AUDITING GENDER & DIVERSITY CHANGE IN IRISH MEDIA SECTORS

Dr Páraic Kerrigan
Dr Susan Liddy
Dr Anne O´ Brien

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Introduction

Introduction and Purpose

As Irish society becomes increasingly diverse in its composition it is crucial that all political, economic and cultural institutions reflect the gender, class, sexual, racial and ethnic identities of its people, as well as their diverse abilities and creative capacities. For media industries in particular it is clear that diversity on screen is only created in an authentic and sustainable manner when there is diversity behind the scenes. Policy and initiatives have been developed internationally, and to a lesser extent nationally, for improving diversity and inclusion. This research project aims to examine how policy and initiatives are promoted and implemented on the ground by broadcasters, production companies and professional organisations. The objective is to develop a solution-centric discussion of diversity and inclusion in the Irish media industries. To that end the project has engaged with various actors and stakeholders and in so doing has 'taken the temperature' of Irish media industries and where they are currently positioned in terms of embracing diversity and inclusion. It has extrapolated data to identify, within the Irish context, what might work to generate and create significant change for diversity and inclusion.

The need to develop policy, tools and measures has become pertinent. The Irish media workforce currently lacks diversity. Women still struggle to advance their careers in media industries in Ireland and globally. In 2011 the Global Report on the Status of Women in the News media, a 59-nation study, which included 13 EU Member States, using aggregated data from 522 companies, showed gender segregation by role. Men held three quarters of positions in top management and three quarters of all technical roles (Byerly, 2011). In 2021, the Reuters Institute analysed the gender breakdown of top editors in a strategic sample of 240 major online and offline news outlets in 12 different markets across four continents (Robertson et al., 2021:1). Only 22% of the 180 top editors across the 240 brands covered were women, even though on average, 40% of journalists in the 12 markets were female, 'despite a greater focus on diversity, we find no significant evidence of change' (Robertson et al., 2021:5).

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The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) in 2013 similarly stressed the 'significant problems of segregation within media organisations which impact on employee retention and the content of media itself' (EIGE, 2013: 19). EIGE has recently revealed the Gender Equality Index indicates that the EU is at least 60 years away from full gender equality (EIGE, 2020). Turning to Hollywood and the international film industry, Martha Lauzen's 2020 Celluloid Ceiling Report found that women continue to be significantly marginalised. In the top 250 grossing US films of 2020 women comprised 23% of all directors, writers, executive producers, producers, editors, and cinematographers (Lauzen, 2020: 2). Lauzen remarks 'This represents an increase of 2 percentage points from 21% in 2019 and a recent historic high. It also represents an increase of only 6 percentage points since 1998' (Lauzen, 2020: 2). While the percentage of female writers, directors and producers has increased significantly in the Irish industry since 2017, as will be discussed more comprehensively in Section 2, data on diversity in terms of race, ethnicity, class or disabilities in the Irish media workforce does not currently exist.

Additionally, the rationale for creating a diverse media workforce has merit, from a social justice point of view 'to honour our own and others' humanity' (Ely and Thomas, 2020). All citizens of the nation should be valued, treated equally and represented appropriately, but it is also crucial for the future well-being of the creative industries in Ireland. International research demonstrates the significant effects of diversity on organizational work cultures and output. Much research refers to 'productive diversity', whereby a more diverse workforce provides the global marketplace with 'widely diverse people, cultures, ideas and viewpoints' that contribute towards sustainable competition and success within organisations (Chavan, 2010). Diversity has been similarly touted as crucial at the level of decision-making and has been noted as 'providing a range of new resources and tools for those who want to promote inclusive decision making' (Lukensmeyer et. al., 2014). An argument exists for diversity based on the importance of incorporating new voices and perspectives into strategy dialogue, to help senior management and leaders understand and address the needs of a demographically diverse base and to stimulate a wider range of creative alternatives. In fact, research demonstrates that organizations with a strong commitment to diversity outperform their competitors (Slater et al., 2008).

These findings are supported by the recent McKinsey & Company (2020) Diversity Wins: How Inclusion Matters report, which states that companies in the top quartile of gender diversity on executive teams were 25% more likely to experience profitability than peer companies without gender diversity at this level. Similarly, ethnic and cultural diversity contribute towards outperformance and more profitability but companies 'will typically require a step change in the level of courage and boldness they have displayed so far' (McKinsey, 2020: 47). Research on media industries comparably attest to this 'business case' for diversity. When it comes to cinema audiences, however, recent research suggests that on screen diversity can impact on the

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composition of the audience. Some correlation was found 'between the representation of various demographic cohorts on screen and their share of the total audience for a particular film' (Geena Davis Institute, 2020: 4). Literature points to the fact that the increasing scale of media distribution has opened up a space for more cultural diversity and has shifted how culture and branding are assessed in terms of media production, contributing to an investment in more under-represented groups to tell their stories and get involved in production (Christian, 2019). Newman and Levine (2012) coin the concept 'diversity as value', which describes how diverse creative voices can incubate more sustainable cultural representations and diversity in media work cultures and media distribution.

From a state developmental perspective, diversity is perhaps the single most important determinant of success for our screen production sector in future markets nationally and internationally. If Irish media content is to thrive in a domestic market, and if it is to prove viable as an export commodity for an international market, then it needs more diversity at its core, in its workforce. The success of Netflix (Smith, 2021) and generally the on-demand model, further alludes to the increasing diversification of audiences, whose needs can no longer be addressed by media products that are conceived as addressing a single generic audience. The success of media products hinges on the extent to which they are able to capture and reflect their audiences. A version of Ireland as ethnically homogenous no longer reflects the reality of multicultural Ireland.

Research Questions and Aims

In assessing how the Irish media industry has engaged with diversity and inclusion and in order to examine what policies and practices can be further developed in this area, a number of key research questions were developed to shape data collection. These include:

▸ Are broadcasters, production companies or professional organisations aware of the gender/diversity structure of their workforce and have diversity and inclusion become embedded in policies and practices?

▸ What policies, tools or measures are key interventions that might be developed to stimulate broadcasters and production companies to engage with improving diversity and inclusion in their workforces?

▸ How does diversity and inclusion shape hiring practices, particularly with regards to new entrants?

▸ How would international media initiatives, tools and measures around diversity and inclusion look within an Irish context?

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Research Methodology

In addressing the research questions, a qualitative case study approach was adopted. Case study research involves the study of a case within a real-life contemporary context or setting and is a strategy of inquiry that is bounded within a system, time and place (Yin, 2009). Each participating broadcaster, production company, professional organisation and training provider was treated as an individual case and respondents were sampled from within each case. Only activist organisations directly concerned with media diversity were approached, Women in Film and Television Ireland, were excluded because one of the researchers is the Chair of the organisation. Respondents' positions in key roles concerned with implementing equality and diversity policy within their company or organization dictated their inclusion in the sample. For that reason Managing Directors, Senior Executives, Diversity Managers, Heads of Departments or their Deputies and Commissioning Editors across the sector were approached for interview. A small number of candidates in senior roles in broadcasting and in executive roles in large production companies did not respond to requests for interviews. Most requests for interviews were positively received with a total of 27 interviews undertaken. Respondents who worked for independent production companies were anonymised to ensure they were free to speak openly without fear of consequences to their working lives. All other respondents would be identifiable because of the specifics of their job title or industry role and so they gave consent to be named in the research. Participants are described further in Tables 1 and 2 below. Data was gathered using semi-structured, in-depth interviews, which were done by the authors between the months of January-April inclusive. Interviews were conducted online, which reflected the particular constraints of working under Covid 19 pandemic restrictions. Open-ended questions addressed issues including: data gathering, perceptions of policy, the role of funding rounds, the approach of leadership, how recruitment impacted, what training needs the sector recognised, how they engaged with educators and how they assessed tools and measures from other jurisdictions as potential instruments for improving equality and diversity in the workforce. Each interview lasted for approximately one hour on average.

In-depth interviews are useful for exploring detailed perspectives and allow for long and complex responses, which generate very rich data (Bertrand & Hughes, 2018:98) and this was the outcome in this case. All interviews were recorded and transcribed. The resulting data was coded with categories derived from the literature and codes that emerged from the data. Codes were analysed and key themes generated for further analysis in order to present the central findings of the research. At each stage of the analysis the three researchers met to discuss and agree the key themes. A final draft of the findings chapter was produced and critically reviewed by the research team. While case studies generate context-rich knowledge and have merit because of their proximity to studied realities (Flyvbjerg, 2006) extrapolating globally on the basis of a relatively small, nationally-specific sample is not possible. The research is nonetheless very valuable for engaging with key informants through in-depth qualitative reflection on their current understandings, practices and approaches to gender equality, diversity and inclusion in media industries.

Table 1: Named Research participants

PARTICIPANT + IDENTIFIER	ROLE	ORGANIZATION
Eimear Cusack	Head of Human Resources	RTÉ
Annie Doona	Outgoing Chair	Screen Ireland
Alan Esselmont	Alan Esselmont	TG4
Hugh Farley	Director	Writers Guild of Ireland
Paul Farrell	Head of VMTV	VMTV
Birch Hamilton	Director	Screen Directors Guild
Susan Kirby	CEO	Screen Producers Ireland
Gareth Lee	Manager	Screen Skills Ireland
Áine Ní Chaoindealbhain	Deputy Head	VMTV
Laura Ní Cheallaigh	Commissioner	TG4
Trevor Ó Clochartaigh	Director Operations/ Director Communications	TG4
Clíona O'Leary	Deputy Head of Sport	RTÉ
Zbyszek Zalinski	Diversity Lead	RTÉ

Table 2: Anonymous research participants

IDENTIFIER	DESCRIPTION	GENDER
Participant A	Media Activist	Male
Participant B	Independent Producer	Female
Participant C	Independent Producer	Female
Participant D	Independent Producer	Female
Participant E	Independent Producer	Female
Participant F	Independent Producer	Female
Participant G	Media Activist	Female
Participant H	Independent Producer	Male
Participant I	Independent Producer	Male
Participant J	Independent Producer	Female & Male
Participant K	Independent Producer	Female
Participant L	Independent Producer	Male
Participant M	Independent Producer	Female

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Research Partners

The research was undertaken as a collaboration between the Department of Media Studies at Maynooth University (MU), the Department of Media and Communication Studies, MIC University of Limerick (UL) and the School of Information and Communication Studies at University College Dublin (UCD).

Research Funder

The research was funded by the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (BAI) under their Media Research funding Scheme 2019, with gender and diversity identified as a specific research theme. This report aligns with the BAI Strategy Statement 2021-2023 and its objective of promoting plurality and diversity. A specific aim within this objective is to 'foster a media landscape that is representative of, and accessible to, the diversity of Irish society'. This report aims to offer some analysis, insights and potential actions to assist the BAI and the broader media industry in Ireland to embrace change for greater equality, diversity and inclusion.

Report Outline

Section 2 of the report provides a review of research and literature in the area of equality diversity and inclusion in media industries, both in Ireland but also internationally. Section 3 specifically focuses on tools and measures that have been developed internationally as examples of best practice and potential sources of intervention. Section 4 presents the findings of the qualitative research undertaken with industry participants. Section 5 presents the responses of Irish industry informants to international tools and measures, along with some discussion of potential actions that the Irish media industry can take to improve equality, diversity and inclusion.

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Literature Review

Introduction

Equality and diversity in media are key concerns of contemporary academic research, current policy initiatives and ongoing activist debates in Ireland. Research, policy and activism focus attention on the content of screen production and also on the socio-demographic profiles of those who work in media industries. Gender equality in media output and in the workplace is an agenda that has been pursued by activists internationally, since at least the 1970s. However, there is relatively little recorded activism in the media sector in Ireland until the 'Waking the Feminists' protests in November 2015, which focused on gender inequality across the cultural industries (Liddy 2015a, 2015b and 2020c). Since then calls for gender equality have been further underpinned by a turn to additional forms of inequality such as 'constructions of class, race/ethnicity, age, disability and sexuality, which complicate and extend privilege and inequality' (Finkel et al. 2017: 282, Crenshaw, 1989). Social media campaigns such as #OscarsSoWhite and #MeToo have drawn global public attention to the lack of diversity and equality and the scale of sexual harassment in the media workplace. Aided by this academic and global industry attention, Irish policy, research and activism has begun to address questions of under-representation. However, while there is a growing body of research on gender equality in the Irish media workforce (Liddy 2015c, 2016, 2017, 2020a, 2020b; O' Brien 2014, 2015, 2017a, 2017b, 2019a, 2019b) on LGBTQ workers (Kerrigan & O' Brien 2018, 2020a, 2020b) and on new entrants to the industry (O'Brien, Arnold & Kerrigan, 2021) there has been very little research attention paid to broader diversity issues, in particular to disability, ethnicity or race. Indeed, Zelie Asava's work on representations of the black Irish on screen, both in film and television drama, contends that 'Irish screen culture remains quite monolithic and rarely positions the black Irish as part of the collective "we" of the nation' (2013: 21). In contrast, there is considerable concern in the UK that the s creen industries do not reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of the population.

