

BIS | Department for Business
Innovation & Skills

**EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS
RESEARCH SERIES NO. 104**

The Union Modernisation
Fund – Round one:
Final evaluation report

MARK STUART, MIGUEL MARTINEZ
LUCIO AND ANDY CHARLWOOD

OCTOBER 2009

EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS RESEARCH SERIES NO. 104

Union Modernisation Fund – Round one: Final evaluation report

BY
MARK STUART, MIGUEL MARTINEZ LUCIO AND ANDY CHARLWOOD

About EMAR

Employment Market Analysis and Research (EMAR) is a multi-disciplinary team of economists, social researchers and statisticians based in the Employment Relations Directorate of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Our role is to provide the evidence base for good policy making in employment relations, labour market and equality and discrimination at work. We do this through:

- Conducting periodic benchmark surveys
- Commissioning external research reports
- Conducting in-house research and analysis
- Assessing the regulatory impact of new employment laws
- Monitoring and evaluating the impact of government policies

Further details of EMAR's work, including PDF versions of all our publications, please see our web pages at:

www.berr.gov.uk/employment/research-evaluation

Published in October 2009 by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

URN 09/1346 © Crown Copyright 2009

Hard copies of this report can be ordered at: www.bis.gov.uk/publications
Alternatively, call the BIS Publications Orderline on 0845 015 0010 (+44 845 015 0010) and quote the URN, or email them at: publications@bis.gsi.gov.uk.

Electronic copies are available to download at:

<http://www.berr.gov.uk/employment/research-evaluation/errs/index.html>

Enquiries should be addressed to emar@bis.gsi.gov.uk or posted to:

Employment Market Analysis and Research
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
Bay 4107
1 Victoria Street
London SW1H 0ET
UNITED KINGDOM

Contents

Contents	i
Glossary of abbreviations and acronyms	iii
Executive summary.....	1
Chapter 1: Background and introduction.....	9
Background and purpose of Fund	9
The evaluation process	10
Methods and Analytic approach	10
Structure of the report	15
Chapter 2: The context of union modernisation	17
The position of British trade unions	17
British unions and their administration.....	18
Understanding the UMF as an employment relations modernisation project ..	21
Chapter 3: First Round Award Process.....	25
Background to the First Round call	25
UMF First Round Application Procedure	26
Characteristics of applications.....	27
Analysis of applications by project themes	30
Characteristics of unsuccessful projects	31
Experiences and perceptions of the First Round award process.....	32
Chapter 4: Project activities and outputs: the artefacts of modernisation.....	35
Round one project completion and delivery	35
Summary	50
Chapter 5: Dissemination and the ‘demonstration effect’	51
Project dissemination and networking	51
Support for dissemination and strategic networking	54
Summary	55
Chapter 6: Challenges on the path to modernisation	57
Internal communication, co-ordination and governance	58
Planning and strategy took longer than anticipated.....	60
Relations between project workers and traditional union officers were at times strained	61
Tensions between ‘controlling’ projects and ‘buying-in’ expertise	62
Pressure on trade union workloads	64
Technical issues and contractor relations	65
Lack of employer buy-in in key cases.....	69
Modernisation challenges traditional union systems and way of doing things ..	71
Project buy-in and cultural resistance.....	72

Internalising lessons learnt and knowledge assets.....	73
External dissemination and memory	74
Summary	75
Chapter 7: The Lessons Learnt on the Way to Modernisation: Sustainable project outcomes	77
Introduction.....	77
New resources, assets and roles	79
Communication	81
Contracting relations	82
Project management	83
Evaluation and reflection	84
Networks and shared learning.....	85
Mainstreaming and embedding change	86
Summary	87
Chapter 8: Conclusions.....	89
The potential for transformational change	90
The 'demonstration effect'	92
UMF Rounds Two and Three	92
References	95
Appendix 1: The Supervisory Board	99
Appendix 2: BIS reporting pro forma.....	99
Appendix 3: Final survey of projects	102
Appendix 4: Summary of Project Activity	103
Appendix 5: The ten case study projects	124
Appendix 6: Projects approved under UMF Round Two	157
Appendix 7: Projects approved under UMF Round Three	164
Employment Relations Research Series.....	169

Glossary of abbreviations and acronyms

BDA	British Dental Association
BERR	Department of Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform
BIS	Department of Business, Innovation and Skills
BFAWU	Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union
BME	Black Minority Ethnic
CDNA	Community and District Nursing Association
CWU	Communication Workers Union
CYWU	Community and Youth Workers Union
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
FTO	Full-time officer
GFTU	General Federation of Trade Unions
GMB	General Municipal Boilermakers Union
HDNL	Home Delivery Network Limited
ICE	Information and Consultation of Employee Regulations
ICT	Information communications technology
NGSU	Nationwide Group Staff Union
NUJ	National Union of Journalists
NUT	National Union of Teachers
OCN	Open College Network
PGSA	Portman Group Staff Association
RCM	Royal College of Midwives
RMT	National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers
SCP	Society of Chiropodists and Podiatrists
TGWU	Transport and General Workers Union
TSSA	Transport Salaried Staffs' Association
TUC	Trades Union Congress
ULF	Union Learning Fund
UMF	Union Modernisation Fund
URTU	Union Road Transport Union
USDAW	Union of Shop Distributive and Allied Workers
WBBSSU	West Bromwich Building Society Staff Union

Executive summary

The UMF was launched in July 2005. Funding was initially provided to 35 innovative projects designed to speed unions' adaptation to changing labour market conditions. The projects were of variable duration and size and ran from January 2006 to June 2009, focused on a number of priority themes. The majority of projects reached successful completion, with just three non completions. The evaluation provides strong evidence that the UMF has generated a high degree of potential for transformational change within trade unions. Projects delivered a wide range of outputs, such as new electronic platforms, training programmes for officers and staff, research investigations and the development of new union roles. These outputs are starting to impact on the day-to-day activities of unions.

The main, and potentially lasting, outcomes include improved communication structures and democratic processes, greater understanding of the representational needs of potential members from diverse and ethnic backgrounds, efficiency improvements in union processes and structures and new skills sets for project management. A notable outcome has been the development of new union organising roles around equality and diversity, through the formation of networks of equality representatives. The UMF has provided space for unions to engage with and learn about the nature and processes of modernisation. Numerous challenges have been faced, in terms of the coordination, planning and strategic execution of modernisation, as well as around wider engagement with external contractors and stakeholders. Such challenges have revealed important lessons for unions in terms of the deeper processual and cultural barriers to modernisation. Dissemination efforts are unfolding, but need to be extended further to draw out the full demonstration effect of the UMF.

Background and evaluation procedure

The UMF was designed to support innovative projects to help speed unions' adaptation to changing labour market conditions. The Fund aimed to support projects that either explored the potential for, or contributed to, *transformational change* within unions, and through such innovative activity provide a *demonstration effect* to the wider union movement.

The evaluation tracked the First Round of the UMF, from the initial tender process through to the completion of funded projects. Two interim reports were published, in addition to this final report.

UMF – Round one: Final evaluation report

The evaluation data were derived from two main sources. The first included reviewing the extensive documentary sources produced by projects, including periodic and final reports. The second included primary data collection and fieldwork, including surveys of project managers and ten qualitative case studies of selected projects.

The evaluation framework makes a distinction between the outputs produced by projects and the means by which such outputs lead to more substantial and sustainable outcomes. More longitudinal evaluation will be needed to draw out the full nature of project outcomes in terms of union culture and practice.

First Round Award Process

- In total, 35 projects were funded under the UMF First Round (out of 49 applications). Around £3 million pounds was allocated to projects, across 32 unions. There was a good spread of projects across unions of different size and industrial location.
- Unions that received funding represented 51 per cent of total trade union membership.
- Projects were organised across six UMF priority themes, with many projects cutting across two or more themes. The most common theme proved to be projects designed to improve two-way communications with members, followed by projects focused on labour market diversity and the application of modern management methods.
- The call for First Round applications was generally perceived to have been successful. The number of applications was high and applicants reported no major issues with the submission process. Submissions based on projects that were already under consideration by unions proved to be more successful than applications that were constructed specifically with the UMF in mind.

Project activities and outputs

- Many projects experienced significant delays in their progress against plan, most notably in terms of set-up. This is hardly novel. Around one third of projects obtained approval for formal extensions. The important point is that project delays did not impact on the successful completion of projects. Just three projects failed to complete. These were all small unions.
- The general activities of projects tended to fall into five categories: research/mapping exercises; IT/ICT reviews and new product implementation; training and competence development; raising awareness; and, employer

engagement. The immediate outputs were naturally derived from the activities and included: research reports/ state of the art reviews; new websites and/or new electronic protocols; numbers of trained staff and new modules and courses; toolkits and handbooks; and, new partnership arrangements or model agreements with employers.

- The evaluation was unable to establish a formal, quantitative assessment of outputs. Indicators were available in relation to some ICT projects, in terms of increases in web usage and membership participation. Such indicators all showed improved levels of membership engagement. But, beyond this, inconsistency in project reporting and the variable nature of much activity and outputs, for example in relation to training investments, limits any aggregate quantification.
- Nonetheless, it is evident that the UMF has stimulated an array of innovative activities and, in some cases, novel outputs within unions. This includes a wide-ranging research effort across unions and the implementation of new training programmes, for example around diversity issues, communications and general management approaches. And new institutions are emerging through the roles of equality representatives and new partnerships with employers.
- It is also evident that the process of modernisation is starting to be understood as broader than just the specific outputs or products of projects. The work of projects is raising and in many cases engaging with deeper issues around the organisational culture of unions and how the ongoing process of modernisation relates to cultural change.

Dissemination and the 'demonstration effect'

- A range of dissemination activities occurred across the life of projects. There was some evidence of an increasing dissemination trajectory as projects neared completion. A crude metric of dissemination is presented against projects in Appendix Four in terms of, *internal* dissemination, *external* dissemination, *launch events* and *networking*.
- Internal dissemination was considered extensive in around half of cases. This included basic day-to-day consciousness raising of projects, the promotion and marketing of projects in union magazines and newsletters and in some limited cases wide ranging surveys of members.
- Three projects held major launch events, the CDNA, TSSA and the TGWU. The TGWU, for example, was a notably high profile event to formally launch an equality toolkit and the new role of equality representatives.

UMF – Round one: Final evaluation report

- External dissemination was also pervasive, for just under half of all projects. This included articles in external journals, promotional leaflets, websites, workshops for external stakeholders and employer engagement. Projects such as the TGWU Migrant Workers Support Unit engaged in international dissemination activity.
- The degree of project networking was far more limited. There was some evidence of networking and information sharing in relation to projects on diversity and equality concerns and in terms of project management challenges of dealing with IT contractors. But beyond this, few projects saw networking with other projects as a potential device for internal learning in relation to modernisation.
- The big question relates to the meaning of dissemination and how this contributes in terms of the 'demonstration effect' of the UMF. There is evidence that the dissemination trajectory did increase during the course of the UMF First Round, and this was supported by a number of BIS sponsored events. BIS had also drafted a detailed dissemination strategy, although this had yet to be fully implemented.
- The main ambition for a strategic approach to dissemination should be to move beyond publicising what projects are or have been doing to a wider focus on the modernisation agenda itself. This is to form part of a renewed dissemination effort by BIS in late 2009.

Challenges on the path to modernisation

- All UMF projects were at times faced with challenges. The management, organisation and delivery of project innovation can raise issues of uncertainty and competing ways of working, raise opportunity costs and even generate a deal of internal conflict. How difficulties are experienced, faced and overcome can, however, be harnessed to create an environment of change and learning which is more sustainable, legitimate and eventually inclusive in the longer term.
- The main challenges faced by projects included:
 - Internal communication and coordination issues;
 - The timeframes for planning and strategic implementation;
 - Strained relations between project workers and traditional union officers;
 - Pressure on trade union workloads;
 - Tensions between 'controlling' projects and 'buying-in' expertise;
 - Lack of employer buy-in for key cases and initiatives;

- The way that modernisation can challenge traditional unions systems and ways of operating;
 - The extent to which unions were able to internalise lessons learnt and create new knowledge assets around such learning;
 - The ability of unions to disseminate projects and archive findings and understanding as part of organisational memory.
- It is notable that the challenges faced did not derail the overall success of projects. In some cases the key challenges had been anticipated as part of project risk, in other cases issues were seen as unanticipated. Nonetheless, the way projects responded, for example around the intricacies of project management, fed into the learning process of unions and ultimately the modernisation outcomes of projects.

Sustainable project outcomes: the lessons learnt on the way to modernisation

- Modernisation should not be seen in terms of quantitative deliverables and outputs, but how outputs feed into wider outcomes. The evidence of the UMF suggests that such outcomes will be social in nature, informational and substantive in terms of economic related issues.
- The modernisation process is about more than the six substantive themes of the UMF. It is also about the lasting improvements that may be made to capacity and frameworks of representation, communication and organisation that allow a modern trade union movement to respond in one way or another to the challenge of a more diverse, complex and uneven society.
- The UMF has provided an important innovatory space for unions to experiment with new ideas, activities and approaches. As much as anything, the potential benefit of projects should be as much as anything about creating a climate for *learning* within unions.
- Given the fact that many projects had only recently completed, the longer term outcomes are as yet unknown. However, the potential appears to be significant and in many cases unions were looking at how to capitalise on projects and move forward. The key dimensions of organisational learning and potential longer term outcomes of the UMF for unions included:
 - *New resources, assets and roles* – the outputs of projects had created valuable toolkits, training and learning resources that have the potential to upgrade the skills and capabilities of unions, notably in terms of labour market diversity. This has been further enhanced by the investments into and formation of the nascent union role of equality representatives.

- *Communications* – the widespread investment into new ICT technologies has significant implications for unions. At a simple level they represent a basic upgrading of the technological capacity of unions, but more importantly can contribute to the improved efficiency of union representation structures and the servicing of members. It is also notable how ICT can contribute to improvements in the democratic and participatory basis of unions, by allowing members to contribute through on-line forums and polls.
- *Contracting relations* – Modernisation brings with it new relations between unions and the providers of key services, such as research and ICT provision. Unions have had to learn to deal with the complexity and uncertainty of such processes and relationships.
- *Project management* – In many cases the skills needed to run and manage projects had been underestimated by unions. Yet as projects this was seen as an important and valuable lesson for unions. The ability to manage projects has become more of an issue as the need for internal modernisation impacts on unions. Increasingly it is recognised that effective project management, and the accompanying skills and capacities to deliver this, feed through into manageable workload and effective outputs.
- *Evaluation and reflection* – At the outset, there was a tendency to regard projects in their own terms. However, as projects completed, unions reflected on the value of such activities and a degree of evaluation took place in terms of thinking about how to build on projects and mainstream trials across the union. Such evaluation and reflection is seen to be an important part of the modernisation process.
- *Networking* – Whilst this was not as extensive as it could have been, project networks could probably not have been imposed at the outset of the UMF. Over the life of projects networks emerged organically in relation to key issues, and unions started to realise the potential benefits of such networking for shared learning and the addressing of key challenges. A notable example emerged in terms of how to deal with the uncertainties, and in some cases conflicts, which arose with the contracting of new IT services. This proved to be particularly valuable for small unions.
- *Mainstreaming and embedding change* – Modernisation, transformation and change can be viewed somewhat cynically in union circles and perceived to have little to do with the core activities of unions. However, projects were not seen to detract from or substitute traditional union roles, ideals and functions. Indeed,

there was emerging evidence of how modernisation projects could contribute more broadly to the effective realisation of core union concerns. In the case of USDAW this resulted in a cultural shift in how the union builds and implements its strategic plan. In other cases, there is evidence of how the formation of new union roles, such as equality reps, could start to contribute to wider union activism and organising efforts.

Conclusions

- The evaluation concludes that the First Round of the UMF has been broadly a success. The UMF has allowed unions to trial new ideas, conduct research and map members' views, develop new roles and engage in debate in a way that was relatively low risk to participating unions. Given the modest sums invested, the outputs and potential outcomes appear to be extensive and promising.
- Judged against the first overarching aim of the UMF, it is too early to judge whether projects have contributed in any measurable sense to transformational change in the organisational efficiency or effectiveness of unions. There is, however, strong evidence that the UMF has generated a high degree of potential for transformational change.
- The extent to which this potential for transformational change is fully realised will depend on the furtherance of the second overarching aim of the UMF, related to its 'demonstration effect'. What this actually means in practice will need to be further worked out and a more strategic approach pushed forward. There is evidence of extensive dissemination in relation to individual union projects, but primarily at an internal level. External dissemination has been something of a 'slow burner' and wider knowledge of the UMF, its potential and the wider lessons for the union movement needs further elaboration.
- Nonetheless, BIS has developed a detailed dissemination strategy for the UMF. Now that First Round projects have all completed, it would seem opportune to step up the dissemination effort and start to make connections between what has been learnt in the First Round and the development of projects in UMF Rounds 2 and 3.
- The UMF has a valuable role to play in encouraging trade union innovation. There are many important insights and lessons to be taken from the findings presented in this evaluation report and the ongoing work of projects in further rounds. The full benefit of this trade union innovation needs to be disseminated as widely as possible if the full demonstration effect to the union movement is to be realised.

About the authors

Professor Mark Stuart is Professor of Human Resource Management and Employment Relations and Director of the Centre for Employment Relations Innovation and Change at the University of Leeds. Professor Miguel Martinez Lucio is Professor of International Human Resource Management and Comparative Employment Relations at the University of Manchester. Dr Andy Charlwood is currently Senior Lecturer in Human Resource Management at the University of York.

Chapter 1: Background and introduction

Background and purpose of Fund

This report presents the final evaluation of projects funded under the First Round of the Union Modernisation Fund (UMF). It builds on two previously published reports (Stuart et al, 2006; 2008). The UMF was established under the auspices of the Employment Relations Act 2004, which inserted into the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 an authority for the Secretary of Trade to establish a Fund to facilitate the operational modernisation of independent trade unions and their federations.

The purpose of the Fund is to support innovative projects to help speed unions' adaptation to changing labour market conditions. It aims to support projects that either explore the potential for, or contribute to, a transformational change in the organisational efficiency or effectiveness of a trade union or unions. Through helping unions to explore and test innovative ways of working, and by disseminating the results of projects widely across the union movement, the Fund also aims to provide a demonstration effect to the broader trade union movement, enabling unions to realise more fully their potential to improve the world of work for workers and employers alike (see DTI, 2004, 2005).

The First Round call for applications under the Fund was launched in July 2005. Applications were invited for transformational projects that met one or more of six priority themes: improving the understanding of modern business practices by full-time officers and lay representatives; improving two-way communication between unions and their members; improving the ability of unions to respond to the increasing diversity of the labour market, and to supply services geared to the needs of a diverse membership; applying modern management methods to the running of unions as efficient, outward-looking and flexible organisations; assessing the challenges and opportunities of union restructuring and mergers; and, developing the professional competence of union officers.

Thirty five projects were funded under the First Round, involving 32 unions. Multiple projects were successful for the Transport and General Workers Union (three projects) and the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union (two projects). Total funding for the projects amounted to around £3

million, with the largest grant awarded to the GMB (£198, 324) and the smallest to the West Bromwich Building Society Staff Union (£4, 546).

The evaluation process

In August 2005 the Department of Trade and Industry, now Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), commissioned a team of researchers led from the University of Leeds to carry out an independent evaluation of the UMF¹. The evaluation process continued until June 2009, split into two stages.

Stage A: Focused on the period from the First Round Call for UMF applications to the formal approval of projects. The aim was to assess the effectiveness of the Fund's operation in Round 1 to inform policy decisions about the approach to be adopted in the Second Round. **The findings from Stage A were formally published by BIS in September 2006** (see Stuart et al, 2006 - <http://www.berr.gov.uk/files/file33929.pdf>)

Stage B: Involved evaluating the medium-long term impact of financial assistance provided to trade unions in relation to both the specified objectives of individual supported projects and the overall aims and objectives of the Fund. This included establishing the nature and extent of benefits accrued, lessons learnt and good practice lessons arising from individual projects, and assessing the wider 'demonstration effect' from individual projects both in their own terms and in terms of the overall effectiveness of the wider impact of the Fund. An interim stage B evaluation report was published in March 2008 (Stuart et al, 2008).

This report collates findings from across the evaluation to present our final conclusions on the impact of the First Round of the UMF.

Methods and Analytic approach

The analysis in this report was derived from data collected from two main sources.

The first data source was a large dataset of documentary materials. As a condition of funding, UMF project holders were expected to submit regular

¹ A number of Departmental changes took place during the course of the evaluation. The UMF was launched under the auspices of the Department for Trade and Industry, which was renamed the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform mid-way through the evaluation, which was in turn changed to the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills in 2009.

progress reports to BIS, typically every three months. The documentary sources included such progress reports, along with additional recorded communications between BIS and projects, notes of meetings between BIS and projects, additional project materials (such as minutes of steering group meetings, project presentations, research reports and interim evaluations), final project reports and communications relating to the UMF Supervisory Board (see Appendix One for composition). The size of the documents ranged from a single page to over 100 pages (for a final report). Officers at BIS logged every document received and then sent them, at regular intervals, to the evaluation team. In total, around 250 documents were analysed for the final report, including all documents received by the evaluation team as at the end of May 2009.

Reporting requirements were devised following reflection by BIS on the shortcomings of reporting procedures in previous employment relations programs, such as the Partnership Fund (see Terry and Smith, 2003). Regular reporting was a condition of the award. The precise frequency varied from project to project. Reporting frequencies were agreed between the project holder and BIS, to reflect the scope, length and complexity of the project. BIS recommended a reporting template (set out in the Appendix Two), although use of this template was not compulsory. Project holders were asked to report progress under four key headings. First, progress against the reporting period was to be documented in terms of specific milestones, whether milestones had been reached and reasons for any failure to meet them. Second and third, there were two sections on projected performance, assessed in terms of hard and soft outcomes (which have been identified in project monitoring and evaluation strategies). Fourth, project holders were asked to note any changes to project specification. These reporting requirements were communicated to project holders by BIS at an event prior to the start of the projects. It was recognised by BIS that there were certain limitations to the reporting template, not least in terms of picking up ongoing challenges faced and resolved and supplying additional contextual material. Project managers were thus encouraged, as appropriate, to supply additional content in narrative form – internal steering group minutes often sufficed to fill the gap.

Overall, there was evidence of under-reporting, both in terms of the quality and quantity of information provided. Some of the reasons for this are picked up in the body of this report, and related to the extent to which projects had anything to report, lack of familiarity with the project management techniques required by BIS and time management pressures on project managers. Some projects reported very little until the submission of their final report. There was however no correlation between a lack of project reporting and project failure. Moreover, BIS officials monitored projects regularly and ensured, where progress reports were not forthcoming, that projects remained on track.

In some cases the detail of reporting limited the insights that the evaluators were able to make about projects, but across the First Round as a whole this was

limited. There are examples of projects that reported little, but then delivered comprehensive final reports. Overall the information provided was satisfactory for evaluation purposes. But the evaluators also sought to complement this, by requesting additional support from BIS for a final 'mop up' survey of projects (as detailed in our second report, Stuart et al 2008), to ensure that any remaining data gaps were covered.

The second data source involved primary data collection. This included survey, case study research and interviews with key stakeholders. Two surveys were conducted at the start and towards the end of the evaluation. The first survey, which was presented in Stuart et al (2006), focused on the application stage of the UMF, and was directed at all those who applied for First Round funding, with the aim of exploring applicants' views on the process of developing a bid. It was conducted during October and November 2005 and elicited responses from 48 of the 49 union officials that had overseen bids to the First Round.

The second survey, as noted above, acted as final 'mop up' exercise, to explore the key outputs and outcomes from projects and the key challenges that projects faced. It was targeted at those projects that the evaluators had not had additional contact with during their evaluation, and had either completed or were live at the time of the survey (the 3 failed projects were excluded). The survey was conducted between September and November 2008 and elicited 21 responses out of 22 possible cases (the other referred us to the final project report), a response rate of 95 per cent. The survey was conducted by telephone with an open-ended question protocol; interviews typically lasted 20-30 minutes and were taped and transcribed. The findings from the survey are integrated across the analytical body of this report and the survey instrument is presented in Appendix Three.

The core of the primary data collection focused on ten detailed, qualitative case studies of First Round projects. The aim was to conduct semi-structured interviews with key respondents at the start and towards the end of their projects. Projects were selected to cover variety by UMF project themes and size and type of union. For each project, face-to-face interviews were conducted with two key project stakeholders, typically the project manager and the senior union officer supporting the project. In two cases, this meant interviewing the external consultants that had been commissioned to manage the day-to-day running of projects. Interviews were conducted during May to November 2006 and again through the period January to June 2008. On average interviews lasted around one hour, with the majority taped-recorded and transcribed.

The designated contacts at each case were also approached periodically to discuss project progress. In addition, two action learning sets were organised with the project workers from each of the case studies during 2007. Each action learning set involved five participants, the aim being for project workers to raise key problems and challenges with each other and discuss possible solutions in a

supportive environment. The role of the evaluators was to facilitate the action learning sets, rather than impose a formal and structured set of questions. Whilst these events proved difficult to organise, they were highly effective and acted to improve information sharing on some key issues between projects, for example on how to deal with technical contractors.

The case contacts all proved willing to support the ongoing evaluation activities, with the exception of one case, where just one initial telephone interview was conducted and then no further contact proved possible - with the project eventually failing. The project cases are listed below in Table 1.1. Summaries of all projects are presented in Appendix Four, with the ten detailed case write-ups presented in Appendix Five.

Table 1.1: First Round Project Case Studies

UMF Code	Trade Union	Project Title
004	GMB	Race and Diversity
005	Communications Workers' Union (CWU)	CWU – Reaching Out
010	Society of Chiropodists and Podiatrists (SCP)	Shaping the Future*
011	Royal College of Midwives (RCM)	Improving the communications between the RCM and its members
017	Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU)	Migrant Workers Support Unit
020	Bakers Food and Allied Workers Union (BFAWU)	Membership and communications systems
028	TSSA	Increasing diversity: turning members into representatives
031	USDAW	Developing the USDAW management model
034	National Union of Journalists (NUJ)	Equality for all: NUJ workplace and freelance equality representatives project
046	Portman Group Staff Association	Creating full partnership working with Portman Building Society through a highly skilled and efficient employee rep committee.

* Project did not complete

A number of semi-structured interviews and more informal discussions were also conducted throughout the evaluation with key stakeholders. During the initial stage of the evaluation this included interviews with (four) BIS officials and (four) members of the UMF Supervisory Board (see Stuart, 2006). Beyond this, useful

data was also collected through periodic meetings with the BIS UMF Director, the Head of Strategy at the Trade Union Congress, and attendance and participation in a number of UMF related events.

The underlying approach of our evaluation is close to that of Walker et al's (2007), who draw heavily on Pawson and Tilly (1997). As Walker et al (2007: 272) explain, 'The outcomes of a project are a result of underlying mechanisms operating in a particular context'. Context is important because it can condition similar mechanisms to produce different outcomes; in basic terms a training course could lead to cultural change in one context, but not in another. Understanding the context of particular trade unions is accordingly necessary for evaluating the overall achievements of the UMF. As we explain in the next chapter, unions are faced to some extent with similar external contextual conditions, but unions can differ markedly in terms of their own administration and organisation, not just due to size, sector and occupation, but the political structure of the organisation and the way that branches and representatives are organised and rules are made and codified. Taking such context into account, the aim of any evaluation should then be to 'identify and explain regularities in patterns of project interventions and outcomes' (Walker et al, 2007: 272). For the present evaluation this means examining in some detail the specific activities of projects and the outputs that were then produced, before considering the significance of this for wider outcomes and the particular change that is sought within unions. Yet, regularities will not just relate to specific project interventions, but can be understood in terms of the deeper challenges that projects faced and how they were responded to – as the underlying mechanisms can essentially be seen as the key lessons that are learnt and implemented.

Finally, it is necessary at the outset to differentiate between immediate *outputs* and longer term *outcomes*. Outputs are those typically specified in the project proposal as deriving over the course of the project from its key activities and interventions – for example, a project handbook, or some new IT kit or software or an officer training programme. Outputs can then become the means (or mechanism) to lead to more substantial outcomes. Again, as Walker et al (2007: 274) explain: 'The *outputs* are produced in one context – the 'context of production' – and are then used in a rather different context – the 'context of use'. The *outcomes* are the wider industrial relations or political consequences stemming from the use of outputs...' For the UMF evaluation, the outputs were relatively demonstrable by project completion, although it has not proved possible due to the varied nature of projects and project reporting to effectively present any aggregated quantification of this (for example, total numbers trained). The *outcomes* evidently transcend the lifespan of projects and the evaluation. Nonetheless, the report does seek to draw out where possible evidence of the wider impact of projects, both in terms of basic sustainability or in terms of the wider steps that may lead to more longer-term transformational change.

Structure of the report

The report is structured into seven further sections.

Chapter two considers the context of union modernisation. Through a brief review of the academic literature, it situates the UMF within the wider environment that unions are facing and outlines various union responses.

Chapter three summarises the First Round Award process and the characteristics of those projects that were successfully funded and those that were not.

Chapter four examines the key activities and outputs of projects. It locates such activity against the six priority themes of the UMF.

Chapter five explores dissemination activity to date and considers the potential demonstration effect that could accrue from projects funded under the UMF First Round.

Chapter six considers the main challenges that projects faced in implementing modernisation activities.

Chapter seven turns to a more considered account of the potential longer-term outcomes of projects and identifies the key lessons that have been learnt to-date.

Chapter eight presents the final conclusions of the evaluation report.

UMF – Round one: Final evaluation report

Chapter 2: The context of union modernisation

The Union Modernisation Fund (UMF) represents an attempt to facilitate the operational modernisation of trade unions, so that unions may better respond to changing labour market conditions (Stuart et al. 2008). The rationale for the Fund needs to be situated within the current context that trade unions find themselves, as this will mediate the way in which unions look to not only introduce and implement UMF projects, but, more widely, define the process of modernisation. This needs to be understood at two levels. First, what is the environment that unions are currently facing? Second, how have unions, as administrative entities, organised themselves in response to this environment. The chapter considers these two questions, before drawing out more broadly the implications for projects of modernisation and trade union transformation.

The position of British trade unions

Since 1979 trade union influence in Britain has declined dramatically. Union membership fell from 13.3 million in 1979 to around 7.6 million by 2008, and union density from 57 per cent to 28 per cent (Certification Office, 2008; Mercer and Notley 2008). Whilst the rate of decline has slowed somewhat since 1979, the trajectory has remained downwards. These figures mask broad divergence between the public and private sectors. In the public sector, around 60 per cent of employees are union members. The equivalent figure for the private sector is around 16 per cent. Collective bargaining coverage has contracted from covering around 85 per cent of employees, to covering just 34 per cent of employees (Charlwood 2007). Where unions retain bargaining rights, they bargain over a narrower range of issues (Kersley et al. 2006, Brown et al. 2000). The pay premium that union members enjoy compared to non-members has diminished (Blanchflower and Bryson 2004), as has the ability of unions to reduce wage inequality (Card et al. 2003, Addison et al. 2006). However, unions continue to act as a 'sword of justice' boosting the wages of, and narrowing pay inequality among, disadvantaged groups in the labour market (Metcalf et al. 2001), and there is an overall union mark-up of around ten per cent.

The attitudes of employers and employees have shifted in response to waning union power. By 2004, only 22 per cent of senior managers responsible for HR issues were in favour of union membership among their workforce, with the majority (62 per cent) professing neutrality (Willman and Bryson 2007). On the employee side, just 46 per cent think that unions make a difference in their

workplace, and one quarter of employees believe that they themselves would be better negotiating a pay rise than their union would be (Charlwood and Forth 2009).

Unions also face a very different labour market to that in which they organised during the high tide of union membership in the 1970s. They now operate within a far more legalistic environment, and compulsory trade union membership (the closed shop) has been outlawed. Employment in manufacturing and key industrial sectors, once the heartlands of union power and membership, has declined dramatically: in 1984 25 per cent of employees worked in manufacturing, by 2006, this figure had declined to 13 per cent of employees (www.statistics.gov.uk). Declining manufacturing employment was partly due to the closure of large numbers of highly unionised workplaces in the recessions of the early 1980s and 1990s, but it is also the result of technological change, which has reduced employment levels and caused the disappearance of many of the crafts and trades which unions used to organise through. The unions which have prospered in this new environment have largely been those that represent professionals in education and medicine, or organise primarily in the public sector.

British unions and their administration

As organisational bodies trade unions are unusual, in that union organisation is the sum of both a professional, employed workforce and an elected and voluntary body of lay activists. Unions thus face a tension between being administrative bodies, tasked with the efficient operation of their own internal affairs and of their representative obligations to their members (supporting collective bargaining, providing legal advice and support etc.), and representative bodies, effectively representing the democratic will of their members. As such, unions have what might be described as 'on-balance sheet' resources (buildings, investments, membership income etc.) and 'off-balance sheet' resources (voluntary activists). Over the last decade, union resources, both on and off-balance sheet have declined (Willman and Bryson 2009). While we do not have an authoritative account of union activism, there has been a marked decline in the number of trade union representatives, from around 328,000 to around 100,000 in 2004 (Charlwood and Forth 2009). Union financial reserves and measures of the financial solvency of unions are at historic lows (Willman and Bryson 2009).

There has also been considerable structural re-organisation among unions. The historic structure of British trade unionism was of many small craft unions, representing skilled workers in a particular occupation, with a smaller number of general unions representing semi-skilled and unskilled workers. Since 1980, the number of unions has decreased rapidly as unions have sought to respond to the triple challenge of falling membership, declining manufacturing employment and technological change, which has led to the disappearance of many of the

traditional crafts and trades around which craft unions were organised. Former craft unions have merged with each other and with the larger general unions, with the result that while in 1980 there were 438 trade unions by March 2008 just 167 were recorded by the Certification Office (2008). Union membership is now highly concentrated in a handful of very large unions: by 2008, 85 per cent of union members were members of just 15 unions, each with more than 100,000 members (Certification Officer, 2008).

