

# Creating Difference

Overcoming Barriers to Diversity in UK Film  
and Television Employment



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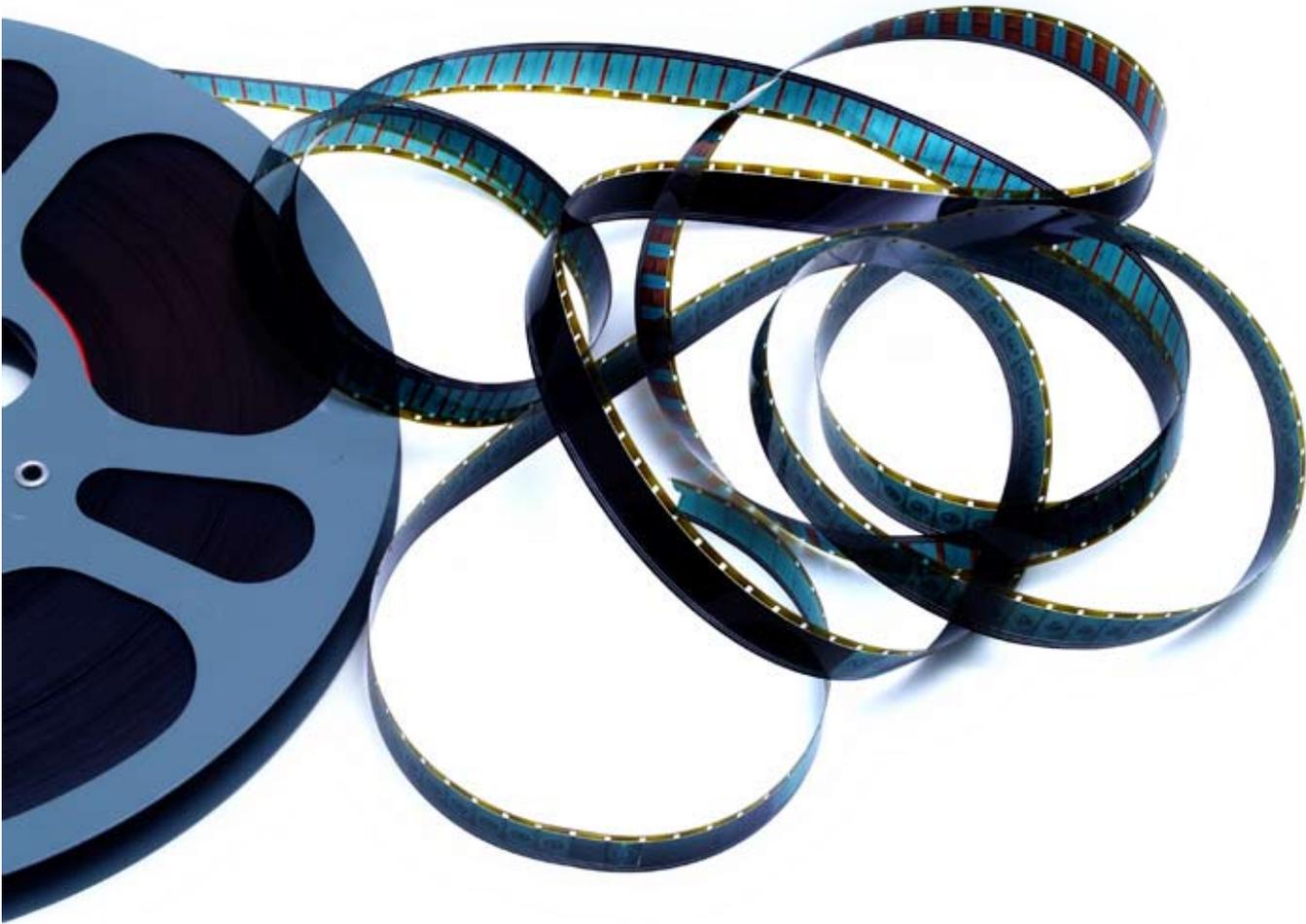
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**Prepared for the European Social Fund Diversity in Practice by:**

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PDF versions of the full report are available at [www.fdmx.co.uk](http://www.fdmx.co.uk) and [www.embracingdifference.co.uk](http://www.embracingdifference.co.uk).

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# Volume I: Background to the Research

## Introduction

A diverse workforce can inform the development of new or enhanced products and services, open up market opportunities, improve market share and broaden an organisation's customer base<sup>1</sup>. By 2010, only 20% of the UK's workforce will be white, able-bodied men under 45 (UKFC 2003: 8). This creates a real need to find ways to drive employers to open up work opportunities for a broader mix of social groups in the workforce so that the UK economy can continue to grow.

### Creating Difference: Overcoming Barriers to Diversity in UK Film and Television Employment

This research, designed and conducted by the Creative Industries Research and Consultancy Unit, University of Hertfordshire, is a sub-project of Diversity in Practice development partnership, supported by the European Social Fund and managed by core partner, Exemplas. Diversity in Practice seeks to demonstrate the 'business case' for organisations to embrace diversity and flexible working strategies and develop (where none exists) innovative resources to help employers and disadvantaged groups in the labour market to access opportunities and make greater contributions to the economy. The partnership was established to explore innovative processes to link cause and effect and to use pragmatic approach to influence policy and build a more flexible growth economy. This research focused sub-project targeting the UK film and television industries will contribute significantly to the aims and objectives of the wider initiative.

### Diversity in Practice

The project aims to:

- Explore ways of demonstrating to employers and individuals the 'business case' for embracing flexibility and diversity strategies;
- Develop practical, pragmatic tools and resources to support implementation of these strategies;
- Influence national and regional policy to stimulate and support businesses and individuals to take appropriate responsibility in building the future to create a more flexible growth economy.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.cipd.co.uk/subjects/dvsequel/general/divover.htm?lSrchRes=1>. Accessed on 30 September 2007.

## The Project Objectives

They are to:

1. Explore, build upon and develop a range of compelling, practical indicators to help organisations to understand and measure the benefits of effective flexible working and diversity strategies.
2. Explore, build upon and develop initiatives to help organisations and employees implement effective flexible working and diversity strategies for maximum measurable return.
3. Explore, build upon and develop resources and support initiatives to help people from disadvantaged groups to fulfil their potential in making a contribution to the economy.
4. Influence policies of government bodies and key institutions to further stimulate and advocate diversity and flexible working for a more effective economy.

## Aims and Objectives of the Sub-Project

The *Creating Difference* team set out to explore barriers to diversity in UK film and television employment and to review and evaluate recent policies and interventions adopted by key sector bodies and broadcasters to promote diversity in employment in the sector.

These aims of the sub-project will be achieved through objectives 3 and 4 above.

The project team's starting point was the recognition that in addition to social equity arguments there is considerable evidence that a diverse workforce can aid the development of new or enhanced products and services, open up market opportunities, improve market share and broaden an organisation's customer base<sup>2</sup>. This has been called the 'business case' for diversity.

## The Project Report

There have been many previous studies addressing diversity issues in film and television. *Creating Difference* is distinguished from what has gone before by its depth, interviews with 100 industry professionals and representatives of sector bodies, and its scope, focusing on issues of ethnicity, age, region, gender, disability and class.

*Creating Difference* is divided into three volumes and reports the results from desk top research and interviews (see Appendices 3 and 4).

**Volume I** provides an introduction to the research project and contains a snapshot of the UK film and television industries. It reviews existing literature on UK film and television employment, discusses diversity, defines key terms and describes the research methodology the research team adopted.

**Volume II** addresses the third objective, explores the barriers that

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.cipd.co.uk/subjects/dvsequl/general/divover.htm?IsSrchRes=1>. Accessed 30 September 2007.

underrepresented groups face in entry and progression in the industry, drawing evidence mainly from the interviews, and considers ways to overcome these barriers. The first section of the volume deals with the main demographic issues under the diversity agenda: disability, gender, ethnicity, geographical locations, age and social class. The second section explores recruitment practices and outlines the barriers faced by those belonging to underrepresented groups while entering and progressing in the sector.

**Volume III** addresses the fourth objective. It considers the initiatives introduced by the key sector bodies and broadcasters to redress the lack of diversity in the film and television workforce in order to inform future policies and strategies of government bodies and key institutions. It considers a variety of schemes aimed at underrepresented groups defined by characteristics including disability, gender, ethnicity, geographical locations and age. In section 2, programmes that tackle barriers at entry level, provide graduate training and promote skills transfer are explored, as well as other initiatives that help to increase diversity. The final section of the volume examines the role of different networks such as Cultural Diversity Network (CDN), CDN North and Broadcasting and Creative Industries Disability Network (BCIDN) and several initiatives and strategies by sector bodies to promote diversity.

## Executive Summary

This summary draws out and highlights what the *Creating Difference* team regards as critical points or key themes from the research.

It is clear that the sector bodies that represent the film and television industries in the UK are well aware of the sector's limited diversity and understand the need to make them more representative of the UK's population as a whole, both from a business and a social responsibility perspective.

What is also evident is that any progress in this direction is slow. There are a range of positive initiatives designed specifically to support underrepresented groups in entering and sustaining a career in the sector. Monitoring of the results of the initiatives will help the sector to track the progress of change whilst raising awareness among decision-makers may redress the imbalance in the industry's workforce and ensure that enhancing diversity remains a long-term goal and value.

The most significant finding of this research is that an emphasis on the individual demographics of diversity (for example, ethnicity, age, disability or gender), which are frequently the focus of the initiatives, may be missing a bigger picture. Often absent from the diversity agenda is the question of social class. A much more difficult concept to grapple with, class may incorporate elements such as parental occupation, educational background and income.

Little tangible evidence of direct discrimination or overt prejudice against particular minorities have been found in the research, however, where belonging to a minority also coincides with 'higher' or 'lower' social class membership the results can be significant. There are good reasons for this.

Firstly, entry into the sector increasingly follows degree-level education and this requires aspiring entrants to invest in themselves. The advent of full cost tuition fees means that graduates will leave University with ever increasing debts. Over time this may have an impact on choice of subject, allied to aspirations about post-university careers. A casualised, freelance and unpredictable industry may prove less attractive to more risk-averse potential entrants.

Secondly, the majority of entrants into the sector can expect to spend some time working for free or for very low pay to establish a foothold. This is frequently only possible if the, usually young, person involved can fall back on parental support to see them through this period, which may last a year or longer. This is particularly unlikely where the person concerned comes from a low income family and may be further compounded where he or she is also based in a region outside London and not close to one of the very few other regional clusters of media activity.

It is also important to recognise that this significant barrier to entry, the unpaid 'internship', may also represent a breach of the minimum pay legislation where it can be shown that an employment relationship exists. It is possible that many employers are, consciously or unconsciously, breaking the law in this respect.

In the case of some diversity demographics, for example ethnicity, there may be a greater overlap between membership of a particular group and social class or economic marginalisation. Consequently exclusion from the sector may be less a result of any prejudices that may exist and more a function of structural issues associated with the nature of entry into the sector. Having said this, there is still evidence of what has been termed 'institutional racism' within the sector and this may be reflected in a widespread belief that there remains a 'glass ceiling' frustrating the ambitions of mid-career professionals from underrepresented groups.

Turning to another aspect of the diversity agenda, *Creating Difference* is, the project team believes, the first study to look in depth at the issues confronting disabled professionals in the sector. Once again the casualised and freelance structure of employment appears to present a major obstacle for those working in film and television. It is difficult for disabled professionals to make the transition from being on disability benefits to earning income due to the complicated application procedure involved, which they have to go through each time a contract ends.

If the UK film and television industries, broadly speaking, are to meet their moral obligations to contribute to social equity and at the same time take advantage of the undoubted business benefits of a diverse workforce, there is still much to be done. Within the sector everyone has a part to play; whether it is employers ensuring that they stay within the minimum wage legislation or beginning to formalise recruitment procedures, key sector bodies sponsoring further research or developing new strategic initiatives, or individual employees helping to create the cultures within their working environments that support diversity. But others have a part to play too. Schools need to ensure that students are fully aware of the opportunities open to them in film and television and Colleges and Universities need to look closely at both the accessibility of their courses and their relevance to industry. The research team hopes that *Creating Difference* will contribute to the understanding of the barriers that hold back diversity in the sector and provide some suggestions as to how these might be overcome.

# 1 The UK Film and Television Industries

## 1.1 The Film Industry

The UK film industry was described as a 'cottage industry'<sup>3</sup> in the 6<sup>th</sup> report of the Culture, Media and Sports committee to the House of Commons in its 2002-2003 session. The industry has grown and changed since that time. A report commissioned by the UK film council on the economic contribution of the UK film industry estimates that it supported around 45000 full time jobs (including 12000 jobs associated with the distribution/exhibition of films made abroad) and contributed £2.9 billion to GDP in 2006 (Oxford Economics 2007: 23). Nevertheless, there are many small companies in the film industry; many producers set up SPVs (Special Purpose Vehicles) for independent productions and wind them up once the films are completed. The ad hoc and fragmented nature of the industry makes it difficult to commit any long-term, sustainable effort to improve diversity in the workforce.

### 1.1.1 The Value Chain of the Film Industry

The value chain in the film industry consists of three major processes: production, distribution and exhibition.

#### I Production

The film production process involves generating ideas, planning, casting, writing and directing. It includes processes such as location management, catering, set production, camera operations, sound recording and mixing, animation, visual effects as well as post-production that includes editing, music and computer generated imagery (CGI). Several departments, for example costume and wardrobe, hair and makeup, props (sales/rental), stage and studio rental and equipment, catering department, set production, sound and light, are involved in the production process. The key clusters of production companies in the UK are based in Soho and Westminster in London and the major studios are located around the capital such as Pinewood and Shepperton (Buckinghamshire), Elstree and Leavesden (Hertfordshire) and Ealing Studios. The total number of full time jobs in the production sector is estimated at 28450 (Oxford Economics 2007: 14).

#### II Distribution

The distribution phase consists of film duplication and secondary distribution through various platforms such as video, DVD, TV sales and online. The largest players in the distribution sector of the UK film industry are Buena Vista (distribution arm of Disney and Miramax films), UIP (an organisation jointly owned by Universal Pictures and Paramount) and Entertainment (an independent British owned company). The number of jobs in the distribution sector is estimated at 1350 (Oxford Economics 2007: 14).

#### III Exhibition

The exhibition phase consists of distribution of films to cinemas. The exhibition sector of the UK film industry is dominated by the following multiplexes:

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200203/cmselect/cmcomeds/667/66706.htm>. Accessed on 13 August 2007.

Odeon<sup>4</sup> (over 100 cinemas), Cineworld<sup>5</sup> (73 cinemas and 758 screens) and Vue<sup>6</sup> (59 cinemas and 579 screens). The number of jobs in the exhibition sector is estimated at 3750 (Oxford Economics 2007: 14).

Apart from creating jobs and contributing to the GDP through ticket sales, the research conducted by Oxford Economics on the economic impact of the UK film industry identifies four areas on which the impact of the film industry has been significant, namely, 'promoting British cultural life, attracting tourists to the UK, supporting UK exporters, and generating sales of DVDs, CDs and other merchandise' (Oxford Economics 2007: 4). The following figures show the contribution of the UK film industry to the GDP, Exchequer and employment:

### Summary of the Economic Contribution of the Core UK Film Industry

Channel of Impact	GDP	Exchequer	Employment
Direct	£1510mn	£436mn	33500
Multiplier (Indirect and Induced plus TV)	£1625mn	£420mn	33500
British Film Box Office Effect	£53mn	£8mn	500
Tourism	£900mn	£200mn	20000
Promotion/trade	£20mn	£5mn	700
Merchandising	£235mn	£105mn	6500
Total	£4343mn	£1174mn	94700

(Oxford Economics 2007: 72)

Though the report cannot put a value on the impact of the UK film industry on the British identity, it concludes that the industry has a significant impact on it. This underlines the importance of a diverse workforce in the UK film industry who can contribute towards the shaping of the British identity.

### 1.1.2 Training

A survey of the workforce in the UK film production sector undertaken by Skillset reveals that the average industry workforce is well-educated (Oxford Economics 2007: 26): 59% of the workforce is university educated with either a postgraduate qualification (15%) or an undergraduate qualification (44%). This compares with 28% of the population of working age in England who have qualifications of NVQ level 4 or above. 23% of the workforce has a graduate level qualification specifically relevant to the core UK film industry.

The training and education strategy laid out, after close consultation with the film industry, in the UKFC and Skillset report, *A Bigger Future*, reveals the perception across the industry that there is a shortage of courses that deliver the right mix of vocational skills to equip students to enter the sector (UKFC & Skillset 2003: 17). The key objective of the strategy is 'to ensure that the UK [film] industry is able to compete successfully in the European and global marketplace on the basis of world beating skills' (UKFC & Skillset 2003: 9) and focuses on the following four key areas: careers information, advice and

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.odeon.co.uk/fanatic/about\\_us/](http://www.odeon.co.uk/fanatic/about_us/). Accessed 10 August 2007.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.cineworld.co.uk/Home>. Accessed 10 August 2007.

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.myvue.com/corporate/>. Accessed 10 August 2007.

guidance; further, higher and postgraduate education; new entrants, professional and company development; and collecting and analysing information.

A network of Screen Academies has been established that offers vocational courses where there is a shortage of skills in the film industry. A number of institutes offering high quality practical filmmaking courses were identified to form the network which is jointly funded by DfES and the industry (UKFC & Skillset 2003: 18) and comprises The Screen Academies at<sup>7</sup>:

- The Arts Institute Bournemouth & Bournemouth Media School
- London College of Communication (part of the University of the Arts London) and Ealing Institute of Media (part of Ealing, Hammersmith & West London College)
- Napier University & Edinburgh College of Art
- The Film Academy (University of Glamorgan) and International Film School Wales (University of Wales Newport)
- The London Film School
- The National Film & Television School
- The Film Business Academy at Cass Business School, City University.

### 1.1.3 Digital Future

Digitisation has a significant impact on all three stages of filmmaking: production, distribution and exhibition. The use of digital cameras in shooting has the potential to bring the cost of the shooting process down as it facilitates easier transportation of camera, does not require expensive film stock and allows the easy file transfer of the footage over the internet. In the post-production stage, there is a widespread use of digital technologies especially in the editing process and in special effects. During the distribution phase, the use of digital film stock could help retain the image quality of the film regardless of age. Since the cost of production and transportation of copies of a digital product is minimal, distribution companies could distribute duplications of a film to a large number of cinemas electronically (Pratt et al 2007: 14).

While digitisation helps to bring down the costs of filmmaking, some equipment is still expensive. For instance, digital cameras of broadcast quality and high quality editing equipment remain very expensive. Nevertheless, due to the benefits of digital technology, there has been a rise in their use. In post-production, there has been an increase in the use of Digital Intermediate process (DI) which scans and stores the entire film as one digital file on which all post-production works such as editing, special effects and colour correction can be carried out (Culkin et al 2005: 11). The DI process also offers a cheaper way to make a Digital Source Master (DSM) from which a range of formats such as high definition television (HDTV), DVD, broadcast television, internet streaming and Digital Cinema Distribution Master (DCDM) can be derived (Culkin et al 2005: 11).

A major factor holding back the digitisation process in film distribution and exhibition is the cost of introducing digital projectors in the cinemas as the burden of expense lies with the exhibitor but the benefit goes to the distributor

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.skillset.org/uploads/pdf/asset\\_7848.pdf?3](http://www.skillset.org/uploads/pdf/asset_7848.pdf?3). Accessed 11 September 2007.

(Pratt et al 2007: 15). In response to this, the UK Film Council has set up The Digital Screen Network (DSN) to broaden the range of films, especially specialised (or non-mainstream) titles, available to audiences across the UK<sup>8</sup>. DSN comprises a network of 240 screens, located in approximately 200 cinemas.

The relatively lower costs of digital production and post-production have the potential to attract previously underrepresented groups into the industry. For example, the lower cost of equipment and editing software allow more people to make films and there are generally more avenues for their exhibition. Further investigation is needed to determine the extent of these developments.

## 1.2 The Television Industry and the Independent Production Sector

The UK television industry generates an annual revenue exceeding £9 bn which has a considerable impact on the economy (Ofcom 2006: 1). The Skillset employment census states that the number of people working in the independent production sector is 20950 up from 14900 in 2004 (Skillset 2004, 2006). The television value chain consists of those who generate the ideas and hold the copyrights, produce, broadcast or distribute programmes and the audience. The industry comprises terrestrial broadcasters (BBC One and Two, ITV, Channel 4 and Five) and digital, cable and satellite broadcasters (for example, Sky and Virgin media). BBC, ITV and Channel 4 also have their own limited number of digital channels.

### 1.2.1 History

The BBC was founded in 1927 under a Royal Charter as a public service broadcaster. It is funded by the license fee paid directly by each television owning household. The BBC provides eight interactive television channels, ten radio networks, a website and an on-demand television service, BBC iPlayer (since July 2007)<sup>9</sup>. ITV, established in 1955, is a commercial broadcaster and generates its revenue mainly through advertising (Ofcom 2005: 6). In 1982, the founding of Channel 4 effectively ended the duopoly of BBC and ITV in UK television production as well as the broadcasting sector. Channel 4 is a commercial broadcaster which either commissions or buys all of its programmes and therefore a main force in the development of the independent sector.

The UK television industry is largely vertically integrated with most of the broadcasters except Channel 4 making a number of their own programmes. In addition to the programmes commissioned by Channel 4, The Communications Act 2003, which requires all public service channels to commission 25% of their non-news programmes from the independent production companies (IPCs), has also helped in making the television industry more robust by enabling the development of the sector. The evolution of digital television has further strengthened the UK television industry. Emerging technologies like video-on-demand, personal video recorder, interactive television and broadband have increased the scope of the UK television industry (AHRC 2005: 15).

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.ukfilmcouncil.org.uk/cinemagoing/distributionandexhibition/dsn/>. Accessed 30 September 2007.

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.bbc.co.uk/info/channels/>

## 1.2.2 Business Model

Most independent productions are financed by the broadcasters on an agreed budget. The business model of the independent companies is described as “cost plus” price production fee and only limited (if any) residual income from further exploitation rights’ (Mediatique 2005: 8). The *Review of Television Production Sector* (Ofcom 2006: 13) identifies other sources of revenue for independent production companies such as sales to UK digital channels and international customers and the exploitation of secondary rights, which also contribute to the expansion of the sector. The Communication Act 2003 gave further rights to independent productions (See Section 1.2.3).

The film and audio visual industries comprise a large number (11000) of mainly small companies (IES 2004). In 2002, 96% of those in film and video production had fewer than ten employees (IES 2004: 23). 23% of independent production companies were ‘one-man bands’, increasing to 42% in the case of minority ethnic led independent companies.

There is a clear segmentation in the independent sector based on the size of companies. At the top end there are three companies with over £100m turnover in 2005: Endemol, HIT Entertainment and All3media (Mediatique 2005: 3). There is a middle order with many companies which generate a small albeit steady income. At the tail end, there are a large number of companies which depend on individual talented programme-makers for commissions.

## 1.2.3 Opportunities and Barriers

The Communication Act 2003 made it mandatory for broadcasters to commission 25% of their non-news programmes from independent production companies. The BBC pledged another 25% to be open to external competition under its commissioning slate entitled Window of Creative Competition (WOCC) (Ofcom 2006: 9). Consequently there could be further growth in the number of independent productions made for the BBC. A key industry professional (see **Glossary**) states that ITV commissions 20-40% of its programmes from production companies; all of Channel 4 programmes are made by independents. These policy changes have led to further growth in the UK independent sector. A report commissioned by the BBC states that the sector has been growing, characterised by mergers, investments from private equity firms and by public market-listings (Mediatique 2005: 11). Hence the independent sector could have a crucial role to play in promoting diversity among the television industry workforce. Nevertheless, the independent sector is not regulated by any statutory body, unlike the broadcasters which are regulated by Ofcom. Therefore the independent companies do not have any regulatory obligation to implement diversity policies.

## 1.2.4 Recruitment

The major broadcasters have large corporate structures and formal recruitment procedures. The growth of the independent production means that the sector is now made up of companies of different sizes in terms of both employment and turnover. Endemol, one of the biggest companies in the industry, has about 250 permanent staff and 800 people on project-specific contracts. Larger independent companies like Endemol and Talkback have human resources

departments which could help implement diversity policies and initiatives. Many smaller companies, according to a human resources professional, do not even give their staff contracts of employment. It would be difficult to implement diversity initiatives among the smaller companies, as this interviewee explains:

*It makes it sound like we've taken a step backwards in terms of the opportunities for introducing things like equal opportunities policies because small firms either can't or don't adhere to those kind of [practices] ...a lot of them are employing, technically, illegally.*

(Human Resources Professional)

A permanent staff member of a small independent production company says that the company expands and contracts according to the number of programmes that are made at any one time. The company has 7 permanent staff members, but during their busiest period, they may be making 4-5 programmes and will have around 25 members of staff working in the office, including producers, directors, assistant producers, researchers and occasionally editors. More crew members, such as technical staff, are hired as and when their services are required. A key sector professional (see **Glossary**) claims that the high turnover of staff and the casualised workforce make it difficult for small companies to implement diversity initiatives and policies.

### 1.2.5 Training

With the deregulation of the industry and the growth of the independent sector, the responsibility for training shifted from the broadcaster to the individual, as this key sector professional explains:

*... [until] 20 years ago, the BBC employed and trained everybody in the technical areas. That doesn't happen any more. And whilst independent access and the freeing up of television have been good in many ways, there is always a downside to everything.*

Since the independent companies hire the majority of their workforce from a pool of freelancers, the responsibility for training is now largely with the individual. The bigger independent companies have departments responsible for training and development but most of the smaller companies do not train their employees. The high cost of training could pose an obstacle for some people aspiring to enter the sector. This is another barrier to diversity as aspirant new entrants from marginalised groups might not be able to gain work experience. In recognition of this, some broadcasters have developed schemes, discussed in detail in Volume III.

### 1.2.6 New Platforms

Recent advances in digital technology are driving widespread changes across the television industry. Interactive and mobile television are two recent innovations which have come about as a result of digitisation. Interactive television allows viewers to interact with the broadcasters, such as participating in quiz shows and games (AHRC 2005: 13), and offers greater convenience for the viewer on what, when and where they watch.

Interactive and mobile television is leading the development of new business

models. Independent production companies are a major source of their content: 35% of IPCs surveyed in early 2005 had produced interactive programming in the previous year and all companies with revenues of more than £20m annually did so (Mediatique 2005: 14). Interactive television is now an important and growing sub-sector of broadcasting. Its revenues are forecast to increase to £2bn by 2008. These changes will help the IPCs as they play a more powerful role in the commissioning process, with broadcasters seeking to retain the rights of interactive formats.

The relatively lower costs of digital production and the increased opportunities provided by digital broadcasting may have the potential to attract previously underrepresented groups into the industry. For example, there are generally more avenues for the exhibition of media contents and the lower cost of broadcasting quality equipment may allow more people to make programmes. Further investigation is needed to determine the extent of these developments.

### 1.3 The UK Film and Television Workforce

The sector is characterised by a mainly freelance workforce. The term 'freelancer' is widely used in the film and television industries. In Skillset's research, freelancers are defined as those on contracts of less than 365 days whilst permanent or long-term contracts are defined as of 365 days or more (Skillset 2003, 2005a). This project also adopts these definitions. Many professionals in the media sector in the UK also identify themselves as freelancers. Their experience of employment and careers is explored in **Volume II section 2.2**.

Broadcast television is made up with a relatively high proportion of workers on permanent contracts (79%) (Skillset 2005a: 51) and 73% of those in broadcast television work exclusively in that sector (Skillset 2005a: 31). On the other hand, 61% of those in independent productions are freelance or sole traders (Skillset 2005a: 50)<sup>10</sup> and 51% work in more than one sector (Skillset 2005a: 31).

The employment of most professionals in the film industry is not regular. Work is project based and Skillset figures show that the majority of professionals working in production (63%) do so on a fixed term contract that lasts only for the duration of a film (2005b: 14). Blair provides survey evidence from employees on her case study feature film which shows that the average length of projects they had completed in the previous year was 7.3 weeks (2000: 121). Furthermore they had completed an average of five projects in the same period which gives some indication of how frequently they re-entered the labour market. In the Film Production Workforce Survey, only 11% of the respondents were permanent employees and 74% worked in other audio visual sectors in the previous year, most commonly in broadcast television or commercials (Skillset 2005b: 12, 13). Therefore, it seems that the workforce in broadcast television is the most permanent whilst those in film production are most likely to be freelance and are involved in work in other audio visual sectors including television. This is also borne out in the interviewees' experience. Those working for the broadcasters tend to be permanent or long-term employees whilst those in independent

<sup>10</sup> The Financial Services Authority states that 'a sole trader operates as an individual without the use of a company structure or partners and has sole responsibility for the actions of the business. Business finances cannot be separated from personal finances insofar as the sole trader has unlimited personal liability and is personally responsible for any liabilities incurred by the business'. <http://www.fsa.gov.uk/Pages/Doing/how/application/glossary.shtml>. Accessed 9 July 2007.

production companies are more likely to be freelancers; both groups usually focus on television productions. Interviewees in film production are most likely to be freelancers and often cross over to other audio visual sectors including television.

This report adopts the definitions of employee/employer given by the Inland Revenue which are based on answers to a list of questions<sup>11</sup>. The employers/owners of very small IPCs face many similar experiences to freelancers (e.g. casual work contracts, high risk employment). Company owners are also included in the research in order to compare and contrast their experiences with employees (including freelancers and the self employed).

Previous research evidence shows that a majority of the UK film and television workforce is freelance and is lacking in diversity (see **Volume I section 2 and Volume II section 1**), this research aims to explore the relationship between these two characteristics of the sector. It also examines the impact of industry structure and recruitment practices on the careers of the predominantly freelance workforce (see **Volume II sections 2**).

<sup>11</sup> In order to determine the nature of a contract, it is necessary to apply common law principles. The courts have, over the years, laid down some factors and tests that are relevant, which is included in the overview below.

As a general guide as to whether a worker is an employee or self-employed; if the answer is 'Yes' to all of the following questions, then the worker is probably an employee:

- Do they have to do the work themselves?
- Can someone tell them at any time what to do, where to carry out the work or when and how to do it?
- Can they work a set amount of hours?
- Can someone move them from task to task?
- Are they paid by the hour, week, or month?
- Can they get overtime pay or bonus payment?

If the answer is 'Yes' to all of the following questions, it will usually mean that the worker is self-employed:

- Can they hire someone to do the work or engage helpers at their own expense?
- Do they risk their own money?
- Do they provide the main items of equipment they need to do their job, not just the small tools that many employees provide for themselves?
- Do they agree to do a job for a fixed price regardless of how long the job may take?
- Can they decide what work to do, how and when to do the work and where to provide the services?
- Do they regularly work for a number of different people?
- Do they have to correct unsatisfactory work in their own time and at their own expense?

<http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/employment-status/index.htm#1>. Accessed 20 March 2006.

## 2 Diversity: Defining the Terms

### 2.1 Diversity

Diversity is an elusive term. The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) states that:

*Diversity is valuing everyone as an individual, whether they are an employee, a customer or client, or another stakeholder.*

*The starting point for good diversity management is valuing and celebrating 'difference' as an asset because everybody is different and unique...*

*Through good diversity management based on these values and celebrating 'difference', employers can access unique mixtures of talent, skills and experience, that can make valuable contributions to business performance.*

(CIPD 2006: 2)

There is a range of demographic characteristics that may define an individual: ethnicity, gender, sexuality, disability, religion, age, social and economic background, and regional and national identities (UKFC 2003: 8). Much of existing research focuses on cultural diversity which is generally interpreted as ethnicity (see **Volume I section 3**). Key sector bodies also tend to limit their diversity agenda. For instance, the UKFC focuses on ethnicity, gender and disability (2003: 8-10). During the scoping study of the current research, through examining existing research and the opinions of representatives from the key sector bodies, disability, ethnicity, gender, geographical regions and age emerged as the main demographic and personal characteristics influencing the lack of diversity of the sector's workforce. In **2.2-2.7** below, existing contexts in relation to each of these issues in the UK film and television industries are examined. The case for diversity is then explored in **Volume I 2.8**.

The film and television industries workforce does not reflect the diversity of the British population. This has been clearly acknowledged by the lead bodies in the UK Industry (BECTU 2000, Pact<sup>12</sup>, Skillset, UKFC 2003, BFI 2001, BSAC 2001). These organisations, along with key broadcasters, have committed themselves through mission statements, policies, strategies, action plans and working groups to work towards greater diversity in the industry. Some success is claimed in the portrayal of diversity in industry output and in meeting workforce targets (IES 2004). The impact of initiatives by industry lead bodies and broadcasters is the subject of **Volume III**.

### 2.2 Disability

Disability can be defined in different ways. The Disability Discrimination Act (1995) relies on a definition of physical or mental impairment that has an adverse effect on someone's ability to carry out day to day activities. However, organisations such as the BFI adopts a wider 'social model', which refers to the loss or limitation of opportunities to take part in the normal life of the community on an equal level with others due to physical and social barriers<sup>13</sup>.

<sup>12</sup> See IES (2004).

<sup>13</sup> Disabled People's International 1981 cited in <http://www.bfi.org.uk/education/teaching/disability/thinking/medical.html>. Accessed 13 August 2007. See also BFI (2002: 3).

The UK government passed a further Disability Discrimination Act (2005) promising a proactive approach from public sector employers. The barriers faced by disabled people in the labour market include organisational, physical and attitude issues. They are also more likely to be unemployed, economically inactive, earn less and leave the labour market earlier than non-disabled counterparts (Roulstone & Warren 2006: 117). Post 1995 labour market policies that affect the disabled have been criticised for 'attempting to construct disability benefit recipients as part of the reserve army of labour' rather than catering to their needs (Grover & Piggott 2005: 714-715).

The number of disabled workers in the film industry is very low, standing at somewhere between 2% (Skillset 2005b: 28) and 0.8% (UKFC 2003: 8). This compares with 12% in employment as a whole (Disability Rights Commission estimate). The proportion of disabled employees in the audio visual sector as a whole has remained unchanged since 2001 at 0.8% - well below the national average (UKFC 2003: 8). However, it is likely that this is an underestimate and that there is under self-reporting in an industry dominated by freelancers due to the stigma attached and the fear of losing employment opportunities<sup>14</sup>. There is little incentive for many practitioners to declare their disabilities unless they are visible.

Disability is an under-researched area in relation to the UK film and television industries<sup>15</sup>. *Frames: Interrogating Disability in the Media* (Pointon and Davies 1997) is an early collection of essays that examines representation as well as employment, training and the development of a disability arts movement in the UK. There has been no major research project in the UK focusing on disabled workers in the film and television sector.

## 2.3 Gender and Family Status

A 1995 UNESCO report asserts that 'gender patterns in media employment are shifting' but notes that the upper echelons of the media have not been 'feminised' (Gallagher 1995: 1). In other words, women were excluded from editorial and decision-making positions. The main issues affecting women cited in the report included stereotyped attitudes and working conditions (Gallagher 1995: 53-56). Hakim (2006) argues that despite equal opportunities and family friendly policies, the pay gap, glass ceiling and occupational segregation for women continue.

The combination of gender, class, ethnicity and social divisions is equally valid as an analytical category in relation to women's employment experience (Warren 2003: 605-606). For instance, there is a growing number of (privileged) women who are 'increasingly adopting more typically male-like labour market behaviour; working full-time with largely uninterrupted relationships with the labour market' usually remaining childless or delaying motherhood (Warren 2003: 607).

Women account for 45% of the UK's working population (UKFC 2003: 9). Just one third of the film industry's workforce is female, with the proportion varying widely by occupational group, from 89% in makeup and hairdressing to 8% in

<sup>14</sup> See Loughran (2006) for a discussion of the disability forum amongst BBC staff.

<sup>15</sup> A research conducted in Australia with similar approach to the current project was documented in Goggin & Newell (2003).

lighting, 11% in sound and 10% in camera (UKFC 2003: 9). An analysis carried out by the BFI found that of 350 films made in the UK in 2002, only 8 were directed by women (UKFC 2003: 9). Women also earn lower weekly rates than men (Skillset 2005b: 13). In addition, women working in film are less likely than men to be married or living as part of a couple (44% compared to 69%). They are less likely to have dependent children under 16 (21 compared to 39%) (Skillset 2005b: 12). Perhaps reflecting the itinerant nature of an industry which requires production staff to work away from home for long periods of time, 39% of the film production workforce are single and 67% have no dependent children (Skillset 2005b: 29). This report examines women media professionals' experiences in **Volume II 1.2**.

## 2.4 Ethnicity

BSAC defines ethnic minorities as 'Black and Asian communities living within the UK including South Asians, Afro-Caribbeans, Chinese and Vietnamese, as well as other non-English language communities' (BSAC 2001: 10). An alternative definition is 'visible minority groups' as many such groups are (native) English speakers making a definition based on linguistic differences redundant. UKFC provides another alternative, 'an individual's identification with a group sharing any or all of the following – nationality, lifestyles, religion, customs and language' (2003: 20), which is the one more appropriate to this project.

Ethnic minorities make up 8% of the UK population (Cabinet Office 2003: 4); most live in the major cities, particularly London (Dorsett 1998). There are variations in the experience of the different groups. For instance, Indians and Chinese are out-performing whites in schools and the labour market while Pakistanis, Bangladeshis and Black Caribbeans are doing less well (Cabinet Office 2003: 4). The class backgrounds, educational achievement, geographical locations and discrimination against minority groups are some of the factors thought to account for the differences (Cabinet Office 2003: 6-7).

The clear majority of the film industry workforce is white. Although 4.6 million people living in the UK are from minority ethnic groups and they are keen cinema-goers (comprising 12.8% of UK cinema audiences), they make up only 1.6% of the film and video production, 4.3% of the film and video distribution and 23% of the film exhibition workforces (UKFC 2003: 9-10) against a national average across all business sectors of 6.1%. In London which is home to almost 50% of the UK audio visual industry and where 30% of the population is from minority ethnic groups, only 12% of the sector workforce is drawn from these groups (BSAC 2001: 10, UKFC 2003: 9). At senior decision-making levels in Channel 4, ITV and the BBC, there were even fewer black and Asian professionals in 2000 than there had been ten years earlier (The Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain 2000: 161).

These broad figures do not reflect the uneven distribution of minority staff across the sector: 22% and 18% as box office and kiosk attendants, 1% in production, 2.8% in animation, 3% in wardrobe/costume, 3% in makeup and hair, 5% in camera and sound and 7% in lighting (UKFC 2003: 10).

