

Architects of Meritocracy

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Architects of Meritocracy Social mobility at work

Employers can read between the lines

Creating a socially mobile workforce starts in the early years of life, writes *Michael Skapinker*

Any discussion of what employers can do to increase social mobility needs to begin with what they are up against. In several advanced societies, particularly the UK and US, mobility problems start long before young people get anywhere near a workplace. Poor young people in the UK and the US begin with many disadvantages, from poorer health to lack of

educational opportunities, which increase throughout their lives. It does not have to be this way. Other developed countries ensure far more of their young people have a chance of achieving good incomes and professional status. Examples include Nordic nations such as Denmark, Norway and Finland. While views of the Nordic model are becoming more nuanced (as Martin Sandbu explains on Page 6) these three countries had the highest social mobility of 24 nations profiled in a recent paper published by the Stanford Center on Poverty and Inequality. Its author, Miles Corak, an economics professor at Ottawa university, said the US belief that people could prosper if they had the initiative and put in the work was largely illusory.

Other countries with high levels of intergenerational mobility were Canada, South Korea, Australia, Sweden and New Zealand. Those with very low levels included Peru, South Africa, China and Brazil. Perched just above them on the social mobility ladder were the UK and the US. That Canada and Australia provided poorer children with better life chances than the UK and US showed that social mobility was not just a matter of language and national culture. The four countries, Prof Corak said, arguably had more in common with each other than with elsewhere. The four “share historical experiences, similar demographic diversity, and a demonstrated capacity for much policy learning and spillovers in a variety of domains”.



It is important to study why the US and the UK have such different social mobility profiles from Canada and Australia, because that will help us understand the challenge facing employers as they try to assemble workforces that are more representative of the people in the countries where they are based. Prof Corak discovered that many of the differences between the relatively immobile US and UK and more

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where the mother was in poor health was far higher in the UK and US. The percentage of children born to a teenage mother was strikingly higher in poorer families in the US and significantly higher in the UK than in Canada or Australia. In all four countries, children from better-off families were much more likely to be living with both biological parents, although it was less the case in the US. But among poorer families the old pattern emerged: less well-off children in Australia and Canada were more likely to have both parents living at home. The bright spot for the UK was that parents were more likely to read to their children every day than parents in Australia and the US, although not as likely as in Canada. Social mobility experts view reading to children as a vital contributor to their educational and career success. And a UK government report on social mobility in November showed that parents of all social classes were spending more time at home on educational development. In the 1970s, British parents spent just 20-30 minutes a day on reading and other educational activities with their children. There were then, the report says, no significant differences

between income groups. Today, the time parents spend on educational activities with their children is far higher, but differs vastly depending on the parents’ education. Highly-educated parents spend an average 110 minutes a day involved in the children’s educational activities, compared with 71 minutes for parents who are not well-educated. That means relative disadvantage in the UK starts early. The report said that the poorer children were, the less ready they were for school. This provides a context for some of the corporate mobility and inclusion projects profiled in this report. They are all highly worthy. The Legal Social Mobility Partnership, launched by law firm Slaughter and May and broadcaster ITV, and now incorporating other legal practices and companies, gives students from less-privileged backgrounds work experience, helps with university applications and gives them access to networks they would otherwise have no knowledge of. This is a creditable effort that other organisations should emulate. But as the Stanford and UK social mobility research shows, early intervention is vital. Companies offering reading buddies to infant schoolchildren might be even more effective.

mobile Canada and Australia began in the family. Median family income was higher for rich families and lower for poor ones in the US and the UK than in Australia and Canada. In low-income families, the proportion **Life chances spelt out: reading to children contributes to later success** Christian Science Monitor/Getty Images

Understanding overlaps in identity

Intersectionality

Isabel Berwick on an academic term with new resonance for managers

After a year of poisonous and socially divisive political campaigns in the EU referendum in the UK and the US presidential election, there is heightened awareness of differences of race, gender, religion, sexuality and social class in our societies. Less is made of the way these identities overlap and are interconnected. The discriminations that can stem from those identities – such as sexism and racism – can combine to create multiple, self-reinforcing layers of disadvantage for those affected. A Muslim woman wearing a hijab, for example, could face sexism, racism and Islamophobia. This is known as “intersectionality”. A mouthful of a term that is only now becoming more widely debated, intersectionality has long been in use in academic, feminist and activist discourse. The concept was defined in an academic paper more than 20 years ago by the law professor and civil rights activist Kimberlé Crenshaw, now of UCLA and Columbia University. In it, she said her intention was “to deal with the fact that many of our social justice problems like racism

and sexism are often overlapping, creating multiple levels of social injustice”. In a recent TED talk, Prof Crenshaw describes how she coined the term after coming across the case of an African-American woman who was turned down for an office job at a car manufacturing plant and then made a claim for both race and gender discrimination. This was denied by the judge, on the basis that having two grounds for complaint meant “she would have had preferential treatment” over claimants complaining only about sexual or race discrimination. This factory did hire both women and African-Americans. But, crucially, all the African-Americans were men working on the production line, while only white women did office work. Rather than recognising the particular difficulty facing African-American women, the case was tossed out of court. “Where there’s no name for a problem, you can’t see the problem, and you can’t solve it,” Prof Crenshaw says. The problem of multiple discriminations persists. “Even today in many countries, anti-discrimination laws look at gender and race/ethnicity separately,” says Jawad Syed, a professor of organisational behaviour and dean of the Suleman Dawood School of Business at Lahore University of Management Sciences, whose team



