

1.

Title card

2.

Coming up, we'll set the stage for networks that are growing beyond their headquarters, from regional to global reach. We'll see examples of models, roles and activities that have been taken by other networks. We'll also consider what this means for sharing power, global narratives and cultural tensions.

3.

The very first thing you should do before expanding your network's reach is to make sure you have your own house in order. That means documentation like your strategy and mission statements, how your team works, role descriptions, and how your efforts are governed. You should also assess how well this is being applied with a process audit and review of your communications channels. Try to take into account other factors like the culture of your network, local organisation, and your brand perception. Yes, that might sound like a lot to do if you're responding to a join request from one person in another country, but it's good practice to set you up for future success.

This will assess your readiness for leading on a regional or global scale, and to check that you won't inadvertently be excluding new members because they don't understand the "unwritten rules" of the network.

In your worksheets you have some checklists you could use to help you. We recommend collaborating on this, not only with your team, but if you can, someone who has interest in your network, but no insider knowledge. Does it all make sense to someone who didn't help create it?

If you find your house is mostly in order, then you can move on to consider your global approach. It doesn't need to be perfect, but you should be able to identify what needs improvement and invite your new members to contribute to that solution. But some networks who do this exercise realise that even though they have high-visibility in their HQ, and they've been asked to expand, by a sponsor for example, they have not yet reached a place where success is likely in other locations, and they have more work to do. You should be honest in your conversations about what you think you can achieve - particularly when it comes to time management. If the organisation is asking you to take a more prominent role, then it should be appropriately supported.

Try to flip your perspective on what type of network you'd like to join, rather than lead. A community from another place and time, or one that speaks your language.

4.

When you feel your network is ready to go beyond your current location, you might begin by remembering how your network got started. Chances are this involved a lot of personal networking, finding out who was interested in forming a committee, or sponsoring your effort.

You might not have done this personally, but perhaps there is a recorded or spoken history on this. What gets discovered during this initial networking process? The people skills available to you? The appetite of the business? Employee expectations? And in this stage it's also likely that these first people gave their time without it being a formalised role or with manager buy-in, or a clear idea of where it would lead.

You should think about all of this as you introduce new opportunities to locations which don't have the same network history or maturity as yours. It can be like beginning the process all over again, and so we have to consider how we network strategically with the right stakeholders.

You're more likely to get keen local leaders if you go beyond an invitation to join your growing network, and instead identify mutual opportunities. If they are going to step into a role of accountability they'll need the skills, confidence, and motivation to support your network expansion through what might be a difficult period of change.

If they need skills what training can you recommend? If they need confidence, what experiences can you invite them to? If they need motivation, this might actually be about the time commitments needed, or what they have previously perceived as a lack of progress outside of head office, so find out why that is.

It will be useful to draw up a stakeholder map of where you're at with all your potential global recruits, and try to understand who they are connected to as well. Would it be easier for example to task one leader in South America to recruit another, rather than you being the central node in the diagram.

5.

Cultural competence, also known as intercultural competence, is a range of cognitive, affective, behavioural, and linguistic skills that lead to effective and appropriate communication with people of other cultures.

Effective intercultural communication results in the desired goals of all parties involved and which suit the expectations of a specific culture, the characteristics of the situation, and the level of the relationship.

Here are five pillars to help you consider your own approach.

Mindfulness: the ability of being cognitively aware of how the communication and interaction with others is developed. It is important to focus more in the process of the interaction than its outcome while maintaining in perspective the desired communication goals. For example, it would be better to formulate questions such as "What can we say or do to help this communication process together?" rather than "What do they mean?" And think about whether you are asking the right questions.

Cognitive flexibility: the ability of creating new categories of information rather than keeping old categories. This skill includes opening to new information, taking more than one perspective, and understanding personal ways of interpreting messages and situations.

Tolerance for ambiguity: the ability to maintain focus in situations that are not clear rather than becoming anxious and to methodically determine the best approach as the situation evolves. Generally, low-tolerance individuals look for information that supports their beliefs while high-tolerance individuals look for information that gives an understanding of the situation and others.