Most large unions could be categorised as ‘conglomerates (exceptions include the teaching unions and unions organising medical professional like doctors and nurses). Willman (2004) argues that these conglomerate unions typically adopt a ‘modified M form’ structure, where the union head office uses tight financial controls to allow different geographical and industrial ‘divisions’ and bargaining units to share risk and cross-subsidise one another. Willman (2004) goes on to argue that this structure makes the task of union management complicated, because the representative and administrative functions of unions have been decoupled, so respond to different environmental pressures (see also Jarley et al. 1997). Representative functions remain close to the bargaining unit, while administrative activity is centred on the union’s headquarters. Equally, while financial control is vested in the headquarters, the union’s off-balance sheet resources (activists) are located in the bargaining units.

This means that there must be a bargaining process between the bargaining unit and the headquarters over resource allocation within the union. Headquarters will have only a limited amount of strategic choice over spending priorities, because it must first meet the demands of the bargaining units that they be adequately resourced. Further, the headquarters has only limited capacity to shape the priorities of activists, and it can only seek to influence activist behaviour, it cannot control it. *Given this organisational environment, a project like the UMF may be able to leverage change, by providing resources to introduce innovations which unions would not be able to resource otherwise.* But the impact of UMF projects (and hence their transformational potential) may also be limited because of the difficulty of embedding them across a diverse portfolio of bargaining units with divergent interests and priorities. This analysis chimes with research from the USA, which found that the internal governance structures, constitutional and democratic values, financial reporting oversight rules, and the autonomy of local union structures had prevented unions from making improvements to the way in which they were administered.

So what does the British research evidence tell us about how unions actually behave and manage themselves given these structural constraints?

Research specifically on this area is thin on the ground. One exception is the survey into union administrative policies of Clark et al (1998), although this does little more than provide information on the proportions of unions that had a HR or Personnel Director and that had a formal strategic planning process in place. The

workings of strategic planning in practice are not explored. Similarly, while there is a considerable body of research and analysis into the strategic choices facing unions (see Heery (2002) for examples), *there is less evidence on how union actually translate strategy into practice*. One notable exception is Heery's (1998) account of the re-launch of the Trade Union Congress (TUC). Heery found that the TUC was remarkably successful in re-ordering its internal structures to become a more flexible and campaigning organisation. However, despite the success of the re-launch, the TUC still struggled to secure key strategic objectives, because to fully realise its objectives it needed support from affiliate unions which was not forthcoming, and because it was limited in its ability to influence Government. Note also that the challenges involved in managing the TUC are significantly different to the challenges involved in managing an affiliate union.

There are also accounts of the problems that unions have faced in trying to develop strategies of organising and partnership, which, while not directly focused on issues around union management and administration, do shed some light on the difficulties involved (trade union organising and recruitment is also explicitly excluded from the remit of the UMF). Studies of union organising (Simms and Holgate 2009, Heery and Simms 2008), suggest that resource constraints, poor management systems and lack of commitment to change from senior union leaders, full-time officials and lay activists were all important internal constraints in change initiatives aimed at building an organising culture within trade unions. Tensions between the agenda of full-time officials and lay activists have also been documented in research studies on partnership. Union full-time officials are often seen as more supportive of union policy to encourage partnership, compared to activists and members who are often less convinced (see Stuart and Martinez Lucio, 2005).

Therefore we know how unions organise and structure themselves, and the structural constraints and tensions that they face as organisations. We have evidence of the practical difficulties that unions have in turning strategies of organising and partnership into practice. What there is less research and knowledge about are the administrative and managerial processes that lie behind these difficulties. The data from UMF projects help to fill this knowledge gap, but more importantly shed key insights into what modernisation may actually mean for trade unions. For in addition to the structural constraints and contextual conditions discussed above, unions increasingly face and are expected to respond to a broader range of environmental challenges. These challenges place increasing pressure on the administrative and managerial functions and processes of unions, raising questions about how and what unions need to change to improve their strategic and operational effectiveness.

Understanding the UMF as an employment relations modernisation project

There are various reasons why the UMF has emerged and what unions potentially stand to gain. Whilst it necessary to note that the issue of union modernisation is not uncontroversial, not least in terms of the role of the state in promoting and funding such innovation, such debate falls beyond the remit of the evaluation. Criticism has focused on the extent to which the UMF can be seen as an attempt by the state to reshape core trade union functions to meet government interests and wider concerns about what the public purse should be funding. Yet, as a 'modest' investment, the aspirations of the UMF 'to help speed unions' adaptation to changing labour market conditions' seem high, and are in the interests of both government and unions. Unions are key economic and social actors that can contribute not only to the well being of the labour force but economic competitiveness. Recognition of this has stimulated similar modernisation programmes in a number of other European countries and at the EU level – for example, the EU Trade Unions Responding to Change project (TRACE) (see Walker et al, 2007). This agenda of modernisation is best seen as a response to wider regulatory reforms and labour market shifts, and an assumption that there is a need to organisationally change or develop the way in which trades unions work.

This agenda for modernisation can be illustrated with reference to three environmental challenges that unions face, at different levels of analysis. First, the habitat of trade unions, as noted above, has changed, in terms of the labour market and the wider social and economic environment. The key point here is that at the same time as union membership has declined the qualitative pressures on unions as both representative and social actors have been more varied and significant. If the 1980s and early 1990s were defined by increased individualisation at work, decentralised industrial relations, new management strategies and greater labour market fragmentation, the last ten years has seen an increasing juridification of the employment relationship and new individual rights, new forms of management-labour dialogue and productivity coalitions, new agendas around skills and learning and a wider concern with workforce equality and diversity. This raises questions of how well equipped unions are to represent the changing composition of the labour market and engage with the changing demands of employers.

The second challenge relates to the new demands and expectations of the so called Information Society (Castells, 1998) and the way that communication channels within contemporary organisations are changing. Thus, any attempt at modernisation must involve engagement with new forms of communication, representation, and dialogue afforded by the internet and new forms of Information Communication Technologies (ICT). Whilst this has been a matter of debate in relation to unions for some time (Greene et al, 2003), there is a

question over whether trade unions have historically taken advantage of, or even understood, the full potential that ICT could offer.

The third challenge relates to the way unions look to organise and structure themselves and develop their internal capacities, skills and resources. To respond effectively to the types of challenges noted above, unions need to engage with issues around internal organisational change and potentially new ways of working and structuring work. This raises questions not only about the process of management, accountability and participation within unions, but about the wider competencies and professional knowledge of union staff.

These challenges form part of the modernisation path for trade unions. It is about equipping trade unions to meet the new economic and social demands of society (e.g. more female, older and migrant workers, a greater competitive and globalised environment, and a more transparent and information-rich labour market albeit with continuing levels of dualism and segmentation). This is especially the case if trade unions are accepted as a vital part of the social and economic order. Social partners such as trade unions need to be responsive to and reflective of the workforce if they are to add value or input into the broad concern with sustaining a 'just', 'orderly' and 'efficient' labour market. The ability of established institutions to be able to represent - and therefore effectively regulate work and employment relations - is a key political priority.

Whilst the case for modernisation is relatively clear, what this means in practice is, of course, far more complex. Unions as organisations have their own distinctive strategic imperatives and concerns, which are often far removed from considerations of administrative or operational efficiency. Specific union context will shape the nature of modernisation and the way in which modernisation is defined. But in understanding how unions may go about modernisation, as Hyman (2007:1) notes:

'Whether, and how, unions respond to external and internal challenges is also conditioned by what may be termed organisational capacity. This can be understood as the ability to assess opportunities for intervention; to anticipate, rather than merely react to, changing circumstances; to frame coherent policies; and to implement these effectively' (4/5).

He notes that it is tricky to theorise or 'specify concretely' the make-up and 'causal dynamics of organisational capacity' (5), but that modernisation is best understood not in terms of specific outputs but the processes of organisational capacity that develop, change and may be challenged to generate such outcomes. The nature of trade unions, and the way in which identity and values are embedded means that the course of modernisation may follow certain path-dependent properties. However, a key component of any process of modernisation is the degree of organisational learning, not just in terms of what

learning takes place and the meaning of this, but the extent to which an organisation is able to 'unlearn' extant internal bureaucratic protocols in the pursuit of modernisation (Hyman, 2007).

It is in this context that the UMF is best situated and understood. A key concern of the UMF is to support projects that explore the potential for and/or contribute to *transformational change* and that have a *demonstration effect* to the wider union movement. Transformation will have a different meaning and magnitude in different unions – for example, an innovation that transforms a small or occupationally specific union may have no relevance for a larger or general union. What is possible will also be shaped by the different political considerations of unions. But the main demonstration effects will derive from what is ultimately learnt or unlearnt through modernisation. This means that modernisation carries certain risks for unions. The main benefit of the UMF therefore is to afford unions a space to experiment with change and to provide an opportunity to take risks, free from the daily organisational routines and demands. It allows unions to reflect about key agendas and challenges and think through responses in different and imaginative ways. Whether and how this has happened is considered in more detail in the chapters that follow.

UMF – Round one: Final evaluation report

Chapter 3: First Round Award Process

This chapter details the process by which awards were granted under the First Round call of the UMF. It sets out in brief the history of the First Round and the thematic priorities for which projects were encouraged. It then maps the key characteristics of successful applications to the First Round.

Background to the First Round call

The UMF was established under the auspices of the Employment Relations Act 2004, which inserted into the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 an authority for the Secretary of Trade to establish a Fund to facilitate the operational modernisation of independent trade unions and their federations. Following an initial consultation and impact assessment exercise (see DTI, 2004, 2005), the promotion of the Union Modernisation Fund started in earnest in January 2005. A BIS team leader had already been appointed as early as July 2004 to oversee the programme. The promotion of the Fund started with an initial awareness raising exercise in January 2005, with meetings between BIS officials, the TUC and the UK's largest trade unions. This was followed by a formal presentation by the Minister for Employment Relations to the TUC's General Council in February 2005. A series of training events then followed, organised by the TUC and BIS.

It was stated by the government that the UMF was to represent a 'modest investment', with a total of £5-10 million allocated to the Fund. The stated purpose of the Fund is to support innovative projects to help speed unions' adaptation to changing labour market conditions. It thus supports projects that either explore the potential for, or contribute to, a transformational change in the organisational efficiency or effectiveness of a trade union or unions. Through helping unions to explore and test innovative ways of working, and by disseminating the results of projects widely across the union movement, the Fund also aims to provide a demonstration effect to the broader trade union movement, enabling unions to realise more fully their potential to improve the world of work for workers and employers alike.

Funding for individual projects was expected to total no more than £200, 000, although grants of up to £500, 000 were potentially available with sufficient justificatory evidence. All projects were expected to be matched-funded and to last a maximum of two years. The first call for applications under the Fund was

UMF – Round one: Final evaluation report

launched in July 2005. Applications were invited for transformational projects that met one or more of six priority themes.

Theme 1: Improving the understanding of modern business practices by full time officers and lay representatives, to better enable unions to work constructively with employers as partners to improve business performance. Projects were particularly welcomed that equipped full time officers and lay representatives for their role in the implementation of the Information and Consultation of Employees Regulations.

Theme 2: Improving two-way communication between unions and their members, leading to a potential for greater participation of members in the union.

Theme 3: Improving the ability of unions to respond to the increasing diversity of the labour market, and to supply services geared to the needs of a diverse membership.

Theme 4: Applying modern management methods to the running of unions as efficient, outward-looking and flexible organisations.

Theme 5: Assessing the challenges and opportunities of union restructuring and mergers.

Theme 6: Developing the professional competence of union officers.

Whilst bids on other themes were acceptable, they were not prioritised. A number of activities are deemed ineligible under the Fund: direct recruitment in respect of particular employers; activity that supports a union's ability to engage in collective bargaining; and, trade disputes and expenditure on political objectives. The first two exclusions could, however, be overcome if there is employer consent for such projects.

UMF First Round Application Procedure

Applications for the Fund were formally invited on 15 July 2005, with a submission date for applications of 3 October 2005. The application form and all supporting guidance notes were available on the BIS Employment Relations website. Applicants were asked to locate their project against any number of the six project themes, but had to provide clear detail on the project's rationale and objectives, milestones and outputs, governance structure, transformational potential, additionality, sustainability, risk assessment and wider benefits. All applications had to be accompanied by a note on the union's broader modernisation strategy and a monitoring and evaluation plan for the project. Applicants were free to approach either BIS or the TUC for advice on application

completion, prior to submission, and a number of advice sessions were also organised by BIS.

In total, 49 applications were submitted for consideration, with a total value of £6.1 million. Once submitted, the applications underwent a rigorous internal assessment process within BIS and were graded in readiness for the formal assessment and recommendation of projects by the UMF Supervisory Board. The composition of the UMF Supervisory Board was announced in September 2005 and included, in addition to Sir Bill Connor as Chair, three further trade union representatives, an employers' representative and two eminent industrial relations academics (see Appendix One). The Supervisory Board met to assess First Round applications on the 23/24 November 2005 and recommended that 32 applications be funded under the First Round, with three applications invited to resubmit revised versions of their bids, which were subsequently approved. In total, approximately £3 million was allocated to modernisation projects during the First Round. Their recommendations were then forwarded to the Minister for Employment Relations for final approval. Prior to an official offer of funding, every successful application had its original project monitoring and evaluation strategy assessed by the external UMF evaluators, who provided short comments on the saliency and adequacy of monitoring and evaluation plans. Approved applications were publicly announced in late March 2006.

Characteristics of applications

As noted, 35 projects were approved for funding out of the original 49 applications. In total, 39 unions and two union federations applied to the Fund. One union, The Transport and General Workers Union, submitted four applications (three of which were successful), and a further five unions made two separate applications (Amicus, BFAWU, Connect, NAHT and NSEAD). The majority of unions applying to the Fund were affiliated to the Trade Union Congress, although 12 unions (submitting 14 applications, half of which were successful) were not. A summary of successful and unsuccessful applications is presented in Tables 3.1 and 3.2.

There was a good spread of successful applications by size of union. Five successful applications were to unions with more than half a million members and six successful applications to unions with members of less than 5,000 members (three of which were based in the finance sector). Eleven successful applicants had memberships of over 50, 000 and 19 had memberships lower than this (the two federations were not counted).

There was also a good spread across industrial sectors, with seven successful applications from public sector unions, 14 from the private sector, three from the ex public sector and 8 from general unions or federations. Relative to applications to the Fund as a whole, applications from public sector unions were

UMF – Round one: Final evaluation report

disproportionately unsuccessful (with a success rate of 44 percent, compared to 65 percent for all applications). Typically, unsuccessful projects failed to address key criteria of the Fund (See Stuart et al, 2006).

Table 3.1 Summary of successful applications (* non TUC affiliated)

UMF code (UMF /2005)	Union	Amount Approved (banded)	Themes	Type of union	Size of Union
002*	Retained Firefighters' Union	50-99K	2, 4	Public	<5K
003	Nationwide Group Staff Union	<10k	1, 2	Private	5-20K
004	GMB	>150k	3, 6	General/Fed	500k-1M
005	Communication Workers Union	>150k	2, 4	General/Fed	100-500k
006	Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union (BFAWU)	10-49K	3	Private	20-50k
007	TUC Wales	>150K	3, 6	General/Fed	500k-1M
008*	Lloyds TSB Group Union	10-49K	2	Private	20-50k
009	National Union of Teachers	50-99K	2, 6	Public	100-500k
010	Society of Chiropractors and Podiatrists	50-99K	1, 2	Public	5-20k
011*	Royal College of Midwives	>150K	2, 6	Public	20-50k
013*	Union of Finance Staff (UFS)	10-49K	2	Private	<5K
014	Ceramic and Allied Trades Union	50-99k	5	Private	5-20K
015	United Road Transport Union (URTU)	50-99K	1, 4, 6	Private	5-20k
016	Equity	10-49K	1	Private	20-50k
017	TGWU	>150K	3	Gen/Fed	500k-1M
020	BFAWU	10-49K	2, 3	Private	20-50k
021	Community and District Nursing Association (CDNA)	10-49K	2, 4	Public	<5k
022	TGWU	>150K	3	Gen/Fed	500k-1M
023	Community	50-99K	2, 3, 6	Private	50-100k
026	TGWU	10-49K	1	Gen/Fed	500k-1M
027*	British Dental Association	10-49K	2, 3	Private	20-50k
028	Transport Salaried Staffs' Association (TSSA)	100-149K	2, 3	Ex Public	20-50k

UMF – Round one: Final evaluation report

030	Connect	50-99K	2, 4	Private	5-20k
031	Usdaw	>150k	4, 6	Private	100-500k
032	Prospect	>150k	2, 4	Public	100-500k
033	National Union of Rail, Maritime & Transport Workers (RMT)	>150k	4, 6	Ex Public	50-100k
034	National Union of Journalists	50-99k	2, 3	Private	20-50k
035	Accord, Connect and the Musicians Unions	50-99k	2	Private	50-100
036	TUC	50-99k	2, 6	Gen/Fed	N/A
038	Community and Youth Workers Union	10-49k	3, 5	Public	<5K
039	Amicus	100-149k	2	Private	1M+
041	ASLEF	50-99k	2	Ex Public	5-20K
043*	West Brom Building Society	<10k	1, 2, 4	Private	<5K
044	GFTU	50-99k	1, 6	Gen/Fed	N/A
046*	Portman Group Staff Association	10-49k	1, 6	Private	<5K

Table 3.2 Summary of unsuccessful applications

UMF code (UMF/2005)	Union	Amount requested £	Theme s#	Type of union	Size of Union
001	General Federation of Trade Unions	1-49k	4	Gen/Fed	N/A
012*	National Society for Education in Art and Design (NSEAD)	<10k	2	Public	<5k
018	TGWU	50-99k	4, 6	Gen/Fed	500k-1M
019*	NSEAD	50-99k	6	Public	<5K
024*	Professional Association of Teachers	10-49k	2, 4	Public	20-50k
025*	Royal College of Nursing	100-149k	1, 4, 5	Public	100-500k
029	Unison	201-500k	1, 3, 5	Public	1M+
037	Association of Teachers and Lecturers	150-200k	2	Public	100-500K
040	Amicus	>500k	4	Private	1M+
042	National Association of Educational Inspectors,	10-49k	1	Public	<5K

UMF – Round one: Final evaluation report

	Advisers and Consultants NAEIAC				
045*	Association of Licensed Aircraft Engineers	10-49k	2	Private	<5K
047	Professional Footballers Association	150- 200k	2, 4	Private	<5k
048*	National Association of Headteachers	150- 200k	2, 4	Public	20-50k
049*	National Association of Headteachers	150- 200k	1, 2	Public	20-50k

* non TUC affiliated union |

The applications covered a high proportion of trade union members in Britain. Bids were received from a little over a third (39 out of 106) of the independent trade unions eligible to apply. The unions that applied for UMF funding represented 86 per cent of total trade union membership. Thirty trade unions had projects funded, a quarter of unions eligible to apply to the Fund. Unions that received funding represented 51 per cent of total trade union membership.

Unsurprisingly, there were a disproportionate number of applications from larger trade unions to the Fund. Ten of the 14 independent trade unions (71 per cent) with more than 100, 000 members eligible to apply to the Fund submitted applications. Whilst there was a good representation of applications from those unions with less than 100, 000 members, this only accounted for approximately a quarter of those eligible to apply to the Fund.

Requests for funding ranged from just £2, 750 to £800, 000 (four times the specified limit). The largest grant awarded was for £198, 324 to the GMB and the smallest of just £4, 546 to the West Bromwich Building Society Staff Union. Nine grants of over 150k were awarded, including two to the TGWU. Typically these went to large unions with over 100, 000 members, although both the Royal College of Midwives (with between 20-50k members) and the RMT (50-100k) were smaller unions with successful large bids. The four largest applications to the Fund, which were all £200k or over were unsuccessful, as was the smallest application of just £2, 750.

Analysis of applications by project themes

It was common for applicants to locate their projects against a number of priority themes; indeed, in some cases up to four or more relevant themes. Just two applicants located their projects against a single priority theme. This seems to be a practice that is typical in such funding streams (see, for example, Terry and Smith 2003 on the DTI Partnership at Work Fund). The spread of applications across project themes is depicted in Table 3.3. The most common priority theme targeted by projects relates to improving two-way communications with members,

whilst the least popular theme for applications relates to assessing the challenges and opportunities of mergers and restructuring. There was a high degree of clustering of particular projects. In total, approximately 60 per cent of all applications were based on exploiting ICT in some way. This builds on the fact there had been some interest in the union movement in the development of ICT, but unions were at very different stages of development, some early adopters aside.

3.3: Applications by UMF priority theme

	Total	Successful
Theme 1: Understanding modern business practices and working with employers as partners, including I&C	12	8
Theme II: Improving two-way communications with members	28	21
Theme III: Diversity	12	11
Theme IV: Applying modern management methods	16	9
Theme V: Assessing the challenges and opportunities of mergers and restructuring	4	2
Theme VI: Developing professional competence	13	11

Characteristics of unsuccessful projects

In total, 14 applications were rejected, with a rejection rate of 29 percent. There were three main reasons why projects were rejected. First, projects comprised a significant hardware element. This was relevant to five of the rejected applications. Typically, this related to the purchase of laptop computers, but a couple of projects also included significant hardware costs relating to the complete overhaul of existing ICT network systems.

Second, projects were rejected if deemed to fall outside the basic eligibility criteria of the Fund. This applied most notably to the two largest bids submitted, one of which was for a new converged computer network that fell well outside of the Fund's stated (exceptional) maximum of 500k, the other a project that seemed more suitable for Union Learning Fund support.

Third, the main reason for rejecting bids was simply that they fell short of the main objectives of the Fund around union transformation, modernisation and the demonstration effect. In other words, such applications came up short in term of key criteria for assessment of bids. This was generally understood in terms of having a limited transformation potential. It was the potential for projects to have a transformation effect that ultimately distinguished between projects that were approved for funding and those rejected.

Experiences and perceptions of the First Round award process

As part of the evaluators' First Evaluation Report (Stuart, 2006), a survey was conducted of all applicants' perceptions of the First Round bidding process, along with interviews of selected members of the Supervisory Board. We do not repeat our findings here, but it is worth highlighting a number of key points.

In terms of the process of putting applications together, there were three key characteristics of successful applications. First, more time was invested in putting applications together. Successful applicants spent nearly twice as long preparing bids (8.4 days) compared to unsuccessful applications (4.5 days). Larger unions were naturally able to mobilise more resources and time than smaller unions. Second, where unions drew on the support of external consultants there was a 100 per cent success rate. This was of particular value for smaller unions that lacked internal resources and capability. For some unions this was the subject of internal debate. The RCM, for example, initially took the view that the use of external consultants would be a necessity for an effective bid, but they nonetheless decided to draw on their own internal resources to frame a bid and use the exercise as a learning experience. Their bid was successful. Third, bids constructed specifically in response to the UMF were less likely to be successful than projects already under consideration. In many cases unions had conducted reviews of key activities that called for action (modernisation), but they had been unable to progress due to resource constraints. The UMF thus facilitated the development of pending strategic objectives, or allowed projects that would have been significantly under-resourced to be expanded in a potentially more transformational way.

The role of the Supervisory Board was central to the approval of applications. Following the internal assessment and scoring by BIS officials, it was the job of the Supervisory Board to make the final recommendations on funding. This process was appropriately and effectively executed. The assessment process was robust and BIS officials and the Supervisory Board worked well with and complemented each other.

Board members came to their conclusions on the basis of consensus decision-making. Where there were differences of opinion they did not become entrenched and after discussion decisions were reached by unanimity. Board members were particularly careful with regard to any potential conflicts of interests. They did not participate in deliberations or decisions on unions where there may have been some potential conflict of interest, for example where a board member was a former official of a union that had submitted a bid. It was made clear by the Board Chair that they "were not influenced by the size of the union or political influence, or the 'prettiness' of the bid". All applications were assessed solely on their own intrinsic merit.

Finally, whilst the majority of Supervisory Board and BIS officials felt that the overall quality of applications was high, there a concern over the extent to which many of the projects were truly transformational. As one Board member put it, the bids were of a good quality, but 'lacked imagination'. However, this is an empirical question, which is examined more systematically in the remainder of this report. The transformation potential of projects lie not so much in the mechanics of a bid or a set of activities, but the context of particular unions, the problems that are addressed and the wider outcomes of projects. The Board also noted that bids could have given more attention to their dissemination strategies.

At a more basic level, the call for First Round applications seems to have been very successful. Forty-nine submissions were regarded as a decent return for the First Round of a new Fund, and was argued by Fund officials to be higher than for the initial rounds of other programmes, for example the Partnership Fund.

There was a particular dynamic around communication and diversity/ equality in the First Round that set a theme for the forthcoming rounds. Modernisation became linked in great part to issues of social involvement, representation and fairness and this steadily set the tone for future rounds of the UMF, as we note later, and the association of the UMF with new rights related issues and the nature of intra and inter-union discussion on it.

Chapter 4: Project activities and outputs: the artefacts of modernisation

UMF projects were located against six priority themes of modernisation. In practice, projects tended to be organised across a number of themes. This chapter details in relatively descriptive terms the key activities undertaken by projects and the outputs that resulted, and is organised across the six priority themes of the First Round. Where applicable, the potential benefits and indicators of good practice of particular projects are noted, but a more analytical consideration of longer-term outcomes is considered in chapter six. The chapter begins with a brief note on the success rate of project completions.

Round one project completion and delivery

The second evaluation report (Stuart et al, 2008) noted that many projects were experiencing significant delays in their progress against plan. This is not an unusual occurrence for projects and their management in most areas of the private or public sector. For trade unions, which typically do not have extensive internal project management expertise, or other resources which would help underpin delivery, it is even less surprising. The key question is how these delays impacted on overall project completion rates and success measures. In this regard, the First Round of the UMF appears to have been very successful.

In total, just over a third of projects requested, and obtained approval for, formal extensions. These ranged from less than one month to up to six months; in once case even though an extension was approved the project still appeared to complete to time. There were no clear differences between the types of projects or unions that requested extensions. The balance between large (more than 100k members) and small unions was almost identical. For the large unions, projects tended to be larger, more complicated and have multiple activities; for the smaller unions, the reason for extensions typically related to problems with, externally sourced, IT projects.

More significantly, around 85 per cent (30) of projects completed their activities. In some cases, the activities may have been slightly revised, but all projects that completed delivered some outputs, achieved benefits and learnt important lessons in terms of union modernisation. Just three projects did not complete at all. These were all projects led by small unions. The status of two other projects is less clear: one project appeared to complete its activities, but failed to produce its audited accounts on time, so a full repayment of the grant was made; in another case, the project appeared to be progressing well, but did not deliver a final report or request an extension.

Across the projects, the general activities undertaken tended to fall into five categories: research/mapping exercises; IT/ICT reviews and new product implementation; training and competence development; raising awareness; and, employer engagement. The immediate outputs were naturally derived from the activities and included: research reports/state of the art reviews; new websites and/or new electronic protocols; numbers of trained staff and new modules and courses; toolkits and handbooks; and, new partnership arrangements or model agreements with employers. The remainder of the chapter reviews these activities and outputs in more details across the First Round priority themes.

Theme 1: Understanding modern business practices and working with employers as partners, including I&C

Projects funded against this priority theme were designed to improve understanding amongst full-time union officials and lay activists of the key challenges facing unions as business organisations. By equipping unions with such capabilities it was anticipated that unions could work more constructively with employers to improve performance. Particular attention was also directed at equipping unions with the competences for engaging more effectively with the implementation of the Information and Consultation of Employees (ICE) Regulations. In a number of cases, the main activities of projects were related to the development of electronic resources, which also falls under theme 2. Eight projects addressed in some way the aspirations of Theme One.

Projects such as the Nationwide Group Staff Union were focused on the development of a dedicated website for its members and training for key officers and activists in how to use it. The link with employers is that such sites can fit within an employer's overarching website. In contrast, the project led by the General Federation of Trade Unions was educational and entailed the advertisement and organisation of numerous management courses, although these courses were not specifically limited to understanding modern business practices, but also included diversity awareness training. The target of 400 learners for the projects was far exceeded, with 501 participants attending courses during the life of the project.

Four projects were specifically designed to further partnership relations with employers. Only two of these projects, were formally signed off as completed. The projects by the West Bromwich Building Society Staff Association and the Society of Chiropodists and Podiatrists did not complete.

The main activities of the PGSA project were threefold. First, a two-day workshop was organised by the Partnership Institute (PI), attended by 20 management and staff association representatives. Two separate workshops for management and staff association representatives had been held prior to this. A report was produced by the PI detailing the course of action needed to embed partnership working in the Portman. Alongside this activity, the PGSA commissioned a study on its role and visibility within the organisation by an external consultancy (CERTraining). The study found a generally favourable disposition amongst staff towards the association, but its visibility within the organisation was low. All this background material was combined into a training programme delivered by CERTraining to around 40 union representatives and officers at a number of geographical locations. The course focused on the challenges of developing partnership in the context of the Information and Consultation Regulations, but also covered aspects of TUPE and redundancy legislation, issues that had become pertinent against the backdrop of a merger between the Portman and the Nationwide Building Society. The project was successfully completed despite the industrial relations turbulence created by this merger process; as well as the departure during the project of the PGSA Chairperson. During the period of the project PGSA membership steadily increased, with 361 new members joining, including a number of middle and senior managers, increasing membership from approximately 50 to 65 per cent; although membership has subsequently reduced due to staff reductions as part of the merger.

The TGWU project, 'Preparing Opinion-Formers for Information and Consultation', was identified by the UMF Supervisory Board as a project that could potentially provide 'an important demonstration effect to the unions'. Pilot workshops, for example in the transport sector, were conducted along with a three-day briefing to education tutors. Notably, a pilot programme was agreed with the newly-formed logistics consortium Home Delivery Network Limited (HDNL) to put '250 workplace representatives (TGWU and Usdaw) and over 300 front-line managers through a programme to understand, undertake and implement brand new structures based upon the ICE regulations'. The programme had to compete with the business priorities of HDNL, but the union saw it as a potential best practice case that could be disseminated to other companies, such as BP Logistics. The main benefit of the project according to union reports was that 'through the promotion of T and G officers, this issue (information and consultation) is one of top priorities among the membership'. In addition to training, the project produced a toolkit that was distributed to 600 union offices and emphasised the benefits that could be achieved through working together with employers on information and communication.

Theme 2: Improving two-way communication

In total, 21 successful projects met the aspirations of Theme Two, although a number of projects predominantly located against other themes also addressed communication issues. This proved to be the most popular theme of the UMF First Round. All projects under this theme focused on taking advantage of the potential benefits of new forms of information and communication technologies to facilitate, through improvements in information flows, greater participation of union members. In the vast majority of cases this meant the upgrading of existing websites or the development of new websites, but a number of projects also took this further in terms of how information is stored, managed and communicated more broadly with unions.

Activities generally concentrated on three areas. First, there was a significant research dimension, as unions sought to survey members, either through samples or in the case of the TSSA a survey of all 33, 000 members, to assess members' communication needs (including web user needs), views on existing communication mechanisms and web sites and usage of web sites. Typically, unions which conducted surveys of their members and activists ran into difficulties because they had underestimated the complexity of the task as a result of having no prior experience of this type of research. However, all unions found ways around these difficulties and the research generated useful findings. For example, in the case of the TSSA and BFAWU the barriers some members face in fully engaging with their union were highlighted.

Second, and to some extent related, activity focused on updating membership records. Whilst the updating of such records was a central objective of a number of projects, it became clear that membership records were often in a poorer state than anticipated. For example, there was a tendency for membership records to be kept regionally, rather than centrally, and in different formats in different union regions and branches. Often, for example, member records included no details on race and gender issues.

Third, projects focused on the piloting, trialling, installing and testing of new modes of technology. In the case of the CWU the union established, after an internal application process, six regional pilots that trialled new and novel communication methods. For many projects, the development of new or modified ICT systems involved detailed discussions and negotiations with service providers over web site design and content management systems.

Relations with service providers were not always as efficient or as productive as anticipated at the outset. In most cases getting agreement with service providers over technical specifications took longer than expected, and in at least one case led to the project threatening to find an alternative supplier. This reflected the known difficulties experienced by many clients, particularly those less experienced, seeking to procure occasional or one-off IT or other major

infrastructure services. Evaluating outputs for projects under Theme 2 appears at one level to be more straightforward than some of the other themes. Notably, the design and launch of a new (and more interactive) website represents a key deliverable and success criteria for projects. However, it is important to recognise that this type of output may not, in itself, be a valid proxy for union modernisation. As project managers recognised, how such sites are used to improve communications within unions and empower members will be a longer-term issue for monitoring and evaluation and in many cases will require significant associated cultural change internally beyond any project life cycle. How such outputs can act as mechanisms for longer-term modernisation outcomes will be considered in more detail later in the report.

There was, nonetheless, emerging evidence of good practice and recognition of the longer-term implications of projects. The Nationwide Group Staff Association (NGSU) launched a new web site and had started to trial regular online surveys with members, such as around pay. Initial assessments suggested an increase in web users by 10 percent. The project by the Lloyds TSB Group Union led to the launch of a new website with improved interactivity that included an on-line balloting system. Moving forward, the union expressed some trepidation over the potential for misuse of its online forum, but recognised the bigger cultural objective around engaging members and boosting interactivity. Their initial evaluation suggested that 'reaction to the project from union officials has been extremely positive and the project itself both has and will have a significant impact on the roles performed by union officials'. For example, the number of members with whom union officers communicate to by e-mail (rather than post or phone) had increased by 28 per cent. The broader impact on members was argued to be 'difficult to assess', but the raw data on web usage appeared positive. The number of members registered for the union's online service had increased by 137 per cent (5240 users), and there had been 2000 posts on the new online forum covering 410 topics, such that members were 'sharing experience and expertise like never before'. The union had also undertaken an online pay negotiation survey, which had elicited a five per cent response, and two issues of the union magazine had been published on its website.

