**Equality, Diversity, Inclusion 2012 - conference Abstract.**

**Title:** *Managing Differences Meaningfully through Reflexive Practice*

**Conference Stream 6:** Operationalizing Diversity Management in Organizations around the Globe,Managing the Organization, Strategy and Culture of Difference to achieve genuine outcomes

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**Abstract:**

This paper is based on a post-hoc qualitative reflexive study of a managing diversity project undertaken by the author. The study attempts to contribute to the practitioner managing diversity field by demonstrating that reflexive practice can add significant value to managing diversity processes in organisations. The author proposes that by taking a reflexive stance the limited approaches to organisational diversity, prevalent in the applied field of managing diversity, can be challenged and expanded. This is because reflexive practice provides a means to include employee perspectives to achieve more meaningful, significant ways to design and implement organisational diversity initiatives. The study suggests that reflexive practice can allow both managers and employees to more critically examine the conventional ways in which differences are apprehended, and that this awareness can enable more embodied approaches to diversity to be developed. In particular, reflexivity will be shown to stimulate both independent and shared action learning sense-making processes which support equal participation in relation to diversity agendas. In positioning organisational diversity as inter-subjective, forged in-the-moment localized processes, meaningful dialogue between employees and managers thus becomes possible. Moreover, as reflexivity allows for a range of narrative accounts to emerge from such embedded activities, this approach can serve as a model for similar mutualist processes within the wider organisation. The paper will suggest therefore that such democratic managing diversity initiatives represent a novel leadership paradigm shift capable of delivering the kind of creativity all organisations require in the competitive global environment because people are placed at the centre of potential for change.

**Key words:** Managing diversity outcomes, reflexivity, action learning, practitioner research, sense-making, storytelling.