Activism and Research in the US and UK

Ongoing concerns about underrepresentation in the UK led to the introduction of the British Film Institute's (BFI) Diversity Standards in 2016, which require film productions to 'include underrepresented groups in a range of film roles and positions, with these groups based on the protected characteristics identified in the 2010 Equalities Act' (Nwonka, 2020:2). The standards, discussed further in section 3, encourage equality of opportunity by 'challenging filmmakers to improve representation on screen, promote good hiring practices, and help films find new audiences' (BFI, 2020:4). In order to be eligible for BFI funding, film productions have to demonstrate a commitment to diversity and inclusion by meeting criteria in at least two of four production areas; (A) On-Screen Representation, Themes and Narratives; (B) Project Leadership and Creative Practitioners; (C) Industry Access and Opportunities and (D) Opportunities for Diversity in Audience Development (BFI 2016). The Diversity Standards have been lauded internationally but are not without critics. Nwonka (2020)

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acknowledges that the Standards are a significant intervention in policy approaches to diversity in the film industry but, he argues, they have not successfully tackled the diversity problem. They are 'not yet a robust enough model for responding to the intersectional and multi-dimensional nature of inequality in the industry' (Nwonka, 2020:3). While acknowledging the Standards are 'a crucial intervention' and an 'evolving concept' Nwonka (2020:7) identifies a number of limitations and calls on the BFI to make amendments, which it is currently considering. It is worth noting that ongoing reviews of existing policies, in partnership with academics or stakeholders, can be a useful exercise in ensuring that omissions and strategic difficulties are identified and corrected.

As well as Nwonka's focus on race/ethnicity he has also argued that factors such as nepotism, informal recruitment practices and cultural elitism 'create and sustain exclusion beyond ethnicity, gender and disability… the significance of social class as an important form of social exclusion should not be denied' (Nwonka, 2015: 2). The importance of class has not yet been grappled with in an Irish context but is a significant focus in the UK. For instance, a 2019 report by Carey et al. 'points to a number of pressing challenges' in the UK creative industries, including class issues (2019:5). O Brien et al. noted that '18% of the creative workforce is of working-class origin compared to 35% of the population as a whole' (cited in Carey, 2019: 39). A subsequent Carey et al (2020:2) report on class, participation and job quality found that 'class interacts with other factors – such as gender, ethnicity, disability and skill levels – to create "double disadvantage" leading to considerable underrepresentation'. Over half the people working in UK screen industries were from privileged backgrounds (53%) (Carey et al, 2020:2). The likelihood of someone from a working class background finding work in a creative occupation in the UK has remained the same since 2014 'the first point at which we are able to measure class origin using a robust and comparable method' (Carey et al. 2020: 2)

Spanning UK industry, research and activism contexts, Henry and Ryder (2021) have over many years, campaigned for greater diversity on television. They challenge the notion that diverse groups are a social minority; white, middle-class, able bodied males make up just one third of the UK population, hence diversity is not a minority issue. For them, 'the big problem with all these training or leadership programmes is they implicitly and sometimes explicitly suggest that the reason why women or disabled people or Black people have not progressed is because we are not capable' (Henry & Ryder, 2021: 41). Such a cosmetic approach to diversity, can be dismissed as leading to very little structural change and instead 'blames the victim' (Henry & Ryder, 2021). The tools and measures that Henry and Ryder propose to address diversity, such as tax breaks and ring-fenced funding, are discussed further in section 3.

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In the US context, annual studies continue to highlight significant and consistent underrepresentation for women and people of colour, these include Lauzen, the Annenberg Inclusion Initiative and the Geena Davis Institute. A recent study by Smith et al. (2021), commissioned by Netflix, examines on-screen inclusion of gender, race/ethnicity, sexuality and disability as well as gender, race and ethnicity behind the camera. The study focuses on Netflix scripted-series and original films from 2018-2019. The overall findings suggest that more underrepresented groups have a voice on Netflix than in Hollywood, with the caveat that many groups still struggle for inclusion. For instance, 'LGBTQ and disability communities are rarely seen or heard in storytelling' (Smith et al., 2021: 29). Smith makes the link, already established for gender (Lauzen 2020), that the involvement of underrepresented groups behind the camera 'telling stories' has far reaching ramifications for content. The study found that there are 'exponentially more' leads, co-leads and main cast from marginalized communities when a person behind the camera is from a historically marginalized community (Smith et al, 2021). Smith states 'that access is helping make people make decisions differently' (Smith, cited in Ramos, 2021). Smith's tentatively optimistic findings chime with the 2020 Diversity Report by Hunt and Ramón. Hunt summarises its results: 'As of 2019, both women and minorities are within striking distance of proportionate representation when it comes to lead roles and total cast' (cited in Wolf, 2020). However, Hunt echoes Smith's emphasis on the importance of behind the camera representation for onscreen diversity, which 'begs the question: Are we actually seeing systematic change, or is Hollywood just appealing to diverse audiences through casting, but without fundamentally altering the way studios do business behind the camera?" (cited in Wolf, 2020).

The collaboration between Smith at USC's Annenberg Inclusion Initiative and Netflix was a transparent and productive engagement and points to the potential value of industry/academic research partnerships. Smith explains 'it was instigated by Netflix and demonstrates a commitment to self-reflection and a desire for transparency. These are critical steps to take on a journey toward inclusion' (Smith et al. 2021: 31). Importantly, Netflix co-CEO, Ted Sarandos has committed to working towards closing existing representational gaps, and monitoring progress and 'will release a report every two years, from now through 2026' (Netflix, 2021). However, a key issue that the research with industry also highlights is that transformational interventions can prove controversial within industry as policy interventions require 'uneasy coalitions of stakeholders and the forging of alliances to implement and run' such initiatives (Newsinger and Eikhof, 2020: 57). Indeed, a key focus of this research is to ask to what extent transformative policies are welcomed or merely tolerated by industry and to what extent they can actually be implemented within the Irish screen production sector?

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As Jeremy Ahearn has argued, cultural policy 'can figure successively as a peripheral and as a central component of governmental strategy, as superficial and as fundamental, as decorative or substantial' (2009: 2). In defining the parameters of what policy was to be included in this study, Ahearn's distinction between two broad categories of cultural policy, explicit or nominal cultural policy, and implicit or effective cultural policy, is instructive (2009: 143). Ahearne differentiates between policies that are explicitly directed towards culture and those that have an effect upon on culture, without being labelled as specifically 'cultural'. This point has been developed by Newsinger and Eikhof (2020: 48) who note that, implicitly, labour market policy, education policy, NGO and company policies can all impact on diversity, even while not claiming to do so. However, it is beyond the scope of this research to adopt such a broad approach to policy and this review is limited only to policy that explicitly claims to address equality and diversity in media industries directly.

Explicit interventions to increase workforce diversity can be divided into two further categories, empowering interventions that enhance the individual's capacity to participate and transforming interventions aimed at changing exclusionary practices and processes (Newsinger & Eikhof, 2020:56) There is some evidence that empowering interventions such as training schemes and mentorship programmes can provide 'limited numbers of women, BAME people and disabled people with entry routes to the industry' (CAMEo, 2018:9). Such interventions are undoubtedly worthwhile but do not address 'systemic challenges to workforce diversity in the screen sector' and therefore need to be supplemented by more 'systemic initiatives' (CAMEo, 2018: 46). Interventions in the second category seek to 'transform sectoral practices, to remove barriers to equal participation and often operate at a policy level within individual organisations '(such as reshaping recruitment processes or delivering unconscious bias training for decision-makers) as well as at industry levels (for example, linking funding awards to practices that facilitate equal opportunity)' (Newsinger and Eikhof 2020: 56). Some examples of transformative interventions that have been generated in the Irish context are outlined below.

Diversity and Equality policy for Irish Screen production

Since 2015 a number of explicit policy changes have occurred across both gender equality and diversity agendas, within Screen Ireland, the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland and in RTÉ. Within a five-year period, Screen Ireland (formally the Irish Film Board (IFB)) issued a six-point plan, an enhanced production funding scheme and a POV production and training scheme as well as establishing a Diversity and Equality Subcommittee. Similarly, the BAI launched a Gender Action Plan in 2018 and added gender as a focus to its Sound and Vision round in 2019. RTÉ's 2018-22 Strategy was followed by a Diversity and Inclusion Charter in 2018. All these policies are set out and discussed below.

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In December 2015, the Irish Film Board (renamed Fís Ireland/Screen Ireland in June 2018) announced a Gender Equality Six Point Plan, implemented in 2016. The plan included a commitment to the publication of gender statistics on funding and role allocations and the monitoring of gender data in Board meetings. It pledged to 'stimulate applications for development and production funding with female creative talent attached' (IFB, 2015) with an ambitious, though ultimately unrealised, target of 50/50 gender parity in funding within a three-year period. Training and mentorship, which fell under the remit of Screen Training Ireland (since renamed Screen Skills Ireland) included specific initiatives such as international placements, mentorships for writers and directors and seminars, conferences and gender panels at industry events. Early intervention in formal education settings was acknowledged as being an important tool in getting women into industry. The IFB also committed to work with Enterprise Ireland on an entrepreneurship start-up scheme to encourage engagement with female creative talent. Lastly, there was a commitment to work with industry partners to embed gender equality 'within the decision-making process in screen content which is publicly funded' (IFB 2015).

By 2017 some progress had been made in terms of encouraging female writers, directors and producers into the sector through training initiatives and through the IFB's short film scheme. That year 70% of funded short films had female directors attached and short film schemes have continued to hit at least 50/50 gender equality in key creative roles. However, the number of funding applications for features received by Screen Ireland with female writers and directors attached remained relatively low, 'Whilst a lot has been achieved in developing the careers of female writers and directors, not enough has been achieved in relation to increasing the actual funding applications received by Screen Ireland, with female talent attached' (Screen Ireland, 2021). To address the deficit Screen Ireland introduced a number of funding initiatives. The Enhanced Production Funding for Female Talent introduced in 2017 gave increased support of up to €100,000 for female writer and director led features or €50,000 for a project in which a female writer or director was attached. Funding was further increased in February 2018, when the IFB confirmed their third initiative, the POV Production & Training Scheme. A shortlist of ten projects would receive 'tailored support' after which, three films with budgets of €400,000 would be selected for production. In fact, the selection process was extended to four films and for the first time, gender balance in terms of crew was explicitly mentioned as an expectation within funded features. Importantly, in 2017 a Gender Equality and Diversity Subcommittee was also set up to establish ongoing policies and guidelines in relation to funding and applications as well as to consult with external bodies.

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When projects are grouped together, despite variations, it is clear that Screen Ireland's policy and initiatives did have an impact, although there remains a number of as yet unresolved issues including, crucially, lower budgets for female driven projects. Projects, which include feature film, television, animation, documentary and shorts, produced with female directors attached, increased from 10% in 2015 to 37% in 2019; with female writers attached increased from 27% in 2015 to 43% in 2019; and with female producers increased from 63% in 2015 to 69% in 2019 (Screen Ireland, 2021). In October 2019 the Spotlight Scheme was launched 'specifically targeted at diverse and underrepresented voices and this is reflected in the choice of projects' (Screen Ireland, 2020). Screen Ireland's future direction is stated clearly 'It is the intention of Screen Ireland to develop funding criteria for productions based on the following guiding principles; equality, diversity and inclusion, career & skills development, dignity in the workplace, and climate and sustainability' (Screen Ireland, 2019).

During a colloquium on gender equality in the industry, 'Women in the Irish Film Industry: Moving from the Margins to the Centre' (MIC, Limerick, March 2016), it emerged in a presentation by BAI senior policy manager, Stephanie Comey, that the BAI had, up to that point, been gender blind. Moreover, the BAI had little or no ready access to statistical information about how their funding was being distributed until Comey herself undertook to uncover and provide statistics for her presentation. Of the 386 television projects funded in the previous five-year period, just 19% had a female director (Liddy, 2020b: 82). Subsequently, following a data request from Women in Film and Television Ireland the BAI noted that the producer category had 43% participation by women but in the writer and director categories participation was under 20% (Comey, 2018). The BAI board addressed the gender inequality issue and agreed the need for an action plan. Subsequently, the BAI launched its 'Strategy Statement 2017-2019' in February 2017, with a focus on diversity and a mission to 'promote a plurality of voices, viewpoints, outlets and sources in Irish media' (2017: 1). In April 2018, it launched its Gender Action Plan. The plan was informed by a recommendation to the Council of Europe, issued in 2017, which had sought to 'encourage the relevant audio-visual sector organisations (including… the relevant regulatory authorities) to prepare, or revise, regulatory and self-regulatory strategies, collective bargaining agreements and codes of conduct or other frameworks for implementation, taking into account a gender equality perspective' (Council of Europe, 2017).

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The BAI Plan addressed four key areas of gender equality. Firstly, accurate data on numbers of women involved in the sector, types of roles occupied and opportunities for funding were inadequate (2018: 2). It proposed to gather 'transparent and accurate data on the number of women involved in the sector, what roles these women have, pay structures… and whether there exists adequate gender balance in decision-making positions in the industry' (2018a: 3). Assessment criteria for Sound and Vision funding included gender balance in key production personnel. Secondly, the BAI committed to undertaking gender research on questions of equality of access, leadership, on air representation, as well as on obstacles to participation and gendered working conditions. Thirdly, the BAI proposed to expand its sectoral development agenda through training for on-air participation and gender awareness training for funding assessors, Board members and external stakeholders. At that juncture, the BAI noted they were 'considering' a special funding round on 'Women's Stories' (2018: 4) This was subsequently implemented in 2019 under Round 33 of Sound and Vision 3. The BAI also addressed accountability by publishing the Gender Action Plan, and by planning to promote development initiatives and seek partner opportunities with other bodies, funders and broadcasters.

