

## **Race and Equality**

### *Key Moments*

#### **Eric Addae Kyeremeh and Joan Simons:**

JOAN: Right, Eric. Thanks for agreeing to do this video with me today. Looking back at your 10 successful years at the OU, can you tell me what have been the highlights for you?

ERIC ADDAE: Oh, thanks. Thanks, Joan, for inviting me to have this chat. Yes, the 10 years have flown very quickly and for me picking highlights, it's always a difficult one. I've really enjoyed my decade at the OU. But I'll try. I'll try and pick out a few for purposes of our conversation. And I'll probably maybe kind of describe them as key moments rather than just highlights, and I will say-- I mean, going back to January 2011 when I joined the OU, I say one of the key highlights was that within the first 2 and 1/2 years, I'll say, I was kind of giving the opportunity to lead master's in education team.

For me, for someone who had come from a Further Education sector, not necessarily from another HE institution I think was a very big vote of confidence from the panel and from my colleagues. To be given the opportunity to lead the master's in education program, then at the time the second biggest or largest qualification in the OU, only second to the MBA with over 2,500 students, was a massive, massive key highlight for me at the OU. Being kind of a newbie but given that-- being trusted to do that. And it was great because it gave me an opportunity to demonstrate my leadership capacity, but also help make some changes that we felt at the time was needed to the qualification, to be able to kind of respond to changes in the sector.

I mean, there was the time when loans were coming in. We had seen our numbers sort of kind of gradually dropping a bit, so we needed to move things and restructure the qualifications slightly. So, Joan, I mean, for me it was a really good opportunity for someone who was fairly new to the University to be given the opportunity to take this role on. And I really appreciated and enjoyed it. And I did it for three years and I enjoyed it very much.

JOAN: Thanks, Eric. That sounds like a real vote of confidence for somebody new at the OU. So, tell me another highlight.

ERIC ADDAE: Yeah. Another highlight it's being involved in the teacher education in school-based TESS-India project. One of the reasons why I kind of was looking for an opportunity in HE when I was in FE was to be able to do some research but also to work in international development. And again, within a year or so of joining the OU, I was invited by the academic lead at the time, Steve Hutchinson, to be part of the team that developed the bid for the TESS-India project. Most people may not remember, it used to be called India 1 million.

And when we started developing the proposal, yeah, and I was given an opportunity to co-lead the school leadership development aspect of the project. I mean, a pan-India project across seven states, that was huge at the time. And being given the opportunity to work with the team on the-- again for me is another highlight I always like to mention because it's, again, being given the confidence to be able to sort of do that.

Although I have, I had experience in terms of running leadership programs in London for various organizations in my previous role, but the research and the opportunity to work with development practitioners was one of the reasons why I wanted to come into HE. So it was a very, very wonderful opportunity for me. And again, it's one of the highlights, all I would say the key moments for me.

They third it's mainly my doctorate. I would say that's another key highlight. I mean, holding down a full-time job, holding down a leadership role in the faculty but at the same time finding the time to do that doctorate, I think is one of the highlights because it came with a lot of support from the supervisors but also my line manager who was very accommodating in terms of times where I had to just take study leave, block time off and kind of disappear for a week or so. I think was also very critical in terms of the support I got to be able to complete my doctorate.

JOAN: Well, done on finishing it. As you say, with full-time job that really is an achievement. So, there are three great highlights, Eric. Thank you for sharing them.