

**Impact Leadership Programme  
Evaluation  
Imperial College**

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## **Impact Leadership Training Report**

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## **Executive Summary**

This report is both an evaluation of participants who have attended the Impact Leadership Training Programme (ILTP) and a group who are exploring and considering the ILTP. 15 Black and Racial Minoritised staff in total attended three focus groups.

The report highlights several themes; Access to and support from Line Managers to the ILTP, the rationale participants had for choosing the programme, the benefits of participating that included a safe space for being their authentic selves, developing their confidence with those who shared the same institutional experience, the action for change aspect of the programme, positive mentoring and network of people addressing isolation at Imperial College. It identifies improvements and developments to the programme that included; details of the programme the objectives and outcomes, testimonials from previous participants, manager's involvement in the programme and the dilemmas of deciding on the ILT programme versus mainstream options based on accreditation.

The evaluation of the ILTP provided an opportunity for all those involved in the focus groups to express and explore the racism and discrimination prevalent at Imperial College. This primarily centred around pay and progression obstacles, and also included the culture and experience of working each day at the College. This was evident in the experience each of those involved in the programme of being in a safe space and being free to share their experiences of racism and discrimination –this was replicated in the focus groups. The significance of being able to voice and be acknowledged in these spaces cannot be underestimated.

### **Introduction:**

The Evaluation of the Impact Leadership Programme involved a focus group discussion of Participants in three groups. Two groups were made up of staff who had attended the training and the third group consisted of staff who were considering and exploring participating in the programme.

Section A comprises those who had attended the Impact programme and Section B those who had not attended a programme.

The focus groups were facilitated centred around themes and questions which stimulated open honest dialogue and sharing of experience. We have grouped the themes under headings that reflect the points being made. We have centred the participants' voices within the report with *their own words*.

## **Section A**

### **Access to the Impact leadership programme**

Some staff members reported that they learnt about the leadership programme accidentally by stumbling across it or by other staff from the black minoritised community. Staff said the leadership training programme was not promoted by managers or considered as part of a suite of training within a continue professional development programme.

*I found out about Impact from another person of colour that had come to do a secondment within my department, this was the first time we had heard about the programme. But to say that I could have got that direction from my line manager, I would still be waiting for it to happen.*

*I heard about the Impact leadership programme from an external trainer from another course I was attending and they encouraged me to do this course.*

Participants of the focus groups felt uncomfortable and reluctant initially about the programme in particular as its focus and target audience was them. Some staff said the programme positioned them as being visible, generalising them as a special group and reinforcing the notion of them as being problematic. It was also felt that this approach subsumes black and racial minoritised people into a one generic category thereby denying them their individuality and anonymity.

*I kind of didn't want to do a course that was specifically targeted at ethnic minority staff because I kind of hate that.*

Participants although acknowledging this dynamic as a reality and lived experience they sought to see what benefits they could gain from attending the programme as access to other leadership courses was not available to them.

*There was no training available for me, and that course was available, but at that time Imperial were quite selective so you kind of couldn't access that training depending on what grade of staff you were, and I wasn't a high enough grade to access that training. Then the more I thought about it, and then the prompt from this external trainer, she was like, 'Well, you'll be able to access that material in a different sphere and it's going to have a different name but it's going to give me access to that material,' and eventually I realised that I need to think about myself and be selfish and think about what this is going to do for me, so then I decided to apply to go onto the course.*

Participants discussed the lack of any clear lines of career progression available to them as leadership and management courses were only accessible to senior level staff. There were discussions around the poor quality of courses available to them which motivated them to apply for the Impact programme.

*I think the mainstream courses are quite bitty. They're like a day session of different types of training, and I think for me what appealed with the Impact programme was it was modular, of different things, for example confidence building, CVs, and things like that. Those courses do exist but it's very bitty in terms of...Like one-day courses.*

*Yes, one-day courses, so if you wanted to have a programme, a course, for me the Impact, the actual content, apart from one or two sessions it was tailored to looking at your race, but everything else was quite generic*

### **Line manager support**

The discussions and reflections with participants around the support and encouragement they received from line managers in relation to progression and career development was non-existent, although line managers were not overtly resistant the lack of interest and motivation a 'laissez faire attitude' was felt constituted a form of neglect. Participants developed their own

individual, self-motivated approach and sought support and encouragement outside of Imperial.

There was also apprehension about applying for the Impact programme in case it was perceived by future employees as being a programme to support staff with problems or difficulties and potentially work against them. This inherent conflictual dynamic, and the nuisance of racial generalisation upon group identity versus individuality had to be consistently navigated for staff with racialised identities.

*I have a good relationship with my line manager and I did speak to her about it and I did seek her advice and I asked her, 'From a management point of view, how would you feel about someone, if you saw on someone's CV that they had done a talent development programme that was specifically for minority groups or was for a specific reason like that, would it make you look less favourably on that candidate?' and she said, 'No,' and because of who my line manager is and what she is doing and how long I've worked with her, I believe that she wouldn't. I still have my personal reservations, but that gave me the confidence at least some people would value it. But she didn't encourage me, she didn't push/pull it in my direction in the first place. I received encouragement from somebody external to Imperial.*

*The line management input regarding training and development is minimal you have to be self-motivated to see where you want to go and then get a course that's going to help you on the way. The line manager doesn't really sit down and say, how are we going to develop you? what's your plan for the next three years for you?' You don't have those conversations with your manager about how they're going to grow you inside the department or college.*

*'I would say that my manager's management style, she is encouraging but not directive, so she would always encourage me to look at the training opportunities within Imperial but wouldn't say you should do X, Y and Z course.' I would say, because that conversation only happens once a year, Impact programme is in the middle of the year so we wouldn't have been having that conversation around the time the information would be going out to staff; assume she would see it but I can't say for 100% sure that she does.*

*For me, I think my manager's style is very much... I feel I'm quite autonomous in my own role and my own needs, I think if I was to suggest a training course, I don't have any issues with that, so I think my relationship is quite open and honest in what I need, so I think for me, when I wanted to do the Impact programme there was no issues on that. I wouldn't have expected him to suggest, I suppose, because it's my own self-development.*

## **Rationale for choosing the Impact programme**

The participants who attended the Impact programme, some being initially resistant of attending, shared the benefits of being together as a group and being with others with shared racial identities.