One of the benefits of such technology is the ability to track usage and hence reveal clear performance data. The usage of new online services had increased across all projects targeted at improving such services; recorded web hits had increased in all cases. This was also the case where the emphasis was on getting members and/or officers to formally register. For example, the NUT project, Heath, developed a systematic online interactive centre linked to an up-to-date and developing membership database, allowing local officers to gain access to unprecedented information, advice, guidance and on-line support. Over 600 local officers registered. The potential for local officers to modernise their activities was high, particularly in terms of improving and standardising membership databases (due to the reasons noted above) and knowledge management systems.

The projects by Prospect, Connect, RMT and Equity were all focused to some extent on the development of more sophisticated and integrated electronic information and knowledge management systems. They were not, therefore, just about the publication of new web sites that allowed members to participate in forums or respond to surveys. In the RMT case a new e-membership system was established that allow members to sign up and provide membership details online, whilst 250 branch secretaries are now able to access and update membership records in 'real time'. In the Prospect case far more 'union business' can now be stored and monitored online, as their website not only includes a detailed library of resources, but allows union case workers to track the details of cases online. The new site also allows union representatives to provide information of bargaining outcomes and this is collated and published to act as benchmarks for others. In all cases, union officers and representatives now communicate with each and their members far more regularly by email.

In the case of Equity, the project, based on a trial in Scotland, resulted in a new membership system whereby actors can post their profiles on an online directory. To-date, some 600 (out of 1000) actors have added their profiles and this had led to increased communication across the union and also wider engagement with potential employers, who have started to make use of the directory. There are plans to roll out the initiative, initially in London and then nationally.

One of the ten selected cases for detailed investigation, the BFAWU project, Membership and Communication Systems provided a useful case of good practice. The project was designed to investigate how best to upgrade the union's membership records and communications systems in order to establish two-way communication within the union, and facilitate the tracking of members so that its operations could be both more efficient and more responsive to membership needs. A detailed research exercise on membership needs was undertaken and then members' views on various modes of communication were elicited.

The project highlighted gaps in existing membership data, and the need for a more coherent approach in relation to the collection of this, something that is essential to target more effectively BFAWU services to an increasingly diverse (particularly in terms of ethnic background) potential membership. This led to the design of a new membership application form, in order to capture a greater variety of personal information. There is now an acknowledgement within BFAWU of the need to develop standardised processes and procedures for administering membership enquiries, since the current approach to this is ad hoc and inefficient. This raises broader issues related to the structure of the union. On the back of the project a new communication system was being implemented that would allow Branch Officials to issue membership numbers, an activity previously done at the regional level.

The project will have a recognised long-term impact within BFAWU. One senior official indicated that the project represented the starting point for the modernisation process within BFAWU, because it has alerted the union to the many challenges that lie ahead. Activities will continue as the new membership and communication system is installed. BFAWU has made the financial commitment to gather information to ensure that membership records are up to date, and to train staff to enable them to use the new system when it is introduced. The new system was also designed with sustainability in mind, and flexible enough to enable new features to be added to accommodate emergent needs.

The CWU project was, in many respects, the most ambitious of the Theme 2 projects. The project trialled a range of new, innovative IT solutions in six selected pilot sites: North Lancs and Cumbria; Merseyside and South West Lancs; Coventry area; North East region; Capital Branch; and Gwent Amalgamated Branch. The innovative solutions introduced varied by branch, as each pilot began from a different starting point and a different level of local expertise and technical knowledge. Nonetheless, five of the pilots introduced new software packages, such as media suites, supported in three pilots with dispersion of laptops amongst local representatives. Five of the pilots experimented with a new CWU text messaging service, three with teleconferencing, two with new print solutions and one with video making equipment. The pilots were undertaken during a period of turbulent industrial relations with Royal Mail, which impacted on the amount of time branch representatives were able to devote to the project and, in some cases, the level of technical expertise (in relation to common software packages) was found to be quite rudimentary. Yet, each of the pilots realised benefits from the trials. The level of text messaging to members increased significantly and this was found to have had a knock-on effect on visits to the CWU website. Also, perhaps some of the seeming less innovative activities, such as the introduction of new printing technologies, was found to have had a potentially transformative effect on branch operations. As the Final Report notes: 'Since its installation, the North East Region have produced around 250, 000 copies of various union literature as part of their role providing a professional print service to their branches and CWU headquarters'. This led to cost savings, in terms of no longer having to outsource such provision, but had also freed up the valuable time of local reps and allowed the branch to communicate its message more swiftly than in the past.

An emphasis on piloting IT equipment was also undertaken by Amicus, with laptops and home broadband distributed to 67 union branches. However, this project did not appear to have been as positively received as the CWU trials. Whilst there was evidence of improved levels of communication, the Final Report suggest this was not as high as anticipated, and it was claimed that much further consultation was needed before the project could be rolled out to all union branches.

Theme 3: Improving unions' ability to respond to diversity

Projects under Theme Three aimed to improve the ability of unions to respond to the increasing diversity of the labour market and to supply services geared to the needs of a diverse membership. In total, ten proposals cut across the aspirations of this theme. Many of the projects related to this theme had multiple components and related to a number of other priority themes. For example, both the BFAWU and TSSA projects also linked explicitly with priority Theme Two, in that they sought to link any emergent strategies around diversity to their systems of on-line communication.

Again, there was a strong research dimension to modernisation projects focusing on diversity. In the case of the BFAWU project this was the sole purpose of the project, to investigate in detail the specific patterns of ethnic backgrounds in the relevant industries covered and to identify the needs of members. But nearly all other projects conducted a research or mapping exercise during the early stage of the project. This included surveys of members' needs and/or audits to assess activism and union participation by member background (be it in terms of gender and/or race). In many cases this activity proved to be more protracted than anticipated. This was partly down to what seemed to be a pervasive problem with extant membership records, and also the difficulty of getting good response rates to membership surveys. As one project team reported, 'the initial survey took three times longer than anticipated'. An exception was the BDA project on young member participation. Working on the basis that recent membership surveys generated response rates of between 40 and 60 percent, the project team revised the original plan for a single large survey and undertook three smaller surveys to allow progress to be tracked more effectively over the course of the project. In addition to survey methods, many projects also undertook group interviews and focus groups, desk-top research and small scale studies to identify best practice activity at community or company level.

The research phase proved valuable for framing the more practical aspects of projects. In general, the research was considered to have produced results that were in a useable form for the unions. The Wales TUC project experienced a problem in this regard, as it had contracted the research out to an external agency that had produced a report that was not 'fit for purpose'. This was not a common experience with contracted research. In this specific case, the Wales TUC contracted a more relevant agency to conduct the research; in other cases, unions tended to rely on trusted contractors they had used before or that had experience of working with and conducting research for unions.

The value of such research activity is best highlighted with reference to the BFAWU, Membership Diversity research project. The research involved background investigations into activity across the union movement, qualitative focus groups of members from diverse background and a survey of members and non-members distributed via the union's branch structure to all workplaces.

A number of ideas evolved from the research were ‘tested’ via focus groups and a series of recommendations drawn. First, there was need to communicate the services and benefits offered by the union more extensively, with greater clarity and in an increased number of languages (six priority languages were identified).

Second, it was recommended that the accessibility of ESOL (English for speakers of other languages) courses be reviewed, as it was not currently possible for night shift workers to take advantage of these learning opportunities. This possibility of this was being explored with the BFAWU Union Learning Fund (ULF) project team. Third, that union information was targeted more specifically to the needs of different groups of workers; a finding that links with the objectives and outcomes of the Theme Two BFAWU project outlined above. Fourth, that there was a need to explore more systematically the needs and working conditions of temporary agency workers. The union was looking to explore these issues with a number of the larger temp agencies. Fifth, in terms of increasing participation a workplace ‘buddy’ scheme was suggested, explained as ‘a new role...who will be a contact and mentor for colleagues of the same nationality (or where languages are shared, the same language group). This new position should be clearly identified and supported within the union structure’. Sixth, that a programme of diversity awareness training be developed. Seventh, that, following a high degree of support from leading employers, partnerships be developed in relation to diversity concerns. And finally, that the union looks to build links within the communities of their members and forges links with unions in other countries. The key point is that all the recommendations raised by the research have fed into the ongoing strategies of the union.

Dedicated diversity training and broader capacity building was a central component of many projects. For example, the GMB race and diversity project involved the delivery of a series of training events for union officers and staff. The training involved a dedicated course to raise diversity awareness and was undertaken by 452 staff.

Other projects aimed to develop a more systematic training component that either looked to embed diversity courses in ongoing union education, for example the TGWU Equality and Migrant Workers projects, or was designed to facilitate the development of a network of equality representatives. Three projects sought to develop these new union roles. Such training was often accompanied by dedicated ‘toolkits’ that represented sustainable educational resources. Toolkits and handbooks were, most notably, completed by the TGWU, NUJ and GMB. There would seem to be real value in disseminating these outputs broadly across the union movement.

It was not possible to aggregate with any degree of certainty the total number of equality reps developed as part of the UMF First Round. No statistics were provided by the TSSA, whilst the TGWU equality project stated that around 40-50 were recruited as part of workplace seminars. The most progress appeared to

have been made by the NJU project, which was focused specifically on developing a network of equality representatives. A new training course for representatives was developed and overall 70 equality representatives were trained. This was less than the target of 80, but nonetheless given the fact this was a new role the number was considered a success. More importantly, some of those trained came from workplaces and chapels (union branches) with previously low levels of activism, and there was evidence that participation in equality reps courses and recruitment to the role increased interest in the structure and activity of the union more generally. A 'bargaining for equalities' handbook was produced, with further updates added to it in response to user demand. Plans were also being made to 'mainstream' and embed equalities issues within the union, for example by incorporating parts of the equalities training program into traditional union provided training for representatives. A similar agenda resulted from the publication of an Equalities toolkit and handbook as part of the TGWU Equalities project.

In addition to developing training resources, a number of projects sought to advance the equalities agenda in collaboration with employers, either to trial out new equalities policies or to build and establish the equality representative role. In the case of the TSSA this took the form of trying to establish model partnership agreements with six employers. Whilst progress was slow, the union appeared to have gained 'agreement in principle' from three employers, Scot Rail, TFL and Thomas Cook. The TUC Wales project sought to undertake six workplace pilots, but in practice only four of these focused explicitly around employers, and it proved time consuming to organise. More successful was a marketing and leafleting campaign of 2500 employers about the objectives of the Wales TUC project on Equality at Work, and 5 employer-employee seminars attended by 64 participants.

The TGWU equality project held four workplace/sector seminars during the course of the project, in general/ multi-industrial, local government, oil refinery sector and the bus industry. The seminars focused on issues pertinent to each sector and the role and contribution that equality representatives and the equality toolkit could make. Discussions also took place with a range of other employers during the project and others were planned for the future, with for example, Ford, British Waterways and Associated British Ports. Both the TGWU and NUJ toolkits had designed model equality agreements that equality reps could use in their discussions with employers.

Theme 4: Applying modern management methods to the running of unions

Theme Four focused on the application of modern management methods to the running of unions as efficient, outward looking and flexible organisations. Typically, this involved a programme of management training for senior officers, training in the use of new technologies or the use of technology to improve the operations of day-to-day union activities, such as the updating of memberships

records. Thus projects under this theme also tended to contribute to other themes, notably two and six. Nine projects fell under this theme.

The technological aspects of projects have been described above. The application of modern management methods related to the way in which the technologies were to be utilised and the development of specific competences to take advantage of such technology. The projects revealed that many management methods considered relatively routine in business settings were not quite so familiar in terms of the way in which unions organised their activities. Thus, training for projects covered basic and advanced software skills, in relation to packages such as Word, Excel, Outlook and Powerpoint. There was evidence that this had impacted on the ability of union representatives to make presentations and in terms of the ways in which they communicate. Increased use of email appears to have been an important development in many of the ICT projects.

The URTU project illustrated some of the issues and complexities involved. This project was primarily focused on its IT component, and it introduced a suite of new technological protocols that could be used by full-time officers, including the ability to send bulk SMS messaging to members. At least five new courses, designed as accredited Open College Network (OCN) units, were developed, such as 'management of change', 'project management' and 'stress management'. However, the project raised issues in terms of the skills that needed to be developed and how training was to be organised. A project report noted that 'it is significant that there now needs to be continued progress made in relation to the wider core skills training that the project proposed to develop'. It was suggested that this was less than straightforward, as 'it may well not be possible for the union to guarantee to deliver the total number of planned days' training, nor involve the whole intended number of beneficiaries'. In practice, it was difficult to get a group of senior union officials to attend bespoke courses at the same time. Instead, the project changed direction and got officers to attend the regular courses provided through the union's educational provision. The project also raised a set of on-going training needs.

The issue of 'work load' and hence ability to attend training sessions was raised by other projects. Time constrained FTOs often have few opportunities to attend such training and organising group attendance at timetabled events can be troublesome. This point was made explicit in the reports of the Retained Firefighters' Union project, which noted that 'getting people together for training is an issue'. This project nonetheless made significant progress in advancing its new technological capabilities and in identifying the existing competencies of RFU representatives with regard to software applications and developing training materials.

One project stood out in developing the application of modern management methods in a way that was not connected to the introduction of technological

infrastructure. The USDAW project, 'Developing the USDAW Management Model', was an ambitious initiative to radically overhaul the union's management structures and business processes through the adoption of a 'balanced score-card' model of management. Part of this process involved the development of performance metrics tailored to the organization. The union had been inspired to introduce this management system on the basis that much can be learnt from the management practices of the large employers its members work in. The project was organised around five 'work streams': developing the management models (essentially the steering group for all project work); developing operational performance management systems and tools; developing priority setting management systems and tools; developing project management systems and tools; and, maximising performance management systems and tools. In total, 27 senior officers of the union were organised across these work streams, each of which had its own targets and milestones and progressed a series of training events and master classes.

The project delivered some discernable outputs. An USDAW balanced score-card was developed in conjunction with a team of consultants from the Work Foundation. A system of score-cards, based on key performance indicators was developed and a roll out across the union's regions planned, each of which had their own relevant targets and performance indicators. A new performance management system (PMS) was piloted. A survey of those involved in the pilot suggested that the PMS was effective in communication and goal setting. A management development programme for key union staff was undertaken, and around 30 plus participants attended three training courses, accompanied by a one-to-one, one year mentoring programme of senior staff and officers ran by the Work Foundation. All this activity was brought together and published under the 2007 Strategic Plan, which set out the targets and objectives of the four key themes of the USDAW balanced score-card: organising, people, financial and delivery objectives. For example, as part of its organising strategic plan the union set a target of 94, 000 new members (it typically needs to recruit 80K members to stand still), 1, 300 new representatives and specific targets for the big 4 supermarkets. The balanced score-card now underpins all the union's strategic decisions and operational practices. Its ongoing roll out was supported by an application to the Second Round of the UMF.

Theme 5: Assessing the challenges and opportunities of restructuring and mergers

Just two successful projects fell within the remit of Theme Five. The CYWU project, also listed under Theme 3, involved a research project designed to ascertain the specific needs of its very diverse membership base. The research was considered important for preparing the union for merger with the TGWU. The research revealed the needs and expectations of members in terms of the support they need from their union.

The other project under this theme was also a dedicated research project for the Ceramic and Allied Trades Union (CATU). The research, which was undertaken by Keele University, was situated within the context of the changing face of employment both in the ceramics industry and the North Staffordshire area where much of the union's activity had been traditionally located. The research was commissioned in terms of a brief by the union that it 'needed to increase the areas in which it operated and reach beyond its industrial roots by adding a whole raft of community activities to its traditional industrial imperatives'. The research included: local labour market analysis; interviews with employers; interviews with migrant workers (primarily Polish, Czech and Slovakian) and a review of civil society in the relevant region. The research comprised the core of this project and the fact that the findings were delayed for around six months impacted on the overall management of the project. However, the findings and recommendations of the research seem to have resonated with the union, in terms of identifying the 'magnitude of the task it faces in adapting in today's globalised society'. This has fed into a debate about the future of the union and how it organises itself.

Theme 6: Developing the Professional Competence of Union Officers

Theme Six related to the development of the professional competence of union officers at all levels. In practice, all projects under this theme also tie in with the aspirations of other priority themes, and most have already been detailed above. For example, both the TUC and GFTU project were based around the use of ICT technologies.

In terms of the development of professional competence, activities can be grouped under two general headings. First there are projects that were focused within a single union on the training of a cadre of senior officers or union staff more generally. Second, projects sought to develop union officers through a more networked approach.

In terms of internal union activities, the projects led by the GMB and Community are good examples. The Community project was educational and focused on 'creating capability' amongst senior officers within the union, most notably in terms of furthering the union's new community-based strategy. A four-day training programme was designed in conjunction with Henley College of Management and delivered to three cohorts. This was claimed to represent 'the most comprehensive group of Community officers ever to receive strategic education together' – including the General Secretary, Assistant General Secretary, all Regional Secretaries, all head office staff and senior officers on the Executive Committee.

The training included sessions on cultural change, team working, strategy and marketing. The original plan was to put 26 officers through the programme, but, following the perceived success of the first session at Henley, the next two

UMF – Round one: Final evaluation report

events were held at cheaper locations in order to increase the number attending to 37 overall. A final one-day evaluation event was attended by 24 of the Henley participants.

The final report reveals that the programme provoked focused and insightful debate amongst participants. A key concern was to discuss 'what are the taboos within the union – what DON'T we talk about? (that perhaps we should)'. Moving forward, four main themes emerged that needed addressing. First, there was still some confusion over what the union's community-based approach meant, and some antipathy from a minority that saw the role of unions primarily in terms of collective bargaining. Second, was a view that too much was centralised in head-office. Third, that the union's organising and educational functions needed to be more effectively integrated. Fourth, there needed to be increased diversity in the composition of officer appointments, to combat the oft-quoted image of trade unionists as 'pale, male and stale', although there was minority opposition to such a policy as it was perceived as 'positive discrimination'. At the final evaluation event it was noted that more needed to be done to market the union and to improve its communications, both internally and externally.

From this, a series of practical recommendations were proposed and a senior-level implementation team established. The recommendations primarily related to improving communication structures within the union, improving relations between the head office (and its operation) and the regions and re-evaluating the roles and responsibilities of officers. Reflecting on what had come out of the project, the project manager reported that the project had been beneficial and some important lessons had been learnt:

'Some of the tone of the above appears negative largely because much of our discussion was based on identifying the mistakes we currently make and what we have to do to put them right. We now know what we are and where we are going. It is also imperative that we arrange for the union's staff and National Executive Committee to undergo a version of these learning processes'. (Project Manager)

It was recognised that major issues of cultural change needed to be addressed in the future: 'There is more work needed within our culture to get everyone to speak out without fear, and we still need to be precise where our union's new culture will take us in terms of new people to represent'.

The GMB Race and Diversity project involved an extensive programme of awareness training on diversity issues for all union staff. Whilst it took some effort to organise such a large programme of training, the union succeeded in putting 452 of its staff through the training sessions. On completion of the seminar it was anticipated that GMB staff would have:

enhanced understanding of equality and diversity issues and how these apply to their role and practice;
recognised how assumptions and stereotypes can lead to discrimination;
clarified their role and responsibility within current and developing equality and diversity law;
explored the benefits of providing an effective and appropriate service to the GMB's diverse membership;
identified ways of overcoming barriers.

A full write-up of this case is provided in the Appendices. However, it is evident that the project attempted to radically change the awareness of all union staff and, following this, to embed diversity considerations into all union structures and activities. In more sustainable terms, the project also delivered an equality toolkit and a training programme for Diversity Champions, undertaken during the project by 22 participants. The barriers identified to the mainstreaming of diversity during the project resonated at the most senior levels within the union and are to feed into the union's ongoing strategic deliberations.

Three projects adopted a more network approach to the development of the professional competence of union officers, those by the GFTU, TUC and TUC Wales. As explained above, the GFTU project involved the organisation of numerous projects on the application of management methods that led to the competence development of 501 union participants, though mainly from the activist rather than senior officer ranks.

Both TUC projects were more focused on specific professional development. In the Wales TUC case this focused around two types of training provision. The first was a Bargaining for Equality course which was attended by 71 participants, against an original target of 80. Bargaining for equality was targeted at trade union reps. to enhance their understanding of equalities and discrimination and equip them to tackle equalities and discrimination issues in their workplace, in particular through including equality issues as part of the negotiation process with management. There appear to have been some scheduling issues with this provision, which was initially organised over weekends and then during the week, and with the venue. More successful was a more detailed Employment Tribunal and Discrimination Law (ETDL) course held at Cardiff University; it was a six day course, conducted on a day per month basis. Targeted at union equality officers (and CAB advisors), the course was attended by 59 equality courses, compared to a planned total of just 10. The formal evaluation of the project reveals that both courses were well received by participants and considered to be successful. The lower than anticipated attendance at the Bargaining for Equality workshops was explained by the fact that 'in terms of negotiating on equality ... a vast majority of course participants did not have the authority to do so within their workplace'. Nonetheless, for both cases there was recognition that such competence development was required and there was a demand for further development.

Finally, the national TUC project was focused on the development of union professionals more generally. The project established an online resource under the rubric of the TUC that professionals from affiliated unions can log into. The site includes a large resource of legal documents, research reports, information, advice and guidance and a forum for union professionals to engage in virtual debate around key issues. A key concern for the project was to first identify who the union professionals were and hence who should have access rights to the resource. To date, 1080 union professionals had registered to use the resource.

Summary

This chapter has detailed, against the six priority themes of UMF Round One, the main activities and outputs of projects. Evidently, much has happened. Whilst the interim evaluation report noted that many projects had experienced delays, for the vast majority this did not unduly affect the final deliverables. The majority of projects completed and projects undertook a range of activities and produced various tangible outputs.

It has not proved possible to present a summary, quantitative assessment of outputs. Such indicators are most apparent in the design and launch of new interactive communications mechanisms within unions, such as new websites that allow members to participate in debates to a greater extent than previously. The hard indicators suggest that usage of such tools by members have been positive and increased. But, beyond this, it is not possible to say with any confidence, for example, how much training took place across the projects, in part because of inconsistency with project reporting and also because of the different nature of training across projects. Nor is it possible to quantify the added value produced as a result of the vast research effort undertaken by projects.

It is evident, however, that the UMF has stimulated an array of innovative activities and, in some cases, novel outputs within unions. This includes a wide-ranging research effort across unions and the implementation of new training programmes, for example around diversity issues, communications and general management approaches. And new institutions are emerging through the roles of equality representatives and new partnerships with employers. More significant, it is evident that the process of modernisation is starting to be understood as broader than just the specific outputs or products of projects. The work of projects is raising and in many cases engaging with deeper issues around the organisational culture of unions and how the ongoing process of modernisation relates to cultural change. Unions have also started to reflect on how the outputs produced by projects ('the context of production') can be used more broadly beyond the life of projects, to lead to more sustainable outcomes ('the context of use').

Chapter 5:

Dissemination and the 'demonstration effect'

The funds available for the UMF are limited. A key aim of the initiative is therefore to act as a catalyst for change by ensuring that the transformational changes delivered as a result of funded projects, and the lessons that are learnt from this, are disseminated more broadly, both within individual unions and across the union movement. For this to happen, a significant and sustained programme of dissemination needs to take place, both during and well beyond the life of individual projects. This chapter explores dissemination activity to date and consider the potential demonstration effect that could accrue from projects funded under the First Round.

Project dissemination and networking

The value of project dissemination may well seem to be self-evident. However, despite the central focus of the UMF on the 'demonstration effect', there is a risk that project dissemination may often not figure too highly on the agendas of individual projects. The completion of projects can often become an end in itself: dissemination becomes something that may or may not take place after the project itself is over. There are many reasons why this could be seen as a sensible approach. First, external dissemination can become conflated with the presentation of specific types of outputs or demonstrable project successes. This raises important questions over how the 'lessons learnt' on projects are shared and debated. Second, given the politically sensitive nature of trade unions, there may be some degree of hesitancy and reticence in disseminating not just the outcomes but the process challenges of projects, and the cultural constraints related to this, to broader constituencies. Whilst these challenges are not intractable, they need to be borne in mind in terms of the overall UMF dissemination strategy.

A range of dissemination activities occurred across the life of projects and there is some evidence of an increasing dissemination trajectory as projects neared completion. To try to assess the extent and significance of dissemination activity a somewhat crude metric is presented in the summary of projects listed in Appendix Four. This considers the extent to which there was internal dissemination (to some or a significant extent), external dissemination (to some

or a significant extent), a high profile launch event and wider networking with other projects, unions or external stakeholders (to some or a significant extent).

All projects engaged in some degree of internal dissemination activity. At a simple level, a good deal of effort was directed in the day-to-day activities of most projects towards consciousness raising and general promotion of projects. This took place through membership surveys and, perhaps most significantly, through meetings between project managers and key full-time officers in the regions and branches aimed at harnessing 'buy-in' to projects. Where unions were developing new ICT solutions or introducing new interactive websites it was almost self-evident that the new innovations would have to be marketed and advertised as broadly as possible across union constituencies. In one particular case a survey of members following a new website launch revealed that members felt that more could be done to advertise what had been achieved and changed. The union thus put more effort into the marketing of the new site, and saw this effort as more valuable than the training programme for key activists it had planned to promote the site.

In around half of cases the degree of internal dissemination could be considered extensive and covered large constituencies of staff or levels of membership. In the cases of the TSSA, BDA and CYWU the research surveys related to the projects covered large portions if not all members of the union. But, in themselves, such surveys can be considered one-off events and specifically related to the methodologies of projects.

A number of unions sought to publicise their projects on an ongoing basis through either dedicated newsletters or pages in the regular union magazine or journal. In the case of Aslef, a feature on the project was published in the union's in house journal and distributed to its 18,500 members. The projects by USDAW, NUT, RMT, in contrast, all published regular project briefings and newsletters. The dissemination of these newsletters varied. In the case of the NUT and RMT it appeared to be to all members; in the USDAW case to a more limited constituency of project members and key activists. These projects are also of interest because in each case the unions gave a specific branding to the project, which for example in the case of the RMT played on the name of the union.

Many projects took the opportunity to share the objectives and progress of projects at union congress. In the case of the NUT, the project had a stall at annual Congress and the General Secretary included a note about the project in his 'invitation to congress' letter. In the case of the GMB, there was a sustained debate about the issues pertinent to the project for the first ever time at the union's conference.

Externally, three projects held major launch events, the CDNA, TSSA and TGWU equalities project. The CDNA event was held at TUC Congress House, to launch the CDNA as a 'virtual union', and included key note speeches by the

TUC General Secretary and the Secretary of State for Health. This event inspired the RCM to plan a similar launch event, although we were not able to confirm whether this actually took place. The TSSA launch event was held at the House of Commons, and included a key note address by the Minister of Employment Relations to an audience of approximately 45 people, including CEOs, HR Directors, TUC officials and representatives from the media. The TGWU event was the most high profile event, and focused on the launch of the equality toolkit and the developing role of equality reps. It was attended by well over 100 people, from within the union, the TUC, BIS and a range of other unions and organisations. Key note speakers included the TUC General Secretary Brendan Barber and the Rt Hon. Harriet Harman, then Minister for Women and Secretary of State for Equalities.

In terms of external dissemination more generally, this took place to some extent for just under half of all projects. Again, this took the form of dissemination activities related specifically to progressing specific project activities, or in terms of wider project demonstration. For example, projects seeking to engage employers sought to advertise the aims and objectives and potential benefits to external groups of employers. In the case of the Wales TUC project this was extensive and involved leafleting to 2,500 employers in Wales. Similar activity took place to a lesser degree by the TGWU and TSSA.

More broadly, the innovative nature of projects and emerging findings were published in leading external journals and magazines. ASLEF was approached by Membership Today about its project, and a short article about the project was published in Membership Today Magazine and on its website. As a result of the TGWU equalities project launch event major features on union equality reps were published in Equal Opportunities Review and Labour Research, which drew directly from the debates at the launch event and the value of the TGWU equalities tool kit.

A number of projects were also active in terms of presenting at UMF related events organised by BIS or the TUC, for example at fringe events at TUC Annual Congress. The GMB, BFAWU, USDAW and TGWU were notably active in this regard. In a limited number of cases, projects either had pages dedicated to them on the respective union's websites (eg. GMB) or a particular site for the project (eg. Wales TUC).

The project with the most visible external presence was the TGWU Migrant Workers Support Unit project. Indeed, much of this project's activity centred on dissemination and campaigning around the migrant workers' agenda. This included support to major national campaigns, such as Justice for Cleaners, presentations at national seminars run by academic research centres and other community and policy related bodies and contributions to external projects and commissions, such as the TUC Vulnerable Workers Project. The MWSU gained an external international reputation during the course of the project, and had an

impact through participation in, presentation at and partnership relations with bodies in the Netherlands, Spain, India, Poland, Greece, Georgia, Albania, Germany and Portugal. To give just one example of this activity, the MWSU was invited by Oxfam to attend an IFWEA organised seminar in Ahmedabad, India. As the Final report notes, 'The seminar discussed organising informal economy workers and was attended by trade unionists from Europe, Africa, North, centre and South America, Asia and the Middle East'.

The degree of networking across projects in the First Round was relatively limited. There was evidence of some networking in around a third of cases. This was evident at three levels. First, where projects held launch events this tended to generate links with other unions. Second, throughout the course of the projects there was some evidence of information sharing around how to deal with potential problems pertaining to contracting with external suppliers of IT. Some of this information sharing was directly stimulated by the action learning sets organised by the evaluators. Third, there were notable attempts at the cross-fertilisation of knowledge in relation to the UMF priority theme on diverse labour markets. For example, the GMB project manager presented to the Welsh TUC and was subsequently invited to sit on the advisory group of the Welsh TUC UMF project. Also, as part of the BFAWU research contact was made with other unions working on diversity-related projects. There was also some information sharing between the TGWU equality project and the NUJ equality rep project, and as noted the TGWU Migrants Workers Support Unit developed links with a wide range of external agencies.

A progress workshop organised by BIS in March 2007 also afforded project managers the opportunity to network with each other. The workshop focused on key themes and emerging challenges, and, following it, there was evidence that projects started to share their experiences and lessons learnt, again, for example, over contractual relations with external IT suppliers.

Support for dissemination and strategic networking

During the course of Round One, BIS developed a strategy to encourage dissemination. BIS recognised that 'effective circulation, understanding and implementation of key lessons from UMF projects is crucial to the success of the initiative and will help embed the benefits of the UMF across the union movement'. To that end, a formal UMF dissemination strategy was produced by BIS in February 2007. The document recognised that any strategy will need ongoing refinement as it is 'not yet known which dissemination mechanisms will work best'. Nonetheless, a number of specific proposals were presented. First, was the compilation of a library of individual case studies (something suggested in the First Evaluation Report) and generic materials, including a high-level scene-setting document on the modernisation agenda and the main thematic priorities. These were to be published on the BIS website. To date, this has

resulted in the production of 14 project case studies (with others due to follow shortly), written by an external consultant in an accessible style for external audiences: see

(<http://www.berr.gov.uk/whatwedo/employment/trade-union-rights/modernisation/case-studies/page43225.html>)

Second, it was suggested there should be regular dissemination of key messages – drawn from project reports and the Evaluation reports – to TUC and non-TUC affiliates, via the TUC and BIS websites, union journals and other communications networks. Third, a series of ‘promotional/networking events at regular intervals involving project winners, TUC, Unions 21 and other stakeholders’ was proposed. Fourth, the strategy document suggested the ‘early development of a web-enabled ‘modernisation network’ of project managers and other experts.

It was anticipated that the TUC would ‘have a major role to play in the dissemination of the UMF benefits via the provision of advice, sharing of best practice and development of a ‘modernisation network’. TUC signalled their agreement to the proposals. A Supervisory Board member also suggested that BIS should consider using the TUC’s media provision to ensure that the messages coming from the UMF were presented appropriately to the right places. To date, the public profile of the UMF has remained rather low.

A number of events were held to assist with the dissemination process of First Round projects. There was a fringe meeting on the UMF at the TUC 2006 and 2007 conferences and, in early 2007, a joint TUC/Unions 21 workshop on the UMF. The latter event included project presentations from the TGWU Equality Representatives project, equity and Community. All events were well attended with good debate.

BIS also organised a networking event specifically for project participants and prospective Round 2 applicants in March 2007. There were presentations from a selection of projects, and a focus on learning emerging to date. Delegates were split into small working groups and asked to discuss a number of questions related to: Lessons learnt to date; monitoring and evaluation; and, dissemination. A member of the evaluation team attended and noted that delegate feedback was positive. There have also been various other events organised by the TUC during the course of the UMF Second Round, which Round One projects may have contributed too, and the TUC has reference to the Fund on its webpage:

http://www.tuc.org.uk/the_tuc/index.cfm?mins=534)

Summary

Dissemination activity increased during the course of Round One and by the time projects completed all could record some degree of dissemination activity. This

UMF – Round one: Final evaluation report

was predominantly internal and most typically related to the actual operational progress of projects. There was however good evidence of external dissemination, external recognition and, to some extent, networking and information sharing between projects.

The big question relates to the meaning of dissemination and how this contributes in terms of the 'demonstration effect'. BIS had developed at a relatively early stage a detailed strategic plan for dissemination and recognised that it was necessary to build a trajectory over the life course of the UMF. Whilst it is certainly true that activity has happened, the wider profile of the UMF remains rather low and the full ambition of BIS's dissemination strategy has yet to be implemented. The main ambition for a strategic approach to dissemination should be to move beyond publicising what projects are or have been doing to a wider focus on the modernisation agenda itself. In dissemination terms, there has been less of a focus on transmitting more broadly across the union movement the transformational changes that have been delivered as a result of funded projects and the lessons that have been learnt from this. In this regard, BIS have plans to ramp up dissemination now the First Round has fully completed. This issue is returned to in the concluding chapter of the report.