Kimberlé Crenshaw: coined a phrase to describe an injustice

recently studied the experience of Pakistani women in British workplaces. “As a result, when black or other women of colour experience intersectional discrimination, the law in many jurisdictions is simply absent to protect them,” says Prof Syed. In the UK, the Equality Act of 2010 has a provision that acknowledges cases of “dual discrimination” can be brought simultaneously – but no more than two. But the government decided not to bring this provision into force on the grounds that it

wanted to reduce the cost to business. In addition to such legal roadblocks, individual incidents of racism or homophobia, for example, can be hard to prove. Prof Syed points out that one reason why intersectionality is relatively unknown is that there is, so far, little individual case law to show how it operates. Intersectionality is probably not explicitly on the agenda for most employers, but HR professionals stress that good practice should always take account of people’s differences and individual needs. “We are hard-wired to make judgments about groups of people,” says Dianah Worman, adviser on diversity at the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development and co-director of Inclusive Talent, a consultancy. “Back in the 1990s we at the CIPD developed a position of stressing the need for people in workplaces to be recognised as individuals – ultimately, the vision we had was ahead of the ‘equal opportunities’ agenda of the time. Diversity celebrates difference as well as the commonalities that bind us,” she says. But, as Ms Worman points out, the threats to social cohesion caused by the current political climate in the UK and US urgently reinforce the need for more inclusion – and more awareness of the different problems facing others whose identities differ from our own.

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Architects of Meritocracy Social mobility at work



Intense early intervention helps raise aspirations

Education Helping disadvantaged pupils and families to see university as an option is vital, writes Miranda Green

An “unfair education system” is at the root of Britain’s “us and them society”, according to Alan Milburn, chairman of the UK government-sponsored Social Mobility Commission.

Part of his suggested solution is to make schools more accountable for where their pupils go next, while spreading university education to young people from under-represented groups and geographical areas that have become education black spots. In the north-east of England, for example, not one child from the poorest category of households went to Oxford or Cambridge universities in 2010, the commission has found.

For decades, schemes designed to encourage more young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to apply to university have been devised,

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launched and then scrapped by the next set of incoming ministers.

But since undergraduate tuition fees were introduced in 2004, the Office for Fair Access, an independent regulator, has required each institution to provide a plan to widen access in exchange for the right to raise this revenue. Even after fees increased dramatically in 2010 to £9,000 a year, progress has been made.

According to the Universities and College Admissions Service (Ucas) one in five 18-year-olds from deprived backgrounds now goes to university – a 65 per cent improvement on 10 years ago. This year Oxford raised the proportion of state-educated students admitted to undergraduate courses to 60 per cent, up from 56 per cent in 2015.

But barriers remain – not least because more than two-fifths of state schoolteachers surveyed by the Sutton Trust, an education charity, said they would not encourage even their brightest pupils to apply to Oxbridge.

Charities and university outreach schemes try to address the endemic lack of aspiration by working with schools; the most effective begin with primary age children and embed themselves in local communities.

The message 'has to be relentless': IntoUniversity's Hugh Rayment-Pickard

IntoUniversity



“We have to start early, it has to be relentless and for the long term,” says Hugh Rayment-Pickard, chief development officer at IntoUniversity, a social-mobility NGO that started in a deprived corner of west London in 2002 and has spread across seven British cities, helping 25,000 school pupils a year, many as young as seven. It has just opened its 22nd learning centre, in London’s Finsbury Park, an area with the third-highest level of child poverty in England.

The new centre is backed by Oxford university’s Wadham College, Cambridge university’s Corpus Christi College and four private schools: Eton, Westminster, St Paul’s Girls School and City of London School for boys. It is the first centre to involve collaboration of this sort between the ancient universities and the independent sector.

The disadvantages faced by pupils in Finsbury Park, compared to those at any of the private schools, are, says Mr Rayment-Pickard, part of a “pretty stark” story of an educational divide passed down through generations.

Young people growing up in Finsbury Park are half as likely to go on to university as those in the more prosperous nearby areas of Crouch

End, Muswell Hill and Highgate.

Intervening at primary school level is part of the way IntoUniversity hopes to break the “locked in disadvantage” that sees university-educated parents pass on their expectations and advantages to children. Studies show the test scores of children throughout their schooling are dramatically boosted if their parents are educated to degree level.

Evaluations found that the charity’s mix of after-school academic support, mentoring and intensive, subject-focused workshops ensures that 80 per cent of the school leavers on these programmes go on to higher education. For comparison, the overall figure for children in the most deprived groups in 2014, measured by entitlement to free school meals, was only 23 per cent.

Family support is important: “We try to normalise the idea of higher education,” says Mr Rayment-Pickard. “Not all our students will go on to university and not all should. But we get them to feel talking about it is not freakish. What are the advantages middle-class kids have? Partly, it is not waiting until the age of 14 to hear about university, and they understand the link to getting good grades.”

The push by educated parents to

ensure their child’s place in the next cohort of success stories entrenches the divide. Last month’s report from the Social Mobility Commission observed that where both parents are highly educated, children received about 110 minutes a day of educational activity, compared to 71 minutes in other households. In the 1970s there was almost no difference between these groups.