*You could be yourself and be with people who understood issues that you face. So, when you talk to people about, like skin for example, dry skin, a lot of people who are black minority ethnic are forever getting dry skin or getting ashy skin, so something like that where you're... When I was at school we'd take the mick out of each other of course, but that's something we've grown up with, having to constantly cream our hands and things because it looks really ashy.*

*Things like with hair, with food or with culture, and all of a sudden you realise, when we had our first session we had, which was 'give an item of cultural significance to you,' our items were similar, and even though we didn't know each other, never met each other before, our items were either revolving around food or an item that came from our country, and it was really interesting to see, 'Oh wow, you do that? So do we,' and that parallel as well of we're not actually that different, in a way we're all similar, we all have different ways of doing the same thing. That's why I wanted to join, not a leadership programme per se, because you could focus on the leadership not the extra stuff that we as, I suppose again minority ethnic people bring and the way that we navigate through the world.*

*I do really appreciate when there are things that are targeted to someone like me, because it kind of gets you more on an emotional level. I know that's silly, but I am a very emotional person and I can't really separate who I am from my work, so having something that I think really spoke to me beyond my job, because I don't see myself as just my job, was a real big draw, I already know that I'm going to meet people that are thinking like me, who feel like me and will not judge me.*

*I was reluctant at first to apply for the Impact programme because I knew it was going to take me out of my comfort zone and I knew that it's going to be like a self-discovery kind of journey with other people, which made it all the more interesting, it was not just a leadership thing but a personal journey as well, which was one of the rewarding things about it.*

*In the Impact programme when we came together in our sessions it was a complete contrast to what daily working life was like. In my team at work there were very few minorities ethnic people, so it wasn't something that I could experience day-to-day, and it would be a completely different experience going to these Impact sessions where you could just feel like you could be yourself. You knew if you said something it would resonate with someone.*

These experiences highlight the insidious nature of institutional racism which is deeply embedded within the fabric of our society, our organisations and within our relationships. The notion of whiteness defined as a standard a universal norm that then becomes a reference point for human behaviour and organisational cultures. The testimonials from the participants highlight the duality they experience in negotiating this norm / standard. The Impact programme offered them a powerful space to be themselves unhindered and experience a space of mutuality, safety and support.

### **Positive benefits for individuals attending the Impact programme**

The Impact programme benefitted participants on many levels both personally and professionally. Participants shared they felt increased levels of confidence in their abilities and in the comments below resulted in contributing more within their departments. Increased confidence within the work place impacts upon many aspects of performance including reducing stress, increased problem-solving skills and promoting leadership.

*But the confidence, it's a different kind of confidence of self. I think because as ethnic minority groups within a white system, that in itself, being the minority, makes the confidence lower than somebody of a white background, and I think just us not being able to see other people like ourselves makes us to lack confidence in that sense, within our environment. So, it's not only the confidence the line manager would give me in my job, no, I've already got that, but it's the confidence of me as a person within the organisation that, 'Oh look, it's just me,' and there are all these people around, you know? And then, 'Oh, I'm always expected to be the only black person around,' it's like that kind of resignation within oneself.*

*I think the course did help me a lot, It gave me a lot of confidence. Sometimes I kind of devalued my work, I'd go, 'Oh anybody can do that, it's nothing...' or even my contribution, so just going on the course, that really changed the way that I perceived things and how I perceived my own contribution, and so that really helped a lot, because I was promoted to a different grade, and that's all because it just gave me the confidence to say, 'Oh, I can do this.' Before I would be making excuses as to why I couldn't do it, which is what I was used to doing before, but after the course I was much more positive about what I could achieve and my own abilities to achieve, because I've always, like I said, undermined my own abilities and didn't see any value in it.*

*After the course I applied for a new role that came up within my own team, in the Open Access Team, but then due to the lockdown it was... I was going to apply for it but again, like I said, I was making excuses as to why I wouldn't apply, and then the lockdown came and then they kind of postponed the job until after last year so, like I said I applied for it and I got the job, but I think that's because of the confidence that I had. Even during the interview, and internal positions are very difficult to apply for, right, but yes, one of the comments that kept coming across was that, 'Oh, you're so confident, such a change in how you've grown in confidence,' and things like that, so it was very positive. I think that's all down to, partly to do with the Impact programme.*

*My confidence really increased. We had different sessions on the Impact programme, one was on the things that we learnt tricks about assertiveness, and I definitely used some of the tricks that we were taught in difficult conversations that I was having with my line manager at the time, and then... I think subsequently it all helped to raise confidence. Then in September I went for a role which was a grade up, so I was working as Comms and Events at one of the institutes at Imperial, but then I went and got a role in the Comms Division which is more centralised, and it was one grade higher, so I think I definitely felt like there was a bit of a shift in my confidence after doing the Impact programme. I think it just made me realise that there were loads more people just like me, because that visibility isn't quite there. I guess because there are not that many minority ethnic people, it feels like we're all a bit hidden away, the programme helped me realise there's many of us, so I definitely feel like it had a profound impact on my confidence.*

*For me, I haven't actually gone for a new job or anything, I only did it last year, but I have come up with my own ideas, so I find it a bit more confident in doing projects that I want to work on. I'm actually working on a project at the moment which incorporates EDI activities, so I'm really proud of myself for that because pre-Impact I probably wouldn't have done it because I would have thought, 'No one wants to know what I think about this,' or, 'It's not really relevant to my job,' but it is relevant and it's something I want to do and I had the confidence to approach my manager and give the idea, and they've been nothing but supportive, so it was worth it.*

*I would say the biggest thing Impact did give me was more confidence, and I'm happy for that. I think that year I was going through a lot of things that I just didn't, workwise, that I thought wasn't right, and I think being in that space made me realise I'm not crazy, and then it gave me the confidence, and I think that was the first time I asked them for a bonus and I got it, because I wasn't crazy, I had been doing things that were above and beyond what anyone needs to be doing.*

### **Recommendation:**

The Impact Leadership programme to be integrated within a suit of CPD training offered to staff. Line managers within the annual appraisal and staff development one to one meetings

to offer this as an option available, dispelling the notion of the Impact leadership programme being a special course for black and minoritised staff.

### **Opportunities to network**

The Impact programme created a space for black and racial minoritised people to be together challenging the isolation they feel working in predominantly white environments and building a sense of community within Imperial College. It provided participants with a safe space to share, be understood not judged and create a commonality of experience and identity.

The impact programme allowed them to reflect and articulate their experiences in relation to the restrictive structural barriers caused by racism, including assumptions of competencies, capabilities which are often based upon racial stereotypes. They shared the experience of feeling invisible and isolated, hitting a glass ceiling in relation to promotion and having low expectation projected onto them.

*One of the things impacts for me personally was, having joined in lockdown, having met everybody albeit through a screen, that there actually are quite a lot of black minority ethnic people within Imperial but you don't realise where they were. It is almost like we were hiding, and so for me the Impact programme enabled me to find like-minded people, and I was able to create a network now of people which I didn't have before. Because sometimes it's all good and well having your colleagues to speak to, but sometimes it might be something not work related, or sometimes you just want to have a moan because as humans we do, and with people that are like-minded that would understand if you have an issue with something.*

*My manager approached me yesterday because he had been asked to attend an Impact for manager course, I didn't know that such a programme existed, he was asking me about how I got on with the Impact programme. What did make me chuckle though is, so he's a white man and was asked to bring an item of cultural significance and he was really scratching his head thinking, 'I don't know what to do, what do I do?' So I asked him if it was ok to be really stereotypical? So I mentioned some very stereotypical English items, his wife is also Welsh so I threw in some daffodils, that kind of thing, but it kind of made him question his culture, which made him think, 'Well, hang on a minute,' and then he started talking about my culture, and all of a sudden, just by him doing that one little bit of work it opened up all these questions where you could almost see the cogs turning in his head of, 'Hang on, do you navigate every day, do you do this all the time?' 'Yes, pretty much.' 'Oh.' So I'm really glad the Impact programme exists for managers; how managers will do it, I don't know, but it's interesting they've got a programme now for managers.*

### **A safe space was created**

A safe space was created by virtue of the programme bringing black and minoritised staff together where they felt they could be truly their authentic selves in contrast to their daily experiences in the workplace.

