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on Social Inclusion,
Participatory Democracy
and Human Rights

**Inclusive Cities
Observatory**

Promoting equality and fighting racism in London¹

This narrative is one out of 15 that were originally developed in 2007 as part of a project on innovative policies for social inclusion jointly developed by the Development Planning Unit (DPU), University College London with the Committee on Social Inclusion and Participatory Democracy (CSIPD) of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG). This narrative was complemented and edited in 2010 by the Centre for Social Studies, Coimbra University (CES), to a standard format for the Observatory on Social Inclusion and Participatory Democracy.

Name of the policy: GLA Initiatives to promote anti-racism, including the Race Equality Scheme, the Gender Equality Scheme, the Disability Equality Scheme, and the Sexual Orientation Equality Scheme

Start date: 2000

Completion date: Ongoing

¹ The **Inclusive Cities Observatory** is a space for analysis and reflection on local social inclusion policies. It contains over sixty case studies on innovative policies for community development, access to basic services, gender equality, environmental protection and the eradication of poverty, among others. The initiative has been developed with the scientific support of Prof. Yves Cabannes from the University College of London (15 case studies) and a team of researchers from the Centre for Social Studies (CES) at the University of Coimbra, which has worked under the supervision of Prof. Boaventura de Sousa Santos (50 study cases). This Observatory aims to identify and investigate successful experiences that might inspire other cities to design and implement their own social inclusion policies.

The **Inclusive Cities Observatory** has been created by the Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights of UCLG. United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) is the global platform that represents and defends the interests of local governments before the international community and works to give cities more political influence on global governance. The **Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights** aims to contribute to building a common voice for the cities of UCLG in the areas of social inclusion, participatory democracy and human rights. It also aims to guide local governments in designing these policies and to that end, fosters political debates, the exchange of experiences and peer learning among cities around the world.

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CONTEXT

GOVERNMENTAL AND SOCIAL CONTEXT

London: A global city with global inequalities

London is not simply the capital of the United Kingdom but a 'global' city, with an estimated total population of more than 7 million people. London produces a wealth comparable to that of many national economies and it attracts high levels of foreign investment and a large number of tourists from all over the world. London is also the most ethnically diverse city in Europe, 'with a population that encompasses 300 languages, over 150 countries represented and 14 faiths practised' (GLA 2007: 3).

This picture suggests a successful story of local development and urban diversity. However, London is also a city of social exclusion and inequalities. In Inner London there are areas with high levels of deprivation. Groups defined by traditional axes of inequality, including race and ethnicity, experience higher levels of poverty, unemployment, and ill health (GLA 2007). London has a 39% rate of child poverty (the highest of any city or region in Great Britain), which goes up to 52% in Inner London. In the winter of 2004/05, 31% of the working age population in London was unemployed, compared with the average 25% rate of the whole country. If we consider London's high housing costs, figures show that 36% of pensioners in Inner London are living in poverty, compared with 25% nationally and 21% in Outer London.

If we look deeper into data on poverty and social exclusion and disaggregate them by race/ethnicity and nationality we discover an even more worrying situation. The Black Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities are particularly affected: 69% and 51% of children in London from Bangladeshi and Pakistani groups and Black groups, respectively, live in poverty, in comparison with an average of 39% for the whole city. Unemployment rates are twice as high for BAME groups as for White groups. Bangladeshi, Pakistani, and Black African households are at least five times more likely to live in overcrowded housing than White British households. Average earnings of BAME groups were 21% lower than those of white groups in 2004 and 30% of BAME employees were earning less than £7 per hour, compared with 18% of white groups. BAME households are overrepresented among the numbers of statutorily homeless. In London in 2004/05, 32% of households accepted by local authorities as homeless were of African or Caribbean origin, 11% of Asian origin, and 13% of other ethnic origin. In general, people from BAME groups are more likely to assess their own health as poor than White groups. They are also more likely to report a long-term limiting illness. While educational attainment has been improving steadily in London, particularly in Inner London, Black pupils – especially boys – are below average in educational attainment.

London's inequalities have been the target of equality policy enacted by the Greater London Authority (GLA). Since its establishment in 2000, the GLA has assumed coordinating functions vis-à-vis the 32 London boroughs, with four specific areas of competence: police, transport, fire, and strategic planning. The Greater London Authority Act of 1999 provides that the GLA performs



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its functions and implement policies respecting equality of opportunities (GLA 2006: 8). The target and beneficiaries of GLA's equality policy have been the city's ethnic and religious communities, lesbians, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people, people with disabilities, elderly people, and youth, among others. As part of this policy, equality schemes have been approved (e.g. the Race Equality Scheme, the Gender Equality Scheme, the Disability Equality Scheme, and the Sexual Orientation Equality Scheme).