The Parekh Report (The Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain 2000: 167) suggests that problems of onscreen representation of ethnic minority

groups are connected with organisational and employment issues behind the scenes, where the television industry is predominantly white. Creeber (2004: 27) argues that the BBC fails to reflect local, linguistic, racial, cultural and religious differences in an attempt to assert one form of 'Britishness'.

## 2.5 Geography

The UK replicates trends across the developed world: old industrial areas have been in decline since the 1970s due to the move towards flexible labour markets and the restructuring of the regions. There have been mass redundancies and high unemployment for workers employed in the coal, steel and shipbuilding industries (Danson 2005). On the other hand, there has been a rise in the numbers employed in occupations in the service, creative and cultural industries including the media. Individuals from 'the old industrial areas (OIAs)' (Danson 2005: 285) may now lack the skills and experience to find work in the new economy.

The production centres for the UK film and television industries are based primarily around London and the South East (Soho, the London studios to the west of Greater London, Hertfordshire and North London). 58% of Skillset's 2005 Film Production Workforce Survey respondents lived in London, with a further 20% in the South East (2005b: 12). The concentration of the studios, production companies and broadcasters in the South East has been a longstanding feature of the sector although little research has been done on its effects on the labour market. The high cost of living in and around London, for instance, can be an exclusionary factor.

## 2.6 Age

Age discrimination regulations came into effect in October 2006 in the UK to prevent discrimination on the grounds of age right across the spectrum. Britain has an ageing population. In 2003, the government figures showed that the number of people aged over 65 had risen from 10% of the population in 1950 to about 17% and was set to continue to dramatically increase to 25% by 2033 (Lewis and Goldman 2005: 10).

Age relates with other personal characteristics such as gender and disability. For instance, Duncan and Loretto (2004) suggest that there are gender dimensions of ageism in the UK: all age groups are affected but women, particularly those from the younger and older age categories, experience ageist attitudes concerning their appearance or sexuality.

With the exception of Skillset's statistical data, age and employment in the UK film and television industries is an under-researched area. Although there is criticism that the media industry places emphasis on youth (Creamer 2006), the mean age of the respondents of Skillset's film production workforce survey was 40.6, with 79% aged 49 or under (Skillset 2005b: 25). 21% of the survey respondents of the Skillset research were aged 50 or over and only 3% were aged between 16 and 24 (compared to 16% of the UK workforce as a whole); the film industry workforce was older than the audio visual workers captured by the 2003 Skillset *Audio Visual Industries Workforce Survey* (Skillset 2005b: 25). These statistical data contradict the notion that the media industry focuses on youth.

## 2.7 Social Class

Class is a much researched and discussed sociological term (Therborn 2002, Sorensen 2000, Kivinen 1989, Muravchik 1981). Yet, it seems to be subsumed under race and gender as a subject of contemporary debate on diversity (Nesbit 2006). Class divisions have not disappeared from British society (Mount 2006). On the contrary, there has been a surge of the numbers of the rich and the level of their wealth since 1989 and Britain is the second most polarised society after the United States (Lansley 2004).

**Volume II 1.6** examines class in detail. Socio-economics is central to diversity within the sector. For many prospective employees the only route into the film and television industries is through 'internships' which often means working for free or for very little pay (Hold the Front Page 2007, Pact 2007). 29% of the companies in the independent production sector surveyed in the IES report (2004: xii) used or were made up of unpaid workers and working for free was also more common amongst those from minority ethnic backgrounds. Candidates who cannot fall back upon parental or family support while trying to break into paid employment and who live permanently outside of the South East of England are likely to be excluded as a result. Much of the work in the sector is project based and unstable and many freelancers experience periods of unemployment (Skillset 2005b: 13). Individuals from marginalised groups may therefore be deterred from a career in the media industries due to the economic insecurity. It may be argued that white practitioners from lower income households are equally likely to face this barrier though the Joseph Rowntree Foundation's study shows that poverty rate of British minority stands at 40%, twice compared to the White British population<sup>16</sup>.

## 2.8 The Case for Diversity: Business, Creativity and Employment

The UK Film Council recognises diversity as vital to the film industry, which is the rationale behind their strategic framework document *Success Through Diversity and Inclusion* (2003: 10):

*If the sector really is to maximise its creative potential, it must create a culture that supports diversity and equality, levelling the playing field to enable the full and active participation of filmmakers from under-represented or disadvantaged groups. Experienced practitioners from under-represented groups should also be able to gain fair access to opportunities to work and develop their careers. It makes good business sense to ensure that talents are not marginalised, excluded, under-used or wasted on the basis of the ethnicity, gender, disability, sexuality, religion, age, geographical location or economic status of any individual.*

This section examines the business, creativity and employment dimensions in the case for diversity further. In the CIPD initial survey report *Diversity in Business*, five top drivers for diversity are suggested by 285 individuals who are involved in diversity management in UK organisations (2006: 3)<sup>17</sup>:

<sup>16</sup> See <http://www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/socialpolicy/sprN48.asp>, <http://www.poverty.org.uk/03b/index.shtml> and <http://www.jrf.org.uk/pressroom/releases/300407.asp>. Accessed 18 June 2007.

<sup>17</sup> See also CIPD (2007: 7)

	Percentage of Respondents
Legal Pressures	68
To Recruit and Retain Best Talent	64
Corporate Social Responsibility	62
To be an Employer of Choice	62
Because it Makes Business Sense	60

The main reasons for diversity appear to be linked to the ability to do better business and to recruit talented employees. The report also confirms that organisations that acknowledge both the importance of legislation and the business case show higher levels of sophistication in their approach to diversity management (CIPD 2007: 9).

The UK Film Council states that there is a sound business case for diversity:

*Diversity... is one area where we need to do much more across the sector – not only because it's the right thing to do but because it makes good business sense both creatively and economically.*

Tim Bevan [Chair, Leadership on Diversity in Film Group, UKFC].

(UKFC 2003: 2)

In 2002, the UK Television industry had a turnover of £13.4bn (Cambridge Econometrics 2005: vii). A study conducted in 2004 showed that the UK film industry contributed £3.1bn to the national GDP and employed 31000 people (Oxford Economic Forecasting 2005: 1-2). Exports from film and video industries in the UK were worth £581 million in 1998, rising to £653 million in 1999 (DCMS 2001: 3). Consumer spend on film and video also grew year on year through the 1990s (£1941 million in 1994 to £3023 million in 1997) (DCMS 2001: 6).

Ethnic minorities constitute 8% of the UK's population. An estimated 80% of them are between the ages of 16-35, have significant wealth and contribute £32 billion to the economy (Cabinet Office 2003: 4, BSAC 2001: 10). Disabled people in the UK have £80 billion worth of spending power<sup>18</sup>. According to the Employers Forum on Disability Survey in 2006, 82% of disabled customers in the UK took their business to a more accessible competitor the previous year<sup>19</sup>. The proportion of the UK population over 65 years old was about 17% in 2003, compared to 10% in 1950 and set to continue to increase (Lewis and Goldman 2005: 10).

Amongst the consumers/audiences, the proportion of women, ethnic minorities, disabled individuals, the young and older people makes a compelling case for the film and television industries to consider their different needs. The BBC recognises class and regional differences and 'other key communities of interest' in the UK audience (BBC 2005). This underlines the need for diversity in programming and among the workforce.

There is further evidence that some of these underserved groups are avid consumers of media products. Members of minority ethnic groups go more

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.realising-potential.org/your-business-case/>. Accessed 8 August 2007.

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.realising-potential.org/your-business-case/>. Accessed 8 August 2007.

regularly to the cinema and access digital, satellite and cable television in greater proportion than the rest of the population (Bennett et al 2006: 4-5). Yet, it was reported that many television programmes alienated groups of potential viewers (Bennett et al 2006, Gibson 2007). The report, *Include Me In*, argues that audiences in Britain are 'multiculturally aware' but 'the television lags behind in the portrayal of this social reality' (Sreberny 1999: 3).

As a result of the inability of British terrestrial television to cater for minority needs, sections of audiences are turning to cable and satellite for viewing. The special report, *Communications Market*, states that ethnic minority viewers watch less BBC and ITV than the general population (Ofcom 2007: 14). The report establishes that EMG communities use digital multi-channel television and cable/satellite services 'to increase their choice of programmes and channels, to access specialist channels/programmes including those targeted at ethnic minority groups and to benefit from time-shifted viewing using PVRs<sup>20</sup>' (Ofcom 2007: 12). There are around 12 dedicated Asian channels, including Zee UK, that have a potential audience of 2 million Asian viewers in Britain (Creeber 2004: 32)<sup>21</sup>. The IES report on minority led production companies shows that many talented EMG media professionals are excluded due to the perception that ethnically driven concepts are not commercial (IES 2004: xiv). The success of the feature film, *Bend it like Beckham* and television shows such as *The Kumars at No. 42* and *Goodness Gracious Me* supports the business case: *The Kumars at No. 42*, as a format, has been exported to many countries including Australia, the US, Netherlands, Pakistan and India and is reportedly watched by 40 million viewers worldwide (Kibble-White 2006).

Watson (2001: 4) suggests that television programme-makers can be encouraged by the example of advertisers as more black people appeared in commercials than television programmes in her research. She further cites that in the US, the increased use of black writers, cross cultural casting and minority ethnic suppliers means that the viewing patterns between white and black Americans have begun to converge (Watson 2001: 4). The popularity of US programmes among black audiences in the UK is a testimony to the need for the UK film and audiovisual industry to diversify its contents in order to survive at home as well as on a global level<sup>22</sup>. In fact, the Cabinet Office states that 'failure to make the most of the potential of ethnic minorities has an impact on the UK's economic performance' as between 1999 and 2009 they will account for half of the growth in the working age population (2003: 6).

Possible loss of audiences, the success of minority focused projects, the advantages of developing and mainstreaming innovative and modern contents that would make the UK film and television industries a global player are strong reasons in support of the business case for diversity in the sector.

Tim Bevan goes on to make a compelling point about creativity amongst diverse teams of filmmakers (UKFC 2003: 3):

<sup>20</sup> PVR is Personal Video Recorder.

<sup>21</sup> 80.2% of UK households have digital television in 2007 (<http://www.broadbandtvnews.com/>. 21 June 2007). See also IES (2004: 10, 33) and Sreberny (1999: 112).

<sup>22</sup> 'Black participants argued that US television includes many more Black people than UK television, particularly within comedy programmes. Indeed, there was a feeling that a lot of Black representation on British television is, in fact, American in origin' (Hargrave 2002: 22).

*Film is about storytelling and the whole process of filmmaking draws on people's life experiences. Filmmaking is about teamwork and diverse teams are more likely to be innovative and creative than those that are not.*

In management literature, the benefits of diversity, creativity, performance, flexibility and catering for different markets are widely documented. At an individual level and at work group level performance can be improved if diversity is managed effectively (Kossek and Lobel 1996). It has the potential to enhance creativity, problem-solving, workgroup cohesiveness and communication. At an organisational level, firms that manage diversity effectively will be able to adapt to diverse markets and recruit and retain the best workforce.

## 3 Review of Previous Research and Policy Documents

There is a body of literature which addresses both employment in the film and television industries and the representation of various minority groups by the media. This literature comprises both research output and strategy/policy documents. While both the research literature and the strategy/policy papers address the issue of cultural diversity broadly, where these focus on specific groups they are largely limited to ethnic minorities and women. To date other groups (the disabled and third age employees, for example) have featured less prominently. In preparing for the current research, both academic research and industry reports have been consulted.

### 3.1 Audience and Representation

Previous research in the UK on cultural diversity in film and television tended to focus on audiences. BFI's 2000 report *Black and Asian Film Research* uses quantitative (questionnaire) and qualitative (focus groups) methods to research audiences from African Caribbean and South Asian backgrounds of their film consumption habits. 37 film professionals were interviewed by telephone but the questions were mainly about audiences (BFI 2000). *Top 10 TV* (CRE 2001) looks at the main television genres and ethnic minority representation within them in terms of numbers and roles.

More up-to-date research is found in the BFI commissioned report *Media Culture* (Bennett et al 2006) which studied the 'cultural practices associated with film and television and their relations with social divisions among the contemporary British population' (2006: 4). In this recent report on onscreen portrayal, the main sample came from Indian, Pakistani and the Afro-Caribbean communities. The research examined consumption habits, preference for different channels, programmes and types of films. It followed a similar approach to *Black and Asian Film Research* (BFI 2000) in using combined quantitative and qualitative methods and a small sample of professionals.

These research reports not only focus predominantly on ethnicity but are limited to the main groups, African Caribbean and South Asian communities. *Media Culture* examines the participation in film and television culture associated with ethnicity, social class, age, gender and education and states that these personal characteristics are implicated in the process through which social inequalities are produced and reproduced in contemporary Britain (Bennett et al 2006: 7) (See also **Volume I 2.7**).

### 3.2 Employment in Film and Television

The advent of the Skillset census<sup>23</sup> has provided a much needed annual 'snapshot' of the film workforce, however, it was only in 2004 that the census was extended to the harder to reach production workforce (by telephone and

<sup>23</sup> In 2000, Skillset published its first ever census of the UK audio visual industries based on the survey conducted among the workforce. It was intended to be an annual exercise that provides data enabling Skillset to anticipate the training and recruitment needs of the sector. [http://www.skillset.org/uploads/pdf/asset\\_120.pdf?1](http://www.skillset.org/uploads/pdf/asset_120.pdf?1). Accessed 14 September 2007.

The census is now undertaken biannually and a workforce survey is conducted during the second year of a biannual cycle.

online availability), where employment is mainly and increasingly freelance (Skillset 2004: 4). Furthermore, while such a snapshot of the workforce is an essential starting point in addressing diversity issues, an understanding of the mechanisms by which the traditional shape of the workforce is reproduced is less well addressed in the literature and consequently less well understood.

Several studies that cover employment in the sector have combined qualitative and quantitative methods and research into audiences and producers. *Include Me In* (1999) is an early example examining television audience responses to the representation of different cultural groups but it also includes research into the experience of minority ethnic programme producers. Hargrave's 2002 report, *Multicultural Broadcasting*, for the Broadcasting Standards Commission and Independent Television Commission, principally examines attitudes of audiences and industry personnel towards multicultural broadcasting, i.e. the representation of minority groups on television and radio (and in comparison with advertising).

Campion (2005) updates the examination of the representation of cultural diversity in public service broadcasting. The study attempts to make a link between the lack of programme-makers from diverse backgrounds and the poor representation of the perspectives of those 'marginalised in society' (Campion 2005: Summary). The report is rich in empirical data although there is a lack of clear focus. The research is based on interviews with programme-makers and seeks to explain why marginalised groups in society are not represented accurately and fairly. The project is less concerned with the structural and economic factors inherent in the industry. It aims to examine cultural diversity although it largely restricts this to ethnicity.

Several recent research studies focus on the workforce and labour process whilst examining their relationship to representation. Watson's report for NESTA, *Pitch Black* (2001), considers how the participation of British black producers and black owned companies in the mainstream television industry can increase value and wealth, focusing particularly on the commissioning process. She conducted surveys of company principals, producers and NFTS graduates, content analysis of television advertisements and television programmes and one-to-one interviews with senior personnel within the broadcasting companies. Watson suggests that it is imperative that diversity initiatives are integrated into the mainstream and do not stand as a separate, marginalised part of the industry and argues that there should be more black leadership in the production sector (2001: 3).

*Researching the Independent Production Sector: A Focus on Minority Ethnic Led Companies* (IES 2004), commissioned by Pact and the UK Film Council, focuses on minority ethnic led production companies in a study of the barriers to success. Some of the main points it raises are:

- Unpaid work is more common amongst people from ethnic minority backgrounds.
- The commissioning process is particularly difficult for small independents (less than £1 million turnover/10 employees).
- Minority Ethnic Led (MEL) production companies are more likely to be 'one-man bands'.

- Black professionals are more likely to have higher qualifications; they are more likely to identify the lack of permanent positions as barriers.
- MEL production companies are more likely to experience a feeling of doing 'less well' and face difficulties in finding funding.
- MEL production companies are more likely to experience a feeling of lack of success due to lack of contacts, lack of advice from main bodies and pigeonholing.

In terms of methodology (mainly in-depth interviews), the IES research is closest to the current project, although it focuses on MEL companies rather than individuals as units of study.

A scoping study into the lack of women screenwriters in the UK was recently commissioned by the UK Film Council (IES 2006) to examine the barriers female scriptwriters face. The preliminary report ends with recommendations for further research, in particular around industrial practices and support for individuals. Although the current research does not focus on women screenwriters, we have interviewed many female practitioners in the media industries who elaborate upon some of the issues raised.

A recent study by the Working Lives Research Institute (WLRI 2006a, 2006b, Holgate and McKay 2007) aims to establish the significance of otherwise of informal recruitment practices in the audio visual industries and whether or not these have an adverse impact on maintaining or reproducing discrimination against black and minority ethnic workers. The research focuses on the experiences of final year students, recent graduates from media, film and television courses and new entrants in the audio visual industries in London. The scope of the study touches on issues of gender, but ethnicity and class remain the principal concerns. They found that EMG workers were 'twice as likely to have either witness, or been a victim of discrimination than white workers' relating to promotion, pay and recruitment (Holgate and McKay 2007: 8). 40% of EMG workers thought that their ethnic background had made it more difficult for them to get work in the sector (Holgate and McKay 2007: 8).

### 3.3 Academic Research

Historically, industrial processes in relation to film and television were under researched. A stream of literature emerged in the US in the 1980s in relation to the film industry and flexible specialisation of labour (Christopherson & Storper 1989, Storper 1989). However, they focus largely on industrial and organisational re-structuring.

Relatively little research has been done in this area in relation to the UK film and television industries. Barnatt and Starkey (1994) apply the idea of flexible networks in the changing UK television industry. The study is again based on analysis of the industry at organisational level, namely the outsourcing of programme making at the BBC and ITV since the launch of Channel 4. It also examines networks formed around productions. Dex et al (2000) consider how uncertainty of the television sector affects the freelance workers; many cope with the problem by diversifying income resources, building informal networks and thinking of leaving work in television. Blair's work (1998, 2001, 2003)

turns to the labour process within the UK film industry in relation to the way film productions are organised. She explores individual experiences through interviews, questionnaires and observation. McKinlay and Quinn (1999) explore the effects of digital change on collective bargaining power in the UK broadcasting industry. Dean's research into women performers (2005), although limited in scope, is another example of recent academic study that focuses on media professionals' work as a labour process.

### 3.4 Industry Publications

The research team also consulted policy oriented publications from the main broadcasters and key sector bodies, for example, ITV's *Cultural Diversity Guide* (2003), Pact's *Cultural Diversity Action Plan* (2002), Skillset's *A Bigger Future* (2003), UKFC's *Disability Equality Scheme* (n.d.). They inform the research of sector strategies and policies.

### 3.5 The Creating Difference Project

A robust investigation, employing qualitative methods that can get behind the more recently available figures for the production workforce and go beyond content analysis to examine mechanisms of reproduction and barriers, is essential in informing the debates around diversity within the UK film and television industries. The current research project will be the most extensive thus far in examining experiences of individual workers in the sector, in roles along the value chain from creative talents<sup>24</sup> to post-production, exhibition and distribution. Quantitative data inform our research but the bulk of the evidence comes from qualitative research. The sampling shows our commitment to a wide range of diversity issues, including disability, ethnicity, gender, geographical locations, age and class (See **Volume I section 2**).

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<sup>24</sup> Creative talents, a collective term for producers, directors, writers and cast.

## 4 Research Methodology

The research method adopted by the project followed a predominantly qualitative approach consisting of four stages: scoping study, semi-structured interviews, transcription and data inputting using NVivo (qualitative research software) and analysis.

### 4.1 Scoping Study

Desk top research as well as interviews with 28 representatives from key sector organisations and broadcasters were part of the scoping study (see **Appendix 3**).

The semi-structured interview method helped to clarify the industry accepted definitions of the terms used and to shape the direction and define the scope of the research. During this phase, information was also gathered about specific individuals and companies which helped in the preparation of case study materials.

This process helped to establish the key issues to be researched (disability, gender, ethnicity, age, regions and class), as well as suggesting the focus on topics less well researched thus far such as disability and geographical locations. The importance of age within the diversity agenda was highlighted at this stage due to the coming into effect of the Age Discrimination Act (2006).

### 4.2 Semi-structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were used both for the scoping study and during the main stage of the project to collect information from representatives from key sector and industry bodies as well as industry practitioners. The research team interviewed 71 industry practitioners and 28 representatives from the key sector bodies and broadcasters. The names and job titles of some of the key professionals are listed in the appendix with their explicit expression in order to show the depth of the research through a wide range of consultation with key sector bodies and broadcasters. Purposive sampling<sup>25</sup> was employed to select the interviewees to ensure that the interviews would yield data that cover the research topics. Industry professionals from underrepresented groups were proactively sought to positively ensure that previously marginalised voices might be heard. The practitioners were from a variety of backgrounds, different job roles with different employment status such as freelancers and professionals on temporary and permanent contracts (see **Appendices 3 and 4**). The identity of the interviewees has been kept confidential. All quotations are anonymous and chosen to represent individual experience and allow their voices to be heard. Where there was the possibility that the interviewees might be identified, approval was sought.

A sampling grid of the work roles from the entire value chain of the sector was prepared based on which the interviewees were contacted. The report *Achieving Diversity in the Film industry* (BSAC 2001:10) subdivides the workforce of the film industry into the following categories: Production – Creative; Production –

<sup>25</sup> Purposive sampling method enables the researcher to select cases that best help the researcher to address the research questions and objectives (Saunders et al 2003: 175).

Technical; Production – Financial; Distribution and Exhibition. This classification has been adopted and television specific roles have been included, such as commissioners, researchers and studio engineers. The list is not exhaustive. A detailed breakdown of the work roles is contained in the following Interviewees Sampling Grid.

### Interviewees Sampling Grid<sup>26</sup>

<p><b>Production: Creative</b> Producers Directors Writers Actors</p>
<p><b>Production Staff</b> Production Financial Legal Locations Casting Assistant Directors</p>
<p><b>Production Staff: Technical</b> Art/set decorating Camera Script/development Sound Video playback Costumes Makeup and hair</p>
<p><b>Post-production</b> Publicity/stills Editing/post-production Visual effects Special effects Music</p>
<p><b>Other</b> Stunts/doubles/stand-ins Electrical Props Construction Catering Transport</p>
<p><b>Distribution/ Exhibition</b> Sales Agent Distribution Exhibition Programmers Cinema management</p>
<p><b>Television Roles</b> Commissioners/Buyers Researcher Floor Manager Studio Engineer Editing Suite Scheduler Sales/Marketing</p>

<sup>26</sup> See also Appendix 4.

Snowballing techniques were used<sup>27</sup>. Professionals in certain harder-to-reach work roles such as post-production were actively pursued by making use of databases such as Production Base and mandy.com as well as the Film London website. The majority of the interviews with the industry professionals were conducted by one or two female EMG researchers. As some of the interviewees pointed out, the gender and ethnicity of the interviewers made them more comfortable and therefore perhaps more forthcoming with their views.

In the main phase of the research, semi-structured interviews were used to explore the barriers to diversity in the UK film and television industries and the effectiveness of the policies and interventions of the key sector bodies. The semi-structured format was used since it gave interviewees the opportunity to lead the process by expressing opinions or concerns and volunteering information that the interviewers might be unaware of or might not give importance to. The open ended and probing questions yielded in-depth information.

The interviews were mostly face-to-face, with a small number conducted by telephone or in groups. Each interview was approximately one hour long during which the following topics were covered: job role, entry into the industry, education and social background, self identity (as freelancer, permanent employee, sole trader and so on), examples of jobs/work history, sources of employment, barriers to progress, future in the sector and training. A monitoring form, containing questions about the background of the interviewees such as name, gender, age, average annual income, geographical location, educational qualification, professional qualification, ethnicity and disability, was also provided. 54 interviewees completed the voluntary monitoring form (See **Appendices 5 and 6**).

As class is a complex issue the interviewees were not asked directly which class they identify themselves with. Yet many interviewees made references to their class background during the course of the interviews. The discussion around class is also informed by the interviewees' educational background.

### 4.3 Transcription, Data Input and Analysis

NVivo 7, a qualitative research software, was used to analyse the interviews. The interviews were recorded using a digital recorder and the audio files were transcribed into Microsoft Word format. The text was then cross-checked with the audio files to avoid any errors. The text was imported into NVivo and stored. This process was repeated with all the interviews except in the case of two interviewees who refused permission for recording. The data were then coded and grouped under themes. Thorough analysis of the findings under each topic informed the main points contained in this report.

<sup>27</sup> Snowballing sampling is the recruitment of new samples through existing study subjects (often through accessing their contacts and social networks).

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## Appendix 1 Glossary

**Above-the-Line** - In the film industry, 'employees are categorized as "above-" or "below-the-line". Above-the-line employees are thought of as creative talent; while 'below the line' refers to technicians and support services (although it includes set designers and artists). The 'line' is an accounting demarcation used in developing the budget for production. Some above-the-line costs include the story rights, the screenplay, the producer, the director and the principal cast'. (Blair et al 2003: note 1)

**Access to work** - A scheme run by Jobcentre Plus to provide advice and practical support to disabled people and their employers to help overcome work related obstacles resulting from a disability

**BFI** – British Film Institute

**BJTC** – Broadcast Journalism Training Council

**BSC** - Broadcasting Standards Commission. The BSC has ceased to exist from December 2003 and its duties were assumed by Ofcom.

**BSCine** - British Society of Cinematographers

**BSL** – British Sign Language

**BVA** – British Video Association

**Cine Guilds of Great Britain** – They are The Association of Motion Picture Sound, The British Film Designers Guild, The British Society of Cinematographers, The Guild of British Camera Technicians, The Guild of British Film and Television Editors, The Guild of Location Managers and The Guild of Stunt and Action Co-ordinators.

**CIPD** –The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development

**Colour-blind casting** - Casting minority actors in roles where a white actor might be expected

**CRE** – Commission for Racial Equality

**Creative Talents** –A collective term for producers, directors, writers and cast. See also above-the-line.

**DDA** – Disability Discrimination Acts 1995 and 2005

**DfES** – Department for Education and Skills

**DP or DOP** – Director of Photography

**DPU** – Disability Programming Unit, the BBC

**DSN** – Digital Screen Network

**EMG** – Ethnic minority groups

**ESF** – European Social Fund

**FT2** – Film and Television Freelance Training

**IES** – Institute for Employment Studies

**Institutional Racism** – Collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people in different equality groups (UKFC 2003: 20)

**IPCs** – Independent production companies

**ITC** – Independent Television Commission. The ITC has ceased to exist from December 2003 and its duties have been assumed by Ofcom.

**Key Sector Professional** – See Appendix 3. The term is used to describe and anonymise representatives of key sector bodies, broadcasters and unions whom the project has consulted.

**Key Industry Professional** – See Appendix 4. The term is used to describe and anonymise senior managers in the film and television sector. They include executive producers and commissioners whose original job titles may identify them.

**LDAF** – London Disability Arts Forum

**NESTA** – National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts

**NFTS** – National Film and Television School

**Ofcom** - The Office of Communications

**Positive Action** - Section 47 of the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (the SDA) allows for the use of 'positive action' in a number of specific circumstances. Sections 37 and 38 of the Race Relations Act 1976 allow an employer to give special encouragement and provide specific training for a particular racial group.

**Positive Discrimination** – Choosing someone for employment solely on the grounds of their gender or racial group, and not on their abilities. It is illegal under UK anti-discrimination law (UKFC 2003: 21).

**RP** – Received pronunciation

**RSAs** – Regional Screen Agencies

**SIF** – The Skills Investment Fund. See **Volume III 3.3**.

**Social Model of Disability** – According to Disability Rights Commission, disabled people do not face disadvantages because of their impairments but experience discrimination in the way we organise society. This includes failing to make education, work, leisure and public services accessible, failing to remove barriers of assumption, stereotype and prejudice and failing to outlaw unfair treatment in our daily lives. See <http://www.drc-gb.org/citizenship/howtouse/socialmodel/index.asp>. Accessed 27 September 2007.

**SPV** – Special Purpose Vehicle

## Appendix 2

# Key Sector Organisations in the UK Film and Television Industries

### British Screen Advisory Council (BSAC)

The British Screen Advisory Council is an independent industry funded body. It is a forum for individuals and members, executives and specialists in the audio visual industries who do not directly represent the organisation for which they work. Members are chosen for their personal qualities and for their knowledge and experience of the many sectors of the audiovisual industries in the UK. In addition to serving on the Council, members form Working Groups set up on an ad hoc basis to deal with industry issues. The Council provides independent advice to government and policymakers at national, European and global levels.

### Broadcasting, Entertainment, Cinematograph and Theatre Union (BECTU)

BECTU is the independent union for those working in broadcasting, film, theatre, entertainment, leisure, interactive media and allied areas and are primarily based in the UK. The union represents permanently employed, contract and freelance workers within these sectors.

### Department of Culture Media and Sports (DCMS)

The DCMS is responsible for government policy on the arts, sport, the broadcasting and creative industries including film and the music industry, press freedom and regulation, licensing, gambling and the historic environment as well as the National Lottery, tourism, libraries, museums and galleries.

### Directors Guild of Great Britain

The Guild represents directors in all media: film, television, theatre, radio, opera and commercials, corporate, multimedia and new technology. It offers help with contracts, a campaigning voice, policy to influence the future of the industry and advice for members.

### EQUITY

Equity is a trade union that represents artists from across the entire spectrum of arts and entertainment. Equity includes members from the whole range of professional entertainment such as actors, singers, dancers, choreographers, stage managers, theatre directors and designers, variety and circus artists, television and radio presenters, walk-on and supporting artists, stunt performers and directors and theatre fight directors.

### New Producers' Alliance (NPA)

The NPA is a national membership and training organisation for independent new producers and filmmakers in the UK. The NPA is registered as a charity that provides access to contacts, information and advice regarding film production. It is a forum that has over 800 members, ranging from film students and first timers to highly experienced feature filmmakers, major production companies and industry affiliates.

## Producers Alliance for Cinema and Television (Pact)

Pact is the UK trade association that represents and promotes the commercial interests of independent feature film, television, animation and interactive media companies. It is a lobbying organisation that has regular dialogues with government, regulators, public agencies and opinion formers on all issues affecting its members and contributes to key public policy debates on the media industry, both in the UK and in Europe.

## The Production Guild of Great Britain

In 1999, The Guild of Film Production Accountants and Financial Administrators (GFPA) and The Guild of Film Production Executives (GFPE) merged to become The Production Guild of Great Britain. Its membership grades include all production grades, administrators, accountants and production co-ordinators. It aims to improve members' employment opportunities, inform, advise and give guidance, share best practice, encourage and foster new talent, lobby and campaign government on issues pertaining to film and television production.

## Screen Agencies

Regional Screen Agencies (RSAs) are self governing bodies which receive the majority of their funding from the UK Film Council through the Regional Investment Fund for England (RIFE). There are nine RSAs in England and they are charged with building the media sectors within the regions and encouraging public access to film culture. Set up during 2002-2003, they bring together existing regional film bodies, commissions and media development agencies. Northern Ireland Film & Television Commission, Scottish Screen and Film Agency for Wales have similar remits in the respective nations.

## Skillset

Skillset is a national training organisation for broadcast, film, video and multimedia. It develops and funds skills solutions, using third party training providers in the delivery. Skillset focuses on the following areas: careers, training, company support, standards, qualifications, research, strategy and funding. It undertakes this work across all the nations and regions of the UK.

## UK Film Council (UKFC)

The UK Film Council is the government-backed strategic agency for film in the UK. It invests government grant-in-aid and National Lottery money in film development and production, training, international development and export promotion, distribution and exhibition of films and in education. Its main aim is to stimulate a competitive, successful and vibrant UK film industry and culture, and to promote the widest possible enjoyment and understanding of cinema throughout the nations and regions of the UK.

## UK Post

UK Post is the trade body that represents the post-production and special effects sector in the UK and internationally. UK Post acts as a strategic lobbying body, support mechanism and voice of the sector with particular focus on fiscal, legislative and workforce issues.

### **Women in Film and Television (WFTV)**

WFTV is a membership association open to women with at least one year's professional experience in the television, film and/or digital media industries. WFTV exists to protect and enhance the status, interests and diversity of women working at all levels in film, television and the digital media industries. It has more than 800 members, covering a broad spectrum of skills and job descriptions, ranging from senior executives to lawyers, writers, directors to producers, actresses, accountants, DP's, composers, makeup artists and many others.

### **The Writers' Guild of Great Britain**

The Writers' Guild of Great Britain supports writers for television, film, radio, theatre, books and computer games. Members get access to free legal advice, as well as weekly information bulletins, a quarterly magazine and regular events.

## Appendix 3

### Professionals from Key Sector Bodies and Broadcasters Consulted

**Max Beckmann**

Equality Officer, Equity

**Sue Caro**

Senior Diversity Manager, Portrayal, BBC

**Jane Cussons**

CEO, Women in Film and Television (at the time of the interview)

**Equality Committees, Equity**

4 Representatives

**Mary Fitzpatrick<sup>28</sup>**

Editorial Executive, Diversity, BBC

(Formerly Editorial Manager of Cultural Diversity, Channel 4)

**Sarah Hamill**

Extend Co-ordinator, BBC

**Laurie Hayward**

CEO, Screen East

**Susan Kennedy**

Film Company Support Scheme, Skillset

**Susy Liddell**

Head of Production, BBC Films

**Peter McGettrick**

Service Lead, Disability Access Services, BBC HR Direct

**Chris Maguire**

Training & Professional Development Manager, Four Corners Film

**David Martin**

CEO, Production Guild

**Sally Milne**

Head of Resourcing and Diversity, ITV

**Adam Minns**

Head of Policy Development, Pact

**Carla Mitchell**

Development Director, Four Corners Film

**Daniell Morrissey**

HR & Development Manager, BBC

**Catherine Philips**

Audio Visual Entrepreneurship Partnership Co-ordinator, Skillset

**David Pope**

CEO, New Producers Alliance

**Richard Southorn**

Access Unit Manager, BBC HR Direct

**Gary Townsend**

Executive Director - Corporate Affairs & Organisational Development, Skillset

**Janice Turner**

Diversity Officer, BECTU

**Alison Walsh**

Editorial Manager - Disability, Channel 4

**John Wilkinson**

Chief Executive, Cinema Exhibitors' Association Ltd.

**Marcia Williams**

Head of Diversity, UK Film Council

**Marsha Witter**

Foundation Placement Scheme Manager, ITV Yorkshire

<sup>28</sup> Mary Fitzpatrick was interviewed twice, as Editorial Executive, Diversity, BBC and whilst working at Channel 4.

## Appendix 4

### List of Film and Television Practitioners Interviewed

<p><b>Production Staff: Creative</b></p> <p>Producers Directors Writers Actors</p>	<p>Actors' Agent Female Disabled Filmmaker (3) Female Disabled Producer Female EMG Producer (2) Female Head of Production Key Industry Professional (5) Male Disabled Actor (3) Male Disabled EMG Filmmaker Male Disabled Filmmaker Male Disabled Journalist (2) Male Disabled Producer Male EMG Actor (2) Male EMG Filmmaker (5) Male EMG Producer/Director Male EMG Screenwriter Male Director Male Screenwriter</p>
<p><b>Production Staff</b></p> <p>Production Financial Legal Locations Casting Assistant Directors</p>	<p>Female Disabled Researcher (2) Female EMG Assistant Accountant Female EMG Assistant Producer Female EMG Researcher (3) Human Resources Professional (3) Key Industry Professional Male Disabled Assistant Producer (2) Male Disabled Researcher Male Production Manager</p>
<p><b>Production Staff: Technical</b></p> <p>Art/Set Decorating Camera Script/Development Sound Video playback Costumes Makeup and Hair</p>	<p>Female Camera Crew (2) Female Makeup Artist Male Camera Operator/Trainer Male Disabled Camera Crew Male EMG Sound Technician</p>
<p><b>Post-Production</b></p> <p>Publicity/Stills Editing/Post-Production Visual Effects Special Effects Music</p>	<p>Female Assistant Producer Female EMG Filmmaker/Editor Female EMG Subtitler Female Texture Artist</p>

<p><b>Production: Other</b>                  Stunts/Doubles/                  Stand-ins                  Electrical                  Props                  Construction                  Catering                  Transport</p>	<p>Stunt Co-ordinator (2)</p>
<p><b>Distribution/                  Exhibition</b>                  Sales Agent                  Distribution                  Exhibition                  Programmers                  Cinema Management</p>	<p>Female Industry Professional                  Key Sector Professional                  Male CEO of Media Company</p>
<p><b>Television Roles</b>                  Commissioners/Buyers                  Researcher                  Floor Manager                  Video Operator                  Studio Engineer                  Editing Suite                  Scheduler                  Sales Staff                  Marketing</p>	<p>Female EMG Camera Crew                  Male EMG Engineer</p>
<p><b>Other</b></p>	<p>Access Co-ordinator                  CEO, Disability Training and Consultancy Company                  Disability Quality Trainer and Consultant                  Female Disabled CEO of Media Company                  Key Sector Professional                  Male EMG CEO of Media Company                  Representative from Regional Training Organisation</p>

Total: 71

## Appendix 5 Monitoring Form

Please take a few minutes to complete this form. All information provided will be kept confidential.

### Background information about you.

Name

Male  Female

Age

18-29

30-39

40-49

50-59

60+

What has been your average annual income over the last 5 years (or length in industry whichever longer)?

Under £8000

£8000-£11999

£12000-£19999

£20000-£29999

£30000-£39999

Over £40000

In which region/ city are you located?

How long have you been in this location?

What is your highest educational qualification (including subject)?

Where did you obtain the qualification?

What is your highest professional qualification?

## Disability

The definition of disability under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 is a physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

**Do you consider yourself to be disabled within the definition of the DDA?**

Yes  No

## Ethnicity

Please tick the category that you feel best describes your ethnic origin (we are using the 2001 Census classification).