*I think something else that's really interesting is, it's people's perception of you. For example, I suffer from imposter syndrome quite badly but you wouldn't guess that, you wouldn't know that, and it's those little things that we reveal about ourselves and others, 'Really? No, not you.' And it's that self-belief of, 'Actually, I'm not as bad as I think I am,' I'm probably a lot more confident and I come across as confident or I come across as articulate or I come across as being quite self-assured, but that little voice in your head is still there and it's about actually being brave enough to say, 'Yes, I have this problem. The Impact programme gave me a safe space where I could be myself, say what needed to be said and knowing it won't go anywhere, just in the virtual four walls of the Impact programme.*



*I think one of the things that I noticed in my group was how many people were in a similar boat as me, and because of the networking opportunity I realised that myself and others are still in the same position. However, the support from others has given me the confidence to move outside what I was doing, and basically, I'm retraining. That said, I've recently had a conversation with my line manager who is saying to me that she wants to move me up to the next level, so... But it really is hit and miss, I find, within Imperial to have that straight pathway, depends on your line manager and if you get one that is promoting you are really lucky. At the beginning of the year my line manager said I'm clearly working above my grade, but it's taken that long still to actually be recognised, so..., it's not necessarily an upward progression, it's a sideward progression which could get completely wide with no limit.*

### **Role of the mentor**

The Participants valued the mentorship they received as part of the Impact programme as it offered them opportunities for professional growth learning from the mentor's professional lived experience.

*I gained a lot from having the mentorship from a director, because I was able to go to her, I was able to talk to her, I was able to say exactly what is happening within my department, how should I proceed, how should I do this? That mentorship after the programme is quite helpful to me, it makes a lot of impact on the training and on how I do things within Imperial College as well.*

*It was exactly based upon the experience of mentorship within the Impact programme that I've also just had another mentorship from another director right now, and it's the same thing that's happening, because I tend to gain a lot from them because even though I can see, I can sense from what they are saying as well that they are not happy with what is happening in Imperial, because when I said to her that I am glad one of our people is now made a director, and she asked me a little bit about it, and she said, 'Oh good, it's high time.' You can see that reaction, that means they are looking forward to these changes as well.*

### **Line manager's inability to have conversations on race**

Conversations about race and racism can be uncomfortable for managers and the willingness to experience this uncomfortableness and uncertainty is often a barrier to open discourse. Black and racial minoritised staff said the responsibility to raise race issues was left up to them.

*Sometimes line managers don't know how to approach the conversation for fear of offending people, but personally, and I think probably quite a few minorities ethnic people say this, just ask. Obviously, don't ask in a disrespectful way but sometimes if you're not sure about something, just as you would ask a question of, 'Oh, where's the milk?' 'The milk is over there,' that's a question, same sort of thing. So, if there are things that are affecting you, particularly in a world as well with current world affairs and things, don't be afraid of trying to pigeonhole people. Different things affect us in different ways and it's about having that open dialogue with that supportiveness, which I think sometimes managers, I don't want to say they lack, they're just not aware of it and it's that difficult, 'I don't know if I'm offending you or not.' I always say to people, 'I'll let you know if you offended me.' It's always having that open... But again, it comes from us as opposed to the other way round, we almost have to steer or broach the conversation because we have seen and experienced the issue. It is up to us to have that self-actualisation, that self-awareness, which can get frustrating because you're constantly having to do the, 'So, what do you think about this?' and you always feel like you're, for me in*

*my department, the shouty ethnic person sometimes, because I keep talking about similar issues that are happening for me.*

*I was inquisitive about the Impact programme before my line manager encouraged me to go on it because she raised that other colleague had a problem with me. She raised that other people had said I was inapproachable and they were afraid to talk to me, they said I was tough. The Impact programme was seen as a solution to my assertive management style.*

### **Recommendations:**

The significance and the impact of institutional racism experienced on a daily basis by black and minoritised staff is evident within these sections and Imperial College needs to consider actions to address this.

The net-working aspect of the Impact Leadership programme is important for black and minoritised staff, therefore the Impact for Manager's course needs to be delivered alongside it.

### **Pay grades and progression**

Like many organisation across the UK the ethnicity pay gap is a concern for many institutions The Office for National Statistics in 2018 indicated that there are considerable disparities in the kinds of employment and earning received. Black employees earn on average 9.2% less whilst employees of Bangladeshi or Pakistani heritage earn 16.9% less than white counter employees. **All** participants within the focus groups highlighted their concerns in relation to pay progression and the drivers behind the disparity. They also raised concerns over the role and actions of their line managers in relation to their own progression within Imperial. We have extensively listed comments on this as these experiences were a central aspect of the focus groups. Various circumstances and responses were shared on this;

*Honestly, I think that some of the ownership should be on the line manager. For example, I'm just going to use the PRDP as an example, because it's what it says on the tin, it's your personal development but in my area, it's solely based on the KPIs of the unit, and then just as a little caveat at the end of it there's, 'What training do you want to do?' There's never any thought into it, again you have to bring it to the table and hopefully it gets written off. So even though you're meeting your line manager, or I am, on a regular basis, there's never any direction, there's never any clear pathway.*

*How do you retain the experience from the Impact programme, because this is what's happened now in my department, a lot of people have left, and as I'm one of the older staff, in all senses, I'm told that I have to hoist up the newbies, 'You've got direction, you know where things are, you know who to speak to,' and it's, 'You can't help me personally grow but you want to now put other things on top of me'? That's my experience anyway.*

*In my team it was just me and the team expanded so there's two more people in the same role as me, and a similar sort of thing, you've been here the longest so you have to support the newbies, but then my personal development or my growth almost gets stunted because I seem to know... For some bizarre reason I seem to know a lot of people, so if I ever need anything from anyone, instead of doing it the official way I can kind of circumnavigate those things, and because I'm known to do that I get then given, 'Can you contact security for ID cards? Can you do this, or can you do that?' we can't give you a job here, but you can leave.'*

*I think in Imperial as well, if you're an academic there is a clearer structured path and most people are aware of that, but if you're in professional services, I've forgotten the other job*

family, the only reason I know is because I'm in the professional service job family, but if you're in any other job family that's not academic, there's no real way of you going up to the next grade. I found this out again purely by looking at the Imperial website, about pay reviews, so there is actually a specific time where you can actually have a pay review, which I didn't know, and I missed out on it obviously because I found out too late. My line manager was also unaware of pay reviews.

There's a bit of a bone of contention between the 3A job family and the 3B, I know a lot of people who've tried to jump from A to B and it's not as simple as A to B, it almost ends up A, B, C, D, E, F, G, eventually coming back to B, but that takes a while and it's almost having to jump through all these hoops. I don't know what it's like for people of minority ethnic background but I'm assuming it's going to be a bit harder for us. Again, I don't have any evidence to back this up but there's no clear path when you're in a role... For me, for example, I know full well in my department in my role that there's no other... My manager's my manager, but there's nowhere else for me to go so if I wanted to progress, I'd have to leave, do something somewhere else.

