

# Diversity Institute of Bermuda



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**DIVERSITY INSTITUTE OF BERMUDA (DIB)** was a non-profit, member-driven organisation established in 1998 with an ambitious mission—to change lives.

Set up as a company limited by guarantee with registered charity status, DIB sought to raise awareness among Bermudians about racial issues and diversity in general—including differences in gender, age, religion, status, disability and sexual orientation. Through community and corporate education and training programmes, the DIB was committed to promoting awareness and appreciation of human diversity and thereby creating a healthier environment.

A decade later, DIB was discontinued. However, its mission and ideals continue today through the work of like-minded community groups, and its 91 programme graduates—from diverse sectors of Bermudian society—who represent its valuable legacy.

## History of DIB

DIB was born out of a series of experiential workshops hosted by the Bermuda College in partnership with the Bermuda government and local and international companies. The Diversity Skills Development Programme was driven by the collaboration of Bermuda College president Dr. George Cook and Dr. Lennox Joseph, of the NTL Institute for Applied Behavioral Science. It aimed to train groups of individuals in diversity awareness, providing them with the ability to develop their own programmes for workplace or community groups.

In 1995, a pilot programme with 25 participants was launched at the college, comprising an intensive 20-day, 200-hour course run by facilitators of the Maryland-based National Training Laboratory (NTL). Graduates praised the programme and over the next two years, more Bermudians, from all backgrounds, were immersed in the experiential-style diversity training workshops.

- A total of 91 participants (31 in 1996 and 35 in '97) graduated with certificates and training that equipped them to guide others in the issues they had studied in training. Graduates continued to meet, network and socialise after the courses ended to examine issues of diversity, ways to address disparities, and improve decision-making processes to bring about positive change. Most of the DIB work in the community was done by graduates, complementing the work they did with their employers and other organisations.

- Archival VHS tapes of the 1995–97 participants' presentations on the seven dimensions of diversity (age, class, disability, gender, race/ethnicity, religion/spirituality, sexual orientation) are available from the Bermuda Community Foundation.

## Change Through Learning

The programme's courses, facilitated by NTL, aimed to open dialogue and develop empathy for those with different perspectives on race, gender, age, disability, class, religion/spirituality or sexual orientation. They focused on facilitating diversity awareness through experiential learning methodologies, including group discussions, role-playing workshops, experimentation exercises, keeping journals, delivering feedback and giving presentations.

In these ways, the programme empowered participants to develop proactive ways to consider, manage and respond to diversity. It taught skills to deal with tensions created by different approaches, with the aim of creating a culture of dialogue and trust, and a better understanding of privilege. Through facilitator group discussions, participants were able to play a part in their own learning experience, discovering how certain behaviours impacted others, for example, as well as identifying dysfunctional behaviours, assessing themselves, examining identity and social stratification,

***To excel in facilitating and modelling the process of inclusion for individuals, businesses and community***

—DIB mission

## DIB objectives were:

- *To be a source of diversity education and training*
- *To gather and share information regarding diversity in Bermuda and elsewhere*
- *To facilitate and promote ongoing opportunities for public discussion relating to diversity*
- *To provide and/or facilitate consulting services*
- *To be an agency for certification in the area of diversity*
- *To act as a change agent in the community*
- *To create a mechanism to educate and engage Bermudians in public conversation on issues of diversity, including race and sexual orientation*
- *To liaise closely with organisations in related fields and to build contacts and networks in Bermuda and abroad*



1995 Graduates

trying out new approaches and modes of communication feedback, and dealing with conflict. Products and course topics included:

- Introduction to Diversity Awareness
- Diversity in the Workplace
- Sexual Harassment in the Workplace
- Three-Week Diversity Skills Intensive Programme
- Girls-to-Women, Boys-to-Men
- Valuing Differences
- Managing Diversity
- Race, Class and Youth Culture
- Toolkit for Effective Dialogue and Communication

The overall goal was to identify and analyse biases, stereotypes, prejudices and other issues of race and demographics, and find ways to overcome them. Essentially, the DIB aimed to be a catalyst for educating and engaging the community to create positive social change in the area of diversity.