An assessment of the Gender Plan was to be included in the BAI's Annual Report (2018: 4). That report restated the BAI's role in promoting diversity and acknowledged that the current strategy focused on 'gender and Irish language' and noted that 'additional areas of diversity will be prioritized in future years' (2019a: 26). The Sound and Vision 3 scheme was the main achievement outlined, which had led to 'an increase in the number of women directors and writers employed' (2019a: 26). In 2018's Round 30, of all successful proposals, 64% of producers, 36% of writers and 21% of directors were women (Comey, 2018). The subsequent addition of 'Women's Stories' as a focus in Round 33 led to an increase in proposals that fulfilled that focus. By 2020, in Round 34 of Sound and Vision more than 80% of the successful TV projects identified between one and four women in lead creative roles (BAI, 2020).The BAI continues to capture data on leadership and content and gender will 'continue to be a consideration for the selection of applications'; the BAI will also 'continue to monitor all projects awarded funding so that they maintain the quota of women in lead creative roles as part of the contracting process' (BAI, 2019b).

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Beyond the regulator's measures to increase gender equality, the national broadcaster, RTÉ also took action. Their 2018-22 Strategy was published in March 2017, wherein the Chair's Statement articulated RTÉ's determination to 'Create content that reflects the diversity of an ever-evolving nation' (RTÉ, 2017a: 6). The broadcaster had engaged with 'external diversity specialists' and clearly acknowledged a requirement for change, which in turn would involve measuring on-air diversity and developing a 'deep understanding of audiences in Ireland' (2017a: 35). While the strategy also noted an 'increased awareness' of 'gender diversity' in Irish society (RTÉ, 2017a: 35) it did not directly address this form of inequality on-air or amongst the workforce in the Strategy document. In October 2018, however RTÉ launched their Diversity and Inclusion Charter, which contained a commitment to 'ensure that there is fair and authentic representation of gender…' within the workforce (RTÉ, 2018: 4). The goals attached to that objective included 'a 50/50 gender balance across RTÉ as a whole and, where possible, within key levels of management' (2018: 6). However, RTÉ had already claimed in its 2017 Review of Role and Gender Equality that 'the gender distribution of employees is almost a 50/50 split in overall numerical terms' (RTÉ, 2017b: 9). The charter committed to a minimum 5% rising to 10% of persons from a non-Irish background and 5% rising to 8% of persons with a disability as well as 'a minimum preliminary goal of 4% of persons who identify themselves as members of the LGBTQI community' (RTÉ, 2018: 6). However, it is unclear whether the timeframe for achieving these targets is 2020 or 2030. The Charter also committed to educate the workforce on D&I and to capture staff experiences through surveys. D&I was to be fully integrated into workplace policies and practices. RTÉ stated an objective of acting as a leader in championing D&I and promoting strategies to address inequality in the creative and media industries in Ireland. In the more detailed action plan that accompanied the Charter, RTÉ committed to appointing D&I champions as well as a D&I Lead, and key actions to implement the objectives were set out under each of the four key objectives. In February 2019, as part of that strategy for diversity and inclusion, after an internal competitive process Zbyszek Zalinski was appointed RTE's first Diversity and Inclusion Lead.

While the Irish policy approaches to gender equality, diversity and inclusion can be described in detail, there is as yet no clear analysis available as to how the measures have been received or applied on the ground within the film and television industries. It is to this gap in knowledge that this research project is addressed, but firstly it explores the tools and measures for diversity and inclusion that are available internationally.

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Tools and Measures for Diversity and Inclusion in International Contexts

Introduction

In terms of approaching diversity and inclusion in Irish media industries, the policies, tools and measures that have been developed in other jurisdictions' media industries are a useful focus. A range of tools have been developed across Europe, the US and Australia, which focus on gender, race, age, sexual identity and disability, areas where there are significant under-representations. This section of the report incorporates a review of the EDI tools and measures that have been developed internationally and how they have been incorporated into routines of production in media industries. This section examines: diversity standards, leadership objective setting and incentivization, targeted talent development and diversity monitoring as they have been developed by production companies, activist organizations, broadcasters, communication regulators and government departments. Section 5 will examine how participants in the research believed these tools and measures might apply in the Irish context.

Diversity Standards

There has been a strong emphasis internationally on the area of diversity standards across a range of broadcasters and bodies. Many of the standards vary but generally share the same principles. They have been issued by the British Film Institute (BFI), Channel 4, the BBC, Ofcom and ITV, each are discussed below as are the mechanisms through which the implementation of standards are monitored.

The BFI standards focus on gender, race, age, sexual orientation and disability and are designed to 'encourage equality of opportunity and address under-representation in the screen industries' (BFI, 2019). Those who seek funding, mainly production companies, must expect to meet the criteria for at least two of four Standards and are actively encouraged to pursue at least three. The standards cover A) on-screen representation, B) creative leadership, C) industry access and training opportunities, and D) audience development (BFI, 2019). The BFI notes that this is a flexible framework that can be used for feature films, television content produced for broadcast and online, as well as for a range of audience-facing activities such as film festivals. Standard A regarding on-screen representations requires production companies to meet three criteria from the following: (i) at least one of the lead characters/contributors/presenters/voice artists are from an under-represented group(s); (ii) the total of secondary or minor on-screen individuals needs to meet one or more of specific targets, such as a 50-50 gender balance and 20% need to belong to an under-represented ethnic group; (iii) the main storyline or subject matter is about an underrepresented group; (iv) casting decisions reflect under-representation; and (v) the setting is wholly or partially in an under-represented region or community (BFI, 2019). Standard B regarding creative leadership aims to develop talent and leadership and requires production companies to meet two of four criteria: (i) three members of leadership must be from an under-represented group; (ii) at least six mid-level or technical roles are filled by someone from an under-represented group; (iii) the company has target quotas for under-represented group (iv) the company hires from different regions. Standard C, regarding industry access and opportunities, addresses

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under-representation in relation to internships, work experience, promotion, mentorship and first job roles (BFI, 2019). Criteria that must be met in this standard include paid employment opportunities such as internships for people from under-represented groups and training opportunities and skills development for new entrants. Standard D, regarding audience development, requires details on the promotional and marketing strategies that will enable a film, project or programme to access under-served audiences. The criteria to meet this standard include disability access to materials, targeting under-served audiences with a clear strategy to reach them and reaching audiences beyond urban centres (BFI, 2019).

Channel 4 has a measure set out in their 360 degree diversity charter which applies to each of their commissions with independents, in which they commit to diversity both on and off screen through a 'YES Scheme'. For example, to qualify for a YES from Channel 4, the independent has to ensure that certain criteria are met either on-screen or off-screen (Channel 4, 2015). The on-screen criteria relates to content/subject matter, where a series or single programme must reflect a variety of communities and backgrounds through their subject matter and roles, which refers mainly to ensuring diversity in casting actors for scripted programmes and contributors on factual programmes. The off-screen component of the measure is divided into three sections. The first section relates to senior staff/key creative roles (Channel 4, 2015). To qualify for a YES here, production companies must demonstrate that at least one senior member of the production is from an ethnic minority or at least two are women. Under the development/production team/crew component, a YES can be secured if roles within production teams and crews are accessible to people from under-represented groups (Channel 4, 2015). For factual and scripted programmes, a YES can be achieved if 15% of the production team or crew are from an ethnic minority or have a disability. For entertainment programmes, at least 40% of the crew need to be women or 15% need to be from an ethnic minority, or at least 5% need to have a disability (Channel 4, 2015). To achieve a YES under training, internship and career progression, production companies must demonstrate support for access to the industry, as well as career progression with Channel 4 and its suppliers. Specifically, a production company must hire one paid intern through an approved industry scheme or hire a graduate of an internship scheme or provide skills training from a recognised provider for team members with disabilities or from ethnic minorities. As part of this scheme, performance in meeting these measures is published against the diversity criteria on an annual basis, to ensure that progress is being made.

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The BBC Diversity Commissioning Code of Practice sets out a number of equality, diversity and inclusion commitments within the UK's public service broadcaster. The code sets out the steps the BBC will take when commissioning content across all genres to ensure it accurately represents and authentically portrays the diverse communities of the whole UK. The Code includes a commitment to diversity of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion and belief, sex, sexual orientation and socio-economic background. The focus of this diversity measure relates to the areas of representation and casting, workforce diversity within commissioning and production teams and expectations for content-makers working with the BBC. The Code of Practice notes that the BBC will only work with content makers outside of the organization who have diversity and inclusion policies in place, which for them is a contractual requirement. The Code also has an emphasis on increasing opportunities for diversity through recruitment at entry level, by seeking out candidates from a wide variety of backgrounds. A Creative Diversity Unit was established in the BBC in November 2019, which aims to develop key diversity and inclusion commitments through industry collaborations and events. Among these events was the recent 50:50 festival held in April 2021, a series of panels and discissions around best practice in increasing representation (BBC, 2021a). In November 2020, the BBC hosted the Reframing Disability event, in collaboration with NGOs and activist groups The Valuable 500 and Disabled Artists Networking Community. The event, which was hosted by LinkedIn Live, aimed to 'inspire audiences to return to their communities, institutions and organizations with the tools they need to create inclusive change' (BBC, 2020). The BBC's Creative Diversity Report (2020) further proposed that the BBC should build on the code of practice through a series of additional initiatives, which included developing creative diversity toolkits. Since then, June Sarpong, the director of creative diversity at the BBC launched 'a toolkit for change' called Rivers: The Six Streams of Inclusion. These are designed as practical steps aimed at helping to shift production norms and build a more diverse and creative industry. The six streams are described as follows:

i. "Renew: Shake up the talent search. Go to them instead of expecting them to come to us.

ii. Invest: Allocate adequate resources to developing diverse talent and retaining a culture of diversity.

iii. Value: Ensure everyone in the organization understands diversity and its value.

iv. Empower: Allow diverse people to share their stories and provide them a chance to do so.

v. Reward: Give people credit for their work in a meaningful way.

vi. Sponsorship: Pair diverse talent with sponsors to make change to people's careers" (BBC, 2021b).

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The BBC'S commitment to diversity is tracked by Ofcom, the UK's communications regulator. In particular, progress with their code of practice is reported annually to Ofcom to ensure compliance. Ofcom has a number of legal powers relating specifically to diversity in broadcasting that apply to much of the broadcasting industry in the UK. Among these legal powers includes the issuing by Ofcom of licenses for television and radio broadcasters. Part of that process requires broadcasters to make arrangements for promoting equality of opportunity in employment between men and women, people of different racial groups and for disabled people, as well as training or retraining people employed, or in connection with the provision of the licensed service. Because of the BBC's Public Service Broadcasting charter, Ofcom can set a number of diversity standards for the BBC as described above.

ITV launched its Diversity Acceleration Plan in 2020 to accelerate change in equality, diversity and inclusion by creating more opportunities for those from Black, Asian, minority ethnic and other underrepresented groups. The plan aimed to ensure that measurable change would be implemented over 12 months, from July 2020 to July 2021. The plan has so far resulted in the creation of a Group Diversity and Inclusion Director, who sits on ITV's management board. In August 2020, Ade Rawcliffe was appointed to this role, which was orientated around developing ITV's EDI strategy to deliver its published targets, while also partnering with all management board leaders, commissioning teams and HR teams to deliver on the Acceleration Plan (ITV, 2020). ITV concurrently established a Cultural Advisory Council, a group of independent external advisers 'who will advise, challenge and counsel ITV on all of its inclusion and diversity activities' (ITV, 2020). This group, along with the diversity director Rawcliffe, will lead and coordinate all of the EDI activities through a series of action plans, which will be developed and delivered by teams across ITV. While the composition of the board still remains unclear, ITV is keen to ensure that the board is made up of people from diverse backgrounds from outside of the organization (ITV, 2020). Other specific departmental initiatives have also been established within ITV. Comedy 50:50 aims to address gender imbalance in comedy on ITV and a database of over 450 female writers has been created for use across the industry. Commissioning terms for comedy have also changed so that all commissions must have male and female writers (ITV, 2020). ITV News Diversity Panels aims for each ITV news region to have its own diversity panel with representatives from community groups to enable editorial teams to gather feedback directly from community members on how they can better reflect and represent their region.

In the case of UK broadcasters, the commitment to diversity is maintained (or challenged) through the establishment of external monitoring and consulting bodies, to coach and advise on EDI issues. The Diamond Project is one such monitoring initiative. This is a single online system used by the BBC, ITV, Channel 4, Channel 5 and Sky to obtain consistent diversity data on programme they commission. The specifics of the Diamond Project are discussed in more detail in the monitoring section below.

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In other jurisdictions, diversity standards are maintained through slightly different consultancy arrangements. Flemish public service broadcaster VRT has an institutional-level diversity board, made up of external representatives from civil society organizations and academia, to evaluate how the broadcaster televises diversity and also uses this board to inform news and current affairs programming and for consulting on the development of storylines on television fiction (Kerrigan and Vanlee, 2020). Section 5 will describe how various diversity standards are perceived in the Irish context.