Behavioural flexibility: the ability to adapt and accommodate behaviours to a different culture. Although knowing a second language could be important for this skill, it does not necessarily translate into cultural adaptability. The individual must be willing to assimilate the new culture.

Cross-cultural empathy: the ability to visualise with the imagination the situation of another person from an intellectual and emotional point of view. Demonstrating empathy includes the abilities of connecting emotionally with people, showing compassion, thinking in more than one perspective, and listening actively.

Although its goal is to promote understanding between groups of individuals that, as a whole, think differently, it may fail to recognise specific differences between individuals of any given group. Such differences can be more significant than the differences between groups, especially in the case of heterogeneous populations and value systems. In other words, we still have to remember diversity and inclusion even as we generalise populations in our cultural competency.

6.

The EPRG model was developed by Howard Perlmutter and colleagues in the 1970s as a way to understand how international businesses evolved in host countries. It outlines four stages which we'll view with the added lens of employee networks.

Ethnocentric or "nation-centered" organisations believe that they'll succeed if they transfer their people, processes, and values to the location that they have expanded into. In network terms this can include governance models, success metrics, and strategies. This means there is little room initially for decentred networks to innovate or evolve according to their own needs.

Polycentrism often appears when the organisation recognises that this "one fit for all" approach is not succeeding in a new country, but HQ doesn't necessarily understand why. They start to realise that local talent may have techniques which work better for their environment and culture and appoint local managers. It signals a stronger emphasis on diversity which networks should be able to both support and take advantage of as a business case.

Regiocentrism occurs when there are several working locations within one country. Networks are likely to have seen this emerge strongly post COVID now there's been an overall increase in various patterns of home-working. Similarly to Polycentrism there is an acknowledgement that working styles and expectations will vary more than if everyone is gathered in a head office. For networks this means more asynchronous work, better communication, and fewer centralised events. For some networks it will also affect their strategy as they have to account for rural

versus metropolitan cultures.

For Geocentric organisations it shouldn't matter who you are or where you're from. On the one hand it appears to be a model of inclusion and provides a vision for recruitment. On the other, it seems to ignore the cultural differences that make diversity so important. The most useful way for networks to consider Geocentrism is to think about the language used. The key point is that they don't refer to HQs, satellite locations, or main networks. Every cog in the machine is spoken about equally. The same values and considerations are understood globally, but everyone has the power to enact them without seeking permission.

As a network you might consider where your organisation sits on these approaches, and then what approach you are taking, or intend to develop, with your network. Does it match your organisation, or challenge it?

7.

Once you've secured your own network, identified key stakeholders to expand into other locations, and considered what kind of approach you take to localisation, it may be helpful to formalise any network roles which have a global reach, including your own.

We'll go straight into an example.

Jane has been the leader of her national gender network for two years and has accepted the opportunity to create a more globally aligned approach for the several gender networks that exist within her organisation. Her first task was to find a local successor, as she would not have time to lead both efforts. While she was working with her deputy chair to prepare them for the role, she considered how other locations have defined the leadership role, and taken the opportunity to make personal connections with them all. This was also the time when she explained that HR had encouraged her to develop a global network, and she'd be seeking their input for how they think it would affect what they do.

While some countries believed they already had a strong team and strategy and were nervous about new directions being imposed on them, other countries had struggled to find resources and welcomed the opportunity to receive more centralised support. Jane realised that a single approach would not work for all networks, and so her role in the first year would not be to create a global strategy that the other networks would apply, but to develop resources and communication channels to support local networks where they needed it. She noted that her vision for year two would be to take a more geocentric approach in how all the networks will face their organisational challenges together.

In another example, a global third sector organisation has several "cultural background" networks. While some of their other networks like gender and LGBT+ had appointed global leaders, they felt it wouldn't be appropriate to have any single country be the HQ cultural background leader, no matter how inclusive their behaviour. This meant that as they defined the role, by its nature, it had to be a committee comprising several different locations. It also meant that for individuals it required less of their time, and so they can maintain a role on their national networks too. The global network, for them, was an opportunity to gain greater understanding of cultural nuance by office location, and to workshop ideas for how that can be communicated back on a local level. They did not attempt to form a global narrative as such, more a travel guide to working in different environments, and tips on how to welcome people into your office

from different locations.