Chapter 6: Challenges on the path to modernisation

This chapter examines the challenges faced by projects during the First Round of the UMF. Any process of change and transformation brings with it such challenges; the process of modernisation is not straightforward. The management, organisation and delivery of project innovation can raise issues of uncertainty and competing ways of working, raise opportunity costs and even generate a deal of internal conflict. How difficulties are experienced, faced and overcome can, however, be harnessed to create an environment of change and learning which is more sustainable, legitimate and eventually inclusive in the longer-term. Change projects tend to be more common, and are more widely understood, in the context of private and public sector employer organisations. Yet, understanding the complexities of change is also vital for the modernisation of unions, although as formally democratic organisations they need to be situated within a different and possibly more complex organisational context.

Challenges

Internal communication, co-ordination and governance
Planning and strategy take longer than anticipated
Relations between project workers and traditional union officers were at times strained
Pressure on trade union workloads
Tensions between ‘controlling’ projects and ‘buying-in’ expertise
Sub-contract relations
Lack of employer buy-in in key cases
Modernisation challenges traditional union systems and way of doing things
Internalising lessons learnt and knowledge assets
External dissemination and memory

It is not surprising that all UMF projects were at times faced with challenges, to various degrees of severity. How projects responded reveals the critical lessons that were learnt across the Fund and, to some extent, shapes the way in which project outputs could successfully act as mechanisms for longer-term outcomes. The fact that just three projects eventually failed to complete is evidence that no single challenge proved so overwhelming as to derail the aspirations of the Fund.

In what follows we draw out those themes which were common across some or a large portion of projects, and how unions sought to respond.

Internal communication, co-ordination and governance

This was an issue that all projects faced and responded to in different ways. It was particularly evident during the set-up phase of projects, as projects sought to identify who should be involved and included in project management, progress and delivery and how communication channels should be organised. Projects responded by revising their communication plans, developing specific plans or constructing new systems of project governance.

There were many instances where debates emerged as to who should be involved in project steering groups, what the lines of accountability should be and how milestones should be measured and evaluated. In larger unions, the role of various departments such as research, education and more specific campaign departments had to be seriously balanced and consulted in order to allow for effective and meaningful input – communicating and co-ordinating across various functional departments brought forth a need for clear structures. Mainstreaming educational toolkits into the education department, or new forms of communication into the communications function, also required careful planning in terms of project governance structures.

Some projects did not face these problem due to the way in which they mapped their structures at an early stage. In the NUJ, there was a dimension to the project related to securing 'buy-in' from officials and activists. The issue as far as the Equality Officer of the NUJ was concerned was to bring together the equality work of the NUJ: this helped ensure that equality was not a secondary issue in terms of collective bargaining and union representation. The project was managed by the NUJ's Equalities Officer, reporting to a Steering Group chaired by the union's General Secretary. The Equalities Officer was responsible for delivering the project, with the support of other functional specialists within the NUJ. The role of the union's senior leadership, particularly the General Secretary, was seen as being important for securing 'buy-in'. Hence co-ordination and communication in this case was anchored through a strong link with the leadership of the unions.

The support of the senior team proved important for many projects. The GMB Race and Diversity project recognised that time constraints would make a dedicated Steering Group of senior union officers a difficult task to organise, so, instead, the project was made a standing item at all Senior Management Team meetings. Similarly, the RMT project established at a very early stage a detailed reporting structure from the project team to the General Secretary. This included a project Steering Group, which met quarterly to discuss the project manger's reports and a project panel to provide assistance, expertise and advice to the

project manager and steering group as required. Whilst there was some initial disagreement about who should be included on what team, the project established a clear support structure for the project and those involved had clearly elaborated responsibilities. The governance structure reflected the union's ethos of strong internal democracy, consultation and inclusion.

The value that can be added by such structures was recognised in the initial stages by many projects and small changes made to facilitate this. In some cases changes were clearly made to ensure that project governance structures were adequately supportive of the size, complexity and nature of projects. In the Wales TUC case a decision was made to establish at ground level a Project Implementation Team, involving project partners from relevant equality agencies, the project workers and an external adviser, to 'oversee the finer detail of the work done by the project'. This made sense where projects were complex, strategic projects that required robust governance structures with senior officer buy-in.

Yet in a limited number of cases those lines of internal communication were not always there, or were not considered as effective as key participants would have liked. In the Migrant Workers Support Unit Project of the T&GWU, now UNITE, migration was an issue covered by many departments and functions. There were activities spread across education, the legal department, various regions and specific sectors. Maintaining clear lines of communication across this organisational arena came in the form of project officers linking into departments and roaming across them with the aim of raising the profile of the work being done, and then raising the status of the project. The project had structures, which were similar to that of the NUJ outlined above, but the sheer scale of the organisation required a strong internal marketing role and communication role by key players within the project across the organisation and not just through formal committees. Larger unions present real challenges in terms of the way they are structured and their internal lines of accountability. So getting the message directly across required a great degree of internal lobbying.

There was also an example to suggest that even where solid governance structures had been established with top level support and inclusion, this could still lead to perceived misunderstanding and communication problems. In one case, a project worker wrote that maybe he had not communicated as effectively as he could have done and on a regular basis as maybe he should have during the course of the project. However, this reflection seems to have been situated within a context where the project worker was demanding more resources to progress the project at a key moment, and the resources were not immediately forthcoming.

Overall, standards of coordination, governance and communication structures in most projects were of a high standard. Problems appeared to be most acute at

the set-up stage of projects and where they proved more enduring revealed significant project management issues, which are picked up across this chapter.

Planning and strategy took longer than anticipated

Some projects, self-evidently, had more elaborate systems of project management and governance than others, related to the complexity of projects and the context of unions. However, the challenges raised by project management were ubiquitous. Many project reports noted how delays in projects were ‘unanticipated’ and that more thought should have gone into planning.

Prior to the official start dates of most projects, BIS had held a two-day project management workshop to introduce those running projects to: their responsibilities under UMF; key project management principles; reporting and financial arrangements; and monitoring and evaluation requirements. The workshop was well received and project workers/managers referenced its value during interviews with the evaluators. But evidence suggests that much of this knowledge may not have always been internalised. The initial training may not, therefore, have been enough, in itself, to anticipate all likely reporting and project management issues - most of which only really became apparent once projects really got up and running. In some selected cases, projects managers found additional training courses to develop their project management capabilities – in the case of the TSSA, for example, they engaged with EU developed project management programmes which were useful in their scoping of projects; a couple of other projects also referenced Prince 2 project management protocols.

Whilst many unions are, to some extent, used to planning their work within dedicated time frames, they are increasingly working on projects that are externally funded, through the Union Learning Fund, the European Union and other sources. Such external funding requires a degree of discipline in terms of planning that unions do not have large experience of. In terms of the UMF this meant dealing with new sets of criteria in terms of financial accountability, mapping resources and times (e.g. matched funding), and establishing systematic forms of evaluation. Whilst projects had all developed project management schedules and had undertaken a degree of risk assessment, most recognised that the development of project management skills, competence and experience had been one of the key lessons learnt from the projects. This was particularly evident when projects had to deal with external contractors (see below) or manage diverse, multi-faced projects. As one Final Report noted, ‘All of those involved in the project underestimated the sheer scale of the planning and preparatory work’.

The planning of projects, of course, relates to a variety of other challenges that form part of project management, such as workloads, and the allocation of tasks between key personnel. But it is also something that needs to be considered

carefully and recognised as important from the start of projects. The initial stages of a project, for example, can be a moment of lull. As teams come together, routines are established and milestones re-considered in the light of early stages; it is vital that projects are prepared if they are to avoid delay and potential stagnation. In some cases unforeseen circumstances, such as the departure of a key individual or the onset of a difficult industrial relations issue could have been overcome if the planning had been more effective and realistic. The need to avoid relying on key staff to such an extent that their departure or illness can seriously disrupt a project requires planning effective and well-rounded teams.

Relations between project workers and traditional union officers were at times strained

Related to the challenge of internal project communications, there were examples where relations between project workers and traditional officers were at times strained. At the most basic level, this related to how the management of projects slotted into the organisational demands of unions and requirements on time and resources. But there were also a number of minor cases that suggested challenges around the integration of those appointed from outside of unions. A key issue here was how those from outside of the union fitted into the culture of unions. Two examples will suffice. For one large union, externally appointed project workers were not seen to carry a great deal of legitimacy compared to formal and established trade union officers. This affected the ability of those project workers to communicate with the regional and sectoral structures of the union they needed to get on side to progress the project. In another case, a senior officer of the union responsible for the project reported that a great deal of time was required inculcating an external appointee into the way that the union operated. It was noted that this needed to be considered in relation to any future appointments of this type.

The nature of some projects may however necessitate the appointment of external expertise. This was the case for the TGWU Migrant Workers Support Unit project. The project experienced significant initial delays and eventually started six months' later than originally planned, and the main reason for this was the time it took for the union to establish and agree the job description for the two project officers that were employed to run the Unit. This took longer than anticipated, as the posts were new to the union movement and there was not a ready made supply of experienced and capable candidates for such a role. The union took the view, quite sensibly, that it was important to take the time needed to get the job description right to ensure that appropriate qualified people applied for the position. This included appointing a project worker with experience from outside the union movement, but with extensive experience of the voluntary sector and working with communities. Once employed, the project worker needed some time to work out how the union functioned, and how to engage with the different levels of the union. To ensure that support was forthcoming from key

regional constituencies, a change of title was needed from project worker to project manager.

The role of the project manager or worker is not uncommon in unions and many officers run a portfolio of cases and projects. Project work is thus becoming more common and more visible within unions. Yet the status of a project manager with a special remit in relation to one project, along with a new status, can be a challenge in an environment where reputation and legacy is important – and where formal hierarchies are common. The UMF saw issues being raised in some cases in relation to this.

Tensions between ‘controlling’ projects and ‘buying-in’ expertise

Projects were managed in a myriad number of ways. The simplest distinction was between those unions that decided to buy-in project management experience from outside the union and those that made a decision to run projects in-house. Whilst both routes led to challenges and issues, the projects, by definition, required key project management inputs that were difficult for senior officers to attend to. Where expertise was bought in, as long as the union instituted clear governance controls, projects were managed with a degree of expertise that was beneficial to successful delivery.

Likewise, those unions that initially sought to run projects from the top quickly saw the benefits of delegating the day-to-day operations to dedicated project managers, and internal secondments within unions often proved an effective solution, as in the example of USDAW. Allowing project teams to move on with their projects was seen in cases such as the NUJ and RCM as a positive step, even when there was highly supportive senior buy-in. Yet there is always a challenge in how projects are controlled and managed, given the risks that can be associated with them. Clear reporting lines in such unions allowed for teams and project workers to continue with their tasks and exert a degree of autonomy.

Many projects allowed for the buy-in of research expertise or dedicated project management. This brought risks in terms of control and whilst this was managed and overseen in most cases in an effective manner, for future projects decisions about buying in expertise will need to be discussed and considered at early stages if problems are to be avoided. A good example of best practice was provided by the Campaign Company, which was contracted to manage both BFAWU projects and the GMB Race and Diversity project. The Campaign Company has an established track record of working with unions and understanding of the challenges of doing so. To some extent they seemed to have an ‘off the shelf’ model that was employed across all the projects, but they also ran the projects in a highly effective manner, delivered the anticipated outputs and completed to time. The key point, however, related to the structure of

project management that they established in each case, with strong lines of communication and reporting to lead trade union officials, who were kept well apprised of project progress throughout. This allowed the union participant to keep a strategic overview of project progress, whilst the Campaign Company got on with the job – as the lead officer in the GMB project noted, the union would have been unable to run the project if it had not adopted this approach. This is not to suggest subcontracted consultants as some quick fix solution that is suitable to all projects, as the competence of the consultant can be an issue. In another case the consultants that managed the project let matters drift so far that the project never completed.

Given the concerns, noted above, which unions may have about appointing people from outside, it is not surprising that in many cases decisions were made to run projects 'in-house' under the close jurisdiction of senior union officials. Whilst this had the benefit of providing clear ownership and legitimacy for projects, it quickly became clear that senior officials themselves had limited time to undertake the micro-management of projects, despite their best intentions. For example, one significant, large union project was considered to have 'no real risks' as it had top level, hands-on support and because of this the project 'would be implemented'. Yet, the reality was significant delays, as the senior official responsible was drawn into core and more pressing union business. There were a number of examples of projects led specifically by senior union officers where, in hindsight, it was noted that a dedicated project manager should have been employed. Reflecting on the issue, one senior official concluded that:

'Our discussions (and our experiences) with the UMF have concerned the leadership that a much more formal approach has to be undertaken – and this requires a dedicated "Project Manager" rather than relying on over-burdened union bureaucrats...In future bids (if successful) as our experience so far points to the need for a more focused, determined and prioritised approach to "project managing"...Slippage ... has been endemic – and, in retrospect, inevitable. The critical need for a dedicated and individual/team to drive the project and its participants is all too obvious and embarrassing'.

A similar problem was also experienced by a union official of a smaller union. After months of delays and a failure to submit any progress reports, the official admitted he was 'having trouble keeping up with the project'; he was just far too busy travelling around the country dealing with members and unfolding disputes. In this case a decision was made to contract out the day-to-day running of the project to an external organisation. In the worst case example, the project did not complete and the senior official was simply unable to find the time needed to push the project forward.

The key point here was not about the 'failure' of lead union officials, which naturally have other concerns to deal with, but how projects are designed. There were examples where delays in projects caused significant stress for union

officials, who were committed to the aspiration of the UMF but were simply unable to find the necessary space to engage with emerging issues. This stress could have been alleviated with more formal project management structures with devolved responsibilities for the day-to-day running and implementation of projects.

Pressure on trade union workloads

This leads to the more general issue of workloads and pressures on trade union officers. It was recognised that the cost of projects in terms of labour resource and time was typically under-estimated. In most cases projects responded to this early in the life of projects. But in select cases, senior union officers and projects managers often tried to struggle with projects on top of full workloads. This led to an inevitable degree of personal stress and project delay. This problem needs to be situated within the context of which projects are developing within the trade union movement. There has been a shift in the way trade union officials work. A focus on specific problems and formal policy developments has been supplemented in recent years with a greater focus on specific organisational concerns and a more diverse project portfolio. This has meant that the spread of work of trade union officials has been stretched by various internal and external pressures. Such pressures may include:

Greater case work

Greater attention to judicial and legal developments

Increasing lines of accountability

The need for greater record keeping

Multiple roles in relation to different union functions

Dealing with regional and internal sectoral structures

The emergent challenge of email and new forms of ICT

Greater line management functions within the union itself and internal HRM issues

Balancing varying interests and viewpoints within the union

In smaller unions these problems may be particularly acute due to the way officers' carry diverse roles and portfolios. For one small union, personal pressures and multiple roles meant that an officer failed to cope with his remit and objectives. This was visible at an early stage due to the tensions of competing priorities faced by the individual in managing his diary. In many respects this brings us to a vital issue about 'change' and 'modernisation'.

Often, notably within the more prescriptive management literature, change processes are situated out of context, without realisation that change needs planning, resources and realistic time frames. Any organisation which deliberately aims to change its structures needs to evaluate and scan its capabilities and capacity for change. Internal stability, investment in internal

labour markets - and good internal employment relations - are actually a vital pre-requisite for change. In the more difficult cases, failures to map change and its requirements were compounded by a failure to develop effective internal human resource management and supportive programmes for staff. Whilst such examples across the UMF First Round were rare, the reality was that coping with change and supporting staff through particular projects was a challenge that was starting to be internalised and learnt. Unions have been developing their HRM functions for some time but the current changes to the nature of work are bringing new forms of pressure.

A common issue was that trade union officials were running with a variety of projects, both internally and externally funded, and it was not uncommon to see these come into conflict with each other due to the lack of co-ordination in terms of timescales and resources. In the case of Prospect, for example, project workers changed due to the needs of the union at a particularly challenging time. The RFU spoke of a need to reflect on the time it would take to do a project: EQUITY spoke of the need to have someone appointed to oversee the stages and different needs of a project as something they would do in the future. So, the question of mapping resources is vital for future consideration.

Technical issues and contractor relations

The main technical issues faced by projects related to the implementation of new technology and, to a lesser degree, the conduct of research. The new technological solutions being designed, implemented and trialled also meant that many unions, in common with other comparable organisations of a similar size, had to work with contractors that they had no previous experience of, on an issue they had no expertise in, and this raised a number of problems. An added complexity was the practice of some suppliers to promise certain technical solutions which, when it came to practice, were either not possible or required far more input than originally specified. Once contracted, unions found themselves stuck with having to work with such suppliers. Key lessons were learnt as unions sought to address such unforeseen events.

A number of projects significantly underestimated the time needed to develop/install new ICT systems. Specifically, there was insufficient awareness of the preparatory work that was often required. At a superficial level it was understandable for project managers to assume that the redesign of a website would be a relatively straightforward job. But approving design work, synchronising the web development to existing computer architecture and then generally trialling new types of interactive provision often proved to be a protracted process. Such difficulties resulted in 'knock on' delays for some projects as subsequent activities, such as training, were dependent on the completion of ICT work. The following experiences were relatively common:

UMF – Round one: Final evaluation report

‘The installation of the various ITC solutions has taken longer than originally anticipated’. (Large industry-specific union)

‘The completion of the first milestone of the project has been delayed due to unforeseen additional development that has been required in order to ensure that the website’s structure and functionality achieves a standard that is satisfactory both to the contractor and XXXX’. (Small union, company specific)

‘Testing commenced in August. The system has required a more protracted period of testing/debugging’. (Large, professional union)

Other issues within ICT based projects related to the ordering of work. It was sometimes realised that the planned ordering of work was not logical, necessitating changes in the sequence of activities. In some instances this resulted in project slippage, but in other instances projects were able to run activities concurrently thereby saving time. A typical case was the following example from one of the transport-related unions:

‘The revised plan, milestones and cash flow chart will shortly be revised by agreement between the project managers for both parties in the light of working experience. Some elements were clearly misplaced in the plan. The task of web development, for example, has not been scheduled in a more logical manner in relation to system development, towards the end of the project.’

The CWU project, which involved the trialling of numerous ICT solutions in six regions, again highlighted that the practical difficulties of implementing such infrastructure required careful planning:

‘Extensive planning and preparatory work is a fundamental prerequisite to successful implementation of modern communication methods and the introduction of a large amount of new technology and IT support systems. The Project offers a clear lesson of the real practical difficulties involved in IT related initiatives. If you want ‘instant messaging and constantly refreshed websites you need months (if not years) of planning to address and overcome the wide range of technical, geographic and logistical problems.’

At a less obvious level, many projects also found the conduct of research somewhat more complicated than originally anticipated. In some cases, such as the BFAWU projects, the aims and objectives were primarily research orientated, in other cases research activities were necessary to accumulate the base point measures needed to evaluate ongoing project success. Surveys of members, in-depth interviews and focus groups were commonplace. Typically, far too little time was allocated to this activity, and obvious slippage occurred. The most notable problems were around participation. Low response rates to surveys were endemic and projects often had difficulty getting full attendance at focus groups, although this was less problematic.

There were two notable issues here. First, the projects did not draw on any repository of research skills. In some cases, there was a clear lack of research skills. Second, and perhaps even more significant, the progress of research activities was impeded by the poor state of many unions' membership data systems. This seems to be a central modernisation concern for many unions in itself. Even if unions had contracted out much of their research activities to external experts, they would still have faced these systemic constraints, although the planning and anticipation of risk may have been more sensitively developed (although see below). Some typical examples related to research problems are quoted below:

'Conducting the initial survey took three times as long as they thought it would' (small union)

'The employee profiling exercise has been highly problematic because xxxx membership records are inadequate. The regional structure exacerbates this since there is no central repository for employee records'. (large, general union)

'It became apparent that gathering data would not be a simple procedure. There was not a central computer system that contained all the required information'. (transport-related union)

Despite such challenges, most projects managed to get the relevant data they needed somehow, either through concentrated action in the regions to collect data and get key players to support the project and encourage members to participate or through specific inducements, such as prize draws, to get members to complete questionnaires. It is apparent that the research process in itself has raised important lessons about the state of many unions' internal systems of recording, collating and storing members' records. It is unsurprising, therefore, that addressing such concerns was indeed the main objective of some of the Theme Two, Improving Communication, projects.

The research component (as opposed to the wider project management) was specifically contracted out to an external provider in only a select number of cases. The Wales TUC project undertook a tendering exercise to appoint an initial research contractor, but this resulted in a research report produced that was deemed to have been 'not completed to the reasonable standard expected' and outstanding payments were not released. The research was eventually conducted successfully by an alternative research body more familiar with working with unions. The research for CATU was significantly delayed, but once delivered seemed to have had a major impact on the modernisation agenda of the union.

Contractor relations were more of an issue in relation to the acquisition of new computer hardware and the delivery of technological solutions. In most cases,

the main problem was a relatively simple matter of relationship building. Project managers were not experts in technical systems but were overseeing often complex interventions, faced with compatibility, security and licensing protocols.

These issues were often not anticipated or, where they were, were not perceived to be significant enough in risk terms to shape the original project timelines. When issues subsequently arose they naturally affected timelines, not only in terms of the time needed to address the issue but the time it took for the contractor and project manager to understand each other and agree a course of action. Such delays tended to have an overall cumulative effect on projects.

In the vast majority of cases, once projects and contractors had a good understanding of what was needed progress was made, albeit with degrees of slippage. In other words, relations with contractors were productive. This was not always the case. In a couple of cases, the relationship with contractors broke down, as the following quotes illustrate:

On-going slippage attributable to removal of original ITC service provider during the Q3 2006. Now pushed back to February 2007 due to infrastructure issues relating to (xxx) delivery of ADSL services into some areas. (Large, general union)

‘Substandard service from one IT contractor has resulted in a second contractor being unable to deliver their element of the project in a timely fashion’. (Transport union)

In the latter case, the project manager had to write a formal letter of complaint to the contractor’s Customer Relations Director. It seems that this contractor was not providing appropriate specification details to the second contractor promptly enough and that general communication with the contractor had become virtually ‘non-existent’. Following this formal intervention, communication lines improved and the working relationship was more effective. In this particular case, the union had a detailed contract to fall back on.

In the case of a project led by a large, professional union it was admitted that a lack of a detailed contract was ‘part of the problem’ for why repeated requests from the project to the contractor to address ongoing problems had not been addressed. The union had used the contractor before, and they were a well known supplier of union IT systems, so there was a degree of good faith behind the initial agreement. However, once the project was underway it became clear that the supplier had agreed to the union’s original proposal without regard for the practical consequences of design and implementation. Without a detailed contract, with appropriate time lines and penalty clauses for delays, the union was finding it difficult to get the supplier to deliver to plan.

It is difficult to discern best practice. In many cases, unions used contractors they had employed previously, were familiar with the union's modus operandi and that they were comfortable with. In many cases, this type of arrangement worked well. For example, as a small, employer specific union noted:

'Using a contractor that we already had some dealings with meant they had an advantage in knowing our systems and how we worked which aided the speed of production and liaison'.

However, the communication failure on the transport union's project noted above related to a contractor that the union had an eight year relationship with. Unions seemed to be on safest ground when they had a clear idea what they want, put the work out to tender and then carefully reviewed the previous contractors. In the case of another transport union, the project team inspected three tenders and eventually went for a contractor that had a solid track record of work with other unions. In this case they were able to look specifically at related types of output that had some relevance for them.

It is worth concluding that a greater degree of knowledge sharing amongst unions could have been helpful, as in all cases unions had sought to do their 'own thing' in terms of engaging contractors. There was, initially at least, very little cross-referencing and co-ordination between unions on such issues and very little sharing of knowledge, experience and expertise. But networking on contracting issues did develop across the First Round. It was recognised that the degree of bargaining power size conferred on larger unions meant that they often incurred less risks in terms of contracting, but knowledge of how to deal with contractors, and one specific contractor was identified, started to be shared between projects as Round One progressed. This included discussion of the need for model contracts when dealing with contractors. Overall, it should be noted that whilst contracting was in many respect the key external challenge that delayed projects in no cases did this get so extreme that projects were unable to complete.

Lack of employer buy-in in key cases

Employer support was not essential for the furtherance of most UMF projects. The Fund is about the internal modernisation of unions. In some cases, however, projects were aligned with employer engagement and required a degree of support in terms of partnership building. The role of the employer was deemed as key in certain cases where partnership and joint working were the objective, albeit on a range of issues.

Projects in the finance sector, involving a number of small staff associations, seemed to have a high degree of support from key managers. For example, the project led by Portman Staff Association had the backing of the employer. In this case, though, the employer had been actively involved in the UMF application

and the initiative related to it, so there was already pre-project buy-in. Also, there were many examples where the initial research and mapping phases for projects involved case studies of employer or sector best practice. The research by the BFAWU, for example, into diversity matters had been well supported by employers in the industry.

Those projects which were more focused on the development of new union roles, for example around the equality agenda, seemed to have greater difficulty engaging employer interest, even where the development of the initiative was couched in partnership terms. This issue of new union roles became a major challenge for some unions. The central area of concern relates to the new role of equality reps. The TSSA project managed to build strong relations with specific employers on the project's agenda, for example with Transport for London. A broad dialogue with Transport for London yielded new representatives and related initiatives. However, one of the challenges of the project was the constant struggle to engage the interest and support of other employers more generally, despite apparent commitments during the early stages of the project. The union was able to promote key partnerships with employers at the House of Common launch of the project, yet their ongoing engagement proved more problematic. Specifically, employers in some cases were unwilling to provide facilities time for representative champions:

'Difficulties in engaging employers remain persistent and have resulted in XXXX having to change strategy to deliver the project. XXXX had envisaged securing partnership agreements in order to facilitate the development of rep champions, but are now seeking to develop rep champions in the absence of partnership. This has proved equally difficult, however, since employers appear to be unwilling to commit to rep champions – especially time off. Also, even where informal agreements have been concluded it is a moot point whether employer commitment to the principle of a rep champion will be translated into practice (i.e. facilities).'

Despite this, steady growth in relevant representatives and relevant materials were evident. The applicants for the champion role are more diverse in terms of their ethnicity and gender than traditional union representatives, and over time the project saw a steady number of individuals engage with the agenda. However, this is a nascent role and it may well be something that attracts more of a groundswell of support in further rounds of the UMF – Round Two, for example, gave priority to the issue of equality reps.

The question of facility time and employer support is clearly an emergent agenda item in terms of industrial relations. If unions are to be continue adapting to new modern demands in terms of equality, for example, or the pressures of participation on strategic issues then the question is how other organisations, employers and management buy into and sustain the issue of modernisation. Modernisation is not solely about the organisation 'modernising', it is as much

about the development of a supportive climate where benchmarking and learning can take place and where resources are provided. This is in part the logic of the UMF itself and the role of BIS, but industrial relations consist of more than unions and government. The interests of the economy are served by proactive and effective unions, yet this requires resources and support. The presence of relevant employers in terms of UMF related activities, dissemination events, and press related materials may have to be a greater focus of attention in future.

Modernisation challenges traditional union systems and way of doing things

Whilst projects varied in their degree of ambition, many projects, regardless of size, challenged aspects of traditional union cultures. This hardly seems a surprise; it would seem to be a key objective of union modernisation. However, the way in which projects fit into union cultures and structures is a complicated issue. Some unions were keen that projects should specifically challenge its ways of thinking and to some extent lead to cultural change, in other cases projects were seen as being about modernisation but it was assumed this could be integrated within existing systems. Some trade unionists reflected on the fact that projects raised important new questions about how they should be engaging with and representing members – that is, it is members who define the parameters of modernisation. In other cases, the projects threw up new representational issues that directly challenged existing union rule books and there was a degree of debate about how modernisation could be accommodated within this. One good example of this related to whether the level of union support for diverse groups of workers should require preferential treatment in terms of servicing and organising support.

The BDA was emphatic in terms of how the UMF was able to develop debate in the union and its internal relations. This suggests that how unions approached the challenge of modernisation was a determining factor in what they achieved from it. The unions that had a more open and genuine concern with gaining in democratic and organisational terms were those which used the UMF projects to act as a catalyst for change and for innovation.

This brings a challenge in the way modernisation is seen by unions and communicated by BIS. The UMF is not just about refining the technical aspects of unions. It actually has strong democratic themes based on openness, learning and greater participation in relation to a wide set of workers. Be it in relation to the Internet and communication or equality representatives, the unions who gained most were not just those who were well organised and prepared but who were also open and not worried to engage with risk. Modernisation is, in this respect, more than ‘technical re-adaptation’, it is about cultural change and this needs to be consistently communicated from lead parts of the trade unions involved in steering the UMF.

Project buy-in and cultural resistance

Following from the above, there did not appear to be serious signs of a lack of buy-in to union projects or cultural resistance to the agendas being progressed. Where cultural resistance was discussed by projects it typically related to sustainability issues after project completion. For example, in terms of whether members would take advantage of the services afforded to them by new technologies. But this was more of an issue of ongoing cultural change rather than visible cultural resistance. In one of the case study projects, led by USDAW, there had been some initial scepticism towards the project's aims and objectives, but as described this had largely receded.

Lack of buy-in, where it was reported, focused on two concerns. The first related to the research process outlined above, with unions experiencing disappointing responses to survey/consultation exercises with members, or having to cancel and reschedule the odd focus/discussion group. Secondly, and more significant was the level of support given to project workers by union regions and branches. In the GMB case, activists were resistant to ethnic self-categorisation during the audit of current levels of participation by ethnic minority members. Given the problems already discussed about the state of union membership databases, the support of regions and branch offices to either update membership lists or get behind the modernisation of such databases was imperative. There were examples where this was proving difficult:

‘Some Regional Officers expressed concerns regarding the confidentiality of members’ information, which would be stored electronically. They felt that this system would deter some members from seeking help and advice. They also argued that the new system would increase their workload, as it would not be replacing paper files’. (Large, professional union)

‘Regional officers responsible for project delivery are not reporting back to the national level of union despite repeated requests for this’. (Large, general union)

This was not, however, a general concern amongst projects. In many cases, regional and branch officials actively wanted to participate in projects or had been included in the project structure in some way through the development of steering groups, advisory bodies, large project teams or dissemination circles. Also, many projects had already identified key stakeholder buy-in as a potential risk and, having anticipated this, developed appropriate contingencies. For example:

‘The project has sought to include union and branch officials and local activists at all stages. Officials were involved in the drawing up of the survey’. (Small, industry specific union)

‘A slightly longer user consultation exercise was initiated to ensure that everyone is involved and feels they are part of the project’. (Transport union)

‘This is your project and you have already played a major role in its success. Many of you will be playing active parts during the implementation stages whether it be defining specification, testing or taking part in walk throughs. All users and potential users of the membership database have a stake in the project. The aim is to keep you up to date and we hope to answer any questions you may have’. (Transport union newsletter)

More generally, a number of projects noted that whilst any initial scepticism or resistance had been overcome the projects themselves had raised issues of attitudinal change that needed to be addressed if the union was to modernise. This was clear in one Theme 2 communications project, which raised issues of how a new website was to be used to open up transparency within the union. It was also noted in both the CATU and Community projects, both small, historically industry specific unions, how traditional approaches to industrial relations and the attitudinal legacies of this would have to change if the respective unions were to engage with new constituencies.

Internalising lessons learnt and knowledge assets

One of the positives of the First Round was the degree of internal learning that was taking place, with some emergent evidence of project sustainability. However, a challenge remains over the extent to which projects will have long-term influence. There remains a challenge that projects may be ‘consigned to the shelf’, or that ‘memory’ will be lost as key project workers move on to other projects – the endless stream of project management. This is in great part due to the acceleration of project work whereby outputs - be they toolkits, learning materials, or organisational innovations - are not always clearly accessible to members. There may be a problem due to the sheer amount of documentation produced through project working. The CWU is well known for producing high profile research and campaigning reports. Its highly developed project report for the UMF, which clearly outlined the use of new forms of communication technologies (and some traditional ones too) for the local activist networks, is, in effect, in competition with other reports.

There were a range of unions such as the RCM who had high profile launches and who used this to further raise consciousness within the union of the work being done. The uses of trade union conferences, be they specifically related to a topic (equality networks for example) or are more general decision making annual conferences should be used as vehicles to develop and raise awareness of the work. This strategic link with the national and functional conference system of the trade unions is something that will have to be considered. However formal

internal dissemination through magazines, websites and workshops within unions has been significant.

The challenge of sustainability is not, however, limited to dissemination; there are also internal resource considerations related to staffing. An area that will need some ongoing monitoring will be the loss or movement of key personnel. In at least four cases, the original architects and drivers of projects had moved on, and this had led to some slippage as other colleagues took up the brief. It is important when such leaders move on that valuable project 'memory' is not lost.

External dissemination and memory

Leading on from the previous challenge regarding the issue of internal dissemination, we find that external dissemination has mainly focused on high profile events in the House of Lords or similar and communications between unions who have carried out similar projects in terms of their themes. There has not been to date a major national end of Round 1 UMF event, which would present the various outputs as a co-ordinated package, though timing and cost considerations may have made this difficult. Now all projects are complete, and a learning trajectory is emerging via Round 2, BIS are understood to be considering ramping up dissemination activity later in 2009.

The lack of any real engagement from or with the national press means that the UMF has remained locked within established circuits of trade union networks and relations, though new networks eg the TUC union professionals site, offer glimpses of what might be developed in a UMF-specific context. It could be that the press views industrial relations in terms of conflict or job losses at the moment, but this means that the engagement between unions involved in the UMF has not be as extensive as it could have been. Evidence from the research across all cases meant that the officers and representatives involved in UMF were very positive of the way the support was given by BIS and the events that were held - it could be that this is something that can be built on in future rounds. It is imperative this is so because there are now a range of UMF Round 1 Projects that would allow the later rounds of projects to learn in substantive and procedural terms.

Another related challenge is how all reports, toolkits and materials more generally are made accessible across trade unions. The question of archiving and providing easy and clear access is something that confronts all organisations. The age of excess information flows, exhaustive website based communication and broad marketing processes means that the UMF dimension in terms of BIS and the unions have to plan how the positive work produced is not easily squeezed out of existence. In one project, for example, work on an online centre for information for representatives and branches - whilst successful – was found

to be competing with websites and ICT related activities at the regional and local level already being pioneered by local union structures.

