrimination in the workplace on two levels; based on their gender and also on their race. Both the US and the UK still have higher unemployment levels for ethnic minority women although the most disadvantaged group differs in each country. Black and Pakistani/Bangladeshi women have higher levels of unemployment and poverty in the UK. In the US, African-Americans, Mexicans and Hispanics are those most likely to be disfavoured.² Muslim women are one of the groups that experience the largest employment penalty of any group in society.

In both countries, ethnic minority women face the following challenges; pay gaps, part-time work, access to childcare, maternity leave issues, etc. all of which are deepened by current government cutbacks.



1. Employment Rates

1.1. United Kingdom

² *The University of Manchester, Institute of Social Change, The Labour Market Situation of Minority Ethnic Groups in Britain and the US – an analysis of employment status and class position (1990/1 – 2000/1), Working Paper 2010-01*

The employment gap between ethnic minority women and women overall has remained fairly constant over the last five years at 16.5 %. In 2009, the employment rate for white females was 72.2% in contrast to female Pakistani and Bangladeshi employment rates which stood at 26.9% and 27% respectively. Black Caribbean (64%) and Indian (64.4%) had the highest employment rates of ethnic minority females. The overall ethnic minority rate was 50.4%.³

Unemployment

For the second quarter of 2010, the International Labour Organisation's unemployment rate for female ethnic minorities stood at 13.5%. This was 6.3 percentage points higher than the rate of females overall. Pakistani/Bangladeshi (19.8%) and black African (18.0%) females had a noticeably higher unemployment rate than the other ethnic groups.⁴

In the second quarter of 2010, the female ethnic minority economic inactivity rate stood at 39.6%. This was 13.8 percentage points higher than for women overall. Pakistani and Bangladeshi women had the greatest inactivity rates (62.2% and 58.7% respectively), being noticeably higher than the next highest ethnic group (other Asian; 40.1%).⁵ Almost two thirds of Muslim women are economically inactive (66%), compared with about a quarter of all women (26%).⁶

Pakistani and Bangladeshi women are less likely to be in the labour market, but this is changing for younger generations. Although second and third generation ethnic minority women are more likely to be in the job market, it is still true that these women still face or experience discrimination in the labour market.⁷

1.2. United States

In 2009, 59.2% of women were in the labour force, and this share has been relatively stable over the past several years. Women's labour force participation rate peaked at 60% in 1999, following several decades of growth in women's labour market participation. In 2010, 58.6% of women were labour force participants—working or looking for work.⁸

Unemployment

In 2010, the unemployment rate for all women was 8.6% and for men it was 10.5%. Among ethnic groups, Asian

³ BAME Women in the UK: 2010 – A profile of ethnic minority women in Britain, Race for Opportunity, Business in the Community


⁴ BAME Women in the UK: 2010 – A profile of ethnic minority women in Britain, Race for Opportunity, Business in the Community

⁵ BAME Women in the UK: 2010 – A profile of ethnic minority women in Britain, Race for Opportunity, Business in the Community

⁶ Labour Force Survey 2006 and DWP 2007.

⁷ Equal Opportunities Commission, 2006

⁸ Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010



women continue to have the lowest unemployment rate of 7.5%. For white women, it was 7.7%; Hispanic women, 12.3%; and black women, 13.8%.⁹

In 2009, foreign-born women were less likely than native-born women to be in the labour force (55.4% compared with 59.8%). Of those in the labour force, native-born women were less likely to be unemployed than their foreign-born counterparts (7.9% versus 9.2%).¹⁰

From 1975 to 2000, the labour force participation rate of mothers with children under 18 years of age rose from 47.4% to a peak of 72.9%. By 2005, the participation rate for mothers had receded to 70.5% by 2009, it edged back up, to 71.6%. In general, mothers with older children (6 to 17 years of age, none younger) are more likely to participate in the labour force than mothers with younger children (under 6 years of age). Unmarried mothers have higher participation rates than married mothers. In 2009, 75.8% of unmarried mothers were in the labour force, compared with 69.8% of married mothers.¹¹

2. Pay Gaps

Although the pay gap between men and women in the UK and the US has decreased since records began in the 1970s, it is still present. In this area, the data clearly shows that the UK is making much more significant improvements than the US. Both countries however show a much narrower pay gap for younger generations. The pay gap for ethnic minority women in the UK and the US was the widest.