The global role can be as varied as any network strategy. The important thing is to consider the impact you want to have first of all, before defining the responsibilities that come with it.

8.

Regional networks have often been an afterthought, as organisations often centred their social efforts on a central office, usually within a city. But that got turned on its head during global lockdowns as workers everywhere found a new empathy for the isolation of working apart from the main hub. And so many regional approaches have evolved to focus on decentralisation through online engagement.

This has emerged as channels of communication, book and article reading groups, guest speakers, speed networking, cooking classes, and safe space networks to name a few. We've seen that this has helped to maintain community and provide wellbeing support, but it also raises opportunities to continue this decentralised approach in a post covid world. How do we resist going back to events that only happen in a head office in the evening - now that we understand more about rural workers, carer and parental challenges, access needs, and people who can't fully be themselves at home.

Answering these questions for your specific organisational needs can help form your regional network action plan. In particular, how does your budget spend, if any, demonstrate that you are regional and not centralised. The same is true of your committee structure and active network engagement.

For example one LGBT+ network in a bank resolved to spend a year focusing more on members who lived in towns, which mostly accounted for their customer-facing employees, rather than in the cities, which represented people working within the core of the business, but with little customer interaction. They offered some budget to several locations which supported smaller Pride efforts, and withdrew their network from the capital's main event. The broader visibility this had for their network, particularly among customers, led to a much more diverse spread of conversations, which they were able to offer as anecdotal research back to the network leaders, and central organisation.

9.

The key to going global or regional is to empower local stakeholders. So let's run through some tips for how we can improve our chances that it will stick.

We probably say this a lot, but explain your "why's". As ever it's important to take the time to explain to your stakeholders why you've arrived at the place you are. When you offer a committee structure for example, don't take for granted they believe it's for the best, explain why it's one you've adopted, how it benefits you, and maybe what else you tried before you settled on the one you have. What is your approach to budget? Does everyone get their own equal pot, or is it based on a project by project basis so that the global team can look for synergy and collaboration opportunities?

When you've set your own position, take time to understand why the local situation might be

different. There is bound to be some element that doesn't quite sit right, whether it's the language used, hierarchies or flat structures, the technology used, etc. The reason you'll want to discuss this so early on is because it shows that you acknowledge that they'll do things a little differently, and you're behind that, as long as you understand why.

And to the third tip, build trust. One of the ways trust is built is by giving away power. By setting this as a collaboration rather than a managerial structure they should feel like you've opened up a respectful line of communication. You should also be true to your word, so think carefully about how much of your time and availability you promise. Typically global leaders say they'll be there for support, but the practicality of consulting on 20 events plans, mentoring sessions, strategies and monthly committee meetings isn't practical. So don't over-promise and be clear on your boundaries and resources.

That said, if you can be invited in to their space it gives a clearer picture of how things are operating on a local level. This is the difference between a manager setting up a meeting so they can review your progress, and being invited to a workshop by a colleague because they value your opinion. So look for those opportunities where you can.

In any networked structure there will be some messiness, it's part of maintaining individualism. Think ahead about how you have dealt with that in other situations. Are you someone who thrives in uncertainty, or are you more drawn to predictable behaviours. Imagine a time when a local network might go against the advice of the global council - how will you react and why? Running through these scenarios will help you plan your communication style so that it can be productive.

And finally, don't forget to show gratitude. As global leaders you have the opportunity to push for more reward and recognition. Will this be planned and transparent, reactive, or random?

10.

As with any effort that goes beyond your core network members, you have the opportunity to diversify the stories that build up a picture of your workforce, their challenges, and the opportunities your organisation has for inclusive innovation.

In this example, a global network took on the role of curating the narrative for its wellbeing networks. Leaders in different locations took it in turns to profile each other, in an ongoing chain that recognised their contributions and rewarded them through recognition. The Singapore wellbeing leader interviewed the Australian leader, the Australian leader interviewed the Japanese leader and so on. While they all came under the global network of "wellbeing" they had different key actions depending on the experiences of the local members. In Japan, at the time, there was a lot of focus on physical health in the workplace, while in Australia they were campaigning to get people to talk more about mental health.