Summary

This chapter has detailed, in no particular order of priority, the key challenges that were faced by projects. In simple terms, they can be aggregated in terms of three overarching categories. First, there were general problems related to project management, in terms of planning, allocation of responsibilities and ownership and general workload. Second, there were specific contracting problems, relating to the commissioning of major external investments. Both these challenges in many respects were relatively new for the trade union movement in terms of their day-to-day activities, and thus, even if they may to some extent have seemed trivial, there were often not ready made solutions existing within the unions. The third set of challenges related to the wider issue of how the UMF and the process of modernisation and change connected to deeper cultural issues within unions, in terms of the ‘buy-in’ of key actors and the longer-term sustainability of projects. Self evidently, projects were situated within certain contexts, in terms of the strategic and operational imperatives of unions and the external conditions and constraints that faced them. A number of projects were being conducted against the backdrop of significant external events, be it the major organisational reforms in the health service, organisational merger, trade union mergers or key industrial disputes. This seems to have impacted more significantly on some projects rather than others. Importantly, though, whilst there were moments when project progress was delayed by such events, this did not mean that projects were unable to complete or deliver on their objectives. The bigger issue relates to what happens next.

The next steps of the UMF agenda will have to take note of the challenges outlined in this chapter and learn from them. This is not a weakness, but part of the overall learning framework of agenda for modernisation. The ‘learning by mistakes’ approach of innovation is not a weak sign of a project: even a successful programme, such as the UMF with its positive impact and effectively managed processes, must draw from its broad experiences. There have been few attempts in trade union history to create a jointly shared environment for internal organisational innovation and development, so the opportunity the UMF provides is significant. It brings together a range of themes, initiatives and experiences which must be learnt from. In this regard, the table below outlines the challenges and suggests a variety of responses.

Challenges	Way Forward by Drawing from Benchmark UMF Projects
------------	----------------------------------------------------

UMF – Round one: Final evaluation report

Internal communication and co-ordination issues	Provide templates of projects structures and evaluation best practice in UMF 1
Planning and strategy take longer than anticipated	Develop milestone maps and provide more training on planning given it was well received
Relations between project workers and traditional union officers were at times strained	To consider training of project workers and to create greater synergy between officers and project work
Pressure on trade union workloads	To map resources and time, to develop project training
Tensions between ‘controlling’ projects and ‘buying-in’ expertise	To assess internal resources and to evaluate risk and benefits of either
Sub-contract relations	To liaise with other unions dealing with subcontracts and to develop expertise and networks
Lack of employer buy-in in key cases	To reference and use BIS in such cases and seek consensus and buy in at the highest levels
Modernisation challenges traditional union systems and way of doing things	To develop project management, new open forms of teamworking, greater transparency, cultural change
Internalising lessons learnt and knowledge assets	To have communication and internal dissemination plans, user focus groups, and make documentation accessible
Dissemination and memory	To develop cluster groups around projects and use the TUC more effectively on such matter having consistent events - to mainstream UMF outputs into education and learning agendas

Chapter 7: The Lessons Learnt on the Way to Modernisation: Sustainable project outcomes

Introduction

This chapter looks to draw from our analysis thus far to tease out some of the wider lessons learnt from the UMF First Round. A key concern of the chapter is to look at how the projects themselves have started to deliver wider outcomes that can contribute to transformative processes of change or modernisation within unions. We begin by considering again the nature of modernisation and the importance of processes of learning to change.

Modernisation must not be understood purely in terms of quantitative deliverables and outputs, i.e. toolkits, research reports, modified websites. The key point is how such outputs are translated into a wider range of outcomes. The emerging evidence from the UMF suggests that such outcomes will be social in nature (e.g. equality), informational (e.g. communication and democracy), and substantive in terms of economic related issues (participation and discussion within the workplace). There are clear indicators as to the way modernisation vis-à-vis UMF has developed and how the materials produced are being used. However, there are also a range of internal and in some cases intangible developments (at first sight anyway) which suggest that we need to keep a very broad and open mind as to how we understand modernisation within the trade union movement. In other words, the main outcomes of UMF relate to the process of change itself.

Moreover, the UMF is one layer or stage of a modernisation process that has been developing for some time. The question of engagement with the internet, equality representation, new forms of data collation, and new forms of internal organisations, for example, have been part of union work for over a decade. However, much of this is sometimes piecemeal. Modernisation is, therefore, not

just about the substantive six priority themes of the UMF, but also about developing capacity and frameworks of representation, communication and organisation that allow a modern union movement to respond in one way or another to the challenge of a more diverse, complex and uneven society. Modernisation is about creating a space around which the actual developments in the preparatory activities of trade union responses and approaches to change can be understood, shared and sustained. In this regard, it is as much about creating a climate for learning within trade unions as anything else.

Across the 35 projects it is clear that important lessons are being learnt from participation in UMF projects, and in the majority of cases the projects are delivering value to the union. The 10 in-depth case studies provide detailed accounts of good practice. These show us exactly how unions have steadily reflected on questions of renewal and modernisation.

The question of learning is a diverse subject but it is one that unions must begin to address. As we noted earlier in the report, Hyman (2007) argues that a key component of any process of modernisation is the nature of organisational learning, not just in terms of what learning takes place and the meaning of this, but the extent to which an organisation is able to 'unlearn' extant internal bureaucratic protocols in the pursuit of modernisation (Hyman, 2007). Wider debates on learning and organisational learning, in particular, are extremely important for any understanding of union development. We know that organisations have to be participative if they are to enhance the potential role of their members: there are many resources within an organisation and trade unions are no different in that much of their knowledge and understanding is not necessarily in the head office but within the local workplace and its activists. Many of these resources are informal and embedded in local networks and practices – the question is how you tie them in and learn from them. Sources of knowledge can be formal and acquired through formal learning or they can be informal and acquired and developed through 'learning by doing' and experiential. Building on the work of Polanyi (1944), Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) differentiate between explicit knowledge and tacit knowledge: the challenge is to articulate and formalise the hidden resources of the organisation and in this case the union (the move from tacit to explicit organisation) – many see this as an important feature and requirement for any openness and modernisation process.

In effect, trade unions must learn to utilise their formal and informal resources, they must be able to provide frameworks so that these can be developed and supported. These environments must be able to develop new professional and activist roles through developing 'communities of practice' via joint enterprise, mutuality, and shared repertoires. The overcoming of boundaries between communities is seen as key – for example departments of research, education and specific functional areas for example - hence the concern with greater flexibility in dialogue and learning within organisations and between them. This is

the pivot of a process of modernisation. The role of collaborations - where sources of knowledge are tapped through networks, alliances and a distinct open culture - is a vital dimension of any process of change which aims to enhance the social and economic rights and resources of its members. Knowledge is managed through a new approach and a less bureaucratic vision of the organisation and not just through codifying and formal learning. Modernisation has to be sustained through effective, meaningful and participative dialogues which are accessible and transferable.

Building on this, the following chapter will point to six dimensions in the way internal organisational enhancements have emerged in relation to union modernisation and sustainable outcomes.

Dimensions of Organisational Learning in the UMF Context

New resources, assets and roles – knowledge and access

Communication – enhancing communication and participation

Contracting relations – relating to the industry of modernisation

Project management - managing and scoping change projects

Evaluation and reflection – measuring and marking points of change

Networks and shared learning – creating a learning environment

Mainstreaming and embedding change

New resources, assets and roles

As noted in the Second Evaluation Report (Stuart et al, 2008), the process of project participation also produced important benefits to unions through the lessons that are learnt in relation to new artefacts and resources. One of the main developments was the ability to work with, and the awareness emerging in relation to, research. The mapping and exploration that took place through the research activity of many projects has provided an important platform for change within unions. As one project report noted, the research did not reveal anything that was unknown, but had provided the evidence needed to back up previous assertions. In other cases, the research conducted was likely to have a major effect on future union policy. For example, the research conducted by the BFAWU's two projects had contributed to strategy formation for future engagement with diverse groups of workers and the required channels of communication to support this. The research commissioned by CATU had led to a strategic reformulation in terms of engaging with civil society groups. The BDA

undertook a major research project on apathy and lack of engagement within their membership. Subsequently, decision making and reflection within the union had become much more grounded in terms of hard facts and research data. This represents a major turning point in terms of their work and the way they engage strategically.

In the case of the GMB a race and equality awareness training programme was based on extensive research. This included a series of focus groups, depth interviews and a survey of 200 BME members and 100 non BME members as a control group. Although there was some initial slippage in the research process, as it proved difficult to get participants for the focus groups, the contracted Campaign Company persevered and, with extensive support from the union's regional offices, completed an impressive programme of research. This also included reviews of good practice cases around supporting BME workers that involved other unions or non-union community organisations. This was not just hard data that allows the union to understand its membership and needs, it brings forth a new way of planning and executing work. It is also part of the developing research function within the labour movement which is more open and engaged with the external community.

In terms of other assets and resources – the increasing knowledge about the internet as previous chapters have suggested is significant. However, what is also interesting is that greater knowledge and more effective networks have been developing in relation to the 'how' of the internet, the ways in which to tap reliable expertise within the market on the subject, and the manner in which to ensure reliable contracting relations with providers. Hence, the relationships between the organisation and information technology and communication technologies has developed and been mapped more broadly. The CWU began to review its communication assets (traditional printing, websites, mobile telephony, and others) and establish a more flexible and engaging view of them in relation to campaigns and more routine forms of relations with members. In effect, the UMF is about re-aligning the relationship between officers and their assets and resources.

There were more physical and realisable gains in some cases. The RMT project developed greater access to membership information and records. The ability to have up-to-date records, clear membership profiles, and a greater feel for the membership of the trade union is a vital pre-requisite to any strategy of renewal and change. Hence the quality of resources available to a union can be considerably enhanced, something the RCM was concerned with as well in terms of member profiles and access. Many unions are up dating out-of-date membership databases and the consequences of this are serious in terms of mapping membership, engaging them and including them. This brings with it new ways of working in terms of data and in terms of being more proactive in using information that is readily available. Where once the data was merely to record

sources of finance it is now a set of resources for scanning membership identity, social needs, and even skills and capacities.

The projects as a whole also produced significant new resources and tools in the form of handbooks. The publication of such handbooks, as project outputs, did not represent an outcome in itself. However, there was positive evidence, for example, in relation to the NUJ and TGWU, which suggests the toolkits are being widely used to shape how the respective unions engage with equality issues. The mainstreaming of such resources was an important dimension of the modernisation process of these unions, as they look to develop the equality agenda and build a new trade union role, the equality rep, to support this. Whilst this role is still nascent, it is evident that its development could play a transformational role within the representative structures of unions.

Communication

The projects, notably those focused on the web sites, have prompted unions to look more systematically and deeply in terms of how they communicate with members and how communication flows are transferred down union channels and from the bottom up from members themselves. The implementation of new interactive web sites, with provision for on-line voting and forums, has created new democratic assets within unions. The previous chapters have outlined many of the diverse uses of Internet related communication systems and innovations.

In the case of the CWU, there were clear, interesting examples of how ICT and new forms of communication were being used in each of the pilots. The aim was to have a firmer basis for establishing a more effective system of communication with members. In the Coventry branch, for example, a focused and local website was developed which was customised and more accessible. Short films have been put on the website regarding local campaigns and the local officers appear to have developed their competences in relation to multimedia activities. This was supported by the use of text messaging and these have been used to keep members in the loop regarding key campaigns. In the North East region the CWU pilot did not just focus on new forms of communication in the form of text messaging but decided to upgrade and develop a professional approach to more traditional forms of communication in the form of posters and promotional material. In effect, the modernisation agenda was not just about using new technologies but of also enhancing traditional forms of communication and visual communication in particular. What emerged in this case was not just substantive uses of the Internet and other technologies for the purpose of communication but an environment where experimentation, piloting and discussion could develop about using and learning. The UMF project has helped develop an array of communication skills and knowledge of the appropriateness of new developments which can anchor a longer term cultural change in relation to communication.

The UMF has been probably at its strongest in this area of communication where across many unions we have seen a very detailed rethinking of how to move from the early wave of the websites (e.g. the static or overloaded website) to more informed opinions about how to engage and include members across a variety of means of communication. At first sight many of the web-based projects appeared rather simple and some doubt could have been raised over their transformational potential. However, in nearly all cases such ICT projects have radically changed the ways in which unions communicate and, more importantly, members participate in the internal debate and decision processes of unions. As one project report noted, a new interactive website raised significant issues of cultural change for the union as it meant giving over more information to members and making decisions and communication structures more transparent than had previously existed.

Furthermore there was a strong training dimension to communication as well. In the case of the GMB an extensive programme of race and diversity awareness training was completed, with very positive levels of feedback from participants. In total, 452 members of GMB staff participated in the training. Communicating change and key issues of equality was being embedded across the various functions and roles of the union. Education becomes increasingly strategic and responsive. Hence, communication weaves itself into various activities of the union. In this case the training had a strong link with research activities, as noted above.

Contracting relations

One aspect where learning was to some extent unanticipated was in dealing with contractors. Many projects had bought in subcontractors to either deal with new technological solutions or to conduct research. This had often not gone as planned and lessons were learnt by unions about this. There was also a degree of information sharing between select unions around the issues with certain IT providers.

In the RCM, relations with the contractor were complex. It was argued that certain ICT level developments which were promised were more complicated than at first imagined. A major feature of these developments has been greater co-ordination with various other unions in terms of dealing with IT and ICT providers/expert companies. This is a critical issue for smaller and medium sized union who do not have the resources and in-house capacity to manage their IT systems effectively. The need to co-ordinate activity effectively between and within trade unions vis-à-vis providers and to share knowledge about them and any issues that can potentially arise was a major outcome of the project. It led to sharing questions of good and bad practice and the creation of lines of communication between officers from different unions who may not have

otherwise engaged with each-other. The question of co-ordinating consistent and informed approaches to external providers is a key feature of union modernisation (in a world of organisational sub-contracting) and in this case progress had been quite thorough.

In the action learning sets the evaluators developed it was clear that some of the smaller, professional unions were engaging with each other in terms of their experiences of contractors in terms of research and in terms of ICT. The need for a dialogue of a more systematic nature was apparent but what was clear was that informal networks and contacts across this issue were helping for knowledge about contractors to be shared.

Project management

The management of projects that are externally funded is an increasing feature of the current context of organisations throughout the private, public and voluntary sectors. The question of mapping projects in terms of resources, timelines, inputs, direction, operational issues and dissemination is an emergent management science in its own right. One of the challenges as we outlined previously is that many unions have a paucity of project management skills. Project management skills emerged as key lessons learnt by projects. At the outset, this was often seen as trivial or something that was not appropriate to the way unions were run. But as projects progressed, key project management techniques were learnt and approaches to project management developed, in relation to time management, project governance, financial issues, internal communication and monitoring and evaluation.

The UMF acted as a catalyst - along with other similar ventures such as the ULF – in engaging unions with the need to think about how they plan, develop and disseminate projects and activities. Many unions – especially some of the smaller ones – had no idea as to how to match fund, for example. The fact that match funding could be measured in terms of working time was not clear to various unions. This meant that they had to learn quickly in terms of measuring and deploying their resources - and, indeed, accounting for them. They had to think more strategically about resources and their deployment – in effect, how they worked. Hence, many had to debate how structures of governance were provided and organised to own and lead projects. In addition, they had to think in terms of milestones and deliverables at various stages.

This aspect of the work and support provided by BIS can be seen to be one area the unions were unanimously supportive of. BIS's specialist team became a hub of advice and learning about project management skills and the overseeing of projects more generally. This was done through one to one conversations and through group meetings. The challenge in the future is that more such courses are very likely to be welcomed by those unions involved in the UMF. Creating a

space for reflection on how to manage and understand projects and resources is a key feature of UMF's impact and future potential.

Communication with external agencies, such as BIS, led in the case of the RCM to a greater understanding of project oriented work. The RCM invested in project management and is taking increasingly systematic approaches to managing projects in the light of what the UMF project has taught them. The TSSA actually sent staff to project management training courses which they found would prepare them more for dealing with and managing future developments in projects. In some cases project management was effectively passed on to external organisations – especially when the deliverable was a concrete piece of research or set of data. In these cases the union made a decision on the basis of the actual nature of the project – linking project management back into the union at key stages to measure deliverables.

Whatever the approach with this issue of project management, what emerges is a more systematic approach, and realisation of, the needs to create transparent and rigorous approaches to the development of project work. The UMF has many cases of unions having to consider how they approach such work in the future and that is a vital development for their learning culture.

Evaluation and reflection

The area of evaluation is increasingly significant in part due to the need for financial accountability, but also due to the need to actually quantify and understand what the value of a project or activity actually is. The question of additionality is a key part of the UMF guidelines. Being able to track developments is therefore increasingly important. All projects had some degree of evaluation, although this varied considerably. Some contracted in evaluators and worked closely with them (such as the RFU and Wales TUC), others used their own project management teams as devices to evaluate milestones and stages. The language of evaluation is something trade unions are not uncommon with given the wide variety in their work, but the UMF insisted as part of the application process that there be systematic and clear evaluation techniques used within individual projects. Dialogue about evaluation does not appear to have been as apparent when compared to more substantial issues such as contracting but the experience of thinking through the project process and measuring outcomes in one way or another was apparent. Yet a basis has been established for the development of a more consistent approach to evaluation and the preparation of templates in the future.

Evaluation went alongside a broader process of reflection. The process of progressing projects raised many issues that contributed to organisational learning, but project managers and participants also used the remit of the project to reflect more broadly on how projects were contributing to the broader

operation of unions. In some cases, project managers reflected on what could have been done differently, in others there was a view that projects had been rather conservative and more ambition could have been attempted. In other cases projects were raising questions about how the union serviced its members more generally. The BDA actually reflected on their UMF project in terms of how they worked more generally, whilst some other unions saw their project as opening the door to more consistent internal debate and critique. Those smaller unions tended to be the ones which saw the greatest potential for cultural change as a consequence of their training and research they had done.

There is a link between reflection and evaluation. Evaluation can be done in terms of simple stages and outputs, but it can also be linked into a broader view of how a union works and what it is doing. In some cases this link was apparent. Evaluation is not just, therefore, conforming to standard and contract but reflecting on how things are done and how they could be done better: there is evidence that this has been apparent in a selection of UMF projects.

Networks and shared learning

All projects were faced at times with challenges. The most common response was to address such issues internally. For the most parts, projects were able to address challenges successfully, but in some cases delays proved protracted and in three cases projects did not complete. There was a degree of mutual support across some projects, around for example how to deal with IT contractors, model contracts or issues in relation to labour market diversity.

In terms of networking, there were visible developments around clusters of UMF projects. Whilst networks of equality officers exist in one form or another within the trade union movement, there were clear signs that a dialogue around UMF equality projects had evolved. Discussions on toolkits, training materials, and initiatives were common. This has been clear in the support the NUJ have provided to the NUT. There was a formal level of support for the NUT's equality strategies as a consequence of the NUJ's UMF project. Links with the Welsh TUC equalities project were also extensive. Materials and advice have been shared thus avoiding the problem of having to 'reinvent the wheel' and work in isolation on projects and issues where there is already a growing body of knowledge.

Again, it appeared to be smaller unions who gained more from this networking. TSSA and RCM networked about contractors. The GFTU and the BFAWU networked on the development of their projects – although there is a historical relation between them. Overall, however, the clusters of networks that evolved were not as extensive as they could have been. This has been addressed more explicitly in UMF Round Two to some extent, where networks have been established around equality representative projects.

Mainstreaming and embedding change

Given the focus of the Fund on projects that have the potential to lead to transformational change within unions, it is important that projects outputs and any lessons learnt are mainstreamed more widely in to the cultures and structures of unions. Some dimensions to this have already been outlined in the chapter, but three aspects of mainstreaming are worth highlighting.

First, there was some evidence of the mainstreaming and embedding of change through the development of new ICT technologies. As noted, new web resources and particularly their participatory capacities were leading to scale changes and questions being raised about internal communication systems more generally. Whilst the technical changes had often had obvious results, the degree of change within the wider context of unions was more limited. In smaller unions the impact was more immediate and significant. In larger unions, such as CWU and AMICUS new ICT solutions had been trialled and it would take more time for wider changes to roll out; in the CWU case this seemed likely, in other cases maybe not.

Second, there was some evidence that the work being done in the equality agenda was leading to wider changes within unions and a degree of mainstreaming of the equality agenda. The TWGU equality project and the projects by the NUJ and GMB had all produced toolkits and handbooks and training programmes designed to inculcate new perspectives within the respective unions with regard to equality and diversity issues. In the GMB case this had led to the appointment of a new officer role, in the latter two cases there was an emphasis on rolling out networks of equality representatives. Given the subsequent emphasis in Round Two on equality representatives, it may well be that one of the lasting legacies of the UMF turns out to be the development of new union roles at the workplace.

Third, there were a limited number of cases where projects could genuinely be said to have led to a significant shift in the overall strategic direction or management of unions. In the cases of CATU and Community, this had, through research and training, led to the desire for a strategic reappraisal of the future of the unions and the constituencies they needed to engage with. The most notable case of the UMF First Round in terms of embedded change was the USDAW project. This project was designed specifically around changing the strategic and operational management of the union, and was very successful. The union introduced a balanced scorecard approach to organisational decision making and this was being rolled out across the union and supported by a range of other organisational practices, such as performance review. In other words, this was not a project that just produced a specific output, a handbook with a score card, but a case where the work conducted through the UMF has permeated every facet of the union and resulted in major cultural change. Its annual strategic plan is now based specifically around the processes of the balanced score card, and

targets, for member recruitment and administrative efficiency savings, are linked to this.

Summary

There are many benefits from the UMF in terms of workplace equality and new forms of working relations. However, it is also important to focus on some of the procedural and organisational enhancements. The way unions work is transforming due to the pressures of their changing membership. In order to develop more open and clearer approaches, the UMF has acted as a significant form of learning space. There are clearly new sets of resources and assets which allow for a broader knowledge base to be accessed. In addition communications are being reflected upon in a more dynamic and open manner. There are now real engagements with a variety of communication systems and the potential for real synergies between unions. There are many new forms of communication being used and - what is important in terms of the UMF contribution - reflected on.

In terms of organisational structure we are seeing greater realisation of the need to plan contracting relations with the external world of providers and to develop a more professional view of relating to the 'industry' of modernisation. This is also visible in terms of the internal process of project management - managing and scoping change projects in a more thorough and effective manner. This dovetails with signs of a more serious concern with evaluation and reflection – measuring and marking points of change. Finally in terms of learning, not only are there communication and organisation-based developments, there are signals of there being a greater degree of networking and shared learning – thus creating the basis of a learning environment. However, regardless of these developments, there are still challenges related to the way UMF projects are allowed to unfold. Many of the positive steps outlined above need to become more generalised, strategic and embedded within unions.

UMF – Round one: Final evaluation report

Chapter 8: Conclusions

The report has considered in some detail the activities, outputs and potential outcomes of projects funded under the UMF First Round. Nearly of all the 35 projects funded completed their activities and produced outputs of value to their unions. More than just the outputs, however, the projects revealed that many lessons were learnt through participation in the UMF and this has started to lead to internal debates within unions about the process of modernisation.

In terms of the immediate added value of the UMF, two basic points are worth making. First, the ideas behind many projects were already a 'glint in the eye' for many unions, but it is the case that they would not have been realised without the financial support of the UMF. This became even more evident as projects progressed and completed. The UMF has supported many important projects that would not have gone ahead without funding, either due to lack of funds or more generally resources across unions. In many cases, project funding has allowed unions to 'buy-in' relevant expertise to mobilise new initiatives, under the guidance, rather than the reliance, of senior officials – although there were notable cases, and problems, where this was not the case. Second, the UMF has provided for unions a useful space for experimentation. The levels of funding were recognised to be modest and this must caution any assessment of the overall impact of projects within unions. Nonetheless, the UMF allowed unions to trial new ideas, conduct research and map members' views, develop new roles and engage in debate in a way that was relatively low risk to participating unions in a broader sense. Projects did not impose undue constraints on the core activities of unions, although in some cases the context and constraints within unions did impinge on the activities and progress of projects.

One of the challenges of initiatives that are funded through external sources is the extent to which projects prove enduring once they complete. All too often carefully constructed toolkits and handbooks are consigned to book shelves or cupboards once projects are completed. It is too early to formulate a robust conclusion on the sustainability of UMF activities. However, there is some evidence that unions are following up projects with their own internal investments, commitments to 'carry on' or by integrating the findings of projects into the 'way we do things around here'. The match funding of many project went far and beyond the nominal 50-50 expectation, as unions put in far more resources, often unmeasured, to project activities and there appears to be a desire in many cases to build upon this investment and commitment.

The report concludes by briefly revisiting the main purpose of the UMF, before considering the development and future of union modernisation. To recap, the purpose of the Fund is to support innovative projects to help speed unions' adaptation to changing labour market conditions. It aims to support projects that

either explore the potential for, or contribute to, a transformational change in the organisational efficiency or effectiveness of a trade union or unions. Through helping unions to explore and test innovative ways of working, and by disseminating the results of projects widely across the union movement, the Fund also aims to provide a demonstration effect to the broader trade union movement.

The potential for transformational change

It was clear that the projects were individually, and as a collection of projects, producing a significant amount of outputs. The key question is around the extent to which projects can be considered transformational. The degree of ambition varied considerably by projects and, self evidently, the success of projects was shaped by the contextual conditions within which individual unions operate. What may be possible in one union may not be in another. Nor should specific results necessarily determine the level of potential. At a superficial level, the introduction of a new web site may seem rather mundane and to lack ambition, but for smaller unions it may offer the first real opportunity for participatory engagement with members and may radically change the culture of communication within unions. Similarly, whilst larger unions often trialled pilot approaches the scale of ambition was high, and, at this stage it was more about learning what was possible, for example in terms of supporting migrant workers, rather than developing new, formal structures for the future.

It is too early to judge whether projects have contributed in any measurable sense to transformational change in the organisational efficiency or effectiveness of unions, but there is strong evidence that the UMF has generated a high degree of potential for transformational change.

There are signs of significant progress in terms of the development of new communications infrastructures, technological processes, new management methods and new union roles (such as equality representatives). In pure efficiency terms, the technological investments adopted during the First Round do suggest some level of cost savings in the administrative functions of unions and also improved productivity of union officials, in terms of allowing them more time on core activities or improving their ability to manage case work. The USDAW balanced score approach is an example of best practice in terms of cultural change and the transformation of organisational effectiveness. More widely, we are starting to see nascent union roles that could impact significantly on unions' representational effectiveness in the area of equality.

Internally, then, new union roles have started to emerge around equality and diversity matters. There were examples of such roles being drawn from areas not noted for activism, and this has contributed to the organising agenda. Yet, at the same time, such roles also raise challenges within union structures, about how

they fit and what it means for the traditional role of the shop steward – as the TGWU project made clear, equality representatives should not be seen as an alternative to shop stewards having training and a strong commitment to advancing quality and representing members on equality issues.

The process of modernisation means that projects often challenge established ways of working within unions and can face barriers in terms of the structural location of information flows and key decision makers. This is exemplified not only in terms of the degree of strategic conservatism that often pervades the political apparatus of unions, but the very democratic and often autonomous structures that characterise unions as organisations. In this regard many projects have found that their objectives impact upon the regional apparatus of unions and they have put significant time into communicating the aspirations of projects to key delegated officials and working with them to ensure buy-in for the project.

Furthermore, it is clear that important lessons will come out of the UMF in terms of internal communications and organisational effectiveness. One key aspect of modernisation in this respect will be related to human resource management within trade unions, and the working environment and workloads of key officials and activists, and the support structures and governance of project teams. How the skills related to project management are developed within unions and harnessed and co-ordinated across the different structures and functions within and between trade unions will be an on-going issue for the future.

The project management role is relatively new within unions and, in many cases, this is something that projects were defining and refining as they proceed. Much has been learnt in this regard, in terms of what the responsibility of the project manager should be and where this role should be located. For example, one project manager concluded that in any future UMF projects he would take a far more strategic approach, rather than hands on approach, to the running of projects, with the day-to-day activities delegated to more appropriate others. Similarly, in a number of other projects, union officers were starting to recognise that they needed to pull in dedicated resources to lead projects, as their workloads simply precluded close day-to-day management of activities and deliverables.

In conclusion, the findings suggest that modernisation as defined by unions and the way they have worked with specific thematic priorities does not seem to be an issue. Overall, there has been a positive basis for modernisation, in terms of the attitudes of key stakeholders. Cultural resistance has generally been low and, in any case, was largely anticipated by projects. The overall success of the UMF should be judged not solely in terms of project outputs, such as the delivery of a new web-site, but how unions respond to challenges and events. Such responses and the lessons that they elaborate will be a positive outcome in itself. This relates to external problems and also, crucially, how internal processes are adapted and key organisational challenges tackled.

The 'demonstration effect'

There is evidence that dissemination activities picked up during the life course of projects. All projects engaged in dissemination activities of some sort. At an internal level, projects put some effort into disseminating findings, challenges and lessons to union staff at all levels and to members. Those projects that had produced toolkits and handbooks had also started to engage in activities to disseminate the value of such resources extensively across their unions, and also to some extent externally. There was also some evidence of projects sharing information, notably around dealing with contractors, with each other and engaging in a degree of networking activity.

More broadly, however, the level of external dissemination was something of a 'slow burner' and wider knowledge of the UMF remains low. To be sure, there were examples of a number of high profile launch events that engaged significant constituencies and stakeholders. Also, in a limited number of cases, projects reported their findings and success in external journals, magazines or at public workshop events. But the extent to which the results of projects, in terms of the implications for modernisations and key lessons for change, have had a demonstration effect to the wider union movement is probably quite low. Unions have knowledge of the UMF as a funding stream, but less of what can actually be achieved by exploring and testing innovative ways of working. There have been few high profile events that systematically attempt to pull out the key themes of the round in a more generalised sense and generate a wider debate on modernisation within the union movement.

Nonetheless, BIS has developed a detailed dissemination strategy for the UMF. Now that First Round projects have all completed, it would seem opportune to step up the dissemination effort and start to make connections between what has been learnt in the First Round and the development of projects in UMF Rounds 2 and 3.

UMF Rounds Two and Three

Two subsequent rounds of the UMF have been approved for funding, within the original financial allocation made available for the Fund. The Second Round opened in 2007, and 33 projects were funded (though two subsequently withdrew before work commenced). In total, 12 unions that were not supported under the First Round, have projects under the Second Round. It is also notable that there are good examples where unions have sought to develop and build upon what was learnt in their initial projects through new sets of activities, for example more focused around implementation. The Second Round also identified as a priority theme the explicit development of the equality representative role (picking up a recommendation of the Women and Work Commission). At least eight projects

have a dedicated focus on building networks of equality representatives and a number of other projects focus on the equality agenda more broadly.

The Third Round opened on 12 February 2009. The winners were announced on 15 September 2009. It focuses on the delivery of new ideas for improving the support that unions and others can provide to vulnerable workers. The new focus will allow unions to tackle a range of serious challenges faced by vulnerable workers and will enable partnerships to be developed with voluntary and community organisations which have specific expertise in this area.

Over the course of the UMF, therefore, we have a strong focus on the development of new equality roles and with the most recent round the challenges of supporting vulnerable workers. There are some insights that can be learnt from the race and diversity and migrant worker projects of the First Round. The Third Round also requires unions to work more closely with external organisations and agencies, and will pose further challenges to the working practices of unions. It would seem logical to evaluate further these specific dimensions of the UMF (around equality and vulnerable workers) and also to review, in a more longitudinal fashion, the impact and sustainability of key First Round projects (perhaps through revisiting the 10 detailed cases).

Overall, it is clear that the UMF has a valuable role to play in encouraging trade union innovation. There are many important insights and lessons to be taken from the findings presented in this evaluation report and the ongoing work of projects in further rounds. The full benefit of this trade union innovation needs to be disseminated as widely as possible if the full demonstration effect to the union movement is to be realised.

UMF – Round one: Final evaluation report

References

Addison, J., Bailey, R. and Siebert, S. (2006) "The Impact of Deunionisation on Earnings Dispersion Revisited", *Research in Labor Economics*, vol. 26: 337-364

Blanchflower, D. and Bryson, A. (2004) Union Relative Wage Effects in the United States and the United Kingdom, *Proceedings of the 56th Annual Meeting of the Industrial Relations Research Association*, 133-140

Brown, W., Deakin, S., Nash, D. and Oxenbridge, S. (2000) 'The employment contract: from collective procedures to individual rights', *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, 38(4): 299 – 216

Card, D., Lemieux, T. and Riddell, W.C. (2003) Unionization and wage inequality: A comparative study of the US, The UK and Canada, *NBER Working Paper 9473*, Boston: NBER

Castells, M. (1998) *The Rise of the Network Society*. Oxford: Blackwell

Charlwood, A. (2007) 'The De-collectivization of Pay Determination in British Establishments 1990 – 1998: Incidents, Determinants and Impact' *Industrial Relations Journal* 38(1): 33 - 50

Charlwood, A. and Forth, J. (2009) 'Employee Representation' in Brown, W., Bryson, A., Forth, J. and Whitfield, K. (eds) *The Evolution of the Modern British Workplace*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (forthcoming)

Clark, P., Gilbert, K., Gray, L., Solomon, N, (1998) 'Union Administrative Practices: A Comparative Analysis' *Journal of Labor Research*, 19(1): 189 – 201.

Department of Trade and Industry (2004) *Union Modernisation Fund: Consultation on the draft rules and procedures*. London: DTI

Department of Trade and Industry (2005) *Union Modernisation Fund: Governmental response to public consultation on the draft rules and procedures*. London: DTI

Greene, A.M., Hogan, J. and Grieco, M. (2003) 'E collectivism and distributed discourse: new opportunities for trade union democracy', paper presented at TUC/ LSE conference on Unions and the Internet, London, 12 March.