2.1. United Kingdom

In 2010, for full-time employees the pay gap between men and women was 10.2%, down from 12.2% in 2009. For part-time employees the gap had widened in favour of women, extending to -4%, compared with -2.5% in 2009. The gender pay gap for all employees had decreased to 19.8% from 22% in 2009.

The scale and direction of the gender pay gap varied according to age. For instance in the 22–29 age group, full-time women earned 2.1% more than full-time men and part-time women earned 1.7% more than part-time men. The largest pay gaps in favour of men for full-time and part-time employees were in the 50–59 age group at 17% and 17.4% respectively. The largest pay gap for all employees, 27.4%, was seen in both the 40–49 and 50–59 age groups.

⁹ Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010

¹⁰ Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010

¹¹ Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010

The widest pay differences by major occupation groups for full-time and all employees are seen in the Skilled Trades, where the gap ranges from 31.4% to 26%. The narrowest pay differences for full-time and all employees are in Professional occupations where the gap ranges from 4.2% to 1.6%.

Calculated using the mean rather than the median, women's hourly pay was 15.5% less than men's pay for full-time employees, 11.7% less than men's pay for part-time employees and 19.3% less for all employees. These are all below the mean pay gaps for full-time, part-time and all employees in 2009, which were 16.4%, 11.8% and 20.1% respectively.¹²

In the UK, women of every ethnicity experience a significant pay gap compared to men from the same ethnicity. The contrast is especially stark for some: Pakistani and Bangladeshi women who earn only 56% of the average hourly wage of white men. Indeed, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women earn the lowest salaries of any ethnic group, with an average of less than £6 an hour.¹³



¹² UK Office for National Statistics, 2010

¹³ Fawcett Society, 2008

2.2. United States

In 2010, the median weekly earnings of women who were full-time wage and salary workers were \$669, or 81% of men's \$824 - a pay gap of 19%.¹⁴ This figure has not improved much since 2003 when the pay gap was 20%. In 1979, the first year of comparable earnings data, the pay gap was a staggering 37%.¹⁵

When comparing the median weekly earnings of persons aged 16 to 24, young women earned 95% of what young men earned - a pay gap of 5%, while women aged 35 years and older earned about three-fourths as much as their male peers - a 25% pay gap.¹⁶ The ratio of women's to men's earnings also varied by place of residence.¹⁷

The women's-to-men's earnings ratio varied significantly by demographic group. The ratio was about 88% - a 12% pay gap for both blacks and Hispanics or Latinos in 2003; for whites it was 79% - a 21% pay gap; and for Asians it was 78% - a 22% pay gap. Earnings differences between women and men were widest for whites and Asians.¹⁸

Women who worked full time in wage and salary jobs had median weekly earnings of \$657 in 2009. This represented 80% - a pay gap of 20% - of men's median weekly earnings (\$819). Earnings of Asian (\$779) and White (\$669) women were substantially higher than the earnings of their Black (\$582) and Hispanic (\$509) counterparts. Women's-to-men's earnings ratios were higher among Blacks (94% and a pay gap of 6%) and Hispanics (90% with a pay gap of 10%) than among Whites (79% - a pay gap of 21%) and Asians (82% - a pay gap of 18%).¹⁹

3. Climbing the job ladder

3.1. United Kingdom

A study from the Government Equalities Office found that "once in employment, minority ethnic women are as successful as White women in reaching a higher occupational level, indicating that their labour market disadvantage applies mainly to finding work".²⁰

Overall, ethnic minority women directors made up 9.7% of all female directors in FTSE 100 companies. There are no British nationals among this group of female directors.²¹

¹⁴ U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment and Earnings, January, 2010

¹⁵ U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, September 2004, Report 978

¹⁶ U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment and Earnings, January, 2010

¹⁷ U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, September 2004, Report 978

¹⁸ U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, September 2004, Report 978

¹⁹ Bureau Labor of Statistics, 2010

²⁰ Government Equalities office, 2008

²¹ Cranfield University School of Management, The Female FTSE Report 2008

3.2. United States

Employed Asian women were more likely to work in the higher paying management, professional, and related occupations in 2009 than were employed White, Black, or Hispanic women. 47% of Asian women worked in managerial and professional jobs compared with 41% of White women, 34% of Black women, and 25% of Hispanic women. Meanwhile, Hispanic (32%) and Black (29%) women were more likely than White and Asian women to work in service occupations (20% and 21%, respectively).²²

4. Flexible work

Flexible work can be a viable alternative to women who wish to enter or return to the workplace but wish to keep a work-life balance. In both the UK and the US, there is a higher percentage of women in part-time or temporary employment than men.