I would be interested to know how many people have attended these Impact programmes and have actually changed their position within Imperial College? I don't think there are many.

When I started Imperial 13 years ago, I was on level 4, and throughout the service of 110 staff, there were only two people on level 4, now they have about, up to 20 or so on level 4 now, and I'm still on level 4. You see what I mean?

I'm a research technician which I think adds another level of complication to it. Imperial has many different job families between academic, research and PTO (covers professional, technical and operations). I'm fighting to get that separated, I'm genuinely actively fighting to get that separated because it makes no sense to me at all, but I'm a technician within that job family. I started as a level 3A technician, and I think in 2012 I became a level 3B technician. I happen to know within the whole of the Faculty of Medicine there are only two level 4 technicians in the whole of the Faculty of Medicine, I don't know how many technicians there are, not actually that many people in the technical family although I believe there are some jobs that are technical but then they somehow end up in the professional family, so there might be some higher level... There are definitely higher level technicians within Imperial, but in the Faculty of Medicine, the last time I saw the stats there are only two level 4 technicians'.

'I used to have another line manager and her job encompassed some technical aspects and more professional aspects, and obviously she was my line manager, but she was the same grade as me. I actually had a review where I said, 'There is no incentive for me to work hard in this place,' because I had asked for a bonus at that stage and they were taking a really long time to make the announcement, so I didn't know if I was going to receive it, so I said, 'I can't get a bonus, something else, and my line manager's the same grade as me, so there's nothing for me to aim for.' It's written on paper, because actually I have a good supportive management system, and I didn't write it on paper and she goes, 'Can you write it down on a piece of paper so it can be recorded and filed away?'

I do think there is a ceiling for staff here in different families, and the ceiling can be different in different families but for ethnic minority staff there is a ceiling. The data exists, you can see it, it's not that say we entered the workplace later so we're behind, we just get to a

*certain level and we drop off, and we drop off either because we can't see the opportunities are here and we leave, or we stay stuck at that level, essentially 3B, because that's where we get stuck at in Imperial.*

*Like I said, my job is ever-evolving, and I think on paper my job can definitely be a higher level, and I'm not saying that because I'm talking about myself, I genuinely think that. I even tried with my line manager to get her job rated at a higher level but HR didn't agree with us. Last year I asked my boss to put me through for a bonus again because I was seeing technical jobs advertised and approved by HR that were the same level as mine and they literally had to do one thing, I have the evidence of this, but they won't agree that me that does, I run a small technical facility, I supervise student projects, I do finance bits, I can't even tell you what I do. I re-wrote my job description and I put that through, and my case was approved, so I did get the bonus, but trying to get my job re-graded is almost impossible now. They literally got rid of that process but they were never going to regrade it higher anyway because they seem to think that it can't be done.*

*I at least have had the opportunity to increase my grade, but now there literally isn't even a job I can apply to that's higher. I don't know, it's kind of a swings and roundabouts thing, I sometimes have a really big conflict – do I do these things to help my boss and my department, or do I just stick doing nothing because they're not really going to reward me for it, and there's nothing I can do to get a reward? Even doing the training is pointless to me at this moment in time. So, I am also in the process of trying to figure out what my next step can be, and it doesn't feel like I can take a next step within Imperial.*

*I have been on 3A since I've joined, so I've been applying internally, I've recently applied for a role internally for a 3B, I think having done the Impact training, so I think for me it's just given me the confidence to want to progress, so that was my journey through the grading system'. Can I just add one thing else? The reason why I got my job regraded was because someone asked me to sit on an interview panel for another job, and I looked at it and I was like, 'I do more than this,' and it was graded higher than me, so I put my job to be regraded, and it did go through so that was fine, but that was the reason why.*

These comments illustrate the need for significant change in managerial and institutional practices in relation to black and racial minoritised staff and consideration of the most effective forums to bring these experiences to light.

The statistics from the Impact BAME Staff Development Survey, identified the reasons given in joining the Impact programme;

- 46% of participants went into the training for career progression and opportunities
- 36% to meet other ethnic staff
- 38% to have a safe space to talk about the challenges at work, and then another
- 38% to enhance my profile at the College

The evidence from the programme cohorts indicate that 46%- 50% of participants went on the Impact programme to improve progression. However, two members of staff within the focus group sessions who have been with Imperial College for a considerable amount of time and have not made any progression. The participants felt the Impact course it in it self was a supportive and a valuable experience however, they felt it has not addressed the issues regarding promotion experienced by staff with racialised identities.

*I'll be honest with you, the Impact programme itself, I don't have negative feelings about it per se, I did gain knowledge and skills. I think it probably is something... that you could do quite early on in your career that will really help with the foundations and thinking about yourself earlier. I think it was good to actually be in that space, and I did enjoy that, probably more because actually Imperial is really, really white, that is just the truth of the matter. Although my day-to-day experience isn't per se, in terms of when I go to say events and Celebrations at Imperial then I'm like, 'Oh my gosh, why am I sticking out like a sore thumb in this room?' kind of thing, so it was kind of nice to be in a room where there were more people that looked like me than the other way round, like it normally is.*

*I do think that in terms of it helping with career progression I don't really think it's really useful. I wouldn't say that's unique to the Impact programme. I think is the slight problem with Impact, it's not got any formal accreditation, I don't know if anyone external to Imperial knows what it even involves, and even within Imperial. Overall the Impact programme was good on a personal level; was it good professionally? Not really, if I'm really honest about it.*

For participants the Impact programme offered them a nurturing experience on a personal level and a space that was mutually supportive giving respite from having to navigate and negotiate the white dominated space. However, these two comments raise concerns about the programmes significance for career progression and employment opportunities.

The participants expressed that the expectations of the Impact programme needed to be clarified and made more explicit in terms of progression and regarding the status of the programme both internally and externally and that attending the programme does not necessarily open doors for promotional opportunities.

*I feel like it's important to be explicit at the beginning of the Impact programme in terms of what it's not, as in what it might not be good at doing, kind of changing things overnight. I think that's really important to know maybe.*

*I don't know if there's an expectation that you come out and straight away, you're progressing, internally or... For me, I think it was just a lot of food for thought, a lot of moments where I really had to think deep in my heart what my own barriers were and what stopped me, and moments where I lost opportunities and things like that. I think it's probably important to be explicit in your own thinking about what... I don't know if I'm making sense, but I just feel like it's important to know what it's not going to do overnight, and that's really important.*

*I think having done it last year, and I applied for a job just recently, I knew then at that time that... I remember my manager was like, 'You should definitely let them know that you've done the Impact training,' and I was like, 'Not really,' because I don't want the Impact training as a result of this job, if I'm a good candidate I'll get the job and if I'm not, then I'm not,' and I actually didn't get the role, and when I look at the interview and how it went, I know that I didn't excel in that interview at that time, so I know that there's a lot of deep things rooted in my own issues of confidence and articulating, there's a lot of things that I need to work on and I think it's important that we state that the Impact programme doesn't mop up all these things overnight.*

*I would say the biggest thing Impact programme did give me was more confidence, and I'm happy for that. I think that year I was going through a lot of things that I just didn't, workwise, that I thought wasn't right, and I think being in that space made me realise I'm not crazy, and*

*then it gave me the confidence, and I think that was the first time I asked them for a bonus and I got it, because I wasn't crazy, I had been doing things that were above and beyond what anyone needs to be doing.*

### **Recommendation:**

This section regarding pay grades and progression needs be shared with strategic leadership within Human Resources and Finance for comments and actions regarding these disparities.