### White

British  Irish

Any other White background (please write in) \_\_\_\_\_

### Mixed

White and Black Caribbean  White and Black African  White and Asian

Any other Mixed background (please write in) \_\_\_\_\_

### Asian or Asian British

Indian  Pakistani  Bangladeshi

Any other Asian background (please write in) \_\_\_\_\_

### Black or Black British

Caribbean  African

Any other Black background (please write in) \_\_\_\_\_

### Chinese or Other Ethnic Background

Chinese

Any other (please write in) \_\_\_\_\_

Information refused

## Appendix 6 Data from the Monitoring Forms

Completed monitoring forms: 54 out of 71 respondents

### Age

18-29	14
30-39	23
40-49	14
50-59	3

### Gender

Male	29
Female	25

### Disability

Yes	17
No	33
No Details	4

### Locations

London	41
South East	4
South West	1
Midlands	1
North West	5
Yorkshire	1
Scotland	1

### Ethnicity

White British	24
Chinese	6
Black – African	4
Black – Caribbean	3
Asian – Indian	3
Asian – Bangladeshi	1
Asian British Sri Lankan	1
Asian – Pakistani	1
Asian – Sri Lankan	1
Black – Caribbean – African	1
British – Asian	1

British Chinese (Mixed)	1
British Irish	1
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1
Mixed – White and Asian	1
White – French	1
White – Hungarian	1
White Irish	1

### Education

Higher Education	41
A Levels, Further Education	3
GCSE, O Levels, School Leavers	3
Acting Diploma	1
Life Experience/None	2
No Details	4

### Income

Under £8000	7
£8000-11999	1
£12000-19999	8
£20000-29999	20
£30000-39999	7
Over £40000	10
No Details	1

# Volume II Exploring the Barriers

## Introduction

Volume II explores the barriers that the underrepresented groups face in the UK film and television industries. The first section of the volume deals with the main issues under the diversity agenda: disability, gender, ethnicity, geographic locations, age and social class. The second section outlines the general barriers faced by those belonging to underrepresented groups while entering and progressing in the sector, including factors such as training and recruitment practices.

## 1 Key Issues in Diversity

### 1.1 Disability

There are 11 million people with disabilities in the UK, about 18% of the population<sup>1</sup>. The number of disabled people working in the audio visual sector is only 1% of the total workforce which clearly is not representative of the disabled population in the country (Skillset 2006: 3). The Department of Work and Pensions states that the spending power of disabled people is estimated at £80 billion but as their choices also affect those of family, friends and colleagues, this figure could be effectively doubled which should make them an attractive target market for the broadcasters and advertisers<sup>2</sup>.

The figures from the research carried out by the BBC on disabled audiences reveal that disabled adults are more likely to watch television every day (92% of 15 - 34s and 94% of 65+) and are also more likely to watch more of it (over an hour more per day) than their non-disabled peers<sup>3</sup>. An estimated 26% of the daytime television audiences are disabled but they are underrepresented both on and off-screen. Only 11% of television programmes portray disability. Production types which portray disability more are comedy (1.9%), film (1.8%) and drama (1.1%) and those with the lowest representation are soaps (0.2%), light entertainment (0.5%), news (0.6%) and factual (0.7%)<sup>4</sup>. Despite the low representation of disabled people, factual television and radio programmes are the most important source of information about disability for non-disabled people, while for the disabled it is the second most important source after personal experience<sup>5</sup>.

The above mentioned BBC research shows that a key concern of disabled people is that the media do not portray their everyday lives. Other criticisms include patronising and demeaning onscreen portrayal and a lack of representation in television programmes. Higher representation by the disabled through employment in the industry could improve the accuracy and frequency of onscreen portrayal.

This section examines the barriers faced by disabled professionals in entering and progressing in the UK film and television industries.

#### 1.1.1 Attitudes and Perceptions

A disabled producer believes that attitudes towards disabled professionals in the sector are changing. Potential employers are more aware of disabilities and are less likely to discriminate than they used to be. But there are still individuals who make assumptions about the potential of disabled professionals and might not be inclined to offer work to them.

Several interviewees point out that some people in the industry are uncomfortable around disabled professionals because they are ignorant

1 See <http://www.scope.org.uk/disablism/facts.shtml> and <http://www.bbc.co.uk/commissioning/marketresearch/audiencegroup7.shtml>. Accessed 19 June 2007.

2 <http://www.scope.org.uk/disablism/facts.shtml>. Accessed 19 June 2007.

3 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/commissioning/marketresearch/audiencegroup7.shtml>. Accessed 19 June 2007.

4 See <http://www.efd.org.uk/www/bcidn/guides/research/onscreen-representations.doc>. Accessed 19 June 2007.

5 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/commissioning/marketresearch/audiencegroup7.shtml>. Accessed 19 June 2007.

and fearful of disabilities. Experiences shared by disabled interviewees show that some industry professionals offend their disabled colleagues because of prejudices they may not be aware of. A disabled journalist who was newly transferred to an office was given a desk at the far corner of the room because some colleagues thought he might want 'a bit of space'. But this, according to him, was a physical representation of their attitude towards him.

A disabled researcher observes that during several productions the hearing crew with which he worked did not give enough respect to their deaf colleagues and considered them as less intelligent. He feels that there was overt discrimination in the work environment. A disabled camera operator observes that those working in the industry are not used to working with deaf people. He feels that they do not really want to include a deaf crew member for fear of slowing the production process down because the media world is pressured with deadlines and fast moving.

Another disabled researcher, however, claims that she had a very pleasant experience when she started a new role, most of the colleagues in the office approached her to talk or emailed her in order to make her feel welcome. She rates the company as the best she has worked in.

The attitudes of those working in the sector are reflected in their behaviour towards disabled professionals. The career progression of disabled professionals potentially depends on those attitudes. A disabled journalist believes that the opportunity given to him by the news editor to cover a recent war was encouraging as it demonstrated the confidence in his ability to do the job despite his disability.

Several interviewees suggest that it is the attitude of line management that determines the behaviour of colleagues towards disabled professionals. If line management shows a positive attitude towards accepting disabled practitioners then others may follow the lead. On the other hand, negative attitudes by line management give others a licence to behave negatively. A disabled journalist outlines how the negative attitude of middle management affects the career progression of disabled practitioners:

*I think there's almost a subliminal or subconscious attitude that says, well look, you're disabled. We'll give you a job, you should be happy with that, you know? Never mind that you've been a researcher for the last ten years while all your contemporaries have moved up to assistant producer, producer and then executive producer. I think ...there is a tail end of paternalism about the whole thing. It's disappearing, but it is there.*

Many interviewees also express their resentment over being pigeonholed into working only on programmes related to disability (**see Volume II 2.2**). In spite of her minimum access needs, a disabled researcher contends that she gets offers to work only on specialist programmes. A disabled researcher said that the reason she dropped out of the sector was because the number of specialist programmes made was minimal and the opportunities available were insufficient to sustain a career. Furthermore, a deaf camera crew member who has worked on *Vee TV*, Channel 4's magazine style programme for deaf people, claims that when it was taken off air many competent deaf producers and directors had to

drop out of the television industry because they could not get other jobs in the media.

Several interviewees comment on the 'glass ceiling' that exists in the industry preventing the career progression of marginalised groups including disabled professionals. A disabled journalist points out that in spite of getting positive appraisals he has never been used for any flagship programmes made by the broadcaster. This makes him feel less valued and he wonders whether it is because of his disability.

In spite of successfully working with non-disabled people on disability related specialist programmes, many disabled practitioners are unable to break into mainstream media. A disabled camera operator notes that in spite of being appreciated for his crewing skills, his experiences are all confined to working on specialist programmes. He maintains that though he has good working relations with many producers, once they move to other departments, he does not get further opportunities to work with them. This shows reluctance on the part of non-disabled professionals who are in decision-making capacities to recommend disabled crew. This could be because of the lack of confidence in the ability of the disabled crew to work successfully in the mainstream industry or a general reluctance to promote disabled practitioners.

### 1.1.2 Access Needs

Lack of accessibility is another barrier that disabled practitioners face. The access needs of disabled professionals are different for people with different disabilities. For some of our interviewees, the needs may be physical accessibility to buildings while for others it might be a height adjustable desk, a large monitor screen or a track ball mouse. People with similar disabilities can have different access needs. One of the deaf researchers we interviewed needs a text phone and an interpreter, while a hard of hearing practitioner wants an office that has carpeted instead of wooden floor for better sound insulation.

Several disabled professionals protest against the tendency of some individuals in the sector to pigeonhole them together and treat them as a homogenous group. Deaf professionals point out that they ought to be considered as within a different category as their needs are largely communicational, while some disabled practitioners have physical access needs. A deaf camera crew member maintains that deaf people should be considered as a linguistic minority whose first language is British Sign Language:

*We share an issue more with a linguistic minority, but the biggest fundamental difference is, we can't learn to speak a language. People who have ethnic linguistic needs can. They can learn English. We can't... we can't learn to hear. But we share common ground, we don't really fit into the disability spectrum, which is more accessibility, modification of equipment, access ramps.*

Not meeting the access needs of disabled people could deny them the opportunity of competing on equal terms and it could also make them feel unwelcome. A disabled filmmaker cites her experience of going for an interview on a radio journalism course as an example. In that particular instance, the interviewers refused to guarantee a socket for her computer so she could

complete a test. They also had not made arrangements for her to go on the office tour. These experiences made her feel that she had no chance of being selected for the course.

Several interviewees note that there are public buildings which are not designed to accommodate the access needs of disabled people. The lack of consideration and understanding of access needs shown by some key sector bodies while choosing the venue for public events are seen as reflection of their attitude towards the disabled, as these interviewees explain:

*I look at the Film Council and they are at least 25 years behind and I think the problem for me is that there are places outside film I would go to and I'd say, this is the problem, how do we solve it, and they'd go, oh God, how did we not think of that, let's sort it. Whereas with film they just seem to go, yes, and, but we're fine. That's where I just don't even know where to go with it.*  
(Disabled Director)

*Where you choose to exist, it kind of tells people if you want diverse people or not in your building. Look at UK Film Council, it is the most inaccessible place. The ground floor is relatively OK, but if you are working there, it's a nightmare ... You won't be able to park anywhere if you have to access your car.*  
(Disabled Filmmaker)

A disabled journalist comments that the BBC is not very good at thinking ahead and designing accessibility into its systems. The focus is on adapting the systems rather than designing them to be accessible from the beginning. A disabled documentary filmmaker maintains that most of the post-production facilities in Soho are not accessible.

Some disabled television professionals mention their reluctance to ask for access needs that could facilitate their working to be met. A disabled professional recounts that when he started working in the BBC he did not appreciate that he should ask for any special needs to be met. He rethought his strategy after injuring himself. He states that having an assistant now helps him to focus all his energy in working rather than exhausting himself simply to stay afloat. He says that it is important to get people to be sufficiently comfortable around disability so that they can declare their disabilities without feeling that they are admitting their inner most weaknesses.

### 1.1.3 Recruitment Practices

Lack of enlightened recruitment practices is identified as one of the barriers preventing the entry and career progression of disabled professionals in the UK film and television industries. Nonetheless, several disabled interviewees believe that including their names in employee databases or sending curriculum vitae to employers are not effective practices as recruiters prefer to hire non-disabled professionals over them:

*... I have got my name on lists. I always put down that I'm deaf as well, but of course, out of thousands and thousands of people on a list, they're like, oh I'm not picking a deaf person who I've never worked with, I'll go with a hearing person.*  
(Disabled Camera Crew)

Word of mouth referrals and contacts are the usual sources of work in the sector. Many disabled professionals make contacts, especially with other disabled colleagues, and are able to take advantage of these networks (see **Volume II 2.2**). However, these practices could also adversely affect disabled professionals. A deaf camera operator observes that not being able to talk to producers and directors casually, to network and to build up contacts, has affected his chances of getting work. Using an interpreter in a fast paced conversation, for instance in a pub, is not considered to be an effective strategy in building contacts.

A disabled filmmaker argues that there is a class and educational hierarchy in the recruitment of disabled practitioners within the sector. She asserts that middle class white males are the first to be employed among disabled practitioners. Several Oxbridge educated disabled practitioners acknowledge that having been to those universities has helped their careers. The effect of social class and education on recruitment is dealt with in detail in **Volume II 1.6**.

### 1.1.4 Disability Benefits, Access to Work and Freelancers

Several interviewees express the opinion that it is nearly impossible for disabled people to come off benefits and rely solely on the income from television and film work. A disabled filmmaker, who has been part of a consultancy team for setting up a website to advise disabled arts practitioners, notes that an important issue that they deal with is how to make the transition from benefits to income. She says that many disabled professionals are in uncertain financial situations; they do not want to lose their benefits as it is very difficult to get them back again. This is how a disabled filmmaker handles her finances:

*... I'm on Income Support with a Severe Disability Premium, so I get full Housing Benefit to pay my rent and Council Tax Benefit. Meanwhile, when I get a fee I have a separate account and it goes in that account and I'm in a constant state of setting up in business, so the benefits and tax people have accepted that I've never quite managed to set up in business. In the past the income in that account came from charitable donations. Whatever I would raise for equipment that I needed paid for disability related expenses connected with setting up in business... I want to be in business, but it's just not been possible yet.*

Many disabled practitioners express the desire to come off benefits and become income earning. But the complicated bureaucratic procedure of making the transition from being on benefits to income and the risk involved if one has to go back to benefits discourages them from doing so.

Several disabled professionals we interviewed comment that the Access to Work scheme has been extremely beneficial<sup>6</sup>. According to a deaf camera operator who runs a film production company, Access to Work enabled him to start the company and not rely on benefits. A disabled journalist says that the scheme helped him to concentrate on the job. He continues,

*I have Access to Work funding for a full time [Personal Assistant]. Now that's made all the difference in the world to me because, whatever job*

<sup>6</sup> See [http://www.mib.org.uk/xpedio/groups/public/documents/publicwebsite/public\\_atwemp.hcsp](http://www.mib.org.uk/xpedio/groups/public/documents/publicwebsite/public_atwemp.hcsp) and [http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/EmploymentSupport/WorkSchemesAndProgrammes/DG\\_4000347](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/EmploymentSupport/WorkSchemesAndProgrammes/DG_4000347). Accessed 13 July 2007.

*[broadcaster] throws at me, I know I can do it because I've got somebody to help me, to assist me. Access to Work also funds transport for me to work and within work, so I no longer have to fight my way on and off the tube and all of that kind of malarkey.... I was expending a lot of energy just being me and now I can devote 100% of my energy to doing a really good job for [broadcaster], so I'm more productive and I'm more efficient, and hopefully more creative as well....*

However, many interviewees comment on the lack of awareness about the Access to Work scheme in the sector. The bureaucratic procedure of applying for Access to Work and the time delay in getting the grants has also been identified as a negative aspect of the scheme. A deaf researcher says that the company she worked for had to make the last payment to the interpreters when Access to Work did not. She fears that the company might be reluctant to take on any more disabled professionals because of the negative experience. A disabled filmmaker states that Access to Work would work for people in permanent positions but not in a freelance world because application needs to be made afresh for each new contract. This affects the financial situation of disabled practitioners. A disabled filmmaker states that since the contracts are short and there is no guarantee that there will be work immediately after one job ends, many disabled workers hesitate to make the transition to income earning and volunteer to work for free. This deaf researcher explains,

*Short term jobs, it's very difficult for somebody to get the Access set up in time, the job is over by the time it's set up.*

### 1.1.5 Lack of Role Models and Mentoring

The lack of role models for disabled people working in film and television is commented on by several disabled professionals. A disabled director notes that when she started working in the industry she had to make her own way as there was no set career path for disabled filmmakers to follow.

A disabled journalist suggests that disabled people might not even consider media as a potential career option because of the lack of role models. But as a key industry professional (see **Glossary**) observes, without new entrants in the sector, there will be no role models:

*I don't know whether it's because there aren't enough role models higher up the food chain, and that therefore they think there's no point, but actually unless they come in through the ground, there won't be enough role models.*

Several interviewees assert that the lack of mentoring of disabled practitioners is one of the barriers that impede their career progression. A disabled filmmaker comments that the careers of disabled practitioners are seldom nurtured the way the careers of non-disabled counterparts are. When he proposed the idea of commissioning a television programme with two disabled actors who had appeared in a recent drama, he was told by the commissioners that,

*... 'oh we love the idea, we want you to do something with [writer], but we've seen [the disabled actors], so can you find somebody else'.... [I thought] do*

*you say that to all the actors? Do you say, you've seen Sarah Lancashire, you don't want her in something?*

According to this filmmaker, the commissioners usually do not hesitate to employ non-disabled actors repeatedly in different projects and mentor their careers.

A disabled filmmaker argues that the sector usually treats disabled filmmakers as new entrants despite their having worked in film and television for many years. She was introduced by Channel 4 which broadcasted one of her short films as a new director in spite of several years of industrial experience:

*...this is something I've faced all the way through my career. Whatever I'm doing, it's always going to be my first film, and it's always going to be at an entry level.* (Disabled Filmmaker)

### 1.1.6 Onscreen Portrayal

The report, *On Screen Representations of Disability*, which was prepared for the Broadcasting and Creative industry's Disability Network (BCIDN), finds that there has been no significant improvement in the onscreen representation of disabilities in recent years. In the recent You Gov poll<sup>7</sup> conducted by BCIDN, a majority of those polled said they would like to see more disabled people on screen. According to the report, only 9% disagreed with the statement that there should be more portrayal of disabled people on television in a wider variety of roles. Despite the evidence, there seems to be reluctance among programme-makers to cast disabled actors.

Non-disabled actors are often cast as disabled characters. Traditionally, high profile awards, such as Oscars, have been given for disability portrayal and 'there... is a fascination in watching non-disabled actors play the alien "other"' (Pointon & Davies 1997: 53). An agent of disabled actors and models referred to a film production company, which, when criticised for using non-disabled actors to play disabled characters, claimed that there was a lack of disabled actors. However, Equity has published a register of just under 200 disabled actors and there is an agency called *Visible* that solely represents disabled actors and models (BCIDN n.d.).

In the mainstream media, disabled characters often represent either a token presence or stereotypical characters. A longstanding stereotype of disabled characters on film is the evil villain. Sutherland points out that 'physical abnormality is used to denote menace' and onscreen portrayal of such stereotypes reinforces these ideas (1997: 17). This is also commented on by a disabled actor:

*Well, they often have an impairment to denote evil...Giant guy with teeth, Blofeld has a patch over his eye.*

He claims that casting non-disabled actors in the disabled roles often result in inaccurate portrayal. There should be more informed programmes around disabilities where the portrayal is accurate. According to him this is not happening in UK film and television as opposed to other platforms such as fringe theatre. It may be argued that 'good' actors can play disabled or non-disabled

<sup>7</sup> See <http://www.employers-forum.co.uk/www/bcidn/guides/research/yougov-report.html>. Accessed 3 July 2007.

roles. However, disabled actors are not given the opportunities to represent themselves and non-disabled characters are seldom given to disabled actors, as attested by an agent (see **Volume II 2.2**).

Several interviewees commented on the use of disabled people in reality shows, such as Pete (Bennett), the contestant with Tourette's symptom for the programme, *Big Brother* (7th series 2006) which was produced by Endemol and broadcasted by Channel 4. While noting the argument that using disabled people on reality shows could be exploitative, the general consensus was it increased the mainstream acceptance of disabilities. A key industry professional observes that there was general acclaim for Pete on *Big Brother* and it provided information about Tourette's symptom.

### 1.1.7 Overcoming Barriers

Increased representation of disabled people on and off-screen could help people to understand more about disabilities and overcome their prejudices. A deaf researcher says that she hopes to change the attitudes of people by her work in the sector.

#### I Technology

Technological advancements can help disabled people to overcome many of the physical barriers. Mobile technology and various software packages enable disabled professionals to perform tasks which were previously difficult or impossible. A disabled journalist states that he familiarises himself with the latest technological advances to help him offset the disadvantages he has and to gain an edge in the workplace. He gives an example:

*I was one of the first people to send a piece that I'd recorded, what we call 'a package' which is a 3 or 4 minute report, a feature, different interviews all cut together and bits of sound and your script and everything. I was one of the first people to send one of those via FTP, the file transfer [protocol], over the internet, from...California... the good thing from my point is that I got across the technology and what that meant is that I... didn't have to go wandering one of the radio stations in Los Angeles trying to work their equipment.*

A disabled actor suggests that the CGI technology which was used to transform able-bodied actors into disabled characters should also be used to give disabled actors more opportunities in mainstream programmes.

#### II Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 was passed to make it unlawful to discriminate against disabled persons in connection with employment, the provision of goods, facilities and services or the disposal or management of premises; to make provision about the employment of disabled persons; and to establish a National Disability Council<sup>8</sup>.

A casting agent says that the DDA has made positive improvement to people's knowledge about disability. The advertising campaigns that were in the television and in the national press had challenged people's preconceptions about disability. A disabled filmmaker points out that because of DDA, key sector bodies

<sup>8</sup> See <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts1995/95050-a.htm#1>. Accessed 13 July 2007. See also [http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2005/ukpga\\_20050013\\_en\\_1](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2005/ukpga_20050013_en_1) on the Disability Discrimination Act 2005. Accessed 27 September 2007.

have to consider disabled filmmakers for the funding opportunities available:

*I got a call from [a key sector body], saying we've got a scheme to support directors to make their first feature films and we'd like to support you, could you let us know if you've got any projects, whatever, and I met her, and I realised that probably that had come from, oh my God, the boxes, you know, we've got to have a ... disabled director ... are there any disabled directors?*

Nevertheless, several interviewees note that though the DDA has been instituted to make it illegal for disabled people to be discriminated against, disabled professionals still cannot compete equally in the workplace because of the range of barriers referred to here.

### III The Access Unit

The Access Unit, which was previously a part of BBC but now outsourced to an independent company, Capita, takes care of the access needs of disabled professionals working for the BBC. It handles the assessment process for disabled employees, evaluates the environment they will be working in and makes adjustments to enable them to do their job well. It also assists disabled employees to secure funding from Access to Work. In short, it ensures that disabled practitioners have everything they need to assist them to do their job. A key industry professional notes that outsourcing the Access Unit to an independent company may open up the services of the unit to other broadcasters and independent companies while previously they were available only within the BBC.

### IV The Broadcasters and Creative Industries Disability Network (BCIDN)

The BCIDN<sup>9</sup> brings together the broadcasters to address disability issues in the UK television industry. All the major broadcasters have signed up to the BCIDN manifesto and have set up action plans to increase the representation of disabled people in the industry. See **Volume III 3.6**.

### V Positive Onscreen Portrayal

Increasing onscreen portrayal and working with disabled actors can dispel fear and ignorance about disability. A disabled documentary filmmaker cites the experience of making *Desparados*, the BBC programme about wheelchair basketball users, which had a positive impact on the crew. He says that many of the crew members cited it as a positive programme-making experience; one said that it changed his expectations and knowledge of disability. The screening of the programme to a group of young children also elicited positive responses and the recommendation that it should be seen more widely.

### VI Positive Role Models

Several interviewees, who have successful careers in the television industry, claim that they chose to make their careers in the industry after interacting with disabled role models. A disabled journalist says that he was asked by a disabled professional who was then working for BBC radio to consider a career in the industry. A disabled documentary filmmaker says he was inspired by the theatre

<sup>9</sup> See <http://www.employers-forum.co.uk/www/bcidn/index.html>. Accessed 25 June 2007.

company Graeae and Nabil Shaban, a disabled actor<sup>10</sup>. Positive role models can encourage disabled people to consider a career in the industry. Similarly it can also bring about a positive change of attitude amongst non-disabled colleagues towards disabled practitioners in the sector.

### 1.1.8 Summary

There is a **lack of both on and off-screen representation** of disabled people. Many disabled characters are played by non-disabled actors, which take away opportunities for disabled actors, who are rarely invited to play non-disabled roles. Barriers for disabled professionals in the sector include **prejudice and lack of knowledge** by many potential employers of their capabilities. The **attitude of line management** determines the attitude and behaviour of others towards their disabled colleagues. Disabled professionals are often **pigeonholed** into working on disability related programmes and find it hard to break into mainstream television. It is also claimed that their careers in the sector are **not mentored** like those of their non-disabled counterparts. As a consequence of **the lack of role models** in the film and television industries, disabled people might be deterred from considering working in the sector.

**Lack of physical access** to buildings discriminates against disabled people in the workplace. In a sector dominated by freelance work and short term contracts, it is difficult for disabled professionals to make the transition from being on **disability benefits** to earning income due to the complicated bureaucratic procedure of benefit applications which they have to go through each time a contract ends.

Interviewees reported largely positive outcomes from the **Disability Discrimination Acts** (DDA 1995 and 2005). The **Access to Work** scheme has enabled many disabled professionals to work in the sector and **technological advances** often help overcome physical barriers. The **Access Unit**, which was previously a part of BBC but now outsourced to an independent company, Capita, ensures that disabled practitioners get the assistance they require and their access needs are met to enable them to do their jobs. Across the sector, the Broadcasting and Creative Industries Disability Network (BCIDN) brings together the broadcasters to address disability in the television industry and to formulate action plans to increase representation of disabled practitioners.

<sup>10</sup> Graeae is a disabled-led theatre company that profiles the skills of actors, writers and directors with physical and sensory impairments. The artistic approach creates aesthetically accessible productions that include a disabled and non-disabled audience. Nabil Shaban is one of the founders of the company.

### 1.1.9 Recommendations

- Producers and casting directors should be encouraged to consider disabled actors in a variety of roles, not just as disabled characters.
- The benefits of the Access to Work scheme should be publicised widely to encourage employers to employ disabled professionals without fear of incurring extra costs; further research should be conducted to explore how it could work more effectively for people on short term contracts.
- Technology that could enhance the work of disabled professionals should be utilised wherever possible.
- Measures need to be taken to retain disabled practitioners who are already working in the sector so that they can progress, for example, by providing mentoring support.
- Further research should be conducted to examine the impact of the DDA on the careers of disabled practitioners in the sector.

## 1.2 Gender

According to the Skillset Employment Census 2006, 38% of the audio visual workforce are women (Skillset 2006: 5), but the male/female ratio is not uniform throughout the film and television industries. In certain occupational groups such as makeup & hairdressing and costume & wardrobe, the percentage of women working is as high as 87% while in the camera department it is only 16%. In the exhibition sector, 64% of cinema cleaners but only 13% of cinema projectionists are women.

In addition to the gender imbalance within certain sectors in the industry, there is evidence that it is increasingly difficult for women to progress within the industry, as these interviewees suggest:

*...the further up you go, the less chances they'll [employers] take on you...*  
(Female EMG Assistant Producer)

*I think at senior roles...there's still more men than women.*  
(Key Industry Professional)

This section of the volume examines the barriers to gender equality in the sector.

### 1.2.1 Self Selection and Cultural Conditioning as Barriers

Occupations with low female representation in the workforce include special physical effects (28%), camera (16%), lighting (8%), sound (18%), broadcast engineering (15%) and post-production (18%) (Skillset 2006: 14). Self selection could be one of the reasons for gender imbalance; females might not be considering these occupational roles as potential career options. For instance, a female makeup artist believes that there is a higher proportion of women in the hair & makeup and costume & wardrobe departments because 'culturally it is a thing that women would naturally do'.

Similarly, it could be cultural conditioning that kept women out of technical roles and the post-production industry.

Inadequate career advice could be a contributing factor to self selection. A key sector professional (see **Glossary**) comments that careers advice in schools does not show girls that they can perform a range of work roles:

*...we get anecdotal stories all the time of girls who said, oh well I wasn't told I could do this, I wasn't told I could do that. I was told, go and do whatever, and I honestly think that in our industry, there is an extraordinary lack of knowledge in careers advice, which has a very bad effect on women.*

As a result there might be gender imbalance in education and training for the technical roles as well. An HR professional in a post-production company comments that there were only two female applicants for the internship programme that they ran and the male-female ratio of the interns selected was 7:1.

Many interviewees observe that the differences in behaviour between men and women have also contributed to the gender imbalance. A female assistant producer takes the view that men have proved to be far more confident in selling themselves while fear of failure hinders the career progression of many

women. Some interviewees suggest that they might not have come across as confidently as the men they were competing against in job interviews. This could have a detrimental effect on their careers as in the freelance world one had to constantly attend job interviews and prove oneself:

*...the nature of freelancing is that ....this is because of the way the interview works, you have to always prove yourself on your jobs....you always have to prove to your next employer ...to give you a chance, and that can be difficult and I think it's especially difficult for women.*

(Female Assistant Producer)

## 1.2.2 Attitudes and Perceptions

### I. Perceptions about Women's Ability

During earlier times, equipment, especially cameras, tended to be very heavy, requiring a lot of physical strength to handle and camera crews used to be exclusively male. Though technology has improved and lighter equipment is available, the perception that women may not be physically capable of handling it persists. As a result, women might be denied jobs:

*I remember going for a job and I had the interview and I thought it went pretty well, but I didn't get the job, and my friend worked at the same film company, he spoke to the engineering camera man and the engineer camera man said, 'we really liked her, she knew what she was doing, but we don't think she'd be able to rig the lights and stuff because she's quite small and she's a girl,...health and safety, so we're not giving her the job'.*

(Female Camera crew)

Another female camera operator further comments,

*I've been asked on several occasions... can you carry the camera, will you be all right sort of thing, and I have to say more from women interestingly than from men.*

The above interviewee is suggesting that women are equally likely to discriminate against women at work. A female assistant producer adds,

*I know many women that shoot better [than men], but the problem is that ... the women that are making [the decision] are more likely to trust the men.*

Therefore, having more women in positions of power may not be the answer to changing gender stereotypes. Rather, it requires a change of deep rooted attitude and perceptions for all. A key sector professional argues that the advancements in technology could potentially reduce some barriers:

*I think one thing that's helping women to break through in a lot of those areas is the advancement of equipment. It's no longer big heavy stuff, and there was, an arguable reason why gripping was dominated by men, why lighting was dominated by men, because the equipment was bloody heavy and you try lifting a dolly. It takes four butch blokes,... and now cameras are so small, and the little HD cameras, digital cameras, they're all tiny and they're very lightweight, so there's no 'you need physical strength' excuse any more, and I think that will help quite a lot to break down some of the barriers.*

Apprehensions about the safety of women might also hinder the career progression of women. A stunt co-ordinator admits that he is reluctant to put women stunt performers in high risk situations for fear of their safety:

*...most slightly old-fashioned men like myself are reluctant to put a woman really deeply into the firing line of major [stunts]...I find it unnatural asking a woman to turn a car over on fire, something that really could disfigure her... there are some very [female] good performers but I do find I have a little problem with that sometimes.*

Such an attitude could hamper the career progression of female stunt performers since they have to attain a range of experience, sanctioned by the stunt committee, to progress to the next level.

## II. Technical Competence

The attitudes of decision makers might contribute towards gender imbalance in the industry especially in technical roles. Several interviewees take the view that women have been denied work because of the perception that men are more capable in technical roles than women, as these two explain:

*Some of them assume that because you're female you won't understand how a camera works because they don't understand how a camera works,...they do have this certain trust issue which is,...they think that guys will understand technical things much better than girls... (Female Camera Crew)*

*[men] are more likely to get certain jobs than you... even if you've got the same skills. I mean I lost out a job for that very reason even though the man in question didn't have half as good shooting skills than I did, but I lost that job because they thought he could do it and they just didn't think I could. (Female EMG Assistant Producer)*

## III. Macho Culture

A camera trainer told us that he had conducted research among female camera operators prior to setting up a course under a scheme for women. Most felt that their job was still perceived to be 'macho' and the industry had a 'building site mentality'.

### 1.2.3 Informal Recruitment Practices

Informal recruitment practices contribute to the gender imbalance in the sector. Recruiting freelancers on the basis of word of mouth referrals usually requires them to build a network of contacts within the industry, some of which is done by working or socialising together. Several interviewees point out that women trying to break into the industry frequently lack contacts, consequently finding it difficult to get jobs. Even women with considerable work experience find it challenging to get work through word of mouth referrals if they cannot maintain the contacts due to, for example, family or child care responsibilities. This female researcher explains that working in the industry,

*...wasn't sustainable, both financially and also in terms of having to look after children that were under five at that point... and I think because to do the work I was doing which was as a researcher, you need to maintain very strong links and networks with people to get the jobs because it's all freelance.*

Working relationships in the industry are forged on the basis of trust. For instance, directors tend to work only with camera crews they trust. This could make it challenging for many women to break into such close knit groups if the jobs have been dominated by men to date. As a consequence, male practitioners may be able to build up a longer work history than their female counterparts.

Industry bodies such as the New Producers' Alliance (NPA) and Women in Film and Television (WFTV) provide networking opportunities. In contrast, as a female camera operator points out, some organisations are a closed shop for women, which she describes as an 'old boy's network'; she cites the example of BSCine, British Society of Cinematographers, whose membership is by invitation only. Not getting an invitation to the club means being denied access to networks that lead to work. One female camera operator states:

*I do think that if the majority of people who are making the decisions are men, they feel more comfortable with their own, and that's come out a lot. The peer on peer thing, and the stories that they relate to.*

A key sector professional says that another contributing factor to the low representation of women in technical roles within the industry, especially in sound and lighting, is the nepotism that prevails in those departments. Attempts to set up interviews with several sound and lighting companies have been unsuccessful and therefore we are unable to verify their recruitment practices.

### 1.2.4 Freelance Working and Family Responsibilities

The freelance nature of the industry also affects female practitioners. For example, the short contracts that freelancers work on affect eligibility for paid maternity leave<sup>11</sup>.

Women with family and child care responsibilities might find it difficult to be available on short notice which could prevent them from taking up jobs in the sector. This has negative effects on their career, as this key sector professional asserts:

*I think women have a lot of difficulty with working freelance because of child care issues, family care issues...it's not helpful to their careers.*

Several interviewees state that as the production of television programmes and films often runs into the weekend, and sometimes takes place on locations, those with child care responsibilities find it hard to take those opportunities. An industry professional also notes that compared to banks or supermarkets that have a range of different shift patterns that the employees can choose, the media industry does not offer flexible working. A key sector professional points out that it is often the careers of women that are compromised as they take on

<sup>11</sup> To get Statutory Maternity Pay, a pregnant woman must have been: (1) Employed into the qualifying week which is the 15th week before the week the baby is due. (2) Employed by the same employer without a break for at least 26 weeks into the 15th week before the week the baby is due. [http://www.dwp.gov.uk/lifeevent/benefits/statutory\\_maternity\\_pay.asp#caniget](http://www.dwp.gov.uk/lifeevent/benefits/statutory_maternity_pay.asp#caniget). Accessed 20 September 2007.

more of the child care responsibilities. These interviewees explain:

*I think ...there's a presentee-ism, there's the hours that you work and... being available 24/7, which when you have a family, inevitably many women just find it's too much. (Key Industry Professional)*

*I still think it's an issue, the unfriendly hours, especially if you've got kids around, because we'll routinely have to get up at 4 o'clock in the morning, go out and work a 12 hour day and then get back at 10 o'clock at night. (Female Camera Crew)*

Film and television professionals are also expected to be available on short notice, usually making it difficult to arrange for child care.

Some women in the film and television sector rely on their partners who have steady income and jobs with set hours in order to overcome these barriers. A key industry professional observes that her previous jobs often took her away from home and it helped that her husband was a teacher who had set hours and holidays to manage their child care. In cases where both partners are freelancers in the industry, one parent tends to take on child care responsibilities whilst the other is working. On the other hand, one female makeup artist manages to take advantage of the flexibility offered by freelance work:

*I tend to work one or two days, or maybe three days a week because it fits in with my family.*

The industry still lacks female role models in the upper echelons who have successfully balanced career and family life. This could lead to misapprehensions about women's ability to prioritise their careers. A key industry professional reports a conversation she had with a commissioning editor when he said,

*I just think ....a woman of a certain age who's got kids, and the hunger isn't there any more, so they'll do you a good enough job but they won't die and fight for the programme.*

Many interviewees suggest that successful female professionals usually put their personal life on hold to pursue their careers. Those who have children often do not talk about them for fear of it affecting their careers. A key sector professional suggests that

*... it's noticeable that women [at the top of in the industry] are not married or have not had children, a lot of them. And does that say, in order to get on, you can't have children? Because even if you stop and you come back a few years later, you put two CVs blind together, one of them will understandably have years more experience than the other, because the woman has lost five, six years....*

An interviewee claims that the lack of support for family and child care responsibilities in the sector does not get addressed as people do not want to draw attention to these issues for fear of being labelled as a problem.

### 1.2.5 Summary

**Gender imbalance** prevails in many work roles that have been traditionally male dominated. **Self selection and cultural conditioning** may result in women

not considering certain sectors of film and television, especially technical roles, as potential career options. The inadequate careers advice that some female students receive at school could be a contributing factor to self selection.

The 'macho culture' that dominates in some sectors could deter women from choosing those jobs. Equally, the **attitudes of decision makers** who think women might not be able to perform some jobs adequately due to lack of physical strength or technical competence could affect the career progression of female professionals.

Prevalence of **nepotism** and **word of mouth referrals** as recruitment practices might prevent women who lack contacts in the sector from finding work. Due to **family/child care responsibilities**, many female professionals find it more difficult to work in a sector which is dominated by freelance employment and characterised by **long hours and inflexibility**.

### 1.2.6 Recommendations

- Improving careers advice would be a step towards attracting more women to a wider range of roles in film and television.
- More research needs to be done to ascertain the impact of cultural conditioning and the attitudes of decision makers on the gender imbalance that is prevalent in some work roles in the sector.
- Women who have successfully balanced work and family/child care responsibilities should be promoted as role models.
- Supporting professionals with child care and family responsibilities needs to be treated as a priority in the sector.
- More schemes like Skillset's *Time Shift* (see **Volume III 1.2**) could promote alternative work arrangements within the sector.

## 1.3 Ethnicity

Ethnic minority groups make up 7.4% of the UK audio visual industries workforce compared to 7% of the UK ethnic population of working age (Skillset 2006: 4). In London, however, where half of the audio visual industry is based, ethnic minorities constitute only 12% of the workforce as opposed to the 30% of the capital's population (UKFC 2003: 9). These statistics indicate that the industries' workforce is not representative of the country's demographic profile.

Further statistics also show that there is an imbalance in the occupational distribution of the ethnic minority workforce. There is a high ethnic minority representation among cinema cleaners (17.4%) and those working in the processing laboratories (19%) whereas it is almost non-existent in animation (0.3%) and absent in physical special effects (0%) (Skillset 2006: 4). This section outlines the need for the workforce to reflect the demographic profile of the country and the barriers to entry and progression that ethnic minority professionals face in the sector.