4.1. United Kingdom

Since the second quarter of 1971, the female employment rates have generally increased, although almost half are part time jobs. For women, the presence of a dependent child has a substantial impact on employment.²³

Women's employment, work patterns and risks of poverty are directly connected to the availability, affordability, appropriateness and quality of childcare. Current provisions make childcare inaccessible to many ethnic minority women which directly affects their earning potential.²⁴

90% of all women say availability of flexible working conditions is very important when choosing a job. Ethnic minority women tend to prioritise flexible working even more highly than white women. At present however, black mothers experience the lowest level of access to flexible working arrangements. This lack of access is directly linked to higher levels of homeworking and the percentage of women that are unemployed.²⁵

Ethnic minority women are disproportionately likely to be working in temporary jobs whilst 78% of all part-time workers are women, with childcare concerns acting as a key driver. Temporary work leads to patchy and insecure income and part-time work has a disproportionately harsh effect on earnings and career progression. The lack of appropriate employment options means that ethnic minority women make up a substantial proportion of the over

²² Bureau Labor of Statistics, 2010

²³ Labour Force Survey (LFS), April-June 2008, Office for National Statistics

²⁴ Fawcett Society, 2008

²⁵ Fawcett Society, 2008

85% of homeworkers that are women. In addition, ethnic minority women are almost twice as likely (20%) to want to set up or run their own business than white women (11%).²⁶

Research shows that 30,000 women every year lose their job as a result of pregnancy-related discrimination. Pakistani and Bangladeshi mothers are least likely to be in paid work during pregnancy and most likely to rely on a sole male wage earner.²⁷



4.2. United States

The situation in the US is very similar with 73% of employed women work on full-time jobs, while 27% worked on a part-time basis.²⁸

In 2009, 27% of employed women usually worked part time—fewer than 35 hours per week. In comparison, 11% of employed men usually worked part time.²⁹

5. Employment Sector

²⁶ Fawcett Society, 2008

²⁷ Fawcett Society, 2008

²⁸ Bureau Labor of Statistics, 2010

²⁹ Bureau Labor of Statistics, 2010

Although employment opportunities for women have managed to diversify, a majority still work in traditional roles. In both the UK and the US, a small percentage of women are self-employed.

5.1. United Kingdom

Women are more likely to be employed in the public sector – one in three compared to one in six men – but this rises to nearly one in two Black Caribbean women. Black Caribbean and Bangladeshi women are more concentrated in a few occupations than white British women, who themselves are considerably more segregated than white British men.³⁰

But men and women still follow very different career paths. A fifth of women in employment do administrative or secretarial work compared with 4% of men. Women are also more likely than men to be employed in personnel services and in sales and customer services. Similar proportions of men and women work in professional, associate professional and elementary occupations, such as labourers and catering assistants. Men are more likely to be self-employed than women. Nearly three quarters of the 3.8 million self-employed people in the second quarter of 2008 were men, a proportion that has remained the same since early 1997.³¹

5.2. United States

The largest percentage of employed women (40.6%) worked in management, professional, and related occupations; 32% worked in sales and office occupations; 21.3% in service occupations; 5.2% in production, transportation, and material moving occupations; and 0.9% in natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations.³² The largest percentage of employed Asian, white, and black women (46.1%, 40.6%, and 33.8%, respectively) worked in management, professional, and related occupations. Hispanic women showed their strongest attachment to service occupations at 33.2%.³³

In 2009, women accounted for 51% of all people employed in management, professional, and related occupations, somewhat more than their share of total employment (47%). The share of women in specific occupations within this broad category varied. For example, 6% of construction managers and 32% of lawyers were women, while 62% of accountants and 82% of elementary and middle school teachers were women.³⁴ In 2009, women accounted for more than half of all workers within several industry sectors: financial activities, education and health services,


³⁰ *Equal Opportunities Commission, 2006*

³¹ *Labour Force Survey (LFS), April-June 2008, Office for National Statistics*

³² *Bureau Labor of Statistics, 2010*

³³ *Bureau Labor of Statistics, 2010*

³⁴ *Bureau Labor of Statistics, 2010*



leisure and hospitality, and other services. However, women were substantially underrepresented (relative to their share of total employment) in agriculture, mining, construction, manufacturing, and transportation and utilities.³⁵ The percentage of working women who were self-employed in non-agricultural industries was 5.3% in 2009, compared with 7.7% for men. In 2009, 39% of all self-employed workers were women, compared with 27% in 1976.³⁶

THE ORGANISERS

About Faith Regen Foundation

FRF is a Muslim inspired multi faith charity, operating at both a national and international level to build bridges with and between multi-faith communities, government and civil society. We use our networks with faith-based communities as well as statutory and non-statutory bodies to promote interfaith dialogue, address poverty, regenerate deprived areas and provide greater opportunities for employment and training to Black and Migrant Ethnic groups.