This small case study introduces the design, implementation, and impact of GLA's equality policy between 2002 and 2007 under the mayoralty of Ken Livingstone. Official GLA reports on the equality schemes and the state of inequalities in London provided the information on the policy and the background information against which the impact of the policy has been assessed. The following section explores the main features of the policy, while the last section provides a final assessment of the policy and elaborates on its replicability.

Institutional level of policy development: Municipal / metropolitan region

COMPREHENSIVE NARRATIVE

In this section, GLA's equality policy is explored in relation to some specific issues: its focus and participatory elements, the promotion of cultural diversity, action for social and economic equality, and its outcomes and impacts. Particular emphasis is placed on racial and ethnic equality, highlighting the specific anti-racist elements of the policy and GLA's efforts to promote the economic and social integration of London's racial and ethnic communities.

Policy objectives

Equality is a value that the GLA aims to promote and integrate in all city policies by tackling different and intersectional forms of discrimination. According to the Mayor's Equalities Vision, which in turn is part of the Mayor's Vision for London, the GLA should be (re)conceived as a champion in promoting equality and diversity, challenging and eradicating discrimination, providing responsive and accessible services for Londoners, and ensuring the GLA's workforce reflects the diverse population of London (GLA 2006: 8). As part of this vision, the GLA aims to promote initiatives against racism.

In this respect, London's international and multicultural character is seen as an asset of the city: a character that needs to be preserved and defended through the implementation of anti-racist activities. A further input for the anti-racist focus of the GLA's anti-racist policy comes from London's substantial engagement with the European Coalition of Cities against Racism (ECCAR), a UNESCO initiative to establish a network of cities interested in sharing experiences in order to improve their policies to fight racism, discrimination, and xenophobia. ECCAR has a ten-point action plan for cities fighting racism.



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Participatory processes implemented

The participation of the city's communities and other groups and civil society organisations is a characterizing element of GLA's equality policy. However, participation is not structured as to involve directly all the members of the groups suffering from social exclusion and targeted by the policy: it is mediated by organisations that aim to represent the interests of these groups. The approach followed by the GLA is to engage with the most representative organisations, relying on a database of over 5000 contacts reflecting London's diversity and key representative groups.

A programme of stakeholder engagement has been enacted, which involves many of the city's communities, including its racial/ethnic and/or national minorities such as the BAME groups, Africans, Turkish and Kurdish speaking communities, Polish, Latin Americans, London's traveller and gypsy community, and Irish communities. In addition, London's faith communities, LGBT communities, women and women's organisations, older people, trade unions, and students have been involved. This programme facilitates open dialogue on mayoral policies and priorities and enables Londoners to inform the Mayor's office of the issues affecting their communities. In turn, BAME and other media (e.g. lesbian and gay press) are used as an effective way of communicating with Londoners and the city's various communities.

Promoting (cultural) diversity

As part of the equality schemes supporting different communities, a number of initiatives have been promoted. Many of these efforts aim to raise awareness of ethnic and national diversity and to fight racism. A number of events, receptions, seminars, and conferences have focused on policy and cultural outcomes for different communities in London, for example: Simcha on the Square, State of Race Equality, London Schools and the Black Child, and New Roz reception, among others. The conference 'A World Civilisation or a Clash of Civilisations?', hosted by the mayor, was inspired by the increasing diversity of the city and the recent immigration of Polish and African people. Publications and reports relating to policy issues or specific communities have also been developed to provide more robust information on these communities and their needs, and as a method of raising awareness of their contribution. Support for large-membership Black, Asian, and other minority ethnic organisations have offered opportunities for specific work on anti-racism activities and support events and processes to celebrate the contribution of different communities in London through positive engagement.

London's festivals and other major public events are intended as further occasions to promote equality and inter-community dialogue. Amongst these, the annual *Rise: London United* festival is attended by around 80,000 people and is a free anti-racist festival to oppose racism and celebrate the diversity of London. In addition, key cultural and religious events reflecting London's diversity are supported such as Diwali, Vaisaikhi, Russian Winter Festival, Chinese New Year, St Patrick's Day parade and festival, Carnival Del Pueblo, Pride, and Liberty Arts Festival, among others. These events celebrate the contribution of each community to the city's multicultural fabric, raise awareness of differences amongst Londoners, promote good community relations, and contribute to anti-racist initiatives.