Heery, E. (1998) 'The Re-launch of the Trades Union Congress' *British Journal of Industrial Relations*

UMF – Round one: Final evaluation report

Heery, E. (2002) 'Partnership Versus Organising: Alternative Futures for British Trade Unionism' *Industrial Relations Journal*, 33(1): 20 – 35

Heery, E. and Simms, M. (2008) 'Constraints on union organising'; *Industrial Relations Journal*, 39 (1): 24 - 42

Hyman, R. (2007) 'How can trade unions act strategically?', presented at Industrial Relations in Europe Conference (IREC), Center of Industrial Relations and Negotiations (CIRN), Athens 26-28 July

Jarley, P., Fiorito, J. and Delaney, J.T. (1997) 'A Structural Contingency Approach to Bureaucracy and Democracy in US National Union' *Academy of Management Journal*, 40: 831 – 61

Kersley, B., Bryson, A, Forth, J., Alpin, C. and Bewley, H. (2006) *Inside the Workplace: findings from the 2004 Workplace Employment Relations Survey*, London: Routledge

Mercer, S. and Notley, R. (2008) *Trade Union Membership 2007*, London: National Statistics

Metcalf, D., Hansen, K. and Charlwood, A. (2001) 'Unions and the Sword of Justice: Unions and Pay Systems, Pay Inequality, Pay Discrimination and Low Pay' *National Institute Economic Review*, 176 (April): 61 – 75

Pawson, R. and Tilley, N. (1997) *Realistic Evaluation*, London: Sage.

Simms, M and Holgate, J. 'TUC Organising Academy 10 years On: What Has Been the Impact?' *International Journal of Human Resource Management* (2009), (forthcoming)

Stuart, M. and Martinez Lucio, M. (2005) *Partnership and Modernisation in Employment Relations*. London: Routledge.

Stuart, M., Charlwood, A., Martinez Lucio, M. and Wallis, E. (2008) *Union Modernisation Fund: an Interim Progress Report*, Employment Relations Research Series No. 92. London: Department of Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform.

Stuart, M., Charlwood, A., Martinez Lucio, M. and Wallis, E. (2006) *Union Modernisation Fund: Interim Evaluation of First Round*. Employment Relations Research Series No. 68. London: Department of Trade and Industry

Terry, M. and Smith, J. (2003) *Evaluation of the Partnership at Work Fund*, Employment Relations Research Series No.17. London: Department of Trade and Industry.

Walker, S., Martinez Lucio, M. and Trevorrow, P. (2007) 'Tracing trade union innovation: a framework for evaluating trade union learning projects in a time of complexity', *Transfer*, 13(2): 267-90.

Willman, P. (2004) 'Structuring Union: The Administrative Rationality of Collective Action' in Kelly, J. and Willman, P. (eds) *Union Organisation and Activity*, London: Routledge

Willman, P. and Bryson, A. (2007) 'Union Organization in Great Britain' *Journal of Labor Research*, 28(1): 93 -115.

Willman, P. and Bryson, A. (2009) 'Accounting for Collective Action: Resource Acquisition and Mobilization in British Unions', *Advances in Industrial and Labor Relations*, Vol. 16, forthcoming

UMF – Round one: Final evaluation report

Appendix 1: The Supervisory Board

Sir Bill Connor (Chair) – ex General Secretary of USDAW

Judith Hackitt – Director-General of the Chemical Industries Association (resigned January 2006)

Professor David Metcalf – Professor of Industrial Relations, London School of Economics and Political Science (resigned December 2007)

Professor William Brown – Master of Darwin College and Montague Burton Professor of Industrial Relations, University of Cambridge

Jeannie Drake – ex Deputy General Secretary of the Communication Workers Union

Adrian Askew – General Secretary of Connect

Danny Carrigan – ex Assistant General Secretary of Amicus from 2002-2005

Bruce Warman – ex Director of Personnel at Vauxhall Motors (appointed October 2006)

Professor David Gordon - Director of the Townsend Centre for International Poverty Research and Professor of Social Justice at the University of Bristol (appointed March 2009)

David Lebrecht – ex HR Director for British Airways (appointed March 2009)

Appendix 2: BIS reporting pro forma

FINANCIAL CLAIMS PRO FORMA			
Name of Project			
Name of Union (or lead partner in joint projects)			
Name of Project Finance Officer			
Contact tel. number			
Period of project activity for which claim is being made			
Start date		End date	
Budget Heading	UMF grant claimed	Matched Funding contribution made	
Pay of personnel directly engaged on the project			
Overheads			
Materials consumed			
Capital equipment and tooling bought or consumed for the purpose of the project			
Sub-contract charges or consultancy fees			
Training costs			
Monitoring and evaluation			
Project management costs			
Travel and subsistence			
Other (please specify)			
TOTAL			

PROGRESS THIS PERIOD			
Milestones from Revised Project Plan	Achieved ?	Explanation for slippage	
PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT DATA – HARD OUTCOMES			
Measure	Overall Target Level	Previous Level	New level / progress to date
PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT DATA – SOFT OUTCOMES (Please use the space below to record progress against softer targets identified in your monitoring and evaluation strategy)			
CHANGES TO PROJECT SPECIFICATION (Please record below any significant changes to your project – e.g. changes to personnel, timetable, expected costs, participating organisations)			
DECLARATION			
<p>I declare that the information contained in this report is correct to the best of my knowledge. I would also declare that all the expenditure claimed is in respect of costs, which are properly attributable to the project.</p> <p>Name of designated officer... ..</p> <p>Role.....</p> <p>Signed.....Date.....</p>			

Appendix 3: Final survey of projects

Name of interviewee:

UMF Project Code:

Project Title:

Date and Time of Interview:

Interviewer(s)

What was the project's main objective?

What were the key outcomes of the projects?

What lessons did you learn from the project?

What were the main challenges you experienced in progressing and delivering the project?

Did these challenges delay the project, and, if so, for how long?

Was there any internal blocking points (i.e. resistance to change) and how did you ensure the 'buy in' of key stakeholders?

What planning and recording processes did you implement to ensure delivery of the project against plan?

What additional resources did the union allocate to the project? Did you find yourself putting more resources generally than was initially planned?

How have you publicised and marketed the project internally within the union and externally to other unions and beyond. If so how?

Did you network with any other projects that were UMF funded? If so, WHO, and how did you network? Was it useful?

How did channels of communication with the DTI and the TUC develop and were they effective? What would you advise they do in future UMF Rounds?

If you could do anything differently, what would it be?

What was the most unexpected outcome/ lesson of the project?

Appendix 4: Summary of Project Activity

Code	Applicant Union	Project title and objectives	Project activities/ outputs	Dissemination
UMF 002	Retained Firefighters Union	Local representatives' empowerment strategy: Two-year Project to support the RFU's role in fire service modernisation through increased participation of local representatives. The project aims to utilise IT solutions to support local representatives' activities. Outputs include: purchase of lap top computers; a new nationwide database of union resources; new web-based portal for dissemination of information and best practice; programme of training and development activities to facilitate information flows.	<p>The project started two months' later than planned, but completed to time.</p> <p>Activities/ outputs: Due diligence for hardware/software and capital items; 25 Laptop computers purchased Design of training programme; training implemented for 25 regional reps.</p> <p>Benefits accrued, lessons learnt and good practice: Difficult to get reps to attend training, due to workloads and geography. But training well received. Planning needed for procurement Succession planning Reps 'more competent and noticeably more confident'.</p>	I +

UMF – Round one: Final evaluation report

003	Nationwide Group Staff Union (NGSU)	Using the internet to activate and empower members: Six month project to upgrade the union's website to facilitate two-way communications. Focus on improving communication to inform and add value to NGSU representatives' roles in taking forward the new I&C arrangements recently agreed with the employer. Target of 10 per cent increase in use of web-site.	<p>Completed to time: web-site redesigned and completed; some training launched on-line workplace pay survey</p> <p>Benefits accrued, lessons learnt and good practice: 1704 registered members on forum, 2000 posts on 410 topics. 'Sharing experience and expertise like never before'.</p> <p>Pay negotiation survey got 5% response. 2 issues of union magazine gone on-line; extent of e-communication and unexpected outcome.</p>	I ++ E + N +
004	GMB - Britain's General Union	Race and Diversity: project to implement the findings of recent internal race equality audit. Project will develop a membership strategy to encourage greater participation of BME members and provide diversity training for all GMB staff.	<p>Completed to time: large research programme completed, including best practice cases Profiling and networking activity Training of staff, 452 staff covered Network of 22 Diversity Champions established</p> <p>Benefits accrued, lessons learnt and good practice: Important lessons learnt around the limitations of existing membership profiling and the key barriers and challenges to building increased awareness of diversity issues. Final Report sets out key recommendations for integrating into union strategy beyond the life of</p>	I + E + N +

UMF – Round one: Final evaluation report

			the project, such as communications and wider roll out of the training to the regions. A dedicated Diversity and Equalities Officer has been appointed.	
005	Communication Workers Union (CWU)	CWU reaching out: Project to pilot new communications methods in a number of the union's regions, with the aim of identifying the best approaches for roll-out to the whole organisation.	<p>Completed to time:</p> <p>- 6 regional pilots established, with range of associated investments in ICT, printing facilities and training</p> <p>Benefits accrued, lessons learnt and good practice: Pilots raises a series of issues in terms of skills currently lacking by union reps, such as basic computing skills. But series of new outputs produced, such as newsletter, communication widely increased and ability to 'stay ahead' of communications at work. Lesson learnt around the sheer scale and planning of preparatory work for the project. New ICT being established as part of culture of union work.</p>	I ++
006	Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union	Membership Diversity: 12 month project to research the needs and attitudes of workers for whom English is a foreign language in order to inform the development of a strategy to service their needs. Project to also entail diversity awareness training for staff and activists.	<p>Project completed to time: Detailed background research of race and diversity issues facing union and food sector. Survey of membership; Qualitative focus groups; Diversity awareness training conducted of all union employees</p> <p>Benefits accrued, lessons learnt and good practice: Research identified key</p>	I++ E++

UMF – Round one: Final evaluation report

			issues for future union strategy and series of recommendations – including the introduction of a ‘buddy’ system. Positive response to training programme. Strong internal dissemination, recommendations of the final report presuppose a degree of additionality and sustainability.	
007	Wales TUC	Equal at work: Trade union in Wales promoting equality and challenging discrimination: Two-year project to build capacity of TUC affiliates in Wales on equality issues. The initiative will include: research into the needs of disadvantaged workers; awareness raising of new discrimination legislation in 2500 workplaces; web site; training for union equality representatives and equality officers; establishment of a network for equality bodies and union officers to share best practice; joint seminars and six pilot projects.	<p>Project completed, with extension of 4 months. Its four key objectives were externally evaluated: increasing understanding through research, promoting and raising awareness of equality issues, increasing trade union capacity and establishing an equality reps network:</p> <p>Research completed by Bevan Foundation, after initial contractor unsatisfactory; Awareness raised through website, leafleting and promotion to 2500 workplaces, 5 employer-employee seminars with 64 participants; 6 ‘workplace’ pilot projects; Bargaining for Equality Course attended by 71 participants (80 planned), 59 equality officers) (rather than 10 planned) attended Law course; Ongoing discussion over Equality Network.</p> <p>Benefits accrued, lessons learnt and good practice:</p>	I ++ E ++ N ++

UMF – Round one: Final evaluation report

			<p>The project experienced problems and delays with the research and the changing structure of key institutions affected engagement strategy. But the project was complex and generally seen as a success. It was noted that forming partnerships with other interested parties, such as the Equalities Commission, can be beneficial for unions. Evaluation report raises questions over the achievement of an ongoing network and the union capacity to deliver on this, and provided a series of recommendations for sustainability. The innovative workplace pilots were seen as time consuming and only partly successful.</p>	
008	Lloyds TSB Group Union	<p>LTU technology modernisation project: Project to increase and improve the level of communication with, and consultation of, members through the development of a new internet package.</p>	<p>Completed on time: completion of new website, with new, interactive user aspect; new content management system</p> <p>Benefits accrued, lessons learnt and good practice: Final report notes, 'it is difficult to assess the impact the project has had on the union's members'. Nonetheless, positive reports of union officials, improved efficiency dealing with member requests and increased usage of webpage, with site visits up by 33 percent and</p>	++

UMF – Round one: Final evaluation report

			registered users up 137 per cent. Lesson learnt around establishing adequate timescales for such projects. Use of a familiar contract and regular contact between the project and contractor evidence of good practice.	
009	The National Union of Teachers	The online interactive centre for lay union officers and school and college NUT representatives (HEARTH): Project to establish a new section of the union's website for lay representatives, providing them with information and resources tailored to their needs, as well as opportunities to exchange information and experience.	Completed to time: Development and implementation on new online centre, includes an open site, reps site and membership storage site (HEARTH); recruitment of registered users; HEARTH newsletter and promotion; Training events Benefits accrued, lessons learnt and good practice: Key challenges related to IT suppliers and sophistication of software and some internal resistance. The latter was overcome through presentations and training. Large number of users for new system and improved communications, which will be rolled out further across the union.	I ++ N ++
010	Society of Chiropractors and podiatrists	Shaping the future: The project aims to build the union's capacity to work in partnership with employers by identifying and training regional champions, holding regional training events for members around Agenda for	The project did not complete, although some activity was undertaken: signing of company partnership agreements; training courses arranged' regional training events arranged	

UMF – Round one: Final evaluation report

		Change and a conference in partnership with employers.	Benefits accrued, lessons learnt and good practice: Key lesson learnt relates to project management and the pressures of workload on full-time officials.	
011	Royal College of Midwives	Improving the communication between the Royal College of Midwives and its members: 18 month project. Integration of the union's website with an improved membership database to allow the collection and use of richer membership information in targeted communications.	Completed to time: new membership system introduced; updated website e-mail newsletter Benefits accrued, lessons learnt and good practice: 194 members updated details via i-membership, Visits to website increased by 95 per cent. Delays due to IT contractor problems, with meant some tasks not completed and marketing of project put back. Over-estimated senior officials' time on project, but extensive overall project governance. Strong branding of project (RCM memberlink).	I + + N +
013	Union of Finance Staff (UFS)	Interactive database project: 18 month project to introduce a new interactive web-based membership database and communication system for members and representatives.	Completed with approved extension of 5 months: new website and membership system introduced. New forms of communication and information storage. Benefits accrued, lessons learnt and good practice: 16 per cent of members registered to new website (600 members), lower than target. General functionality of site successful; unanticipated email and survey tools on new site	I +

UMF – Round one: Final evaluation report

			widely used. Good relationship with IT contractors but still 'numerous misunderstandings'. Lesson learnt about time needed to complete such projects.	
014	Ceramic and Allied Trades Union (CATU)	CATU modernisation (2006-8): The project involves a review by the Universities of Keele and Staffs of the union's existing structures and processes, with a view to developing new structures better fitted to the new labour market realities in the union's heartlands in line with its vision of becoming a 'community union'.	<p>Project completed, with three month extension:</p> <p>The research, completed 8 months' late, included labour market analysis, employer interviews, interviews with migrant workers, and community-based studies.</p> <p>Benefits accrued, lessons learnt and good practice: The project was described as 'transformational' within the union. There were clear lessons learnt in terms of project management and the organisation and time management of projects. The changes that have taken place were not envisaged at the onset of the project. The research revealed 'outdated practices and mindsets' and this led to attitudinal change within the union. This is seen in a strategic shift as an active partner in civil society; a change in name to UNITY and change in the staffing structure of the union.</p>	I +
015	United Road Transport Union (URTU)	Building for success: Supporting the growth and stability of a small and specialist trade union within the road haulage and logistics industry: The first element of	<p>Completed to time:</p> <p>training completed, but changed from bespoke courses to officers attending regular URTU provision.</p>	

UMF – Round one: Final evaluation report

		<p>this project involves training for shop stewards and FTOs in generic management skills and on the specific challenges facing the logistics sector, focusing on I&C and Working Time. The second element focuses on developing the union's website and providing the union's mobile office with access to central union IT systems.</p>	<p>Review, update and implementation of new ICT systems.</p> <p>Benefits accrued, lessons learnt and good practice: The new ICT system is reaping benefits, in terms of speed of communication to different levels of union. New training needs have been identified.</p>	
016	Equity	<p>On-line talent directories: Project to create and pilot online talent directories allowing Equity members to market themselves directly to prospective employers. The project is designed to add value to the union membership offer and to enhance the prospects of the majority of Equity members who are excluded from the system of employment through talent agents.</p>	<p>Completed following two month extension: new interactive directory established</p> <p>Benefits accrued, lessons learnt and good practice: Project experienced some challenges in terms of workload issues, contracting and some internal resistance, but these seen as learning points. The new site is used extensively; 600 out of 1000 actors posted their profiles; employers are using site. The main outcome was the massive increase in levels of communication. A roll out to London and then nationally is planned.</p>	<p>I + E +</p>
017	Transport and General Workers Union	<p>Establishment of the TGWU migrant workers support unit: The Migrant Workers Support Unit will offer services such as translation, advice on employment rights and signposting to community</p>	<p>Project started later than plan and then completed with an extension of 6 months: appointment of project workers</p>	<p>I + E ++ N +</p>

UMF – Round one: Final evaluation report

		<p>support services. The unit will aim to build links with other support services such as the CAB, Polish Workers Association etc. It will be a pilot project, focusing on sectors and locations most affected by the Gangmasters Licensing Act 2004.</p>	<p>wide scale research effort mapped activity in and difficulties of organising migrant workers; identified training needs and broader policy issues for union</p> <p>Provided legal support across union and contributed to number of campaigns</p> <p>Connected with external agencies an dpartnerships wide dissemination</p> <p>Benefits accrued, lessons learnt and good practice: Project set in motion activity that will have lasting change within the union in terms of strategies towards, support for and organising of migrant workers. Some key aspects will be continued, such as specialist website, but the MWSU itself will not continue. The aspiration was for a national project but in reality in was geographically focused, and the training planned was not delivered. However, the project identified a pressing need for training across the union and this will be developed and delivered by the union education department.</p>	
020	Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union, BFAWU	<p>Membership and communication systems: Research project to investigate communication needs of members, particularly those for whom English is not the first language. The project will</p>	<p>Project completed to time: extensive research programme completed and recommendations produced.</p> <p>Benefits accrued, lessons learnt and good practice:</p>	I + E +

UMF – Round one: Final evaluation report

		deliver a specification for a transformation of the union's website, including the provision of parts of the site in other languages.	Clear insight into needs of members, significant data and clear research. Feeding into union strategy.	
021	Community and District Nursing Association (CDNA)	Developing the virtual union: Project to develop an interactive website with integrated membership administration functions. This will enable targeted communications, two-way consultation and discussion forums as well as online balloting facilities and increase levels of inclusion amongst the union's peripatetic and geographically dispersed membership base.	Completed to time: new virtual union website launched Benefits accrued, lessons learnt and good practice: The union overhauled site rather than revised following internal research. Web hits increased and ¾ of membership registered on new site.	I + L
022	Transport and General Workers Union	Developing and supporting workplace union equality representatives: The project will develop a toolkit for workplace union equality representatives, to be piloted in partnership with employers in workplaces across a range of sectors, culminating in a public launch seminar and wider dissemination of the toolkit.	Completed with three months' extension: Research activities in relation to value of Toolkit; Piloting, refining and publication of equalities Toolkit, with an accompanying concise equality handbook; 4 workplace/ sector seminars held in general industry, local government, oil refinery and bus industry; General awareness raising of equality reps Benefits accrued, lessons learnt and good practice: Project considered a success, with the Toolkit and handbook being mainstreamed into all areas of union activity and widely	I ++ E ++ L

UMF – Round one: Final evaluation report

			requested. An additional 40-50 equality reps recruited at workplace seminars. Takes time to engage employers and overall planning and running of project took longer than anticipated. Any initial shop steward scepticism overcome and the 'role of the equality rep seen as more legitimate'	
023	Community	<p>Creating capability: trade unionism in the community: The project involves a programme of training for the union's senior staff in globalisation and labour market trends, as well as modules on cultural change, setting organisational strategy and the management of finances and human resources. The intention is to stimulate the process of building a new inclusive culture and identity, bringing together the constituent parts of the merged union.</p>	<p>Completed, following 5 month extension: completion of 3 strategic training sessions for senior officers organised by Henley Management College; wider report and recommendations for union. 37 attendees across 3 sessions.</p> <p>Benefits accrued, lessons learnt and good practice: The dynamic from the project appears to have led to further project work and dissemination of training. Good relations with Henley. More people trained than originally planned. Raised strategic issues about changing union culture and developing closer team working. Implementation team established. The training courses, 'bonded the Executive Council' together 'to think about the overall benefit for the union not just for their regions'.</p>	+
026	Transport and General Workers Union	<p>Preparing opinion formers for information and consultation: Project to organise a series of training seminars for FTOs</p>	<p>Project completed and received 6 month extension. The final report was submitted, but no final audit</p>	+

UMF – Round one: Final evaluation report

		and key activists on I&C, and to produce new guidance materials.	<p>report. This resulted in the Full repayment of grant. research activity training/ workshops/ case studies of companies – 250 reps and 300 managers trained; information and guidance tool developed and distributed to 600 union offices.</p> <p>Benefits accrued, lessons learnt and good practice: Problems around project management and the workload implications of running a project. The view was that it would have been effective to appoint a project worker. But project considered a success, in terms of improvement in union-management relations in the case companies. This revealed that I&C need not 'be a chore' and that 'working together can solve a lot of problems. Nonetheless too little time allocated to project and difficult market conditions led to many delays.</p>	
027	British Dental Association	Young member participation and engagement: Exploring the needs for today and tomorrow: Research to examine young members' (a disproportionate number of whom are women and from ethnic backgrounds) attitudes to the union.	<p>Completed to time: project undertook an extensive programme of research with members under the age of 35. This included focus groups and a survey of 4,500 members.</p> <p>Benefits accrued, lessons learnt and good practice: The analysis of the survey produced recommendations to feed into BDA policy.</p>	I + E +

UMF – Round one: Final evaluation report

			<p>More training has been given to branch secretaries so they are more inclusive in recruitment campaigns. The project has some minor workload issues but these were dealt with effectively. Overall, the project revealed, 'nothing too earth shattering...it just confirmed what we already thought', and provided empirical evidence to back this up.</p>	
028	<p>Transport Salaried Staffs' Association (TSSA)</p>	<p>Increasing diversity: Turning members into representatives: Project to encourage greater diversity in the TSSA's activist base. Project will involve research to discover why members become activists and whether diversity factors affect this, development of strategies to recruit more diverse representatives, online two-way communication with members and representatives and the establishment of a group of representative champions to provide ongoing encouragement to under-represented groups to become more active within the union.</p>	<p>Project completed and extension requested, but no final report received:</p> <p>Research aspect and data collation. Focus groups and survey. Meetings with employers to establish representative champions. Recruitment of representative champions.</p> <p>Benefits accrued, lessons learnt and good practice: The support of employers and their buy-in an issue. Formal management programme undertaken for project worker.</p>	<p>I + E + L N +</p>
030	<p>Connect</p>	<p>Knowledge management system: Creation of an online knowledge management system that will act as a one-stop shop for information and advice, with different levels of access for members, representatives and staff.</p>	<p>Project completed to time:</p> <p>Information scientist appointed; review web systems, test and introduce new electronic knowledge management system training and awareness raising</p>	<p>I ++</p>

UMF – Round one: Final evaluation report

			<p>Benefits accrued, lessons learned and good practice: Did not achieve all the goals set out (eg. new search engine) but do have a much more effective e-communication system with members. Learnt a lot about what information is of relevance to what groups of members and its accessibility. Also lesson about different culture of working for union when recruiting an external project worker.</p>	
031	USDAW	<p>Developing the USDAW management model: Project to develop and test a best practice management model, adapting pre-existing business models to the specific circumstances of trade unions. The project will draw on the expertise of the Work Foundation and Said Business School at Oxford University. The model will include mechanisms and management tools for evaluating the operational performance of the union as a whole, linked to the appraisal of individual staff performance and new project management systems.</p>	<p>Project completed to time: Business model, based on Balanced Scorecard, developed Performance management systems researched, developed and implemented New priority setting procedure launched Toolkit developed Workshops, interviews and focus groups conducted Project team and senior staff trained through 3 training courses, and one-to-one mentoring from the Work Foundation for 34 senior managers and 4 central officers KPIs developed Support documents produced</p> <p>Benefits accrued, lessons learned and good practice: Internal processes more transparent Resources allocated on basis of business case</p>	<p>I ++ E + N +</p>

UMF – Round one: Final evaluation report

			<p>rather than who shouts loudest</p> <p>Staff empowered and have good understanding of new system</p> <p>Personal and performance development system widely used.</p> <p>14 major new projects and campaigns managed by new system</p> <p>Significant change to overall culture and practice of union.</p>	
032	Prospect	<p>Electronic information systems (EIS): Establishment of electronic document management and distribution systems. This is to be accompanied by a change management programme to develop and train staff in new work processes to increase the efficiency of information management and sharing.</p>	<p>Completed with a one month extension:</p> <p>Review of current electronic document management and information system</p> <p>New EIS system introduced, with bulk email, knowledge management, library etc</p> <p>Training</p> <p>Staff consultation</p> <p>Benefits accrued, lessons learned and good practice:</p> <p>Review of systems revealed absence of a coherent procedure for casework files. Union now has a better knowledge of all stand alone data bases and information being used in a more structured way, and new e-system for casework and bargaining information. Staff consultation has increased senior mgt knowledge of membership. 'Now collect, analyse and use information in a far more advanced way than before this project.'</p>	I +
033	RMT	<p>Web-based membership system and associated training: Project to develop</p>	<p>Project completed with three month extension:</p>	<p>I ++</p> <p>E +</p> <p>N +</p>

UMF – Round one: Final evaluation report

		<p>new web-based membership system that will allow for the collection of richer membership information and improvement in accuracy of records by allowing branch secretaries to update. The project also includes relevant training for branch secretaries.</p>	<p>New web-based membership system introduced (branded as ReMoTe access); supportive programme of training (75 per cent of target group trained by completion) wide dissemination</p> <p>Benefits accrued, lessons learned and good practice: 250 branch secretaries are now able to access and update membership records in 'real time'. This has led to improved communication and services between the union and members. There were some minor challenges relating to IT contracting and useful lessons about the need for project workers to communicate effectively (and gain the support of) the union executive.</p>	
034	NUJ	<p>Equality for all: NUJ workplace and freelance equality representatives projects: Pilot project to establish, organise and train a network of 80 NUJ Equality Representatives. On the back of this, the project aims to establish a number of equality agreements, incorporated into collective bargaining arrangements, with key employers.</p>	<p>Project completed to time: Publicity material developed Membership survey Training course for Equalities Representatives developed and 70 Equality Reps trained Equalities handbook produced in hard copy and on-line versions and updates added, with model equality agreement</p> <p>Benefits accrued, lessons learned and good practice: The project has led to increased activism as equality reps get interested in union structures and</p>	<p>I ++ E + N +</p>

UMF – Round one: Final evaluation report

			<p>increased member engagement with equality issues. Aspects of Equalities Rep training to be mainstreamed within traditional rep training. Exploitation of synergy with other projects/concurrent initiatives, such as online support from UMF Round 2 projects. Numbers seen as very successful for a small union.</p>	
UMF 035	Accord, Connect and the Musicians Union	Transforming union democracy using internet systems: The project aims to increase democracy in each union by developing internet systems for elections, ballots and surveys.	Project did not complete.	
UMF 036	TUC	Developing an on-line support system for union professionals: Development and testing of an online support system for union professionals in TUC affiliates, providing targeted advice and information to FTOs and specialists (finance, legal, education officers etc). The system will allow the TUC to target communications and market TUC services to the appropriate people, and to support the sharing of best practice through online discussion forums and consultation.	<p>Project completed, with extension of 4 months:</p> <p>New web resource and database for union professionals completed and launched.</p> <p>Benefits accrued, lessons learned and good practice: union professionals using the website, sharing information and a resource is being developed. 1080 registered members. Some IT issues and lessons learnt around planning and clarity of objectives.</p>	I ++ E ++
UMF 038	Community and Youth Workers' Union (CYWU)	Membership diversity project: Research project to build an evidence base of the priorities and expectations of CYWU's diverse membership based ahead of merger with the TGWU.	<p>Completed to time:</p> <p>Membership survey</p> <p>Research</p> <p>Two discussion groups conducted</p> <p>Two focus groups conducted</p>	I +

UMF – Round one: Final evaluation report

			Benefits accrued, lessons learned and good practice: Focus group participants have joined CWYU; general insights gained into 'desires of members'.	
039	Amicus	IT for branches: A pilot project designed to reinvigorate branch activity (building upon the momentum of a recent review of branches) through the provision of IT equipment to branch secretaries to enable them to access up-to-date and relevant information.	Completed to time: Pilots held in 67 union branches; Distribution of laptops to pilots and broadband connections in homes; Associated training Benefits accrued, lessons learned and good practice: Minor issues with technological implementation, attendance at training and project planning, but successfully completed. Has led to improved communications from pilot branches to other branches, union and members. But not as high as anticipated and doubts over whether should roll out to all union branches. More consultation needed within union. Project management skills improved in union by project.	I +
041	ASLEF	ASLEF membership and communications modernisation project: Project to build upon the recent launch of a new union website through the development of specific areas for members, branch secretaries and representatives. The union proposed a phase approach to the adoption of the project	Completed to time: Software package developed and trialled New website and membership system launched Advertising of site Benefits accrued, lessons learned and good practice: Project experienced considerable delays with IT	I ++ E +

UMF – Round one: Final evaluation report

		with the aim to rebuild member confidence in the union following recent events.	contractors, but still completed to time. Hits to the site have increased by 40 per cent, participation has increased through on-line polls, communication to members has changed with more SMS and printing costs have been reduced by putting more documentation on-line.	
043	WBBSSU	ICE (Integrate, communicate and embrace): Development of a new website to be integrated with the membership database. The site is to be used for improved access to representatives, discussion forums, bulletin boards and surveys. The website would also contain an area for all WBBSSU staff, whether members or non-members, which will be used for information and consultation, building on the pre-existing agreement concluded with the employer.	The project did undertake some activity, but it did not formally complete.	
044	GFTU	Foundations for success: Supporting the growth and stability of small and specialist trade unions: The project looks to develop new training courses for FTOs of GFTU affiliates in generic management skills, tailored to the trade union context and I&C. In addition, GFTU proposes to develop capacity with affiliated unions to conduct their own training needs analyses and to develop organisational training plans.	Project completed to time: Training needs analysis Seminar programme designed Seminars delivered; 501 participants against 400 planned. Benefits accrued, lessons learned and good practice: Positive course evaluation. Whilst the TNA identified value of courses to senior union officers, few actually attended, with the main composition activists. Difficulty of organising courses around people's	I + E +

UMF – Round one: Final evaluation report

			working lives. The project did engage senior officers in the BAFWU.	
046	PGSA	Creating full partnership working with Portman Building Society through a highly skilled and efficient employee representative committee: Project to upskill all representatives so that they are able to effectively represent staff at formal hearings, reducing over-reliance on the Chair	Project completed to time: Activities: Partnership workshops held Training events held Benefits accrued, lessons learned and good practice: More robust and well trained union structure, with additional 46 reps; improved internal union communications.	I ++ N +

Code for dissemination: I + refers to internal dissemination to some extent, covering a group of staff or reps; I ++ to a large extent, covering all union staff systematically and also disseminating to large body of reps and members (eg through newsletters and magazines). E + refers to external dissemination to some extent, such as an occasional presentation to an event or fringe meeting; E ++ to a large extent refers to a systematic programme of external presentations and distribution. L – major launch event. N + refers to networking with other UMF projects or unions to some extent; N++ to a large extent, significant and planned engagement with other unions over UMF project activities and outcomes.

Appendix 5: The ten case study projects

UMF 004 – GMB – Race and Diversity

The context and background

The GMB is a general union representing over 600, 000 members. The background to the project stems from an independent study conducted in 2002 (by ERAH Training and Consultancy) on race and equalities in the union. The study found that levels of involvement amongst black and minority ethnic members were low. The details of this finding were unanticipated by the union, as the general view amongst senior officers was that the union was dealing with race and diversity issues in a more competent way than the report set out. In response, the union set up a Task Force led by a full-time officer to investigate the issue further. Race and diversity issues were also identified as priority concerns in a subsequent document entitled 'Framework for the Future'. It was recognised that the union is no longer able to rely on its traditional areas for members. In the future it will have to go to where the (potential) members are (eg. food, leisure and services). To assist this, it was recognised that the union needs to develop a strategy for diversity, to ensure that every member of staff and ultimately shop steward undergoes training in race and diversity. However, recognition of these strategic challenges coincided with a period of significant internal upheaval, at the top level of the union, and financial problems. These problems have now been resolved and, with the assistance of the UMF, the union is in a position to progress its new strategy on race and diversity issues.

The project

The two year project had two overall objectives. First, the design of a Membership Development Strategy: to encourage member involvement and activism with specific targets and actions to support black and minority ethnic representation. Targets were set to increase the take-up of membership services by BME groups by 2.5 per cent and also to increase the number of branch representatives and stewards by 2.5 per cent. To advance this particular aspect of the project a research programme was planned in order to collect base-line measures and gauge the views of BME members to the services offered by the union. Second, a significant programme of race and diversity awareness training was planned for activists and staff, along with a series of staff briefings in the

regions. To ensure sustainability after the completion of the project, a 'training the trainers' programme was planned, in order to contribute to the development of a network of 'diversity champions'. The project was overseen by a senior management reporting structure within the union and had a designated union officer acting as the project manager. It had top-level support from the office of the deputy General secretary. Its day-to-day activities were organised by the Campaign Company.

What happened?