Many interviewees comment that belonging to an ethnic minority group has an impact on their experiences in the media industries, which can be summed up in the following words:

*Before I worked in the industry, I was very much the last person ever to say my race would ever affect anything. But working in the industry and looking at people at the top, looking at people I know trying to get in, people at bottom levels, being an ethnic minority I think puts up another challenge and I think that's because people don't have that open mindedness and understanding that they think they have. (EMG Researcher)*

### 1.3.1 Importance of Reflecting the Demographic Profile of Britain

The report *Media Culture* (2006) states that ethnic minority viewers showed preferences for multicultural programmes like *The Bill* over programmes with 'strongly white middle England associations' (Bennett et al 2006: 34). The representation of ethnic minority communities especially in the mainstream programmes is thought to be not reflective of the demographic profile of the area where the programmes are set. Soaps like *Eastenders* and *Coronation Street* which are set in East London and Manchester respectively are given as examples:

*Coronation Street in Manchester [is] all about white people.[It] only changed about five years ago when they brought the first Asian family in. (EMG Filmmaker)*

*When I go to the East End, the only kind of people I see are Bengalis, not just generic Asian, but specific Bengalis from ...one area of Bangladesh. Now I look at a programme called *Eastenders*, I don't see anyone like that in it. (EMG Filmmaker)*

A training co-ordinator from one of the broadcasters asserts that the research she conducted prior to developing a trainee scheme revealed that many people from EMG backgrounds had the impression that they might not be welcomed to work in television because of the predominantly white cast of their prime time

programmes. This underlines the impact of onscreen portrayal on the lack of diversity in the sector's workforce.

Many of the interviewees recognise the importance of a workforce that reflects the demographic profile of the country. A key industry professional says it is important for programme-makers to have 'different voices', 'different cultural experiences' or 'different home life'. The richness in the cultural experiences is expected to bring new perspectives to the media workplace. For instance, a news producer from an ethnic minority background who worked for one of the broadcasters recounts that his proposal to cover the story of the murder of the black teenager, Stephen Lawrence, in South East London in 1993 was passed over by the news editor in favour of another report about horses being abused in Surrey. In his opinion,

*[In] the newsroom...there was one black guy...who had been to Oxford and there was me and everyone else was white, but they weren't...the white people ... who live in London nowadays who are open and multicultural... These are people who live in Kent and Surrey and commute in. They're setting the news agenda for the country, but their whole view of the world was so different and so monocultural and ... well at times bordering on racist.*

Several interviewees feel that most of the ethnic minority related programmes are produced by those who are not familiar with the cultural nuances of minority groups. Consequently the programmes lack accuracy and portray stereotypical characters. To ensure accuracy of portrayal and expression of a variety of views it is crucial to have a diverse range of voices in the sector. The business case for diversity also demands that the sector become more diverse to cater to the untapped market of ethnic minority communities for film and television products.

### 1.3.2 Nature of Film and Television Employment as Barrier

Many interviewees feel that while covert discrimination is still prevalent in the industry, it is the inherent characteristics of the UK film and television sector such as the freelance nature, low pay, lack of stability and informal recruitment practices that are the bigger barriers.

#### 1. Lack of Professional Status

Many key sector and industry professionals comment on the detrimental effect of the lack of professional status of media jobs on the career choice of people from ethnic minority backgrounds. Interviewees from ethnic minority backgrounds say that their parents prefer that they choose professions such as medicine, law or accountancy where there is more income security and a clear career path than opt for a career in film and television, as this interviewee suggests:

*So you'd have these youngsters [from EMG background] who were keen on trying to get into the industry, but then being encouraged by parents and family to go down a more traditional route....doctors, lawyers...*

(Training Co-ordinator)

A key sector professional points out that there are professionals from EMG backgrounds working in the legal and accountancy departments in the sector. Therefore, the lack of ethnic minorities may be more of a problem in the creative roles.

## II. Financial Constraints

The sector's workforce is predominantly freelance (see Volume I 1.3), which is characterised by uncertainty and income insecurity. Most of the jobs in the sector are short term contracts and entry level jobs are usually not well paid.

Many who try to break into the industry might not be able to work and live in a city with high costs of living like London unless they have family support to subsidise them in case of unemployment or if they are on low pay. Frequently, breaking into the media is through undertaking unpaid or low paid work experience which is also a barrier for those from low income households. Socio-economic backgrounds also affect education and career opportunities. It may be argued that white practitioners from lower income households are equally likely to face this barrier, as these two interviewees suggest:

*I think there's definitely a barrier for ... people that come from poorer backgrounds about getting work experience, and that might not be common to ethnic minorities at all, but I know that I wasn't able to get a lot of work experience outside of my degree because I had to work and, I'm sure that there's many people in the same position, especially with universities now and tuition fees.*

(EMG Researcher)

*I think a lot of it is socio-economic rather than racial, or ...based on nationality. People need a great deal of qualification to do the jobs that we do here, education that I wasn't even aware of a few weeks ago. And diversity... [is] always going to be related to socio-economic status and careers.*

(Human Resources Professional)

Nevertheless, ethnic minority households are more likely to belong to lower income households than the average white British household<sup>12</sup>; The Joseph Rowntree Foundation's study shows that the poverty rate of British minorities stands at 40%, twice that of the White British population. Consequently many EMG film and television professionals find the economic uncertainty a bigger barrier than their white counterparts. For instance, this human resources professional suggests:

*Asian families ...it doesn't have the status...everyone knows that it's a freelance world, so you don't have the same job security. [It] doesn't appeal to people who, may for social and economic reasons, need to know every month exactly what they're earning. The entry level salaries are not very high, that puts people off. And I suspect people don't think they'd get a job. That's... our biggest challenge ...*

The impact of economic marginality on the lack of diversity in the sector is discussed in Volume II 1.6.

## III. Nepotism and Informal Recruitment Practices

The sector is characterised by nepotism and informal recruitment practices.

<sup>12</sup> See <http://www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/socialpolicy/sprN48.asp>, <http://www.poverty.org.uk/03b/index.shtml> and <http://www.jrf.org.uk/pressroom/releases/300407.asp>. Accessed 18 June 2007.

Several key sector and industry professionals note that some practitioners in the sector are able to move from one job to the other without having any break in their careers because they have the right kind of networks. One suggested that these people had held jobs at the BBC or ITV and after the broadcasters were deregulated and Channel 4 was set up in 1982<sup>13</sup>, they left their jobs to set up production companies. They rely on their well laid network of contacts for information about the availability of jobs and recommendations. Many people from ethnic minority backgrounds lack these networks, consequently, they struggle to get jobs in the sector, as these interviewees assert:

*...basically the whole industry functions on networks and contacts, and this is particularly true in production. And if you're from an ethnic minority.... you are more unlikely to have access to those networks and contacts than if you were white.* (Key Industry Professional)

*If you are a black or minority ethnic professional who's graduated, you haven't got any contacts in the industry. How are you going to get in?*  
(Key Sector Professional)

Many interviewees suggest that 'who you know' matters more than 'what you know'. An EMG filmmaker describes the community:

*If you go into BBC Drama, which I did do, and meet the Head of Drama there and meet all the drama producers, there's not a single non-white person in the whole department. Then in BBC Documentaries, there's not a single non-white person working as an executive producer, director or producer, I mean there isn't, because they are closed shop kind of places. These are people who invite each other round to their houses for dinner, they all go out together, they're in that sort of world, and they don't let anyone else in.*  
(EMG Filmmaker)

Most film and television professionals rely on word of mouth recommendations for jobs. Many suggest that those from white middle class background are more likely to have access to the networks of contacts and therefore to the jobs. Ethnic minority professionals are less likely to have family members or friends in the sector than their white counterparts. Consequently entering the media and finding work might be harder for them:

*My contacts ....were so minimal, I knew no one in the industry, certainly in terms of family. In terms of friends I knew maybe one person who worked at the BBC ...I hardly spoke to that person ... I think people would have contacts in an industry where they would be able to ...at least get some experience or whatever, but it took me ten months to get one month's experience out of BBC Scotland when I was an undergraduate.* (EMG Engineer)

*The industry is so nepotistic, there's so many people who just because they've happened to run something or their mum happens to do something, that's how the industry operates, there's some very, very weak link, that person might get in over you.* (EMG Assistant Producer)

Even those who are already working in the sector may not be included in existing

<sup>13</sup> See <http://www.movinghistory.ac.uk/archives/bt/films/four.html>. Accessed 24 July 2007.

networks, as this key sector professional points out:

*Basically an awful lot of black and minority ethnic workers in the industry who do have experience, they are professional [and not] people just starting out, they are so far out of the loop of what's happening in the industry...*

#### **IV. Lack of Support for Career Development**

A key industry professional believes that the sector has failed in supporting and developing the careers of ethnic minority professionals. Emphasis is given to bringing in new entrants while career development is often ignored. For example, an EMG filmmaker suggests that he was treated differently from his white counterparts:

*Young directors at that time, if they got the chance and delivered their first documentary, they'd get mentored by Channel 4, they'd get given projects and guided through a whole career. Well as soon as I delivered that film, [title]. As I said, no one would speak to me there, all the doors were slammed.*

The sector also tends not to acknowledge the work experience of those from ethnic minority backgrounds. A key industry professional points out that EMG professionals tend to be considered as new entrants in film and television despite having several years of work experience. Consequently there is a dearth of EMG professionals at the senior management levels:

*I also think that at the top level, there just aren't enough people breaking through, because I think we haemorrhage a lot of talent, because I think that ... black careers, Asian careers, are slower... (Key Industry Professional)*

This concurs with the experience of an EMG filmmaker who felt that a deliberate attempt was made by some people from the broadcasting industry to block his career. For example, a commissioner promised to fund one of his projects only if he would agree not to direct despite it being his idea originally. When the project was given to a white, middle aged director, he felt that he was sidestepped because he was from a minority background.

### **1.3.3 Attitudes and Perceptions**

#### **I. Pigeonholing**

It is estimated that ethnic minority led production companies make up, at most, 10% of the independent production sector (IES 2004: xiii), which is high compared to the representation of ethnic minorities in the UK audio visual industries' workforce (7.4%) (Skillset 2006:4). A key sector professional argues that the figures could be high because producers from ethnic minority background might have set up their own production companies as they could not get into the mainstream.

Ethnic minority led production companies run the risk of being pigeonholed into making culturally specific programmes. A key industry professional believes that:

*...going to black and Asian run production companies is a really good way to get some drama, for example, that targets that audience or helps us target that audience.*

While it is easier for the broadcasters to approach ethnic minority led companies to fulfil their diversity targets, according to a documentary film maker who owns a production company, it is not financially sustainable for these companies to be pigeonholed into specialising in ethnicity related programmes as there are very few of them being commissioned.

This tendency in the film and television sector to pigeonhole EMG professionals into working on ethnic minority related programmes makes it difficult for them to maintain work continuity. An EMG producer states that recruiters were reluctant to give her a job in mainstream programmes as her experiences were confined to working on specialist programmes. An EMG assistant producer suggests that she frequently gets offers to work on specialist programmes despite her wish not to. She also says it becomes harder to fight the stereotypes and the discrimination as one moves up. She suggests that 'there is discrimination at the back of the mind' of those in positions of power

*...even though they don't act like it, or come across like it. That's why I think it's all the more important these days for Black, Asian and Chinese people to work in the media because you've got to remember that these people are all making programmes that are showing on your TV screens every night... you should be more involved because you shouldn't be working on purely Asian programmes, ...you don't need to be like that in this day and age.*

An EMG filmmaker takes the view that the ideas and stories that are commissioned are often the ones like *Pride and Prejudice* and *The Queen* that would appeal to a 'middle England mentality'. According to several interviewees, the decision-makers would rather choose a tried and tested formula than take a risk over a completely new idea. An EMG filmmaker notes that he has to pass certain stories to white colleagues to get them commissioned. Consequently EMG filmmakers feel that they do not have a voice in the media, as this interviewee comments:

*...it really made me question whether, Black people, or non-white people actually have a voice in film in this country at all because ultimately it's somebody who sits up there in the distribution company, or a sales agency who are all white, middle class men, middle aged men, and they tell you what they want you to do. And you have to bow down and do it...*

(EMG Filmmaker)

## II. Tokenism

Many interviewees believe that the decision-makers have a tokenistic approach towards those from EMGs. Ethnic minority actors are often hired to play background characters in what they describe as a 'box ticking exercise'. This interviewee further asserts:

*I want to be picked on my merits. Rather than ticking a box for, yes, he's disabled, he's got glasses and he's from an Asian background.*

(Disabled EMG Filmmaker)

An EMG filmmaker says that very often EMG researchers are hired to work on culturally specific programmes in which the producer and director are white. Though the presence of ethnic minority researchers lends credibility to the

project, as they do not have much decision making power they are not able to influence the final product.

### III. Onscreen Portrayal, Stereotypes and Typecasting

Several interviewees state that the commissioners or editorial managers lack the talent and the vision to spot ideas and projects that have the potential to appeal to broader audiences. The opinion of several EMG professionals is that most of the films or programmes that are commissioned either cater to 'middle England' or perpetuate the stereotypes about ethnic minorities, as this EMG filmmaker asserts:

*They already know what they want to aim for ....and generally in telling these stories about the black community, of which they have very little knowledge, they want me to aim for the stereotypes and clichés which suit their agenda and their broader agenda of suiting the palate of Middle England, than of really getting an accurate story about what's really going on.*

An EMG documentary filmmaker comments on the failure of the mainstream media to provide a balance in its portrayal of ethnic minority communities. He says programmes like *Shoot the Messenger* (Sharon Foster), *The Trouble with Black Men* (David Mathews), *The Crouches* (Patricia Elcock) and *Baby Father* (Sharon Foster) depict clichéd one dimensional black characters and not a balanced view of the community.

Several interviewees comment that it is difficult to get funding for programmes or films which are about the experiences of ethnic minorities. EMG led programmes that get commissioned are often the ones that fit the stereotypical notions of how ethnic minorities are. An EMG director who was unsuccessful in getting UKFC to finance his films says that his experiences with people in decision-making roles have proved that they lack the understanding of the diverse cultures of people in the UK. Therefore, the projects they commission are reflective of their limited notions of these communities:

*You're black so you're going to make films about inner city kids who are all fucked up on drugs. You're Asian so you're going to make a film about Asian families stopping their children doing what they want to do, because that... I haven't seen a single thing yet which disproves the fact that it is the mentality they have ...[at] the Film Council. (EMG Filmmaker)*

An EMG documentary filmmaker says that he had to turn down commissions from some of the broadcasters because they wanted him to portray negative stereotypes and clichés about the minority communities that would suit the palate of middle England.

Several of the EMG actors we interviewed claim that, on the one hand, they are denied mainstream film and television work as there are few leading roles for those from ethnic minority backgrounds. On the other hand, in mainstream programmes, ethnic minority actors are frequently cast in stereotypical roles, for example, black dinner ladies, Chinese gangsters, prostitutes and waiters or as extras and background characters. This lack of realistic portrayal of ethnic minority characters in mainstream film and television in the UK makes working in the mass media unappealing for ethnic minority actors. For an EMG actor, the roles were,

*...nearly all Chinese now, in one form or another, and most of them I just wouldn't get out of bed for, because ....they're racist...well not racist, but stereotypes.*

A British Chinese actor notes that when he started acting he avoided taking up roles in television programmes as they were mainly stereotypical Chinese waiters. These stereotypes are so removed from the minority actors' own experiences that they feel highly frustrated, as this interviewee explains:

*...my agent calls me sometimes, says there's a casting for you, and you get quite excited and you go down there ...and they come out and they meet you and they say, this is the script you'll be reading today. You're reading the character of Chen, he's just got off the boat from China, he's got about four lines, and that's...frustrating, you know, obviously I speak quite good English, so pretending I can't speak English is very frustrating.*

(EMG Actor)

These characters are written by screenwriters who make assumptions about ethnic groups. Actors of mixed parentage face further barriers as they often feel they are even more removed from ethnic stereotypes defined by others, as this interviewee suggests:

*I got very fed up as a British born Chinese, people telling me what I was, what I thought and where I should be and how I should be, and it was usually done through a non-Chinese perspective. And I've even had said to my face by a director once, when I went for a casting. He said, 'well actually you're not really Chinese, are you?' And what he meant was, that basically ... what he assumed Chinese should be. My English was good, blah, blah, blah, and the fact that I was only half Chinese, although he can't really tell that.*

On the other hand, several interviewees claim that the American film and television industries cast many ethnic minority actors in mainstream roles:

*Hollywood... I've done quite well out of American films and series, because when the Americans used to come over, again, I was treated like an actor. I've played all ...all sorts of parts, when I was just this guy in an office, or, I was this and that, I was an astronaut, but, the fact I was Chinese was neither here nor there.*

(EMG Actor)

It has been suggested that in the UK ethnic minority viewers prefer to watch American or Australian programmes to British programmes (Bennett et al 2006: 5). According to an EMG actor, ethnic minority families may be reluctant to encourage their children to take up acting as a career option, therefore, it is important for those from these communities to work in the industries because of the power of 'what one can do in front of the camera and behind the camera'.

Colour-blind casting is put forward as a strategy to improve onscreen cultural diversity by one of the key industry professionals (see **Glossary**):

*In the main I think our onscreen portrayal is good. I mean I'm sure there is a more lateral way of thinking, I'm sure that there's more that we can do. If we commission [a] project, we're going to cast it colour-blind, I think we do that well.*

Nevertheless, a filmmaker points out that if the race or ethnicity of a particular character is not mentioned, the agents usually send white actors for auditions.

#### IV. Prejudices

According to an EMG researcher some in the industry are prejudiced against those who are on positive action schemes which are instituted by the broadcasters or industry bodies. The participants of the scheme are sometimes looked down upon by colleagues who think that they have got the opportunity because of their ethnicity, rather than on merit.

Another EMG filmmaker recounts the resentment he experienced from his colleagues once he won a commission to do a documentary that also enabled him to set up a production company:

*When I went in there, to the stills department to select stills for publicity, the way people were looking at you and the vibe... this was the sort of thing which people would say, 'oh you're imagining this', but then subsequently we all know that no, actually, these people were resentful [that a] young Asian guy got the money to make a film...because lots of people are competing for that money.*

### 1.3.4 Institutional Factors as Barriers

#### I. Lack of Knowledge of the Sector and Role Models

Culturally, many communities do not consider the media as a career option, as this interviewee attests:

*The jobs that I've had in my career are jobs that aren't really understood by anyone in my family... and I still struggle to explain to my Dad exactly what I do, he just accepts I do something that's kind of vaguely OK...*

(EMG Key Sector Professional)

Therefore, people from EMG groups may not associate themselves with the industry. In addition, several interviewees of EMG backgrounds say that the lack of role models in television and film deters EMGs from considering working in the sector as a career option.

#### II. Lack of Strategic Planning for Diversity

A representative from a media training organisation points to the lack of strategic planning and long-term vision towards diversity in the sector. She feels that most diversity initiatives are a knee jerk reaction to published reports and research. This view is supported by an EMG filmmaker who says that closing down the multicultural department by Channel 4 in 2002<sup>14</sup> effectively took away one centre which people from ethnic minority background could have approached for funding. The intention behind closing down the department was to integrate multiculturalism into all programmes rather than segregating it. But closing the department before achieving integration resulted in taking away a platform which offered an entry point for ethnic minority professionals before having another system in place, as this EMG filmmaker asserts:

<sup>14</sup> See <http://www.cre.gov.uk/Default.aspx?LocID=0hgnew0q0.RefLocID=0hg01b001006009.Lang-EN.htm>. Accessed 24 July 2007.

*They abolished their multicultural department ... saying that, 'we think that all the individual departments should be more multicultural.' ...because that was a clear block of money which was available for people like myself to go to as a first port of call, in one fell swoop, they just wiped that out so we had nowhere to go, and ...that was actually unforgivable.*

The closing down of the Disability Programme Unit (DPU) by the BBC also drew similar reactions from interviewees.

### III. Institutional Racism

An EMG filmmaker expresses the opinion that there is an element of subconscious and institutionalised racism that exists within the mainstream media which tends to be brushed aside. He says,

*I basically said to [my mentor], I said listen, I think [racism] is a problem. He goes, 'you can't seriously be alleging that can you, you can't be serious?' I said 'Well, if it wasn't serious, I wouldn't be saying it to you would I?' ... but that was the attitude ...so that was the BBC really for you.*

(EMG Filmmaker)

#### 1.3.5 Summary

A workforce that **reflects the demographic profile** of the country is especially important in the film and television industries as it brings different perspectives and experiences both to the workplace and onscreen. Due to the lack of onscreen cultural diversity among mainstream terrestrial channels, viewers from ethnic minority groups (EMGs) may turn to digital channels for their specialist cultural programmes.

**The lack of role models, onscreen cultural diversity, professional status and financial security** in the sector could deter those from EMG communities from considering the media as a career option.

EMG professionals might not be able to take up low/no pay entry level jobs or internship due to lack of financial support. The prevalence of **nepotism and word of mouth referrals** as recruitment practices might prevent EMG professionals who **lack contacts** from finding work. Many EMG workers believe that their careers are **not mentored** like those of their white counterparts.

EMG professionals report that they are sometimes treated as a **token presence** to lend credibility to projects; EMG actors are often offered minor or stereotypical roles. Many EMG practitioners also feel that they are **pigeonholed** into working only on ethnicity related projects which could affect the progression and sustainability of their career in the sector as there are not enough specialist programmes to support continuous employment.

The prejudice and negative attitude of some **decision-makers** in the sector could have a detrimental effect on the career progression of EMG professionals as this might affect the chances of their projects being commissioned. The proportion of ethnic minority led companies in the independent production sector is higher compared to their representation in the UK audio visual industries' workforce, which may be a result of the lack of progress of EMG professionals in the mainstream media. Some EMG practitioners believe that **institutional racism**

still prevails in the sector and that there is a **lack of strategic planning and long-term vision** towards achieving cultural diversity.

### 1.3.6 Recommendations

- To increase the commissioning of diverse stories and ensure accurate onscreen portrayal, more people from EMG backgrounds should be encouraged to consider careers in the sector.
- Awareness of the various career opportunities in the sector among EMG communities needs to be increased.
- The lack of contacts of EMG professionals in the sector should be addressed by providing more networking opportunities.
- The career progression of EMG professionals should be actively supported; EMG film and television professionals should be mentored, so their representation in senior roles with decision-making capability might increase in due course.
- Promoting colour-blind casting (casting minority actors in roles where a white actor might be expected) could improve onscreen ethnic diversity.
- Funding support for initiatives aimed at those from ethnic minority communities, at entry level and in relation to career progression, should be provided.
- Awareness about the importance of cultural diversity in the sector to redress institutional racism, prejudices and the on and off-screen representation of EMG practitioners should be promoted.

## 1.4 The Regions

The production centres of the UK film and television industries are based primarily around London and the South East (Soho, the London studios to the west of Greater London, Hertfordshire and North London)<sup>15</sup>. Relatively little research has been conducted on geographical locations as a subject of diversity even though key sector bodies such as the UK Film Council make brief reference to the regions within their diversity agenda (UKFC 2003: 5). In this section, we examine how geography features in the lack of diversity in the sector and using data from the interviews, how the regional factor relates to other elements of the diversity agenda and how the barrier may be overcome.

### 1.4.1 Entering the Industry

The London-centric nature of the industries is likely to exclude those candidates who cannot fall back upon parental or family support while trying to break into paid employment and who live permanently outside of the geographical centres of the capital and the South East. The high cost of living in London and the low pay that many new entrants receive may preclude those from less affluent backgrounds. This representative from a regional training organisation explains the effects of the concentration of opportunities in London for her when she was a new entrant completing an internship:

*If you're living with your parents or if you've got some money, it's not an issue. Then of course you can afford to take that, but I was living on my own, I didn't really have any other friends in London. Whilst I did the internship I was sharing a room with three others and that was the only way I could afford to stay in London for those ten weeks... on the internship I was only being paid £70 a week, so I spent quite a lot of my savings and a lot of my student loans to go down there and get the experience, so I think that's the biggest barrier. I can't see that changing.*

The interviewee goes on to comment on the low pay offered to her after the training:

*My parents are from a very working class background, we were all raised on a council estate, and the thing with this industry, to do with everyone, not just to do with diversity, is that you need to have some work experience. You need to work for a very small amount of money. When I was in London I couldn't afford that. They offered me a job at the end of the internship... this was in the early 2000s and they said, 'We'll start you off on £3.60 an hour'.*

Film and media related training (including film schools and courses such as special effects) can be expensive. Class differences are found to affect students' experience of university (Cooke et al 2004). With the advent of full cost university tuition fees in 2006 it remains to be seen whether graduates will be willing to shoulder the financial risk associated with an increased debt upon leaving university, combined with highly uncertain employment prospects. This could have further distorting effects on issues of social inclusion in the sector.

<sup>15</sup> Skillset survey shows that half of the audio visual industry works in London and over quarter of the sector companies are based in the capital. See <http://www.skillset.org/uk/london>. Accessed 8 June 2007.

### 1.4.2 A London-centric Sector

Even for those who have already entered into the film and television industries, the cost of living in London can act as an inhibiting factor. The majority of jobs in the sector are found in London which means that those from the regions are often excluded. Those who live and work in the capital reluctantly accept the high costs for the sake of their careers. Geographical distance as a barrier is compounded by issues such as family responsibilities and the lack of networking opportunities that are one of the most important ways of gaining employment in a freelance sector. This interviewee lives in a regional city and has since left the film and television industries:

*Predominantly because I have a young family and I live in [a regional city], and there weren't the opportunities to get enough work basically... as a freelancer, you've got to be in the nub, you've always got to be networking and keep yourself known to get those offers of work, and I just couldn't be in the nub because I didn't live in London.* (Researcher)

The above interviewee has a disability that she does not see as a barrier to her staying in the sector as much as geographical location, financial issues and family commitments.

Compared with the regional centres, London and the South East offer more media related work as this is where the majority of film and television production companies and broadcasters are based. Nevertheless, the London-centric nature of the UK film and television sector is discriminatory particularly against those with access needs from the regions:

*The number of times you talk to somebody in London who says, 'just drop in when you're passing'. They think everybody's on their doorstep, don't they? There's an assumption that people in media will always be in London!* (Disabled Filmmaker based in a regional city)

Many who work in the regions comment on the effect of London-centrism; for example, as EMG workers move to the capital, departments elsewhere are left with even fewer diverse talents.

### 1.4.3 Regional Identities and Perceptions

Despite the BBC's plans to move several departments to Salford, along with over 1000 employees<sup>16</sup>, major broadcasters in the UK (the BBC, Channel 4 and ITV) are still based primarily in the capital. The BBC, especially, is sometimes seen as synonymous with London and the South and presented as an elite institution highlighting both class and regional differences. Some of our interviewees recount experiences of regional identities as a barrier, albeit from some years ago:

*I was interviewed for a BBC traineeship and I just felt I was too Northern, I had too much makeup on. I was interviewed by two very posh stuck-up women, whereas ITV at that time was much more commercial. Loads of people [there] hadn't got degrees. It was quite rare to find someone at the BBC that's not got a degree.* (Key Industry Professional)

<sup>16</sup> <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/manchester/4072649.stm>. Accessed 8 June 2007.

The way that a person's regional identity is determined can be somewhat arbitrary. For instance, the perceived inaccessibility of the BBC is connected to a combination of accent and class. Received Pronunciation (RP) is a term used by linguists to describe 'the speech of educated people living in London and the southeast of England and of other people elsewhere who speak in this way'<sup>17</sup>. Traditionally, RP was also associated with the public school system and ancient universities such as Oxford and Cambridge. Despite the fact that the days of ubiquitous RP at the BBC are gone, the association of regions, accent and the public service broadcasting still penetrates our discussions with the interviewees:

*[Class] is a very tricky one. Most of the people who work in television are fairly middle class, and there is a high percentage of your Oxbridge. Just because somebody's not middle class sounding, whether it's accent or attitude, they shouldn't be ruled out... It just means they've come from an area where that accent is very strong and...that probably their family have it as well, but it doesn't make any difference. What matters is the talent.*

(Key Industry Professional)

#### 1.4.4 Promoting Regional Diversity

Even though the UK film and television industries are largely based in London and the South East, many workers have chosen to remain elsewhere in the country. While the capital is considered an expensive place to live and work, especially for those at the beginning of their careers, homes in the region (sometimes with parents) offer support for those on low wage/unpaid work experience and for new entrants. Family responsibilities and access needs outweigh the benefits of a move to London:

*It's another of those arguments I have with myself about whether I should move to London and...the practical complexities of...uprooting my daughter's school to having to get a whole new Local Authority to fund my personal assistance. It's a year's building work to get this place accessible, I can't go through that.* (Disabled Filmmaker)

Interviewees from the regions often express a preference to stay away from the capital and the South East as the latter is perceived to be too competitive and costly. One interviewee from Scotland suggests that he has 'fewer distractions' and he only travels to London for necessary meetings. Many film and television personnel from the regions make conscious decisions to live away from the focus of the sector and take advantage of available work in the regions. According to the interviewees, there does not appear to be enough recognition that work opportunities are either physically available in the regions or can be completed from those areas. A researcher based in a regional city tells us that most of a researcher's job is done on the telephone before face to face meetings. Therefore, many practitioners could achieve flexibility in their geographical location.

Interviewees from the regions also point out that there are other film and television workers in their areas and alternative networks are formed. Workers within a region get to know each other, so they share information about job opportunities. They extol the advantages of better standards of living, independence and flexibility:

<sup>17</sup> See <http://www.bbc.co.uk/dna/h2g2/classic/A657560>. Accessed 8 June 2007.

*I'm happy in the North West and wherever you are, whatever region you're in, as long as you've got the contacts, you will always get phone calls and people always need cameramen. It's wherever the story is in the country. I like the idea of having a nice home that isn't ridiculously expensive, close to my family, and being able to work. Because I'm freelance, I could effectively live anywhere within the region. I could live in a cottage in the country or I could live in the city centre or whatever, because at the end of the day I always have to drive and I do a lot of driving to jobs, but I like the independence and freedom it gives me.*

(Camera Crew)

Away from London, we have conducted a number of interviews in several regions<sup>18</sup>. The North is seen as a growing location for the media industries, partly due to the BBC's planned move to Salford. Interviewees in Yorkshire also hope to see local ripple effects on film and television programme making. Regional workers point out the advantages of filming there: lower costs than in London and the South East and more positive portrayal of diverse communities. Many are optimistic about the BBC's move to Salford in terms of work opportunities and the possibility of halting the flight of talent to London. Interviewees based at BBC Manchester hope that the partnership with the local authority and the planned training schemes in association with the relocation will increase regional employability.

Finally, the Regional Screen Agencies (RSAs), set up in 2002-2003, are 'charged with building vibrant and sustainable media sectors within the English Regions and encouraging public access to film culture'<sup>19</sup>. The interviewees' comments regarding their experience of the RSAs are largely negative, often reflecting unsuccessful funding applications for film projects or training, complaints of lack of disabled access and lack of response to queries from the agencies. Due to the relatively small regional sample of the research, it is difficult to conclude whether the RSAs are providing effective support to filmmakers in the regions. However, future research on the work of the RSAs is recommended.

### 1.4.5 Summary

The UK film and television industries are mainly based in **London and the South East** which is associated with high living costs and may be a particular obstacle for those at the beginning of their careers. Geographical location as a barrier is therefore compounded with **class, economic factors and disability/mobility** issues. The requirement for Received Pronunciation at the BBC is gone but public perception of the broadcasters as elitist institutions is likely to remain for some time, which may deter some from considering a career in the sector.

There is a need for freelancers to be in a **close network** with others working in the sector which means that the concentration of the workforce in the Capital and the South East may perpetuate.

At the same time, many media professionals choose or are obliged to remain in the regions. They suggest that there are both **work opportunities in the regions** and tasks that can be completed away from the main production centres.

<sup>18</sup> See Appendix 6, Volume I.

<sup>19</sup> [http://www.skillsset.org/film/knowledge/links/article\\_2495\\_1.asp](http://www.skillsset.org/film/knowledge/links/article_2495_1.asp). Accessed 1 July 2007.

Freelancers in the regions benefit from flexibility and independence and many form alternative networks. **The BBC's move to Salford** will create employment and should stop the loss of personnel from the North to London.

### 1.4.6 Recommendations

- There should be more support to promote film and programme making in the regions.
- Monitoring and evaluation of the effects of the BBC's move to Salford ought to be carried out.
- Research on the effectiveness of Regional Screen Agencies (RSAs) in supporting film and programme-makers in the regions should be carried out.

## 1.5 Age

The age distribution of the film and television industries workforce, from the Skillset's workforce surveys, has been discussed in **Volume I 2.6**. To summarise, the industries draw predominantly from those between the ages of 25-49; the film sector has an older age profile than the audio visual industries as a whole. It remains to be seen whether the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations that came into force on 1 October 2006 have a major effect on the sector. Like regional locations, age is an under-researched area within the diversity agenda. In this section, we will examine what the interviewees have said about age, whether it acts as a barrier to diversity in the sector and if so, how to bring positive changes to it.

### 1.5.1. Reflecting the Demographics of Contemporary British Society

Although our research does not set out to investigate portrayal of diversity in film and television in detail, many interviewees recognise that invariably the characteristics of the workforce have a bearing on representation onscreen and vice versa. British society is ageing<sup>20</sup> but the sector may be failing to reflect the changing demographics. While it cannot be determined precisely when media professionals are considered 'too young' or 'too old', one interviewee suggests that, for example, young script writers are unlikely to reflect on the lives of groups who are ageing. Older actors do not feel they are being represented adequately or sufficiently onscreen, and this affects their work opportunities. Ageism also combines with gender discrimination in onscreen portrayal and an interviewee argues that there is a dearth of programmes that cast women over the age of 45 in lead roles:

*I think that the broadcasters remain blind to that...There's a clear business case for parts for older women on TV, and if you put the telly on most nights, you'll be lucky to see older women in lead roles...*

*Some of the castings that come out for women over 45, they want dodderly old ladies with grey hair, no memory, and yet if you look for the castings similarly for men, they don't want dodderly old men over 45. They want strong, virile types. It's just ridiculous because society's moved on health-wise generally, we're all living longer. We're all staying fitter longer, and yet it's not reflected in casting.*

(Key Sector Professional)

According to a key sector professional, this puts pressure on actresses to look young rather than promoting the benefits of their considerable work experience. The business case for better representation of older people can be found in the growing ageing population in the UK (see **Volume I 2.6**).

### 1.5.2. Age and the Film and Television Industries

There are comments from interviewees that suggest the industries are 'too young' although statistically the under-25s are not so well represented in the audio visual sector, as stated above. Instead of attempting to determine whether

<sup>20</sup> Office of National Statistics. See <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id=949>. Accessed 11 September 2007.

the sector as a whole is 'too young' or 'too old', more detailed and subtle examination of the issue of age is needed.

The bottom rungs of the film and television sector tend to rely on low paid workers and (mainly) young people on work experience. Unpaid or low paid work experience is examined in **Volume II 2.1**, but young workers' susceptibility to exploitation is a topic that crops up in the interviews:

*This industry is a very youth orientated industry. Partly because it's quite exploitative... and younger people somehow are fairer game for exploitation... haven't got responsibilities, so [they] can be exploited more. I think it's endemic in our society...lack of respect for people with experience and that you're past it by the time you're 50 in the industry and you can't come up with ideas that are relevant or engaging or whatever...completely out of step with the demographics of the population and that is one of the biggest criticisms of broadcasting.*

(Key Industry Professional)

An interviewee who works in the human resources department of a broadcaster supports the notion that this is an issue as young researchers do not have the experience to make programmes that appeal to older people. Older recruits with family and financial responsibilities may not be able to afford to take up low paid positions. Some interviewees talk about competition from younger colleagues: a makeup artist who has entered the industry after a change of career suggests that she may be seen as a little more threatening to senior managers than younger counterparts.

At the other end of the age spectrum, there is evidence that senior management positions in film and television tend to be occupied by older employees:

*In the last [Skillset] production workforce survey, the median age was reasonably high actually, so it confounded that idea that it's a really young industry. If you looked at the senior representation in the Guilds and so on, you'd very quickly realise that...they're guys and they are older. So, to that extent, it's the other end of the age spectrum that we have to worry about.*

(Key Industry Professional)

This is perhaps not surprising as they are likely to have progressed up the career ladder over a number of years. For some roles, age is perceived to be an advantage, as this camera crew member explains:

*As a camera person... you're in your prime later on. 45 is still very young for a cameraman. 55...you're kind of getting there.*

A camera man agrees that it is difficult for younger people to break into the industry as cinematographers because it is a life-long profession dominated by older male workers. Opportunities, especially at the level of DOP (Director of Photography), are relatively closed to newcomers. Generally, age is associated with experience, especially for the technical grades. A key industry professional comments that news journalism is also an area that benefits from age but career change for experienced workers from other industries is not encouraged in the media sector.

### 1.5.3 Staying In and Getting On

Some specific roles, such as stunt performance and cinematography, are physically demanding and generally require lengthy training and career progression. Interviewees have mentioned that long hours can also compound the physical strain resulting in people dropping out or retiring early.

Even without considering the effects on health within specific job roles, some interviewees have explained the change of career paths as people encounter different life choices:

*I'm sure as you get older, your life choices impact on your work, don't they? And it's that whole thing about life work balance. There's something, definitely, about turning middle aged and deciding there's more to life than work and all of that stuff, you find that people make a number of career choices.*

*As you get older you take stock of how far you've progressed up the career ladder, and do you want to get any further? So it's like a pyramid: the more senior you get, the fewer jobs there are. To an extent, unless you're very determined and prepared to commit and really go for that senior job and be quite dedicated putting in the hours or whatever and securing the skills...*  
(Key Industry Professional)

Older people are more likely to be married and have family commitments. Even though personal relationships and commitments affect both genders, by and large the burden of childcare and housework responsibilities still tend to fall on women. A more detailed discussion is presented in **Volume II 1.2**. Though acknowledging positive changes on gender equality, some interviewees have observed that the sector is still lacking in women at a senior level. A younger researcher already anticipates her own career path:

*Television's great while you're young and it's sort of exciting and all the rest of it, but I'm also very family orientated and I do want to get married and have my 2.4 children...it's not a career for women with children, I don't think.*  
(Female Junior Researcher)

Freelancers in the sector work long hours, are away on locations for long periods of time and some interviewees suggest that 'burn out' for those in mid-career is common. It is difficult to say how many film and television professionals leave the industries over time although interviewees who have left the industries or who have switched careers have been included in this research. Their experiences are reflected in the findings.

### 1.5.4 Overcoming Barriers

One of the first steps in addressing age as a barrier may be to recognise it as an issue within the diversity agenda and its effect on the industry. Achieving diversity within the sector workforce means ensuring a balance of older and younger people, so there are different points of view and experiences. Skills and knowledge transfer, from other industries and career backgrounds, should be encouraged. The recognition of people's life experiences will have positive effects on the sector retaining its workers:

*This industry operates on new ideas, fresh perspectives, particularly in relation to content generation... the industry invests huge amounts of time and money in these people developing their skills, and then we lose them. Those skills could be re-cycled and there's so much more that people who've seen the progress of the industry over a period of time can give back to the industry and I don't think we capitalise on that enough. As I say, there's a high dropout rate after 40.*

(Key Sector Professional)

### 1.5.5 Summary

**Age as a barrier** to diversity is still relatively under researched. There is evidence that the film and television workforce as a whole is dominated by the 25-49 age group. Ageism relates to **gender stereotypes** in onscreen portrayal: while older actors may be given positive roles, their female counterparts are often typecast as dodderly old ladies. Given that British society is ageing, the sector may be failing to reflect the changing demographics.