## Launch of DIB

In 1998, following the success of the three-year diversity training courses, graduates from all sessions held a conference to decide the next step in the process of diversity education. There was a desire for a more permanent entity to carry on the programme's mandate, and the decision to establish an institute was made. An action planning team was created to make the idea a reality.

Diversity Institute of Bermuda was established to help strengthen the community's understanding of diversity issues and its empathy for differences among people. DIB launched a programme of in-house diversity training workshops for Bermuda-based companies and organisations that saw wide participation. The group created custom programmes, and its facilitators, primarily graduates of the three training courses, worked with clients' staff to explore issues of inequality, fairness and systemic racism through experiential methodologies.

## 1996 Graduates



### Diversity Training in the Workplace

Diversity, and racism in particular, was examined from all angles. In Bermuda, tackling racism, gender, and other diversity issues in the workplace, was especially pertinent. Participants learned a true definition of racism is when power coupled with prejudice enables racism.

Numerous Bermuda-based companies, both local and global, supported employees by underwriting their participation in DIB workshop courses. The aim was to lay the groundwork for better internal relationships and improve teamwork, workplace behaviour and fairness.

In-house diversity awareness courses organised by DIB were embraced by law and accountancy firms, banks, local and international insurance companies, utility companies, Parliamentarians, and the Bermuda Police Service.

### Challenges & Opportunities

DIB faced financial challenges during the 2000s, as well as positive opportunities. Its former executive director was prosecuted in 2007, when she admitted using the charity's credit card to buy personal items. She was fined \$2,000 in Magistrates Court and ordered to pay back a further \$10,000 following a separate civil judgement. The setback caused severe fundraising and public relations problems for the DIB, leading to its dormancy in 2005.

But the dream did not die. Four elected board members set about re-establishing DIB's financial and administrative infrastructure—paying all back taxes, bringing accounts up-to-date, and helping the charity meet all its responsibilities—and re-opened its Bermuda College office. In 2009–10, DIB continued to offer seminars as part of a mandatory course for first-year students on civic engagement,

***The fact Bermuda has such variety in its population is an advantage. It not only makes us more interesting and dynamic than if we were all the same, it enriches our experience and our culture by introducing fresh ideas, different perspectives, unique views and other beliefs***

—DIB

1997 Graduates



*It is hoped...  
DIB's founding  
goals and lasting  
legacy can help  
support a greater  
appreciation for  
diversity in  
Bermuda in  
the future*

—DIB

social justice, and democracy. The course, "Diversity, Equity and Human Rights," was run by individuals from the community. A rudimentary website was developed with help from Bermuda College students.

DIB also acted as in-country host for the international residency component of a Master of Science in Organisation Development Programme offered by American University (AU) and the NTL. Hosted by 18 mid-career graduate students and four NTL-member AU faculty members, the February 2010 consultation skills course saw students provide consultancy services to local non-profits and government agencies.

DIB was finally wound up, transferring its remaining financial resources to the Bermuda Community Foundation (BCF) in 2014. Through BCF, DIB created the Diversity Initiatives Fund, a permanent endowment for the support of diversity initiatives in perpetuity:

[www.bermudacommunityfoundation.org/HowtoGive/OurFunds.aspx](http://www.bermudacommunityfoundation.org/HowtoGive/OurFunds.aspx).

It is hoped, through this dynamic new mechanism for charity endowment on the Island, DIB's founding goals and lasting legacy can help support a greater appreciation for diversity in Bermuda in the future.