Not only does this help you global membership to understand the concerns of other locations and encourage international empathy, it offers alternative communities that are available throughout the organisation. For example if someone from the Japan office wanted to hear more about mental health, which wasn't a current focus in their locale, they could seek out members in Australia. You may find that some subjects translate easily with only a little local nuance, but for others the global narrative is of vital importance.

Global LGBT+ networks for example often have to consider the legal status in different locations. While western networks may be campaigning for equal parental policies, other countries are faced with much stronger persecution. This means that when you talk about the successes of your global network you should think about benchmarking it against the most vulnerable in your community, as tempting as it might be to showcase your own best practice and big wins. By all means celebrate that, but be aware of when you're telling a local story, or a global one.

11.

If you want to consider the impact of running a global network in more detail you may want to research more about globalisation. This refers to the opening-up of trade and culture across national boundaries. For some people this brings the benefits of cheap goods and services that they wouldn't otherwise have, like food, while others may see the negative effects this has on local farmers being underpaid to ship to foreign markets. Some people enjoy the richness of experiencing other cultures through international movies and music, while others feel their identity is threatened as it becomes appropriated and commodified.

This gets to the heart of global networks, identities, strategies, and intersectionality - maintaining individualism, while removing barriers to opportunity. Promoting equality, while resisting an homogenous set of values. Globalisation 101 by the Levin Institute is a useful resource in your further reading if you'd like to examine this through the lens of trade and culture.

For networks the dominant force of globalisation is often driven from the organisation's headquarters. The challenge is not to simply bring outsiders into your place of comfort, but to make productive network connections and communication channels between different locales and attitudes. For example, we've seen recent examples where the global network leaders send useful information on black history month to their local leaders, along with event plans and budget so they can join in. The problem being that in the US and Canada that's February, in the UK and Netherlands it's October, and Black Awareness Day is on November 20th in Brazil. There are many heritage months that are celebrated differently around the world, and with different priorities and visibilities depending on their demographics; so it doesn't make sense for this agenda to be driven from the perspective of one country. A global network would provide a framework and support for locations to plan and deliver their own celebrations, in keeping with the globally agreed organisational mission.

This kind of oversight is an example of egocentric bias, and we'll look more at the various biases that affect our decisions in the next module.

INTERVIEWS VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

Names

Commentary

CH Have you had any thoughts around how you might ensure that kind of cohesive approach whilst recognising, for example, Saudi Arabia, the local differences, cultural differences?

KB Yeah. Massive, massive ... and I think it's just being mindful of that constantly. You know, so even silliest things like, when we were looking at names, so we are the Gender Equality Network we'd shorten it to GEN. One of the names we were looking at was the Gender Inclusive Network which would have been GIN and obviously, in Saudi Arabia, they don't drink alcohol so we thought Well actually is that the right name? Is that an inclusive name that we should be using? And we decided not to and that's why we chose GEN in the end. And lots of things that we talk about so lots of events that we run, especially in partnerships with different networks as well so we collaborate with our Outlink UK which is our LGBTQ+ network and we schedule those for a Friday because Saudi Arabia, they're obviously working weeks is different to ours and Friday is a weekend because, with the cultural differences around that, we're just very mindful of it.

CH That's super interesting. So is that ... maybe you don't know but ... so is that the reason, having that on the Friday is to enable those LGBTQ+ colleagues to join from the privacy of their own home or ...?

KB Yeah, either the privacy of their own home ... or because, when we would be doing campaigns or communications or engagement sessions, actually in Saudi there's, you know, a legal aspect to it as well. So, rather than completely not including them, we just do it so it is more of an inclusive way to do it.

