

# **Economy Diversity, Inclusion and Anti-Oppression Policy**

Version 3.0

**Consulted with staff:** July 2021, January 2022

**Approved by board on:** 24 January 2022

**Policy became operational on:** 23 March 2022

**Next review date:** November 2022

## **Our Aims**

- Diversity of thought
- Consensus of purpose
- Challenging injustice
- Taking an intersectional approach to dismantling structures of oppression

## **Our Values**

### **1) Promoting accessibility**

Our central aim as an organisation is to highlight that the economy should work for everyone. Therefore, our work should be able to be accessed by everyone with relative ease.

### **2) Valuing diversity**

People have different identities, needs, beliefs and values. Recognising the value of diversity will enable us to: build trust and confidence between communities, bring a richer mix of talents and ideas to support our work, create more efficient and effective decision making.

### **3) Promoting involvement and co-production**

The best interventions are based on a close understanding of the needs they are trying to meet. We aim to co-create our work with the people who will be affected by it because they know their needs best. Traditionally, some groups are more likely than others to be consulted and involved. We will challenge ourselves to reach out and involve groups that are often left out, and to help them take a more active part in shaping the work that we do.

### **4) Promoting equality of opportunity**

We recognise that some groups find it harder to get jobs and they may also find it harder to make use of services, or find using those services more difficult. We believe that we should create a level playing field for everyone and this may mean

treating people differently in order to help them have the same chance to work with us or access our services and programmes, or, for staff members, to progress and develop within the organisation.

### **5) Promoting inclusive communities**

We want our work to help build strong communities, in which: people feel they belong, their lives are appreciated and valued, people have similar life opportunities, and strong, positive relationships develop between people of different backgrounds.

### **6) Dismantling structures of oppression wherever we find them**

We understand that there are intersecting systems of oppression that are built into the structures of our society which mean that minority groups are systemically disadvantaged. These systems include racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, disablism and oppression on the basis of class, income and wealth, religion, and immigration status. We aim to do whatever we can to take an intersectional approach to dismantle these structures where we find them, both inside *Economy* and beyond, including in wider society. By intersectional we mean recognising the ways that different forms of oppression and disadvantage (and conversely, of privilege) overlap and build on each other.<sup>1</sup>

### **Why diversity, inclusion and anti-oppression must sit at the core of all of our work**

*Economy* exists as an organisation because we recognise that the economy does not work adequately for many people within it. In particular, local, national and global economies have historically been built on structures of oppression on the basis of race, gender, class, sexuality, disability and other marginalised identities, and have to date failed to address or dismantle these structures. In pursuing our vision of a world where everyone can shape the economy, it is therefore vital that our work contributes to this task of dismantling these oppressive structures and includes people with diverse identities, backgrounds and experiences.

In addition, we have particular responsibilities as a charity and as an organisation working within the space of economics to address the ways in which these types of organisations have tended to replicate these forms of oppression, and failed to be diverse or inclusive. For example a large majority of economists in the UK are men<sup>2</sup> and fewer than one in 10 charity and voluntary sector employees are from

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<sup>1</sup>This article on the work of Kimberlé Crenshaw who first introduced the concept of intersectionality explains for example that ‘black women are both black and female, and thus subject to discrimination on the basis of both race, gender, and often, a combination of the two’.

<https://www.vox.com/the-highlight/2019/5/20/18542843/intersectionality-conservatism-law-race-gender-discrimination>

<sup>2</sup><https://www.res.org.uk/uploads/assets/575c241a-fbff-4ef4-97e7066fcb7597e0/women-in-academic-economics-report-FINAL.pdf>

Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups.<sup>3</sup> A 2017 survey found that while around two-thirds of charity and voluntary sector workers are women, they make up only 47% of senior managers and 32% of CEOs in the sector.<sup>4</sup> Hence it is vital that we work to avoid reproducing these types of oppression within our organisation.

This is why we aim for diversity, inclusion and anti-oppression (DIAO) to sit at the core of all of our work: both the ways that we organise ourselves and work together within the organisation and in the ways that we design and carry out our external facing work. Achieving this is not a simple task and will require continuing effort on many fronts, but we are strongly committed to achieving it.

### **Our journey so far**

*Economy* was founded in 2016 and in 2020 we first wrote down our approach to diversity, inclusion and anti-oppression, creating a policy and an action plan for this work. In April 2021 we made a minor update to the policy, adding 'anti-oppression' to the title of the policy and adding a value of dismantling structures of oppression. We then carried out a review of the policy and its application, gathering input which has helped shape the changes made to this current version of the policy (Version 3.0).

The review found that the policy had made some strong public commitments in terms of the values set out. It set out a detailed approach to recruitment which has strongly influenced the recruitment rounds carried out in 2020 and 2021. The review also found that the policy could usefully make more specific commitments beyond the sphere of recruitment and set out clearer responsibilities, resources and accountability mechanisms for the work. In particular it found that there is more to do to ensure that we are reviewing and reflecting on our progress on this work at key points in our project and funding cycles.