On the bottom rungs of the career ladder where most jobs are relatively low paid, there are many **young entrants** at risk of exploitation. For many work roles, especially for the technical grades, age and experience are considered beneficial; this could result in a lack of opportunities for younger people to break through.

There is no evidence that at the senior levels older workers are at a disadvantage. Nevertheless, there is evidence of **dropout and change of careers** as workers reach a stage of their lives when they have to consider different work patterns to accommodate family and personal commitments. This may **disproportionately affect women** who are more likely to be primary carers.

### 1.5.6 Recommendations

- The sector should recognise age as an issue within the diversity agenda, especially given the legal obligations under the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006.
- Research into the dropout rates of male and female workers should be carried out.

## 1.6 Social Class

There is evidence that class divisions have not disappeared from British society (Mount 2006, Lansley 2004). Yet, class seems such an old fashioned sociological term that it often drops off the diversity agenda (see **Volume I 2.7**). Class is an elusive concept. This section explores what some of the interviewees have said about class; in that sense, the term is self defined. Class is interconnected with other personal characteristics such as race and geographical locations. Class is intrinsically linked to social structure which means a long process of change may be involved in overcoming barriers arising out of social stratification.

Interviewees were not asked directly about class but many used the term themselves. For instance, some interviewees have described themselves, their family and where they have grown up using phrases such as 'working class girl from up north', 'sort of working class', 'working class background', 'middle class kind of area'.

Nevertheless, determinants of social class are elusive. For example, **Volume II 1.4** explores the complex connection between regional origins, accents, schooling and class. A key industry professional comments that the phrase 'white of a type' is often used to describe those who work at the BBC, meaning that the majority of the workforce is white and middle class.

### 1.6.1 Class and Career Choice

Even before discussing class as a barrier within the film and television industries, some of the interviewees recognise it as a factor in terms of career choice. This interviewee suggests how important onscreen representation is in projecting an image of the sector that may inform choice of career:

*When you think of programmes like Emmerdale, Heartbeat, The Royal, portray very white, middle class sort of worlds, so we then realised that people watching these programmes, or seeing or heard of these programmes, thinking 'I'm obviously not going to be welcome there, it's nothing to do with my world, I'm not even going to bother applying'.*

(Key Industry Professional)

The lack of diversity in onscreen portrayal is a starting point. Many of our interviewees note that a lack of role models may deter potential entrants from more diverse backgrounds. On the other hand, several interviewees recognise that their middle class background informed their choice of subject areas to study and subsequently careers in the film and television sector. However, some have also reported snobbery towards the technical grades. A makeup artist describes how she was dissuaded from the profession initially as she was expected to study an academic degree by her family.

### 1.6.2 Class and Education

Many of the interviewees recognise the media industries as predominately graduate employers which contribute to a workforce of mainly those from a middle class background.

The subject of Oxbridge and the media came up time and again in the

interviews. Many who work in the industries believe, whether as a result of personal experience or not, that it is a sector still dominated by graduates from Oxford and Cambridge Universities. A good education background is seen to be highly advantageous in film and television work. This interviewee recognises that his Oxford degree has helped him progress:

*All through my career, I have noticed, it's not a fallacy. Having been to Oxford does make a difference. And it's not that you put it down on application forms because I don't. I'm afraid it does, whether it should or not.*

(Actor)

His comments are echoed by others. Several of our disabled interviewees also suggest that an Oxbridge education has helped them progress despite disability being a barrier.

Oxbridge graduates are also associated with the 'old boys' network' that, according to some of the interviewees, still dominates the film industry and programme making. This interviewee describes a chance meeting with an old school friend who is now a producer:

*I think it's really interesting that that opportunity came through a class and education opportunity that I'd had, an old boys' network in effect.*

(Female Filmmaker)

Going further back in terms of educational background, some of the interviewees suggest that a greater proportion of people in the sector have received a private education. Some interviewees assert that it is not so much the particular educational institutions they attended but the general upbringing they have had and the way that a privileged education gives them extra confidence and communication skills. This enables them to fit into a work environment in which there are others from the same background. The monoculture that this creates excludes those who are likely to be already disadvantaged. This interviewee sums up the effects:

*A lot of people in the industry, most people have a degree or... sometimes they've had a... private education. It's quite a kind of middle class, upper middle class industry in a lot of respects. The people that tend to get to the top tend to be well educated. People who've got a disability or sometimes come from an ethnic background, they're probably less likely to have had that kind of upbringing. So even if you're a perfectly intelligent person, you might not understand some of the codes of behaviour or just...how to get on because it's quite subtle, like how to impress people and how to make them feel like you're someone to recommend or look up to.* (Disabled Researcher)

Neotism is examined in **Volume II 2.3** but the fact that the entry route into the industries is frequently informal means that those who are in positions of power could employ others like them. Word of mouth introductions and informal networks are most likely to be amongst people from similar background, who get acquainted through friends and families. This means that social class remains an important factor in the diversity agenda in the sector.

Whilst these comments come from experienced industry insiders, there are no available statistics that confirm or otherwise whether the film and television

sector is dominated by Oxbridge graduates and the privately educated. It is also likely that the public perception of the existence of a white, middle class culture in the media industries will prevail.

### 1.6.3 Getting In

Even though the film and television sector is dominated by graduates (Skillset 2005a: 96-97), there is no set educational route into the sector except for certain technical grades. Some of these training courses are expensive and can be lengthy which makes it difficult for those economically marginalised to afford. Given that many freelancers are not highly paid during the early years of their career in film and television, potential entrants may be deterred from taking up the training. This interviewee talks about post-production courses:

*Those courses cost a fortune, it's very white middle class in that area, and then all those boys will all leave and go into post-production, so you've got all these post-production companies full of white middle class boys who are all in their late 20s and they've been working there, will then become managers in their 30s and directors.* (Human Resources Professional)

What she suggests is that the knock on effect of the high cost of training means that class can become an entrenched issue as white middle class males rise up to occupy positions of power. In turn, it may impact on the gender imbalance in the sector.

Entry routes into the industry are examined in **Volume II 2.1**. However, a common way of getting into film and television is through gaining work experience. In the sector, this usually means working for free for a period or time. Others may find a low paid position such as a runner. The uncertainty and the financially precarious positions many new recruits face exclude those who are economically marginalised. This interviewee sums up the exclusive effects:

*The class issue...if you've got the well off family, actually you can afford to do work experience for nothing, for months on end, whereas if you've got to support yourself and your family can't help you out, that's completely not an option for you...I've got to find somebody who'd pay me to work here, or Mummy and Daddy will pay for them.... to work here. [Otherwise], it's interpreted as they're not keen, they're not committed. Actually it's not that at all. It's simply they don't have the financial resources to do that.*

(Key Industry Professional)

As most of these opportunities are concentrated in London, the cost of living will deter those from the regions and who do not have the financial means to support themselves. An interviewee described how she stayed with her parents in a regional city so that she did not have to pay rent and utility bills in order to gain the necessary experience. Moving to London was not an option for her.

This is likely to exclude those candidates who cannot fall back upon parental or family support while trying to break into paid employment and who live permanently outside of the capital and the South East.

### 1.6.4 Staying In and Getting On

The first few years of a career in film and media are often characterised by low paid work and family support can help. Interviewees talk about enduring this

initial period:

*There are other reasons why I think people from ethnic minorities or working class environments are not coming into this, because there's no money in it for them at first. If they can stick it for five years, they're all right, but can you put up with that?* (EMG Researcher)

The nature of freelance work is examined in **Volume II 2.2**; for freelancers, continuous employment is not guaranteed. Some interviewees have reported that they worry about coping with periods of low income as they do not have families they can fall back on. This key sector professional sums up the problem for actors whose profession is one of the most precarious in the sector:

*Most of [the Equity] membership is out of work at any one point, and so it's about sustaining people to be able to pursue the profession because, if you're looking at people from disadvantaged groups, they're going to be more unlikely to be able to support themselves between jobs than someone from a nice white middle class family who will be able to pull on the support of whoever.*

### 1.6.5 Class as a Cultural Issue

Class affects the social, cultural and economic positions of individuals, their schooling and life chances. As it has been demonstrated, class relates to other diversity issues. This interviewee sums up some of the key themes in the discussion so far:

*Class overlaps on virtually everything. I think it's a massive issue, particularly for the BBC, and because a lot of people who started life at the BBC end up in the other broadcasters...When I worked at Channel 4, nearly every commissioning editor had come up through the BBC, so they all had very similar takes on life and were of often very similar backgrounds. Most of them Oxbridge. We have about 7000 journalists working at the BBC in news, in factual programmes and so on. Research recently into journalism shows it's almost entirely white and public school educated. That's not exactly a wide window on the world, so I do think class is a massive problem.*

(Key Industry Professional)

The result is that there is a sense of a monoculture amongst the workforce which those from different backgrounds often find alienating. This female EMG researcher comments:

*[I'm] trying to feel as if I belong and if I could stay here. There is a group and they all fit together ... they're usually middle class, the same type of school, so they've known each other for years, so it's not even a case that they're rejecting you; you just don't fit...So, lunchtimes, what do you do?*

*Maybe it's because I'm so different. I'm working class, I'm from a different background. There's a lot of things about me that don't fit.*

Later in the interview, the interviewee comments that it is not easy for her to express these feelings of alienation for fear of being seen as making trouble.

Even those interviewees who are white and middle class acknowledge that the lack of diversity in the sector is a problem. Since recruitment in the film and

television industries is often through informal means (an issue that will be discussed in **Volume II 2.3**), nepotism reproduces the class divide. When there is no clear structure of entry and progression, friends and family play an important part in workers getting in and getting on in the sector. For those from outside of the immediate circles of those already established in film and television, breaking in might seem impossible.

Class relates to other individual characteristics such as ethnicity and gender. The minority ethnic communities are themselves divided by class and economic status. Nevertheless, in general, economic marginality affects the minority groups more and members of EMG groups are less likely to be middle class (see **Volume II 1.3**). Again, it is difficult to generalise but this interviewee talks about the career trajectory of immigrant families:

*Their children were born here in the 50s and 60s, they would have started here as a first generation and even then faced a lot of prejudice, a lot of barriers. A lot of them went into council estates, they didn't move into nice middle class educated establishments, they went to working class schools. For them to get up the career ladder is a bit harder.*

(Representative from a Regional Training Organisation)

Even so, there are also relatively privileged members of minority groups whose educational backgrounds, life chances and opportunities are on par with their white counterparts and whose families expect them to succeed and give them support that enhances their career prospects. There is evidence that EMG workers with similar educational and class backgrounds as white colleagues are stereotyped as working class (Holgate & McKay 2007: 9). A key industry professional warns of assuming that someone from a minority ethnic background is representative of that group, ignoring the different experiences arising out of social divisions within it.

### 1.6.6 Overcoming Barriers

Class as a barrier arises out of entrenched, historical social stratifications in British society. It is therefore a difficult barrier to tackle. In particular, it is a social characteristic that is contested, can involve a highly subjective element of self definition and hard to pinpoint.

Many of the comments on class from our interviews focus on the BBC. Some however recognise positive changes, as this producer points out:

*There's a disadvantage in the sense that my parents didn't have the contacts or the inside knowledge that perhaps some peoples' families have. With journalism there's the case of it's who you know, that's as important as what you know. So presumably, somebody whose parents are both journalists or both BBC producers possibly has a head start over somebody who doesn't, but that's changing.*

Some interviewees also believe that a supposed connection between Oxbridge graduates and the public broadcaster is a myth:

*I would say that is a myth, absolutely, surrounding the BBC. On two counts, (a) it's [about] graduates and (b) it's Oxbridge. There are people who've*

*been to those universities that are here, but I wouldn't like to say that's what managers look for. Ironically now, I think the newer universities provide much greater work experience and practical course elements than the old traditional red brick or whatever universities do. And it is a bit of a myth that we place emphasis on qualifications because we don't. That said, we are a 70% graduate organisation, so what is it about people who've been to university that makes them rise above people who may not have done, and I think that goes back to those key elements that we were talking about: having the confidence in a group environment, having undertaken some research. You've actually had to do it as part of your course. It's much more about us making ourselves fully accessible because we don't need qualifications to do the vast majority of the jobs that are here.*

(Key Industry Professional)

Key industry professionals at the BBC state that they try to use a fair selection system and to reach out to diverse groups during recruitment.

Several of our interviewees are very clear about their working class upbringing and they feel that their approach to their work is informed by this background. An EMG researcher suggests that her working class, Northern background in fact motivated her to become a journalist.

With more and more people in higher education in the UK, the social benefits of a university degree are becoming more accessible. The fact that the interviewees have come from diverse groups and many define themselves as not from the mainstream of the industries' workforce indicates that the sector is more accessible than before. Whether these changes are sufficient is a moot point.

### 1.6.7 Summary

While class is identified as representing an important barrier to entry it is a difficult term to define. It also interconnects with other issues in the diversity agenda. For instance, while minority ethnic groups are represented across the social class spectrum in the UK, they are less well represented among the middle classes and more likely to be economically marginalised.

Employees are by and large middle class graduates; a **white, middle class monoculture** exists in the sector that could be alienating for those from different backgrounds. An **'old boys' network'** enhances employment opportunities for older, male workers in a sector in which recruitment practices tend to be informal. The traditional notion that **Oxbridge** graduates and those who have received private education dominate the film and television industries, especially the BBC, prevails, whether this is actually the case or not.

The lack of **alternative onscreen portrayal and positive role models**, as well as the **precarious nature of freelance work**, are thought to discourage those from economically marginalised backgrounds from entering and working in the sector. **Training courses** for some of the specialist occupations can be exclusionary due to the high costs involved, as is **low paid or unpaid work experience**.

Class is a difficult barrier to overcome as it relates to long established social divisions. Nevertheless, the domination of white middle class professionals in the sector is felt to be changing and educational opportunities have become

ever more accessible with the increase in the number of people entering higher education. Whether these changes are sufficient remains to be seen.

### **1.6.8 Recommendations**

- Formalised and standardised human resources procedures and targeted recruitment drives should be encouraged to allow widest access to the industries.
- Paid training, especially in technical areas, and work experience targeted at previously underrepresented groups would help remove some of the existing barriers.

## 2 Getting In/ Staying In/ Getting On

### 2.1 Getting in: Starting a Career in Film and Television

This section examines the routes through which people enter into the UK film and television industries, what barriers they face and how these obstacles may contribute to the lack of diversity amongst the workforce. The focus is on career choices and training:

*For decades, the skills support available to those working in the British film industry has been sporadic and fragmented... Regrettably, nepotism and contacts, rather than open selection and aptitude have also been a key recruitment criteria, with a consequent real lack of diversity across the film workforce.* (Stewart Till quoted in UKFC/Skillset 2003: 5)

As a result of the recognition of the weaknesses prevailing in the UK film and television industries, *A Bigger Picture* (UKFC/Skillset 2003) sets out a skills training strategy. This section examines the evidence from extensive interviews with key sector body professionals, broadcasters and individuals to ascertain their opinions on and experience of training for the sector. In particular, the section explores how training impacts on the lack of diversity amongst the workforce in the sector and the means of widening access for people from underrepresented groups. More specific training programmes and initiatives are discussed in **Volume III**.

#### 2.1.1 Choice of Career

Many EMG interviewees have commented on how their choices of educational courses have been influenced by their parents. Training for the film and television industries, for example film schools, can be expensive. One EMG director commented that his parents would not support him financially which meant he chose an 'academic' degree instead. Some communities and individuals seem to have misconceptions about the sector:

*I wanted to get into film and television and she made me cry, [my mother] said ...you practically want to be a prostitute. I think ...this was when I was about 16, 17, she was really unsupportive, said the classic thing, 'why can't you be a teacher? Why can't you be a doctor?' I don't want to be. I want to get into telly and she just thought I was basically off the wall.*

(EMG Camera Crew)

The parental preference for traditional professions such as teaching, medicine, law and accounting has been mentioned by several EMG interviewees. There is therefore a lack of appreciation of the media as a profession. On the other hand, interviewees suggest that even though their families may not understand the sector, they are allowed to study and make their own career choices. The majority of our interviewees manage to pursue a career in film and television successfully.

There are a variety of reasons for the interviewees' choice of degree courses and career, for instance, interest, likelihood of employment, family circumstances (especially for the decision to stay home whilst studying).

## 2.1.2 Entry Routes and Work Experience

Several key sector/industry professionals told us that many of those working in senior positions in film and television were trained by the BBC in the 1970s and 1980s or under a traditional apprenticeship system, as this key industry professional explains:

*You prided yourself in being BBC trained because it meant that you were the best, and that kind of all went by the wayside.*

The UK film industry and broadcasting have changed since the 1980s (see **Volume I section 1**). Now, training for the different roles within the sector is usually through formal training courses, degree education or on-the-job learning. As a result, there are no set routes into the industries; the sporadic and fragmented nature of training remains. Our interviewees also experienced a wide range of entrance routes. Their comments on how training may present barriers to diversity are particularly relevant to this research.

Interviewees from key sector bodies, broadcasters and individuals comment that work experience is essential for new entrants into the UK film and television sector. There is evidence that much of the work experience is low paid or involves working for free. Not being able to perform free work experience also impacts on those economically marginalised, a barrier that affects many underrepresented groups. As production opportunities tend to be concentrated in London and the South East where the living costs are higher than the rest of the country, this practice excludes those from the regions. For those without parental or other kinds of support, low paid or unpaid work is often impossible. In addition, a disabled interviewee states that it is physically not possible for him to be employed as a runner so this entry route is exclusionary in several ways. This interviewee describes how he worked for a producer and learned on the job:

*He called me, he said yeah, you can come... basically [I] worked for free ... working and doing a proper job. I just generally do everything which was good, because I got access to watching him and how he dealt with people... how to pitch, which is a key skill. So I worked for him for six months with this work placement, and the work placement finished, and I worked there for free for another six months. I was signing on and working for him every day, living with my parents, generally had no money and just surviving... (EMG Director)*

In some cases, work experience may be an actual vacancy but performed by someone who receives no pay, as in the case of the above interviewee. Some interviewees have described how they do other non-media work to sustain themselves financially but try to gain film and television experience through unpaid work. Usually, working for free is also reserved for those with no family/ economic responsibilities or who are supported by parents or partners financially, as this interviewee suggests:

*I think the reason there are so many white middle class people in the industry is because, those people can afford to do work experience for free, whereas the people whose parents can't support them or whatever, they can't do the free work experience so they can't quite get that step in, and I really think there's a need for a scheme that makes room for these people.*

(Junior Researcher)

Many of our interviewees feel that unpaid work experience involves an element of exploitation, as this interviewee explains:

*I was lied to and told that as soon as the job came up, it would be mine, but there weren't any jobs and they were just lying because they liked to get people to work for free, which happens a lot in the industry.*

(Camera Crew)

There is also no contractual or intellectual property protection for these 'trainees'. One key sector professional describes how low budget productions rely on 'pulling in favour' which means getting people to work for free. Since experience is such an important aspect of gaining employment, many work for free simply to gain credits, boost their CV and hope to meet future colleagues, directors and producers to better their career prospects. As a career in the sector is attractive, employers tell us that they often get requests from people offering to work for free. New entrants into the sector therefore tend to be young, graduates and those without family and financial responsibilities.

Even those who have entered into the industry often work in relatively low paid jobs in order to gain skills and experience, illustrated by the comments of this EMG Junior Researcher:

*I was offered a job, full time, a decent job, I would have been the production assistant, and they offered me 11 grand. That's living in London as well. At the moment, I'm on 16, and I'm living at home with my parents, and I'm just about coping with that.*

A makeup artist says that it is almost like an apprenticeship process where new entrants have to expect low or no pay and gradually increase their income. Another common term in film production is deferred payment<sup>21</sup>. Several interviewees have mentioned being offered opportunities on deferred payment basis and they are fully aware of the likelihood of not getting paid at all. Again, it is a matter of weighing up the benefit of experience against the likelihood of working for free.

### 2.1.3 Training and Exclusion

Formal training is equally expensive and elitist, which is recognised by the key sector bodies and individuals:

*It's actually quite time consuming and resource intensive to train an assistant camera person or assistant editor or assistant sound person. And it can't be taught on a lecture basis of 30, 40, 50 plus students, so it does not match the academic model. You are forced to go down the Film School route... obviously it's going to change potentially under the Screen Academy notion... [it] is even more elite, more differentiated, more individual. You need the money in order to go. Therefore, at the top end, you have a siphoning off of quite a lot of opportunity to those who have got the cash to buy it, as opposed to those who have got the skill or the talent to utilise it.*

(Key Sector Professional)

<sup>21</sup> A deferred payment means that some or the workers' entire fee will be paid at a later date, usually out of first receipts from a film. As the majority of films do not go into profit, many crew members may never be paid. [http://www.skillset.org/film/knowledge/freelancers/article\\_3690\\_1.asp#A2](http://www.skillset.org/film/knowledge/freelancers/article_3690_1.asp#A2) Accessed 4 July 2007.

In **Volume II 1.2**, we point out that some technical grades are still attracting more men than women, which is reflected at the training stage. For instance, an interviewee offers his observation in relation to gender and cinematography:

*I do a lot of courses; most of my courses are for people in production. There's probably more women than men in production working as researchers, APs [Assistant Producers]... I might train 200 people a year and probably 140 of them are women. Some women pick the technology up and operate the cameras very quickly, and other women think, it's as though they've got a block themselves. Oh no it's technical, I can't.... get my head around it. Whether it's their own belief in or misbelief in what they can do or whether it's something that's instilled in them.....From a production point of view, there are a lot more women operating on DV but from a jobbing camera point of view, there's very few women.*

(Camera Crew and Trainer)

A disability quality trainer and consultant comments that she is more often asked to train disabled rather than non-disabled people. Therefore, there is little opportunity for more open discussion of issues of disability amongst non-disabled people who are less aware of them. Rather, disability is presented as an individual problem rather than an issue that everyone needs to be more aware of. Therefore, training could define debates within the diversity agenda.

#### 2.1.4 Higher Education as Training

The elitist entry routes contribute to the lack of diversity in the sector further down the line: the monocultural nature of the workforce will prevail if educational opportunities are closed off to students from underrepresented backgrounds.

The film and television sector is dominated by graduates and many new entrants are recent university leavers<sup>22</sup>. Some traditional forms of training, such as performance arts through drama schools, are often now university or college degrees. With the expense of completing degree courses and introduction of tuition fees, this training route can be exclusionary. Many studying postgraduate courses are also self financing (sometimes through loans). This could influence the subject area and the type of courses students choose.

Film and television related higher degrees have increased in popularity in the last ten years. They are potentially a source of training for employment in the media industries. The following table shows figures from The Higher Education Statistics Agency that demonstrate this change:

<sup>22</sup> For example, almost half the Skillset film survey respondents (46%) held a graduate degree, compared to 19% of the UK workforce as a whole (Skillset 2005b: 14).

### Media Degrees and Number of Students<sup>23</sup>

Year	Subject	Number of Students
1996-1997	Cinematics	3204
1999-2000	Cinematics	4350
2002-2003	Mass Communications and Documentation (inc. 22600 Media Studies students)	42175
2002-2003	Cinematics and Photography	10230
2005-2006	Mass Communications and Documentation (inc. 26820 Media Studies students)	47805
2005-2006	Cinematics and Photography	14590

The separate listing of Mass Communications and Media Studies from 2002 and the rise in number of students demonstrate their increasing significance as subject areas. On the other hand, there has been no corresponding growth in the number of people employed in film and television<sup>24</sup>. Consequently, graduates from these degrees who want to work in the sector may find it increasingly competitive.

The contents of these courses vary greatly, particularly in relation to the balance between practice and theory. Many of our interviewees question the usefulness of media related degrees and opinions are divided. This interviewee comments on the lack of advice for the choice of subject to study:

*I really enjoyed media and I was going to do media at university...and even that was the wrong step to take, because I'm now being told you should never do media at university. You should always do English or humanities or something like that, because you can learn the technical stuff of the broadcast industry quite quickly. But that again was the advice that I got. It's not like I knew anyone who worked in the industry.*

(Representative from a Regional Training Organisation)

This interviewee is also representative of many we have spoken to:

*In employers' eyes [graduates from media degrees] don't have the experience. If you're coming straight out of university, an employer would rather see that you'd done work experience in your own time and that you'd done an academically rigorous degree or one that will help your knowledge base in your career. That would count more for you than having a media degree.*

(Researcher)

<sup>23</sup> From [www.hesa.ac.uk](http://www.hesa.ac.uk). The earliest figures available online are from 1996. Mass Communications and Documentation is listed as a subject area only from 2002 when Cinematics is grouped with Photography for the first time.

<sup>24</sup> For example, there were 24102 employed in broadcast television in 2000, decreased to 20800 in 2006 (Skillset 2000: 5, 2006: 4).

Many of the interviewees, both from sector bodies and individuals, comment that many media related degree courses are too theory-based, and do not equip students with marketable skills. Nonetheless, media studies is considered by many, exemplified by the above interviewee, to be less academically rigorous than traditional subjects such as English. Many of the graduate interviewees recognise that practical experience and transferable skills are probably more valuable than a media degree. Practical experience may include industrial placements, research and writing skills and a high quality portfolio of work. Practical elements of the degrees are often hampered by the lack of up-to-date, broadcast quality equipment. Without practical experience, many professionals in the sector believe that media related degrees have effectively narrowed the career choices of the students, as this interviewee explains:

*If you've done a media degree, you can only take that information into television. I think you narrow your field. It's very unpopular to say that because a media degree is one of the most popular and over-subscribed [degrees]. It's a shame in a way because there are so few opportunities for young people to get into television after their media degree.*

(Key Industry Professional)

However, some interviewees have more positive opinions on media studies, exemplified by this key industry professional's comment:

*I don't think it's a disadvantage doing media studies at all, I think there's been quite a number of surveys saying media studies students are incredibly employable because they're media savvy and all those employable qualities in whatever profession you go in for. Where there sometimes is a problem I find is in terms of expectations of media studies students, there's something about what they're being taught on the course that makes students think that they're going to come in at a more senior position or have... more responsibility.*

Therefore, the industry's views on media related degrees vary. However, it is important for educational institutions to take into account the comments about curriculum design and expectations of career prospects at college and university level so that media related degrees would provide a better match between skills training and employers' requirements. Concrete and up-to-date career guidance and advice are also necessary.

## 2.1.5 Overcoming Barriers

Notwithstanding the difficulties many face in entering the UK film and television industries, some of our interviewees feel that the sector has become more open over time. Below is a discussion about ways of increasing diversity in the sector.

### I. Careers Advice

Good quality careers advice starting from school level, though colleges and universities should provide information for potential entrants. Information on the wide range of work roles within the sector and how to be trained and apply would prepare students for careers in the UK film and television industries. Representatives from independent production companies have told us that they

value links with the educational sector, such as giving talks and presentations to students. One human resources professional comments that at school fairs, she has not come across a child who knows any roles other than that of the presenter. Nevertheless, funding for such events and availability of industry professionals could be problematic.

## II. Work Experience

Work experience in film and television is highly beneficial, whether part of a degree or not. Many of the freelancers we spoke to comment that it is a networking opportunity as much as on-the-job training. This interviewee's placement led directly to a job:

*I'd done my work placement while I was at university, at [a named film company]. I'd met somebody, stayed in touch with them, and they then put me up for this job at the production company when I'd graduated.*

(Camera Crew)

This is a common experience. Many freelancers find jobs as a result of work experience or form networks that help them with their career. Offering work experience or training positions is also a good way for employers to test out new entrants at a junior level or allow progression through the grades. For instance, a clapper-loader could be given the experience of stepping up to the role of focus puller.

Training or educational courses need to be structured and practical. More communication between industry and training providers will also ensure a better match between employers' and employees' expectations. Vocational courses replacing the traditional studio apprentice system will create a recognisable training structure. They need to be complimented by industrial experience and should be endorsed by the sector employers who might in turn contribute to teaching and providing work placements.

In relation to training, the Cine Guilds suggest that there should be<sup>25</sup>

– *more funding for proper "trainee" placements on crews—as provided by schemes such as FT2 and the SIF Network; and*

– *more working professionals getting involved in the training courses.*

One way of ensuring wider access to the sector is to provide funding for training. If a 'trainee' is in fact performing work and in an employment relationship, then they must be paid. Pact's guide to work experience sets out the National Minimum Wage requirements and exceptions. Unpaid volunteers cannot be obliged to perform work or services (Pact 2007b). Pact recommends that a maximum of four weeks may be appropriate for shadowing and learning. So, the lengthy unpaid work experience that many report to have undertaken in the sector may contravene the law. Some production companies have taken the initiative to offer short work experience placements although they need to provide structured training and be aware of the National Minimum Wage legislation as this interviewee from an independent company explains:

<sup>25</sup> Memorandum, DCMS Submission to the House of Commons, September 2003.

*Fact do have a policy that we try very hard to follow on always paying people who are doing anything more than two weeks' work experience, which means that you haven't got just people that can afford it getting the work experience. It's actually something that's open to everyone. This does sometimes backfire, in that if you can't afford to pay someone then you can't have someone. Sometimes it means that that position just drops away. Usually, if we want someone on work experience and there's a good reason for having them, we will pay. (Head of Production)*

Some larger companies try to maintain close relationships with relevant colleges and universities and other educational organisations. One company set up bursaries that target students from ethnic minority backgrounds and economically marginalised groups. Other companies have work placements and internship arrangements with specific courses and universities.

Entry level training and professional development should be open, accessible and inexpensive to the trainees. Some of the specific schemes run by Skillset and FT2 are explored in **Volume III**.

### **III. Making Degrees Relevant**

Our interviewees' responses show that those who work in the film and television industries and employers are keen for training and education to be as relevant and accessible as possible. There are also many positive comments; they recognise the transferable skills provided by degree training, whether media related or not, exemplified by these interviewees:

*My course had a practical element. All the skills were completely transferable. I have to do telephone interviews all the time, find various statistics, find people to take part in the show. So my degree completely helped. My Head of Production said to me, the fact you had [a named university] on your CV stood you out above the crowd. (EMG Junior Researcher)*

*The three years that I spent at university have been very rewarding and the technology of the equipment and teachers were first class. Yes, I had a very good time there to learn... (EMG Producer)*

Therefore, it is important to ensure that practical elements are present in media studies degrees and to raise the awareness of both students and employers of the value of transferable skills. Relevance and up-to-date technology will also help to equip students for the world of work. A National Film and Television School graduate suggests that the experience on the course is varied and creative and allows her to build up a showreel. She also reports that she is able to work in different roles and try managing a team as part of the course. She asserts that by going to film school, she has been able to reach a higher grade earlier than she would have otherwise.

A key sector professional suggests that a generic first year on film or media related courses would expose students to the different roles, where female students might pick up technical skills and be attracted to sectors that they previously had little experience of. According to her, it might reduce gender imbalance in certain grades within the workforce. From the experience of many of the interviewees who have graduated from these courses, they tend to

specialise in a medium after the first year. Many interviewees support the view that there should be more practical elements in film and media degrees.

Accreditation and employer recognition will enhance the career prospects of graduates and make training and education courses more attractive to a wider range of potential students. Universities and colleges need to recruit more widely and from schools that reflect diverse groups.

#### IV. Management Training and Sharing Good Practice

A disability trainer and consultant suggests that good practice and independent companies which are doing well in managing diversity should be promoted or showcased. Individuals from diverse backgrounds who have benefited from training and work in the industry could also share their experience. He comments on training managers to work with disabled employees:

*It's all very well getting 250 disabled people lined up ready to work for broadcasters. Unless the managers are equipped, confident, aware, it's a waste of time.... often we do a lot of training with the managers who are taking the people on to help them gear up and be ready to manage someone who may have a disability that they may not have experience of.*

A Human Resources Officer suggests that management skills training is important as many in the industries are creative professionals who lack experience in managing people.

#### V. Personal Qualities

Many of our interviewees have overcome cultural and social barriers to work successfully in the film and television industries. Perseverance seems partly responsible for their success:

*I kept plugging away. Someone gave me a short three month contract to do a researcher's job. Of course once you're inside, it's so much easier and you get to know people and then someone after that took me on for another six months and then during that period some real jobs came up and I was in the right place at the right time to get one of those... (Disabled Journalist)*

This seems to be a typical career trajectory for many of the workers in the sector: short term and low paid jobs, gradually getting better work opportunities. Undoubtedly, experience gives new entrants some on-the-job training and many get to make contacts and find work. Being at the right place at the right time is a common way for our interviewees to describe lucky breaks. Employers in the sector place much emphasis on experience and more intangible qualities:

*There's no reason why you can't work in television. What it requires is someone who's tenacious, can communicate well. It's all about getting people to tell you stories, getting people to trust you, having empathy, and being able to write well probably, to have very strong people skills. So you don't need a degree to work in television; you don't need any particular academic or technical skills, because you learn the technical skills through working in the industry. (Human Resources Professional)*

Aptitudes such as these could be culturally specific and potentially exclusionary because one's ability to communicate and people skills may appear to be

particularly good when interacting with those who share similar social backgrounds. In a sector dominated by a white middle class workforce, this could exclude those who are from diverse backgrounds. Nevertheless, recognising the requirements of potential employers and understanding the working practices and culture of the sector will help new entrants in securing work.

## VI. New Technology and Alternative Routes

Some filmmakers we spoke to have embraced new forms of dissemination of their work instead of trying to find work through traditional routes which may be lengthy and insecure:

*My advice to anyone would be, if they want to make films, to go out and make films by video camera and get access to an edit, use Youtube and the internet and to build up a following and go an alternative route. The television route... [you'd]go without work for long periods of time and when you do get work, basically make rubbish in a very junior role.*

(EMG Director)

This idea of using alternative routes and making one's own way has certainly been made possible by technology. Equipment, computers and software are less expensive than before, which enable people who want to work in the media to make films. A writer/director explains that many filmmakers rely on getting grants from sector bodies such as the UK Film Council and the BBC but he suggests that to maintain creative independence and to learn from doing, completing film projects with a close knit team of talents and using one's own resources is the best way to get on the first rung of the industries' ladder.

## VII. Inspiring Change and Role Models

Several of our interviewees describe inspirations behind their choice of career which encompass principles of self empowerment and belief:

*People told me that I couldn't do it, that it wasn't something that young black men did, they didn't get involved in film making, they didn't get involved in writing short films, it wasn't something that we did as people. That concept of being defined by the colour of your skin [was] something that I always fought against. When someone tells me that you can't do something, I'm like, well why?*

(EMG Filmmaker)

Other interviewees assert that filmmaking could have a social purpose and the media could bring about change. Realising the lack of diversity amongst those working in the UK film and television sector, some of these interviewees feel they have a responsibility to make a difference:

*I'm in a good position to ...involve disabled characters in those stories in a way that everybody, non-disabled and disabled people, can enjoy and experience as real life, and learn about. Because there aren't enough writers doing that, I think it's my responsibility...but moreover because other people tell me it's my responsibility, it's what I want to do.*

(Disabled Writer)

*I'm very interested in that idea of owning your means of communication and not letting other people define you, because obviously as a black person, I come from that position of being defined by other people so I'm very interested in smashing down those barriers.*

(EMG Filmmaker)

Many of the interviewees talk about an individual, a programme, film or character that inspires them. In particular, a senior colleague or another filmmaker can often become a role model when they start out. Some of these individuals will be featured in case studies as part of this research project to provide role models for aspirant industry workers.

### 2.1.6 Summary

Choice of career may be affected by the lack of understanding of the nature of work in the film and television sector from parents and the absence of **appropriate career advice**. Some EMG interviewees suggest a **parental preference for traditional professions** such as medicine, law and accounting.

Training for the different roles within the sector is usually through formal training courses, degree education or on-the-job learning. As a result, there are no set paths into the industries. **Work experience, working for free and low paid jobs** at the beginning of media careers are common routes through which people enter the sector. Unpaid work experience may contravene National Minimum Wage requirements where an employment relationship is considered to exist and some employers may be acting illegally. **The lack of financial support for training** can lead to exclusion on the grounds of social class, geographical location, disability and economic marginality. The sector is dominated by graduates and the **increasing costs of completing a degree** make this a potentially exclusionary route. Training for some **technical grades** is still gender biased as they are traditionally male occupations and women may not be encouraged to pursue these careers.

The popularity of **media related degrees** is increasing but there is a lack of careers advice to students. Many media related degrees are not felt to equip students with **practical experience** for a career in the sector or they set up unrealistic expectations. A network of **Screen Academies** has been established that offers high quality practical filmmaking courses where there is a shortage of skills in the film industry.

### 2.1.7 Recommendations

- Good quality careers advice starting from school level, up to colleges and universities, would provide information for potential entrants.
- Paid work experience would make the recruitment and training of new entrants more accessible for all.
- Degrees should be more practice-based, in order to equip students with transferable skills.
- Communication between the industry, training providers and educational institutions will ensure a better match between employers' and employees' expectations.

- Accreditation and employer recognition of film and media related training programmes and degrees will enhance the career prospects of graduates and make the courses more attractive to a wider range of potential students.
- Universities and colleges need to recruit more widely and from schools with diverse populations.
- Vocational courses with industrial experience should be endorsed by sector employers who could in turn contribute to teaching and providing work placements.
- Further research should be conducted to explore the effects of new technology on filmmaking, dissemination and access to the film and television industries.
- Role models who can inspire new media professionals from diverse groups should be actively promoted.

## 2.2 Getting On: The Freelancers' World and Career Progression

In the Skillset feature film workforce survey, only 11% of workers were permanent employees; 68% were on a fixed term contract and 14% on daily contracts (Skillset 2005b). There has been a gradual erosion of in-house television productions from the BBC and ITV<sup>26</sup>. The establishment of Channel 4 in 1982 has fuelled the increase in freelance work in the last two decades. **Volume I section 1** explores the structure of the sector and explains the dominance of freelance work. This section examines how freelancers in the UK film and television industries gain work, the conditions they work in, how they survive and make a living, what implications these features have for diversity in the sector and issues in relation to how the practitioners stay in and get on in the sector.