FRF has two subsidiaries – one international subsidiary called Global One 2015 and a commercial subsidiary called Innovate to Inspire.

FRF has demonstrated expertise in organising high level international networking conferences in its efforts to promote interfaith dialogue for the benefit of empowering marginalised and vulnerable communities. We have organised international conferences in collaboration with the Philadelphia Cathedral and the Islamic Society of North America, the Department for Trade and Industry and the National Health Service University.

In June 2008, FRF held a conference in partnership with UMCOR and the Commonwealth Foundation on the Role of Women in Peaceful Co-existence. There were contributors from Sri Lanka, Israel, Bosnia, UK, and the Vice President of Gambia.

³⁵ Bureau Labor of Statistics, 2010

³⁶ Bureau Labor of Statistics, 2010



In October 2009, FRF held a two-day Faith and Climate Change conference to stimulate global interfaith and intra-faith action on climate change. As well as presenting the results of focus groups from ten different countries, key note speeches were given by MP Edward Miliband the former Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change and Michael Slaby, Coordinator of Earth Charter.

In October 2010, FRF held a forum in partnership with ASLI called the World Muslim Leadership Forum. The conference was designed to bring together academics, policy makers, business people, and members of NGOs to put forth ideas on how best to develop the Muslim world in terms of economics, social cohesion, and politics. Key note speeches were given by The Crown Prince of Perak, and the event was chaired by Shaukat Aziz, the former Prime Minister of Pakistan.

FRF events have been attended by a cross section of society including the former and present Malaysian Prime Ministers, Ministers of Parliament, activists, senior government officials, academics, international non-government organizations and faith leaders. By bringing together people from the government, community and faith sectors, FRF strives to highlight key issues in tackling inequality and sought to create greater social cohesion.


The U.S. Embassy

The Embassy of the United States in London is located at 24 Grosvenor Square in Mayfair. The Ambassador to the Court of St. James's, Louis B. Susman, is the personal representative of the President, and oversees the Embassy, as well as Consulates General in Edinburgh and Belfast and the Virtual Presence Post Cardiff. The Ambassador's residence is Winfield House. Barbara J. Stephenson is the Minister at the United States Embassy in London and has served as such since August 25, 2010.

Representatives from the State Department and 26 other U.S. government agencies manage portfolios concerning economic, commercial and agricultural affairs, consular and immigration issues, customs, transportation, and law enforcement activities, as well as political and military relations, and public affairs.



Public diplomacy, the conduct of foreign relations directly with the average citizen of a country, rather than with officials of a country's foreign ministry, is an important part of their role. Embassy London's public affairs section, with experienced and motivated American and local staff, builds public understanding and support in the UK for America's goals in the world. Through local, national and international media, the Embassy talks to Britain and the world via television, radio, newspapers, the web and social networking media. They also conduct people-to-people exchanges, where American experts, authors, artists, educators, and students interact with their peers here. Embassy



London, with its huge interagency presence, in-house broadcast studio and a steady stream of high-level visits, offers an unmatched platform to tell America's story to the world.

The Embassy's Economic Section is responsible for monitoring and managing the full range of economic relations between the U.S. and the United Kingdom. The General Economic Policy Unit provides U.S. government agencies in Washington, D.C. and other embassies with accurate, timely, first-hand information and expert analysis on current economic and financial developments in the U.K. The unit also supports visiting U.S. government delegations and maintains regular contact with a variety of British government institutions, American and British business organizations, think-tanks, and non-governmental organizations. The unit serves as an advocate for U.S. economic and business interests in the U.K. and works to explain U.S. economic policies and financial regulations to U.K. audiences. Specific issues handled by the General Economic Policy Unit include labor affairs.