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London's role and position in the global economy has also provided the occasion for highlighting and valuing the multicultural composition of the city. Initiatives supporting London's relationship with key emerging economies – India, China, Russia, and Latin America – have provided a focus for engaging London's diverse communities and raising awareness amongst Londoners, for example, through arts and cultural events such as the China in London Season, India Now, and the Russian Winter Festival. Existing international relationships with London's Partnership Cities – New York, Berlin, Moscow, Tokyo, and Paris – and its Friendship Cities – Delhi, Dhaka, Dublin, Johannesburg, and Kingston – provide a range of opportunities to showcase London's diversity.

Fighting social and economic inequalities

Specific mayoral initiatives target economic and social inequalities affecting Londoners and the city's communities. These measures are undertaken through the mayor's agencies for economic development (London Development Agency) and transport (Transport for London). A large part of these initiatives aim to include women and BAME in the city's economic development by emphasizing the economic value of diversity, as testified also by the *Diversity Works for London* campaign (which promotes the benefits of a diverse workforce and supplier base). Most of them support the employment and employability of women and members of minorities. The London Development Agency skills development programmes, for example, aim to improve employment opportunities for disadvantaged groups. Other programmes of this type ensure that women and BAME communities derive equal benefit from the Olympic legacy, including access to training, employment, contracts, and volunteering opportunities. An initiative has also been implemented which promotes diversity and equality with London's businesses by providing tools and advice to support progress in these areas. The employment of women and BAME in specific positions is also promoted, both in the city's public sector (as policepersons and bus drivers) and in the private sector (as taxi drivers).

A smaller part of these mayoral initiatives promotes women- and BAME-led businesses in the areas of public procurement and contracts. These include, for example, the supplier diversity programmes to increase the proportion of city contracts going to companies owned by minority groups, and supporting the living wage campaign and ensuring fair terms and conditions in public contracts.

In addition to economic inclusion, another group of mayoral initiatives aims to foster social inclusion by providing (facilitated access to) general services and affordable housing. These initiatives address disadvantages experienced by Londoners on the basis of age and (low) income. Some of these initiatives are family-friendly policies: for example, a childcare support programme has been implemented to assist lower income parents who need child care provision to enable them to work. Finally, a number of measures have been adopted to support access to public transport: youth under 16 travel for free, while half-price public transport fares are offered to Londoners on low incomes.

A promising and expanding area of GLA's intervention in support of equality is health. Under the government's Greater London Authority Bill, the Mayor will be given new duties to promote a reduction in health inequalities and prepare a statutory health inequalities strategy, in addition to



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his existing duty to promote health. The health inequalities strategy will provide an overarching framework for supporting equality in health, directly addressing those factors that have the greatest impact on health inequalities in London. It will also identify how other mayoral strategies can contribute to the reduction of health inequalities. Commitments by the mayor which have an impact on health inequalities in London include: improving the health of Londoners by developing partnership programmes to address a range of communities' needs (for example, contributing to GLA-led work on refugee health) and a range of specific health issues of particular relevance to London (for example, sexual health); providing ongoing leadership, coordination, and support for the work of the Greater London Alcohol and Drugs Alliance; providing ongoing leadership, coordination, and support for the African and Caribbean Mental Health Commission; providing comparative data to identify geographical and/or community-based inequalities and priorities for action (for example, annual *Health in London* reports, the *Highs and Lows* report on drugs, and the evidence base for the Agenda for Action on Alcohol).

Agents involved

Partners in the implementation of the policy: London's diverse communities, public services, trade unions, community and voluntary sectors, and local, city, national and international governments

Beneficiaries

The main target and beneficiaries of the policy are national, racial, and ethnic groups, including Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME), but also women, people with disabilities, and the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community.

Financing

Mainstreamed approach throughout the GLA Group – resources of the Authority

Key results and achievements

Official documents report very positive cultural, economic, and social impacts from GLA's equality policy on the city and the communities and groups targeted by the policy and its equality schemes. London has become more receptive of differences. On the one hand, all hate crime categories recorded reductions in year 2006/07 and there was a fall of 11.9% from 2005/06 in racist crimes. In 2006, the Metropolitan Police recorded 9976 racist incidents. On the other hand, the Annual London Survey of 2006 found London's cultural diversity is enjoyed by 83% of people in the capital and 69% believe there are good relations between different racial, ethnic, and religious communities. Taken together, all these data show an increased acceptance of differences by Londoners, which challenges concerns expressed by many that multiculturalism has failed. At least in London, and arguably also with the contribution of GLA's equality schemes, multiculturalism still appears a valuable way of viewing and organizing society.