A further point from the review was that the policy did not fully acknowledge the ways in which *Economy* has not operated according to diversity, inclusion and anti-oppression principles in the past and the harm that this has caused. While we do not know all the different harms that have been caused, we do know: that staff within *Economy* have experienced sexism and racism in the course of carrying out their work; that we have at times failed to acknowledge the existence of structures of oppression in the content that we have produced about the economy; and that prior opportunities for paid work with *Economy* have at times

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<sup>3</sup><https://www.acevo.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Racial-diversity-in-the-charity-sector.pdf>

<sup>4</sup><https://www.charityjob.co.uk/careeradvice/gender-equality-in-the-charity-sector-is-there-strength-in-numbers/#:~:text=Around%20two%20thirds%20of%20us,transgender%20and%20the%20remainder%20men>

tended to exclude people of colour<sup>5</sup> and those from working-class and economically marginalised backgrounds.

The review also noted that the policy did not have a section setting out how the organisation would deal with reports of discrimination; this section has been added to the current version of the policy.

At the time of writing the current version of this policy, *Economy* is planning to bring in expert external support to guide us through a process to more fully understand and acknowledge some of these past harms, and create new organisational structures and systems to help us avoid them in our work as we go forward. We expect that this will be challenging, with elements of complexity, including that different people within the organisation will have different experiences and understandings of past events.

We expect that once the first phase of this work is completed we will want to further review and revise this policy, and commit to doing so at the latest by a year after the approval of this version.

### **Responsibility and accountability for this work**

All staff at *Economy* have a responsibility to apply a diversity, inclusion and anti-oppression approach to their work, and *Economy* will encourage, support and provide resources to enable staff to do this. We will seek expert input to develop appropriate mechanisms for holding staff accountable for delivering against their responsibilities, including considering adapting job descriptions and professional development reviews and will note the mechanisms that have been developed in the next version of this policy.

*Economy's* senior leadership have a particular accountability for leading this work and ensuring that it remains a key focus for the organisation. We will ensure that professional development reviews for senior staff and reviews of trustee board performance include defined questions on their leadership of this agenda. We will maintain our current practice of ensuring that an update on progress with diversity, inclusion and anti-oppression is reported at each trustee board meeting.

We will also set and monitor organisation-wide indicators of *Economy's* progress on this agenda, using expert input to define appropriate indicators for the organisation. And we will examine our processes for project planning and review, funding applications and organisational planning to ensure that they include a focus on diversity, inclusion and anti-oppression. We will report on the organisation-wide indicators that have been set and the other organisation-wide processes that have been updated to ensure a focus on DIAO in the next version of this policy.

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<sup>5</sup> We use the term 'people of colour' to refer to people with a range of identities who have been the subject of racism within systems dominated by white people, but we note that it is a blanket term which should be used with care because it can erase differences between different groups.

In 2021, we have established a paid Community Ambassador Board (CAB), whose members have experienced economic marginalisation and who represent a diverse range of identities and communities across the UK. The CAB aims to make *Economy* more effective by diversifying the perspectives and backgrounds of people involved in decision-making on key issues such as strategy and governance. The CAB is meeting monthly for a year, with a remit to input on the development of *Economy's* organisational strategy and co-produce the participatory governance structures that *Economy* should put in place going forward. The CAB will play a key role in holding *Economy* to account, including on its DIAO work; *Economy* has committed to make public any recommendations of the CAB which it does not accept.

### **Resourcing DIAO work and supporting diverse needs of staff**

We will ensure that *Economy's* diversity, inclusion and anti-oppression work is adequately resourced. This will partly be through creating capacity for staff to spend time on this work as part of their roles, and also by ensuring that the organisational budget includes dedicated resources for DIAO. In 2021-22, we expect that just under 4 per cent of our organisational budget will be spent to resource dedicated DIAO work. In the next version of this policy we will provide an update on this, including our expected spend in 2022-23 and reasons for any variation.

We recognise that staff, volunteers and others working with *Economy* who have experienced oppression and those with marginalised identities may need additional support to flourish within *Economy*, and we will use expert input to design appropriate mechanisms to allocate resources towards this.

As far as possible, we will design inclusive organisational policies which aim to meet diverse needs without this requiring specific requests to be made. We will carry out a review of *Economy's* staff handbook and HR policies and identify where they can do this better and embody an anti-oppression approach, and will report back on the results of this exercise in the next version of this policy.

### **Building a learning culture and celebrating diversity, inclusion and anti-oppression**

To support staff, trustees and the organisation as a whole in carrying out this work we will build a learning culture around diversity, inclusion and anti-oppression.

Training on this policy will be included in the induction of new staff, and all staff will be briefed on any updates to this policy with an opportunity to discuss the implications for their work.