CT At a global level, that becomes more complicated again, particularly because of the different cultural aspects, attitudes to mental health. But what's been really good about it actually is how much I think we're learning from each other. So I'd ... if I'm honest, I'd historically saw the US as being a poor example of kind of how to look after mental health. I know that they're kind of ... I just couldn't survive on five days' annual leave a year – those sorts of things – and they are much more, I think, there is still, I think, stigma is perhaps higher there ... and so we've been able to share a lot of the work that we've done in the UK around kind of encouraging open conversations, getting leadership involved to really role model. But what we've learned from then is that actually, in the US, they have a much more proactive approach to health management. So we have different healthcare providers through our insurance scheme and theirs is very much ... so they get Headspace membership and gym discounts because it's about being preventative and, in the UK, we have incredible support if something goes wrong but not very much to stop you from getting there. So it's been really interesting to learn about those differences and try and work out how we can bring the best of both approaches to each other. And, of course, we're not just US – we've also got some offices in the Nordic regions who, again, have some really fantastic examples of how to ... but then again it's much more integrated wellbeing and they have a much ... I would say, healthier approach around kind of work/life balance. So it's ... how do we do it? We take ... we allow ... we empower people to tailor to their requirements, to their local requirements, but we also encourage them to come together and share best practice and ideas.

AS So it can be different, right, and I think that the best way to look at it is just to keep an ongoing dialogue with whoever is setting the strategy at a global level - whether

that's HR, whether that's the business or whether it's an overarching ERG – and really try to understand what is the strategy and where ... what's the objective and, depending on that, of course, the partnership between trying to understand what the local requirements are, the external context can vary significantly depending on which market you are in. Some markets it's ... might not be the right thing to do at this stage or do the same priority that you would have, for example, you know, something in China might be completely different than a priority in the US and so I would say that, if I would have advice, and I think it's something we do quite well these days, is to really have those ongoing dialogues. However, I do believe in the fact that, if you're trying to do something, it has to be aligned with business strategy ... but you can achieve that in a way that's still relevant in the local practice but, if you want that support and that senior executive sponsorship, whatever you name it, you need to show what the added value is from a business perspective. So the strongest case I think you can make is linking it to the business strategy – whether that's a global strategy or a local strategy – and make sure that the objective of what you're trying to reach is aligned as possible and, the way to do that is by having ongoing dialogues and looking at it as a partnership. That would be my advice.

PK Yeah, I think, not much for the wheel but I think it's just connection, constant engagement and keeping each and everyone informed and being transparent in communication. And I say being transparent in communication, let's see if there is any global toolkit coming, if there is any new, you can say I am the piece that is being curated so sharing and informing and the knowledge sharing and informing each other on how we are moving forward what are your inputs on that? So that constant input taking, feedback, sharing are the three elements I should say which brings the teams together and keeps up the pace and, coming back to your, thinking from the question perspective, when we think about different ERGs also, the objective and the vision is the same. The vision when I see is more about, you know, creating an inclusive mindset and, when we talk about inclusive mindset, there are different portions to that so it may be influenced by, you know, having this ... creating this safe zone within the company, it can be created by, you know, acceptability of different cultures; it can also be created by, you know, respecting the people with ... or maybe accepting the people with different abilities and different genders. So I think there are different portions of things that are playing a role here but it's just coming together and cross-pollination of information.

VF What's your best advice, I guess, with engaging locally whilst keeping the company-wide strategic approach to your network?

PF I think for ... for my network it's fairly easy because of the structure of the company. So the global work is done by the Culture & Inclusion team and we have a global Comms person who will make sure that all of that global stuff is being managed. So my focus is to make sure that I'm connecting with communities across the globe rather than creating for global content. Now what that means is that I have a really close relationship with Georgia, I have a really close relationship with Arthi, and the work that I'm doing, we can then reformat to be able to apply it to a global space. But I think the thing that I would say is, even though you're working within a global ... within a global company, the stories are still very local and the people are still very local and the communities are local, the friendships are local so keeping that in mind and maybe trying not to remove yourself from that too much because actually the goodness is in those local communities and all you've got to do is help give them a platform to be able to promote the work that they're doing. And that's how I see my role so if I can find a group or a set of people or a person who has something really wonderful to share or wants to talk about

a particular thing, and I can give them a stage to do that, then I give myself a pat on the back (laughs).