As of August 2015, with the help of various recent donations from the public, the Diversity Initiatives Fund at the Bermuda Community Foundation (DIF) was established. DIF currently has assets of more than \$55,000 and will remain open for additional contributions from the public to this permanent endowment for support of diversity initiatives. ■

## Q&A with Argentine Saunders Craig

**Argentine Saunders Craig, PhD, Emerita Member NTL Institute ([www.ntl.org](http://www.ntl.org)), Emerita Professor ([www.Fielding.edu](http://www.Fielding.edu)), Board Member, The Lewin Center ([www.lewincenter.org](http://www.lewincenter.org)), was a driving force behind the Diversity Institute of Bermuda. Dr. Craig has worked as university professor, management consultant, Peace Corps trainer and human relations/diversity facilitator/consultant. A faculty member of numerous universities and learning centres, she has advised governments, corporations and other bodies on human resources, graduate education and management training issues of racism, sexism, ageism and social justice.**



### ***What were the aims behind the Diversity Institute of Bermuda?***

The aims for establishing a diversity institute in Bermuda were based on a farsighted rationale: in a 21st-century global village, multicultural education and serious quality diversity training were vital links for successful inter-connected and interpersonal human relationships.

### ***Why was the DIB needed in Bermuda?***

Issues of diversity justice went unaddressed. The findings and recommendations of the “Swain Report” (Dr. Carol M. Swain, Professor of Political Science and Law, Princeton, University) identified the scope and need. A broad range of diversity issues were unaddressed by the Council on Unity & Racial Equality (CURE), which focused on race and racism, and the Human Rights Commission was unwilling (or lacked the courage) to address the civil rights of human sexual orientation.

### ***What made Bermuda a good community in which to launch a programme like DIB?***

On the brink of the 21st century, the thinking and feelings at the time made DIB ideally suited to provide both the leadership and programme content for diversity education and training. The educational institution of Bermuda College offered the place, and the president of Bermuda College, Dr. George Cook, was an advocate for its launch.

### ***What was DIB’s approach to educating people on race and racism and changing opinions?***

DIB’s approach/methodology of experiential learning, following [pre-eminent social psychologists] Kurt Lewin and John Dewey, not only educated people on one dimension of diversity (race and racism) but on the continuum of differences, with the realisation that if these issues are not

taught experientially, they tend to divide people and cause conflict in basic human relations.

### ***What were DIB’s biggest accomplishments?***

Reaching out and engaging the diverse levels of Bermuda society: community, business organisations, international corporations, educational institutions—by being a source/site of diversity education and training, as well as providing consulting services.

### ***What part did you play in the DIB?***

Some of the roles I played were:

- **Initiator** (1995): I brought Dr. George Cook, president of Bermuda College, and Dr. Lennox Joseph, president of the NTL Institute of Applied Behavioral Science, to support the development of a three-year programme of “Diversity Skill Development Training.”
- **Dean/Facilitator** (1995–97): With a diverse staff of Bermudians and North Americans, I facilitated a 200-hour Diversity Certificate programme for 90-plus participants.
- **Member of the Action Planning Team** (APT) (1998–99): The outcome was the creation of the Diversity Institute of Bermuda as a not-for-profit organisation.
- **Lifelong Founding Member** (1999–present): I deeply connected with the founding vision of DIB (“We see a new world where everyone values and respects each other and appreciates the richness that our differences bring”), the philosophy of humanism, and the connecting value of diversity. I saw it as a special and sacred place that focused on change through learning by way of educating oneself and understanding each others’ differences along the wide continuum (race/ethnicity; gender; age; sexual orientation; religion/spirituality; economic and social class; physical and mental abilities; multicultural).

## DIB's Legacy

Today, quasi-government bodies such as the Commission for Unity and Racial Equality (CURE)—transferred to the Human Rights Commission (HRC)—and charities such as Centre for Justice, Citizens Uprooting Racism in Bermuda (CURB), Two Words and a

Comma, the Physically Handicapped Association, Action on Alzheimer's & Dementia (AAD), Amnesty International, Age Concern, the Portuguese Association, Youth Net, the West Indian and other cultural associations are promoting the needs of different groups in Bermuda's community and continuing the critical need to address diversity issues in Bermuda.