With the target set by Tony Blair’s government to help 50 per cent of young people into university all but met, UK policy wonks now try to argue that as much energy should be spent devising high-quality alternative, skills-based routes into good jobs for the rest. A recent report by Professor Alison Wolf for the Education Policy Institute, a think-tank, found uptake of technical qualifications fell by a third in the academic year ending in 2015 compared with the year before.

At IntoUniversity, only 4 per cent of school leavers go on to an apprenticeship, where training standards vary.

“High-quality vocational options are vital,” says Mr Rayment-Pickard. “But we must not forget that a good university place remains a uniquely powerful asset for any young person looking to escape from poverty.”

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Private schools Seeking to shrug off ‘vanity project’ jibe by educating more deprived pupils

Controversy swirls constantly around the principle of selection in education, and how it is practised, at schools and universities that are oversubscribed. The pledge by Theresa May, UK prime minister, to return to the argument over expanding academically selective state grammar schools has revived old battles over the nature of educational ability, achievement versus potential and whether institutions are best serving the goal of improved social mobility as well as excellence.

Quietly, however, some private schools have been pursuing their own attempts to improve access through partnerships with innovative taxpayer-funded school networks, and by expanding a new model of bursaries for boarders.

The experiments provide a model that other schools and colleges could follow in seeking to prove that they spread the benefits of the education they provide to the wider public – a key test of their status as charitable foundations.

Last month, the first inspection report from Ofsted, the education watchdog, praised a sixth form academy set up in 2014 by the prestigious Westminster School and the Harris chain of academies for establishing “an environment in which students thrive in a community of scholars”. For two years running, half the students who stayed until school-leaving age have secured places at leading universities.

Selected via an entrance exam and interview, priority is given to pupils entitled to free school meals, the standard measurement for child deprivation in the UK. In both years there are around 30 per cent in this category.

James Handscombe, the principal, tweeted that he was “appropriately chuffed” by the inspectorate’s glowing report. Patrick Derham, Westminster’s headteacher, says he is “absolutely thrilled” at the swift success. “Seven terms into the project it’s outstanding on all counts and we had seven Oxbridge places this year.”

Mr Derham’s central London school, mostly boys but with girls admitted to study A-levels, charges high fees for what has become a funnel to the top: half of all Westminster pupils go on to study at Oxford or Cambridge.

Critics say the Harris Westminster Sixth Form uses public money to reinforce the reputation of a top institution not lacking in advocates or profile: Labour MP Margaret Hodge called it an expensive “vanity project”. Such critics should be answered, says Mr Handscombe, if he can equal Westminster’s Oxbridge entrance rate and see his own pupils in top government posts: “Then we’ll have better people running the country.”

Mr Derham, himself rescued from a difficult childhood by a scholarship to private school, is

unrepentant about schemes to spread excellent pedagogy, alongside wider reforms such as improved vocational and technical education, and better pre-school provision for children.

“Tinkering with school structures isn’t the answer,” he says, in an implied rebuke to the continuing political punch-up. “All the data show it’s the quality of the teacher and it’s what happens in the classroom.”

In his previous role as head of Rugby School, Mr Derham established the Arnold Foundation, which radically expanded scholarships: the school selected boys and girls for whom boarding provided a better environment for learning than a sometimes turbulent home life.

That model has since been adopted by the SpringBoard Foundation, set up in 2012 after McKinsey consultants provided pro-bono research on how to scale up the scheme. SpringBoard now helps both private and state boarding schools take children from deprived backgrounds, particularly those in care homes.

“We do an enormous amount of due diligence,” says Ian Davenport, a former investment banker who left the City to become an economics teacher and now runs SpringBoard: “Being at boarding school is not for everyone.” But he argues that there are benefits broader than the boost to education and life chances. So far 200 or so pupils have taken part. The scheme provides “110 per cent bursaries” (fees plus all extra costs).

“There is also the subtle but important nuance that the more socially broad the careers that our pupils then follow, the greater the effect on social mobility,” he says. An independent evaluation of the scheme by the National Federation for Educational Research, just published, points to a positive “ripple effect” on the schools and communities from which the pupils came, with young people “acting as positive role models and inspiring others to follow in their footsteps”. **MG**



‘Tinkering with school structures isn’t the answer’

Patrick Derham, Westminster School

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Architects of Meritocracy Social mobility at work

Nordic model myths beloved by left and right

OPINION

Martin Sandbu



When it still mattered who would be the Democrat candidate for US president, Bernie Sanders and Hillary Clinton clashed over Denmark and whether the Nordic country was a good model for the US.

With Donald Trump as president-elect, it seems unlikely that liberal Scandinavia will trespass on the political debate in Washington for at least four years. But Denmark's brief appearance in the campaign illustrates that Nordic countries have long been held up as the gold standard of how egalitarianism and social mobility need not be obstacles to productivity and wealth creation.

Culturally, socially and economically more similar to each

other than to any other country, the Nordics share a long history of social democracy, a tradition of state intervention and redistribution, and a combination of egalitarian economic outcomes with fast growth and high living standards. That has made them a reference point for politicians worldwide, not just on the left but well into the centre-right.

Some of this impression, however, is more mythical than founded in detailed knowledge of the Nordics' socio-economic record.