### 2.2.1 Finding Work in Film and Television

It is important to note that unlike many other sectors, recruitment in the film and television industries is deregulated, informal and often ad hoc (see **Volume II 2.3**). It is often not a company or broadcaster who performs the function of hiring and firing on a daily basis. In some of the technical departments such as camera or lighting, the heads of department choose the crew. For example, a Director of Photography may choose the gaffer who will then be in charge of the electricians. Producers may be consulted if there is non-availability of the usual crew members and contacts. Equally, recommendations from colleagues may be sought. This practice produces 'semi-permanent groups' that move from job to job<sup>27</sup>. The 2005 Skillset feature film workforce survey shows that 81% of the respondents had been recruited to their recent film production through word of mouth (2005b: 14). This interviewee sums up the practice:

*Looking for work... no matter how well you're doing, the fact that you shot that great film last year isn't going to help you. You've still got to find your next job, It is a cliché...you're only as good as your last job. It's a lot of energy ...if you haven't got the drive, you're not going to get there, there's a lot easier jobs to do.*

(Camera Crew)

Informal recruitment practice exists because film and television productions come under enormous time pressure. The ad hoc method of introduction and recommendations are traditionally how film and television crews are formed:

*It's very difficult if you're standing from the outside looking in. If somebody recommends you then that's basically how the whole industry works. Somebody recommended is always better than somebody cold calling.*

(Camera Crew)

Cold calling and sending CVs are not effective means of finding work according to our interviewees because few trust someone they have never worked with before. As a result, freelancers are prompted to network whenever possible with others in the industry. Interviewees are vigorous about maintaining contact

<sup>26</sup> One key sector body professional suggests that there are still more permanent employees in the television sector, which makes it a more stable industry compared to film production.

<sup>27</sup> See Blair (2000) for a discussion of the labour process involved.

details of others in the sector. Many freelancers accept that they have to 'mix and match' the kind of work they do (in terms of contracts, conditions, nature). Since much of the sector's work is short term or fixed term, practitioners describe how they tend to start searching for their next job towards the end of their current contract.

Interviewees agree that finding employment often depends on how good a person is at social networking and there is constant pressure to find opportunities to meet others in the industries in the hope of furthering their careers. For example, a writer describes how he got into the industry through a chance meeting in a bar that led to a long-term working relationship with a producer. Producers and independent filmmakers raising funds also comment on the importance of being in networks with potential funders. Freelance workers explain why sometimes they would work for free or little pay if they thought they might meet filmmakers and crews and make contacts.

Potential employers routinely telephone previous work colleagues and ask for a testimonial. Human resources professionals state that they try to advertise widely but word of mouth recommendations still occur where those who already work in the sector suggest contacts they know for vacancies. As a company's reputation relies on the quality of work, the tried and tested method of informal recruitment remains the norm.

When previous clients make contact, if a freelancer cannot take on a job, he/she may recommend a trusted colleague. Reputations and personal contacts are therefore vital for obtaining employment:

*It comes down to the fact that your recommendation reflects on you. If you recommend somebody and they don't work out, it could lose you clients, so that was a really big thing.*

(Camera Crew)

Word of mouth recommendations affect one's reputation and so freelancers would only refer somebody trusted which often means someone with whom they have worked before. Another camera crew member explained that team work is about personalities as much as skills. In addition, technical departments often stay together and move from job to job.

Freelancers describe how following personal recommendations, they may simply have a meeting with the employer/company. There is no formal application and interview. Even after initial introductions, one interviewee suggests that workers have to 'play the game', know how to behave and 'know the dynamics' to be successful in this sector. In other words, freelancers have to fit into the work and social culture already entrenched in the film and television industries, as this EMG engineer explains:

*There's an element in this industry of if there's somebody they don't know they'd rather first see what they're like ...where they stand, whether in terms of what they dress like, what they look like or in terms of what their views are like ...it's not just the skills that you actually bring to the job, it's a combination of your attitude ...what your feelings are about the actual content of the programme that they're making.*

Some groups are excluded from these networks, for example, those who have no access to the 'right' social meetings or simply are not adept at networking. Sometimes disabled freelancers cannot physically participate in networking. The opportunities of getting to know someone over a few drinks are closed to many:

*I can't go to the pub and talk to other producers and directors and network and set up contacts, I have to bring an interpreter. It's not natural. When there's a group and it's a fast paced conversation, sometimes it's very difficult, so I'm a bit excluded from that.* (Disabled Camera Crew)

Networks and contacts in the sector also create 'cliques'. Therefore, often the 'networked environment' can be alienating for those who do not feel they fit in. This interviewee talks about not feeling part of a group:

*The people here are very cliquey, and all of my colleagues have said very similar things. You're not treated badly ... you just don't fit.*  
(Female EMG Researcher)

Anybody who does not belong to the close knit community could easily feel isolated and alienated enough to give up or leave the industry. An EMG researcher says:

*I understand why a lot of people jump ship and I don't think it was anybody personally trying to make me feel unwelcome, but it's just such an alien environment.*

This interviewee who lives in a regional city who has since left the industry explains how the lack of network is the main reason for her dropping out of the sector:

*You need to maintain very strong links and networks with people to get the jobs because it's all freelance [work]. You get one job, you finish it, then you move onto another, and I just couldn't maintain those networks and links without being in London. So that was the main reason.*  
(Female Disabled Researcher)

She thinks that being disabled and a mother is not as important a barrier to gaining employment in the sector as her inability to make contacts because she lives in a regional city.

The confidence of freelancers in making contacts in social events directly affects their chances of gaining work and building a client base, as this director explains:

*No matter how good you are, you actually have to know people. I generally hang out with people I like and I don't butter up people ever...I don't go to the conferences where people are networking and back-scratching, because ... it just makes me cringe. I suppose that's a big failing for me as a sole trader, because that's the kind of bread and butter stuff that people do to get jobs in.*

Sometimes, cliques evolve into a semi-permanent group of workers. For instance, a head of department may have close contacts with several freelancers and they move together from one job to another. Again, this depends on work performance and relationship one has with other workers. One interviewee

suggests that some roles within the sector, such as cinematography, are effectively a 'closed shop'. Even gaining training opportunities there may be difficult as the Cine Guilds of Great Britain concedes<sup>28</sup>:

*A major problem in this area arises from the fact that the members of a film unit work closely together for a limited period of time, generally to very tight deadlines, and financially they cannot afford to "carry passengers". Therefore a person who is known by others on the team to be competent and who will fit in with the rest of the team will inevitably be selected over someone who is not known to anyone on the crew.*

There are other, albeit less prominent, ways of finding work. Sending CVs, reading trade press such as Broadcast, agencies and availability lists are common means to access vacancies. Internet sites such as Production Base are also increasingly being used. Freelancers of different grades and job roles often use a variety of means to find work, for example, a diary service:

*...they're only there ...to take information and write it in your diary. They keep your diary for you, so people will phone them and book me, and it's a safety net. The diary service will always make sure that I know where I'm going and when for the next day, but my diary service are very good in that they phone me all the time... they've got a very good reputation. (Camera Crew)*

Remark!, a film production company, has an online database that allows deaf/sign language users to break into the media industry by having their profile and photos available to view. There are other specialist databases available on internet search engines.

Nevertheless, disabled freelancers suggest that CVs and databases are not so useful for them as few would pick someone randomly from these sources and even if they do, are unlikely to select one with a disability. Many interviewees have used CVs though they comment that rarely are they effective. One proposal to overcome the informality and lack of networks for some groups is to create alternative databases of, for example, EMG talents. However, these attempts are prone to failure as most people still rely on their own contacts. This key industry professional sums up the problems of this kind of database as a means to diversify the workforce:

*We have tried [databases] over and over again, and the thing is, unless these are properly maintained, they don't tend to work, so ....people build up their own personal databases...their contacts, that's how it works.*

Mainstream press such as The Guardian newspaper's Media supplement has been mentioned by several interviewees but very few have found work through the application and interview process from vacancies in a newspaper. The advertising costs are prohibitive for many small production companies and the process of using newspaper advertising does not fit into tight production schedules.

### 2.2.2 Nature of Work

The freelance media workers' day is comparatively long: an interviewee says that doing 60 hours week, a minimum of 12 hours a day in the sector is common.

<sup>28</sup> Memorandum, DCMS Submission to the House of Commons, September 2003.

Working unsocial hours and long durations away from family on location is also a common feature of film and television work. For most freelancers in the sector, it is also therefore physically demanding work. These elements of working in the media have detrimental effects on those with families and some people with disabilities. It is, for example, difficult to arrange child care:

*If I had a feature film at this stage, then it would all be about what you were going to earn and if you could afford to pay for childcare and take your child with you ...*

*I guess the only way that would solve it is a nanny/childcare service that is available at short notice. If you had an agency that you could phone up very last minute and understood the long hours that you worked... You could start at six and finish, well if you're doing a promo, at midnight. But that was obviously going to cost quite a lot of money because you're paying to keep those nannies there during the periods when you're not working and when you are working and to have that flexibility.*

(Female Camera Crew)

Many freelancers cannot take holidays and do not have sickness and other benefits, compared to permanent employees<sup>29</sup>. This interviewee talks about the close link between personal life and job insecurity for freelancers:

*It's a very unsteady industry, you can't guarantee you can get a mortgage because you don't know you're going to get more than a six month contract. It's an industry that doesn't pay very well, you work very long hours, so as one of my line managers said, it's actually a lifestyle choice as well as a career choice and you have to decide you're going to take that on board as well.*

(Representative from Regional Training Organisation)

Many of our interviewees, mostly women, tell us that having partners who are in other sectors, with steady income and regular hours has enabled them to carry on working in the film and television industries. Once again, the option is not always available for many people, for instance, lone parents who want to work in the media.

A key sector professional suggests that there may be a high dropout rate after the age of 40 as workers become burned out. There is little evidence in our research to support this except several of the individuals have found more permanent roles and stable employment within the sector after years of freelancing. They talked about the advantages of such a change. This might be a difficult issue to research as it would involve identifying people who had dropped out of the sector.

### 2.2.3 Financial Constraints

Much of the discussion we had with freelancers centred on pay and making a living. Freelance work is likely to be precarious and involves frequent employment/re-employment and job search. Although there are some workers successful in gaining sustained work, low pay, periods of unemployment and working for free are also commonly encountered. Some interviewees suggest that they may not even be paid the minimum wage for the work they do. Some roles,

<sup>29</sup> People on fixed term contracts are still subject to PAYE legally but in practice employers may not have that in place. Freelancers can also contribute to National Insurance that affects their entitlement to benefits.

for instance, front of house staff in the exhibition sector are comparatively poorly paid. The problem of low pay is particularly relevant to new entrants who are also likely to be recent graduates who may have debts and student loans. With the introduction of tuition fees for the academic year 2006-2007, graduates may be deterred from entering a sector such as the media which is considered risky and insecure.

Many interviewees also describe doing non-media work to support themselves. One owner of a distribution company held another full time job for two years initially whilst the company was being set up, therefore in effect having two jobs at the same time. Another interviewee talks about his experience:

*I mean basically you can't have a full time job and be a decent artist. Obviously bills need paying. When you're working you can't write, and when you're writing you can't earn money, and the difficult thing is convincing the government, or the Job Centre, or whatever, that you are writing, that you're working full time.*

(EMG Filmmaker)

This appears to be a particularly difficult problem for writers. One EMG writer says that he produces, on average, one script a year that gets commissioned. This means he cannot be a full time writer but has to work in non-media related roles, which he describes as 'proper jobs'. Even though he acknowledges that writing is a discipline and a job, due to family commitments, he comments that trying to earn a living as a writer full time would have been impractical and irresponsible:

*I've always needed to pay the rent, mortgage that kind of thing, and that's been the primary concern. Setting aside my own ambitions or flight of fancies... And another thing, my day job is not one that I dislike.*

The writer therefore suggests that creative work, such as screenwriting, may be too insecure to be considered a full time career. The lack of stable income discriminates against people who do not have additional financial support and affects those from a range of backgrounds e.g. the economically marginalised, practitioners with family responsibility. On the other hand, someone from a well off, middle class family may be able to draw on extra support. One assistant producer stayed with her parents in a regional city initially in order to save money on rent and bills. Actors are known to be out of work for much of their time (75-90% of Equity members are unemployed at any one time)<sup>30</sup>.

An interviewee who is married with a child states she cannot accept low pay or voluntary work as child care costs her £30 a day. There are long-term implications on gender balance in the sector. Here, an interviewee refers to gender, student fees and working in the sector:

*I think if people want to, [student fee]'s probably not going to stop them, but I think it probably does mean it's going to take them longer to pay off their debts, which again would have a very detrimental effect on women because they might not be able to afford to stop and have children, because they're still paying off debts.*

(Key Sector Professional)

<sup>30</sup> [http://www.bbc.co.uk/wales/justthejob/followyourdream/wrap/t\\_getstarted.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/wales/justthejob/followyourdream/wrap/t_getstarted.shtml). Accessed 5 July 2007.

It is beyond the scope of this project to examine film and television financing although many of the creative talents we spoke to have had experience in trying to obtain funds for their film and/or programme making. Often, a mixture of sources is sought, for example, public funding bodies such as the UK Film Council and private investors. The question of obtaining precarious finance is a major issue that most independent producers, directors and writers face. Fundraising is also reliant on forming networks and contacts.

The benefits system pertaining to disabled freelancers and support for adjustment (Access to Work) are discussed in **Volume II 1.1**. It is sufficient to say that as disabled freelancers can expect periods of unemployment, the benefits system affects individuals' decision to work and stay in the sector.

#### 2.2.4. Business Skills and Employment Rights

There are an estimated 11000 independent companies in the UK film and television industries (IES 2004: 1). The vast majority of these are small firms with less than ten employees and a turnover of less than £1 million. Many interviewees are also 'one man bands' and some of the freelancers interviewed for the project are registered as sole traders for tax purposes. This interviewee faces problems associated with the lack of business skills:

*My abilities are more in production, the creative side of it, and what could potentially hold me back is the business side of it. I have to work hard at doing the paperwork, as you can see here. All these bags are my taxes for this year and I actually have quite a lot to wade through. I think [my accountant]'s going to sack me!*

(Director)

Money issues, such as tax, accounting and chasing up debtors, are the foremost concerns for many practitioners. Sole traders and freelancers are often unaware of their legal rights. Even if they were, it could be difficult for them to exercise their rights and protect themselves in relation to negotiating contracts, fees, intellectual property issues, non-payment and late payment. The above interviewee, for instance, also states:

*People feel they can rip you off left, right and centre, and they feel fairly immune from prosecution, because they either think that you're not going to be able to do that and work in the industry again, or they feel that you haven't got enough money to put up front to prosecute them.*

Not all freelancers belong to a union. The interviewees who do belong to a union tend to see it as insurance in case they need representation. However, working in the film and television sector depends on goodwill with (potential) employers so that many freelancers are reluctant to access union's protection and intervention in terms of disputes, as the director above argues. This key sector professional further suggests:

*The problem is that people aren't prepared to take a company to court over it because they would see that as career suicide, and so the Union itself can't take an employer to court, even if it knows that the employer's doing it, unless somebody complains to the Union.*

### 2.2.5 Getting On

Progression in the industry often depends on maintaining good relationships with co-workers and employers. Several individuals use the phrase 'You are only as good as your last job'. Sometimes, informal groups of crew members move from job to job. Staying in and getting on in the sector also means building a portfolio of work.

The informal nature of the sector and reliance on interpersonal relationships create barriers for those from diverse backgrounds. For some grades, there is still a hierarchy that remains relatively closed:

*You have to be in the right place at the right time and you have to know the right people. So in a way it's more difficult for newcomers, women or ethnic minorities to break into the industry because it's always the older guys that are getting picked every time until they retire.*

(Camera Crew)

The UK film and television industries are a competitive field. Many individuals we interviewed talk about being disheartened and even considering leaving the sector when faced with 'closed doors' and 'dead ends' though they may not be able to pinpoint the reasons for their lack of progress. Several disabled media workers comment that they feel that they cannot move up as they are not able to form the important personal networks through socialising. There may be hesitation on the part of the disabled workers in terms of career progression:

*They're not taking advantage of all the networking opportunities, socialising and going to the pub or wine bar or theatre or whatever, the kind of thing that makes you a fully paid up member of the club. Maybe their energy is so devoted to doing the job that that's all they do. They don't look to the next step; I think that's a shame.*

(Disabled Journalist)

Disabled professionals who have worked on specialist programmes often feel that they cannot cross over to the mainstream. Many EMG freelancers face similar barriers. Several interviewees comment that they think they have to work harder than their non-disabled or white counterparts to convince others of their ability. A disabled filmmaker says that even though she wants to be a director, she does not think she will be seen to have the ability. Many from underrepresented groups are likely to be limited by such a glass ceiling:

*...at some point yes, I will hit the glass ceiling. And I think that when you get to the level where you have to manage people, that will be when more problems come up... I'm just wondering in order to become a producer, could I go up that level and take that responsibility, I'd need to think about how I could convince people of my authority...*

(Disabled Assistant Producer)

Several interviewees have talked about dropping out, especially for women with family responsibilities. There is little evidence in this project to suggest women with family responsibilities are more likely to drop out, although it would have been difficult to find interviewees who had left the industries. Family and age are discussed in **Volume II 1.2** and **1.5**.

### 2.2.6 Pigeonholing and Stereotypes

Overt discrimination is rare according to our interviewees from underrepresented groups. Nevertheless, many individuals report frustration with being identified only with their ethnicity, disability and so on. As a result, their career progression is often impeded. This section examines the evidence presented in the interviews.

Minority ethnic filmmakers have recounted experiences they identify as pigeonholing their range of work. An EMG programme producer states that she has been working for a minority ethnic television company, for too long, and feels that she cannot break out of it. Having made ethnicity focused programmes, filmmakers like this interviewee suggest they find it hard to break into the mainstream, meaning the major broadcasters, the BBC, Channel 4 and ITV.

Some filmmakers from underrepresented groups comment on not being accepted in the mainstream of the film and television sector, as it is dominated by a monocultural workforce that may resist change:

*People in television on the surface portray themselves as one kind of person, but actually they're trying to keep the status quo going in an industry which is predominantly white, middle class. They've all got jobs and very cushy lifestyles, they don't want it to change, it's as simple as that. I thought, well I've fought with them enough, I'm going to move on so I made a couple of short films.*

(EMG Director)

Minority ethnic led companies face similar problems that have been dealt with in detail elsewhere (IES 2004). This interviewee sums up the issue:

*The team we have here is very, very broad. But because I head the company, it's automatically seen as black led. We have a common vision and the stories we tell are international, but we're still seen as a black production company. That's what we find very difficult to break away from. And were I white, would I be automatically fitted into any pigeonhole? So I become the black producer, the black director, the black independent production company... Rather than having these clichéd one dimensional representations of the black community, we're much more than that. Yes, blacks are involved in crime. Yes, blacks are misrepresented within the penal system and everything else, but there are other dimensions to black existence.*

(EMG Filmmaker)

This interviewee goes on to suggest that mainstream broadcasters have a particular agenda that caters to 'the palate of Middle England'. A female EMG assistant producer states that she did not want to stay in Birmingham because she was likely to work at the Asian Programming Unit and only make Asian outputs. Wanting to produce different kinds of programmes, she believes that she has 'to work harder than... white counterparts'. Others talk about being treated as 'a one-trick pony', 'ghetto-isation' into specialist programmes and only being called to panel events during the Black History Month.

There is also the burden placed on EMG practitioners of having to represent their ethnic groups which are in fact very diverse:

*You'd be amazed at the number of people here who tell me, because I'm brown and I'm Indian they think I'm a Muslim and they want my advice on Muslim issues. Can't you see I'm a Hindu? The thing about the industry generally is that it's a very white, middle class industry, and those people who have managed to infiltrate, who are not white are often just as middle class, and have been to Oxbridge or whatever, and therefore are not in touch with the communities that ...their colleagues might think they represent, so they never challenge what's put forward as being the way things are.*

(Key Industry Professional)

British filmmaking is also the target of similar criticisms:

*How many people in the Film Council know anything about Asian culture at all...they've got the stereotypical view. There you go, that's going to satisfy our slot for minority films, there it is, done it. Now we can talk about that forever, whenever anyone asks us about funding Asian films, we'll just wheel that out.*

(EMG Director)

A disabled filmmaker describes how she is being side-stepped in relation to a feature film project, which suggests tokenism and discrimination:

*[The producer] said, 'it will be like this all the way through the production and ... half the names at the end of the production on the credits won't be the people who did the work, that's the way it works. Get used to it.' It's one thing being expected to be the blind monkey in the corner, but now I'm like, see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil, do you know what I mean? I'm their credibility, that old thing, the token presence and all that.*

(Female Disabled Filmmaker)

Onscreen representation is directly related to the work of actors. Minority ethnic actors face many barriers in terms of casting. They are disproportionately offered stereotypical, minor roles such as new migrants and foreigners with strong accents. The range of parts open to them are limited and defined by their ethnicity in a restrictive way:

*There's a big race barrier, being mixed race. People who work in the industry... they're very keen on kind of demarcations: If they want a Chinese person, they want a Chinese person; if they want a white person they want a white person. If you're somewhere in between, they've got a real problem with that.*

(EMG Actor)

The same actor goes on to suggest that it is impossible to break the barrier as legal frameworks governing equal opportunities in employment do not apply to the entertainment industry. Much of crewing and casting is also done behind closed doors that there is little that freelancers and actors can do. It is such a competitive sector that individuals are not likely to challenge producers and employers in any case.

An agent specialising in representing disabled actors and presenters suggests that there is fear regarding disabilities, a lack of information and education:

*People tend to sound sympathetic and say, oh yes, we'll try, send us the details and if we think they're suitable we'll invite them to have an audition.*

*But they never do. And I know it's because they're fixed in their minds about only seeing disabled people in disabled roles which is very disappointing and it is something that I know will change. Very occasionally we do ...and I can honestly say that for acting it's always the BBC who are far-sighted enough to [cast disabled actors in non-disabled roles].*

There is a sense that actors from underrepresented groups are invited to audition or employed as part of 'box ticking' exercise: the above agent says she is weary 'of people scoring brownie points at the expense of the actors on [her] books'. Minor roles are not developmental and the actors are still rendered invisible on screen. Another disabled actor suggests that writers who do not understand disabilities are responsible for crude and two dimensional disabled characters but he wants to work and cannot refuse parts for those reasons. Casting agents and producers would be the key to changing the practice.

Disabled workers in the sector also want to avoid being pigeonholed into only producing disability related programmes. They do not want to be identified with specialist programmes, but rather a wider range of outputs. Nevertheless, many are not able to get employment to make anything other than disability related contents. Some of the more junior disabled freelancers comment that people have low expectations of specialist programmes and of them. Several of the disabled interviewees suggest that they have been passed over for promotion or believe that their disabilities act as barriers to their career progression even though they are as equally experienced as their non-disabled counterparts.

## 2.2.7 Overcoming Barriers

### I. Flexibility of Freelance Work

The precarious nature of freelance work acts as a barrier to diversity in the sector. Nevertheless, there are features of freelance work that may be considered attractive. For many of our interviewees, the independence of freelance work offers opportunities that are not available from other types of contract arrangements. Creative talents comment on the possibilities especially where they may find a variety of sources of financing for their projects, which means less direct control from specific funders. Some freelancers work on low/no budget productions in order to gain experience and credits if they like the projects.

One female makeup artist only takes on daily and short term work as it suits her family responsibilities. A disabled researcher comments that her disability debilitates her for short periods of time only, which makes short term freelance work feasible. A programme producer told us that freelance work offers many advantages:

*As a freelancer, I have more mobility and I feel more professional in a way ... because I charge per day, they have to plan ahead, 'how long do I need her for'. In the eight hours per day, I can only do so much, so in a way that was a way for me to stop them from piling up my workload for the same price.*

There is a degree of flexibility in working hours offered by broadcasters and some companies within the sector. However, convincing employers to offer more flexibility (such as part time arrangements, flexible working days) will not be achieved in the short term. Some interviewees talk about the variety from day to

day, which makes work in the media industry interesting. On each production, workers meet new people and form fresh networks. Many practitioners take on a mixture of types of work and contracts over the year which allows them flexibility and control over their own workload.

Freelance work could also offer geographical flexibility. Freelancers in the regions state that they are able to make use of local networks to gain work but they can also travel to London and the South East for work opportunities. They are content with staying in the regions, thereby avoiding the high costs of living in the capital.

Therefore, the sector needs to recognise the beneficial aspects of freelance work but try to alleviate the barriers it poses. For instance, a human resources professional suggests that employers of freelancers on short term or fixed term contracts should still pay PAYE and National Insurance and in turn the employees should have access to paid holiday, sickness and other employment protection.

On the other hand, as this interviewee points out, there may be a case against short term contracts altogether, which needs to be investigated further:

*Work efficiencies are compromised when you've just joined a production, it takes you a couple of weeks to get into the flow of things, and then towards the end of the production, for the last two or three weeks, you're looking for your next job. Actually how effective and productive are our people being if we employ them on contracts?*

(Key Industry Professional)

## II. Alternative Networks

Several interviewees suggest that professionals from underrepresented groups should get together and form their own networks:

*I think if someone puts a barrier in front of you and says you can't do this because you're a woman, you're disabled, you're black or whatever, I don't think you should fall into the victim mentality. I think what you should do is try and think of ways around that, and that's what interests me: creating your own networks.*

(Male EMG Filmmaker)

In addition, disabled interviewees comment that for them using word of mouth referrals and contacts are important ways of gaining employment. Some disabled interviewees suggest that contacts they made at school and university helped them to get a foot in the door of the film and television sector. Freelancers in the regions also comment that as long as they have contacts, work is available wherever they are situated.

## III. Career Building

Expanding one's profile and credits is of prime importance for media professionals. One EMG assistant accountant suggests that by mixing film and television work, she has been able to maintain continuous employment. This advice from an interviewee reflects the belief in personal qualities in overcoming barriers:

*If you've got anything about you, if you're entrepreneurial, if you don't give*

*up... you start to think outside the box and think about loads of different ways of getting a job, you'll be fine.*

(Female EMG Assistant Producer)

Even though many of our interviewees share the view that they can succeed or have succeeded in the media through hard work and perseverance despite the competitiveness of the sector, there are entrenched structural issues in the sector that make it harder for people from diverse backgrounds as evidenced by the findings of this research.

#### **IV. Niche Markets**

Some workers from underrepresented groups may feel compelled to work on specialist programmes or themes related to their personal characteristics. On the other hand, many are interested in reflecting social issues pertinent to their experiences in the films and television programmes they make. Finding a niche market therefore may be a way to move ahead. For example, there are production companies led by disabled entrepreneurs that adhere to good human resources practice and recruit disabled staff when they can. The work of the disabled trainers in the current research is directly informed by their own experiences and their management expertise, as explained by this interviewee:

*We're a company with a social purpose, because we want to change how disability is viewed, in relation to employment, access to services, broadcasting. But we're also a commercial organisation and give professional advice. We would like to make a profit at the end of the year as well. Our external team are probably 80% disabled people. Of our internal team, probably just over 50% are disabled. I want to prove that we...practise what we preach, which is saying, you can be a productive, effective professional organisation having a mixed group of people.*

(CEO, Disability Training and Consultancy Company)

#### **V. Alternative Routes**

Sometimes, pursuing their own projects means more control over the content. Many EMG and disabled filmmakers talk about feeling a sense of social responsibility in their work. For example, several interviewees comment on working outside the mainstream. Whilst it gives the filmmaker a lot of control and independence, this may mean difficulties in finding funding, exhibition and distribution of the films or programmes. Many filmmakers amongst the interviewees have self-financed their films. An EMG director states,

*With hindsight, it has huge implications because, all these companies with the establishment, they've got their own agendas and they've got their own films coming out, so you're very much the enemy. I've felt very much left out, which I never expected.*

An EMG led independent production company uses alternative distribution networks such as online sales. Youtube, MySpace and Google videos have been mentioned by many filmmakers as ways of getting their films seen, rather than relying on traditional distribution avenues. These filmmakers are bypassing major broadcasters although how effective these means of distribution are when compared to traditional media is yet to be explored.

## VI. Personal Development and Mentoring

Personal development and learning were also mentioned by many of the interviewees, although accessing funding for professional development could be difficult. Management training is also crucial, especially for freelancers and sole traders. Similarly, equality and disability training for managers who have responsibility over human resources may change attitudes and improve practice.

Mentoring may be a good way forward to encourage media professionals from underrepresented groups. However, many of our interviewees have argued that there are few positive role models from diverse backgrounds with experience and vision who are in positions of power. There is a sense of hope that this will change, as this interview suggests:

*When we get high enough, we can make the effort to employ people on their merit, not on what school they went to.*

(Female EMG Researcher)

## VII. Changing Attitudes

Some of the interviewees express an interest in creating contents and portrayals that are not stereotypical but reflect their experiences. Several producers mention they try to recruit diverse crews when there is a perceived need to find representatives from specific communities who can relate to the contributors of the programmes. Nevertheless, the perception that diverse crew members are only required for culturally specific programmes will again have a ghetto-ising effect.

In 2002, Channel 4's Multicultural Department was closed as the then new Chief Executive Mark Thompson suggested that multicultural contents should be spread across all departments. An EMG director suggests that there were opportunities and funding available from the Multicultural Department which was closed to him now even though he did not like the creative restrictions posed on him, such as conforming to racial stereotypes. Interviewees from organisations, key sector bodies and individuals all agree that diversity amongst the workforce will affect portrayals in film and television. Therefore, re-education is one long-term solution to the pigeonholing and stereotyping of people from underrepresented groups. In turn, rounded onscreen portrayals will inspire future recruits into the sector. In addition, the more people from currently underrepresented backgrounds working in the film and television industries, the more understanding of the diverse cultures and needs there will be.

### 2.2.8 Summary

The most distinctive feature of **recruitment** in the sector is its **informal, word of mouth nature** as film and television productions come under time and resources pressure. As a result, freelancers have to constantly pitch for work, using a variety of methods. **Personal recommendations** are seen to ensure quality; workers in the sector would only recommend those they could trust.

Freelance work is precarious and often involves **long hours and working away from home**, which forms a barrier to some groups such as those with child care responsibilities. **Low pay, periods of unemployment and working for free** are also common experiences for freelancers. The insecure nature of freelance work

may affect career choice or the decision to stay in the sector. Many practitioners also do **non-media work** to support themselves. Small enterprises and sole traders may not have the necessary business skills. **Union** protection and intervention in employment matters are seldom sought due to the importance of networks and goodwill with (potential) employers in the sector. For some grades, there is still a hierarchy that remains relatively closed.

Although **overt discrimination is rarely reported** in the interviews with individuals, many from underrepresented groups feel that they are pigeonholed in the kind of work they get even though some may wish to **create content that reflects their experiences**. Many of the interviewees feel that they cannot move from **specialist programmes** into mainstream broadcasting and they are employed as a **representative/tokenistic presence** of their communities. Actors also find it difficult to break out of restrictive categories defined by their ethnicity or disability.

Some interviewees also suggest that **commissioners and funders have stereotypical views** of different communities and disabilities that do not reflect diverse experiences. It is difficult to challenge employers as many of these decisions are made behind closed doors. The lack of people from diverse backgrounds at the middle and senior management levels is a reflection of the **glass ceilings** that many of them face.

### 2.2.9 Recommendations

- There needs to be more support by key sector bodies for small companies and freelancers, especially in relation to business skills, legal issues and employment rights.
- Information and support for employers in relation to employment law and human resources management would improve recruitment practices.
- Alternative networks formed among filmmakers and those from marginalised groups should be encouraged.
- Filmmakers from diverse groups should be encouraged to explore niche markets; support for alternative distribution and exhibition channels would provide more opportunities for filmmakers.
- There needs to be further research into the relationship between new media distribution, exhibition and diversity of the media workforce.
- Funding for professional development especially for members of underrepresented groups would help their career progression.
- Mentoring and role models should be promoted to support film and television professionals from underrepresented groups.
- Key sector bodies should raise awareness among film funders and commissioners in relation to pigeonholing and stereotyping of disabled and EMG professionals.
- Diverse crews should not be limited to programmes dealing with specific cultural issues, though specialist programmes could provide funding and support to media professionals from underrepresented groups.
- More research to establish the precise relationships between onscreen portrayal, diversity and employment should be carried out.

## 2.3 Staying In: Recruitment and Selection

Evident from discussions so far in these reports is that there is a lack of formal recruitment procedures in the film and television industries. As a result, recruitment practices in the sector can be exclusionary. Networks and contacts, which are often used as a means of gaining employment, are discussed in **Volume II 2.2**. This section examines how recruitment practices impact on the diversity record of the sector and explore ways of improving them.

### 2.3.1 Recruitment Practices

As the main broadcasters, the BBC and ITV, were de-regulated, reliance on a network of informal contacts has become crucial to finding work in television. This interviewee explains:

*We're kind of prisoners of history really, in that not too many years ago, there was permanent employment in both the BBC and ITV, and there wasn't any Channel 4 or Channel 5. These workforces were overwhelmingly white. Now when there was the de-regulation and setting up of Channel 4, a lot of these workers thought they might be losing their jobs anyway, or they just thought, Channel 4's starting, I reckon I could make it as an independent producer. So they set themselves up as freelancers or self employed. So the overwhelmingly white nature of the traditional broadcasters spread itself out a bit... the people who set themselves up as freelancers and self employed companies, they were mates with the people they were working with last week for example, and so they then used their contacts to get the work. It's all circles within circles, and so if you are a black or minority ethnic professional who's graduated, you haven't got any contacts in the industry. How are you going to get in?*

(Key Sector Professional)

A key industry professional told us that in drama, for instance, each generation of professionals tends to know most of the other programme-makers around. She added that 65 – 70% of people who apply for a job in the sector would be familiar to the recruiters. Unless more people from marginalised groups are in the decision-making and hiring roles, the word of mouth nature of recruitment in the industries is likely to continue.

A key sector professional suggests that perhaps there are more open opportunities in large production teams (e.g. Hollywood inward productions). For many small production companies, no- or low budget projects, film or programme-makers have to call in favours and diversity is not always at the forefront of their mind. Recruitment methods are therefore a lot more ad hoc, fragmented and informal than in many other industries. A key industry professional said it was what...

*... people do when they have a very short period of time to recruit staff. It will happen on a Friday, a programme gets commissioned, on a Monday they start making it, and you might have to recruit 30 people within that timeframe, so you do rely on those people who are on your mobile phone.*

(Key Industry Professional)

Our interviews confirmed that workers are often recruited informally. As productions come under time and resources pressure, personal and professional

contacts become the easiest option to find the crew members. Many posts are short term and required urgently. There is no time to advertise or interview-standard human resources procedures that would offer equal opportunities to candidates. Instead, heads of departments or producers telephone their networks of contacts. This interviewee describes how it works in practice:

*You'll get a film company that has always used a particular person to produce their film. That person has always used a particular person to direct the film, and these people have always used a particular person as the production manager. The production manager's got all these mates who are heads of departments [who] have got this particular person who always works with these people.*

(Key Sector Professional)

There is a sense of security in this traditional way of working as the production team is confident of the quality of work they can expect. However, an interviewee argues that under time pressure, sometimes 'they're not necessarily getting the best person, they're just getting the person'.

With over supply of individuals available and willing to work at short notice, there is no incentive for informal recruitment methods to change. Production companies routinely receive CVs from those looking for work, even willing to do so for free. In lieu of good recruitment practices, those in the industries rely on personal introductions and recommendations. Both key sector body professionals and individuals comment on the discriminatory nature of informal recruitment practices:

*The industry wants to be more diverse. Generally people would agree with the idea that there should be more disabled people around, there should be more black and people from ethnic minorities around, but individually, will they decide to employ someone? They probably just want the best person they know will do the job, that their friend knows, who did really well on something. You've got this kind of slightly insular environment, and it's very hard to break into.*

(Disabled Researcher)

Furthermore, employing more formal recruitment methods such as advertising or using agencies is seen as too time consuming and expensive, especially if a new recruit may be inexperienced and needs to be trained up. A human resources consultant suggests that many employers in the sector do wish to broaden their search for workers but feel constrained by lack of knowledge and time. The large number of small, independent production companies means that many do not have dedicated human resources management, do not have standardised documentation such as contracts or personnel policies, let alone a concerted approach to diversity.

### **2.3.2 Nepotism: Favouritism in business based on friendly or family relationships**

Those who work in film and television acknowledge that there are often requests from friends and relatives (or their children) for introduction into the sector. There are also family business concerns: for instance, a stunt co-ordinator mentioned that several other co-ordinators have children who are stunt performers.

This interviewee believes that nepotism is necessary and not 'a bad thing':

*The barriers I've faced are probably the same barriers as you'd get regardless of race to be honest, things like the fact that the industry is very internal, it's very referral based, it's based a lot on nepotism. It's not necessarily a bad thing because ...it's a commercial industry, you need to take on people you can trust and you can rely on and a lot of that does rely on people you know, which is fair enough.*

(Representative from Regional Training Organisation)

In defence of the practice, some interviewees explain that it offers security and assurance of quality:

*People become more defensive and they become territorial, and they go with who they know. And quite a few people said to me, it's much easier if you're in a panic to employ someone you've worked with before.*

(Key Industry Professional)

Nepotism means that sometimes people are employed not for skills or merits but because they happen to have contacts in the industries who can recommend them. The reliance on word of mouth referrals therefore could lead to and perpetuate nepotism. Skilled practitioners may not get work if they lack contacts.

Informal recruitment through individual contacts is likely to increase the monocultural nature of the sector as friends and family circles tend to be relatively homogenous. Therefore, any lack of diversity within the make-up of workforce in the film and television industries will be reproduced. One of the industry professionals claims that her predecessor employed as many people like her as she could. Nepotism therefore acts as a further barrier for underrepresented groups.

### 2.3.3 Experiences of Human Resources Departments

Major broadcasters, including the BBC, Channel 4 and ITV, have dedicated human resources departments and staff. Their recruitment policies are formal and structured. Nevertheless, a key industry professional comments that practices such as submitting unsolicited CVs and using personal contacts to gain employment at the BBC still exist.

Human resources professionals from larger production companies have attempted to adhere to formal recruitment policy such as advertising on websites, industry databases, national and specialist press even though they accept that recruitment through word of mouth is the norm. In a small industry and/or a specialist area, there are often networks of freelancers who know and have worked with each other, who would recommend their contacts for vacancies.

Increasingly, web based databases such as Production Base, Mandy and Broadcast Freelancers are being used for recruitment. Mostly, job seekers pay a subscription to be informed of vacancies. However, employers recognise that they are still not a good way of discovering new and diverse talents. Most of these websites do not charge the employers, which arguably attract more small independent companies to advertise. However, the subscriptions charged to individual freelancers mount up if they subscribe to several websites, which

may deter those less experienced. An interviewee comments that there are over 800 assistant producers listed on Production Base which demonstrates how competitive the sector is.

