

BEYOND 2015

SHAPING THE FUTURE OF EQUALITY HUMAN RIGHTS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

The [Equality and Diversity Forum](#) and [EDF Research Network](#) are starting a discussion about how to reduce inequality by working more effectively across sectors and disciplines. We begin by mapping the UK's progress on equality, human rights and social justice since 2010, before looking beyond the next election to identify the possibilities for the decade ahead. The goal is to bring together decision makers, researchers, service providers and advocates to find new ways of improving outcomes through knowledge-sharing and cooperation.

With funding from the Nuffield Foundation and the Baring Foundation, the project consists of a two-day conference that took place in London in February 2015 (hosted by the British Academy), a publication and online resources.

SETTING THE SCENE

2015 will be a significant year for the UK, with opportunities but also risks for anyone with an interest in equality, human rights and social justice. Across the United Kingdom, there is a greater appetite for debate about policy and constitutional renewal. This project takes advantage of that momentum but looks beyond immediate election and referendum results to think about implementing equality and rights more effectively in the years ahead. Some of the opportunities and risks to consider are:

- Whatever the outcome of the general election on 7 May, we will have new programmes and policies with significant equality and human rights implications.
- The Government will carry out a post-implementation review of the Equality Act 2010, including of the public sector equality duty.
- The Equality and Human Rights Commission will publish its five-yearly review on the state of equality and human rights in Britain, asking 'Is Britain Fairer?'
- The post-referendum Scottish devolution agenda is likely to lead to changes in the equality and human rights infrastructure of the United Kingdom.
- The 2013 consultation on the future of the European Convention and Court of Human Rights and the UK Balance of Competences Review programme may have implications for European human rights mechanisms.
- And finally, 2015 is the 800th anniversary of Magna Carta – a symbolic landmark in the rule of law and a good time to explore where we're going.

As a first step in addressing these phenomena and thinking about the connections between them, the Equality and Diversity Forum (EDF) and EDF Research Network are bringing together partners from across the UK to ask what we know about changing outcomes for disadvantaged individuals and communities since 2010, before exploring how equality, human rights and social justice research, policy and NGO sectors can work together more effectively in 2015 and after?

OBJECTIVES

The project's remit is UK-wide. While recognising that detailed analysis of equality and human rights agendas in each of the four nations is beyond its scope, we will draw comparisons in key areas. The focus is on the impact and knowledge transfer to be achieved by bringing together academic and other researchers, policymakers and representatives of civil society organisations. The project seeks to bridge agendas, sectors and disciplines and address the disconnections between different areas of policy and legislation in order to better equip the voluntary sector to tackle discrimination and disadvantage

The project has immediate and longer term objectives. In the short term, it will map progress, stimulate debate and critically assess the frameworks we use to think about inequality and disadvantage. In the longer term, we hope the conversations at the conference, publication material and online resources will inform UK and European equality, human rights and social justice agendas in the coming decade.

CONFERENCE, PUBLICATION AND ON-LINE RESOURCES

The Beyond 2015 conference on 12 and 13 February brought together expert speakers and innovative thinking from research, NGO and policy circles around the UK. Following the event, an online resource with links to conference material and a wider range of contributions was developed and is a work in progress. A collection of papers on the project themes will be launched in a (printed and electronic) collection in June. Finally, a special issue of the Journal of Poverty and Social Justice has been commissioned for publication in early 2016.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

The project is co-ordinated by Dr Moira Dustin, Coordinator of the EDF Research Network, and Electra Babouri, EDF Coordinator (contactable at info@edf.org.uk). It is supported by a cross-sector and cross-discipline advisory group.