

# The Institute's View

**As COVID-19 continues to impact the way in which we work and the Black Lives Matter campaign shines a spotlight on perceived injustices, innovation is going to be essential if we're to thrive rather than just survive. Here, Lisa Reilly provides an overview of The Security Institute's all-new Inclusive Security Special Interest Group**



**Innovation** is driven by diversity. In a world that's very different today to what it looked like 12 months ago, we clearly need disruptive thinkers.

When we first talked about the Inclusive Security Special Interest Group (ISSIG), we referred to it as the Diversity Special Interest Group, but as the launch grew closer and the aims and objectives became clearer, we realised this wasn't right. We don't want to highlight differences. We wish to celebrate them.

We want to recognise that, as a sector, we're stronger when there's a greater variety of perspectives involved in the design and implementation of security and risk management practices. Within the ISSIG, our aim – as spelled out by The Security Institute's chair Professor Alison Wakefield PhD CSyP FSI, is: "To change the face... of security and risk management by fostering more opportunities for all groups... to access and thrive within the industry."

The collective commitment of members of this new Special Interest Group to tackle the lack of diversity in the security sector presents a great opportunity for the Institute and, indeed, the wider security profession. Dismantling the barriers that prevent the sector from harnessing the talents of so many will widen its scope and enhance innovation. Potentially, this is the fastest route towards further enhancing the standing of the security profession and fundamental to the continuing growth of the Institute itself.

My work is in the humanitarian sector, looking at safety and security for staff working overseas. We recently published a paper on 'Gender and Security', the aim of which was to highlight that, while different genders may be impacted by threats in differing

ways, this doesn't mean one gender is 'weaker' or in some way more 'at risk' than the other. Both provide opportunities as well as challenges for improving overall safety and security.

## Duty of Care

Gender is only one of many personal characteristics that impact the way we need to manage security. In 2017, we undertook a research project looking at how organisations can meet their legal Duty of Care obligations while not compromising anti-discrimination law. This culminated in the publication of 'Security Risk Management for Staff with Diverse Profiles' just a year later.

There are two key findings from the research, the first being how much discrimination there is in a sector purporting to have humanity at its core. Misogyny, homophobia, racism and sexism are the common ones, along with ageism and an almost total blindness to those issues impacting disabled staff.

The second is that equality has become synonymous with the idea of us all being the same. Often driven by the very best of reasons, this approach isn't effective either for the management of security risks or for achieving our programme objectives. In South Sudan, for example, security plans often ignore the issues related to different ethnicities working and travelling in different areas, while the applicants for jobs in Uganda may not be informed that homosexuality is actually illegal there.

Security protocols often inhibit people from applying for jobs, such as the directive that 'all applicants must be able to drive in case of an emergency', effectively excluding anyone with visual impairment from applying for work in any country, even when the probability of that need to drive is negligible.

As one security manager commenting on the study rightly pointed out, we cannot write a security plan that considers every possible individual

profile. That being so, what do we determine to do instead?

## Challenging mindsets

The security sector is often one that relies on the development and implementation of rules, and is certainly perceived in this way, but we need to challenge such mindsets.

We need to look at our processes to make them flexible and people rather than system-focused. We cannot do this unless we adopt an inclusive approach that actively encourages innovation through diversity and inclusion.

A starting point for the ISSIG will be to undertake a research project that provides us with baseline metrics as opposed to just anecdotal information. Anna-Liisa Tampu ASyI (head of intelligence and analysis at Northcott Global Solutions and co-chair of the ISSIG) is leading on this project.

Anna-Liisa has stated: "This research project will help us to understand our sector better by starting at the beginning and asking who forms part of it. We aim to map out who works for organisations and departments and understand what, if any, barriers to entry exist for certain groups and individuals across the industry. This research will help us to collate vital data to assess what we can do on a collective basis in order to break down the barriers."

While we're still feeling our way with the ISSIG, we would love for interested professionals to be involved with this initiative. If you would like more information, please contact me via e-mail at [gisf-director@gisf.ngo](mailto:gisf-director@gisf.ngo) or Anna-Liisa at [anna-liisa.tampuu@my.westminster.ac.uk](mailto:anna-liisa.tampuu@my.westminster.ac.uk)

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