The project was advanced in a very professional manner. In the early stages of the project it was recognised that the Senior Management Team (SMT) of the union needed to have more 'sight' and involvement in the project. Whilst it was always envisaged that the SMT would receive regular reports on progress, this was formalised through the inclusion of the project as a standing agenda item at the monthly SMT meeting. This was considered necessary to 'ensure buy in at the most senior level'. The Campaign Company produced a PowerPoint presentation about the project at its outset and used this as the basis for meeting regional secretaries to inform them of the project. The presentation was then used by regional secretaries as the basis for a briefing exercise with employees, to discuss the project.

An extensive programme of race and diversity awareness training was completed, with very positive levels of feedback from participants. The content of the training was largely pre-determined. The SMT had previously received race and diversity awareness training by the training company Ionann and it was decided to roll this out across the regions. The dates for training were established at an early stage of the project, to be conducted at the national office and 11 regions between October 2006 and Feb 2007. Whilst the complexity of organising this training led to some slippage, the target number of participants was achieved, following a couple of additional 'mop up' training sessions. In total, 452 members of GMB staff participated in the training, more than the original target of 443.

The research programme was also completed. This included a series of focus groups, in-depth interviews and a survey of 200 BME members and 100 non BME members as control group. Again, there was some initial slippage in the research process as it proved difficult to get participants for the focus groups. For example, one focus group had to be rescheduled due to a poor turnout. However, the Campaign Company persevered and, with extensive support from the union's regional offices, completed an impressive programme of research. This also included reviews of good practice cases around supporting BME workers that involved other unions or non-union community organisations.

The most problematic aspect of the project was the employee profiling exercise and audit of extant levels of participation. It was always anticipated that this

would be a problem and was identified as a project risk. Simply put, the union's database of members was stored at regional level and different regions filed their records in different ways. Most significantly, the union had no membership enrolment system to record the information they need – ie. on race and gender. For activist and membership participation audits individuals were asked to self-classify and most did not. The project explored ways to elicit this information through active engagement of the regions, but response rates were low. This meant that it was impossible to draw a base line measure for the project. Without this, there was no benchmark to assess the projected targets for increases in membership participation activity against. Nonetheless, it raised broader lessons to be learnt about membership records systems.

These problems aside, the project was perceived to be successful. Project reporting and general communication with BIS was regular and effective, and followed a clear protocol established by the Campaign Company. The project was presented in consecutive years to the union's Annual Congress and the project manager disseminated the project at other workshops, such as TUC Annual Congress fringe meetings. There was also evidence of networking with other UMF projects, with the GMB project manager invited to sit on the steering group of the Wales TUC project.

Impact and lessons

Much was learnt through the project and this has impacted on the union's internal structures and evolving policies around equalities. The detailed project Final Report sets out an extensive range of recommendations for how the union can take the project forward. One obvious impact of the project has been that the union has now trained all staff in equality and diversity issues. The research revealed the need for this. Whilst there were clear areas of good practice within the union, and many BME members were in general positive about the role played by the GMB, there were evident challenges. First, as the Final Report notes, whilst regional committees 'were sympathetic and supportive of equalities and diversity policies there is in reality little real understanding of the experience of many BME members'. The project has gone some way to addressing this. More broadly, the project team were shocked by the high levels of racism that were reported in British workplaces. This suggests the union needs to make the campaigning of equality issues even more central to its core activities of organising and bargaining.

To achieve this, the union has recognised that equality and diversity issues need to be mainstreamed more systematically and coherently than in the past. Previously, the union had a range of committees for diverse and minority groups, for example separate committees on ethnic background, gender and sexual orientation. At a national level these committees have all been combined, by agreement, into a single overarching equalities committee. A similar process is under review at regional and local levels. More broadly, equalities issues have

now been incorporated more fundamentally into deliberations at all the union's central committees. The sustainability and mainstreaming of the project will be ensured by the recent appointment of an 'Equalities and Inclusion Officer' to oversee the strategic direction of the equalities agenda. This will be supported by the network of Diversity Champions, and equality and diversity issues will also be mainstreamed into the union's general education activities. The union is also to look more systematically at how it communicates to members about the services it provides to BMEs and how it represents diverse groups in general.

A further outcome of the project relates to the lessons learnt in relation to the membership database. A new set of forms have been produced to capture the diversity measures of members and activists. The website is also to be updated so that it is easier for members to access their records and add more specific personal information.

Finally, the project set an important benchmark in terms of its management and governance. The GMB were open that without the involvement of the Campaign Company they would not have had the capacity of resources to complete the project successfully.

UMF 005 – Communication Workers Union - CWU Reaching Out

The context and background

The CWU represents some 250,000 members across the communications industries. The changing nature of the postal and telecommunications industry brings a need for new structures and new modes of communication. There is a need to identify the right platforms and sites for internal union communications and to harness the possibilities of the Internet. Moreover, the past ten years have brought new internal roles and structures in terms of local branches and regional organisation. The need to develop more systematic forms of communication across the union and in relation to the members in key employers such as the Post Office or British Telecom is therefore a pressing challenge. The union had already been modernising its communications systems in terms of interactive websites, systematic use of email, the use of teleconferencing and video-conferencing and the enhancement of membership databases which include mobile numbers and emails. The nature of the sector the union is involved in has ensured that the union takes a keen interest in being at the cutting edge of communication systems. However, it still faces a challenge in using such developments in an effective and participative manner.

The Project

This has been an innovative project that provides interesting insights into the development of new modes of communication and involvement at the local level of the trade union in terms of its branches and union officers. There were six regions/areas that were identified as pilots for the development of new forms of communication and a new set of relevant competences related to communications. In terms of the pilots, they all worked in terms of the remit of the project and engaged with different types of internet and mobile telephony: These would then be rolled out and be used to communicate with members once the pilot projects were over – the aim being to establish best practice and innovative approaches to be disseminated across the organisation. The types of communication methods selected for development included text messaging, teleconferencing facilities, website development, laptop and more enhanced Internet provision, the use of multimedia, and others.

What happened?

There are clear interesting examples of how ICT and new forms of communication are being used in each of the pilots and there will be a basis for establishing a more effective system of communication with members. In the

Coventry branch a focused and local website was developed which was customised and more accessible. Short films have been put on the website regarding local campaigns and the local officers appear to have developed their competences in relation to multimedia activities. This was supported by the use of text messaging and these have been used to keep members in the loop regarding key campaigns. Initial comments appear to suggest that these have helped in raising awareness and internal debate within the union membership in this area on strategic issues. In the North East region the CWU pilot did not just focus on new forms of communication in the form of text messaging but decided to upgrade and develop a professional approach to more traditional forms of communication in the form of posters and promotional material. In effect, the modernisation agenda was not just about using new technologies but of also enhancing traditional forms of communication and visual communication in particular. This led to a hub for learning and developing skills within the region that would allow further progress in the future. This provides a point of reference for internal innovation and a source of information for members and officers. In terms of Wales and the Marches the development and use of tele-conferencing has provided a new dimension to local communications. These have been used with more frequency and have helped save time and resources.

There have been challenges worth noting and which the CWU have been very open and transparent about both in oral and written forms. There were delays and challenges due to internal procurement issues. The procedures internally provided a challenge to the project but these were overcome even if there were some considerable delays. These emerged from bureaucratic features of the organisation and not strategic ones. The hardware side of communications is a vital pre-requisite for the development of new forms of communication and the union has begun to address this issue in the light of the UMF project. However, whilst there was a difficult early phase, due to these internal procurement rules and issues related to materials, this was in the main the only real challenge to the project's success. Another minor challenge was the fact that during the course of the project disputes with the employer at various levels drew resources and the focus of organisational attention away from much of the communication department's activities. There was a need to co-ordinate pilots and support them at a time when there was much pressure on the communication function of the union. However, the project was steered by a set of committees which involved senior leadership and which worked both at the broader level of the project (the Reaching Out Working Group) and at the level of the pilots (the Pilot Centre Advisory Group).

Impact and Lessons

An innovative feature of this project was the degree of integration between functions of the union. Right from the start the role of the research department in recording and studying developments was apparent. There was a designated researcher working on the project with the aim of undertaking responsibility for

UMF – Round one: Final evaluation report

compiling reports regarding progress. The publication of a highly professional end of project report pointed to the array of developments that had taken place in terms of communication strategy and innovations at the local level. The active involvement of various departments has meant that there has been a sense of common ownership across them. The project has been innovative in creating this type of interdepartmental approach, although this was not always easy.

The project's activities are also being embedded in a variety of training courses – training will steadily reflect the different communication methods have been piloted. Relations with the training department of the union have steadily brought an increasingly systematic approach to how to develop officers and members in terms of the different dimensions of communications.

However, the project has brought to the fore the question of co-ordination not just horizontally between departments but also vertically between branches, regions and the centre. The feedback and monitoring mechanisms within the union were useful in establishing a basis for the sharing of information, but issues were apparent.

The project is ongoing given that it forms part of a process of modernisation in relation to communication. The next steps are to develop a link with online learning which is interactive and is strategically tied to a broader array of communications systems. There is greater interest in on-line networking and conferencing and this will become a focus of the union's future activity. The UMF project has become a major lynchpin of this drive by providing cases and concrete experiences which can be shared. There is a suggestion in discussions with lead members of the project that the project is part of a broader cultural change in terms of how the union works with its members and keeps them within the information framework of major developments. The focus on communication is also a focus on cultural change within the CWU, forming a part of a broader understanding of change.

UMF 010 – SCP - Shaping the future

The Context and Background

The development of partnership is a major objective within the National Health Services. The creation of new forms of dialogue between management and trade unions is considered by the SCP to be a vital prerequisite for dealing with the demands brought by organisational change and changing roles within the workforce. The need to try and resolve problems through mediation and dialogue is seen to avoid using more conflictive and bureaucratically draining approaches.

The Project

The project aims to build the union's capacity to work in partnership with employers by identifying and training regional champions, holding regional training events for members around Agenda for Change and a conference in partnership with employers. It dovetails with the increasing work of the Society with regards to developing a more extensive dialogue between management and unions. The development of a framework for partnership is the cornerstone of this project.

What has happened?

The project experienced delays in progress. Firstly, smaller unions tend to have individuals running with a multiplicity of projects and a range of organisational roles. The challenge and demand of operational issues and local problems draw in national officers in a more direct manner. Key events and developments may draw the union away from longer-term initiatives and in the case of the National Health Service there have been a range of problems and issues which have consumed the resources and time of strategic officers.

Secondly, establishing a clear timetable for all participants to work with is difficult. Whilst such unions tend to be smaller they nevertheless are more dependent on specific individuals at the regional and local level so finding replacements for workshops and meetings is not so straightforward as may be the case in some of the larger unions.

There was no evidence of any cultural resistance to change of this project within SCP. The project met with a great deal of consensus and the early stages of the plan were met with considerable support after some initial delays. The main issue, as suggested by the comments above about time, was the pull on the resources of key officers. After a patchy start and issues emerging from co-ordination, the SCP organised an event bringing managers and representatives

together to discuss the partnership toolkit. It was perceived to go very well and generated positive feedback. A second event was organised due to many subscribers but the pressures of front-line issues led to representatives on both sides dropping out and having to delay. Plans were put in place to reschedule the event. It was also planned to use the 2008 union conference as a major launch-pad for the project's longer term aims. At this point, it was anticipated that a series of regional champions for partnership would be in place as well.

However the project stalled and, whilst it appeared that relatively minor activities needed to be addressed, the project did not complete. There was an issue around the need to sustain a more fluid dialogue during the course of the project with officers at BIS, and with the evaluators. Numerous attempts were made by BIS to get the project back on track and to provide support for the lead project manager, an officer of the union. In recognition of the difficulties the union faced in terms of managing the project from within its own senior officer base, it had approached the General Federation of Trade Unions to take on the day-to-day running of the project and to act in the capacity of secretariat. This never materialised and the planned events were not finalised. After numerous requests for progress, the SCP eventually decided that it would not be able to complete the project.

The project highlights the stress that can be placed on lead union officers in running such projects. There was a great deal of commitment and good will towards the aspirations of the project from the union. However, the key officer in charge had to balance the project with more pressing and higher priority union work. This meant it was not possible to see the project through to fruition.

UMF 011 – Royal College of Midwives – Improving the Communications between the RCM and its members

The Context and Background

The membership of unions has become more volatile in terms of contracts, mobility across regions, and mobility in and out of employment. Midwifery is no exception. Movement in and out of the profession is becoming increasingly unstable. What is more, changes in the NHS's structures and the way midwives work, and where, means that there is a changing environment that challenges the way the union negotiates and organises. The need to communicate with a changing membership and to maintain a clear line of contact through updated databases is pressing, as otherwise organisations such as the RCM cannot keep track of midwives and their needs. The issues regarding the changing nature of work and the transformation of the NHS have become more complex, involving ongoing discussions on structure and the way people work and are paid.

In addition, the honeymoon period when the development of an organisational website heralded a new moment and opportunity in communication has gone. There are many competing websites on midwifery and health related issues, there is an overflow of internet based communication, and a challenge in renewing membership lists that reflect the real base of the organisation. Midwives are able to access a variety of information sources and are increasingly moving around the NHS. What is more, the novelty of a website with standardised information with little opportunity for feedback is no longer attractive to individuals.

Hence, synthesising the database of members, the communications system in terms of email lists and making a website useable were, and are, a major challenge organisations such as the RCM face.

The Project

The aim of the project was to improve the communication of the RCM with its membership. The integration of the union's website with the membership database was at the heart of this initiative. The aim was to enhance the flow of communications between the organisation and its membership, and to ensure a two-way dialogue. The creation of targeted and focused email communications, for example, was seen as resting on up-to-date and relevant membership information and access. The project was meant to take clear steps in achieving these goals and of enhancing the membership database and focusing communication between the membership and the organisation.

What happened?

In the main, the project developed as planned. The upgrading of internet membership support and databases were met. The pilots were well developed, for example in terms of email briefings. The impression is that the project has been located in a broader discussion about communications and the website.

In terms of the project, a major indicator of success has been that the website has had a doubling of 'hits' by early 2008. There has been a careful mapping of the new forms of communication to see the differing levels of effectiveness. The information provided has become more targeted and more focused. The database has been updated and there are now systems that allow membership information and access to be simpler. The development of interactive aspects on the site have allowed for a broader level of dialogue as well. The journal of the RCM can be sent electronically in a more effective manner. Moreover, there is a 'RCM memberlink' with its own logo and features. This allows members to see their space within the website.

Impacts and lessons

There are various broader outcomes in terms of the project which relate to the general work and modernisation of the union.

Internal communications and organisational approaches have benefited. There appear to have been good lines of accountability and thorough record keeping. There were regular meetings and internal evaluations that ensured progress and the emergence of a learning environment in organisational terms. Different dimensions of the website and database in terms of development have been handled in an orderly and systematic manner. The management structures of the project provided clear and transparent project outlines and discussions. The level of discussion regarding the project in all the documentation suggests that there has been a painstaking and careful approach, and that transparency has been a central consideration. The internal evaluation is coherent and consistent – and evaluation has become an increasingly central aspect of much of the RCM's work.

External communications and dissemination have improved. There were launches and meetings with external bodies with the project in question serving as a benchmark. Communication with other unions has emerged in terms of the issue of communication with members and the use of the Internet. However, a major feature of these developments has been greater co-ordination with various other unions in terms of dealing with IT and ICT providers/expert companies. This is a critical issue for smaller and medium sized union who do not have the resources and in-house capacity to manage their IT systems effectively. The need to co-ordinate activity effectively vis-à-vis providers and to share knowledge

about them and any issues that can potentially arise has been a major outcome of the project. It has led to sharing questions of good and bad practice, and creating lines of communication between officers from different unions. The question of co-ordinating consistent and informed approaches to external providers is a key feature of union modernisation (in a world of organisational sub-contracting) and in this case progress has been quite thorough.

Communication with external agencies, such as BIS, has led to a greater understanding of project oriented work. The RCM has invested in project management and is taking increasingly systematic approaches to managing projects in the light of what the UMF project has taught them.

The RCM is adopting various new projects and the way they actually approach these have been informed by their work on the UMF project. These are visible in terms of investment in project management, evaluation and internal communication systems. In terms of the project itself this has now become an ongoing feature of the work of the RCM with dedicated structures and support. Communication has become increasingly central to the purpose and work of the RCM.

UMF 017 – Transport and General Workers Union - Migrant workers Support Unit

The context and background

Prior to its merger with Amicus in 2007, to form Unite, the TGWU was Britain's biggest general union with a membership of around 800, 000. Its membership nonetheless was in decline and it was recognised that its future strategy would need to encompass the needs of different groups of workers in different sectors. The representation of migrant workers had become a pressing concern. Such workers were becoming more common in some of the union's key sectors, such as the food industry. They had specific representational needs and also posed for the union specific challenges of representation, relating not just to issues of language, but how they were employed and organised at work. The union recognised that to organise and support such workers they may need to develop a tailored response that was more engaged with the broader communities within which migrant workers' lived and worked. There was also a need to engage with employers and labour providers to ensure that the provisions around recruitment, supply and employment under the Gangmasters Licensing Act 2004 offered full support to migrant workers. The project was identified as a core component of the union's modernisation strategy and had top level support, with the Deputy General Secretary and a National Officer identified as project managers.

The project

The project was identified as one of the 'flagship' projects of the UMF First Round. The aim of the two-year project was to establish a pilot Migrant Workers Support Unit (MWSU). The primary function of the Support Unit would be to assess the needs of and tailor support to migrant workers. This could include services related to translation, employment rights, welfare/benefit advice, community/health advice etc. The aim was to focus the pilot project in those sectors and geographic areas most significantly affected by the provisions of the Gangmasters Licensing Act, such as agriculture, horticulture, food processing and the packaging industry. There were three general components planned: first, the appointment of dedicated workers to run the Support Unit; second, an analytic exercise to assess the needs of migrant workers; third, a training effort to upgrade the skills of officers and staff to improve union services to migrant workers. If successful, the pilot project would have a powerful demonstration effect, not only within the TGWU, where it could be rolled out to all industrial sectors, but more broadly within the union movement.

What happened?

The project suffered significant initial delays and the start date had to be put back. Eventually, the project started six months' later than originally planned, in January 2007. The main reason for this was the time it took for the union to establish and agree the job description for the two project officers that were to be employed to run the Support Unit. This took longer than anticipated, as the posts were new to the union movement and there was not a ready made supply of experienced and capable candidates for such a role. The union took the view, quite sensibly, that it was important to take the time needed to get the job description right to ensure that appropriate qualified people applied for the position. This included appointing a project manager with experience from outside the union movement, but with extensive experience of the voluntary sector and working with communities.

A further delay also related, however, to the overall management of the project. In its application, the Union identified no real risks for the project as it had top level support and, because of this, 'would be implemented'. Whilst such support is essential for driving such a project forward politically, senior officers of unions are time constrained and often have to devote their attentions to unanticipated industrial events at relatively short notice. This impacted on the design and approval of the project worker job descriptions.

Following the appointment of the project manager and worker in early 2007 the project got back on track and progressed. The delay in getting the project started resulted in a slight change in focus of the project. As the TGWU note, 'throughout 2006, there has been a significant and accelerated growth in the recruitment of temporary and agency workers in large and increasingly diverse sectors of the economy'. The remit of the project, following DTI approval, was thus expanded to include temporary and agency migrant workers rather than just those workers covered by the Gangmasters Licensing Authority.

The first task of the project manager was to draft a detailed programme of work for the delivery of the project. This focused the project on three key aspects: the delivery of a dedicated and coordinated web presence covering the migrant workers' agenda; translation services; and a training programme. The early stages of the project involved visits to all the union's eight regions, to discuss the project with appropriate officers, organisers (to gain 'buy in' for the project) and regional partnership agencies, and the design and distribution of a national survey of migrant workers. The regional visits revealed that significant activity designed to address the needs of migrant workers was already taking place. A couple of exploratory meetings were also held with employers and efforts had gone into the drafting of a migrant workers legal support package.

The survey and the sectoral meetings revealed much about good practice, but also the challenges facing migrant workers that the union needed to address. Building on this, the project manager wrote an extensive report, drawing on this period of data collection and a review of relevant literature, and recommendations were suggested for a programme of training for union officials. The delivery of this training was delayed, however, and was eventually not completed during the tenure of the project. The main issue related to the level at which the training was to be pitched and how it fitted with existing provision delivered by the union's education department. The Final Report indicates that a programme of training will be developed and delivered by the education department beyond the life of the project. A programme of wide dissemination also took place, with the presentations about the work of the Unit at a number of conferences and workshops, in the UK and internationally; the Unit also provided evidence to various national level campaigns, such as the TUC Commission on vulnerable workers.

Impact and lessons learnt

The MWSU had significant impact. It led to changes within the union as well as engaging with policy circles beyond the union. In terms of the union, it acted as a catalyst for increased coordination of previously dispersed activities and addressed potential areas of weakness that did not service migrant workers as effectively as the union wanted. For example, whilst the union had a dedicated telephone 'hot line' for the concerns of migrant workers this did not have translation facilities. This has been addressed by incorporating a language service that covers some 200 languages.

More broadly, the MWSU acted a vehicle for the broader lobbying and campaigning activities of the union. It acted as a 'repository of answers' for the broader union agenda around legislative support for migrant workers. This is a very dynamic and changing field and MWSU sought to keep pace with and understand such issues. Thus, whilst the needs of migrant workers were initially understood in terms of employment rights, this is increasingly being seen as a wider issue of human rights. The project manager sought to keep abreast of legislative debates by attending high profile international meetings. Lessons learnt at such meetings were then fed back into the role of the MSWU and how it assisted the union in the broader sphere of campaigns around public policy. For example, the Union proposed, launched and part-funded an all party Parliamentary group on migration, chaired by John Cruddas. The work of the MSWU also contributed to external policy reviews, such as the TUC Commission on Vulnerable workers, as noted.

There is a concern that the high profile role the MWSU achieved externally has meant that some of the key challenges that the union face internally still need addressing. For the project manager, union modernisation is best understood in terms of 'challenging the mindset within the union'. This is a complicated task

and, as outsider to the union movement, he had to embark on a steep learning curve about the way the union operates. Two key issues suggest some of the challenges of modernisation that lie ahead. First, whilst the union is highly committed to engaging with the needs of migrant workers, to some extent this comes up against the union's organising agenda, of self activity, and the rule book that states that members cannot draw on union services within the first thirteen weeks. Yet, migrant workers often need support with immediate effect and, indeed, a demonstration of this may be necessary to recruit such workers. To address this issue the project manager sought to navigate the space for flexibility within the rule book and highlighted examples of good practice within the union where they exist. Second, as noted above the training programme was delayed and not completed within the life of the project. The project manager was keen to draft the training programme based on the extensive research that had been conducted and wanted to bring in a senior barrister to deliver the training. Yet, this raised issues about the role of the union's own education department and how such training would be mainstreamed into broader union educational services.

These challenges are likely to remain ongoing for some time and reveal, quite starkly, the real hurdles that unions face in representing more diverse and vulnerable members. Nonetheless, the MWSU provided an example of innovative practice that says much about the potential of the union modernisation fund. Its wide dissemination activities contributed to the ongoing public conversation about the issues facing an important and increasing section of the British workforce and the exploitative conditions that they endure. Yet, despite its relative success, it is unlikely to be sustained in the form established during the project. As the Final Report states: 'Unfortunately it has not been possible to progress this important initiative due to the on-going merger of departments and structures of T&GWU and Amicus' (5)...'The advice and signposting services provided by the project no longer has dedicated personnel assigned to deliver the role' (15). Nonetheless, 'the work started by the MWSU will, to some extent be continued by union activists who are still able to use the contacts already made' (15).

UMF 020: BFAWU: Membership and Communication Systems

Context and background

BFAWU is a small union with a diverse and widely dispersed membership of 40,000 employed predominantly in the food manufacturing sector. The sector is characterised by low pay, irregular hours and higher than average labour turnover. Increasing numbers of migrant workers are employed in the sector and a significant proportion of BFAWU members have English as a second language. Many BFAWU members work and live a significant distance from their closest branch.

The project

The UMF project was designed to investigate how best to upgrade the union's membership records and communications systems in order to establish two-way communication within the union, and facilitate the tracking of members so that its operations could be both more efficient and more responsive to membership needs. The project had four core elements, which were to be delivered over a six month period. First, an analysis of the current membership records system. Second, research into perceptions and use of the BFAWU website. Third, the project audited other types of communication systems within the union. Fourth, an evaluation of available software packages. The research techniques employed included: in-depth interviews with stakeholders within the union, employers within the sector and potential software suppliers; focus groups with BFAWU administrative staff, BFAWU officers and lay officials, BFAWU members living more than 15 miles from their nearest branch, and other BFAWU members; and, a survey of Branch Secretaries and EC members.

What has happened?

BFAWU contracted The Campaign Company to deliver the project, which commenced in April 2006 in line with the start date specified in the original bid. In broad terms the project was executed according to the timetable laid out in the bid, although some activities, such as the survey, took longer than anticipated, whilst others took less time. Project activities were therefore able to cross subsidise each other in terms of time, although additional time resources over and above that specified in the bid were committed by BFAWU in order to facilitate the delivery of the project. Project progress was continuously monitored by the Steering Group, with individual Steering Group members being tasked with monitoring progress of specific activities and providing monthly updates, although in practice communication within the union about project progress extended well beyond this forum. Key actors within BFAWU had previous

experience of project management as a result of receiving ULF funding, and were able to transfer their skills to the UMF project. This activity has generated added value since the principles of project management and performance management are now being incorporated into broader union practices.

Originally scheduled to complete in September 2006 a short extension was agreed with BIS, and a final report was submitted in October 2006. The project successfully achieved its stated outcomes since it identified organisational and membership needs as these related to communication within BFAWU, and a specification for a new electronic communication system was developed which addressed these identified needs.

The most significant challenge faced by the project team related to the survey of Branch Secretaries and EC members, even though this was initially seen as a straightforward process. This perhaps reflected the fact that the union had not previously engaged with such exercises, and that key research skills were under-developed. In particular, the union was not prepared for the lower than expected response rate. In order to overcome this difficulty the importance of the survey, and the purpose of this, was highlighted at all levels within BFAWU in order to gain the buy-in of BFAWU employees and members. The survey was also translated into other languages to increase the response rate from members with English as a second language. Resources within BFAWU (i.e. the language skills of Branch Officials and workplace representatives) were utilised to translate the survey into Asian languages, but the union did not have the internal capacity to translate the survey into Eastern European languages, so the decision was taken to outsource this task.

Impact and lessons learnt

According to a senior BFAWU official, the UMF project represented “Pandora’s box” in terms of the understanding within the union of broader modernisation issues.

The project highlighted, for instance, gaps in existing membership data, and the need for a more coherent approach in relation to the collection of this, since it was evident that it would not be possible to simply transport the existing data to the proposed new system. The need to collect more detailed information about members in order to facilitate the better targeting of BFAWU services was also highlighted. As a consequence of this realisation, a new membership application form was designed for new members, and consideration was given to ways of obtaining the same data from existing members. The project also revealed that data storage systems within different BFAWU functions such as Education, Administration and Legal Services, needed to be linked more systematically to improve efficiency and therefore membership services.

Issues relating to the structure of the union were also raised by the project since this facilitated change in the roles of some staff and officials. The new

UMF – Round one: Final evaluation report

communication system will, for instance, provide Branch Officials with the capacity to issue membership numbers. This was formerly a Regional Office function, and the question has therefore been raised whether Regional Offices are still necessary. Addressing such issues is, however, likely to be a longer-term aspect of modernisation within BFAWU. The union plans to conduct membership surveys on an on-going basis as a way of introducing debate around these issues and increasing democracy within BFAWU.

As a result of the project there is now an acknowledgement within BFAWU of the need to develop standardised processes and procedures for administering membership enquiries, since the current approach to this is ad hoc and inefficient. Similarly, the need for a standardised BFAWU 'brand' has been recognised.

The project raised the possibility that closer working relationships with employers could increase the efficiency of BFAWU operations, since employers hold details about members, which could be passed on to the union. Some employers supported the UMF project, by providing access to sites which facilitated the completion of the survey, and the relationships developed through this activity are to be taken forward by the union within the partnership agenda.

This project ran parallel to a second BFAWU UMF project (UMF 006 - completed). The second project is examining diversity issues in the food manufacturing sector, and exploring how BFAWU can respond most positively to these. The synergy between the two projects has added value to both. For instance, in the past members had often proved reluctant to provide information about their ethnicity to the union, but the systems project has begun to overcome this barrier as members have realised how this could facilitate the more effective targeting of union services. The overlap between the projects has also highlighted the need for the translation of union documents and web pages. The Babylon translation system is therefore currently being trialled, so that the BFAWU welcome pack can be made available in different languages

The project will clearly have a major and long-term impact within BFAWU. Indeed, one senior official indicated that the project represented the starting point for the modernisation process within BFAWU, not least because it has alerted the union to the many challenges that lie ahead. Activities will continue as the new membership and communication system has to be installed, and the broader modernisation issues raised by the project addressed. BFAWU has therefore made the financial commitment to gather information to ensure that membership records are up to date, and to train staff to enable them to use the new system when it is introduced. The new system has also been designed with sustainability in mind, as it is flexible enough to enable new features to be added to accommodate emergent needs.

The project has clearly been a major success in its own terms, but there is also evidence of a demonstration effect within the UK and internationally. Thus within the UK, BFAWU has offered to share project experiences with other small unions including Unity, and internationally the possibility of sharing membership data for incoming migrant workers is being explored with sister unions.

A number of factors contributed to the success of the project. Notably, there was a widespread recognition amongst BFAWU staff of the need to upgrade communications, yet the project team nevertheless consciously involved as many within the union as possible to create a sense of shared ownership. The project team were also able to monitor project progress effectively since they did not have responsibility for the delivery of the project, which was outsourced to experienced external consultants

UMF 028 – TSSA - Increasing diversity: Turning members into representatives

Context and background

The TSSA is a union with 33,000 members in managerial, administrative, technical and professional occupations in the railways, London Underground, the travel trade, ports and ferries. The key modernization issue for the union is responding to the changed ownership and management structure of the rail industry since the industry's privatization. This has shifted the locus of collective bargaining from the national level down to the regional level. This has increased demands on the time of full-time officials, with the result that the union has needed to encourage greater involvement from voluntary lay activists and representatives. The issue of how to recruit representatives has, as a consequence, become salient for the union. At the same time, there is a perception on the part of the union's officials that the existing representative base is 'pale, male and stale', and not fully representative of the workforce that they represent. The project built on the 'five strands' of the union's move to an organising model and a more proactive approach to its membership and workers in the sector generally.

The project

The aim of the project was to identify and train a cadre of 'representative champions' – lay activists who will take on a key role in recruiting and developing a new generation of workplace activists and representatives for the union. There were several proposed activities underpinning this aim.

First, there was a survey of union members to identify, and better understand, the barriers that prevented members, particularly those from under-represented groups, taking on a representative role. This used an on-line survey method, as well as hard copies, and allowed, in itself, for the union to develop new ways of thinking about gauging union membership views. The development of such an interactive internet tool to facilitate communication between activists and union headquarters was a significant feature of the project. There were focus groups and on-line discussion forums developed that allowed for opinions and challenges for new forms of representatives to be better understood. Research capacity and understanding was enhanced within the union as a consequence.

Secondly, the development of employer partnerships designed to facilitate the recruitment of representatives and representatives' champions was a major step in supporting these developments. The aim was to convince employers through reference to the diversity agenda and the business and social case for equality

that having a more diverse base of union and workplace representatives was of mutual advantage to them and the union.

Finally, there was the recruitment of key activists to be representative champions. A key objective of these 'rep champions' is to recruit more female, younger and ethnic minority members to the position of representative. This would provide a closer link between the union and its diverse membership base.

What happened?

The project was led by a dedicated project manager, recruited specifically to work on the project. A survey of members was undertaken. The results were disseminated to key constituencies within the union. The key finding that emerged was that the main barrier to members becoming representatives was poor understanding of the representative role, a perceived lack of support for reps from the union and a lack of a clear union identity and profile in workplaces.

The project managed to build strong relations with specific employers on the project's agenda, for example with Transport for London. A broad dialogue with Transport for London yielded new representatives and related initiatives. However, one of the outcomes of the project was a constant struggle to engage the interest and support of employers more generally, despite apparent commitments during the early stages of the project. The union was able to promote key partnerships with employers at the House of Common launch of the project, yet their ongoing engagement proved more problematic.

Specifically, employers in some cases were unwilling to provide facilities time for representative champions. Despite this, steady growth in relevant representatives and relevant materials were evident. The applicants for the champion role are more diverse in terms of their ethnicity and gender than traditional union representatives, and over time the project saw a steady number of individuals engage with the agenda.

Impact and lessons

In broader terms the project has managed to embed a series of new practices within the union.

Firstly, the UMF project crystallised and embedded a number of new research and communication techniques. The use of on-line surveys, focus groups and on-line discussion forums were able to contribute to the way the union prepares for its future work and map the nature and interests of its membership.

Secondly, the union has become alert to the major challenge of facility time and time-off for training. It is clear that whilst partnership is a resonant issue in

rhetorical terms the truth is that the reluctance of various employers has raised awareness that diversity and equality issues may not always be supported by employers due to the cost implications. This has fed into the need to enhance the case for diversity at all levels and for a more strategic approach through networks and links with public bodies so that employers are compelled to engage with these types of equality initiatives.

The third outcome is the role of greater networking and information sharing with other unions. The NUJ have been a point of reference, amongst others, for the sharing and dissemination of materials. Moreover, the development of an equality agenda between unions and for a more focused view of representation with different niches has meant that a proactive dialogue has developed with the TUC and others.

Fourth, the union has taken on board the need for a more systematic approach to project management and evaluation. The union brought on board its own evaluators and was able to build internal evaluation and reflection in terms of the way it worked. The project manager in this case actually attended project management sessions and developed a variety of project management skills. This has meant that the body of knowledge on overseeing and supporting projects has been enhanced.

The union has developed its equality work by engaging with new UMF rounds and achieving a second project. The new project has costing and administration elements which include the administrative support required for a project to develop. The way of working in relation to modernisation is therefore evolving.