Ways of targeting diverse talents through recruitment have been tried with mixed results. For instance, larger companies and broadcasters have advertised in the ethnic press although one interviewee suggested that the interest generated was disappointing.

## 2.3.4 Overcoming Barriers

### I. Improving Recruitment Practices

Key sector professionals and individuals agree that structured recruitment procedures would make the sector more accessible and open to diverse talents. Major broadcasters and larger production companies have the resources to adopt formal recruitment procedures for job and placement applications, which is a welcome change. Making the procedure of applications fair but allowing for differences is important:

*Human resources can advise the person on how they might treat a disability because they've got another 20 disabled people around the [broadcaster], that's very different to going to a company where there are only 50 people, and no one's ever worked with anyone with a disability before.*

(Disabled Researcher)

Focused search outside of the traditional avenues would also be useful in sourcing diverse talents.

*We used to just advertise in The Guardian. I was on the British Born Chinese website, reading up on something, and a BBC jobs alert popped up. We advertise and recruit in a really different way from what we used to. In the North in particular the recruitment team are fantastic at working with Job Centre Plus, working with small employer coalitions, working with disability groups so that people in those groups get to hear of the jobs faster. Subconsciously the message is really different to 'well, you should know that you need to read The Guardian'. (Key Industry Professional)*

A variety of initiatives to overcome barriers to diversity in employment have been put in place by lead sector bodies and broadcasters (see Volume III). The larger independents have also been able to develop long-term business plans and to work on a sustainable basis, which means they could improve their employment practices, as this interviewee suggests:

*There've been some very enlightened production companies... and obviously within television the growth of... the big independents... should put them in a position where they can actually do more.*

(Key Sector Professional)

What the above interviewee suggests is that with the growth of independent companies, the sector should be more conducive to implement diversity initiatives and human resources policies. For example, several larger production companies have good relationships with relevant courses and colleges that help to publicise work in the sector and attract future recruits:

*It normally starts with being invited to their open days and then after that ...some of our operators go down and give talks about what they do, I go down and talk about how to get into the industry, how to apply, what to put on your CV, your reel, that sort of stuff. They can come to [the company], I'll give them a tour and show them round the studio. For us it's a bit of promotion and obviously the hope that we'll get the best students and obviously for them it's helpful knowing what it is they're going into.*

(Human Resources Professional)

These independent companies are also aware that they could work with schools and universities in more diverse areas that might help to attract potential entrants.

To improve diversity in the sector the key sector bodies and the broadcasters set voluntary codes of practices and standards and persuade the companies to implement them. This key industry professional explains how she may work with independent production companies to increase diversity:

*They are an independent production company so ... we can influence ...we have approval over key creative roles actually. Certainly ...on a film like Bullet Boy or a film like Shoot the Messenger we would be very active in that way, but otherwise we would discuss it with them. We put forward people we thought were good, that's for sure.*

Skillset also launched a scheme to advise small and medium sized companies in the industry on improving human resources policies (see **Volume III Section 3.3**).

Web based databases could be useful and there is evidence that this method of recruitment is increasingly being used by both employers and job seekers. Maintenance, coverage and costs are often cited as problems. At the moment, the established sites such as Production Base and Broadcast tend to be used by more experienced freelancers.

There are also alternative means of recruitment: a makeup college also acts as an agency and students and graduates find work through the connection. Specific organisations such as the Production Managers' Association provide a list of production staff. The Production Guild publishes a membership directory and issues availability lists that help to match freelancers and employers. The more open and accessible recruitment practices are, the more diverse the workforce the sector will attract. Alternative methods of advertising should be explored.

Key sector bodies that fund or part fund productions and broadcasters commissioning independent companies have a stake in actively promoting diversity. From the interviews we had with their representatives, at the moment they only use that power in relation to certain projects that are considered culturally specific:

*We sometimes get people suggested by broadcasters. They will say, right, we're making this programme and we'd like to recommend this producer, director, so you'll meet new people that way.*

(Head of Production)

The requirement to recruit fairly should be part of all service contracts by public

bodies. That, together with education and awareness will make recruitment practices more transparent.

## II. Changing Attitudes

One way of increasing the pool of potential workers from marginalised groups is to change ideas about the industry starting from schools and colleges. The UK Film Council issued a DVD in 2005 entitled *Get in the Picture* to highlight role models from diverse backgrounds and raise knowledge about the kind of work available in the industries. A short trailer from the film is included as part of the DVD releases of productions part funded by the UK Film Council.

Several schemes are already in existence to place new recruits from diverse groups in independent companies so they gain on-the-job training and experience, as well as start to build networks (see **Volume III**).

Increasing the number of people from diverse groups in positions of hiring and crewing in the film and television industries are particularly important. For instance, a Chinese actor comments that he has never seen a non-white casting director. Both employers and individuals agree that positive discrimination is not only illegal but would undermine recruitment based on equality principles. It is likely that the process of change will be slow and it will take time to create a more open environment in the sector.

## III. Widening Networking Opportunities

As it is a long process to change the working practices of the sector, more opportunities for creating networks and promoting contacts between professionals from underrepresented groups with others in the sector will help to break down nepotism as a barrier. Most of the key sector bodies are in agreement with the need to create networking opportunities between decision makers and professionals from underrepresented groups. Initiatives such as BECTU's *Move On Up* is discussed in **Volume III 2.6**.

Many of the key sector bodies, New Producers Alliance, Women in Film and Television, Pact and Production Guild, already organise networking events for their members. Networking events are particularly useful for new entrants but will generally help with career progression. Film festivals also offer opportunities to make contacts and are generally open to new and experienced filmmakers.

Mentoring within organisations and broadcasters, if properly administered and structured, could help junior members of the sector in making new contacts and progressing. This is also an element of several training schemes for new entrants.

### 2.3.5 Summary

**Informal recruitment practices** dominate. **Networks and contacts** are the main means of gaining employment, which forms a barrier for **fresh and diverse talent** from underrepresented groups, as many may not have access to social events and opportunities.

**Small production companies**, which dominate the market, do not have the necessary human resources knowledge while the **major broadcasters and larger production companies** often have procedures in place to prevent discriminatory human resources practices.

### 2.3.6 Recommendations

- Wherever possible, recruitment practices should be formalised and made more transparent.
- Targeted recruitment drives outside of the traditional route might help to attract wide range of applicants.
- More industry input in career advice in schools and colleges would provide information to students and attract future recruits.
- Web-based databases and availability lists need to be properly maintained and made inexpensive for individual users.
- Commissioners and public funders should encourage diversity in employment in productions they support.
- Networking events and mentoring will help new entrants and career progression.

# Volume III Industry Initiatives

## Introduction

Volume III examines the various initiatives instituted by key sector bodies and broadcasters to overcome barriers to diversity in the UK film and television industries. Section 1 considers a variety of schemes aimed at underrepresented groups defined by characteristics including disability, gender, ethnicity, regions and age. In section 2, programmes that tackle barriers at entry level, graduate training and skills transfer are explored, as well as human resources initiatives and those providing networking opportunities. The final section of the volume examines positive action, training and the role of different networks such as CDN, CDN North and BCIDN.

# 1 Initiatives Taken to Address the Key Issues in Diversity

## 1.1 Disability

The key sector bodies and broadcasters have taken several initiatives to increase the on and off-screen representation of disabled people in the sector. Training schemes such as BBC's *Extend*, Channel 4's *Researcher Training Programme* and ITV's *Enabling Talent* target disabled people specifically. The following section discusses these schemes in detail. There is support such as *Access to Work*, the BBC's *Access Unit*, the *Disability Programme Unit* and specialist programmes like *Vee TV* and *See Hear* that have helped to increase the representation of disabled people in the sector and these are discussed in **Volume II section 1.1** and **Volume III section 3.1**.

### 1.1.1 Extend

The *Extend* scheme is a six month work placement for disabled people run annually by the BBC. It was set up to increase the representation of disabled staff within the corporation. A key industry professional says that it was also intended to enable talented disabled people to gain work experience in the UK film and television industries and to improve their opportunities of securing future employment. It was instituted to try and enhance the scope of disability awareness within the BBC especially at management level and to highlight the business case for employing disabled staff. The managers who hire *Extendees*<sup>31</sup> get the opportunity to take part in an in-house workshop on disability equality training. An industry professional claims that the scheme, which has been running for around ten years, is the only positive action programmes run by the BBC.

The number of placements varies from year to year. They are set up in programme making roles such as broadcast journalists, broadcast assistants, television researchers and programme support areas including administration, business support and accountancy throughout the corporation. The placements are UK-wide covering BBC Scotland, Ireland and Wales in addition to London. Since *Extend* is not a training but work placement scheme the applicants are expected to have the necessary skills to do the job at the point of recruitment.

*Extendees* are considered new members of staff. They are paid £250 a week for the duration of the scheme. Once *Extendees* are appointed for a particular placement they are referred to the Access Team to set up an Access Needs Assessment. The Access Unit also supports them in applying for funding from *Access to Work* and makes sure that any necessary reasonable adjustments are fully met. The Access Unit is staffed by a team with expert knowledge on disability, access issues and assistive technology who are ready to help the *Extendees*.

The scheme is considered to be a valuable tool in increasing the number of disabled professionals working in the industry and helping to achieve the target of 4% disabled workforce in the BBC. According to an industry professional:

<sup>31</sup> *Extendees* are those who have been chosen to take part in the *Extend* Scheme.

*It's the main way that people with disabilities end up working for the BBC ...So it's a good scheme in that it has a heritage and a lot of disabled employees have come through that scheme.*

According to a key industry professional, the *Extend Scheme* can be considered to be successful as over 50% of the Extendees gain ongoing work. The scheme won the British Diversity Award for the best employment initiative for underrepresented groups in 2002. An industry professional claims that plans are underway to increase the number of placements under the scheme. However another key industry professional suggests that there is little emphasis on helping Extendees in finding jobs once the placements end. Furthermore, the duration of the placement is felt to be too short for disabled professionals to come off benefits and then to return to it if they need to, once the placement comes to an end.

### 1.1.2 Channel 4 Disability Researcher Training Scheme

The *Disability Researcher Training Scheme*, run by Channel 4, places the researchers in various independent companies who make programmes for the broadcaster. The company pays 50% of the researchers' salary and Channel 4 pays the remaining 50%. The scheme is intended to provide an opportunity for disabled people to become trained in researcher skills. A key industry professional believes that it also offers potential employers a learning experience that helps them realise that a disabled person can be a researcher, 'as long as they've got the right brain and personality to do the job, they can employ them and it won't be a big deal for them'. Consequently they may be more open-minded when recruiting in future.

A key industry professional claims that the number of enquiries and applications they received for the placements clearly affirms the need for such a scheme in the industry. She states that since initiatives like the scheme are very rare, Channel 4 cannot rely on traditional means of advertising, for example in the *Media Guardian*, and expect to attract disabled potential applicants; extra effort was put into reaching the widest pool of talent. As well as the Channel 4 website, the scheme was advertised widely on e-groups, on other websites and to organisations like *Blind in Business*.

A key industry professional says that being involved in the delivery of the scheme has been a learning opportunity for many people as they have to be more aware of the access needs of disabled professionals, some of which are often ignored. It is also pointed out that care is taken to make sure the candidate is suitable for the company and vice versa; if the working partnership between the company and the candidate is successful, the employer will be more inclined to offer work to other disabled professionals in future.

### 1.1.3 Enabling Talent

*Enabling Talent*<sup>32</sup> is the report produced by ITV to outline their progress on the BCIDN's Disability Manifesto and Action plan (BCIDN 2006). It includes ITV's initiatives on employment, portrayal, technology and access needs<sup>33</sup>. *Disability*

<sup>32</sup> [www.employers-forum.co.uk/www/bcidn/manifesto/2006-action-plans/itv-bcidn-report.ppt](http://www.employers-forum.co.uk/www/bcidn/manifesto/2006-action-plans/itv-bcidn-report.ppt). Accessed 13 September 2007.

<sup>33</sup> The Enabling North West Talent scheme is a separate scheme supporting six disabled talents on job placement at ITV

*Traineeships* and *the Disability Broker Initiative* are schemes intended to increase the number of disabled employees in ITV.

*Disability Traineeships:* ITV worked closely with Scope (UK disability organisation whose focus is on people with cerebral palsy) and other national and regional organisations to offer a number of traineeships in various roles with the broadcaster. The scheme was advertised in a broad range of publications including the specialist diversity press to attract more applicants. ITV has also invested in technology to meet the access needs of the applicants with a range of disabilities.

*Disability Broker Initiative:* 'ITV intends to develop close relationships with disability organisations and partner them with other ITV suppliers and give them access to job vacancies'<sup>34</sup>.

ITV has also taken steps to create a more disability friendly environment. It has delivered sign language courses to 100 of its employees and has also set up Access All Areas, a group to examine access across the ITV regions and platforms. As part of *Enabling Talent*, ITV has employed diversity champions at the senior management level to help implement the diversity action plans of the organisation and promote more inclusive policies. ITV has not committed to any disability portrayal targets in its report, *Enabling Talent*, though it intends to collect more data from its regional and national centres to give an overview on portrayal. ITV diversity champions are expected to lobby and influence within various television genres to increase diversity.

ITV has committed to increase the number of programmes that are signed, have audio description and subtitling. It also has a centre for onscreen sign language programming called Sign Post which is based in Newcastle upon Tyne. Sign Post employs deaf onscreen and studio staff whose first language is British Sign Language (BSL). It also runs a bi-lingual English-BSL website where visitors can access details of signed television programmes shown on ITV and other channels, news and information about deaf issues, learn a BSL sign a day, see signed news and find more information about signing on television.

#### 1.1.4 Talent Fund for Disabled Actors

In 2005, BBC and Channel 4 jointly ran a scheme called the *Talent Fund* to find and develop 25 disabled actors. UK-wide auditions were held and actors with a range of disabilities from different ethnic backgrounds were chosen for training to help them develop their television acting skills. A key industry professional says that this scheme was run to address the claim of casting directors that there was a shortage of disabled actors.

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Granada.

34 [www.employers-forum.co.uk/www/bcidn/manifesto/2006-action-plans/itv-bcidn-report.ppt](http://www.employers-forum.co.uk/www/bcidn/manifesto/2006-action-plans/itv-bcidn-report.ppt). Accessed 13 September 2007.

## 1.2 Gender

The key sector bodies in the industry are well aware of the gender imbalance in the industry especially in certain roles (see **Volume II 1.2**). The schemes, *Directing Change*, *Technical Change* and *Time Shift*, have been developed to address the imbalance. The following section discusses each of these schemes.

### 1.2.1 Directing Change

*Directing Change*<sup>35</sup>, launched in 2003, was set up to increase the number of women feature film directors in the sector. The scheme is led by Women in Film and Television (WFTV), a membership association for women who have at least one year's professional experience in the television, film and/or digital media industries, and is funded by the UK Film Council. It gives two talented and experienced UK based women directors the opportunity to break into bigger budget film making. The successful candidates get the opportunity to work alongside experienced feature film directors throughout the production. The scheme aims to equip the candidates with skills that would help them to transfer into mainstream film making. It includes teaching them a broad range of technical, practical and communication skills required to prepare and run a shoot. Being part of the scheme raises the profile of the candidates and provides them with contacts in the industry. It also intends to give women directors a level of credibility with producers, financiers and distributors.

*Directing change* aims to break the glass ceiling some women professionals hit during the course of their careers that prevents them from progressing further. It also addresses barriers such as lack of contacts and work experience that restrict some women from working on big budget productions. A key sector professional comments that after the scheme was instituted there was a significant increase in the number of women directors in the industry but she recognises that this change could be coincidental and might not be a direct result of the programme.

### 1.2.2 Technical Change

The success of *Directing Change* inspired WFTV to institute a similar scheme for women in technical grades. *Technical Change* is conducted in collaboration with Skillset, UK film council, UIP pictures and Channel 4<sup>36</sup>. The scheme is funded by the European Social Fund as part of the Equal project and is one strand of the *Audio Visual Entrepreneurship Development Programme* (See **3.3**). The scheme is aimed at women who are in technical grades but seem to have reached a plateau and need assistance to further their careers. They are given the opportunity to work alongside a mentor for a three month period to develop their careers. The scheme seeks to encourage people to set themselves up as freelancers or as small businesses and to become entrepreneurs.

*Technical Change* aims to promote women working in six specific fields; lighting, sound, camera, physical special effects, interactive media and post-production where Skillset figures indicate a low female representation in the workforce.

The scheme aims to change perceptions and prejudices about women's ability

<sup>35</sup> See <http://www.wftv.org.uk/dchange.asp>. Accessed 17 July 2007.

<sup>36</sup> See <http://www.wftv.org.uk/pdf/WFTVTechnicalChangeBrochure.pdf>. Accessed 17 July 2007.

to work in technical areas by increasing the number of women working in those grades. It may also provide candidates with contacts helping them to move up the career ladder. One long-term aim is to promote role models who would inspire more women to work in the technical grades where there is gender imbalance. The scheme is still in its pilot stage and the result of its evaluation is not yet available.

### 1.2.3 Time Shift

*Time Shift* is also part of the *Audio Visual Entrepreneurship Programme* funded by the European Social Fund. It is run by Skillset and is designed to address the problem of women who drop out of the industry due to family and child care responsibilities. A key sector professional points out that people working on film projects often work for more than 18 hours a day making it difficult to meet domestic responsibilities. Those with caring responsibilities, predominantly women, find it difficult to devote that amount of time and energy to work and consequently may leave the industry. The scheme is an attempt to retain those talents.

A key sector professional states that *Time Shift* was informed by research which revealed that women, especially those over 35 years, were leaving the industry. This trend needs to be examined in conjunction with reports from the National Office of Statistics which show that women are having children later in life<sup>37</sup>. This might be one of the reasons why women over 35 were dropping out of the industry and if it was, the scheme could address the issue.

Under *Time Shift*, pairs of women practitioners job share. Skillset pays £100 a week towards their childcare and £180 per week to the production to cover any administration costs that might arise out of having two people working in the company instead of one. More process driven roles such as production design, art department, locations assistants are chosen for the pilot scheme to minimise the creative decision-making responsibilities. Candidates are asked to apply in teams to ensure that they have a rapport between them, rather than candidates being put in pairs who might not be able to work well together. Partnerships based on existing friendship or professional relationship are encouraged.

The participants selected for the 2006 scheme were two teams of costume designers, a team of assistant editors and a team of graphic designers. A key sector professional notes that the feedback about the scheme based on the completed evaluation forms of the participants and the production companies has been positive. The feedback is used to further shape the initiative.

*Time Shift* is considered by a key sector professional to be particularly challenging for employers in the film and television industries because it is about changing their mind sets to accept the idea of job share. It also requires them to hire practitioners who could be outside their networks of contacts. The key sector professional points out that the scheme is not a training programme rather it is pushing forward new models of working in the industry. However, 'the target group of women returners *in positions to job share* was so specific and new to the industry that realistic participants... were thin on the ground' (GHK 2007: 19, italic original).

<sup>37</sup> See <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk=9809&More=Y>. Accessed 13 September 2007.

## 1.3 Ethnicity

There is wide acknowledgement in the UK film and television industries of the importance of a media workforce representative of the demographic profile of the country. There is also evidence that people from ethnic minority groups are not adequately represented in the sector. Several initiatives such as BBC's *New Talent*, *Move On Up*, *Assistant Production Accountant Training*, *Foundation Placement Scheme*, *Channel 4 Researcher Training programme* and *Open Door Awards* have helped people from minority ethnic groups to break into film and television (see also sections 2 in this volume). The *Channel 4 Researcher Training Scheme* and the *Open Door awards* are discussed here, both long running programmes that have shown some degree of success.

### 1.3.1 Channel 4 Researcher Training Scheme

The *Channel 4 Researcher Training Scheme*<sup>38</sup>, funded by Channel 4, is aimed at people from culturally diverse backgrounds. The selected candidates are employed for 12 months with an independent television production company. They also receive training sessions at Channel 4 every month that involve working on location and in studios, writing treatments, DV (digital video) camera training, archive and copyright research, interviewing and assessing contributors for television. The scheme intends to provide the candidates with skills and contacts necessary for them to progress further in the television industry. The company pays 50% of the salaries of the candidates while Channel 4 pays the rest of the salary and all additional expenses. The application process for the scheme is outsourced to a company called Search Light to ensure impartial and fair selection. According to a key industry professional, the scheme sends the message that it is important to employ professionals from diverse communities to independent production companies and the broadcaster gets the opportunity to lead by example.

The independent companies tender for the scheme. They are required to explain the infrastructure within the company and the support they can offer the researchers who are part of the scheme. A key industry professional believes that the scheme can be considered successful as 98% of the participants are still in work and some are moving up the career ladder, for instance, from being a researcher to assistant producer.

The following positive comments are from interviewees who are from among the scheme's current and previous participants:

*I did find it great, I loved it because ...it gave me the opportunity that I always wanted,...I was in the right environment, the Channel 4 research training was an opportunity for me. It was just a great opportunity, it couldn't really go wrong for me.*

(EMG Assistant Producer)

*It definitely gives you opportunities that you never would have had, because with the training, we get to meet lots of different people. We get great experts who come in to help us and we also get to go to... socialising events where, had I come in as a runner, I never would have been invited to any*

<sup>38</sup> See <http://www.channel4.com/4talent/national/opportunities/schemes/specific/training.html>. Accessed 17 July 2007.

*of those events, so definitely from that point of view, the people that you're going to meet along the way, the fact you get a mentor, and you get to have contacts... everybody knows the ten production companies, so if they know there's a job going, they could let you know.*

(EMG Researcher)

*I had so many, so many knock-backs and if it wasn't for this scheme, I'd still be unemployed.*

(EMG Researcher)

An EMG assistant producer who was part of the scheme believes that it was well designed and the training sessions were useful. For instance, the training session on networking and contacts proved to be invaluable as having a network of contacts is important in helping freelancers find work in the industry. Several participants point out that having a mentor assigned to them as part of the scheme has also been beneficial.

Though it is acknowledged that the scheme has been successful in giving aspiring entrants from ethnic minority backgrounds an opportunity to enter the industry, some of the participants say that advertising it as a scheme meant mostly for ethnic minorities potentially works against them. One comments:

*As soon as you go to a company and they know that you're on a course that's for ethnic diversity, you automatically see in their faces, or it feels as if they think you're only here because you're on a course because...[of your ethnicity]... they seem to make out that they give people of ethnic minority jobs....*

(EMG Researcher)

### 1.3.2 Open Door Awards

*Open Door Awards* by Skillset ran from 2005 to 2007. They emerged out of the Millennium Awards (three-year-fellowships leading up to the millennium) and provided training and networking opportunities to disabled people and those from ethnic minority communities. 40 talented people from across London were chosen for the Awards to develop their skills and knowledge within the following fields: New Media, Radio Journalism and HD Video Production. They also received six months training at the BBC and work placements<sup>39</sup>. A key sector professional claims that several participants have been successful in securing jobs in the sector after the training.

These schemes address the barriers that individuals from ethnic minority backgrounds face in the industry including the lack of opportunities to get work experience, contacts and financial support. The paid training schemes and the bursaries accompanying the awards help participants to get trained and build up contacts in the industry.

<sup>39</sup> [http://www.skillset.org/careers/diversity/open\\_door/](http://www.skillset.org/careers/diversity/open_door/). Accessed 13 September 2007.

## 1.4. Regions

Lack of regional diversity in the UK film and television industries is an issue identified by several key sector professionals. As pointed out in **Volume I, section 2.5**, the majority of the production centres are based in London and in the South East of England. Several schemes have been initiated by key sector organisations and broadcasters to address regional diversity.

### 1.4.1. Regional Screen Agencies

The Regional Screen Agencies (RSAs)<sup>40</sup>, funded by the UK film council, have the responsibility of developing media sectors in the regions. Nine screen agencies in the English regions were set up in 2002-2003<sup>41</sup>. Each of them offers training, mentoring and funding opportunities to people from their specific regions to enable them to enter and progress in film and television as well as other media sectors. The regional agencies are also charged with the responsibility of attracting more film and television productions to their regions.

### 1.4.2. Project North

*Project North* represents the BBC's plans to move five of its departments, Sport, Children's BBC, New Media and Technology, Five Live and Formal Learning, from London to Salford by 2010. The BBC in Salford will shift the focus away from London and move 1500 posts north, as well as house 800 staff currently based at the BBC in Manchester. This could increase employment opportunity for the people of Salford as one key industry professional hopes:

*By de-centralising, by moving power and commissioning power and staffing structures and whole departments out of London up here, it's recognised as a genuine employment opportunity because only...approximately 50% of the people who work within those departments now will move, and the rest they won't, they'll find other jobs in London rather than move, so there's a potential of over 1000 new jobs for people living in the North West.*

The above interviewee also points out that an important part of the project is to ensure that a diverse pool of high quality talent will fill either the vacancies or provide the expertise needed. This might have been one of the reasons for the involvement of the BBC in the *North West Foundation Placement Scheme*.

### 1.4.3 North West Foundation Placement Scheme

The *North West Foundation Placement Scheme*<sup>42</sup> was launched in 2005 by Media Training North West, ITV Granada and North West Development agency. The success of the scheme prompted its expansion to include other partners such as the BBC and LIME Pictures. According to a key industry professional, the scheme is the first 'cross-industry bespoke training scheme' that targets the EMGs exclusively. The scheme offers year long training for 20 candidates from ethnic minority backgrounds from the North West regions. They are chosen for a wide range of roles in departments such as the regional newsroom, factual and entertainment programming, radio camera operations, costume, makeup and casting. The training is supposed to equip them with skills, experience and contacts to start a career in the industry.

40 See [http://www.skillset.org/film/knowledge/links/article\\_2495\\_1.asp](http://www.skillset.org/film/knowledge/links/article_2495_1.asp). Accessed 25 July 2007.

41 They are Screen East (East of England), EM Media (East Midlands), Film London (London), Northern Film and Media (North East), North West Vision (North West), Screen South (South East), South West Screen (South West), Screen West Midlands (West Midlands) and Screen Yorkshire (Yorkshire and Humber).

42 See <http://www.mtnw.co.uk/nwfps.asp>. Accessed 25 July 2007. See also Volume III 2.3 about the Foundation Placement Scheme.

## 1.5. Age

The Skillset Workforce Survey (2005b: 25) suggests that the UK film and television industries workforce belong predominantly to the 25-49 age group. *First Light* and *New Talent- Under 16* are initiatives instituted by the UK film council and the BBC respectively to attract younger people (under 25s) into the sector.

On the other hand, a key sector professional acknowledges the lack of schemes for people over the age of 50 even though they are underrepresented in the industry. The *Audio Visual Entrepreneurship Development Partnership* led by Skillset, for example, aims to test and promote new means of combating discrimination and inequality in the labour market and yet there is no initiative that targets the older age group.

### 1.5.1 First Light

*First Light*<sup>43</sup> is funded by the UK Film Council to create opportunities for children and young people between the age of 5 and 18 to make short films. Launched in 2001, it has enabled over 12000 young filmmakers to get involved in the filmmaking process. *First Light* funds young filmmakers through Pilot Awards and Studio Awards. Pilot Awards provide 80% of the budget to make films that are up to five minutes long. Studio Awards require 40% of match funding and offer the maximum grant of £25000 for the production of 2-4 films of up to 10 minutes duration. *First Light* also hosts a website that explains the filmmaking process and offers support to young filmmakers and others who want to get involved in the scheme. A key industry professional maintains that the scheme helps young people to make informed choices about whether they want to work in the film and television industries.

### 1.5.2. New Talent – Under 16

Under the *New Talent* scheme, the BBC has instituted an *Under 16* category which seeks to find and inspire new talent under the age of 16. The initiative gives young people a chance to be part of the various BBC and CBBC programmes as presenters or participants. The BBC website hosts a web page that provides information about the scheme, application process and the various opportunities for young people to take part.

<sup>43</sup> See <http://www.ukfilmcouncil.org.uk/filmmaking/shorts/firstlight/>. Accessed 25 July 2007.

## 1.6. Social Class

As discussed in **Volume II section 1.6**, social class is a complex issue which has cultural and economic dimensions that interrelate with other personal characteristics such as ethnicity and geographic location. Several key sector and industry professionals as well as practitioners in the industry acknowledge that the sector might exclude aspiring entrants from a working class background. However, specific initiatives to redress the issue have not been developed, as one of the key industry professionals explained that it would be difficult to advertise a social class based training scheme.

## 1.7. Summary

Key sector and industry bodies have implemented a range of initiatives to increase diversity. For example, BBC's *Extend*, Channel 4's *Researcher Training Scheme* and ITV's *Enabling Talent* attempt to increase awareness of disability in the industry, change the attitudes and prejudices towards disabled professionals and make the television industry more open to them. For female professionals, *Directing Change* and *Technical Change* are meant to give opportunities to experienced practitioners to further their careers while *Time Shift* offers flexible working aimed at those with caring responsibilities.

The *Channel 4 Researcher Training Scheme* and *Open Door Awards* address barriers such as **lack of contacts, financial support and opportunities for EMGs to gain work experience**. The decision of **the BBC to move several departments to Salford** by 2010 and the establishment of Regional Screen Agencies are attempts to help increase the representation of people from the regions in the UK film and television industries which are concentrated in London and surrounding areas. *First Light* and *New Talent – Under 16* **provide young people the opportunities** to learn more about filmmaking and make informed decisions about whether they want to pursue a career in the sector. Though industry professionals acknowledge the barriers to entry and progression in the sector faced by people from a **working class background**, the complexity of the issue has resulted in an absence of schemes or initiatives to address it.

## 1.8 Recommendations

- Further evaluation of the schemes such as *Technical Change* and *Time Shift* needs to be conducted with the intention of assessing whether the schemes should be replicated in other roles and promoted further in the industry.
- The schemes for underrepresented groups especially those for ethnic minorities need to be re-branded so that the beneficiaries are not considered to be given work opportunities solely on the basis of their ethnicity.
- The effects on regional diversity of the BBC's move to Salford should be tracked.

## 2 Getting In/ Staying In/ Getting On

This section examines initiatives aimed at improving diversity at the level of entry, for graduates and those with transferable skills and industry experience. The section also explores several events that facilitate networking and programmes aimed at improving or formalising recruitment practices in the sector.

### 2.1 Entry Level Initiatives

In **Volume II 2.1 and 2.3**, we examine entry into the UK film and television industries and training for entry level jobs. Some of the recommendations for removing the barriers to diversity include paid work experience, role models from diverse communities, practice-based, transferable skills training and partnership between industry and training providers. In this section, we explore several initiatives by key sector bodies and broadcasters aimed at new entrants.

#### 2.1.1 Compass Point

Part of the Skillset Equal *Audio Visual Entrepreneurship Programme* (see **Volume III 3.3**), *Compass Point* is a career development scheme designed to help overcome barriers faced by black and minority ethnic workers in film and television<sup>44</sup>. It is run by the National Film and Television School in association with B3 Media and aimed at media creative professionals and entrepreneurs who want to fast track their careers. Two annual programmes have been completed, training 32 EMG professionals. The programme consists of skills training, practical projects, business planning and mentoring in two one-week workshops (attended by industry figures and tutors) and a supported intervening development and production period.

#### 2.1.2 B3 Media

B3 Media is an organisation aimed at developing and showcasing creative talents, including filmmakers, visual artists and musicians, from communities that are underrepresented by the mainstream. The most relevant to our discussion is the digital shorts scheme, *Blank Slate*, that supports filmmaking talent from UK's black and minority ethnic communities. The scheme attracted funding by the UK Film Council New Cinema Fund and the Arts Council England. Selected filmmakers receive additional training in scriptwriting, directing, production and post-production. Eight films were produced as part of the 2006 scheme and the 2007 *Blank Slate* was the fifth scheme. Associated with the scheme are screenings, workshops and panel discussion across the country.

#### 2.1.3 BBC New Talent and Writersroom

BBC *New Talent* runs a number of schemes every year offering opportunities in broadcasting<sup>45</sup>. Its website states:

*Some of our initiatives offer job opportunities within the BBC, others provide a platform to showcase your talent and others give you the chance to network with key industry professionals<sup>46</sup>*

<sup>44</sup> [www.compasspoint.org.uk](http://www.compasspoint.org.uk) has profiles of the previous graduates.

<sup>45</sup> See <http://www.bbc.co.uk/newtalent> for more details.

<sup>46</sup> <http://www.bbc.co.uk/newtalent/about/>. Accessed 15 July 2007.

Although the opportunities are not aimed specifically at increasing diversity, they are mentioned here in relation to how they may work at the entry level to the industries.

One of the open access schemes that the BBC runs is *the Writersroom* which is aimed at identifying new writers and championing diversity<sup>47</sup>. It accepts unsolicited scripts for film, television and radio drama, as well as supporting training and projects to develop new writers. The website also functions as a source of information and advice for writers.

There are *New Writing* and *Writersroom* initiatives that run in the regions and aim at culturally diverse groups. One example of these projects is *London Voices* which provided a workshop for aspiring writers from diverse backgrounds for the BBC soap *Eastenders*.

*The Writersroom* also supports Writers in Residence, which have included writers from the regions. They are provided with a bursary, based in the radio drama department and develop ideas with producers. In 2006-2007, *the Writersroom* launched BANG which is a new writing competition for individuals based in the North of England, offering a bursary, a mentor and a chance of a stage production. The scheme looked for scripts that reflected British Asian experiences and workshops were held in Huddersfield, Oldham, Bolton, Bradford, Preston, Manchester, Burnley and Leeds. In addition, *the Writers' Academy*, a 15-month programme which has been run since 2005, trains the next generation of writers for prime time television drama such as *Holby City*, *Eastenders* and *Doctors* (see also **Volume I 2.8**).

Even though screenwriting remains a competitive area, *the Writersroom* targets underrepresented groups such as EMG communities and the regions and the BBC remains the only broadcaster that gives open access to unsolicited script submissions. However, it deals with 10000 scripts a year and the actual job opportunities for new writers remain limited. Initiatives such as *New Talent* and *New Writing* need to be run in conjunction with other recommended changes to the monocultural nature of the industries discussed in **Volume II**.

### 2.1.4 Four Corners

Four Corners is a training organisation and production resource based in East London, formed in 1973<sup>48</sup>. It seeks to develop independent filmmaking especially for those who may be traditionally underrepresented. The training tends to focus on craft based skills such as camera, sound and editing.

The tutors on the training courses are practitioners and the organisation tries to ensure they are positive role models, for instance from previously underrepresented groups.

Although Four Corners also provides continuing professional development, one of the main initiatives that offers new entrants valuable work experience is *Step Up*, a free training scheme for those seeking a career in film and television. The scheme is run in partnership with the London Development Agency, Creative London and Pact. It is open to people who live in London (who are unemployed

<sup>47</sup> [www.bbc.co.uk/writersroom](http://www.bbc.co.uk/writersroom)

<sup>48</sup> [www.fourcornersfilm.co.uk](http://www.fourcornersfilm.co.uk)

or work under 16 hours) and includes training, 50 days paid work placements, childcare and travel expenses. The placement is also flexible in that the training days can be completed in ten weeks or spread out over a longer period. Four Corners also carries out a self assessment of needs at the interview stage. Out of the eight paid work placements in 2005, six trainees got jobs. In terms of evaluation, Four Corners tries to track the graduates in their career progress.

We have examined the exclusionary effects of unpaid work experience in **Volume II 1.6 and 2.1**. Paid work experience supported by key sector bodies, broadcasters and independent production companies will help those from marginalised groups who cannot access work opportunities in the film and television sector. The use of practitioners from underrepresented groups as tutors is also encouraging as it combines skills training with providing positive role models.

### 2.1.5 FT2

FT2, Film and Television Freelance Training, runs *the New Entrant Technical Training Programme*, in partnership with organisations such as Skillset, UKFC, BBC, BECTU, Channel 4 and Pact<sup>49</sup>. It aims to help the sector to achieve a diverse workforce and focuses on technical production training. FT2 is a long running programme established in 1985. The two year scheme is to be replaced by a new programme, *Screen Firsts*, after August 2007, which will cover makeup/hair, props or wardrobe, grips, production administration, camera, sound and edit. *The New Entrant Technical Training Programme* is not a positive action scheme although it aims to recruit a significant percentage of women and EMG trainees.

Training on the scheme is by apprentice style placements. Each year, around 15 students are accepted. In the first year, trainees are given experience in the range of technical departments and in the second year they specialise. They also work on film and television productions, alongside practitioners. Trainees are given an allowance and support for transport and child care if appropriate. A former trainee describes his experience:

*It was 100% practical, yes ....I remember when we joined there was an induction course which involved hands-on... studio work, location sharing work and then after the first year there was another course ...we got sent on, and we made a documentary and a short film...we did short courses as well in between and I went on an AVID course, and a light works course and courses like a first aid course and business skills... and so on. (EMG Engineer)*

The course therefore gives the students an understanding of the technical areas of film and television and contacts, which help them to become freelancers in the sector. The trainees are also encouraged to network with one another. FT2 can be seen as a partial replacement of the apprenticeship system which was the traditional means of technical training at the major studios in Britain. *The New Entrant Technical Training Programme* is targeted at the junior level of the craft and technical grades, feeding the industry with diverse talents.

<sup>49</sup> <http://www.ft2.org.uk/>. Accessed 3 August 2007.

Longitudinal research into the career paths of the graduates from the programme would help reveal what barriers underrepresented groups face in the technical areas of the sector, as suggested by this key sector professional:

*It would be fascinating to find out what is the impact 21 years later. Where are those people? How many are in the business, how many are not in the business? Where did they go to and why did they go? ...People move around for a whole range of reasons. Some of it, it's just really hard. Some of it is they're not getting the breaks. Some of it is possibly real... deep, institutional racism.*

## 2.2 Graduate Training

In **Volume II 2.1**, we discuss how the workforce in the film and television sector is trained and some of the barriers those from underrepresented groups face. In terms of higher education provisions, criticisms of media related degrees include the lack of practical elements, industrial experience and transferable skills and the lack of communication between industry and institutions. There are several initiatives that are aimed at training graduates and we give two examples here.

### 2.2.1 News Journalism Schemes

*The BBC News Sponsorship Scheme* for students on an accredited postgraduate course in broadcast journalism provides four weeks' paid work placement in a newsroom of the BBC, £3500 contribution towards living expenses, the course fees, a dedicated mentor and further training opportunities and contacts<sup>50</sup>. Candidates have to apply separately to an accredited course, complete an application form and go through the interview procedure. Every year, the scheme sponsors 15 students to complete postgraduate courses in broadcast journalism. One of the key objectives of the scheme is improving diversity although it is not a positive action training provision. There is no obligation on the part of the graduates to work for the BBC after the scheme. The programme was to be replaced by a new *Journalism Trainee Scheme* in 2007.