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION FINDINGS

The delegates all concurred that there were many similarities between ethnic minority women in the two nations and that some simple interventions which could be made that would make a difference, whether in the UK or the US. The findings were very much about the poor perception that the woman had of herself. There were different challenges facing women across the spectrum. For instance an uneducated woman faced the challenges of language, poverty and low self-esteem while a highly educated woman faced the challenges of salary gaps, lack of recognition of foreign qualifications, glass ceilings and discrimination.

One clear message that came out was about choice and the lack of understanding of the role of the woman in the home, and how homemakers are undervalued and have a non-status as they do not have economic independence. What is the positive effect of mothers staying at home on children, youth offenders, and anti-social behaviour? This is an area which requires further exploration because morality and values are not being instilled in our youth and this is resulting in a disconnect between youth and British and American society.

Role models are also an important way to reach women and girls and inspire them. Michelle Obama, for example, was pointed out as an effective role model for girls and women. She is a shining example of an ethnic minority woman who has gone to be successful and be a catalyst for change.

Another important factor that needs to be taken account of is the role of men in promoting opportunities for women. Husbands, partners, fathers, sons - they all need to be on board if there is going to be a mental shift in thinking.

Recommendations: –

- Strengthen provision of English language classes
- Utilise ethnic media to build positive images of women and portray role models from the diverse ethnic minority communities
- Build better networking opportunities – both mainstream and specialist
- Utilise faith leaders and institutions to promote gender equality
- Promote citizenship values in US and UK
- Hold a conference in 2012 on Tackling Unemployment among ethnic minority women



In this section we layout the key messages which came out regarding the questions that were discussed at the roundtable.

1. To identify the key barriers and obstacles facing women in the UK and US from accessing job opportunities and climbing the job ladder



The key barriers and obstacles facing women in the UK and the US from accessing job opportunities and climbing the job ladder were very similar.

Lack of self-confidence

The biggest issue hindering women from gaining employment was said to be a lack of self-confidence. This lack of confidence is reflected in the low percentage of women even applying for high paid jobs. Rather women seem to be applying for jobs they are overqualified for and at a lower salary.

Language and cultural barriers

This issue is exacerbated by language and cultural barriers affecting ethnic minority women. The cuts to the provision of ESOL by the UK government will only increase the negative impact of this barrier. New communities are disconnected and they need help from the government to be integrated and engaged. In the US, ESOL provisions vary state by state and it is therefore difficult for a universal solution to take form. A larger programme is

needed if serious concerns are to be addressed. The negative perception of ethnic minority women is still present both in the UK and the US.

Lack of support and funding

Lack of funding at the government level is the main cause of this last barrier. Small projects that help women at a ground level in local communities especially lack this core funding.



Lack of awareness

Another major issue is the lack of awareness, knowledge and information that prevent women from seeking opportunities in advancing their career or entering the labour market. For example, many women are unaware of apprenticeships that could help them access the job market by giving them the experience they require. Careers advice needs to be improved.

Unfair recognition of qualifications

Another important barrier to women entering the labour market is the unfairness attached to the recognition of degrees from other countries. This is an issue that needs to be addressed at government level. It especially discourages ethnic minority women from pursuing employment at a calibre equivalent to their skills and also contributes to lowering their self-confidence.

Flexible work

Women are more often in temporary or part-time employment. These flexible arrangements could however prevent them from climbing the job ladder.

2. To stimulate practical, innovative and creative approaches to encouraging individuals to enter the labour market and be successful within it



In order to break down these barriers, innovative approaches are needed to encourage women to enter the labour market and progress within it.



Engaging women through networks and media

One suggestion was to engage women through networks and through media.

Building women's confidence

Women need to build their confidence in order to feel that they can make the transition into the job market, either for the first time or returning after raising their children. This also holds true for women attempting to climb the job ladder and having the aspiration and confidence to know they are capable of doing so. This confidence, however, needs to first build from the inside. Teachers and parents are key to helping young girls with this; from body image issues to reinforcing aspirations. Girls need to be taught and encouraged to pursue high goals and given the confidence to do so. An effective method to achieving this is by showing girls that there are women in society who have been successful.

Role models

Role models are also an important way to reach women and girls and inspire them. Michelle Obama, for example, was pointed out as an effective role model for girls and women. She is a shining example of an ethnic minority woman who has gone to be successful and able to make a difference. Inspirational female teachers are fantastic role models for young girls and need to present this much more. Women in high level positions including those sitting on Boards need to be more visible and be role models for young girls and reach out to them.