FJ How do you ensure that there's that cohesive approach but whilst recognising there's local differences and you may need to influence your local leaders?

EC Yeah, so we have got a Global Diversity & Inclusion governance model which holds people accountable, in particular, roles. Now we've got the structure is we have a Global Diversity & Inclusion Advisory Group which has representation across every region. Now, that will be someone from HR and someone who is very passionate about D&I. It might be a lead on a particular network and they will sit on this advisory group where they can feedback on local differences. They can feedback into the global strategy and where it might not work across different regions. Now, within our particular networks, for example, the way that this works is that we've got four global networks and those four global networks have global leads that will focus on those international days or those global reviews or those global processes and then they will have a regional leader that sits within that function that will look on the ground. So there might be a date that we want to recognise that isn't recognised on the globe and it's only recognised within a region. They'll also be very knowledgeable in the local nuances and legislation and they can touch base with that advisory group on the ground and it means that they've got the power to influence and adapt any local initiatives to be aligned with those local differences.

2020-21 Collection

Names	Commentary
CH	What would be your best advice on engaging locally whilst keeping a company-wide approach to your network?
PS	Yes ... so on this ... and I can't remember whether it was before or after the training ... it might have (laughing) ... I can't remember ... it was setting a framework so ... using what we've done in the UK as a sort of framework ... model saying like this is ... these are our ... this is our glo ... this is what we believe is our global feeling about what Real You means. These are our sort of non-negotiables; these are the key areas we look at; in the UK these are our key areas so I almost did a slide deck that they could put their own bits in so it would have this is ... this is the strategy from the parent company; this is the strategy of our company; this is the Real You layer on those ... which is backed up by the Stonewall ... Equality Index criteria. So that's their framework basically so anything you do locally aligned to this ... this is what we do in the UK and we would suggest this might work for you here in this way ... so if I expand that into a bit more ... not into ... say, Botswana for

example, it's probably not worth them ... trying to push ... bi and trans ... issues and ... and understanding when ... a lot of their colleagues (laughs) and population still struggle with L&G (laughing) and so obviously the focus area there is different. They will get our global communications about all the other types of events throughout the year ... but obviously they have some different issues they need to address. Likewise with ... our, sort of, race and ... cultural background networks. We haven't launched those as much in the other countries yet but it's something we're looking at for next year ... but, in the UK obviously it's a bit more ... and the US ... we'd be a bit more ... people of colour versus white, if you like, whereas, in Namibia for example, the focus would be on tribalism and things like that ... or country of origin in Botswana and South Africa where, you know, if you're from a Zimbabwean background, you ... you might be subject to more discrimination than if you were local ... so ... yeah, from that point of view, we've got that, sort of, general global ... promotion of those networks and what they stand for but ... the local networks doing their own thing aligned to that in some way ... in different ways and in different ... concentration.

The other key one, what I mentioned earlier, the ... so we have global network sponsors who are generally UK based because they're sort of board members ... so the idea of having local ... sponsors was key and ideally, as I said earlier, the ... then those people also being local people ... the local population can identify with rather than being ex-pat or foreign ... leads ... especially on the more contentious issues like LGBT in certain countries. Having a clear visible leader locally who is from that country was fairly key to us to get that network launched.

FJ How do you think the delivery of your strategy for your network varies by location? So what sort of different priorities or events are you seeing happening?

PA So I think ... at the moment, particularly in the US, I think ... so again to give a bit of background is the US group was formed in the wake of ... and it's a shame it had to be like this ... in the wake of the George Floyd murder ... which took place in 2020. And so what happened was, you know, us in the UK ... we ... we decided OK, we want to kind of show our support. We want to respond to that so we set up what's called the Loud and Clear Series which is basically a discussion forum. It's an open and honest discussion forum where ... members of the board – our CEO even joined it – and members of the workforce would share their stories and their experiences, their lived experiences of racial discrimination so ... we put it out there to our US colleagues. We reached out to the managing director there. He put an ad out to say ... they're organising this event. Does anyone in the US ... are you interested in ... in speaking? We had three people ... three people come forward and they shared their stories and those three people are