The promotion and defence of multiculturalism in London has arguably paved the way to concrete achievements in employment and education. Concerning employment, between 2001 and 2005 there has been an overall increase in jobs of 8.5% (from 56.4% to 64.9%) and 5.8% (from 45.4% to 51.2%) for respectively BAME groups and women. In 2005/06, record numbers of BAME recruits joined the Metropolitan Police Service, increasing the proportion to 7.4% (the highest



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ever achieved), while the proportion of Police Community Support Officers from BAME groups was much higher at 35.4%.

Important results were also obtained in education, although BAME communities still experience some difficulties. Educational attainment has been improving steadily over these years, particularly in Inner London. However, Black pupils, especially boys, still lag behind in performance. Overall, between 2002 and 2006 the percentage of pupils attaining five or more A*-C grades in GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education) examinations went up in London from 47.6% to 57.4%. In this respect, the largest increase experienced by an ethnic group concerned Black Caribbeans: more than a 15 percentage point increase amongst pupils of this group occurred, from 28.8% in 2002 to 44.1% in 2006.

London's success in promoting anti-racism is dependent on several key factors. First, strong political leadership and strategic vision underpin the success of the policy, which positively celebrates diversity. They demonstrate zero tolerance to racism (non-discretionary enforcement policy for anti-discriminatory laws and regulations) and emphasize proving the economic case for promoting diversity and social inclusion. That the GLA's equality policy highlights and tackles the interdependences between cultural, social, and economic inequalities is certainly a qualifying element of the policy, which can be assumed to have contributed to its overall positive outcome.

Second, the GLA follows inclusive and well-informed programmes of engagement with a broad range of partners and stakeholders that fully reflect London's diversity and builds effective partnerships with central government and local government who are the main providers of services. To identify problems and inform solutions, the GLA has overseen the introduction of detailed monitoring mechanisms to provide robust data and research, including monitoring by race, gender, disability, age, faith, and sexual orientation.

Third, the sustainability of these policies is assured through the GLA's control over budgets of policing, transport, and skills to promote diversity and anti-racism in recruitment and service delivery. An active communication strategy enables delivery of the message to the general public and consultation with the public and key stakeholders. The GLA also shares good practice on an international basis, learning from other cities' successful policies.

Evaluation and replicability of the policy

The GLA's equality policy emerges from official reports as quite a successful best practice of fighting social exclusion by targeting the inequalities experienced by the members of many (racial and ethnic) communities and women living in London. A deeper investigation of this policy would certainly give us a more nuanced and detailed picture of its design, implementation, and impact. At this stage, and in broad terms, we can nevertheless suggest that GLA's equality policy has improved the life of minorities and women of London in many respects: the 'multiculturalisation' of the city's public services, the reduction in racist crimes, the improvement of attainment amongst Bangladeshi and Pakistani pupils, the diversification of the education sector, and the wider access for all Londoners to jobs, skills, housing, and equitable health outcomes. Of course, there



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have been obstacles on the way, such as the resistance by public services to change entrenched institutional attitudes and cultures, and difference in goals between the different partners of the policy. These are well-known issues emerging in any efforts to implement policies, including equality policies, whenever they place new and extra burdens on City departments and agencies. In order to reduce the impact of these problems, it is crucial that the policy is backed by strong mayoral support, as in the case of Livingstone, and clear commitment to mainstream equality across all policies and services implemented by the GLA. GLA's commitment to authentic communication and service delivery has also been crucial.

Starting from these premises, it is also possible to explore and reason on the very general conditions under which GLA's equality policy could be transferred and adapted in other cities in order to achieve the same goals. The fact that GLA's equality policy has been successful in London does not guarantee that it can be successfully replicated elsewhere. Some highly context-specific elements of GLA's policy can hardly be found in other cities. First, there is the size and global character of London and its economy. Second, one must consider the city's high degree of urban diversity, which includes both traditional communities from states belonging to the ex-colonies of the United Kingdom and 'new' migrant groups attracted by the richness and opportunities offered by the city. These communities and groups have different (urban) histories and are affected by different patterns of exclusion, eventually generated by the different legal status of their members. Third, the GLA is not a classic local government: it has the more limited competences of an over-arching and coordinating authority, notwithstanding its duty to respect and implement equality of opportunity.