This year, economics Nobel laureate James Heckman and co-author Rasmus Landersø stirred things up with a paper arguing that Denmark has no more social mobility than the US. It measured mobility as how much someone's income or educational attainment could be predicted from what their parents achieved at the same age.

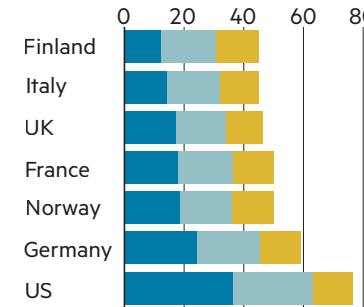
Danes were more mobile than Americans in terms of post-tax incomes, but not by either pre-tax income or educational achievement.

Share of wealth held by the richest

In per cent of society's total wealth

■ Top 1% ■ Top 5 to 10%

■ Top 1 to 5%

Data from 2010 (2012 for Norway and UK)
Source: OECD

One interpretation was that Denmark is as stratified as the US; the difference is its voters' preference for heavy government redistribution.

The reality is more complicated. While income inequality in Denmark is lower than in the US, it has increased faster over the past generation, which makes the

measured effect of parental income look bigger. Comparing like for like, it turns out that even before taxes and transfers, a Danish person's rank in the income distribution is less related to their parents' rank than is the case for Americans. However, the distance between the rungs of the ladder is widening, and Denmark is not as different from the US as in the past.

The Nordic countries' labour markets produce less inequality than the rich-country average, and extensive state redistribution adds to the effect. But even for pre-tax earnings and mobility, things are more complicated than traditional adulation by the left admits.

It is only in earnings from work that the Nordics are exceptionally egalitarian. Capital income is much less broadly shared. This is linked to the concentration of wealth, which is more severe in these egalitarian countries than many realise (see chart). The share of wealth owned by the richest individuals in Norway, for example, is higher than in the UK,

France, Italy and Spain, according to the OECD. Of course, the Nordics differ between them: for example, wealth is more equally distributed in Finland.

The Nordics offer mixed lessons. Their labour markets and educational systems have created a combination of egalitarian wages and high productivity.

But access to wealth and the non-wage income it generates is often as unequal as elsewhere, and as impervious to social mobility.

That means other countries may have something to learn from Nordic labour markets, but the Nordics may have to look elsewhere for lessons on capital ownership. If the future brings more pressure on wages than on capital income — as economists such as Thomas Piketty have warned — they will struggle to maintain the celebrated "Nordic model".

The writer is an FT economics commentator and the author of *Free Lunch* daily newsletter

Architects of Meritocracy Social mobility at work

How to lift barriers for the disabled

Exclusion Better designed processes and buildings will increase everyone's productivity, writes *Alicia Clegg*

As an IBM consultant, based in Brussels, Yves Veulliet, who uses a wheelchair, often travelled on business.

However, one trip stood out. He asked his hotel to reserve a wheelchair accessible taxi at Berlin airport and was met by a driver in a smart white tunic, displaying a card with his name.

It was only when they reached "a white van with a red stripe and blue flashing lights" that the reason for his driver's attire became apparent. The receptionist had booked an ambulance, not a taxi, to convey him to the hotel — and his startled clients, waiting in the lobby, watched his arrival.

Mr Veulliet, who now leads IBM's global disability and inclusion work, uses the anecdote to illustrate what he calls "the medical model of disability", in which anyone with a disability is assumed to be fragile. Such assumptions can cause embarrassment and, more seriously, exclude people from roles they could competently fulfil.

In the UK, the employment rate for disabled workers is just 48 per cent, compared with 80 per cent for the non-disabled workforce, according to the Office for National Statistics. This suggests that even in countries with equality laws workers with disabilities are significantly disadvantaged.

As Mr Veulliet says: "If I'm a manager who equates disability with illness, I may be reluctant even to consider an application from someone with a disability, because by definition I'll expect them to be sick more often and less productive."

Rather than treating disability as a special case, a better strategy may be to help all employees become more productive. Under EU and US law employers are obliged to accommodate the needs of disabled employees so far as they reasonably can. However, as Susan Scott-Parker, chief executive of Business Disability International (BDI), an employers' forum founded by Barclays, GSK and Infosys, observes, sooner or later most workers experience disability, although they may not consider themselves disabled or be classed as such.

The condition may be temporary, as with some sports injuries, or age-related as with hearing loss and arthritis, but it nevertheless affects the person's ability to work.

Autism Using Lego Mindstorms to assess collaborative skills



Would workplaces that work for people with autism work better for everyone? Sue Warman, HR director for northern Europe at the software company SAS, thinks so.

In the UK, SAS is working with the National Autistic Society to become an autism-friendly employer. The basic approach is captured in a question to which all workers may relate: "How should we manage you so that you can do your best work?"

SAS is one of a growing number of organisations — including SAP, Microsoft and Ford — that recruit workers with autism, a neurodevelopmental condition. Though some autistic people have learning difficulties, some have high IQs and abilities to spot patterns that others miss — though they may appear socially awkward. In his book *Neurotribes*, Steve Silberman recounts how a Microsoft supervisor told him that his top software debuggers had autism and held "hundreds of lines of code in their head as a visual image". Yet Silberman writes that many autistic people never benefit from their talents: "They are unemployed and struggling to get by on disability payments."