### **Responding to discrimination and racism**

Participants discussed in both groups more broadly how Imperial was responding to race equality. This included initiatives that had been set up, the representation of black and minoritised groups on an EDI committee, communication of the equality work in Imperial and the desire to have black and minoritised staff in senior positions.

*So the first session of our Impact course, if I remember correctly, was talking about different cultures and our experience, and I remember saying that it's easier to have that conversation when white people aren't around, but actually we need to have that conversation with white people. Then last year within my department, and I think it's been rolled out further within Imperial now, my department at the NHLI level, they did a training course for senior management called 'Let's Talk About Race' and one of the bits that they had to do was then to speak to someone of a different race and to find out about their experiences, so I spoke to a senior management about my experience as a black person in the world, not just in work, just in the world. I think that's a good stepping stone, and so I think that's positive. I think they are starting to, but I think that was more in response to George Floyd rather than having this Impact course and the information that they've been getting from this and all the other initiatives that they needed to do, so it was more of an external stimulus rather than an internal stimulus that got them to then start taking some things forward, which is sad.*

*You can just look at the make-up of Imperial and it's weird, I think the official high-level EDI committee, the picture that they have on the website only contains white people. It makes no sense. They may have changed it; someone else sent it to me actually, one of my white colleagues sent it to me and said, 'Have you seen this?' and I was just like, 'This is funny, it just is funny,' because it's like senior EDI committee, so it suggests and it looks like there are no senior people that are not white that can then make up this committee. I'm not saying that those committees have to be made up of non-white people...*

*I think another problem is that Imperial are very good at selling themselves to outside people, but they're not telling us internally what changes they're making, so when you've been here longer you find out less. I see things that Imperial are doing from friends but me as an internal member of staff, I've got no idea about it, which I find absolutely ridiculous.*

*I think the fact is we shouldn't expect all departments, for all of them to have one BAME staff at a more senior level, I think that would be... It's a long-term thing, but at least some of them should try, and try to not because someone is BAME that they should actually be there, it should be on qualifications, it should be on experience, so they should be able to accommodate that. The ethnicity of the Head of EDI, it's a good thing, you just need to see some of your type like in various other positions as well, it would be quite helpful and quite good.*

Participants discussed the value of the Impact programme from the perspective of enabling them to respond and deal with racism and discrimination in the workplace. Whilst the programme offered the development of participant's confidence they were concerned that conversations on race equality are not taking place.

*I think just it has given me more confidence to look to the future and just be a bit positive that some of the things are happening despite sometimes experiencing the hostility.*

*Well, because for me the confidence is already there, you know? I can confront anything; I don't know why. I just... Anyway, I think the experience is good. Again, the mentoring is good, so it's been empowering.*

*I do think changes are happening. Are they meaningful? Yes, and no. I sit on quite a few committees, so I sit locally on my EDI committee, and I lead for PTO staff, so professional and technical staff, but I also now sit on the Race Equalities Self-Assessment Team committee as well, so the more accountability side of things and seeing what's going to happen. So that's how I'm trying to fight, that's how I'm trying to help contribute to making the changes, and I would say that's from doing Impact, and my line manager, she's the Vice Dean for Institutional Affairs, so she's also really interested in culture and community, I have that confidence now to speak up and say things and to be myself within Imperial. I think, because I work with students directly and my students are international, we learn from each other and we can have comfortable, that's the thing, comfortable, inclusive conversations about our culture, but I don't know if it's like that everywhere within Imperial. It is like that for me, and I think it should be like that, but I know it isn't. I went to the garden party the other day, all the scientific awards went to men, all the culture awards went to women, this is not acceptable.*

*It's a good programme, you gain quite a lot, but I just don't think it should end there when you have qualified. There should be support that carries on from there to actually monitor what happens afterwards as discrimination is persistent.*

*I think like the cultural conversations, I think those conversations need to be had and they don't just need to be had by the ethnic minority staff, they need to be had amongst all staff.*

*I didn't do the Impact course just to get something out of it, like a tangible thing. I think for me it was like a real personal development, because when I look back at my career I feel like there were certain moments that stopped me....My parents came from a refugee background and I was the first generation to go to university, so actually my own primary years I didn't have the confidence, I didn't even speak English, so there were so many barriers to my career development that by the time I did Impact I wished I did that when I graduated or when I was in high school, because I had loads of great teachers that supported me to go into university, I went to a Russell Group university, I did all the things on paper, but what was it that stopped me from progressing...? The personal development was most important for me.*

There is clear recognition of the value and strength of the Impact course for participants in enabling the development and resilience for black and Minoritised staff, however participants expressed their concern of their voices being heard and how might the University be reflecting on the barriers that exist to having the necessary conversations on race and examining the challenges to progression for black and Minoritised staff. Black and minoritised staff have identified the changes and development they need to make and the question remains how might the organisation equally reflect on the changes that need to be made.

The participants experienced tension and conflict regarding challenging racist behaviour within departments in case they were perceived and or labelled as being the spokesperson and the potential EDI voice of the department, this often positions them into oppositional or being seen as responsible to challenge.

*One of the things for me, was I never really brought my race to work prior to me actually going on the Impact programme and seeing there were so many like-minded people in the same boat, and this was from a variation of different roles within college, from medicine, all over the place, but I found I could then bring things up to my line manager. That in itself had some kind of, possibly adverse effect in the sense that they then wanted to push me forward for everything to with EDI because I could speak up and I was talking about things. They put me forward for chairing an EDI group within our department, which I declined I hasten to add, but it just enabled me to speak up more about things.*

*It's the lack of awareness and motivation of others mainly white people to see and understand how it must feel for staff with racialised identities to be in the minority, and reflect upon maybe what can they do to make the environment more inclusive, so that we don't feel like we're just the odd person out at events. Not to say that people are trying to make us feel awkward, no, it's not that, sometimes it's just a lack of ignorance that's been there for quite a long time, a long time and it's still there.*

### **Recommendation:**

Imperial College to review and examine how the existing structures could be enhanced to remove the barriers that prevent black and racial minoritised staff voices and experiences being heard and acknowledged.

### **Improvements to Impact programme**

#### **What does Gabriella want to include in terms of recommendations**

This participant shared their experience and importance of maintaining a network from the programme and from this had heard from many colleagues their struggle to get promotions or progression in their chosen area.