All this suggests that local administrators who want to implement the same policy elsewhere should adapt it first to their local context. In many cases, they will have to downscale the policy to fit the needs of the much smaller population of a much smaller city. Eventually, this intervention may emphasize the more direct participation from women and members of the local minorities, including migrants, without the mediation of civil society organisations as in the case of GLA's equality policy. A more direct and wider participation of the members of the groups concerned with the policy would arguably contribute to the diffusion and elaboration of the city's multicultural values at a more personal and individual level.

Precisely London's 'multicultural' approach to the questions of diversity is another specific element of the policy which is part of the wider United Kingdom's approach to 'difference' and which, as such, may be absent in other cities. This approach implies that, for example, data on race and ethnicity can be legally collected for anti-discrimination and equality purposes. Other cities may have cultural traditions and be located in national environments that are reluctant to recognize differences and opt for integrationist approaches that emphasise the common adherence to universal (republican) values. In these contexts, the collection of data on minorities is regarded as suspicious and often not done at all. It may also be considered a violation of privacy rights.



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SUMMARY

The Greater London Authority (GLA) is the coordinating authority of London in the areas of police service, transport, fire, and strategic planning. Under the mayoralty of Ken Livingstone (2000-08), the GLA started its equality policy. The policy continues under the current mayor, Boris Johnson (updated information on the GLA's equality policy can be found at <http://www.london.gov.uk/priorities/equalities/vision-and-strategy-equal-life-chances-for-all>). Since the beginning, the aim of the policy has been the fight against cultural, social, and economic exclusion affecting London's minorities and women, in a strong intersectional perspective.

As such, the main target and beneficiaries of the policy have been national, racial, and ethnic groups including Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) and also women, people with disabilities, and the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community.

The case presented focuses on the Livingstone's era, emphasizing action in favour of race equality. The implementation of the policy involved the formal participation of the main policy stakeholders, including civil society organisations representing the target groups. Specific 'equality schemes' were approved by the GLA, which addressed race, disability, and sexual orientation amongst others. Several initiatives, including festivals and other types of events, were organized by the GLA in order to valorize the ethnic diversity and cosmopolitan character of the city including those within the framework of London's 'diverse' economic connections with countries such as Russia, China, and India. Other initiatives were implemented in collaboration with the GLA's local development and transport agencies.

If we consider data on (in)equalities contained in official GLA reports up to 2007, the GLA and its equality schemes appear to have been successful in improving at least some aspects of the life of (ethnic) minorities and women in the city. Some improvements concerned the acceptance of diversity in the city. The drop by 11.9% of racist crimes between 2005/06 and 2006/07 shows an increasingly receptive attitude of Londoners vis-à-vis racial and ethnic differences. The same attitude emerged also from the Annual London Survey of 2006. Other improvements regarded the social and economic conditions of minorities and women in London. Between 2001 and 2005, the employment rate of both groups and women experienced increased notably. Record numbers of members of the city's BAME communities were recruited by the Metropolitan Police Service. Notwithstanding these improvements, however, some problems remained. In the education sector, for example, the performance of Black pupils in secondary school remains relatively low, although differences emerge in this respect if we consider different communities.

Local administrators who want to replicate GLA's equality policy need to consider some specific characteristics of London which can hardly be found and replicated in other urban contexts and which arguably have had an impact on the design and outcome of equality policy: London's exceptional global character, its high degree of urban diversity, the multicultural tradition and legal framework within which the city is located, and the specific competences of a metropolitan



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government such as the GLA. Traditional local governments of smaller cities in countries with limited or no multicultural tradition should adapt (and eventually expand) the policy to fit their competences, rescale it, tailor it to the specific needs of its own communities and their different legal statuses (including migrants), and eventually opt for more direct forms of participation of members of minorities and women.

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Acknowledgements and credits

The narrative was written in 2007 by Yasar Adanali under the coordination and edition of Prof. Cabannes at the Development Planning Unit, University College London, UK.

All narratives compiled in 2007 including this one were revised by a DPU editorial committee composed of Ernesto Jose Lopez Morales, Sonia Roitman, Michelle Pletsch, Steffen Lajoie, Luisa Dornelas, Iyad Issa and Pechladda Pechpakdee.

The original text was edited to a standard CISDP Observatory format in 2010 by Dr. Michele Grigolo at the Centre for Social Studies at the Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra, Portugal.

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