Redesigning recruitment methods might help some autistic people reveal their skills. In the US, Microsoft

runs a programme for autistic jobseekers, similar to one developed by SAP. Watched by hiring managers, applicants build Lego Mindstorms robots and are assessed on their ability to collaborate. Candidates are coached for the interview and hiring managers receive training on how to conduct an autism-friendly interview.

Neil Barnett, who runs Microsoft's inclusive hiring programme, says that of the 24 autistic candidates hired so far, 21 had previously applied to Microsoft, but failed to get past the phone interview stage.

Recruits are given a job coach and their teammates receive training in how autism can manifest itself. Ben, a paralegal with autism, finds interpreting social cues tricky. He and his employer, the London law firm Hodge Jones & Allen, have an understanding that "if things become too much", he can leave his desk — so far he has not needed to.

Mostly, the things that stress autistic workers — last-minute diary changes, ambiguous instructions, poorly defined roles — are things that stress everyone, says Ms Warman. "In becoming better employers of autistic people, we become better employers generally." **AC**

refer without involving HR. For straightforward purchases, such as orthopaedic cushions, the bank has a catalogue of preapproved products. If the needs of the employee are more complex, the help desk will assist them to obtain the right support.

Problems that once took 90 days are now resolved in 14, handling costs have fallen by 53 per cent and managers report a reduction in sick days, says Mr Dodd. Providing a help desk, rather than requiring employees to work through a bureaucratic process, sends a signal about how disability is regarded: as an obstacle that can be overcome rather than a status that defines an employee. As Mr Veulliet says: "The message that we see you not as a [disabled person] but as an [employee] who happens to live with a disability is important."

Good design helps everyone, yet many organisations create problems unnecessarily, says Ms Scott-Parker, simply because their contractors lack disability expertise. Using colour contrasts for doors and walls, for example, helps visually impaired employees find their way around. Likewise, enabling screen-reading technologies and spellcheckers on recruitment websites and avoiding forms that time out remove barriers for blind and dyslexic applicants.

To improve disability awareness, BDI is developing online guidance to help IT procurement managers ask the right questions of suppliers during tendering. At IBM, disabled employees test new buildings and tell the architect what modifications are needed.

Allowing workers to choose where and when to work has the potential to reduce the burden on those who struggle with commuting and working an entire day. But employers that encourage homeworking also need to consider the ergonomics of the home.

Even when organisations have good policies and tackle prejudice through training, people may fear confiding in their boss, because there will always be differences in how individuals perceive disability. Peer support can help. "Asking: 'Has anyone been through this before?' in a staff network feels safer because a network isn't part of the business structure," says John Levell, who chairs the dyslexia network at EY.

Mr Veulliet is optimistic about greater participation by disabled people in the workforce. As a consultant, he remembers being invited to celebrate a team success by going ice-skating with colleagues, which he politely declined. As his ashen-faced boss apologised, Mr Veulliet stopped him. "I told him: 'Don't be ashamed. You thought of me as one of your [team], not as a wheelchair user, which is exactly what I want.'"

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Take care when helping good causes

Philanthropy
Having an effect
takes both ideas
and money, writes
Andrew Jack

There is no shortage of social problems, innovative ideas to tackle them and people with substantial sums of money to help. Bringing all three together to produce the most efficient result is another matter.

A new generation of wealthy people, many of whom made fortunes while they were unusually young from technology, are turning their energies earlier in life towards giving some of their money to good causes. They include Mark Zuckerberg, the Facebook founder,

who announced this year that he and his wife Priscilla Chan will donate \$5bn to biomedical research, and Pierre Omidyar, the eBay co-founder who set up the Omidyar Network.

Their relative youth makes them more able and willing to start giving earlier than previous philanthropists. But in other ways many of this generation are less innovative than they may think, either in their approach to identifying new projects or to introducing better measurements of impact and success. Peabody, Rowntree, Ford and Carnegie were at least as strategic in their day.

Many are motivated by personal experiences and sentiments in deciding what to support. Michael Bloomberg has been inspired by his work on gun control and education.

That means some wish to take the lead in projects rather than work in co-operation

with others. They may be put off projects if other donors have already provided support and “own” them.

Critics express concern that donors prefer to establish their own organisations and be the largest single donor, rather than working in partnership with others for established projects. The result can be the reinvention of ideas that have already failed, neglect of those known to work and a substantial bottleneck of fledgling innovations that lack the finance to be rigorously tested.

But there is a persistent need for new technology, as the Financial Times highlighted when it showcased innovations around pregnancy and birth in its Maternal and Child Health special report. One is the Odón device, a simple, low-cost way to ease difficult births, which is still under development. Yet existing,



Mark Zuckerberg

lower-tech approaches linked to people more than equipment are also highly effective, such as “kangaroo care”, involving constant skin-to-skin contact between mothers and premature newborns and reducing the need for costly incubators.

The most successful projects typically work at scale. Small pilots may appear effective but even if they have unusually rigorous data to demonstrate

results, success may be the result of exceptional circumstances and individuals, which cannot be easily replicated.

Even projects with proven impact at a bigger scale often fail to win adoption across regions, countries or borders. Without a sustainable source of income, from individuals or governments, they are frequently doomed to fail. Philanthropy can support innovation, but the longer term often requires support from the state, which may prove difficult if the approach does not match political priorities.