A further legacy is the materials and individuals involved with equality issues. These have become a basis for engaging with a more proactive set of learning initiatives. Many of these initiatives are becoming mainstreamed into the learning and training agenda of the union. The added value to the union is a greater engagement with the question of equality on all levels.

The dissemination of the project internally in terms of meetings, circulars, and sessions at the regional level meant that a space has been opened for further developments in relation to new forms of migrant workers.

UMF 031 – USDAW - Developing the USDAW management model (LEAP)

Context and background

USDAW represents 345,000 members, mainly in the retail and distribution industries. Staff turnover is relatively high in these industries. As a consequence, USDAW has to recruit around 80,000 new members a year for membership levels to be maintained. The union has grown its membership over the last ten years as employment has expanded in some of the large food retailing companies where the union is recognized. There has also been recent change in the union's senior leadership team, with John Hannett elected to replace the retiring Sir Bill Connor.

The new senior management team were interested in improving the efficiency of the union. They were concerned that, while membership had risen, membership density in some of the key expanding companies had declined and the union was not doing as well as it should be. They attributed this relative failure to shortcomings in the way that the union was organized and managed. Planning was seen as being ad hoc and un-strategic. Plans to organize and recruit new members were not sufficiently integrated into the mainstream of union activity. The new senior management team had ambitious plans to change the culture of the union so that the union provides better value for money for members and membership recruitment becomes core to what the union does.

The project

The project was an ambitious attempt to radically overhaul USDAW's management structures and business processes by adopting the 'balanced score-card' model of management. The balanced score-card is a management approach developed by Harvard academics Robert Kaplan and David Norton, which offers a process model of how organizations can re-cast their strategies and processes through the development of a unique 'theory of business'. Part of this process involves the development of performance metrics tailored to the specific organization. In the medium term, these metrics are monitored through the development of a performance management system. USDAW's balanced score card was developed in conjunction with a team of consultants from the Work Foundation, who have a background in the union movement but who also have wider management and consultancy experience. The implementation of the score card was to be supported by a systematic programme of training across USDAW staff.

What happened?

A system of scorecards, based on key performance indicators was developed, and these were rolled out across the union. Each region has its own scorecard with relevant targets and key performance indicators. A new performance management system (PMS) has been piloted, and a survey of those involved in the pilot suggests that the PMS is effective in communication and goal setting. A management development programme for key union staff has been undertaken. The union's IT systems have been updated, so that it is possible to generate more accurate information on membership rates, so that progress can be assessed. Internal communications have been improved, and there is a feeling that this has made internal processes more transparent, so improving governance of the union.

The implementation of the score card was supported by a systematic structure of project management. The score card is divided into four segments: organising, delivery, people, and financial. A key concern was to ensure that the core activity of the union, organising, was more closely related to the management structures and strategic activities of the union. Each segment was allocated a specific project team and there was also a dedicated team for project management. Regular meetings were held to oversee project progress, and a system of health checks were introduced by way of monitoring the progress of the project.

The implementation of the score card was accompanied by a wide ranging programme of training. In total, around 60 key managers were trained in aspects related to the score card, KPIs and performance management. Performance management was introduced as a central component of the new organisational strategy and programme of cultural change. All members of staff now have to go through an annual Performance and Personal and Development Review (PPDR), and this contributes to the development of a national plan for staff training. All managers undertaking PPDRs needed to be trained in their effective conduct.

The development and implementation of the project was disseminated through quarterly internal newsletters to the union's staff. Key messages relating to the project and the change programme were also conveyed through team briefings, and a training programme was undertaken to support the briefing process.

Impact and lessons

The project faced some initial scepticism. To some extent this related to the concept itself and the managerial discourse that relates to it. As part of the balance core card approach to strategic development, USDAW's senior management team now refer to the union as the 'business'. This is not something union officials are used to, so a great deal of time was devoted to 'selling the message' of the project through project meetings and the training programme. A

similar set of challenges related to the introduction of the PPDR. However, the key concern of the senior management team was to convey the point that key aspects of the 'business', such as financial and delivery, needed to be approached to ensure that the union's core activity of organising could be supported and developed.

Whilst some staff initially felt threatened by the project, this sentiment appears to have dissipated and levels of 'buy in' to the project were regarded as high. This was evidenced by a survey of staff undertaken by the Work Foundation. Questionnaires were distributed to 400 USDAW staff, with 264 responses. The results, which are case sensitive, suggested a very high level of awareness and understanding of the LEAP project and a generally positive attitude towards USDAW as an employer. There were some 'lowlights' around the general area of staff participation in the organisation, but attempts are being made address such concerns. A follow-up survey is to be conducted in 2009.

Overall, the project has been very successful. One of the surprising lessons for the senior management when they started the project was just how much it revealed to them about what they did not know. A lot of shared learning has taken place. The view was that previously the union was too focused on organising, to the neglect of costing and how resources could be used more effectively – all of which could be put back in to the benefit of organising. A lot of cost has been taken out of the USDAW's day to day activities. The project has had a major impact on the union's day-to-day activities and overall strategic decision making. All activities now clearly related to an overarching set of strategic imperatives, which are currently benchmarked against 44 Key Performance Indicators. The plan is to develop the strategic plan on an annual basis, with major strategic reviews every three years. The project has made such a contribution to the new culture of the organisation that it is no longer branded as LEAP: 'it is just the way we do things'. The senior official involved in the project concluded that the project demonstrated that 'you can use a business model in a trade union setting. You don't have to compromise yourself'.

The main challenge the project faced, the buy-in of staff apart, was the huge amount of time and resources that needed to be devoted to it. This was grossly underestimated in the original bid and the early stages of the project. A project manager was seconded from within the union headquarters, initially for 1.5 days, but this became virtually full-time as the project progressed. It was recognised that more full-time support should have been designated to the project from the outset. Nonetheless, the project was extensively supported throughout and by the union. It has delivered a sustainable model for the strategic future of the union and also laid the base for a second round UMF project looking at developing the competences and confidence of union managers.

UMF 034 – National Union of Journalists - Equality for all: NUJ workplace and freelance equality representatives project

Context and background

The NUJ is a union with 35,000 members, working in occupations related to journalism. Membership is split between large national newspapers and media organizations based in London and smaller regional publishers. Because the union is relatively small, and because it organizes across a single occupation, the NUJ could be characterized as less bureaucratic, and more open to influence from lay members and activists than some of the larger unions.

Over the last ten years, the union has recruited a large number of younger, female members and activists as a result of successful organizing campaigns. This success is relatively unusual within the union world. In recent years, the TUC has drawn attention to the fact that unions need to recruit 'more and better representatives', including more representatives who are female and from ethnic minority backgrounds, so that union representatives become more representative of the diverse workforces that they represent.

The recruitment successes of the NUJ threw up a number of questions and issues that the union felt it needed to address as a result of pressure from its new members and activists. How could the union get the issues that mattered to this new membership constituency on the bargaining agenda? What could the union do to make sure that these members benefited from new employment rights around work life balance and family friendly working? Against this backdrop, the NUJ's General Secretary regards the question of how to make the union more relevant to an increasingly diverse membership the key strategic issue facing the union. The UMF funded project is a key part of the union's response.

The project

The project had two core elements. The first was the development of a training course on diversity and work-life balance issues, aimed at representatives, designed to equip them with the knowledge and skills to become 'equalities representatives'. The second was to research, write and publish a 'bargaining for equalities' handbook, to inform officers and lay activist undertaking collective bargaining about equalities issues with the objective of 'mainstreaming' equalities issues.

There was an additional dimension to the project related to securing 'buy-in' from officials and activists – the issue as far as the equality officer of the NUJ was concerned was to bring together the equality work of the NUJ: this would help

ensure that equality was not a secondary issue in terms of collective bargaining and union representation.

The project was managed by the NUJ's Equalities Officer, reporting to a Steering Group chaired by the union's General Secretary. The Equalities Officer was responsible for delivering the project, with the support of other functional specialists within the NUJ. The role of the union's senior leadership, particularly the General Secretary, was seen as being important for securing 'buy-in'.

What happened?

The project completed on time for early 2008. The training course for representatives developed, and, to date, a wide range of individuals have received the training on six training courses. Some of those trained have been from workplaces and 71 chapels (union branches) with previously low levels of activism. The 'bargaining for equalities' handbook has been produced, with further updates added to it in response to user demand. Work to provide on-line resources is ongoing. There have been serious attempts made in terms of 'mainstreaming' and embedding equalities issues within the union, for example by incorporating parts of the equalities training program into traditional union provided training for representatives.

It will take time to assess the extent to which the project resulted in equalities issues being 'mainstreamed' within the union's bargaining agenda. It is also too early to say whether there will be a 'demonstration effect' – a clear set of lessons which will allow other unions to learn from and repeat the NUJ's experiences. Yet it is clear that the equality agenda had continued to develop as a central feature of the work of the NUJ.

It is worth reflecting on what has made this project successful. The project emerged from within the union in quite an organic way. It was not thought up as a response to the UMF, but an extension of something which the union was already trying to do, which was facilitated by the UMF. As such, it had the support of the senior leadership of the union, who acted as champions for the project. It is also worth noting the relatively small size the NUJ and the fact that the union organizes a single occupation, which may have created favourable conditions for the project. The ability to communicate directly within the head office makes it easier to inform and bring the leadership on board.

Impact and lessons

The project was seen as part of the general modernisation of communications within the union. Hence, there have been modifications to the website to allow for equality representatives to develop dedicated spaces and interactive features. There appears to be greater interaction on equality issues with equality

representatives engaging on line. This has further enhanced the character and content of communication.

Secondly, the need for project management skills have been taken board as part of a general move to approach the challenges and risks associated with projects that are in part or wholly externally funded. The process of evaluation and time-keeping, for example, has been responded to by enhancing the project management skills and training of officers. There has also been a realisation of the need to take on board the time that individual members and representatives need for training and development – this has been acknowledged as a key challenge for future projects. The environment journalists work in may not be conducive for such type of training-based project work as well as the development of representatives due to intransigent employers.

Thirdly, whilst networks of equality officers exist in one form or another within the trade union movement, there were clear signs that a dialogue around UMF equality projects had evolved. Discussions on toolkits, training materials, and initiatives have been common. This has been clear in the support the NUJ have provided to the NUT. There has been a formal level of support for the NUT's equality strategies as a consequence of the NUJ's UMF project. Links with the Welsh TUC equalities project are also extensive. Materials and advice have been shared thus avoiding the problem of having to 'reinvent the wheel' and work in isolation on projects and issues where there is already a growing body of knowledge.

Hence, modernisation is not just about the specific development of equality issues, equality champions and equality consciousness. There are various broader outcomes in terms of communications, mapping processes of change and the resources they need and in the area of networking and the dissemination of information.

There are three discernable developments in terms of the longer term. The first is that information technology and information communications technologies need a growing share of union resources and the NUJ have begun to focus on this challenge. The second issue is that the union is reflecting on how to measure time and resources in relation to modernising the union. The third is that the NUJ has continued with the UMF agenda and has used its experiences to develop new UMF work on comparable themes. Hence it has begun to frame a more proactive and strategic approach to shaping its agendas for change by linking to external bodies and other trade union modernisation programmes.

UMF 046 – Portman Group Staff Association - Creating full partnership working with Portman Building Society through a highly skilled and efficient employee representative committee

Context and background

The Portman Group Staff Association is a non TUC affiliated union with just 1,300 members. Membership had increased rapidly (from 480 members) following a merger with the Staffordshire Building Society and its Staff Association. The context of increasing organisational change within the Portman Building Society and the development of a new HR modernisation strategy (The People Strategy), that put more of an emphasis on employee involvement and the active engagement of the Staff Association (SA), prompted the union to re-evaluate its representational role. The new modernisation strategy was set against an historical view 'that the organisation does not need unions'. Processes of consultation would typically begin a week before a major organisational change and the SA would be bound by confidentiality.

The appointment of a new Director of HR, and the subsequent HR modernisation strategy, led to a changed relationship with the SA. This included informing the Chair of the SA about any prospective organisational change well in advance. However, the SA faced a number of challenges in strengthening its role within the organisation. First, pockets of management remained cynical towards the SA. Second, the SA was not very visible to staff and the general view of staff was one of indifference to the SA. Third, SA officers were concerned about representing members in disciplinary hearings. There was concern that officers did not have the requisite skills to represent members effectively.

It is against this background, that the SA sought to improve relations with management and develop its own skills base, through an effective system of partnership working. This aspiration was given support through the development of a new recognition agreement, which put more of an emphasis on partnership working, and the establishment of a Partnership Committee. The progress of the UMF project was, however, overtaken by key developments within the Society, notably a merger with the Nationwide Building Society and change in Chair of the Staff Association, which was to lead to a change in the overall outcomes of the project.

The project

In order to ensure the new Partnership Committee worked effectively, senior officers in the Staff Association agreed that three key areas needed to be tackled.

First, there was a need to establish a good working relationship between the SA and management. Second, they wanted to embed a culture of good employment relations with lower level employees. Third, they wanted to upskill SA members of the Committee to 'be better employee representatives'. Related to this, there was also a concern to get more people, particularly young people, involved and active in the union.

The original aims of the one year project were two-fold. First, to create an employment relations environment where 'working together' can achieve business growth and a positive employee culture. Second, to have a competent and highly skilled Chairman and employee representatives who provide quality support and advice to members. To achieve this, the project aimed to deliver structured accredited training to all employee representatives and to redefine the role of the employee representatives. There was also a review planned to define what was needed to achieve full partnership working, and then to develop a plan to introduce this. Following the merger with the Nationwide, the project focused more intensely on building a stronger structure of employee representation.

What happened?

The initial progress on the project went very well. A Steering Group for the project was established, that incorporated a range of SA officers, management and staff from different functions and regions. Next a series of partnership workshops and a review of the SA were planned. The review of the SA and its structure and roles (which included a membership survey) was conducted by a freelance consultant; the partnership workshops, and a report of how they went, were organised by TUC Partnership Institute.

There were three partnership workshops in all, the first for management, the second for SA officers and a final joint workshop attended by 20 staff association and management representatives. This followed a standard Partnership Institute template. One risk anticipated was that attendance at the workshops would be poor. There was some concern over the management workshop, as there was some hostility by managers towards the representatives. Also, there was a view that 'people were aware of partnership, but it was not really embedded or really known about. They needed to get their heads around what it meant for the Portman'. Attendance at the management workshop was bolstered via encouragement of management members of the Steering Group. Hostile attitudes towards the SA were also resolved when managers realised the value of SA representatives to the business and the role they played. Overall, the workshops were judged to be a success, demonstrating the commitment of the SA group to key organisational challenges. Members of the project team were less happy with the report produced by the Partnership Institute, and the project experienced some slippage while this was redrafted. The key concern was the production of an output that was tailored to the needs and issues of the Portman, rather than the standard TUC partnership model.

Following the workshops and the initial consultancy review, a training programme was designed for SA officers, to be implemented by the independent consultant (that conducted the review). Further progress on the project was to come up against two key challenges. First, the SA Chair, and original driver of the project, left the company somewhat abruptly. Second, the Portman went through a merger with the Nationwide Building Society, which raised a whole series of pressing industrial relations matters for the SA – for example, around workforce reduction. These events were significant enough to question the validity of the project and there was initial doubt over whether it would be completed. Following discussions with BIS the focus of the project was changed from cementing partnership to increasing the representative base of the SA. Some of the key issues faced by the SA and members, around for example redundancy provision and Transfer of Undertakings, were then incorporated into the SA training programme. There was also support from Human Resources, with key managers attending the sessions and delivering a number of presentations, for example around the 'compromise agreement' that had been reached around redundancy packages. The training programme for representatives was completed and the project was completed on time.

Impact and lessons learnt

Given the challenges faced by this project, its completion, on time, raises some important lessons for effective project prosecution. Significantly, the SA dealt with the merger, and the related merger with the Nationwide SA, as an issue in union modernisation in itself, and secured agreement from BIS to continue with a slightly revised project specification. Similarly, the change in the Chair of the SA allowed for a revised project management approach to the project. The original Chair ran the Association in a centralised way and the dissemination of knowledge was limited. There were also concerns that the SA was too close to management, as he only communicated to the membership via joint statements. The new Chair, the previous Deputy, has actively sought to increase the independence of the SA, something that senior management actually supported, and increase knowledge flows about the UMF project and wider SA activities.

The key outcomes of the project were, therefore, different than expected. As a result of the merger, around 800 staff were to be made redundant, during a phased severance period, and many others were invited to reapply for their jobs. The redundancy exercise created some obvious pressures for the SA, as employees were entitled to be accompanied by a union rep during consultations with management. The limited representative structure of the union would not have been able to cope with this. The revised focus of the project allowed, therefore, for the SA to recruit and train and additional 46 representatives.

This flexible approach taken to the project, in addition to a decent timeline for a relatively simple project, meant that unanticipated challenges were faced, overcome and lessons learnt. The Chair of the SA claims that as a result of the

project membership has increased significantly, but it is impossible to delineate such claims from any potential membership impetus created by the organisation upheavals of the merger. The most obvious outcome of the project was the new, trained, representative structure. As the Chair of the SA concluded, 'we would not have got through the merger process without this happening. The benefits and outputs are extremely beneficial; we represent our members' interests in a manner never done before'. Information on project activities and progress was disseminated to members through the SA page of the organisation's webpage and a new SA newsletter was launched. The increased number of representatives was also seen by senior management to have measurable benefits, as it meant that there was a more robust and systematic representative base to consult with over the redundancy process.

The main lesson learnt from the project for the SA Chair related to knowledge management. Having taken on the management of the project at a relatively late stage, he recognised the limitations of his predecessor in sharing more widely project knowledge and experience. Instead, the new SA Chair took the view that, whilst a small project, there was benefit in it being managed and overseen by more than one person and knowledge flows and levels of communication were thus extended.

Appendix 6: Projects approved under UMF Round Two

1. Accord and Amicus - Rep training in partnership

The project seeks to develop capacity to support and train reps in understanding modern business practices as part of the existing partnership agreement with HBOS.

2. Association of Professionals in Education and Children's Trusts (ASPECT) - The Next Generation: Modernising Communications for Trade Unionists in the 21st Century

The project seeks to develop an inter-active intranet facility for members and staff to improve communications, improve access to information and underpin a better understanding of diversity issues.

3. Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL) - Developing Effective and Representative Lay Structures

The project seeks to equip lay reps to undertake a broader branch role via an improved communications infrastructure and a training and development programme.

4. Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union (BFAWU) - Modernising our organisation

The project seeks to implement outcomes from their two successful Round One projects, by developing a training programme for members to use the new membership system and using a professional data cleansing and collection service to populate the new system.

5. Broadcasting, Entertainment, Cinematograph and Theatre Union (BECTU) - BECTU: the networked union

The project seeks to transform the members' relationship with the union by using web-enabled tools to empower them and enable them to: influence policy, take control of their own records, communicate directly with colleagues and access

services more easily. The union would be empowered centrally to improve communications, service delivery and promote diversity.

6. Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (CSP) and six other unions - Collaborative Working: feasibility study and implementation plans

The project seeks to undertake a feasibility study to explore opportunities for collaborative working. The aim is to identify the scope for sharing facilities and support services and thereby reduce infrastructure costs and improve the quality of services

7. Communications Workers Union (CWU) - Deconstructing Equality Barriers through Union Training

The project seeks to further modernise their equality-based education and training materials via an interactive toolkit on equality legislation and a best practice guide on industrial relations.

8. Communications Workers Union (CWU) - Youth Empowerment Strategy

The project seeks to radically transform CWU's approach to recruiting and empowering young workers via development of a dedicated resource focussed on developing and supporting young reps, and with the aim of mainstreaming youth activity across union structures.

9. Community - Community Trade Unionism and the NEC: contributing to the union's modernisation

The project seeks to improve understanding between full-time officers and the NEC via an education programme covering strategy, culture, marketing and financial skills similar to their successful Round One project.

10. FDA - FDA Integrated Membership System and Website

The project seeks to develop an integrated membership system and website to transform the unions' communications and membership services. The system would: communicate more effectively to a diverse audience; better engage members in democratic processes; facilitate two-way communications; improve internal efficiency; and provide on-line tools for lay reps.

11. Fire Brigades Union (FBU) - Feasibility study into impact of equal status of part-time fire workers (project did not proceed)

The project seeks to a. undertake an impact study of the consequences of the part-time workers regulations on the 'retained' members of the FBU; and b. implement the recommendations arising from the study.

12. General Federation of Trade Unions (GFTU) and Connect - A New Agenda for Equality in the Workplace: training for equality reps

The project seeks to develop training and on-line learning opportunities for equality reps, as well as establish national and union-based networks for reps. GFTU will work with the CEHR to ensure synergies with their policy priorities.

13. GMB - Developing Modern Management Methods in the GMB

The project seeks to respond to the challenges generated by recent change within the union and pro-actively improve internal management systems, develop a team culture and implement a sustained performance improvement.

14. The Musicians Union (MU) - Managing Change: transforming our traditional structures

The bid seeks to build on their Round One project and undertake a major consultation exercise to research the effectiveness of existing structures - and identify options for modernising them, increasing diversity and improving members' participation in union affairs.

15. National Union of Teachers (NUT) - Fairer futures: Putting Equality Opportunities at the Heart of NUT Local Structures

The project seeks to build the capacity and effectiveness of equal opportunities officers (EOOs) and re-vitalise participation in NUT's local structures. This will be delivered via recruitment of additional EOOs, a training and development programme and development of a good-practice network.

16. National Union of Schoolmasters, Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT) - Support for overseas trained teachers in London and the South-East

The project seeks to provide more effective access to information for overseas trained teachers (OTTs) on professional aspects of the teachers' role as well as social and cultural issues; and to enhance the effectiveness with which the union responds to the needs of OTTs. This would be delivered via a dedicated website and targeted training for union equality officers.

17. Prospect - Building capacity within the defence sector to develop and sustain Prospect equality reps

The project seeks to extend the scope of the union's activities in the defence sector, to groups currently marginalised, and transform representative structures. This would be achieved by undertaking initial research; developing strategies to overcome barriers to participation; establishing training, development and mentoring programmes; and mainstreaming the activity in collective bargaining/consultative machinery.

18. Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS) - Mentoring for Women Reps

The project seeks to tackle the under-representation of women in key branch and regional union positions within PCS Wales via an accredited mentoring, skills training and leadership training programme.

19. Scottish TUC - One Workplace Equal Rights: Tools and training for workplace representatives (project did not proceed)

The project seeks to address the significant gap between initial successes in its equalities work and the effective mainstreaming of equalities activities within affiliate unions. This will be achieved via development of a training package; development of a best practice network; the dissemination of outcomes across affiliates; and mainstreaming of the activity within the STUC workplan.

20. TGWU - T&G21: Modernising Management and Training

The project seeks to bring in external expertise to design and pilot a management training programme as part of a broader change process which aims to tackle the challenges presented by the changing workplace.

21. Transport Salaried Staff Association (TSSA) - Underpinning Equalities: capacity building and beyond

The project seeks to mainstream the equalities agenda by assisting the unions Self-Organising Groups to engage with their constituents; provide modular, tailored training for reps; and build capacity through a network of lay advisors.

22. TUC - Green Workplaces

The project seeks to develop new skill-sets for members and employers which will enable them to work together to promote energy and resource efficient, sustainable workplaces. This will be achieved via a series of pace-setter projects, the results of which will be widely disseminated.

23. TUC - Training and evaluating union equality reps

The project seeks to develop a targeted training programme for tutors and union equality reps to ensure they focus on relevant issues and engage effectively with both employers and members. TUC would work with unions to provide general courses open to all; targeted training for individual unions; and to share good practice from those undertaking their own training.

24. Union of Construction Allied Trades and Technicians (UCATT) - Managing Change: modernising our capacity to respond, develop effective partnerships and engage with members

The project seeks to respond to a series of internal and external challenges and implement a broad-based change programme. This would be delivered via: development of an on-line communications centre; a membership survey to inform the modernisation process; and a training programme for lay reps and officers.

25. Unison - Migrant Workers Participation Project

The project seeks to respond to the increasing diversity of the labour market (including those originating from within the EU) and improve Unison's ability to supply services geared to the needs of a diverse membership. The aim is to involve migrant workers at all levels of the union, and reduce economic and social exclusion.

26. Unison - Establishing equality reps in Unison

The project seeks to support Unison's equality strategy by training and development of equality reps; capacity building to engage more effectively with employers; and improvements to service delivery to ensure equality and diversity issues are addressed effectively by employers.

27. Unison - Virtual Branches Proposal

The project seeks to respond to changing employment patterns and pilot a virtual branch network to better target members, empower them to participate in branch affairs, and overcome traditional barriers to participation.

28. USDAW - Developing Competent and Confident Managers

The project builds on their successful Round One UMF project, which focused on developing the systems and processes for the strategic management of the union, via introduction of a best practice management model. It seeks to develop new skills and behaviours in the senior management team, which will drive the new system, as well as extend the training to the next tier of the organisation.

29. Amicus – Amicus Workplace Equality Reps Development Project

The project seeks to form an integral part of the Amicus Equality Strategy, this project facilitates implementation of equality representative within the union's workplace, administrative and democratic structures in the two year transitional period facilitating full integration within the TGWU. The project will facilitate the development of 400 members of the union as equality reps; ensure they have access to training; recognition by their employer, recognition by the union and communication tools.

30. Equality – Get In On the Act: increasing participation among Equity members

The project seeks to increase participation of Members in the union and activism. The will be delivered through: taking the union to the Members and increasing engagement and participation; stimulating interest in the traditional and developing areas of Equity's work; reinvigorating the democratic structures such as Specialist Committees and developing new roles such as Equality Reps and Equity Ambassadors; overhauling voting processes; engaging better with Student and younger Members to give them a voice in the union.

31. General Federation of Trade Unions (GFTU) – Trade Union Leadership Development

The project aims to develop existing and future leaders of the GFTU and its affiliates to transform unions' cultures and structures to include, develop and empower women and BME leaders. This will be achieved via a programme of research, training and dissemination.

32. Nautilus UK – lay and full-time officials training course

The project seeks to fund a training programme, in conjunction with Ruskin College, to equip all their officials and over 100 lay reps with the skills necessary to represent members in the global market place.

33. Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS) – equality representatives

The project seeks to revitalise the recruitment, training, development and support we provide for our local equality representatives. It will raise their profile and status while at the same time equipping them with the skills, knowledge & experience to change the workplace into a more diverse and less discriminatory place.

Appendix 7: Projects approved under UMF Round Three

1. BECTU - Challenging the creative labour market: moving young workers to centre stage

The project seeks to use web-based tools developed in UMF2 to expand their student register pilot and extend it to create a 'vulnerable new entrants register'. This would: provide information, advice and guidance to vulnerable workers; support an online community and support the community to actively influence employment practices.

2. BECTU – Co-operative agencies for entertainment industry freelancers

The project seeks to address the vulnerability of freelancers in the entertainment industry, many of whom have to use work-finding agencies that charge up-front fees and often treat freelancers unfairly by failing to find them work. The project would research and pilot a co-operative agency that charges commission on earnings rather than up-front fees and gives freelancers democratic control over the enterprise.

3. BFAWU – Reaching out to vulnerable workers in retail bakery

The project seeks to explore the needs of an under-represented industry sector - retail bakery shop workers - that experiences vulnerability due to isolated sites, isolating shift patterns, and variable levels of employer compliance with employment law. The project would research, develop, and deliver a new model of employee engagement that would provide access to new channels of communication, capacity building training and empowerment to secure employment rights.

4. Community – Beyond the workplace: Community in the community

The project seeks to build on Community's modernisation strategy which is based upon engaging with members where they live as well as where they work; and forging links with other progressive organisations to address issues of mutual concern. The project would advance this approach by developing relationships and joint activities with third sector organisations in South Yorkshire and the East Midlands, based on research and consultation. Community officials would be trained in working with the third sector, and a toolkit produced to promote effective collaborations between trade unions and third sector organisations.

5. GFTU – What to Expect When You Start Work: Supporting the Employment Advice Needs of Vulnerable Workers

The project seeks to generate new services for affiliates with the provision of an employment rights service for vulnerable workers. This would be delivered via; 'employment rights' fairs, to showcase good practice in employment; the development of information materials; and the provision of training sessions for vulnerable workers, trainers and equality reps.

6. GMB – Engaging communities and building social capital

The project seeks to reach out beyond the union's usual boundaries into vulnerable communities, breaking down barriers to employment rights knowledge, developing relationships with community leaders and providing training to build capacity and leadership amongst vulnerable workers.

7. GMB – Equality and vulnerability representatives in the workplace

The project seeks to train 45 'early adopters' from their existing equality officers in Birmingham and the West Midlands to become 'equality and vulnerability representatives' with an explicit additional remit to advance the cause of vulnerable workers. The aim is to create a network of powerful advocates for vulnerable workers and provide a strong workplace lead on equalities issues, collaborating with employers, employees and the wider community to tackle vulnerability and inequality in our workplaces.

8. NUJ – New networks: giving journalism’s vulnerable workers the support they need

The project seeks to provide support to newly qualified, freelance and casual journalists who face exploitation at work and are isolated from normal support structures within the industry. This would be done via new IT systems, a new mentoring network and a training package.

9. RMT- New website and Training for Vulnerable Workers

The project seeks to develop an initiative specifically aimed at vulnerable workers in the transport industries (e.g. cleaners and ancillary staff). This would be achieved via an initial survey of their needs, the development of an RMT website dedicated to vulnerable workers, and an extensive training project for officials, key members of staff and Branch Secretaries.

10. Transport Salaried Staffs’ Association – Tackling dyslexia discrimination in the workplace

The project seeks to develop the professional competence of union organisers and representatives to meet the specific needs of vulnerable workers facing discrimination because of hidden disabilities such as dyslexia. This would be delivered via work with Dyslexia Action to develop information materials, training and engagement with employers.

11. TUC – Supporting unions to tackle vulnerable employment

The project seeks to build on the recommendations of the CoVE report and fulfil the TUC strategic goal to tackle vulnerable employment. TUC aim to: provide tailored support to unions seeking to improve engagement with vulnerable workers via training and better information sharing; develop new skills in promoting and protecting the rights of vulnerable workers and integrating their needs into negotiations with employers; develop new resources for unions (specifically regarding informal, agency, younger and casual workers); encourage closer working between unions and enforcement agencies; and pilot new ways of supporting unions in the regions.

12. UCATT - Building a stronger union – protecting vulnerable workers: responding to the downturn - preparing for the upturn

The project seeks to develop practical responses to the range of vulnerabilities faced by workers across the construction sector. A 'Vulnerable Workers-Membership Unit' will develop UCATT's internal capacity to provide representation and support to workers whilst a partnership network will be developed with third sector, external and enforcement agencies to enhance UCATT's capability to provide a package of information, advice, guidance and training services.

13. UNISON – Outsourced Workers Project

The project seeks to address the needs of the growing numbers of public service workers who have been outsourced and could be vulnerable to exploitation by unscrupulous employers. The project would reduce marginalisation and increase capacity amongst outsourced workers, by improving understanding of the issues they face and showing how they can be helped through awareness raising, training and the production of supporting materials.

14. USDAW – Engaging Vulnerable Workers

The project seeks to extend the reach of the union (and their modernising agenda) to hitherto hard-to-reach groups who are more vulnerable at work generally and at greater risk of falling outside trade union protection. It will develop capacity to identify and connect with vulnerable workers through a variety of means, including new ways of developing the knowledge and skills of reps and officials, and more innovative, IT-based, ways of engaging with target groups.

UMF – Round one: Final evaluation report

Employment Relations Research Series

Recent reports published to date in the BIS Employment Relations Research Series are listed below. Adobe PDF copies can be downloaded either from the Employment Market Analysis and Research web pages:

www.berr.gov.uk/employment/research-evaluation/errs (click on the 'Employment Relations Research Series' pages on the right-hand side).

Or via the BIS Publications page: www.bis.gov.uk/publications (click 'Browse by Subject', then select 'Employment Relations Research')

For printed copies, you can place an order via the Publications page above. Alternatively please call the BIS Publications Orderline on 0845 015 0010 (+44 845 015 0010) and provide the publication's URN, or email them at: publications@bis.gsi.gov.uk with your details.

Anyone wishing to be added to our mailing list for printed copies of this series should email their details to us at: emar@bis.gsi.gov.uk

No. 91 *Offshoring and wage inequality in the UK, 1992-2004*. Claudia Canals. URN 07/1667. December 2007

No. 92 *The Union Modernisation Fund: an interim progress report*. Mark Stuart, Andy Charlwood, Miguel Martinez Lucio and Emma Wallis. URN 08/639. March 2008

No. 96 *Characteristics of Rejected Employment Tribunal Claims*. Paul L. Latreille. URN 09/812. June 2009

No. 97 *Implementing information and consultation in medium-sized organisations*. Mark Hall, Sue Hutchinson, Jane Parker, John Purcell and Michael Terry. URN 08/969. October 2008

No. 99 *Vulnerable Workers Pilots' Evaluation: Interim findings from the evaluation of the vulnerable worker pilots at the end of Year 1*. Liz Griffin. URN 08/1055. October 2008

No. 99 *Citizens Advice Client Research: Final Report*. Derek Mitchell, Alpha Research. URN 08/1056. September 2008

UMF – Round one: Final evaluation report

No.100 *International review of leave policies and related research 2008*. Peter Moss and Marta Korintus. URN 08/1057. July 2008

No.101 *Something for nothing? Employment Tribunal claimants' perspectives on legal funding*. Richard Moorhead and Rebecca Cumming. URN 09/813. June 2009

No. 102 *International Review of Leave Policies and Related Research 2009*. Peter Moss, Institute of Education University of London. URN 09/1175. September 2009

No. 103 *Fair treatment at work report: findings from the 2008 survey*. Ralph Fevre, Theo Nicholas, Gillian Prior and Ian Rutherford. URN 09/P85. September 2009

No. 104 *The Union Modernisation Fund – Round one: Final evaluation report*. Mark Stuart, Miguel Martinez Lucio and Andy Charlwood. URN 09/1346. October 2009