Leadership Objective Setting and Incentivisation

There was some emphasis internationally on the area of diversity interventions through leadership. Channel 4 had an initiative for senior managers and editorial staff to improve diversity. This initiative involved them developing specific, measurable targets in one or both of the following areas: (a) within the broadcaster, by increasing the representation of specific groups and leading a culture of inclusion, for example by implementing internal mentoring to specifically support underrepresented groups; and (b) by making more diverse creative output, that is by increasing the presence of underrepresented groups both on and off-screen (Channel 4, 2015). ITV's Diversity Acceleration Plan also sees a focus on leadership objective setting, which includes the Step Up 60 initiative, whereby ITV will provide the opportunity for at least 60 people to step up and secure their first ITV senior editorial and production roles, including directing, writing or producing episodes. Similarly, EDI development amongst leadership was considered part of the plan, with inclusive leadership training, which included mandatory race and inclusion training and unconscious bias training. Additionally, their Race Forward development programme is aimed at creating a pipeline into ITV's leadership, with the programme seeking to develop minority ethnic talent and see them progress to more senior roles (ITV, 2020).

Another measure to incentivize greater diversity has been applied in media award structures, with the aim of engendering change through encouraging productions to incorporate diversity if they wish to meet eligibility standards for awards. One recent example of this includes the Academy Awards and the British Academy of Film and Television (BAFTA) awards system. The Academy Award system has established a set of four categories where at least two standards must be met for a production to be eligible for an award nomination. Among these standards are diverse representation on screen in terms of race, nation, sexuality and gender, diversity in terms of creative leadership and department heads, overall crew competition, industry access and opportunities, including internship opportunities for underrepresented groups and diversity of representation in marketing, publicity and distribution (Oscars, 2020). Already these measures at the Oscars have brought some change, with 2021 seeing the highest number of nominations going to women across the top categories. People of colour also received the highest number of Oscars nominations ever. While these changes have been seen over the course of just one award season cycle, it indicates

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that the measures have the potential for success in supporting diversity and inclusion. Additionally, the Oscars are implementing new diversity measures for inclusion in the best picture category in 2024. At least 30% of secondary roles must be from under-represented groups and there must be opportunities for training and advancement, as well as at least two leadership positions or department heads that are from under-represented groups (The Guardian, 2020).

Targeted Talent Development

Talent development is used to promote diversity and inclusion in both Australia and the UK. Australia's Screen Diversity and Inclusion Network, along with Screen Industry Innovation, have developed Talentcamp, a nationwide skills development program for creatives from diverse backgrounds, designed to provide opportunities for emerging storytellers to create new content and be employment-ready. The South Australian Film Corporation offer a scheme know as Targeted Diversity Attachments. The scheme supports the increased participation of women, First Nations practitioners, deaf and disabled people, practitioners from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, members of the LGBTQIA+ community and those from regional and remote areas (South Australian Film Corporation, 2020). The scheme specifically offers paid work opportunities and attachment to a supervising crew member or department head, who is obliged to provide appropriate tasks, supervision and learning opportunities(South Australian Film Corporation, 2020).

In the UK, the BBC's Creative Diversity Report from 2020 indicates a commitment to talent recruitment, through the delivery of the Experienced Diverse Talent Accelerator programme with its programme commissioners aiming to identify talent on and off air and screen and to provide resources to propel careers to the next level. This programme aims to ensure increased levels of diversity within commissioning teams and 20% diverse talent behind the camera. As this programme has only recently been put in place, its success is still to be determined. ITV's Acceleration Action Plan (2020) also has a focus on targeted recruitment, in particular delivering a positive action campaign to support under represented candidates. They have committed to advertise all permanent roles and to advertise externally, to advertise across a wide range of portals to ensure a diverse pool of candidates and to use a variety of candidate selection and assessment tools in order to reduce unconscious bias. While these are promising initiatives orientated around targeted talent development, it is too early to determine what impact they will have on generating long-term and sustainable diversity in the workforce. The response of Irish informants to the idea of targeted recruitment is discussed further in Sections 4 and 5.

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Diversity Monitoring: Both on and off-screen

In a number of states there are monitoring bodies that gather statistical data on gender and diversity. For instance, in the US GLAAD (Gay and Lesbian Alliance against Defamation) gather data on the appearance and visibility of gay and lesbian people on screen. In the UK Diamond (Diversity Analysts Monitoring Data) examines the diversity profile of people making and appearing on television. The Diamond Project initiative originated from collaborations between the Creative Diversity Network and the BBC, Channel 4, ITV and Sky News. The aims of the Diamond project are to measure and capture diversity and inclusion data, while ensuring every part of the UK broadcasting supply chain understands the diversity and inclusivity landscape. Diamond monitoring is generally the responsibility of production management and is a single, standardized approach used across the industry. Diamond releases a series of reports annually to measure progress around diversity and inclusion. The Diamond report in particular measures gender, transgender, 50s and over, Black, Asian and Minority ethnic, along with disabled and LGB populations, both on-screen and off-screen. In addition the Diamond project aims to:

i. "Unite: Uniting the industry by sharing best practice and creating forums for collaboration and celebrate the action that improve diversity and inclusion.

ii. Support: Supporting the industry with honesty and openness to ensure that actions are undertaken for measurable progress" (Creative Diversity Network, 2021)

iii. The Diamond project has been subjected to some critiques in two main areas: disappointing response rates and an inability to report programme level data (Broadcast Now, 2019).

While diversity monitoring offers useful quantitative materials to indicate where there are gaps in diversity, many of the measurement scales do not necessarily incorporate any solution-centric aspects. More recently however, Australia's Screen Diversity Network has established 'The Everyone Project', a significant new initiative that aims to help Australian screen industry companies and organizations track, boost and foster diversity in their screen productions, both in front of and behind the camera. The project is centred around a web application that invites media workers to self-identify on a set of diversity characteristics for talent and crews working in current projects. On the one hand, the tool is designed for organizations to understand the diversity of their workforces or crews and on the other hand, it is designed to also measure the impact of any diversity measures implemented in the workplace. The app has only been launched in the past year, so its success in supporting sustainable EDI has yet to be seen.

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Conclusion

The search for concrete workable solutions to improve diversity and inclusion in media production continues internationally as much as in Ireland. A notable development in the UK context was the establishment of the Lenny Henry Centre for Media Diversity in Birmingham City University, launched in March 2020. One of its initiatives is to work on the economic modelling necessary to move the issue of Diversity Tax Breaks forward. Henry and Ryder (2021) have also campaigned for broadcasters to ring fence money for productions that meet certain diversity criteria and to introduce diversity tax breaks for productions that meet diversity criteria when filming in UK territory. Henry and Ryder (2021) note the importance of initiatives that have been developed in line with Black Lives Matter, such as the Film + TV charities anti-racism funding strategy, which introduced a £1 million programme to support groups tackling discrimination. The charity is ring-fencing 30% of its future grants budget for black, Asian and minority ethnic people.

What can be seen from much of the material here is that the tools and measures developed for EDI have been orientated around goals, actions, charters and plans that are supported by various coalitions or industry groups. While all of these tools and measures show some levels of commitment to diversity, the success of many of these initiatives has yet to be seen. Initial findings from the European Audiovisual Observatory's Good Practice Handbook (2020), pertaining to achieving gender equality and promoting diversity in the European audiovisual sector indicates some initial findings in terms of what might work. For example, diversity and gender equality strategies without targets or gender equality targets without monitoring have proven to have minimal effect in terms of change. Additionally, public funding and buy-in has encouraged transformation, particularly when coming from film funding bodies, public service media or audiovisual regulators. While some of the tools and measures that have been developed globally have moved change along in some areas, the ways in which these tools and measures could be operationalized on a wider industry scale in Ireland has yet to be seen and how this might work in Ireland will be explore in Sections 4 and 5.

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Findings

Introduction

This section outlines the central findings from extensive engagement with key informants in the film and television sector. The findings address the following themes: policy, perspectives and practices that encourage diversity; creating a pipeline of diverse workers for industry; leadership for change in the sector; and educating industry for greater understanding of diversity and inclusion. Firstly, with regard to policy, practices and perspectives, many of the broadcast respondents had policy in place but this was less in evidence in the independent sector, which nonetheless demonstrated efforts to engage in practices for improving diversity and inclusion. Secondly, respondents were cognisant of the importance of diversity but also of the need to create a pipeline of new entrants to the industry and they offered a number of potential pathways towards diversifying participation such as increased outreach, engagement with educators, training for industry and entrants, internships, mentorship and content calls. Thirdly, in terms of leadership for change, the sector noted that organisational change was needed alongside a coherent vision for the future of the sector and most importantly adequate resources to facilitate such a substantial sectoral-level change. Finally, the industry was very aware of the need for further education about gender equality, diversity and inclusion within the sector and demonstrated a willingness to engage in further learning in those areas. Each of these findings is described and substantiated in detail below and thereafter the report moves in Section 5 to a discussion of potential tools and measures that can further promote diversity, equality and inclusion in the Irish media workforce.

Policy, Practice and Perspective

The views of senior personnel across broadcasters, funders, professional organisations and independent production companies were elicited to assess whether and to what extent gender equality, diversity and inclusion have become embedded in their policies, practices and perspectives. Prior to 2015 the formulation and adoption of gender and diversity policies and the collation and publication of gender statistics pertaining to funding applications and awards was entirely neglected in Ireland (Liddy, 2016). Internationally however data gathering is considered good practice, given that it provides 'an evidence base that makes gender inequalities visible' (EIGE, 2015). This position is further supported by UNESCO who note, in relation to gender, that a lack of data is a factor 'in concealing the gender gaps and challenges from policy-makers and decision-makers' (2014: 134). Good practice requires 'clear measurable workforce targets and diversity and inclusion objectives, with tangible outcomes' that can lead to 'more focused and accelerated results' (Ofcom, 2020). In terms of policy, practices and perspectives in the sector the key insights were that policies did exist in the larger organisations but were less evident amongst independent companies; data-gathering was under-utilized across the sector, some good practices to promote EDI were in evidence but there was a clear need articulated by respondents for greater supports to be put in place to underpin these change mechanisms. These findings are each described further below.

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TG4, RTÉ, Virgin Media and Screen Ireland all have policies or stated positions around gender and diversity and all articulated a desire to achieve diversity in their workforce and output. In their Code of Conduct for Employees TG4 stated their 'commitment to equality and pluralism with regard to gender, sexuality, race, religion, age, disability or membership of the travelling community' (2019). Director General, Alan Esslemont, stressed the importance of formally collecting and monitoring data to identify 'where the weak points are and where we can bring in change'. The TG4 workforce has always been 'historically gender balanced across most levels' but the organisation was less focused on broader diversity issues until recently. Trevor Ó Clochartaigh, Director of Operations and Communications, has overseen the formulation of a diversity policy and a champions forum was being assembled to evaluate diversity and inclusion 'as a living strategy… not a tick box'. TG4's focus was not only on diversity within its workforce but in its output and 'as a champion in the broader society'. Alan Esslemont was cognisant of TG4's capacity to bring about change more broadly, because of its role as a publisher-broadcaster 'everything we do is contractual… we can stipulate in the contract what we expect'. This introduced the prospect or possibility of production companies becoming accountable to broadcasters who seek to implement change.

RTÉ published its Diversity and Inclusion policy in October 2018 stating that the organisation was 'determined to embed D&I into everything we do… to truly reflect the diversity of Ireland today'. Interviews with personnel across a number of departments suggest that data-gathering and the implementation of policy is inconsistent. This is impacted, arguably, by the scale of the organisation, RTÉ's financial difficulties and the disruption caused by the COVID 19 pandemic. Éimear Cusack, Head of Human Resources observed another difficulty 'You're relying on people to leave in order to bring new voices… or new perspectives in' and the turnover of staff in RTÉ is particularly low. While gender statistics were published annually, Diversity and Inclusion Lead, Zbyszek Zalinski, said that RTÉ were still looking for the best way to gather data on diversity 'in a GDPR compliant fashion'. He made a case for 'softer' approaches to cultural change, like marking specific events such as International Women's Day or Black History month. RTÉ's Deputy Head of Content, Niamh O' Connor, argued that to address wider diversity issues 'you need to be more creative, and it certainly needs to be financed properly' and she also pointed to the hiring possibilities in the independent sector where there was 'a lot more leeway'. Interestingly, she suggested that RTÉ had no issue with gender balance, 'every producer in here is a woman' but this would appear to be at odds with the picture that emerged from the sports department. Deputy Head of Sport, Cliona O Leary, conceded there was considerable work to be done in the area of gender equality – 'eighty people working in sport and we have sixty-seven men and thirteen women, so we've got an 84% to 16% difference there…'. Data collection in Sport had been 'ad hoc' for the last few years but, more recently, according to O Leary, that process had been formalised and a target of 20% increase in women's representation by 2020 was established, albeit not met. However, the establishment of a steering committee, a sports strategy and a commitment to publicly and engagement.

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Virgin Media's goal for 2020, according to the organisation's action plan, was encapsulated in the phrase 'more inclusive' and the broadcaster was focused specifically on creating a more gender balanced workforce and one in which people with disabilities could thrive. Indeed, the Virgin Media action plan struck a note of concern about gender equality, 'Being straight up, we've not hit the mark on this one' (Virgin Media online). While a diversity policy document existed, it was formulated by the parent company, Liberty Global and Virgin Media Ireland was currently working on its own policy. A number of Virgin Media executives stressed that diversity was much broader than gender equality. Paul Farrell Managing Director of Virgin Media noted some diversity practices that they had engaged with, such as increasing diversity amongst 'the pool of continuity announcers and promo people', offering opportunities to female directors of drama and 'on the screen side of things… I think we would be ahead of most people'. However, he agreed that while 'Corporately we have all the various kind of pieces in terms of gender, socio-economic, ethnicity, and disability but I would be kind of lying to you if I thought we were anywhere close to best in class across those broader measures'.