Flexible work

The possibility of flexible work is available in both the US and the UK, although many women are unaware of this option. Flexible working hours could help accommodate mothers who struggle with childcare. It could therefore promote a better work-life balance and may indeed encourage new mothers to re-enter the labour market.

Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships were highlighted during the discussion as an easy yet effective way to encourage women in entering the labour market by giving them the confidence and skills they might need. This would also help push women out of traditional jobs and into new fields that might be of interest to them and not out of reach as might have been their initial thought.

Business start-up opportunities

Business start-up is another innovative way to break the barrier and assist women into employment. A business start-up could give women the flexibility to ensure a work-life balance they require. As there are risks to any venture of this sort, government support is crucial.

Support networks

Support networks for women are essential to build confidence and to share experiences. However, it has been the experience of FRF that these support networks are not as effective without funding as they simply lie dormant. The solution to this might be to encourage more voluntary outreach for women. Mixed networks with both men and women could also prove useful at a higher level. It would remove the focus from gender and focus on the barriers preventing women from climbing the job ladder. Women would therefore be more integrated.

3. **To acknowledge the contribution that women can make to the workforce and the business case for increasing ethnic minority women's employment in both countries**

[A number of best practice examples are highlighted below](#)

Future Jobs Fund

The Future Jobs Fund (FJF) was an initiative that was launched by the UK government to create jobs for long term unemployed young adults, especially 18-24 year olds. The scheme enables young people to develop their skills in order to help them find stable employment in the future.

At Faith Regen Foundation, we helped FJFs, including young ethnic minority women, gain valuable and relevant work experience, as well as help them build their confidence and skills set. We have offered this project by giving six month contracts to individuals in roles such as Administration, Finance and Advice and Guidance at Faith Regen and at other organisations such as women's groups, housing associations, charities and news channels. They were given the opportunity to find role models at a close level with women they can associate with. Some of the FJFs were taken on as full time permanent staff with the Faith Regen Foundation team.

"Having stayed with Faith Regen for the past 6 months and a Future Jobs Fund employee I can say that I have thoroughly enjoyed my time with Faith Regen. The skills I have gained will undoubtedly help me with future career". – Sohra, Future Jobs Fund, February 2011

British Muslim Women in Work TV series

Faith Regen Foundation recently engaged Muslim women through a TV show targeted at the Bengali community. The 'British Muslim Women in Work' was a series of thought-provoking shows exploring the variety of ways which working Muslim Women are contributing to British society.

This project presented successful stories of other ethnic minority women and the possibilities for them in business start-up and other employment opportunities. The main objectives of the series was to provide an open platform for working Muslim women to share their insight and experiences, to acknowledge and bring to light the contributions and achievements of working Muslim women, to stimulate discussion concerning issues related to Muslim women's engagement of the labour market and to distil media portrayal and stereotyping of Muslim women.

The series included topics such as *Muslim Women in Politics*, *Muslim Women and ATT*, *Muslim Women in Business*, *Muslim Women in Medicine*, *Muslim Women in Community Engagement* and *Muslim Women Islamic Finance*.



Michelle Obama

Michelle Obama, the wife of current US President Barack Obama, has become a leading role model for girls and women, especially for African-Americans, in the US and abroad. Raised on the South Side of Chicago, Michelle went on to study at Princeton University and attended Harvard Law School. In 2011, Forbes Magazine named her the most powerful woman in the world.

With her background, Michelle has been a great example of a woman overcoming gender and poverty barriers which makes her easy to associate with for many young girls in similar situations.

She has been a strong advocate for ethnic minority issues, especially focusing on education. The First Lady has been encouraging girls to pursue their studies and did just that on a recent trip to the UK in the summer of 2011 when she visited girls at their school in north London and spoke of her own experience of making it from a poor background to a top university. *"I realised that success is not about the background you are from, it is about the confidence that you have and the effort you are willing to invest."*

Universal Companies, Philadelphia

Universal Companies is a not-for-profit "Community Development and Community Management Corporation". Its mission is to create education, culture and entrepreneurial opportunities that will stimulate the development of wealth within historically disenfranchised communities. To accomplish this, Universal Companies focused on the identification and removal of systemic barriers to wealth creation within urban settings.