When the FT’s Maternal and Child Health report looked at innovations meriting further examination, each project already had some funding, management teams in place and evidence of impact. All need different types of support from other backers to be sustained, scaled up or copied.

Innovation in funding is as important as in products and interventions. Living Goods, a non-profit organisation, uses a franchise model in eastern Africa to support local people working to improve health, far from clinics, pharmacies and professional staff.

In Kwara state in Nigeria, a subsidised health insurance scheme gives those on the lowest incomes access to good-quality care. In Kenya, long-term managed equipment service contracts ensure manufacturers are required to train staff and maintain machines operating near-continuously as a condition of payment. Such approaches also have the merit of being largely developed in, by and for lower-income countries.

Ultimately, they may have lessons for those trying to innovate in philanthropy in richer countries too.



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Architects of Meritocracy Social mobility at work

Champions of change

Architects of Meritocracy awards
Four winners show how individuals can make a difference, writes *Carola Hoyos*

Governments can enact social, educational and housing policies to lessen inequality. But businesses also have a role to play in the way they recruit and promote people, and through diversity and inclusion programmes.

Now in its third year, the Architects of Meritocracy competition highlights programmes that are effective in levelling the playing field at work, with the aim of showing other organisations what can be done.

The competition is part of the InterLaw Diversity Forum’s Apollo Project, which seeks to promote best practice in encouraging diversity and inclusion. It is organised jointly with the FT’s Best Places to Work scheme, which highlights employers’ efforts to retain and engage staff.

Daniel Winterfeldt, a partner at law firm Reed Smith, is the driving force behind Apollo and the awards. “The hope of the project is to publicise practical case studies of successful programmes that have brought about cultural change [in organisations], in order to inspire managers to replicate and adapt them for their own businesses,” he says.

The judges in the 2016 awards selected four entries for an award:

Awards The judges

The judging panel comprised: Leigh Murrin, chief legal operations counsel, General Electric; Rachael Davidson, UK general counsel and company secretary, National Grid; Helen Grant, MP for Maidstone and the Weald; Lisa Webley, professor of empirical legal studies, University of Westminster; Liz Grant, director/owner, Fantail; Constantine Karides, partner, Reed Smith; Susan Henderson, head of international labour and employment, General Electric; and Carola Hoyos, editor, FT Executive Appointments and FT NED Club.

Entrants made submissions under a number of headings:

- Business case — how well does the project fit with the goals and strategy of the business?
- Innovation — how unusual is the project?
- Outputs — what is the measurable impact?
- Evidence — how thorough is the verification?

Lead, a cross-sector mentoring programme involving several New York financial services companies and law firms; the Legal Social Mobility Partnership in the UK; Supporting Modern Families, a programme to boost the careers of women and carers at law firm Pinsent Mason; and Hardwicke Chambers, whose approach shows the impact that schemes even in smaller workplaces can have on diversity and inclusion. Although the legal sector dominated this year, the competition is open to all employers.



John Mbiti (right) and Ayo Badejo
Pascal Perich

Lawyers for Empowerment and the Advancement of Diversity

When John Mbiti realised that traditional mentoring schemes were failing to help young lawyers advance their careers, he decided to do something about it. By November 2015, Mr Mbiti, an in-house lawyer at Credit Suisse in New York, had led the formation of a cross-sector mentoring network, called Lead, and signed up many of the city’s big law firms and financial services companies.

What sets Lead — Lawyers for Empowerment and the Advancement of Diversity — apart is that its mentors aim to do more than give advice to their mentees, who are ethnic minorities, women and members of the LGBT community, for example.

The mentors also act as sponsors who make it possible for the young mentees to win new work. This is why Lead started with the idea of sending young law firm associates to be mentored by potential clients in the financial services sector. Lawyers are promoted on the back of the revenue they generate for their firms.

This disadvantages those whose backgrounds have not already involved making valuable business connections and those who suffer from the effects of unconscious bias.

“Business relationships tend to start from personal relationships,” points out Mr Mbiti. “The father was the client of a financial institution and refers his son to so-and-so and they meet because they are in the same social circles.”

Mr Mbiti was born and raised in Kenya and London

and now lives in the US. “I certainly wouldn’t say that from a socio-economic side I was excluded,” he says. But as a black man in the US, his relative affluence has not always shielded him from prejudice.

The Lead programme started with 50 pairs of mentors and mentees and has grown to 70 pairs. They meet up once a month for an hour and the participating businesses host quarterly networking events.

Lead’s mentees have won work, moved jobs and become social justice activists themselves, while law firms and financial services companies looking to boost the diversity of their workforce, partly because of pressure from regulators, have created a new stream of potential recruits.

One of Mr Mbiti’s mentees, Ayo Badejo, says: “In addition to his mentorship, John has helped me establish relationships with a number of colleagues at Credit Suisse, which is extremely valuable.”

Ritu Gha’s mentor helped her make the decision to move from New York law firm Sidley Austin to Thomson Reuters. “[We] determined that an in-house role at Reuters would be a great fit for my interests,” says Ms Gha. In addition, Lead has helped her to maintain a relationship with her former law-firm colleagues.

More than 88 per cent of US lawyers are white, making it one of the least diverse professions in the US, according to US labour statistics collated in the American Bar Association 2016 report on lawyer demographics.