All three broadcasters referenced the practice of incorporating diversity into their most popular, widely watched shows. TG4 commissioner, Laura Ni Cheallaigh, pointed to family talent shows or dancing competitions where 'maybe the Irish language element sometimes isn't as key' and which have attracted dancers of Chinese and Nigerian heritage. She viewed this as an act of 'normalizing, just having a cross-section of Irish society across our content'. While historically RTÉ connected specific programmes to minority groups, RTÉ's Deputy Head of Content Niamh O' Conner noted that shows like The Late Late Show and The Tommy Tiernan Show were seen as key to change 'because it normalises everything and it doesn't kind of create this – "we're doing niche programmes for this niche cohort of society"'. In the same vein, Virgin Media's Head of Content, Bill Malone held up Googlebox as 'a model for diversity' with 'a wonderful mixed-race family… all on the couch together… you've got an authentic reference of life'. While this strategy and practice certainly put diverse faces on screen, it seemed to be limited to entertainment programmes and so did not address the paucity of diverse stories and storytellers across all genres, nor did it address hiring issues amongst staff.

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Screen Ireland has been focused on facilitating the emergence of diverse voices since December 2015. Their gender policy, the Six Point Plan was, in an Irish context, a trailblazer. It included a commitment to publish and monitor statistics, despite previous resistance to that measure, and introduced a 50/50 target to achieve gender parity in funding allocations over a three year period. It was clear from the outset that their focus 'in ensuring a diversity of voices in Irish film and filmmaking' was on gender (Screen Ireland, 2015). However, outgoing chair, Annie Doona, acknowledged that Screen Ireland's work on diversity more broadly has really only begun and has just started to move away from an almost exclusive commitment to gender equality 'we certainly think the whole intersectionality agenda is really, really important… telling the stories of communities that haven't had a voice'.

The vast majority of independent production companies acknowledged the importance of creating a more gender equal and diverse industry and accepted that production companies themselves had a role to play. However, the extent to which this has been implemented did vary. Some companies were proactive and communicated their policy clearly 'We have a production pack that goes out for every production and every member of crew gets it. It has our gender diversity policy, it has our bullying and harassment policy. It has our green energy policy' (Participant B). In other cases independent companies had no gender policy and had made no attempt to collect data, even though EDI was strongly supported in their practices. 'We work very hard to make sure that (we are) diverse and representative of gender and people of other ethnicities as well and that comes down to the projects that we work on…' (Participant M). Small companies were constrained in making changes but some still put great emphasis on diversity in hiring and creative output. Echoing an increasing body of empirical evidence (e.g. Lauzen, 2019) one producer articulated a clear and broad strategy 'really, where you can make significant difference is in the stories that you develop, the talent that you work with, the things that you produce and then who you hire. Because when you're hiring one hundred or two hundred people or something, that's where you can make a significant difference' (Participant D).

The cultural shift that has permeated the independent sector was encapsulated by another producer's reflection 'You would have spent 15 years without thinking about that, of going - who's available and who has the most experience and who you could get for the right deal… It's been an interesting journey on some of the projects we've had where we've been really desperate to get women directors on board. We don't have a diversity task force per se (but) we would usually work with the production manager and the production coordinator to go through and see what our crew is looking like' (Participant E). Just as the 2020 Hollywood Diversity Report stated that 'America's increasingly diverse audiences prefer diverse film content (2020: 6) so too many participants described how they put a positive value on diversity. One producer observed that diversity was part of the 'integrity and 'the DNA of the company' (Participant I). Another noted 'Ethnicity in this country it's a massive thing and it's something I'm particularly interested in. I mean, all you have to do is look at how many black faces are on our screens…' (Participant C).

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Guilds and representative organisations have also embraced EDI. All spoke of their boards and committees being gender equal, or very near it, and of having equality or diversity committees in place. Birch Hamilton, Director of the Screen Directors Guild said 'by diversity, we particularly mean class diversity as well… class and race'. Hugh Farley, Director of the Writers Guild (WGI) explained that their focus had, until recently, been on gender equality exclusively but they now 'want to understand in a meaningful way… how to reach and support the few people of colour who are members; to understand better how we can serve them'. CEO of Screen Producers Ireland, Susan Kirby suggested that for SPI diversity, equality and inclusion was 'a complicated space that needs, like, really long range, multidimensional kind of additional support'.

Overall, with regard to policy, practices and perspectives on gender equality, diversity and inclusion, the unproblematic acceptance of a (white) male dominated industry, in evidence just a few years ago (Liddy, 2020a), was absent amongst participants in this research. Instead, a heightened awareness of the value and desirability of achieving diversity has percolated the industry, along with a realization that a changing Ireland should be represented. This change in perspective was evidenced by the fact that policies on EDI existed amongst all the broadcasters as well as in Screen Ireland and while independent production companies did not all have policies in place, their perspectives on EDI were well informed on the need for policy. With regard to data-gathering on EDI the evidence shows that it is a vastly under-utilized tool, which is at best inconsistently applied even amongst the broadcasters and large organisations and at worst it is non-existent across the independent sector more broadly. In terms of practices for improving diversity, participants described efforts to review recruitment practices, scrutinize company output and discuss openness to change as well as adopting a degree of accountability for improving diversity in the sector. However, respondents were cognizant of the need for greater and more systemic supports to be put in place to ensure that the onus did not fall unduly on individual production companies. Similarly, interviewees from TG4, RTÉ, Virgin Media and Screen Ireland struck a note of caution that building a more inclusive culture would not happen quickly or easily. For TG4, the Irish language requirement would curtail the immediate involvement of 'new Irish'. RTÉ's diversity lead cautioned that 'there is no silver bullet solution to diversity' while Virgin Media acknowledged that change will take 'years not months, and requires a company-wide approach with a solid action plan underpinning executive commitment' (Virgin Media online). In sum, there was much that was positive in the sector with regard to policy and practices but there was also perhaps less animation and urgency directed towards the implementation of practical, tangible measures that would transform the industry in a reasonable timeframe. Indeed, the acceptance by some that it will take many years to change the culture could be interpreted as an almost defeatist acceptance of existing structures and an inevitable continuity of a cycle of exclusion and marginalisation. Addressing exclusion will require more practices aimed at change as described above and in addition the creation of a pipeline of more diverse entrants to the industry.

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Creating a Pipeline of diverse workers

Respondents were very clear as to the value of diversifying the media workforce but noted that a key challenge faced by employers was a dearth of viable candidates from diverse backgrounds who were suitable and available to fill media jobs. As one producer noted 'The training hasn't gone in, the effort hasn't gone in, to making sure there's lots of filmmakers from various ethnic origins' (Participant I). Respondents proposed that this could best be addressed through the creation of a pipeline of diverse entrants for media work. Creating a pipeline was seen by respondents to require: increasing outreach to education institutions at all levels; adopting a collaborative approach across industry to address training needs; and using mentorship, internship and content calls to improve diversity amongst new entrants. Each of these insights is examined in detail below.

Outreach to/from industry

Outreach programmes to educators at all levels was seen as vital to changing the profile of potential new entrants to the sector. As one independent producer put it 'most of us in the industry know that you need more new people coming up and we really could reach out' (Participant K). Gareth Lee from Screen Skills Ireland concurred 'We want to do more… promoting the sector… So, linking in with community groups, linking in with schools… to try and create more diversity'. Birch Hamilton Director of the Screen Directors Guild thought that diversity needed to be addressed as early as pre-school age 'I'll be going back to four years of age to a creche and putting up photos of women with cameras of different ethnicities, different class… saying this is possible'. An independent producer saw it as important to address socio-economic barriers to entry by engaging with secondary school students who may not have had the financial means to go to third level college. As she put it 'I think it's a socioeconomic barrier… I think that is why a lot of a minority ethnicities aren't necessarily getting through to third level to study film… So, outreach has to come at a much earlier point… transition year options… discussions have to start at that point so that they can see it as a potential career' (Participant B). Eimear Cusack Director of HR with RTÉ highlighted the importance of including DEIS schools in particular in outreach at second level, which RTÉ 'has been running for a number of years'. Outreach to community groups was also important in creating a pipeline, as Hugh Farley Director of the Writers Guild noted 'I think that we in the industry need to better understand where these communities can be found and to provide (outreach) through public seminars and events held in communities'. This was particularly important with respect to seeing minorities on screen. As Farley observed 'until people of underrepresented groups, see themselves represented in media…. then you can't imagine that you create that content... It goes back to empowering and incentivizing people from different ethnic backgrounds to feel that those careers are possible and then having identified them to fast track them into positions where they can be visible'.

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Several respondents emphasised that outreach and engagement with third level colleges was an important aspect of increasing diversity in their workforces. As one Independent Producer noted 'the sooner (the better) we get it into the heads of girls in college, girls in school, that you can be the director, you can be in charge' (Participant C). As Cliona O' Leary Deputy Head of RTÉ Sport noted 'we recognise that we need to get out and speak to colleges about the interest that we have in diversifying our workforce'. The Managing Director of VMTV Paul Farrell was enthusiastic about a role for colleges in promoting diversity and inclusion 'linking it to colleges would be a big part of my objective… I think if you could anchor it with centres of excellence in colleges who specialise in either, certain aspects of diversity, or certain aspects of skills or development… I think that's a great opportunity'. Both O'Leary and Farrell were already involved in this kind of engagement with a view to improving diversity through guest lectures or conversations with colleges 'as to how can we work either from a training and development or a bursary perspective to start bringing in different faces and voices' (MD VMTV). Similarly VMTV were engaging with other colleges about 'fulfilling part of their programme and giving people on-the-job placements… at our cost'. Screen Skills Ireland also acknowledged the importance of engagement with colleges when it came to the diversity remit and pointed to the need to keep colleges appraised of industry changes. 'We work with third level very closely in that space. But because diversity and inclusion is such a big thing for us going forward, I think we probably have a role to play there in communicating what we're seeing back to third level'.

However, respondents also noted some of the challenges of trying to engage with colleges around diversifying the intake to industry, which thwarted their efforts. As one Independent producer noted 'in terms of engagement with third level, I don't feel like we're very well integrated as an industry in terms of going and looking to the generation who is coming up' (Participant E). The DG of TG4 Alan Esslemont agreed that 'we find it hard sometimes, every third level institution has got its own self-interest… and that sometimes makes it difficult when we're trying to do something at a national level… it's a little bit of a minefield trying to work out who the best partner is, because quite often the colleges and universities don't partner together'. A lack of coordination amongst third level colleges engaged in education and training for film and television industries made it more difficult for industry to approach them generally and particularly with regard to diversifying the workforce. In sum, outreach, engagement and connection with communities and educators at all levels were important actions to take in order to diversify the pipeline intake to industry.

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A collaborative approach to training

Respondents were clear that connections between diversity and inclusion, education and training and the film and television industries needed to be operationalised through a collaborative approach. As the Diversity Lead in RTÉ Zbyszek Zalinski put it 'I think we need to address the fact that there is more training needed for members of marginalised or underrepresented communities… I would love external funding to create a programme like that… and I think it could be a cross-media project… run maybe by the BAI'. Other respondents also saw a key role for the BAI at the heart of that endeavour 'I think if the BAI could be in the heart of that… and make sure it's administered and monitored at a level of independence, then the stakeholders get the benefit' (MD VMTV). Niamh O' Connor Deputy Head of Content at RTÉ noted 'There's nothing like the BAI saying "This is what you have to do" in order to get focused'. Bill Malone Head of Content at VMTV also noted a potential role for Screen Ireland in this kind of endeavour 'there needs to be BAI mentorship or Screen Ireland mentorship… who looks, finds top talent and schools them and brings them in and then makes them part of productions'. Respondents acknowledged that this would require a change to the education and training remit of the BAI, which was something that industry would welcome. As the MD of VMTV noted 'the support infrastructure within the BAI for learning and development seems to be very restrictive and constrained… and I would have thought there's a much bigger opportunity to have a deep programme to start bringing people either- back to work, or reskilling people, or with a diversity agenda, and having broadcasters or people in the ecosystem part of that programme'.

Other respondents were clear that such an initiative needed sponsorship at a national level beyond the film and television sector. As one independent producer noted 'I do think that there should be a governmental role out. I know training is tied into the section 481 funding. But I genuinely think to get underrepresented communities working in our industry, it needs to be on a paid internship basis that cannot come out of the budget of a production. It has to come from elsewhere, it has to be a separate entity' (Participant B). Another independent producer concurred with a very similar idea about the need for national government level intervention but also a role for government in planning within the sector, which would deal directly also with the questions of diversity and inclusion. 'It feels like we move from election to election and that people are working on that short term basis. I think critically, we need to have a really long term plan…' (Participant E). Susan Kirby from Screen Producers Ireland concurred '…it's the entire ecology, it needs to kind of embrace the concept all at the same time and agree a roadmap…. So everyone from the Department of Education, Higher Education, ourselves , maybe Creative Ireland… That type of inter-agency work could be really interesting… I know it's really complicated to do, but I do think there are infrastructures there'. Other respondents also noted that an interagency approach could go beyond just the film and television sector and include other key community-focused organisations. As Trevor Ó Clochartaigh Director of Operations and Communication at TG4 observed, 'we're going to need to work with some organizations… for people from certain diverse backgrounds… to have a fair crack at the whip, what we could do is target the organizations that support particular

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communities… that's something that should be done on an industry wide basis as well, that people from different ethnic backgrounds or groupings should be supported in coming forward'. As well as being enthusiastic about a collaborative approach to creating a pipeline, respondents had thought about specific mechanisms that would help to diversify the pipeline of available workers.