now the chairs of the US network. So ... but I think what's been happening going forward is the events they've been doing, they've been relating it to ... sort of the ongoing issues of, you know, Police brutality and ... how ... how that works so ... which is just very different to the UK and they're having, you know, there's been, you know, a couple of new murders that have been happening and they did some discussions around that and what are the issues that are happening there. But they also look at ... perhaps, you know, certain books, certain literature, certain education, perhaps certain films ... that ... and they're having sort of book clubs, film clubs ... so that again I think things that happen in the US, even the laws in the US, are just very different to the UK and that's why that's what's shaping it slightly differently for them. But, you know, there are moments in the year when we will ... we will collaborate. For example, we've got the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination which is taking place in March and we'll look to do a like a joint, kind of, panel event where we can have people from the UK and the US on that panel, for example.

- FJ You're getting different networks in different geographies. Is there any ... rationale behind that or is that where you're just getting more interest and noise?
- ALH Well, we've tried over ... over the past three years ... as I mentioned, we've already got really strong networks in the US ... we've tried to expand and extend some of those networks geographically to ... to be more global encompassing ... and as we've done that, I would say it hasn't really landed how we had hoped or how we would intend and they just haven't gotten off the ground. So, in the US for example, we have our ... African American network. We have our Women's Impact network as well. And as we try and extend those into different geographies, our people are saying they don't really feel like the right things for us to focus on. So what we've tried to do in ... in each of our countries is look to the external market and understand what is working in the defence and aerospace sector or in other sectors within those countries ... and that's why, in the UK, Canada and Australia, we're taking an approach around gender balance, for example, rather than women's impact and that's because what we're hearing back is it's really important that we think about how we authentically involve men in the gender based conversation. And we still probably are going to spend 80% of our time thinking about the same things that a women's impact network is thinking about in the US, you know – how do we make sure that we're bringing more women into our organisation? How do we help with career development? But I think we might also spend 20% of our time thinking about, you know, what are the unique issues and challenges that men are facing in business? So things like access to mental health support. We know that, in most of our countries, men have a disproportionate experience of mental health – and also how

might we help men understand what parental leave opportunities are on the table? Because fundamentally across the globe we're still seeing women take up most of the responsibility of home-working, looking after children for example and, unless men play a role and more of a part in the homelife, I think it's going to be a challenge for opposite sex couples to have more of a balance in the workplace for ... for women, for example.

So, trying to be driven by the local market and ... and doing that is just by nature changing the networks that we focus on.

FJ What is the value of networks? Why do you have them?

MFP Well ... we have ... networks at NatWest Group because we understand that it's important to provide a culture where people who are likeminded or ... celebrate their difference ... can find a community that they can sit happily within. We also find that it really encourages people to feel more connected to the business and it gives people an opportunity to showcase their ability to run events, to understand current conversations ... so ... and put them on, so they get really good ... exposure to our senior leaders so it's ... it's very much for us a win/win situation. If we didn't have networks, I think our business wouldn't be as successful as it is because we understand, from all the surveys that we get back, that people feel really grounded by the knowledge that we have the Sikh network, we have the LGBTQ network, you know, the women's network ... and we are just now opening a new network for people of colour in the US. Following the death of George Floyd, there was a ... a request made into us that they would like to have that network and we've agreed to it because that, again, is about people feeling within the business - my voice is heard; I have somewhere to go and we can discuss things; we can take it then to our leaders and people feel really represented.

FJ Oh, that's interesting and ... and so your ... you, personally, and your team put together a quarterly newsletter that you say goes out to the network leadership that informs really? Is that correct? Giving them information about what's going on in your business and what's going on in terms ...

[overtalking]

HA Yeah, absolutely ... yeah we ... we try to ... so, I personally ... put that newsletter together. It goes out to all of my co-chairs globally as well so it's in the US, the UK and Asia Pacific ... and it's just to make sure that they are informed about anything that's happening externally from a D&I perspective but then also from a strategy perspective so other things

that we think as valuable for them to know. And then they can use that to then, you know, continue the activity moving forward.