*It's like with most things that happen at Imperial, you do it and then they wave you goodbye. As I said, as our network we still kept our WhatsApp group going, and it's like the shared experience for everybody. I know people who have gone on to apply for loads of grades above their work that they're clearing doing in their existing jobs, but they're still struggling, and you think, 'Why is that? This person is capable, we know they are, so what are the barriers? What's stopping people from even progressing to a different department within Imperial, not even staying in the same one, but what is stopping people from getting there?' Is again a question that needs to be asked?*

*I think even having a shared directory The idea of facilitating and maintaining a network of people from the programme was unanimously agreed on by participants of our skills and experience, it doesn't even have to be work related, but again a way of sharing that culture.... It could be 'Well So-and-so is really good with presentations,' or, 'So-and-so's good with accessibility issues, So-and-so's good with dealing with neuro-divergent people.' That way we're keeping that knowledge and we're sharing it amongst the wider community because we're all multi-faceted, we all have different hobbies and interests, and it's about keeping that kind of Impact network alive.*

*I suppose lessons learnt from other people, because I meet up with some people that, obviously not through the last two years, we've met for coffee and they've continued to tell me their journey and their stories, so just some sort of follow on. Don't ask me what it would entail at this stage but yes, just... And I don't mean it in a sense of just to get together, because I*



*know that's happened as well, but just a positive follow-on from the actual training that we had.*

There was a strong feeling that a group had been build, forming alliances and from this people build relationships, and that there was shared expertise created through this course. So the groups posed the question how could Imperial maximise this.

Further thoughts on improvements were shared recognising the value of working on a project with increased resource to ensure this is an integral aspect of the programme.

*Programme needs to be longer to include management skills and project I think the programme is good and they should run it. If anything, I think it should cover a longer period of time potentially to encompass some of the other more management skills as well, so people can gain a little bit more of those. The other thing, when I did the course, we had to do a project, but there wasn't really much funding for the project so maybe some additional resources given to Impact.*

One participant identified the need for a co-ordinator from the Impact programme that could provide ongoing support and advice with applications to vacancies within Imperial.

*Following on from the Impact programme, I think if it's possible is to probably have maybe an Impact coordinator, somebody that would, even for everybody that has gone through this programme, if they are willing to apply for jobs within Imperial College, that one or two persons would be there to support them, give them the necessary advice and say, 'Okay, you need to put in more work here, more work here,' and maybe to be able to give them the advice, and then they can continue to monitor their progress and how many have come to them, how many have been able to now get from A to B. That would be quite helpful.*

### **A specific programme for black and minoritised staff**

On the question of a specific programme for black and minoritised staff, participants responded strongly in favour of the programme. These were some of the comments;

*I don't mind that the Impact is aimed at specific people because I'm really proud that I have a culture that's unique and different to other people's. It's something to be proud of, it's why I'm actually different, it's something that's... Going on Impact is tailored for specific people and why wouldn't you want to celebrate that? You might get boxed in, but, you can push back on the things that you don't want to do and doing the Impact helps you build your confidence in being able to do that. So, I do think it is a good thing in a way because it gives you an expression that wouldn't have been there if you just went on a leadership course.*

*Yes, I was going to echo what everyone is saying, it's very true, because there's a reason why there has to be something targeted towards us. If that reason didn't exist then we wouldn't have to have these courses in the first place, but at the same time is it a box that has been created for us? I don't know. The thing is, the positive thing about the course, it's for us to be proud of our cultures, proud of who we are, and to excel and to be able to excel and to build on what we have, which in the environment that we are it's trying to minimise what we are, but that's not the case and we just need to recognise that the box, this invisible box that they might be putting us into, only from outside it might appear to be a box but for us it's something much more because only we know what we're experiencing, we're living our experiences and we want to acknowledge, not only acknowledge it but to appreciate and have others appreciate who we are, and that's what the college should be working towards really, because only then will the college really grow as they say they want to grow.*

This contribution articulates the importance the Impact programme has in gathering together staff from Black and Minoritised groups, it points to the unwritten objective of affirming the experience of racism with each other which perhaps is a particular significant commentary on the participant's experience of working at Imperial

*I think whether we like it or not we'll always be put into a box, and as has been said, the imaginary box. It's up to us though whether we choose to accept that box or not. For example, we could look at gender, religion, class, skin colour, we're all people, and it doesn't help that also when you're collecting statistical data we all have to belong to a box, I'm either Asian British, so it says Asian British, Pakistani, that kind of thing, so whether we like it or not. Some people might think it's a good thing or a bad thing but we're always boxed in some way, shape or form. But it's important for us to have something geared towards us, so we're almost, I think I want to say the word 'vindicated.' I think someone else mentioned it before where you think you have a problem but you're not sure and you think, 'Is it just me?' and you come along to something like Impact and someone says something similar and you think, 'It's not me, I didn't imagine this,' and you feel that vindication, but also that relief of, 'No, I'm not losing the plot, I'm not going mad, I did see that.' I think that's the value of Impact.*

This notion of bringing staff from Black and Minoritised groups together is reinforced with these contributions;

*What Impact has brought off the back of the programme are things like (Imperial as One) and the sessions with Wayne Mitchell, that he has called 'Belonging'.*

*One of the things that I wanted to mention, that I did, I joined (Imperial as One) network as a committee member, so absolutely the best thing, yes, I've ever done at Imperial. So yes, very proud of our work.*

## **Section B**

### **Re Recommendations what does Gabriella want to propose here for this section**

This section groups the key themes that emerged from those who have not attended an Impact programme.

#### **Introduction**

The focus group involved five people with one participant relatively new to Imperial being at the college 6 months, with a couple in post for about 2 years and the other three being at imperial for over 6 years. They worked in various professional and administrative services in different sections and departments. The participants had either learned of the programme form looking at the website or through people connected to the Imperial as One network.

#### **Information and detail of the Impact programme**

The participants began with a desire to see more information and detail of what the programme entailed. They wanted to understand the precise number of hours, what the programme included on a week to week basis and what were the benefits of being on the programme and what you achieved at the end of it. This was explained as not only for their own understanding and consideration of the programme but for negotiation and discussion with their line managers.

It was suggested that it would be useful to be able to see some testimonials to encourage people, or at least help people make that decision about the programme. The group wanted to know more about the mentoring scheme with one participant expressing this;

*For me on a personal level, the mentoring aspect is quite interesting, I know it's mentioned on this webpage about mentoring, but what does that mean? Am I guaranteed to get a mentor or is it just actively go and find someone within this network to mentor me? Is it a more formalised kind of mentoring buddy set up? So, I think some of those things that they've mentioned on the website is great, but for me it needs more tangibles around it, so increasing confidence how? Raising career aspirations how? You know, all this is like, 'Okay, cool, but then what?'*

Participants shared their desire to see this type of information as it would enable them to make a decision and be able to present a case to their managers. Mentoring on the programme was shared by other participants to be a very positive element.

One participant felt sceptical about the programme and attended this focus group to find out others thoughts and shared;

*It seems to be just one of those training courses that I feel is tacked on to all the others, and the others get high priority and this one just doesn't, so that's why I kind of felt like, 'Well, I don't know enough about it, is there a point to it?'*

One participant had experienced resistance from their line manager, they were deemed to have been on 'too much training' training in a specific time period.