New entrant Internships, mentorship and content calls

Following graduation, potential new entrants to media industries experienced the absence of a bridge between qualification and entry to industry (Kerrigan & O' Brien, 2020). Media industries are heavily networked and candidates who are excluded from these heavily male, heterosexual, white and middle class networks need support to overcome that structural obstacle (O' Brien, 2019). State training organisations, the broadcasters and the independent production sector are all key to facilitating a viable transition to work for new entrants from diverse backgrounds. As one producer put it 'media as a whole, it's a rich kids thing. So it's about trying to level that playing field' (Participant M). This research suggests an appetite amongst industry to engage together and with a regulatory or external body to develop a shared, paid-internship scheme as well as company-level initiatives around mentorship and content calls to support diverse new entrants in gaining access to sustainable media work. There was a sense that paid internships could be effective mechanisms to address diversity and inclusion. The Deputy MD of VMTV was clear that graduate internships had the potential to break down homophilic networks, advertised internships were 'completely fair, and completely open and… that's where you'll get diversity'. Alison Hodgson Head of HR with VMTV commented that they made sure that in all of their job descriptions 'there's nothing in there that… puts one or other gender off applying'. An independent producer was equally clear that internships needed to be paid 'that is the only way to increase diversity, because it's all very well and good if mammy and daddy can pay for the first six months of you getting a job and not getting paid, which is what happens in the TV and film world. But if mammy and daddy can't do that, then you miss an opportunity to get in and then your voice isn't heard' (Participant B). Some internships with a focus on diversity and inclusion, were already in existence. Eimear Cusack from RTÉ described their internship programme, which received 'over 2000 applications for ten places… we were looking for people who might not otherwise have an opportunity or who might not have thought about media or broadcasting… they didn't necessarily have to have the third level… I think what is really catching me is that there's such interest out there to get the opportunity to come in…'. TG4 similarly had an internship program with 10 interns who go through a training programme that bridges the gap from college into industry.

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To ensure a viable ongoing career pathway for workers who contribute to diversity, research shows that mentorship and sponsorship schemes are also key inputs that improve the sustainability of careers for diverse cohorts (DeLong et al, 2008). Again there is evidence that such initiatives were welcomed by many employers in the Irish media sector. Mentorship was seen as valuable for generating change 'it is about growing the next generation', for unearthing talent 'mentoring is very important for recruitment' and also for taking it 'to the next level' (Participant I). Mentorship was seen as valuable in terms of the transference of skills, Hugh Farley from the Writers Guild explained how precisely mentorship functioned to address the question of authority and risk that can lie at the heart of selection practices. 'From the point of view of the people who decide whether a person from an underrepresented group gets an opportunity or not and how they evaluate what that person has done is entirely based on their own perception of risk. So how do you de-risk? …Enable people to go, OK, I'm prepared to take this risk…. mentorship plays a role in that, because you can say, well, look, if this person does not deliver the goods, the mentor will intervene in a meaningful way to get it to where it needs to be. That makes it possible for an organization to take a chance'. A couple of respondents did however express reservations about the effectiveness of mentorship. 'I think it's sometimes hard to curate them in a way... I think that can be hit and miss. I think that they can be very helpful' but as a 'solution' for diversity she observed 'I wouldn't be relying on something like that to be a kind of driving force' (Participant E).

Along with internship and mentorship schemes as mechanisms that could contribute to the creation of a pipeline of candidates for media work, diversity content calls were also seen as useful for building a supply of identifiable talent. The Head of Content at VMTV Bill Malone described successful engagements with calls for content and noted the centrality of diversity to that initiative. As he described 'We put a call out and... we had over seven hundred entries, then ten of those projects got nine thousand euro… and these were either written, directed or produced by people who were from diverse backgrounds'. The range of engagement with diverse producers caused him to question whether there really was a shortage of viable candidates for roles, as he put it 'they're telling you there's nobody in the business? So, we had Muslims, we had black and Asian people, we had refugees, so we had a great pool of talent'. The MD of VMTV was also open to facilitating colleges to produce content and VMTV would give them 'the window for people to see it… It costs us nothing in reality, you lose a little bit of advertising but isn't it great to give a showcase to people'. He saw further scope to expand this through the BAI's Sound and Vision fund which could fund projects for new entrants and VMTV would 'showcase them on a Thursday night for the month of March and get people engaged with them and then facilitate debate and that doesn't cost us a lot of money… that's where I think the broadcasters should play a role… in getting great content'.

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In summary, with regard to creating a pipeline of diverse entrants for media work, the evidence shows that this would require industry to: improve and increase outreach to education and community organisations; to collaborate in devising training schemes across the sector; and to use mentorship, internship and funded content calls to develop viable pathways into industry for more diverse workers. The role of funding in supporting diversity in production is explored further in Chapter 6. Moreover, while a degree of individual organisational responsibility was widely acknowledged by respondents as essential for change to occur, there were calls for more formal leadership of the sector in order to oversee and resource an industry that is poised for transformation.

Leadership for Change

There was widespread agreement that a more inclusive industry will require considerable investment and significant overhaul given that inequality, marginalisation and exclusion are well documented in the Irish context and exacerbated by the informal, project-based and freelance nature of the sector (Kerrigan 2020, Liddy 2020a, O' Brien 2019,). It is not feasible that broadcasters, independent production companies or stakeholders could, single-handedly, implement the level of change required to embed EDI across the entire industry. As Gareth Lee, manager of Screen Skills Ireland put it 'It's a kind of cultural change is what you're trying to achieve. And I think that's a huge endeavour….there are interventions needed in all kinds of levels to achieve that….'. Respondents variously called for leadership from government, which they then connected to the participation of public bodies such as the BAI or Screen Ireland in leadership roles, while some respondents also called for the establishment of an entirely new body with responsibility for diversity in the sector. Respondents saw the need for support to go beyond statements and to involve the allocation of resources to the project of diversifying the media industries. Similarly, respondents connected leadership not just to attaining resources for diversity but also to the need for an overarching strategic vision that could guide the sector through the change process.

With regard to leadership one respondent pointed out that 'we should be seeing 10% of our stories involving people from a BAME background and we're not. The leaders in RTÉ and Virgin need to say we need to see more of these stories and these faces and to say it out loud… Without leadership this will not happen because no one really wants to do it… people want to maintain the status quo, because producers and the like are doing alright already' (Participant L). More specifically with reference to the government's role in leading change, one independent producer expressed anger at the absence of senior government voices in public discourse on EDI matters in the industry and the unacceptably slow pace of change around minority ethnicities in particular. 'I often thought what a powerful message it would be to hear the minister say, why are we not hearing voices from the Afro Irish community? On Virgin Media, on Newstalk and on RTE? …That's where the leadership, obviously, should begin' (Participant C). Alan Esslemont TG4's Director General, agreed that 'leadership at a

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government level is very important'. He connected that government level leadership to the BAI as a semi-state body 'I think it's probably the area for the BAI as far a broadcasting is concerned. And the BAI is going to become the media commission… there should be a national policy'. Hugh Farley, Director of the Writer's Guild, also saw government as having a responsibility 'to ensure that the organisations it funds are held to account and are adequately resourced' to deliver on diversity in the sector. In his analysis, again the BAI was named as having potential for strong leadership. As he put it the BAI 'is better positioned than Screen Ireland because it doesn't have a mandate to choose successful projects, it has a mandate to use its Sound & Vision to get made projects that could not be made in any other way… it has more latitude to adopt a really positive role and force producers to consider the make-up of their creative team' (Hugh Farley, Director WGI).

Part of the argument for placing the BAI and Screen Ireland in leadership roles for change was connected to their status as publicly funded bodies. One producer distinguished clearly between the responsibilities of public and commercial funders. 'I think there's individual responsibility for the production companies. There definitely has to be responsibility for public funders… commercial funders no. Commercial funders have to look at their bottom line' (Participant B). Confidence was placed in public funders to improve diversity and to nurture and promote talent in many accounts across the board. According to one producer. 'I do think when it comes to the BAI, when it comes to Screen Ireland, when it comes to the Department, when it comes to RTÉ and TG4 in terms of how they're funded… that comes from taxpayers, ultimately. And I think that those organizations have a responsibility to make sure that there is true diversity and actionable steps to achieve that' (Participant D). Similarly, Aine Ní Chaoindealbhain Deputy Head of Virgin Media articulated support for public bodies as leaders in diversity and inclusion initiatives. As she put it 'it should be just in people's psyche, it should be part of our culture… anybody who's getting public service funding, it should be a part of the culture that we nurture (diversity)'. Public service leadership was seen as crucial in order to identify, orchestrate and implement change.

Some respondents however, were of the belief that a new industry body with a specialised brief would be preferable to any currently existing organisation. While one producer acknowledged that 'bitty things are happening' in the industry she called for a more comprehensive approach 'an industry body that takes in the BAI and Screen Ireland and TG4 and Virgin and RTE and the various different colleges and the independent sector… something that's centralized' (Participant E). The proposal for a new organisation with responsibility for diversity and inclusion in the sector resonated with SPI and SDGI, who also canvassed for the provision of much needed industry data, which organisations could not gather effectively themselves. A number of producers referenced the administrative burden on many small production companies supporting EDI through data collection. Susan Kirby CEO of Screen Producers Ireland remarked 'I actually find it very striking that there doesn't seem to have been a body that really owns the idea of being the data collector for the sector. I don't know. I find

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it quite odd, actually, and a real loss for the sector in case-making and policymaking". SDGI would also welcome having more data on members' activity levels and budgets. As Birch Hamilton, Director SDGI put it 'Data is everything…. you know that phrase, what gets measured gets managed. We would absolutely love that information'. The central role of data-gathering in EDI initiatives is discussed further in Chapter 6.

Despite the commitment, policies, initiatives and cultural shifts evidenced by respondents, the transformation of the industry is a mammoth task if permanent systemic change is to be achieved. But it cannot be achieved on goodwill alone and requires significant resources to be allocated to that change project. Annie Doona acknowledged the backing of government during her tenure with Screen Ireland but said that backing 'needs to then translate into more public support for the whole gender/ diversity and related issues'. She described how backing did not translate into the resources needed to acquire new posts for an overstretched Screen Ireland, which was problematic. As Doona described 'We put in for two or three posts every year and so far we haven't got one, which is probably departmental funding restrictions'. Concerns about the financial implications of embedding cultural change in the sector emerged across multiple accounts from respondents. For instance, as Cliona O Leary, RTÉ's Deputy Head of Sport observed 'RTÉ's finances, I mean it's no secret, that we are really stretched to the bone… it's hard to change mindsets, but then to try and change where money goes, from one thing into another… if there were some supports around that… to try and help the change process and help buy in, I think that would be very, very positive'. For Birch Hamilton and the Screen Directors Guild it matters that the funding would be there to implement change. 'What my wish for that would be… whoever was going to regulate it… would be that it would have adequate resourcing'.

Important though resourcing is, for a number of stakeholders the industry was also urgently in need of visionary leadership to steer it through the process of diversifying the industry. Individual stakeholders had made attempts to improve the representation of groups who traditionally have been side-lined by the sector, some with more conviction than others. But even the engaged companies were operating in a piecemeal way with no overarching direction or vision. Several respondents identified the need for a coherent vision. One producer called for governing bodies to 'step in and insist on diversity. That, then, empowers us to do that job' (Participant J). This was a perspective endorsed by another independent producer who added 'if the major funding bodies adopted that diversity and inclusion (are) best practice, and if companies had to adhere to that… you know, a contractual obligation, people will do that' (Participant I). Paul Farrell Managing Director of VMTV called on the BAI specifically to deliver 'that kind of north star… here's what 'good' looks like…. this is where we're going, and this is how we think we can get there'. Independent producers were mindful and appreciative of the concerted efforts the industry was willing to make to work together for change. As one producer put it 'I think it's been great the way that RTÉ and Screen Ireland and TG4 and Virgin have all actually reacted… the industry and society in general, kind of, going "okay…..something has to be done, this is something we can do better"'(Participant J).

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Where gender equality in media work is concerned there has been a significant shift over the last few years to greater awareness. The same sensitivity to the broader issue of diversity and inclusion was in evidence amongst interviewees. Increased awareness can put an issue on the agenda and locate 'a language for describing and questioning' (Wahl et al. 2003) however, awareness does not necessarily result in action or change. Notwithstanding the value of the 'bitty things' already achieved (Participant E) they are unlikely to carry sufficient weight to reconfigure the industry. Instead respondents were clear that there was a need for leadership, vision and resources to restructure and diversify the industry at all levels. Reconfiguring Irish screen production requires a paradigm shift, not just in terms of industry thinking about how workers might be recruited, where resources should be allocated and who should take a leadership role on diversity and inclusion but it also requires organisations to change their approach to better consider the ideas and meanings of equality, diversity and inclusion.