Universal focuses on education, real estate and social services. Many of its services targets women and especially children. The company's internal policies also reflect on gender equality and the importance of mothers in the community. The co-founder, Faatimah Gamble, an African-American woman is not only the wife of the Founder, but she is also a mother, a grandmother and a community leader in South Philadelphia. Half of the company's Executive and Vice-Presidents are also ethnic minority women and a great role models for the girls they help in the community.

4. To provide an opportunity for policy makers and stakeholders to share experiences and best practice examples of their contribution to tackling ethnic minority women's unemployment.

So why do these realities continue to evade the eye line of policy makers and funders? Perhaps, as some smaller BAME organisations have recently suggested, in times of recession, potential funders may favour projects with a wider, more popular appeal.

Rota BAME Women' sector Fighting for Survival Supplement 2011

Specialist provision needs to be supported as it is clear that generic services either lack the preparation and resources to support ethnic minority women, or fail to understand the complexity of their needs.

Examples such as Faith Regen Foundation and the Newham Asian Women's Collective (NAWC) reinforce the need to sustain specialist interventions.

The Newham Asian Women's Collective [NAWC] was established in 1981 to campaign for and support the needs of South Asian women in the London Borough of Newham because it was concerned about the gaps in service provision for South Asian women.



DELEGATES

Jacqui Henderson CBE, Managing Director, Creative Leadership and Skills Strategies (Chair of Discussion)

Jacqui Henderson is Managing Director of Creative Leadership and Skills Ltd, a consultancy and project management company whose clients include Semta (the Sector Skills Council for Science, Engineering, Manufacturing, Technology and Aerospace); A4e (an international Training and Development Company); the Learning and Skills Council; Creative and Cultural Skills; and the London College of Beauty Therapy. She is Chair of Northumberland Care Trust and a Non Executive Director of UK Skills and of Policy Connect and is Vice President of the Advisory Group of CPPS. She is a member of the Skills Commission and a Senior Advisor to the British Council. Prior to taking up these positions she was Chief Executive of UK Skills and Regional Director for the Learning and Skills Council in Greater London. Other previous positions include Chief Executive of the Training and Enterprise Councils National Council and the Managing Director of Northumberland Training and Enterprise Council.

Jacqui has been a member of Newcastle University's Council since 2005 and was Deputy Chair from 2009-11. She is Chair of the University/Students' Union Partnership Committee and Remuneration Committee, a member of the Honorary Degrees Committee and serves as Council's representative on Senate

Baroness Verma, House of Lords

Baroness Verma is a British businesswoman, member of the House of Lords and currently a Government Whip and Spokesperson for the Cabinet Office, International Development and Equalities and Women's Issues. Until the formation of the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition following the May 2010 general election she had been an Opposition Whip and Spokesperson for Education and Skills and for Health. In 2006 Lady Verma was made a Patron of the Tory Reform Group.

Born in Amritsar in Punjab, India she moved as a child with her parents to England in 1960. She was created a Conservative life peer as Baroness Verma, of Leicester in the County of Leicestershire in May 2006,^[2] having been an unsuccessful parliamentary candidate in two general elections (2001 and 2005). Since 1977, Lady Verma has been married to Ashok Verma. They have a daughter and a son.



Keith Faulkner CBE, Chairman Working Links

Keith Faulkner is Non-executive Chairman of Working Links, an innovative public/private/voluntary sector joint venture company that supports social and economic community development through improved access to employment. Keith has been associated with Working Links since its inception in 1999 and was previously a director of Manpower PLC, where he built up his extensive experience of HR, industrial relations and labour market issues.


He sits on the Public Services Strategy Board of the CBI and is an active member of Acevo contributing to a number of policy taskforces and is a Trustee of the Links Foundation, the Third Age Employment Network and Training for Life. He is a Member of the CfA. Past activities include 2½ years as Chairman of the Recruitment and Employment Confederation, chairing working parties on employment issues for both the CBI and RSA and sitting on two New Deal working groups (Lone Parents and Retention).

Dr Husna Ahmad OBE, Group CEO Faith Regen Foundation

Dr. Husna Ahmad OBE is the Group CEO of the Faith Regen Foundation. With a PhD in Environmental Law from the School of Oriental and African Studies at London University, Dr. Ahmad is the co-chair of Faiths and Beliefs in Further Education, a national independent inter-faith charity working with the learning and skills sector, faith and local communities and national and local faith/belief based groups. She is also a trustee of the MCEC Palmers Green Mosque. She is on the steering committee on a Higher Education religious literacy group under the auspices of Goldsmith University and the University of York. She is a national and international speaker on faith and regeneration, peace building, women's issues and climate change. Most recently, she has spoken at the Norwegian Parliament on Faith and Positive Change at a Peace Conference and at a conference in London on the day of Global Action on Military Expenditure on Warfare or Welfare.