We will support staff to continue learning about DIAO, including through a programme of organisation-wide learning delivered by expert providers. We will also ensure that there are spaces where the *Economy* team can talk about its learning and development about DIAO, including encouraging mistakes and mis-steps to be shared in a non-judgemental forum so that they can help form part of the organisation's learning process. We will carry out an annual review of

the organisation's progress on diversity, inclusion and anti-oppression as a key part of our learning cycle and will report on the next review in the next version of this policy.

We will also seek opportunities to celebrate the diversity, inclusion and anti-oppression journey that we are on and to recognise the progress we are making, including in our regular team meetings. We will support those staff who wish to do so to share and/or celebrate key cultural elements or events with rest of their team.

At any time, we welcome all conversations about how we can improve the way we work and live our values. We encourage anyone who has interacted with *Economy* or our work, especially those with experience of marginalisation and oppression, to share their thoughts about the way we are approaching this agenda: please contact us at hello [at] ecnmy.org.

### **Recruitment at *Economy***

For ease of use given its length and focus, we are now treating what was previously the recruitment section of this policy as a stand-alone policy. It can be found [here](#). The recruitment policy should be read together with this policy to understand *Economy's* approach to diversity, inclusion and anti-oppression through recruitment.

### **Responding to reports of discrimination**

An important element in promoting diversity, inclusion and anti-oppression at *Economy* is ensuring that we deal effectively with, and work to eliminate, discrimination on the basis of identity, personal characteristics and background. This includes discrimination towards staff members, trustees, volunteers, freelancers and members of the public who engage with *Economy's* work.

This section of the policy therefore aims to ensure that we:

- do not unlawfully or otherwise discriminate because of the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics and other characteristics such as age, disability, gender identity and gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation, social class.
- oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination and other discrimination based on personal characteristics. This includes in pay and benefits, terms and conditions of employment, dealing with grievances and discipline, dismissal, redundancy, leave for parents, requests for flexible working, and selection for employment, promotion, training or other developmental opportunities

*Economy* commits to:

- Create a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation, unlawful discrimination and other discrimination based on personal characteristics, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued.

This commitment includes training managers and all other employees about their rights and responsibilities under the discrimination section of this policy. All staff have the right to carry out their work free from discrimination. Responsibilities include staff conducting themselves to help the organisation provide equal opportunities in employment, and prevent bullying, harassment, victimisation, unlawful discrimination and other discrimination based on personal characteristics.

All staff should understand they, as well as their employer, can be held liable for acts of bullying, harassment, victimisation, unlawful discrimination and other discrimination based on personal characteristics, in the course of their employment, against fellow employees, customers, suppliers and the public.

- Take seriously complaints of bullying, harassment, victimisation, unlawful discrimination and other discrimination based on personal characteristics by fellow employees, trustees, volunteers, freelancers, clients, suppliers, visitors, the public and any others in the course of the organisation's work activities.

Such acts will be dealt with as misconduct under the organisation's grievance and/or disciplinary procedures, and appropriate action will be taken. Particularly serious complaints could amount to gross misconduct and lead to dismissal without notice.

Further, sexual harassment may amount to both an employment rights matter and a criminal matter, such as in sexual assault allegations. In addition, harassment under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 – which is not limited to circumstances where harassment relates to a protected characteristic – is a criminal offence.

To report an instance of bullying, harassment, victimisation, unlawful discrimination or discrimination based on personal characteristics, staff members should use *Economy's* grievance procedure. Line managers may also use the disciplinary procedure if they feel that instances of these behaviours have been carried out by a staff member for whom they are responsible. Details of the organisation's grievance and disciplinary policies and procedures can be found in the *Economy Employee Handbook*.

Use of the organisation's grievance and/or disciplinary procedures does not affect an employee's right to make a claim to an employment tribunal within three months of the alleged discrimination.

'Responding to reports of discrimination' is a new section in Version 3.0 of this policy and we will therefore review and report on its effectiveness in the next version of the policy.

**Summary of specific commitments in this version of the policy which we will provide an update on in the next version**

The next version of this policy will be produced at the latest by a year after the approval of the current version. In the next version of the policy we have committed:

- To a further review the policy by at the latest by a year after the approval of this version and report on the results in the next version.
- To note the mechanisms that have been developed for holding staff accountable for delivering against their responsibilities to apply a diversity, inclusion and anti-oppression approach to their work, including ensuring that professional development reviews for senior staff and reviews of trustee board performance include defined questions on their leadership of this agenda
- To report on the organisation-wide indicators that have been set and the other organisation-wide processes that have been updated to ensure a focus on DIAO
- To update on the percentage of our organisational budget that will be spent to resource dedicated DIAO work, including our expected spend in 2022-23 and reasons for any variation.
- To report on the results of a review of *Economy's* staff handbook and HR policies to identify where they can better meet diverse needs and embody an anti-oppression approach
- To review and report on the effectiveness of the 'responding to reports of discrimination' section of the DIAO policy.