Hardwicke Chambers

The world of barristers is still very traditional, but Amanda Iling, chief executive of Hardwicke Chambers, says attitudes to diversity are changing. “Just the fact that we felt ready and confident to apply for the Apollo Project awards shows a big change. At Hardwicke, we have spent



years creating a culture of diversity and inclusion,” she says. This set of chambers, with 75 barristers and 25 staff, has entrenched these ambitions in its business plan and strategic objectives, she says. A quarter of the staff are from backgrounds that are typically under-represented.

Hardwicke’s senior leadership team are all female, and the high proportion of women working there (57 per cent) is unusual among barristers’ chambers. This has been helped its policies on parental leave and flexible working.

Hardwicke’s barristers and staff all undertake pro-bono work to support its programme of diversity initiatives. These include schemes designed to encourage students from all backgrounds to consider a career in the legal sector, such as holding mock trials to show them what is entailed and a 12-month placement for undergraduates on its marketing or IT teams. **Tatjana Mitevsk**

Legal Social Mobility Partnership

In 2014 Barry Matthews decided to solve a problem he had faced as a teenager growing up on a council estate, which he saw being repeated in the next generation. “I wanted to create the work experience and support programme I craved as a 17-year-old,” he says. He would have liked work experience at well-known organisations that would have enhanced his CV and provided talking points in university interviews.



Mr Matthews is now director of legal affairs at ITV, the UK commercial television network, and the driving force behind the Legal Social Mobility Partnership, which launched in 2014. The scheme helps law firms including Slaughter and May (which submitted the Apollo entry), in-house legal teams and commercial partners collaborate to provide ways for more than 200 students from state schools in four English cities to experience working in the law.

LSMP’s two-week programme immerses participants in commercial organisations, backed up with training in legal and softer skills. Support networks such as a virtual coaching group for LSMP alumni on LinkedIn help students keep in touch afterwards. **TM**

Family Support Network

When Kizzy Augustin became pregnant as a young lawyer in 2009, she received detailed information from her employer, law firm Pinsent Mason, on its maternity leave policy. But Ms Augustin was still worried about the effect on her career of taking a break to have a baby. While on average 70 per cent of trainee solicitors at the firm are female, only 23 per cent of partners are women.



“I wanted to understand what happens next. What can I expect when I return? I realised we could be doing so much more to support this part of the process for parents and carers across the business,” says Ms Augustin. She is now a senior associate and chairs the law firm’s Family Support Network, which she set up with support from senior managers.

Pinsent Mason has developed schemes such as reciprocal mentoring and allows its lawyers to have more say on when and where they work. The firm creates opportunities for employees to meet each other’s families. It has also set up a website for advice and feedback, runs coaching sessions and runs events to help staff to juggle work and parenting. **TM**

Architects of Meritocracy Social mobility at work

The next frontier for greater inclusion in financial services

Workplace

Networks, temporary teams and two kinds of mentor all help new faces to fit in, writes *Sarah Murray*

Sponsors for Educational Opportunity (SEO), a New York non-profit organisation, has been offering training and mentoring to junior investment banking analysts from under-represented groups since 2009.

Its aim, along with its sister organisation in London, is to enable them to secure posts in private equity firms and other alternative investment companies, such as venture capital firms and hedge funds.

"We reverse-engineered it. We looked at the knowledge and skills gaps [in the sector] and built the programme to address them," says Julian Johnson, executive vice-president at SEO, which developed the programme with private equity groups KKR and TPG.

However, acquiring technical skills is only one of the hurdles that minority groups may face when entering the financial sector.

"One of the biggest challenges people from under-represented backgrounds have is fitting in. They don't feel part of the club, whether that is the boys' club, the white club or the wealthy club," says Lauren Rivera, a professor at the Kellogg School of Management, who studies class, gender and racial bias in hiring and promotion decisions at investment banks and consulting and law firms.

Fitting in matters because informal networks help people gain access to useful information and resources. "It presents a barrier not only to their

work but also to being promoted," says Prof Rivera.

Researching her book *Pedigree: How Elite Students Get Elite Jobs*, she noted that, beyond core skills, hirers looked for what they might describe as "polish" – or "pedigree" – revealed in tiny social cues and cultural patterns.

The financial services sector tends to be dominated by white men, often from privileged backgrounds. In 2014, a report by Mercer found that while 17 per cent of Chicago's population was African-American and 21 per cent was Latino, the figures for their employment in the financial services sector were 12 per cent and 10 per cent respectively.

Pamela Sandy, president of the US's Financial Planning Association, a trade body, says her industry has been slower than others to increase workforce diversity because of "a culture that's having a hard time changing". She also cites vested interests: "When you have successful white males who have easily stepped into this profession and made a very good living because there was little competition, they're protecting their territory."

Many financial services companies are working to counter this. Barclays, for example, measures diversity and inclusion in its balanced scorecard, its business performance management tool.

One way institutions can support diverse groups is with workplace networks that connect employees of similar backgrounds, interests and experiences. JPMorgan Chase's Adelante business resource group promotes professional development and leadership opportunities for Latino employees and provides networking across the US.

Support groups exist outside the workplace, too. In the US, the Urban Financial Services Coalition backs career development for financial services professionals from minority groups by offering education and networking opportunities, as well as scholarships.