Christian Cali, Economic Officer at U.S. Embassy

Christian Cali is Economic Officer for the US Embassy in London. The Embassy's Economic Section is responsible for monitoring and managing the full range of economic relations between the U.S. and the United Kingdom. The General Economic Policy Unit provides U.S. government agencies in Washington, D.C. and other embassies with accurate, timely, first-hand information and expert analysis on current economic and financial developments in the



U.K. The unit also supports visiting U.S. government delegations and maintains regular contact with a variety of British government institutions, American and British business organizations, think-tanks, and non-governmental organizations. The unit serves as an advocate for U.S. economic and business interests in the U.K. and works to explain U.S. economic policies and financial regulations to U.K. audiences. Specific issues handled by the General Economic Policy Unit include labor affairs.

Esther Pan Sloane, Political Officer at U.S. Embassy

Esther Pan Sloane is Political Officer at the Us Embassy in London. Embassy London's public affairs section, with experienced and motivated American and local staff, builds public understanding and support in the UK for America's goals in the world. Through local, national and international media, the Embassy talks to Britain and the world via television, radio, newspapers, the web and social networking media. They also conduct people-to-people exchanges, where American experts, authors, artists, educators, and students interact with their peers here. Embassy London, with its huge interagency presence, in-house broadcast studio and a steady stream of high-level visits, offers an unmatched platform to tell America's story to the world.

Sheree Bryant, C3 Health


Sheree Bryant is a research associate at C3. She is a public-policy entrepreneur, health-promotion activist and postgraduate student at King's College London.

Shomsia Ali, Partnership Manager at Serco Regional Lead at Serco Welfare to Work

Shomsia Ali is Partnership Manager at Serco and is the Regional Lead for the Serco Welfare to Work Programme. She has many years of experience working in the employment sector.

Dr Elizabeth Henry, CEO Race on the Agenda

Dr. Elizabeth Henry joined Race on the Agenda (ROTA) as Chief Executive in October 2010. Dr. Henry boasts extensive strategic management experience, serving as Director of Public Health at Fortbend Family Health Centre in Texas, USA, and Assistant Director/Public Health Specialist of Enfield and Haringey Health Authority.



Elizabeth's philosophy is informed by her passion for achieving public health for all. She has applied this enthusiasm in delivering equality, diversity and capacity building programmes in local, regional and international settings.

Elizabeth is also Chair of the Board of Trustees for the Selby Trust. She received a Doctor of Public Health from the University of Texas Health Science Centre.

Dalia Al Haj Ali, Help the Needy

Dalia works for Help the Needy Charitable Trust. Their mission is to help bring a semblance of normality to as many Iraqis as possible. Our aim is to educate people about the history, culture and present condition of Iraq, because it is not only the physical lives of people that are being destroyed, but something almost as important to them, and that is an ancient and traditional culture, and way of life.

Dr Nujhat Jahan, Strategy Director, Faith Regen Foundation

Dr Nujhat Jahan is the Director of Strategy of the Faith Regen Foundation and has a doctorate degree in Statistics (Operation Research). She has over 22 years of extensive experience in teaching as a professor in the Department of Statistics, Biostatistics & Informatics at Dhaka University. She joined Faith Regen in 2004 and is actively working to develop new strategies for the long term sustainability of the company. With a very strong research background she has published many papers in national and international journals. The findings of these articles bear strong significance at the national policy level. She has also worked as consultant, fund raiser /bid writer and principle investigator in various quantitative and qualitative social researches on BME communities, population health and other regeneration activities funded by various international organisations for example, WHO, Population Council, DFID, FHI, British Council, Action Aid etc.

Chantal Marin, Executive Assistant, Faith Regen Foundation

Chantal Marin is the Executive Assistant to the CEO at the Faith Regen Foundation. She is an honours graduate in International Development and Globalisation from the University of Ottawa in Canada. As an undergraduate, she carried out field research and produced a report on the education of girls in Dakar, Senegal. She is a certified ESOL teacher and has previously taught in Kaohsiung, Taiwan. Chantal has travelled extensively, through South America, Southeast Asia and parts of the Middle East and has a keen interest in gender inequality and global poverty.