### **Choosing Impact programme or a mainstream leadership course**

A number of the participants were concerned that the Impact programme was not attached to any formal qualifications.

*I would choose a more mainstream leadership programme rather than specifically for BAME, partly because there isn't an official... like membership or qualification or anything like that. So, if I said I've been on the Impact programme, if I went to another organisation or anywhere else and said that I did that programme, it wouldn't mean really anything, but if I'd gone to another organisation and said I've completed my CMI, I've completed my ILM, that is more widely recognised.*

Another commented on its focus for black and minoritised staff;

*If there's no formal qualification that you could use or transfer to another organisation, I don't see the point, ... And I don't like the word BAME anyway, so when I see that, that puts me off straightaway, I'm like, 'No, I'm a person, not a BAME.' So yes, that puts me off and it's a bit like, 'Oh we're just trying to tick a diversity box here, let's just give them something here just to help them in their career while they're here,' sort of thing. It doesn't feel very substantial, like the mental health course that I've done and all the other training that I've done, that's substantial, this doesn't feel that way. I think that you would want something accredited, you would want something that's recognised outside of it.*

Another Participant added;

*Because it's not accredited is it going to be valued outside when we already face so many barriers as existing, so is it worth your time and investment?*

One participant challenged this notion based on their experience of the Calibre programme sharing the value of it through the dimension of disability;

*I think doing Calibre has really changed my opinion about these types of courses, because Calibre wasn't accredited either, it was targeted at staff who were with disabilities and that is exactly what it's called, and that is a problematic terminology within itself just as BAME is for staff with ethnic minorities. But I got a lot out of it, and actually the lens through which Calibre, which I'm assuming Impact will do the same thing through race, the lens of what Calibre does is for you to get educated and consider your disability from a completely different perspective and use that to become a leader for a more inclusive workplace, you use that to become a better manager, a better communicator, and it's all just done through that lens.*

This participant went on to demonstrate how the Calibre programme had given them the opportunity to make a presentation on a change proposal for the college and as they shared 'benefiting everyone at the college'. They were hoping the Impact programme would avail the same opportunity.

*Another thing that Calibre has given me the option to do, which I hope Impact will do the same thing, is I have actually been able to influence change at Imperial based on it. So, at the end of Calibre we gave a presentation to the Disability Action Committee, which is about 40-60 senior stakeholders across the college, and I basically had the option of giving a presentation about reflecting on my own experiences or a change proposal for the organisation. I think Impact does offer the same thing, and I am now in discussions with HR and ICT to actually implement the changes that I have suggested. This is something that I can take to any organisation in the future that I work for and say, 'Because of me, this initiative happened,' and I would want to do the same thing with IMPACT, which again I think is almost even worse that we face barriers from management for not doing these courses, because they don't just benefit us, they benefit everyone at the college, so we should all be being encouraged to do things like this.*

This encouraged participants to recognise the value of the programme despite no formal accreditation, with one participant sharing;

*It doesn't need to have accreditation, it's the intangible benefits, it's for you to understand how your race and ethnicity and all of that stuff impacts your working practices and that of others, so if you get to management positions you can then see it through that lens, educating others and incorporating those practices in your everyday work*

The model adopted within the Calibre programme was then developed with one participant sharing their experience of being on the ILM programme.

*I can talk about the ILM, which I believe is very similar, it's the same level, Level 3. Now, what I did is, I actually did a tangible project on what I did, and I had to basically pitch it, do a presentation to my management, I had to implement the changes, so I had a whole project that I could show to someone and I could document it, I could actually establish what I learnt from the programme and implement it in the project. Because I already line managed, I was able to pitch something to my team about the initiative, and that's something I feel is more rewarding for me personally, it's something that you've made a change and you've taken it away and you can say, 'This is what I've done as a result of what I've learnt from the programme.' That's what I would say would be more valuable to me.*

Again this notion of a programme that included an action and achievement of bringing about change was emphasised and agreed by participants of the value of such a training programme.

*Well, a certificate is one thing, but in terms of the experience I think that would be even more important because that's something you can talk about as well and that's something where*

*irrespective which organisation you work in, if you've taken that experience away you can talk about, 'Well, this actually worked here really well because this is what I did.' In order to go to leadership positions, they want you to have examples of how you've actually given some kind of leadership experience. A project that can bring about a change, it's not just about concentrating on building your skills up personally inside an organisation maybe that doesn't really represent you?*

### **Antipathy about this helping progression**

There was a discussion by the group as to whether a specific programme is needed and necessary and why it has been created. Concern was expressed that given the college profile of managers being small and that Black and Minoritised staff were in lower positions that there was a need for white staff to understand their racism to enable their teams to develop a diverse workforce.

*You know, we don't have an issue with ourselves, so everybody needs to be involved, it shouldn't be just... Yes, we understand that within the college itself black and ethnic minorities are always in lower jobs, I think I've seen maybe two in leadership, if that, and even if you look across the board, from Alice downwards, I can't pinpoint anyone, so if it's going to be something that's going to help us as a person it needs to help others as well understand their biases, understand where they're not helping diversity within their teams and helping them grow. So, for me, I can't go up in the role that I am, I can go sideways but I can't go up, I'll have to leave and go somewhere else.*

Another participant shared the feeling of being stuck.

*I am in a department [where] there is no up, there's no more levels to go and you have no opportunity to go any higher unless you do something completely different and get the training for whatever role you're looking to move up into. So, that's the issue, and that's the issue a lot of our community face within the college, you get into a position and yes it's great at the beginning, you learn things, you get a little bit of an increase in pay, but then it stops and then you'll, like many people have to go to another department where it pays a bit more but then you're still stuck at this level. Yes, it's very frustrating.*

These participants felt that unless the Impact programme supports them to look at skillsets they could not see any value for themselves.

*If there's options within the training about different roles and give your ideas about how your skillset can be used in another department or whatever and they help you with your application process and the training process, then yes, for sure. But again, if they don't offer that it's not really worth my time.*

One participant reflected the feelings of two long standing black colleagues who were disillusioned with idea of progression and who felt that they as black members of staff were not appreciated. They shared;

*I even had the same conversation yesterday with two colleagues, again we're all of the same race, same level, and they are massively fed up in their position because they've just been told by their line managers they're not getting a pay increase. They've worked tirelessly for two years, they've been in the organisation, one lady's been there 16 years and the other one I think 13 years, they've been there a very long time and they've moved sideways again, like all of us, but never up. They've been given more responsibility, a little bit more pay, but the appreciation's not there.*

Another participant shared this feeling;

*This whole concept of glass ceiling and moving upwards does not exist, because in my team now I'm 10 months in and it's become very apparent already from the conversations that I've brought up very directly that there is no room for movement. I will never be promoted, there is no chance. My director told me in no uncertain times I will never be creating a manager level role in my team for marketing. Now, my issue is that I'm basically the marketer, I do everything, from director, head of, manager, officer, executioner, admin, everyone, I have to do everything, and that's not feasible. So, it's already clear to me, and I said this to them directly, I said, 'Okay, fine, so then I know there's no progression here, so my choice is I ride it out for a bit, or I leave, that's the two choices here, there is no in-between here.*