Educating Industry about diversity

Hugh Farley from the Writers Guild expressed the need for education very clearly 'From commissioning editor up to the executive level, they need to have a greater awareness of structural inequality… people have a very surface thin understanding of how inequality actually works… The problem is that people who make decisions which impact on equality do not themselves understand their own biases, subconscious biases, and would be horrified to think that…'. Education and training for industry recruiters was seen by respondents as a necessary step in creating a more diverse workforce. As one independent producer put it 'Can there be a way of actually helping and leading and educating… not just production companies but also line producers, production managers, because they're the ones who do a lot of the hiring' (Participant D). Cliona O' Leary Deputy Head of Sport in RTÉ had already started 'running inclusive hiring workshops… (which) had discussions about culture fit versus culture add'. Equally, HR in RTÉ noted that when they were recruiting, they had their Diversity Lead 'across that process to make sure that we were looking at everything from a diversity and inclusion perspective and that we weren't reverting to type… and that has actually worked very well'. VMTV's Head of Content noted the need for diversity 'champions… people who get it in the key positions…' to drive diversity education and understanding within organisations. Other respondents were clear that there was a need for training amongst decision-makers and recruiters as described above, but also a need for education on diversity and inclusion in the sector more broadly. TG4's Trevor Ó Clochartaigh suggested 'awareness training… activities that would make people more familiar with the types of issues that come to fruition'. Screen Skills Ireland's Gareth Lee recognised the need for 'a very targeted agenda in terms of courses that are very about diversity or unconscious bias… and the awareness level within the sector more generally… if you're someone from a diverse background, do you feel that you fit within the sector? Are you supported in that position? I think that's something we're trying to do more and more on'.

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Respondents were clear that if greater diversity was to be achieved in the workforce there needed to be a fundamentally different approach to how people were selected to work in the sector. As one producer commented 'I think the film industry has not been brilliant at bringing in that younger generation. And I think that that's something that we need to figure out on a broader scale… (through) structured training opportunities that are specifically tailored to increasing diversity' (Participant D). Respondents understood the importance of not advertising roles to the same established candidates. Trevor Ó Clochartaigh from TG4 described 'looking at all of our recruitment processes, the way we advertise our jobs, the communities that we connect with' in order to ensure greater inclusivity. Similarly as the Deputy MD of VMTV Aine Ní Chaoindealbhain put it 'You have to take a look where you advertise your jobs…so we send ads to Access programmes in universities, umbrella organisations, to personal contacts'. Independent producers also adopted targeted approaches to advertising roles. 'if you keep looking in the same places, you're going to keep finding the same people - do we just put it up on IFTN or social media? Because the same people, the same media graduates, the same film graduates, are going to come through those application processes. So what we do, we try and make sure that they're on local clubs or notice boards… looking beyond your own industry' (Participant I). Independent producers also suggested some more innovative approaches to recruitment, as one commented 'there isn't really a database… I suppose there is IFTN, but there's no proper database of people who are working in the industry' (Participant K). And broadcasters also seemed equally open to a new approach to recruitment, as TG4 suggested 'maybe even a tailored apprenticeship which is targeted at a particular community'. In sum, respondents recognised a need to educate people right across the sector on equality, diversity and inclusion and how they manifest and were best addressed so that the industry did not continue to reproduce itself in its own image for years to come.

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Conclusion

Gill has argued that the production of culture is profoundly important because it furnishes 'us with our understandings of the world and what it means to be human' (2013, 190). The inclusion of a multitude of voices and perspectives in the creation of screen content for and about Irish culture was embraced by the vast majority of interviewees. The key findings outlined above speak to engagement by the film and television industry across policy, pipeline creation, leadership and education efforts. Industry respondents noted that while many organisations had made efforts to develop diversity policy, there was a dearth of data available on inclusion and there were further sectoral supports needed to underpin a strategy or vision for greater diversity and inclusion in the media workforce. Respondents were aware of the need to create a pipeline of new entrants to the industry through outreach, partnership with educators and through mentorship, internship and content calls. With regard to leadership for change, the sector was clear that it required organisational change, a clear vision and most importantly adequate resources to facilitate change. Finally, the industry is very aware of the need for broader education about gender equality, diversity and inclusion within the sector and demonstrated a willingness to engage in further learning in those areas.

There was genuine interest and reflection evident across the sector as to how to best go about increasing diversity and inclusion in the media workforce. From a broadcaster point of view Alison Hodgson Head of HR with VMTV commented 'We're very thoughtful about what we're doing and how we're going about it… there's certainly no push-back there's certainly no scepticism, it's been welcomed, people are joining in… our conversations are about making sure that everybody feels that, not only are they included, but they can be themselves and they can work and bring to the fore how they see things'. Similarly, from an Independent Producer point of view 'There is a real hunger for new stories, for perspectives that we haven't seen before or heard before. And so I think that… there is a real openness… that wouldn't feel restricting… it would feel more like an opportunity in a way that maybe wouldn't have five or 10 years ago' (Participant D). Clearly industry has demonstrated an appetite for further engagement on equality, diversity and inclusion and it is to an analysis of other measures and tools that may assist that project that the report now turns.

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Potential Tools and Measures for Improving EDI

Introduction

Many respondents shared a common view that the Irish media industry required significant development, using various tools and measures, to improve diversity. Each of the tools and measures outlined in Section 3 were discussed with participants. Most of the respondents considered these international examples as central to shaping the formation of EDI within the Irish media sector. This section of the report details how varying actors estimated what might work best within the specific dynamics of the Irish context. The potential solutions are outlined in detail below under four overarching headings: firstly, data monitoring and gathering; secondly diversity standards; thirdly, objective setting and incentivization and fourthly, diverse recruitment for the industry. Following each section, a list of potential actions has been provided to offer a solution-based approach that may help to incubate a better approach to diversity and inclusion in the Irish media industry.

Data Monitoring and Gathering

Almost unanimously, respondents considered data gathering and monitoring to be central components in improving diversity within the industry. While there was overall enthusiasm for data gathering there were differences in approach or emphasis amongst respondents, from broadcasters, to independent producers and activist groups. The power of data gathering was noted by larger organisations like RTÉ, who observed that it plays a significant role in ensuring that changes 'are delivered consistently' (Clíona O'Leary). These sentiments were shared quite strongly also by the commercial broadcaster VMTV, Paul Farrell noted that 'data allows you to move in the right direction' and to strategize. Extending from this, Farrell noted that 'monitoring and data is paramount… you have to have it and then you know if you are doing good or doing bad…. Benchmarking, good data, profiling… it's definitely something we have to do'. In terms of actual data collected within the larger broadcasters, this was confined solely to gender and did not encompass other forms of diversity. As the Diversity Lead at RTÉ Zbyszek Zalinski noted 'at the moment we are not collecting this data, but we would like to collect this data, we recognise the importance of collecting this data that will give us the information that we seek about the diversity and the makeup of our staff'.

Respondents from the independent production sector strongly supported diversity monitoring. One respondent saw it as vital. He described the industry as being dominated by a 'macho culture' and argued that data gathering was required in order to 'dismantle' this 'lad culture' (Participant H). That producer explained how 'the macho culture permeates the broadcasters as well as the independent producers and [there are] certain commissioning editors you would never approach with a subject [or programme idea] on diversity' (Participant H). He saw data gathering as key to generating greater inclusivity, which was key to dismantling the normative, dominant male power dynamics of the Irish media industry. Another independent producer noted the significance of data gathering when he asked 'how many people of BAME background are actually available for work? No one can tell you that. People might self-identify as from a different background… but you absolutely need to start with

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the data' (Participant L). He further remarked that at the very least data monitoring can provide 'a sanity check that we've got the right balance on the team' (Participant L). Another independent producer recognized the importance of data gathering, but pointed out that it was vitally important to also examine and analyse the data to understand and articulate 'how these exclusions are occurring in the first place' (Participant F).

The practicalities of data gathering were a concern for some organizations, particularly in the independent sector, who agree fundamentally in principle with data gathering, but noted that 'the burden of admin' could be a potential barrier in fully implementing data monitoring (Participant I). One respondent working in a large production company explained 'when you are in production, everybody is flat out and it's not that we don't want to collect statistical data, it's simply having somebody do that for us. I mean we could review all of our crew lists and just look at them in terms of who is working on what, but we're being conscious of the fact that we want to try and diversify, and make sure that we are diverse and inclusive, but also doing it in a way that's not going to be too paperwork heavy' (Participant K). Some respondents stated that data gathering was starting to happen through crew databases and that this could become mainstreamed as an industry norm at a broader level. In particular using a mobile phone application to gather data similar to that seen in Australia (see Section 3) was well received. As Gareth Lee, manager of Screen Skills Ireland, commented 'Our equivalent to a certain extent will be the crew database. We will hope, that that would work on an app format. More structure, more data, all of that is really positive. The other thing, the crew database will do so much'.

In sum, while data gathering was considered a central tool or measure that needed to be implemented by broadcasters, the medium to large production companies also considered data gathering an important tool for establishing benchmarks for diversity that could be improved upon, but caution was noted by smaller production companies that data gathering should not become a burden and that supports and incentives should be put in place to encourage it.

Suggested Actions

▸ Development of data gathering mechanisms in the sector.

▸ Incentives and supports for production companies and sectoral organisations to engage with data gathering and monitoring.

▸ A national data gathering monitoring advisory group could be established for the sector with support from the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media.

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Diversity Standards

Many of the respondents agreed that international examples of the application of diversity standards could be adapted to the Irish context. More specifically, many felt that the broadcasters should have diversity boards, composed of people with diverse backgrounds and/or expertise to guide broadcasters on intersectional issues of diversity. Some respondents proposed that diversity boards could inform diversity policy, others proposed that they could oversee and advise on diversity content, while more saw the boards as encompassing both policy and content. One independent producer noted 'unless you have a board of diverse people who are talking through policies that you want to implement, how do you know that you are creating the right policies?' (Participant K). Another respondent emphasised that if such a board was to be created, it needed to ensure that people from diverse communities, who were experts also, were placed on it, rather than industry standard bearers (Participant M). A diversity board was also considered by another producer as having the capacity to promote 'positive associations' with under-represented groups, which would give them a voice and a platform, but the respondent noted that the diversity board should not become editorial in its remit (Participant J). While there was generally a strong emphasis on the usefulness of diversity boards, some members of media activist groups were alert to the difficulties in creating the boards. As one activist put it 'I think it's very good to have a board, but how would it be diverse? The issue is it's going to take time for diverse people to become senior and get to boards' (Participant G). The latter point in particular speaks to the fact that some of the tools and measures can only be achieved if a pipeline of talent development is created or supported to participate.

While a diversity board was considered a valuable way of implementing some diversity measures, as mentioned in section 4, many of the respondents considered that leadership was needed from the top down specifically to implement diversity standards. As Paul Farrell from VMTV argued, this is a 'top down piece and if you don't have it at the start with the BAI, you don't have it, they need to be leading with something that says best in class and here's how we can help you get there'. Many felt that regulators such as the BAI should take ownership and lead the way and foster something like the BFI Diversity Standards, adapting them to the Irish context, as Gareth Lee from Screen Skills Ireland noted 'The BAI definitely have a place in all of this, even them adopting the BFI model, I think that's the big picture isn't it?'. This was reflected by Annie Doona from Screen Ireland who stated 'we don't have the same rigour in terms of the questions that have to be filled in as a result of an application that the BFI have, but look at the positive actions that initiative has had, I think that's something we could look at'. Some respondents were fearful of putting an onus on production companies to meet certain criteria in order to access funding 'I think you'd have to be careful around that, because obviously when you look at the population in the UK, it's hugely different and it's massively diverse compared to us' (Participant C). Another independent producer agreed that while it was important for Ireland to strive to meet some diversity standards, it was important to recognize that Ireland was not the UK 'I think the women's initiative is really good, having women-focused rounds, because gender is 50/50, but we don't need to race to meet the EDI goals of our near and close neighbours [the UK] because their experience is different' (Participant L).

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Suggested Actions

▸ Development of diversity boards (composed of a range of diverse individuals and actors) in industry organisations such as the BAI, Screen Ireland, RTÉ, TG4 and Virgin Media.

▸ Development of top-down diversity standards, in line with the BFI Diversity Standards, implemented through relevant government Departments and the BAI.

▸ Objective Setting and Incentivization

Objective setting and incentivisation were recognised as useful tools and measures, if adapted to the Irish context, by respondents from mid to large sized production companies. They were seen as particularly appropriate to developing both diverse talent and a diverse workforce. Specifically, funding initiatives that embedded diversity and inclusion measures as a requirement within application processes were considered valuable. As Gareth Lee from Screen Skills stated 'You get fifteen per cent extra funding when you tick these boxes, and we need to work out what those boxes are, that's a really direct, overnight way. Production companies want more money for their productions…'. Another respondent noted how this kind of incentivization would 'specifically help female directors and different diverse groups' and would make producers put money 'where their mouth is' (Participant E). Another independent producer commented that incentives should engage across a number of diversity categories such as 'age, race, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic background…' (Participant B). One respondent argued that funding calls such as the Sound and Vision Scheme could be expanded to include measures that would encourage applicants to actively incorporate diversity into productions. 'If it's part of the application process, having some points given [to the application] if your crew has people from a BAME background, that starts the process, and that might get people conscious of when they are hiring, because it's a business decision and people will go to find people to meet a quota […] if it's part of the point scoring process, you will start seeing people gaming the system and saying well how can I make my application stronger and get funded ' (Participant L). Another production company noted how media organizations should need to demonstrate an EDI culture within their organization 'Eventually they could have a section where you have to prove that you have an inclusion and diversity policy or that you implement an inclusion and diversity policy' (Participant K).

