

Move on Up

About 1000 meetings took place on 13 December at Congress House in London. Why? This was BECTU's seventh Move on Up events – another great success, says organiser Janice Turner

More than 400 people participated on 13 December at the Trades Union Congress headquarters – about 300 black and minority ethnic professionals and 100 executives from across film and television. Previous events have attracted members of BECTU, the NUJ, Equity and the Writers' Guild: this time the greater breadth of broadcasting executives drew Musicians' Union members to see two executives from the BBC orchestras. Members of the Professional Footballers' Association, also part of the Federation of Entertainment Unions, came to meet BBC Sport, ITV Sport and Sky Sports: as footballers' careers fade in their mid-thirties, some move into sports commentating, reporting and punditry.

MOVE ON UP CHANGED MY LIFE

One speaker who inspired the audience was Dhruvi Shah, a broadcast journalist working in the BBC's Multimedia Newsroom at Television Centre in White City. She told the opening session: "I've been working for the BBC for three years and I always credit Move on Up for

helping me get that first step in the door."

She was working in local papers in London when she attended Move on Up in Radio in 2006: "Although I had no radio experience whatsoever, I thought this would be a great opportunity to find out more and help me figure out what my next move could be.

"I met senior editors from the BBC and commercial stations who gave me advice about how to tailor my CV and how to get more experience in a sector I was completely unfamiliar with. I went to some of the workshops and met people my own age who were in similar situations. I was really impressed by the sessions and how they had made me realise that I had valuable and transferrable skills. The whole event really motivated me.

"The confidence boost I had received helped me in my day-to-day job and I was shortlisted for, and won, several awards."

She became acting news editor at her paper but decided to take a risk and applied for a short internship at an independent documentary company: she helped research a *Newsnight* feature that led to changes in

major companies selling clothes made using child labour and she voiced packages shown on Al-Jazeera. "Again, if I hadn't gone to that one event, I probably would have stayed in my comfortable job in London."

"But it was the second Move on Up event I went to – Move on Up in News – which really helped my career. It was there I met people who remain mentors and friends to me now and who helped me get into the BBC."

Now she's on a contract at the BBC News website, "working on stories that affect the global news agenda. I've been fortunate enough to have a job where I have written original stories based on Freedom of



Eleven of the thousand meetings on 13 December, if we count correctly

Information requests, broken global scoops, worked on UK-wide projects, and even worked from the field covering the Pope's visit. None of this would have happened if I hadn't attended the Move on Up events. They helped me get in touch with people who I would never have got to meet otherwise and gave me access to opportunities I wouldn't have known about. It changed my life."

MONTHS OF PLANNING

The Move on Up concept is so much more successful than ordinary networking events because every BME professional has to send in their CV with their application, to be forwarded to every executive they would like to see, and the executives are all required to read every CV submitted and draw up their own list of people they will meet on the day.

BECTU diversity officer Janice Turner schedules a personal

timetable for every participant in the event. Everyone at Move on Up gets 20 minutes' undivided attention of an executive who has read their CV.

The union encourages the BME professionals to take every opportunity to blag impromptu meetings with executives during breaks or if they spot someone who isn't talking to anyone else. So hundreds of additional meetings took place: one executive reported 10 unscheduled meetings on top of the 12 scheduled for him.

BBC VISION

Move on Up 7 was able to take place only because BBC Vision Productions, led by chief creative officer Pat Younge, stepped in and contributed the majority of the funding. Their backing led to support from around the industry: ITV contributed substantially and PACT, Endemol, the Indie Training Fund, Skillset and the Arts

Council's Cultural Leadership Programme provided support. The TUC again contributed its perfect venue for the event at a fraction of the normal commercial rate.

Pat Younge led a workshop with the controllers of BBC1 and BBC2 – the flagship of a packed day. The industry showed a welcome shift toward looking for senior talent during the event, with ITV hosting a workshop for those aiming to be commissioners themselves.

BECTU is now planning Move on Up 8 (see right). Janice Turner adds: "We hope that all those who participated in Move on Up in December are following up leads, carrying out commitments made and following through from all the meetings. We continue to organise Move on Up events because we know they work – for the industry in finding highly talented experienced BME professionals, and in assisting the professionals to Move on Up."

And in new news...

More than 60 radio and news industry executives have signed up to hold one-to-one meetings at Move on Up in News and Radio, taking place on 12 May at Broadcasting House.

The main industry partner of this event is BBC Audio and Music. Radio 4 Network Manager Denis Nowlan, who is also chair of the Radio Industry Diversity Group, has lined up executives from across the corporation. Alongside them are representatives from commercial radio.

BBC News – television, radio and online – will also be there, alongside at least five ITV News executives, four from Al Jazeera and two from Sky News television and radio.

The BBC Academy is playing a major part with almost a dozen workshops. ITV News will again run its all-day screentesting workshop which allows print and radio journalists to try out newsreading with a teleprompter.

This will be the eighth Move on Up to take place since its inception in 2003 and BECTU diversity officer Janice Turner is "delighted that more and more people are now coming through who got their big break at Move on Up."

A speaker at the opening session on 12 May will be Tina Daheely, who credits Move on Up in Radio in 2006 for giving her the contacts that led to landing a job at the BBC. Four years later she now broadcasts every morning to nine million listeners on the Chris Moyles Show on Radio 1.

"This is what Move on Up is all about," says Janice Turner. "The Black Members' Committee wishes it wasn't the case that to get ahead in broadcasting you need contacts. This makes it harder for anyone without the right connections – and that means a lot of BME professionals – to break through. But in this casualised industry this is the reality, so Move on Up is an attempt to level the playing field. And it works." The deadline for applications is 4 March, to moveonup@bectu.org.uk



Move on Up alumna Tina Daheely at work in a Radio 1 studio with top presenter Trevor Nelson

Support for minority members getting involved

Twenty black/minority ethnic (BME) members of the entertainment unions are being sought to take part in a trailblazing training course designed to give them the knowledge, encouragement and support to run for office in their union.

"Changing the face of your union" will be a landmark training course, designed by the Federation of Entertainment Unions' equality officers in partnership with the TUC race equality department at the request of BECTU's black members' committee.

The course will run over four evenings in April and May, as a constructive response to surveys in several of the unions showing BME workers are underrepresented in the unions and almost non-existent on committees.

Faisal Qureshi is chair of BECTU's black members' committee and on the committee of the Regional Production Division and notes that "BECTU currently doesn't carry out equality monitoring of committees (though we've proposed changes to this) but it's pretty obvious that there aren't enough black and Asian members getting elected onto committees," he says. "Any BME member of BECTU who is interested in playing a more active role in the union should contact our diversity officer Janice Turner at head office."

Winston Phillips is vice-chair of the black members' committee and a member of the union's National Executive Committee. Last year he was elected to the Trades Union Congress Race Relations Committee which represents black workers from across the British trades union

movement. "Our Move on Up programme has changed people's lives," he says, "and it would never have existed without black BECTU members getting active in the union and proposing the policies and initiatives that we consider important.

"If you've benefitted from Move on Up, consider giving something back – by getting more involved in your union. If you'd like to have a chat about it you can contact me, Faisal or Janice Turner via BECTU head office. We urge members to take part in this course."

The course is open to BME members of BECTU, Equity, the NUJ, the Musicians' Union, the Writers' Guild and the Professional Footballers' Association and is on Wednesdays from 6-9pm, on 13 and 20 April and 4 and 11 May at Equity in St Martins Lane. Contact Janice Turner, email janice@stagescreenandradio.org.uk