Companies should also mix up the workforce, however. "Proximity is important," says Prof Rivera. "It [involves] making sure people aren't isolated physically and that they



SEO intern breakfast meeting at KKR — Rick Gilbert/SkyhookEntertainment

change offices regularly so they can make connections with people they wouldn't normally interact with."

This should be the goal in mentoring too, she says. While mentors from similar backgrounds to their mentees provide insights into navigating an organisation, "often they don't have connections with people in positions of power".

Prof Rivera advises companies to take a dual approach. "Individuals get a mentor who

'Make sure people change offices so they can make connections with different people'

can give them social support but also one from a majority group, so they can get access to people who control the power in the organisation."

BNY Mellon enables access to senior executives through its Signature Leadership Forum, comprising networking events that allow promising

employees from a range of backgrounds to highlight their skills. "It gives them opportunities to form peer networks across the company and to get exposure to senior leaders," says Jyoti Chopra, global head of diversity and inclusion.

Assembling teams of people from different backgrounds to work on particular projects also helps, as the bank found with its People Report. A series of stories told by staff, designed to showcase the bank's talent strategy, it involved about 150 people from around the company, says Ms Chopra.

Even more powerful unifiers are projects undertaken outside the office, such as volunteering programmes, says Ms Sandy. "If there is a common goal that is not just driven by work, it allows those walls to break down."

When it comes to staff from disadvantaged backgrounds, she adds, banks can help employees to feel more engaged by involving them in efforts to increase financial inclusion. "Young people from these backgrounds enter the profession with a passion to make a difference," she says.

Architects of Meritocracy Social mobility at work

Measurement A new initiative will make it easier to see which employers are breaking the 'class ceiling'. By *Emma Boyde*

Workplace index will help track progress



An intense debate is under way on the underlying causes of rising populism. In simple terms, do its roots lie in the fears of the "left-behinds" for their economic future or in xenophobia?

Alan Milburn, chairman of the UK's government-sponsored Social Mobility Commission, leans towards the first explanation.

He says that policymakers everywhere have been slow to respond to the worries of voters who feel they are losing out to a privileged elite.

The commission has just published its latest State of the Nation assessment. "In our previous annual reports, we warned that without a dramatic change in approach to how we tackle issues of poverty and mobility, Britain would become a permanently divided nation," he says.

The commission's Social Mobility Index, published earlier this year, separates England into 65 areas, with the lowest 20 – which have the poorest education and employment prospects – ranked as social mobility "coldspots". Of these, only three areas voted to remain in the EU.

Research in the report shows that the UK remains a "deeply elitist nation" where the chances of entry to a top profession are strongly correlated with social background.

When people from less privileged backgrounds do join the professions, they hit a "class ceiling", according to Sam Friedman, an assistant professor at London School of Economics, who is researching the subject for the commission. "Our research demonstrates that while people from

working-class backgrounds may get in, they don't necessarily get on," says Prof Friedman, adding that on average they earn 17 per cent less than their professional colleagues from privileged backgrounds.

"Even when we compare those with the same level of education, experience and a host of other measures, those from working-class backgrounds still earn on average 7 per cent less," he says.

This is one reason why the UK commission in October launched the Social Mobility Employer Index, which enables big companies to measure their progress against their peers. The index will publish its first ranking of companies' performance next year.

"I don't know of any other countries who have tried to construct a similar index, so I think the UK is leading the way with this," says Prof Friedman.

Lack of mobility is not unique to the UK. Two Italian economists found this year that the richest families in Florence, Italy, in 1427 are still the richest today. Another

'Without a dramatic change in approach, Britain [will] become a permanently divided nation'

paper published by academics in the US suggests that mobility when measured across several generations has been overestimated.

The lack of social mobility in the workplace means employers miss out on the skills and insights of those from less advantaged backgrounds. However, there is evidence

that if employers act to address inequities they can see immediate effects.

In 2015, PwC, the professional services firm, removed Ucas scores (a standardised school-leaving exam score used for university entry in the UK) as entry criteria for the majority of its graduate roles. It believes it is the first big employer in the UK to do so.

"We know that a strong correlation exists in the UK between social class and school academic performance, and recognised that by previously placing too much emphasis on Ucas scores ... we were potentially missing out on talented young people," says Richard Irwin, PwC's head of student recruitment. He says that in the 2015 intake – the first since removing the university entrance score – 71 per cent had attended state school, rather than an independent or fee-paying school, up from 66 per cent the previous year.

When the UK government announced its social mobility strategy in 2011, it called for companies to sign up to a Social Mobility Business Compact. The signatories pledged to adopt certain measures that would improve access for those from less privileged backgrounds. These included dropping names and schools attended from job application forms, and paying interns.

More than 190 companies signed up and two years ago a "champion tier" was introduced to develop examples for other companies to emulate.

Among them is law firm Baker & McKenzie, which has been looking at how to improve social mobility since before the financial crisis, says Sarah Gregory, its inclusion and diversity partner.

'Companies have a key role': Alan Milburn, chairman of the UK government-backed Social Mobility Commission

David Levene/Eyevine

Some of its broader measures were adopted too recently to allow for evidence of their effectiveness, she says. However, it instituted a black, Asian and minority ethnic network 10 years ago: at that time 4 per cent of trainees were

from such backgrounds, but they accounted for 36 per cent of the firm's latest intake.

"Employers have a key role in opening up opportunities for people not just to have a job but to progress in a career," says Mr Milburn.

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