They continued questioning the extent to which the Impact programme would be able to challenge the barriers to promotion. The feeling expressed by this participant was they could see themselves leaving;

*The reality is then I need to switch teams or you have to move outwards. That's a shame because Imperial loses great staff. So I think it's the question about how much does race play a role in that? I guess, coming back to this programme, another thing that I'd want to see is how is this programme going to help me break down some of those barriers to promotion when I'm very clearly operating at a higher level, it's plain for everyone to see, I'm operating at a level and being forced to operate at a much higher strategic level. My director doesn't do marketing, my head doesn't do marketing, there is no one above me that does marketing, so therefore by the nature I have to act up, but it's not being recognised. I've been shut down completely, so where do you go with that? I know I'm going to end up leaving at some point, of course, unless an opportunity comes out somewhere else internally. So yes, that's another thing that I think the programme for me, I would like to get some more clarity on.*

### **How you are perceived by making use of this course**

One participant shared their concerns of how they might be perceived by making use of the Impact programme, possibly seen as gaining preferential treatment;

*I think sometimes there can be a perception or a fear of how being on this programme is perceived, because we're BAME and this whole positive quota filling type of perception, whether my white colleagues or non-people of colour colleagues will see I'm being given preferential treatment or something, there's a course they're paying for me to go on. I know it's free for internal people but I'm assuming there must be some sort of internal cost, right? I don't know, I guess so, but if nothing else it's soft costs, it's time costs, my time out of the office, so there is slightly that perception there. I don't know how accurate that is, because I feel like in my experience in public sector that is a bit more all-inclusive, at least on paper, whether it is in reality, then it goes back to that tick box thing.*

### **How does the programme cater for different grading's –is it broad based?**

A number of participants explored this question and theme with concerns.

*Let's just say for example it's so broad that you might have catering and domestic staff there which are Level 2 and sitting next to somebody who's a level 3 or 4, and then there's sort of like a wide gap between the knowledge, skills and attributes that are required for each role. So, because of that and it being so broad it would be very difficult to specify what you can actually take away from it - qualification or like professional accreditation or whatever. That's, I guess, one of the massive issues for me in this particular programme.*

The discussion focussed on the need for a clear skills analysis and audit taking place with their managers to assess for example moving from level 3 to 4. Based on this they felt courses could then be considered and targeted to their needs on this basis.

*If the college wants to challenge the glass ceiling of senior management, in Imperial they are predominantly white, if they really want to get that progression up, courses need to be really bespoke and targeted at levels and really...?*

*Yes, and in terms of other talent programmes or whatever they're called that I've seen and supported, it's specific, so you're targeting a certain group of people in their career, not just because they're people of colour.*

### **What needs to be changed to progress these issues and concerns?**

A central point from this discussion was clearer objectives of what can be achieved, perhaps outcomes as a result of attending the programme. In terms of developing their careers participants felt specific and tangible objectives were important and not just related to their colour. One participant articulated this point;

*I think more conversations and being specific about your overall objectives at the end, so you get that bit first and then you kind of work back. So you say, 'Okay, this is the programme, this is what our objectives are, this is what we want to see in four years/five years/six months or whatever, and then you work back from there, and then it will help you be very targeted to who you're actually aiming this programme towards and being very clear about the objectives which then you can have tangible results and things that you can actually see the measures, the benchmarking for want of a better word, but it's that kind of thing. So be a bit more specific, not just do something because, and I think somebody raised it earlier around just because it's targeted towards BAME or disability, that to me, and this will be quite controversial, is not specific enough, especially when it comes to developing your career or thinking about your career in an organisation like this. There needs to definitely be more.*

One suggestion was to incorporate aspects of two programmes building a more inclusive programme that focussed on leading and managing integrating the equalities themes within that.

*I would strongly argue about having that programme but then incorporate the bits from Calibre and the bits about BAME into something so that it's a bit more inclusive, so that it's not just we're focusing on this and we're focusing on that from a race or disability perspective, but if we are in that space where we will be leading people and managing there has to be something of a component about that anyway, not just specifically for certain groups.*

Another participant felt that it was a valuable programme as an early career development but not so relevant to those who have been able to develop within their areas.

*I think that I would probably find that really useful if I was starting my career, I think that would be good for general guidance to give me some direction, I think that would be like a good overview for those who are, like I said, early careers. However, because I've been quite developed in my area, I would want to see it as something greater, because I feel like I've already passed that stage.*

Further points were made pointing to earlier discussions on the importance of opportunities for change to be part of the programme and additional practical thoughts were shared about timing of the programme.

*What this needs to be to make it work is a programme where we can actually make and implement change. That's a central thing, I think, from this.*

*Barriers that I want to raise that weren't discussed in this meeting for Impact that come from colleagues I've spoken to. One is it happens over the summer; if you work in admissions, who are part of my directorate, you can't take time off during that time period so, point blank, if you're ethnic and you work in admissions, you can't do it. Two, if you're a parent or a carer quite often you want to take leave during your kids' summer holidays, and I'm not, I'm not even speaking from my own perspective, but again July and August, not ideal time. If it could run twice a year at different points so that that it was more accessible, that would be a simple benefit that would hopefully get more people on.*

### **Why this type of programme exists?**

From the discussion above questions re-emerged about why this programme existed. The following dialogue expresses the concern about the approach;

*There must be these numbers of BAME staff somewhere, like this initiative has been created because clearly we are underrepresented amongst our staff, but what do those numbers actually look like? Does anyone know, or who...*

*Yes, they did release that, and you could see that the ethnic minorities were literally in the lower pay scale and in the lower admin roles, and there was very little to no progression into the upper levels, which we already knew, but to see it in black and white, it was a wake-up call, and that's why I felt like all these initiatives started coming out and it was like, 'Oh, let's put this out, let's do this, and let's start interviewing more ethnic minorities and putting them on the newsletter and celebrating our diversity.' Especially October, it was like, 'Oh, let's celebrate our diversity,' and meanwhile you've got portraits of all these people around here who don't look like you.*

*Yes, so they're very much, you know, I feel like they're on a targeted approach, a tick box to say, 'We're really inclusive, we celebrate Pride, we celebrate Black History Month, we do all this stuff,' and I'm like, 'Yes, but on a day-to-day level what's happening there? Because our leadership, the head of our department, there's no diversity there at the Teams meeting, I think there's probably one that I know of. So it's just like the decision-making, the training, nothing is targeted, they keep pushing out initiatives without speaking to the real people who are actually doing the real work on the ground.*

*Yes, and it has to feel authentic, doesn't it? This is the issue, they'll tick this box, they go, 'Oh great, we have to do some diversity drive now, let's do XYZ,' but the reality is, if at all levels from senior leadership downwards, if they don't truly buy into it and create pathways to do that stuff, to enable those people to move upwards, it's never going to happen.*

The desire for examination of the system for progression and the opportunities for moving forward within the organisation were a salient feature of the group which re-emerged on several different occasions during the discussion.