## DIB thanks the following participants

### Initial DIB Board, 1998

#### *DIB Lifelong Founding Members*

Lionel Cann, Argentine Craig, Brenda Dale, John D'Alessio, Kathy Hykes, Gordon Johnson, Karen Kirkwood, Mike Kirkwood, Joy Leman, Frances Marshall, Ian Maule, B. Candace Ray, Cummings Zuill.

#### **DIB Interim Management Committee 2005–12**

Brenda Dale, Cummings Zuill, Myra Virgil, Argentine Saunders Craig, and Greg Smith. Seminar Coordinator for Bermuda College Partnership: David Northcott, with support from Debbie Jackson.

#### **Diversity Skills Development Programme (1995–97)**

#### **Sponsors**

The Bermuda College, Bank of Bermuda, Bank of Butterfield & Son, BTC, BELCO, American International Co., ACE, XL Insurance, Heddington Insurance, Renaissance Reinsurance.

#### **NTL Institute Facilitators**

Dr. Lee Butler, Dr. Argentine Craig, Dr. Mary Lou Michaels and Dr. Ed Olson.  
([www.ntl.org](http://www.ntl.org))

#### **Graduates**

**1995:** Lynne Cann, Brenda Dale, Ernestine DeGraff, Kenneth Dill, James Dumont, Stephen Emery, Anna Faria, Tina Fountain, Glenn Fubler,

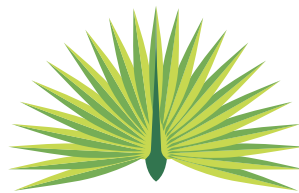
Judith Hall Bean, Nelleke Hollis, Michael Kirkwood, Peter LeNoury, Ian Maule, Florenz Maxwell, Errol McLean, Mark Perreault, B. Candace Ray, Lori Richards, Julia Saltus, Larry Samuels, Leonard Santucci, Naomi Schroter, Dennis Seymour, Joan Skinner, Yvonne Smith.

**1996:** Margaret Armstrong, Olu Bademosi, Brenda Bridgewater, Marva Bridgewater, Lloyd Burchall, Lionel Cann, Stuart Crockwell, Khalid Davis, Debbie DeSilva Robinson, Raymonde Dill, Eva Hodgson, Lindsay Hyland, Gordon Johnson, Karen Kirkwood, James Landy, Ron Lucas, Colette Lundy, Elsa McKay, Alan Richardson, Solange Saltus, Maryanne Scott, Collin Simmons, Gladwin Simmons, Sharol Simmons, Gregory Smith, Robert Thacker, Elaine Tucker-Daniels, Lyn M. Vaughn, Ed Williams, Carole Weinstein, Joanne Wohlmuth, Belinda Woolridge.

**1997:** Maki Bean, Duranda Burgess-Green, Maureen Clemendor, Bonnie Critchley, John D'Alessio, Michael DeSilva, Shangri-la D-Thompson, Terica Esposito, Douglas Frith, Leonard Grant, Patricia Haycock, Catherine Huckle, Kathy Hykes, Roseanda Jones, Joy Leman, Ron Lightbourne, Neville Manderson, Frances Marshall, Charles Mooney, Francis Mussenden, Alana Rogers, Brian Scott, George A. Scott, Kimberley Smith, Valerie Smith, Robert Steynor, Maria Thacker, Jon Thompson, Kelly Trott, V. Lyn Tucker, Junior Watts, Renee Webb, Wayne Wilson, Cummings Zuill.



*Diversity*, by Robert Bassett, 1997



BERMUDA COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION

For more information or to make a contribution to the  
Diversity Initiatives Fund at BCF, contact [info@bcf.bm](mailto:info@bcf.bm)