At its core, mentoring was envisaged as a means through which more inexperienced voices could be incorporated into the industry. As one independent producer remarked 'it's about recruitment and encouraging new talent into the industry from different places, with different voices. Mentoring is a good way to do that' (Participant I). Birch Hamilton from the Screen Directors Guild noted that mentorship was vital to help directors get those all-important 'flying hours', as she put it 'mentorship could be plugged in to the particular project. Like when the BAI give funding, you could say look an extra two thousand euro is attached to this because they're a diverse director'.

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Another producer commented that they sought out LGBTQ interns to mentor in their production company as they were aware of struggles that some within the LGBTQ community had in terms of breaking into the industry (Participant H). That producer noted that a streamlining of these kinds of practices across the industry would be helpful in giving other under-represented groups a chance. Another producer added that the BAI or Screen Ireland could develop and lead on incentivisation through mentorship schemes. 'There needs to be BAI mentorship or Screen Ireland mentorship whereby it is a fund put aside, so you've a fund and a fund manager in Screen Ireland or the BAI who looks, finds top talent and schools them, and brings them in and then makes them part of productions and that includes placements, so part of a ticking for an extra fifteen per cent means I'm going to take two of the people from the shortlist of our acceleration plan, development plan. That's how you would do it so you're not disempowering or disincentivising those who are already doing good work, it's hard enough making a living in TV for a lot of people. What you're doing is you're rewarding those who do it better, and who recognise and support diversity in actual, real and meaningful ways' (Interview G). Many of the respondents acknowledged the usefulness of mentoring schemes for women in film and television, but recognised that schemes for racial diversity constituted a significant gap in the industry.

Many of the activists interviewed further noted that when diverse stories were being incentivised, members of the communities represented needed to be included on the crew or to be present in the writers room (Participant A; Participant G). Similarly, with casting. One production company noted how they had begun to implement colour blind casting on their own productions and suggested that this could work as an incentive on funding applications for drama series, 'if they can demonstrate they will implement colour blind casting, then they get more points' (Participant J). Áine Ní Chaoindealbhain of Virgin Media spotlighted casting as an overlooked element in drama production and as an area where salient diversity interventions could be made. '…Most people look at diversity when they're finished a project', whereas it should be essential 'that diversity is not only represented, but that we are conscious of diversity in our casting'. In sum various objectives were set to incentivize diversity and inclusion through funding, mentorship and casting.

Suggested Actions

‣ Development of funding calls that incentivize inclusion and diversity within production teams.

‣ Incentives for production companies and industry actors to develop their own diversity and inclusion policy, strategy and goals.

‣ Objective setting around creative output to encourage colour-blind casting on television drama and film productions

‣ The development of a code of practice that encourages stories that cover diverse communities to offer voice to those communities.

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Diverse recruitment for the Industry

A major structural impediment to creating a more diverse media workforce is the nature of media work, which is characterised by high rates of short-term, temporary contracts and casualised working terms and conditions. These characteristics make it a difficult industry for people to enter who do not have the benefit of pre-existing contacts amongst networks of homophilic workers. In terms of 'good work' (Banks et al, 2017) most full-time, permanent, openly advertised jobs are provided by a very small number of large employers, such as the broadcasters. As the Head of HR in RTÉ Eimear Cusack commented, steady and secure work in screen production 'is rare in that sector, so I completely understand that RTÉ is attractive from that point of view'. However due to a low attrition rate, RTÉ is very constrained in terms of diversifying its workforce through new appointments. All of the RTÉ respondents commented on the very low attrition rate which meant that the organisation was 'relying on people to leave in order to bring new voices, or new perspectives' (Eimear Cusack).For that reason the independent sector is frequently thought of as the solution to the need for greater diversity amongst production workers. Some of the broadcasters were clear that work channelled through the independent sector was the best mechanism for addressing diversity and inclusion in recruitment. As one RTÉ respondent described 'forty per cent of what we put on RTÉ One and RTÉ Two are made from the independent sector… so most production companies, it's kind of project based… they have a lot more leeway in terms of the type of people that they hire… diversity, you know, gender, everything comes into play there' (Niamh O'Connor). Frequently the 'solution' to promoting equality and diversity in recruitment was the independent sector because as SMEs they had the potential to be agile in terms of recruitment. However, independent production companies mainly work from one commission to the next, recruit only as production requires and mostly on short term, temporary contracts. Because many independent companies are themselves precarious they have solid rationales and structural challenges that mitigate against them acting as the driving force for innovation in recruitment for diversity and inclusion.

The point of view on recruitment from within a small production company was different to the point of view amongst broadcasters about them. As one producer put it succinctly 'My concern is that the expectations of the broadcaster would not match with the feasibility of the producer'. As one producer explained 'we're a small company as most companies are in this business… and when you are in production, everybody is flat out'. The producer explained the precarity of working as a small company 'It's difficult because we're a gig economy, so you only get paid if you're working on a gig and if you're not working on a gig then you're not getting paid… You're working under those pressure all the time… so there's a lot of pressures and it's usually a small team' (Participant K). While the producer in question was very open to the idea of inclusion and diversity in recruitment of workers, at the same time she could offer a solid logic as to why it would prove challenging for many independents. As she put it 'I don't want to come across saying that it's not a priority, because we feel that it is

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a priority, but sometimes you just don't get the time to sit down and analyse the data properly' (Participant K). Most small independents claimed to only have the capacity, time and resources to recruit a team of workers that were already heavily networked with the company and with each other. Most risk in production was referred down to the production company and so in terms of recruitment these companies tended to be conservative.

The independent sector saw itself as structurally impeded from recruiting a diverse pool of unknown or untested candidates for roles, however they were open to wider recruitment if those roles were subsidized. But the funding and resource supports for such an initiative needed to be in addition to funding currently available to the sector. Funding initiatives that were attached to content production have been successful, as demonstrated by Screen Ireland's gender equality initiatives (O' Brien, 2019) and should continue to be supported. But a more radical and additional intervention was required to create a diverse media workforce in Ireland. Part of that additionality is the recognition of the scale of the change project. A state-led scheme to attach increased funding for additional, long-term, sustainable and permanent jobs for diverse workers across media industries has the potential to transform the structure of the workforce. In terms of sectoral development a more diverse workforce has been shown to generate better outcomes in terms of content creation and growth and so more diverse jobs can serve to create a virtuous cycle of development for the media sector. Just as the digital transformation of Irish media in the last decade required strategic input from the Department of Communications, so too the human capital transformation of the media workforce in terms of diversity requires state-led strategic sponsorship at government departmental level. As one respondent concluded 'the people who provide the money and who have a statutory responsibility to all citizens have a responsibility to adopt policies that, in a practical and measurable way, do deliver a changed situation'.

Suggested Actions

▶ Subsidisation of sustainable diverse recruitment to the independent sector through additional funding.

▶ Development of state-led schemes to increase funding for additional, long-term, sustainable and permanent jobs for diverse workers in broadcasting.

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Conclusion

This section of the report has suggested potential actions that decision-makers within the Irish media industry could take to promote greater inclusion and diversity. Based on analysis of actors responses to international initiatives there is evidence of an appetite to further develop tools and measures that can work within the Irish context to develop sustainable 'good' media work for diverse communities.

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Conclusion

The research report has documented current approaches within the film and television industry to gender equality, diversity and inclusion in Ireland. It has analysed industry responses to policy initiatives, to the question of finding workers to participate in production from diverse backgrounds, to discussion on where leadership on EDI should be situated within the sector and it has outlined the need for educational inputs across the sector. The industry's attitudes and insights on particular tools and measures that could be employed to improve equality, diversity and inclusion have also been described in detail. In general, there was evidence of much reflection and critical thinking on EDI on the part of the sector. With regard to policy, respondents documented the absence of data that would help them to appraise the current state of EDI in the workforce and to track change over time. There was a clear sense that this data project needed to be delivered at a sectoral level. This finding was seconded during discussions of potential tools and measures for EDI in the sector where again respondents reiterated this priority. The concern with data also connected with the finding on leadership for change, where again the sector was clear that it would require organisational change, a well-articulated vision, and vitally, adequate resources to encourage change in the EDI context amongst the Irish workforce. Respondents noted that a pipeline of suitable candidates from diverse backgrounds did not currently exist in the sector. They proposed that work was needed in the form of outreach, partnerships with educators and in the form of mentorships, internships and dedicated EDI content-calls to generate a pool of candidates for work in film and television production. Initiatives for diverse recruitment were also emphasised during discussions on potential tools and measures to improve EDI in industry. Dedicated educational and training inputs on diversity were also recognised as valuable by industry. In addition, many of the respondents agreed that diversity standards could be adapted to the Irish context and that the broadcasters should have diversity boards, which could advise on diversity content as well as on policy issues. In a similar way setting objectives around initiatives such as codes of practice and content calls for diversity and inclusion were also supported by industry respondents. Following on from this research there are clear avenues for further research and further actions that derive from the findings.

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Recommendations for Future Research

While this report has engaged with the ways in which the audiovisual industry can develop and embrace solutions and measures regarding diversity and inclusion, further research needs to be conducted with activist and interest groups from various diverse communities. While 'taking the temperature' of the industry in its approach to diversity and inclusion is an important step, more concerted efforts are needed to incorporate the voice of those most affected by an unequal industry. Specifically, research with stakeholder communities can help to develop more diverse perspectives as to how tools and measures could be more inclusive. Speaking directly to issues affecting communities should involve engaged research with ethnic and racial minorities including people of colour and the Travelling community, the LGBTQ community and people living with disabilities as well as with people from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Additionally, participatory action research with organisations and NGOs that represent these groups would provide more insights into how the Irish media industry can respond to community concerns. Further research should examine how pilot applications of tools or measures, are operationalised on the ground. This will ensure they benefit all communities equally or can be adapted to address the variation in identity that can often exist within minority groups.

Media work still remains very much an under-researched facet of industry in Ireland compared to other regions and a focus on developing research in this area is central to developing 'good' media work models. Such research projects also need to incorporate the voices of diverse communities and their graduates as they become new entrants into the industry. More understanding is required of their experiences of the transition from higher education to work, along with a discussion of the obstacles that they face. Researching new entrants from a minority background as they make the education to work transition will not only help highlight how to create good media work, but will also contribute towards our understanding of developing a pipeline of talent, one of the findings of this report. Beyond new entrants, more research needs to be done regarding current working conditions within the Irish media industry for minority groups and women, identifying the obstacles that they face along with the interactions that they have with precarity and media work. While community and belonging, through employee resource groups that reflect minority identities, have proven to be effective in other contexts (Netflix, 2020), research needs to explore if similar kinds of inclusion initiatives are required in bigger broadcasters and producers in the Irish media industry.

Media education serves as a potentially salient site that could provide specific modules focusing on equality, diversity and inclusion in media industries and topics focusing on unconscious bias and inequality in media work. To that end, research with the media education sector is imperative to see how this kind of diversity training could be implemented in higher education. While the outcome of this would be long-term, introducing diversity and inclusion at this level would pay dividends as these graduates make the eventual transition to media work. Further, research with media education programmes regarding how they reach out and try to recruit or encourage applications from minority and diverse communities needs to be examined further. Through

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focusing on these recruitment efforts and identifying gaps and weaknesses, research could potentially make an intervention at this early stage and make recommendations for encouraging higher education institutions to engage with diversity and minority recruitment efforts in a way that is more effective and which would eventually create a more diverse talent pool of graduates. The report has demonstrated that data gathering on diversity is linked to success in creating and sustaining diversity in the Irish media industry. To that end, further research needs to be conducted to scope how this would work across the Irish context. A pilot of diversity data gathering needs to be developed, along with the quantitative and qualitative methods involved in developing a monitoring system.

'And Action…'

The primary recommendation that emerges from this research is that the Irish media sector must enthusiastically and proactively embrace the inclusion of diverse talent in its workforce. This can be achieved in a myriad of ways, as described in detail in sections 4 and 5 above. Through data gathering, creating a pipeline, outreach to the education and training sector and the adoption of diversity standards, diversity boards and codes of practice, the sector can achieve gender equality and increased diversity and inclusion. However, change requires leadership, to generate vision, to articulate policy, to adopt appropriate tools and measures, through which to implement policy, and to monitor change as it occurs on the ground. While all parts of the industry can contribute to change, responsibility needs to sit with a dedicated organization that is well positioned to direct change. Currently Ireland does not have such an organization.

While respondents across the sector spoke highly of the BAI and were supportive of the idea of the Authority taking on the task of driving diversity and inclusion, the BAI does not currently have either the statutory basis or the resources to execute this national change project. Creating a more gender equal, diverse and inclusive media sector in Ireland is a very significant, substantial and democratic change project, and yet to date that project has received little real policy focus or attention. This is not because the BAI is not motivated or interested to engage, but rather it is beyond its current statutory scope to do so. To that end the key recommendation to emerge from this research is that the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media should equip the regulator with the statutory support and resources needed to take a creative approach, which would see equality, diversity and inclusion woven into the fabric of national broadcasting legislation, policy and implementation practices. The sector has responded positively to the objective of greater inclusion, academic research has clearly established the benefits, the regulator can be equipped and resourced to undertake this project, all that remains is for the political will to be exercised to direct change towards a better, more equal, diverse and inclusive media industry in Ireland.

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