Channel 4 also offers two annual bursaries for the training of television journalists<sup>51</sup>. This bursary scheme is aimed at talented, enthusiastic aspiring journalists who have been prevented by financial constraints from studying journalism. It funds two students who should have a thorough understanding of the Pakistani or Afro-Caribbean community to attend the year-long BJTC-accredited Postgraduate Diploma in Television Current Affairs Journalism at City University, London. The bursary includes tuition fees, £10000 living expenses, six months' paid work at Channel 4 and with independent production company after the course, with an additional payment of £10000.

Schemes such as these, covering course fees and costs, should encourage those from diverse communities who lacked the means to undertake training; wide promotion to attract candidates from previously underrepresented groups would be needed. The Channel 4 bursary targets two specific ethnic groups, namely the Pakistani and Afro-Caribbean communities. The schemes, nevertheless, focus on a small part of UK film and television sector and benefit only graduates interested in news journalism.

### 2.2.2 The Graduate Fellowship Programme

*The Graduate Fellowship Programme* is part of the *Skillset Audio Visual Entrepreneurship Partnership* and run in conjunction with UK Film Council. This positive action scheme aimed to match ten graduate new entrants from ethnic minority communities with host companies that would provide them with one year paid work placement. The graduates would also be provided with a mentor and training and development opportunities that they identified in a Beneficiary

<sup>50</sup> Information taken from 'BBC Sponsorship Scheme 2005', provided by one of the interviewees. See also [http://www.bbc.co.uk/pressoffice/pressreleases/stories/2005/04\\_april/21/scheme.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/pressoffice/pressreleases/stories/2005/04_april/21/scheme.shtml).

<sup>51</sup> [http://www.city.ac.uk/news/archive/2007/05\\_may/21052007\\_1.html](http://www.city.ac.uk/news/archive/2007/05_may/21052007_1.html). Accessed 2 August 2007.

Action Plan at the beginning of the scheme. Regular reviews were held between the fellows and a co-ordinator. For the 2006-2007 placements, the fellows were paid a training bursary of between £15,000 - £17,000 per annum. Application was through a form, shortlisting and interview, similar to a job application.

The programme focused on developing business skills rather than production skills. For the 2006-2007 programme, placements included Curtis Brown, a literary and media agency (Development Assistant), Pathe Distribution (Publicity), Raindance Film Festival (Assistant Producer) and Warp X (Trainee Producer). Skillset and the companies identified a role to fulfill which would also provide development and training opportunity for the fellows. The graduates already had management skills which were transferred to working in the film industry. The presence of these graduates in the host companies may also bring about positive changes in the organisations and change perceptions about EMG communities.

At the time of writing, the programme was to run again in 2008.

From the first programme, seven out of ten participants had their placements renewed after six months and one was offered a permanent job at the placement host after only three months (GHK 2007: 16). The evaluation commended the early involvement of the host companies, which raised the likelihood that both beneficiaries and host companies would benefit from the placements (GHK 2007: 19). The programme moves away from the domination of new entrants schemes and recognises that there is the possibility of skills transfer in the film and television sector and that graduates can slot into roles appropriate to their experience, knowledge and skills with support in the transition. One of the manifested aims of the programme is also about developing business skills of EMG graduates which should benefit the communities and reduce barriers to diversity in the sector in the long run.

## 2.3 Skills Transfer and Industry Experience

In addition to the discussion in **Volume III 2.2**, there are also opportunities for professionals who have relevant work experience, knowledge and skills that may be transferred to the film and television sector. We explore two initiatives below that provide industry experience while supporting individuals who wish to transfer qualifications and skills into the media industries.

### 2.3.1 The Production Guild's Assistant Production Accountant Training Scheme

*The Production Guild Assistant Production Accountant Training Scheme* was in its fifth year in 2007. The scheme is supported by Skillset and film production companies that provide the attachments. It seeks to recruit six Assistant Production Accountants who will go through up to ten months training, production attachments and assessment for the Skillset National Occupational Standards for Production Accounting. The scheme has a diversity target in its recruitment. The trainees need to have accounting qualifications and work experience so the scheme is designed to promote skills transfer. The practical elements of production attachments help to set the trainees up with industrial experience, opportunities to network and make contacts. The four to five placements are aimed to be wide ranging, including a low budget film, an independent production, a studio picture, a television programme and a location shoot. This interviewee explains how the experience has helped her:

*I'm absolutely evangelical about the scheme because it's fantastic. At the start you had five weeks based at the Production Guild at Pinewood studios and they took you... through the practicalities of the job. They also taught you... the kind of things that you wouldn't initially be aware of, things like the different hierarchies in this industry.*

(EMG Assistant Accountant)

The interviewee also comments on the fact that the trainees were from diverse backgrounds and the contacts she made had led to job opportunities. In addition, she suggests that the scheme provides a safe environment for the trainees to learn on the job:

*It gave me a huge network.... If you don't have that support and that kind of structure, then it's all finding your feet, learning, making your mistakes on your own, so I thought...without the scheme I would definitely not be in the position that I'm in today, I'm 100% certain of it.*

The skills transfer model is the key to *the Assistant Production Accountant Training Scheme*. The length and industrial attachments give the trainees substantial experience. The positive action aspect of the scheme is also to be commended. It is possible that there are other grades within the film and television industries that also allow professionals who already have some experience and wish to use their transferable skills in the sector to do so.

### 2.3.2 The Foundation Placement Scheme

*The Foundation Placement Scheme* initiated by ITV Yorkshire is a one year positive action paid pre-entry programme in partnership with Screen Yorkshire and PATH, a training organisation. The first scheme in 2003 followed a three month research study commissioned by Screen Yorkshire and The Fair Play Partnership. The research with community groups and minority ethnic organisations showed many individuals did not consider working for major broadcasters a viable career. 20 vocational placements across departments at ITV Yorkshire were offered, in television production and business support roles.

Alongside the placements, trainees also participate in formal training, group digital video project and personal development sessions and are given external mentors. The mentors are also mostly from EMG backgrounds who can act as positive role models and provide networks and advice. Training sessions include interpersonal skills, CV writing for the industry, networking and guest speakers from the industry. Monitoring is through quarterly reviews and trainees' feedback. The recruiting managers and supervisors are also given support, including training in cross cultural communication. 75% of the trainees secured jobs within the sector by the end of the first programme<sup>52</sup>. It has become an annual programme<sup>53</sup>.

The same model was taken up by Media Training North West who launched a similar scheme in the North West in 2005 for 17 trainees in partnership with ITV Granada, the BBC and LIME Pictures. 72% of the graduates from this pilot programme secured employment<sup>54</sup>.

The scheme offers paid work experience so it is accessible, as one of the main entry routes into the television industry is through placements with broadcasters or companies. It also increases the skills base in the Yorkshire and North West regions and creates opportunities for new entrants from EMG backgrounds away from London. The scheme recognises transferrable skills, for example, in the administrative and support roles within the broadcasters. The two aims of the programme are increasing workplace diversity and ultimately improving programme content by having diverse production teams. The link between these two aims is illustrated by the Training Co-ordinator:

*The scheme has had an impact on audience participation. For instance, one of the ways that audience researchers get an audience in is by e-mailing out to staff in the company asking if anyone has got any friends and family who want to come and watch [a game show] next week. Therefore, when the camera pans in on the audience, you begin to see the more diverse range of people, which impacts on onscreen content and representation. Another example is when ...a Production Co-ordinator who was working on a new drama came to us and to ask if we could ask our Muslim trainees with regard to the authenticity of a name for a Muslim character.*

52 [http://www.skillset.org/uk/article\\_4267\\_1.asp](http://www.skillset.org/uk/article_4267_1.asp). Accessed 3 August 2007.

53 18 trainees in 2004 and 19 trainees in 2006.

54 <http://www.mtnw.co.uk/nwfps.asp>. Accessed 3 August 2007.

## 2.4 Film Festivals

Film festivals, including high profile international marketplaces such as Cannes, Berlin, Venice, Toronto, Rotterdam and Edinburgh are the traditional hunting grounds for diverse talents. There are also smaller, mainly national events showcasing new filmmakers' work, often through short films, which are attended by funders and those involved in developing talents. These are important opportunities for filmmakers to show their work, network and make contacts.

Several film festivals are particularly worth mentioning as they focus on creative talents from underrepresented groups.

### 2.4.1 Black Filmmaker Magazine and International Festival

bfm (Black Filmmaker) was established in 1998. A newsletter was created that aimed at existing and up and coming talents and was then developed into the bfm magazine. The bfm International Festival was established in 1999. The organisation also runs a film club and is involved in training.

### 2.4.2 Birds Eye View Film Festival

Birds Eye View is a creative platform for women filmmakers, first launched in 2005. It shows features, documentaries and short films from emerging women filmmakers. Birds Eye View now also runs tours, educational and training events.

### 2.4.3 London Disability Film Festival

The Disability Film Festival, set up by London Disability Arts Forum (LDAF), was launched in 1999 as a two day event. The festival gradually expanded to showcase good practice in relation to audience access. The 2004 festival provided the following during screenings and events<sup>55</sup>:

*Each film in the festival will be soft-titled, audio described, BSL-interpreted and a Palantype transcription will be simultaneously projected during panel discussions.*

LDAF was funded by the Arts Council. The support for the film festival became less clear after the UK Film Council was established in 2001<sup>56</sup>. Unfortunately, the festival did not continue after the seventh edition in 2005 (a five day event at the National Film Theatre).

At the time of writing, the future of the festival was uncertain. It is likely that the good practice and knowledge built up during the organising of the festival in relation to providing access to audiences and participants will now be lost. It is also understood that an archive of over 1000 films are preserved at LDAF but the reasons for the discontinuance of the festival is unclear.

<sup>55</sup> [http://www.filmlondon.org.uk/news\\_details.asp?NewsID=261](http://www.filmlondon.org.uk/news_details.asp?NewsID=261). Accessed 7 August 2007.

<sup>56</sup> After 2001, the Arts Council of England no longer funds exhibition, training or education activities associated with film unless it is in support of artists' work in the moving image. The festival screened work by both artists and filmmakers and had educational events.

## 2.5 Recruitment Practices

The informal, word of mouth, recruitment in the UK film and television sector is a major barrier against diversity amongst the workforce (see **Volume II 2.3**). The high level of interest in careers in the media means that production companies and broadcasters do not have problems recruiting informally. However, key sector professionals and individuals agree that these practices discriminate against fresh and diverse talents. The major broadcasters and larger production companies have human resources procedures in place to prevent discriminatory practices although the nepotistic nature of recruitment is not eradicated completely. In **report II 2.3**, we have discussed initiatives undertaken by broadcasters and production companies to improve recruitment practices, for instance, working with relevant courses at universities and colleges. In this section, we explore further initiatives undertaken by the key sector bodies and broadcasters that are designed to improve recruitment practices.

### 2.5.1 Databases

Major broadcasters such as the BBC, Channel 4 and ITV have standardised recruitment procedures which goes some way to remedy the ad hoc nature of recruitment in the sector. Databases have also been used as a tool to promote the recruitment of talent from diverse groups:

*We're launching a new talent database which comes from three different angles. We have an external talent database, so that should [you] want to join ITV but there isn't a vacancy at the moment, you can tell us about yourself and what area you'd like to work in and what your skills are, and we hold that data, subject to you telling us that's fine. We do the same for people who've worked for us before but no longer work for us on a contract freelance database, and then we have an internal database as well. So if you've been working for ITV for a number of years but you've often thought, I'd love to go and work in this area, we'll know about that as well. Then how you get their recruiting manager to use that database is...also really important.*

(Key Industry Professional)

There are however several difficulties facing the use of databases. Firstly, as the above interviewee has suggested, those who are in positions of recruitment may not be willing to use them due to the traditional means of hiring in the media through personal referral. Maintenance of databases is also a problem as they require ongoing commitment to keep up-to-date. Substantial resources and technical knowledge are also needed in their up-keep.

Some organisations also provide directories or lists of available personnel. The Production Guild publishes a membership directory which is an important communication tool: instead of relying on personal contact, this ensures that production staffs have access to contact details of the Guild's members. The Production Guild has an availability service which is free to its members right across the production and financial management grades. Members who are seeking work place themselves on the list. The list is an online service available through the guild's website and provides email, fax and telephone information. Enquiries come from UK productions, as well from the US majors and US

television companies that are coming to UK and into Europe. Co-productions involving UK broadcasters, independents and European partners also use the service. The directory and availability list may go some way to provide an alternative to the more nepotistic approach to recruitment. To assess how effective these services are, as opposed to the traditional practice of personal referral and recommendations, will require research into how many people are recruited as a result.

### 2.5.2 Skillset Human Resources Support

Skillset's *A Bigger Future* is a strategic plan for delivering industry relevant skills in the UK film industry<sup>57</sup>. It is funded by the National Lottery through the UK Film Council. One initiative within *A Bigger Future* sets out to offer human resources and training support to companies within the film industry. The service targets independent companies across all sectors of the industry, including post-production, production, distribution, exhibition and sales. As we have pointed out in **Volume II 2.3**, many small independent companies within the sector do not have a dedicated human resources department and many owners lack business skills. Skillset's service employs a human resources professional who provides basic audit and assessment of the companies' current human resources practices such as contracts, policies and procedures. She makes suggestions as to how the companies can best comply with UK employment law and take into account best practice. In addition, the consultant also conducts a training needs analysis and proposes a training plan. The grant provided by Skillset is specifically for training of business and management skills<sup>58</sup>. In each round of the scheme, the consultant works with the companies over a two to three-month period. The initiative is aimed at tackling some of the weaknesses in the human resources practices common in the UK film and television industries, namely the lack of formal structure in recruitment, human resources management and employment skills. The human resources professional reported having to target and actively invite companies to apply to the scheme. It may be that companies that are already doing well in improving their human resources management and are interested in diversity and equality issues are taking advantage of the scheme more than those that are not. The project team did not have access to the evaluation of the initiative that might inform the recruitment of companies to participate in the scheme if Skillset were to run the same in future. The majority of companies which participated in the initiative were London based.

<sup>57</sup> [www.skillset.org/film/bigger\\_future/](http://www.skillset.org/film/bigger_future/)

<sup>58</sup> Skillset provides 70% of the costs of training, the remaining 30% to be matched by the company.

## 2.6 Networks

The word of mouth nature of recruitment in the UK film and television sector acts as a barrier to those who do not have access to the necessary networks and contacts (see **Volume II 2.2**). Nepotism exists in a sector dominated by freelance work and may act as a significant barrier for groups already underrepresented who do not have access to networks. In this section, we discuss initiatives by key sector bodies aimed at opening access to networks and contacts in the sector.

### 2.6.1 Move On Up

*Move on Up* is a series of events organised by BECTU in association with partners including the BBC, Skillset and the UK Film Council. The idea is to bring black and minority ethnic film and television professionals into contact with broadcasters and the independent sector through one-to-one meetings with executives. The first event was launched in 2003, followed by *Move On Up North* in 2005; another focused on radio took place in 2006; two events in 2007 (*Move On Up Film and Television* in June and *Move On Up News* in September). The June 2007 event was attended by over 100 industry executives.

The format for all events is the same: applicants choose executives they like to meet. The executives then receive the CVs of the applicants and decide on those they would like to meet. There are also workshops running alongside the 20-minute one-to-one appointments with commissioners, producers and other senior industry professionals. The contents of the meetings are open: advice, further contacts and information may be sought. There were several success stories. For instance, a freelance producer was offered a job at the event for the programme *Honey... We're Killing the Kids* for BBC3 but had to turn it down as he was already working on *University Challenge*<sup>59</sup>.

*Move On Up* is a practical way of allowing access to key industry professionals and demystifying the recruitment process of major broadcasters such as the BBC. The events also bring EMG professionals to the attention of the union and potential employers. There is no formal review of the career progress of those who have attended these meetings. The difficulty may be that few of those contacts are followed up unless practical action plans are drawn between the executives and the EMG professionals. It is also not possible to determine whether job opportunities have been created as a direct result of the initiative.

### 2.6.2 Networking Opportunities

Some of the industry organisations provide members with networking opportunities and actively encourage contacts. The Production Guild, for instance, has 600 members and its social and formal events help to create an environment for members, especially those relatively new to the sector, to meet. The New Producers Alliance has 850 members in 2006 and runs training programmes for producers, directors and writers, as well as other screenings and events. These are all opportunities for film and programme-makers to meet and make contacts.

<sup>59</sup> The Learning Rep Summer 2007 p. 25 <http://www.ssda.org.uk/pdf/Learning%20Rep%20Summer%2007%20magazine.pdf>. Accessed 1 August 2007.

## 2.7 Summary

Initiatives such as *Compass Point*, *Step Up* and *FT2* address barriers to diversity such as the lack of experience and practice based skills for **new entrants** to the sector. *BBC Writersroom* and *The Foundation Placement Scheme* provide **opportunities in the regions**. *News Journalism schemes* and the *Graduate Fellowship Programme* aim to provide industry experience to **degree holders**, equipping them with skills recognised by the industries. Initiatives such as the *Production Guild Assistant Production Accountant Training Scheme* and *Foundation Placement Scheme* recognise transferable skills and qualification. **Mentoring and the use of positive role models** as tutors are part of many of these programmes. Skillset's **human resources support** targets independent companies across all sectors of the industry. **Alternative networking opportunities** are found in film festivals and other events, such as *Move On Up*, that promote networking and contacts between EMG professionals and executives. **Databases** may provide an alternative to informal recruitment practices but require ongoing commitment to be kept up-to-date.

## 2.8 Recommendations

- More research needs to be carried out to determine effectiveness of the schemes; the results from internal evaluation process are often unavailable in the public domain.
- Training needs to be carried out in relation to the managers and colleagues of the trainees to raise cultural awareness and ensure those on placements are supported.
- Adequate follow up support to new entrants and more initiatives aimed at mid-career professionals should be encouraged as many practitioners from underrepresented groups face barriers in progressing in the sector.
- Funding bodies should continue to support specialist film festivals.
- Management and human resources support, especially to small enterprises within the sector, should continue.
- Partnership between industry, key sector bodies, training providers and educational institutions should be encouraged so training schemes can provide vocational skills recognised by the sector at appropriate levels.
- The sector should recognise transferable skills from other industries and consider how best to utilise them.

## 3. Strategic Initiatives by Key Sector Bodies and the Industry

In this section, we examine initiatives set up by key sector bodies and broadcasters which in some way tackle barriers to diversity in the UK film and television industries. For instance, there are training opportunities under the banner of positive action. Major broadcasters have established schemes in order to attract diverse talents and ultimately ensure that onscreen portrayal reflects contemporary Britain. The section also explores briefly the work of Skillset and other training providers. The volume will also examine strategic initiatives and networks by key sector bodies and broadcasters.

### 3.1 Programmes and Portrayal

On screen portrayal of underrepresented groups is thought to have a positive effect in attracting these groups into the industry, as this Human Resources Professional states:

*People need to see themselves on television in order to think that they could work in television, whether it's behind the scenes or onscreen.*

With the BBC's Asian Programming Unit and television shows such as Vee TV and See Hear for deaf audiences, the debates turn to whether EMG and disabled professionals should be pigeonholed into specialist programmes. In **Volume II 2.2**, we point out that many professionals from underrepresented groups feel that they are so pigeonholed and they cannot move into mainstream film and broadcasting. In this section, we explore initiatives in relation to specialist programmes and portrayal.

#### 3.1.1 Specialist Programmes and Mainstream Television

Closing down the Disability Programme Unit (DPU) at the BBC in the early 2000s appears to have had a detrimental effect on the careers of disabled professionals. A disabled filmmaker notes that the DPU was envisioned as a 'nice safe haven of ...entrance to this industry'; many disabled practitioners might have come from a background of long-term unemployment, lack of confidence and lack of educational opportunities. The DPU was closed in order to integrate disability into mainstream programme-making. A disabled documentary filmmaker argues that by closing down the DPU, the one entry point that provided successful on-the-job training for disabled actors, presenters, producers, directors and co-ordinators was taken away.

Channel 4's *Vee TV* was launched in 2001 and de-commissioned in 2005. The magazine show offered opportunities for disabled and deaf production staff and presenters. *Vee TV* had a reputation for being contemporary and diverse and it was renowned for training many disabled and deaf talents. Our interviewees include several who had worked on the programme. Although they appreciated the work, learning and developing opportunities, which often provided a safety net, there was also concern about not being able to find further employment or of being pigeonholed afterwards. This interviewee talks about the lack of knowledge of the programme by potential employers:

*I feel like there's a bit of a glass ceiling... I actually prefer to go into the mainstream area of work, and I mean Vee TV being on my CV means nothing to them, they'll be like, oh great, they wouldn't be impressed by the programme because it's got such a small audience.*

(Disabled Researcher)

*See Hear* is a long running (since 1981) BBC programme aimed at deaf audiences. The programme is also a training ground for disabled and deaf media professionals. The BBC already has well established provisions for its disabled employees (see **Volume II 1.1**) and therefore support mechanisms for the production staff of *See Hear*. Many of the disabled interviewees consider the programme unoriginal after 25 years of broadcast and as a specialist interest programme, there is little investment as it only has a small audience (50000 BSL users<sup>60</sup>).

There are therefore limited opportunities within specialist programmes. One interviewee explains:

*...deaf people are ideally suited to working on a deaf show because they know about that community. I wouldn't say that's the only thing they should do at all, I think deaf people should be able to work on anything, but it would help if there were more programmes for them to get started on.*

(Disabled Researcher)

When Channel 4 began in 1982, the public broadcast remit was to represent the diversity of modern Britain. The programmes initially would have niche markets and be dedicated to specialist slots. With the closing of the multicultural department in 2002, specialist programmes have contracted.

Channel 4's online proposal tracking system also formalises the commissioning process and puts a distance between commissioners and programme-makers. Although this makes the process more transparent, it is also difficult for new production companies and programme-makers to compete with established independents without having the networks and knowledge of commissioners and therefore understanding of the frameworks and requirements of the channel. To ensure underrepresented groups can have successful careers in the media, there needs to be a balance between nurturing new, diverse talents and providing access to mainstream television broadcast.

<sup>60</sup> <http://www.broadcastnow.co.uk/BroadcastNowBlogEntry.aspx?BlogEntryID=108>. Accessed 1 August 2007. See Glossary.

## 3.2 Positive Action

Positive action is a legal provision that addresses the underrepresentation of particular groups in employment, often through training<sup>61</sup>. It is not to be confused with positive discrimination which is not legal. Many of the initiatives we examine, such as *Move On Up* (see **Volume III 2.6**), are positive action schemes. On a more global level, major broadcasters, BBC, Channel 4 and ITV, have attempted to address diversity both in terms of onscreen portrayal and employment making use of the principles of positive action.

In 2006, the BBC appointed Mary Fitzpatrick as Editorial Executive, Diversity, to oversee the way the BBC channels represent the audiences they serve. Fitzpatrick was previously Channel 4's Editorial Manager of Cultural Diversity. We have already suggested (in **Volumes I and II**) that onscreen representation cannot be separated from casting, the make up of the workforce, the commissioning process and relationship between broadcasters and independent production companies. The remit of this new role at the BBC is to work closely 'with channel controllers, commissioners, in-house and independent production companies to improve on-screen portrayal and diversity on BBC Television, including offering valuable advice to programme-makers during the course of the development and production of programmes'<sup>62</sup>. In addition, the Editorial Executive, Diversity will also set up the industry's definitive database of diverse on and off-screen talent for use by the BBC and the independent companies<sup>63</sup>. It remains to be seen how this will affect the diversity of the BBC workforce.

ITV has conducted research into onscreen portrayal, which includes monitoring the backgrounds of reporters, presenters, contributors and interviewees<sup>64</sup>:

*In 2006, we completed the introduction of our automated portrayal system. This enables us to track the diversity of people appearing on ITV and makes it easier for independent production companies to provide us with this information.*

At the same time, CDN Chairman and ITV Director of Television Simon Shaps admitted that, despite sophisticated monitoring methods, the surveys showed that changes are not being made fast enough<sup>65</sup>. ITV Corporate Responsibility objectives make the connection between onscreen portrayal and employment, so that the action plans include bursaries (for instance, news traineeship) and placement schemes targeted at minority groups (see **Volume III 2.3**)<sup>66</sup>.

The BBC has employment targets in relation to ethnic minority and disabled staff<sup>67</sup>. This is the pledge:

61 Section 47 of the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (the SDA) allows for the use of 'positive action' in a number of specific circumstances. Sections 37 and 38 of the Race Relations Act 1976 allow an employer to give special encouragement and provide specific training for a particular racial group.

62 [http://www.bbc.co.uk/pressoffice/pressreleases/stories/2006/06\\_june/06\\_diversity.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/pressoffice/pressreleases/stories/2006/06_june/06_diversity.shtml). Accessed 14 July 2007.

63 [http://www.bbc.co.uk/pressoffice/pressreleases/stories/2006/06\\_june/06\\_diversity.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/pressoffice/pressreleases/stories/2006/06_june/06_diversity.shtml). Accessed 14 July 2007.

64 <http://www.itvplc.com/itv/responsibility/crreport06/onair/reflecting/>. Accessed 6 August 2007.

65 <http://media.guardian.co.uk/site/story/0,,1885913,00.html>. Accessed 6 August 2007.

66 <http://www.itvplc.com/itv/responsibility/crreport06/objectives/>. Accessed 6 August 2007.

67 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/info/statements2006/commitments.shtml>. Accessed 2 August 2007. In 2004, 2.7% of the BBC staff were disabled. [http://www.bbc.co.uk/pressoffice/pressreleases/stories/2004/07\\_july/25\\_disabled.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/pressoffice/pressreleases/stories/2004/07_july/25_disabled.shtml). Accessed 2 August 2007.

*...there are still some groups in society who continue to need a more proactive approach from the BBC – as both a broadcaster and an employer – in how we represent and echo their lives.*

*We will continue to work to increase the proportion of people from ethnic minority groups who work for the BBC. Our target is to increase this proportion to 12.5% overall and 7% for senior management by March 2008.*

*The BBC also has a minimum employment target for disabled staff, and our target is to increase this to 4% by March 2008.*

Channel 4 has similar targets in relation to ethnic minority staff: 13% for all employees and 9% for senior staff by October 2006. In 2004, the actual figures were 11.4% overall and 6% for senior staff<sup>68</sup>. For disabled staff, a target of 4% by the end of 2007 was set. Channel 4 also recruits three EMG trainee deputy commissioning editors every year<sup>69</sup>.

Employment targets only provide global figures: the distribution of those staff across roles and grades is important too.

Most of the key industry professionals we spoke to agreed on the close link between diverse staff and onscreen portrayal representative of multi-cultural Britain. On the other hand, in terms of casting, there are debates about whether targeting actors from underrepresented groups would work, as this key industry professional suggests:

*If we [broadcaster] commission this project, we're going to cast it colour blind, I think we do that well. I think that perhaps there are some projects we could do which are more tailored towards specific areas of our community, I mean the difficulty... is that you end up... box ticking and think, well we've done this section, we've done this section, we've done this section [of society]... the writer's got to be able to find a character, find the story-line...*

She therefore suggests that colour-blind casting (see **Glossary**) and programmes targeting specific communities could increase diversity in onscreen portrayal. However, they should not be box ticking exercises.

The UK Film Council produced a DVD *Get in the Picture* which champions role models from diverse communities who work in the film industry. The interviewees on the DVD come from a variety of roles from creative talents to a trainee accountant, stunt co-ordinator and director of photography. Members of the British Video Association, one of the signatories of the Equalities Charter, agreed to include a 90 second version of the promotional film on UK regional releases. More case studies around disability and good practice from production companies are being planned. The small initiative is aimed at encouraging individuals from underrepresented groups to consider the film industry as a career.

Although key sector bodies and major broadcasters have made some concerted efforts to increase the representation of diverse groups in the UK film and television sector, informal recruitment practices prevail (see **Volume II 2.3**).

<sup>68</sup> <http://www.cdnetwork.org.uk/channelfour.html>. Accessed 2 August 2007.

<sup>69</sup> [http://www.channel4.com/corporate/4producers/commissioning/commissioning\\_5.html](http://www.channel4.com/corporate/4producers/commissioning/commissioning_5.html). Access 2 August 2007.

The underrepresentation of EMG groups in some departments, such as camera or special effects, would be more difficult to tackle without the involvement of existing practitioners. In a sector that remains fragmented and dominated by freelance work, positive action targeted at increasing the number of specific groups in those roles is much more difficult to implement. A key sector professional suggests that working with the higher education sector and screen academies may be a way forward.

There is also fear amongst broadcasters of negative public reaction to positive action even though it is legal, as this key industry professional points out:

*I think there was quite a public backlash about [positive action schemes] ... public organisations discriminating in a positive fashion, and I think that has very much fallen off the BBC's agenda as a way of increasing diversity.*

### 3.3 Training

This section explores training opportunities provided by Skillset, Pact, New Producers' Alliance and the Production Guild.

Skillset is the Sector Skills Council for the Audio Visual Industries (broadcast, film, video, interactive media and photo imaging). It is jointly funded by industry and government to make sure that the UK audio visual industries have the right people with the right skills and that the sector remains competitive<sup>70</sup>.

As the sector skills council, Skillset is involved in many training initiatives in the UK film and television industries. There are several main funds administered by Skillset. The TV Freelance Training Fund makes grants to organisations and individuals to deliver or attend training and development activities that will benefit the UK's broadcast industry. The fund is supported by the major employers in broadcast and independent production for television (the BBC, Channel 4, ITV) and aimed at freelancers in the sector. The Independent Production Training Fund is administered by Pact<sup>71</sup>. The latter has been renamed the Indie Training Fund in 2007. UK independent production companies voluntarily contribute<sup>72</sup> and the recommended contribution is 0.25% of production turnover, capped at £100000 a year. In return, benefits to the companies include Pact courses (such as disability awareness and recruitment) and graduates from training providers such as FT2 and National Film and Television School.

The Skills Investment Fund (SIF) is made up of grants from the National Lottery through the UK Film Council and the Film Industry<sup>73</sup>. SIF is a voluntary levy which is made up of contributions from all UK based film productions (0.5% of production spend up to a maximum of £39500). SIF supports the Skillset Film Skills Fund. At present this represents commitment from the industry towards skills development contributing a minimum of £500000 of funding per year depending on the volume of film production in the UK. *A Bigger Future*, a strategic plan for delivering industry relevant skills in the UK film industry (£50m over 5 years) funded by SIF, is<sup>74</sup>:

*... a long-term training plan which answers the well articulated needs of the UK film industry. It responds to the aspirations of those wanting to enter the industry, to those in further and higher education on the brink of entering and also those in the industry who throughout their working life expect and need career development and growth.*

Skillset does not deliver training but funds other providers. Schemes go out to tender to industry, private training partners and further and higher educational institutions. Freelancers' training may be subsidised by 80%, or 100% in the case of new entrants.

Directly related to diversity in employment is the *Audio Visual Entrepreneurship Development Partnership* led by Skillset, which is part of the European Social Fund Equal scheme<sup>75</sup>. The UK Film Council is a principal partner. The initiative

70 <http://www.skillset.org/skillset/>. Accessed 6 August 2007.

71 See Skillset website: <http://www.skillset.org/>.

72 <http://www.pact.co.uk/training/iptf/>. Accessed 6 August 2007.

73 [http://www.skillset.org/film/funding/sif/article\\_3571\\_1.asp](http://www.skillset.org/film/funding/sif/article_3571_1.asp). Accessed 6 August 2007.

74 [http://www.skillset.org/film/bigger\\_future/index\\_2.asp](http://www.skillset.org/film/bigger_future/index_2.asp). Accessed 6 August 2007.

75 See GHK (2007) for an interim evaluation of the programme.

is designed to test and promote new means of combating discrimination and inequality in the labour market<sup>76</sup>. The overall aim of the project is to explore innovative approaches to supporting individuals from groups currently underrepresented in the audio visual industries (women, people with disabilities, ethnic minorities, older people and young people from economically disadvantaged areas<sup>77</sup>) to develop the skills, knowledge and experience they need to develop successful businesses, including self employment, in the sector. A significant number of projects focus on offering practical industry experience, mentoring, individually tailored training and brokerage (GHK 2007: 20).

There were 20 projects and initiatives, involving 20 organisations, under the partnership. The projects include *Move On Up* (Volume III 2.6), *Step Up* (Volume III 2.1), *Compass Point* (Volume III 2.1), *Graduate Fellowship* and *Time Shift* (Volume III 1.2 and 2.2), *Technical Change* (Volume III 1.2) and *Channel 4 Disabled Production Trainee Scheme* (Volume III 1.1). They are all pilots although some initiatives (e.g. *Move On Up*) have already been repeated. The partnership therefore is also aimed at exploring sustainability and ensuring continuation of the schemes. Skillset, as a strategic body and funder, provided administration, monitoring and guidance support. Since the projects under the scheme target underrepresented groups, there should be evaluation of the application procedures and assessment criteria for each project to ensure that the objectives are met. There should also be adequate support for the delivery partners and project managers. An external evaluator was appointed and an interim evaluation report was available at the time of writing. The evaluation suggests, 'the links between different projects are not immediately clear (i.e. how all of the projects fit together to form a coherent programme of work)' and there is little cross-project engagement (GHK 2007: 10-11). According to this interim report, many projects also plan to undertake in-house evaluation.

Other key sector bodies that provide training include the New Producers Alliance which runs the *Nine Point Producers, Directing and Script Development Training*. Under each of the three strands, nine seminars are run one evening a month and free to members, covering basic building blocks from development to distribution of a project. The events are made up of panels and question and answer sessions, which means that a topic such as diversity may only be briefly touched on, if at all. The Production Guild runs seminars on issues related to the industry, such as tax credit, employment laws and changes that affect production, as well as management software. Nevertheless, the issue of diversity does not seem to be central to these management training provisions.

<sup>76</sup> [http://www.skillset.org/skillset/diversity/ave\\_1.asp](http://www.skillset.org/skillset/diversity/ave_1.asp). Accessed 6 August 2007.

<sup>77</sup> [http://www.skillset.org/skillset/diversity/ave\\_1.asp](http://www.skillset.org/skillset/diversity/ave_1.asp). Accessed 6 August 2007.

### 3.4 Cultural Diversity Network (CDN)

The Cultural Diversity Network (CDN) is 'a cross-industry network that would put cultural diversity at the top of the broadcasting agenda' both in onscreen portrayal and employment<sup>78</sup>. It was started in 2001 by Clive Jones and Parminder Vir of Carlton. Its original members were the BBC, Sky, Five, Channel 4, GMTV, Scottish Media Group, ITV, ITN and Pact. Recently MTV and Endemol were invited to be a part of it.

CDN has created employment and portrayal targets for cultural diversity for its members. Its further activities include focusing on new or neglected minority groups and diversity in senior management positions, concentrating on increasing diversity in national and regional newsrooms and among production staff. It also encourages broadcasters to continue to monitor cultural diversity in onscreen portrayal, in the workforce and to decentralise the CDN by supporting the inception of CDN North.

The chair of CDN used to revolve among the broadcasters annually. But the tenure has recently been extended to two years as it usually takes around seven to eight months to conduct any major events, for instance a diversity conference, after which it requires time to analyse the results.

According to a key sector professional, CDN conducts six steering group meetings annually to discuss a range of issues in the television industry. It also conducts an annual general body meeting (AGM) and commissions research funded by the subscription paid by its members. For instance, *The Colour of Television*, research commissioned by CDN, looked at peak time television portrayal across all the broadcasters. Portrayal on television was examined uniformly by the broadcasters for the first time as part of the research. Otherwise each broadcaster tended to measure portrayal differently.

A key sector professional lists the following areas that CDN intends to focus on

- Looking at the relationship between the broadcasters and the independents, how programmes are commissioned, and what programmes are being produced
- Involving editorial staff
- Setting a standard for the individuals and companies that the broadcasters choose to work with and how they think about diversity
- Trying to promote and share best practices especially among small independents

As a forum that brings together broadcasters and key sector bodies, CDN has an influential role to play in increasing the cultural diversity within the sector.

<sup>78</sup> <http://www.cdnetwork.org.uk/whatiscdn.html>. Accessed 17 September 2007.

### 3.5 Cultural Diversity Network (North)

Cultural Diversity Network North<sup>79</sup> (CDN North) was founded in 2004 to support the distinctive diversity needs of the media industry in the North West. Its primary focus is to increase ethnic diversity within the media in the region. The network consists of major broadcasters (The BBC and ITV Granada), independent companies (Red, Lime Pictures, Centini, Hat Trick North and MMA Arts) and public sector agencies (Media Training North West and North West Development Agency).

The role of CDN North is to bring together the broadcasters and the independents under one banner that suggests that the industry recognises the need to be more diverse and is working together to achieve it. For instance, a key sector professional points out that the visual impact of seeing EMG trainees from the BBC and Granada together under the banner of CDN North may send the message to people from minority backgrounds that the media is a viable career option for them.

In 2005 CDN North organised *Move On Up North* in Manchester in conjunction with BECTU for black and minority ethnic TV professionals to meet executives, commissioners and studio managers (See 2.6). Over 450 one-to-one meetings were scheduled between EMG media professionals and executives. A key sector professional claims that some professionals managed to secure employment as a result of the contacts made on the day.

CDN North has also instituted an informal placement scheme called *CDN North Trainee* which is a paid position offering work experience. A key industry professional notes that through changing the selection criteria and including questions such as 'which audiences do you feel are being underserved' and 'what programmes would you change to serve that audience better' in the recruitment process, the scheme has ensured that diversity is embedded in the selection process.

<sup>79</sup> See <http://cdnnorth.org.uk/>. Accessed 2 August 2007.

### 3.6 Broadcasting and Creative Industries Disability Network (BCIDN)

Broadcasting and Creative Industries Disability Network (BCIDN) was founded in 1989 by the UK broadcasters to explore and address disability as it relates to the media industry<sup>80</sup>. An associate member of BCIDN describes it as a 'useful industry body' and 'forum' that applies pressure on the broadcasters to improve representation of disabled professionals among their workforce as well as in onscreen portrayal. The Network enables its members to recruit and retain disabled people and to promote and share best practice across the media industry.

The BCIDN membership includes representatives from the different broadcasting organisations and associates who are disabled professionals. According to a disabled journalist, broadcasters usually nominate human resources representatives to BCIDN rather than programme-makers, editors or commissioners. It is argued that a senior editor or a commissioning editor might be in a better position to influence the decisions that would ensure diversity in the television industry than human resources representatives. This opinion is echoed by a key industry professional:

*A lot of people in production feel that people in HR know nothing about what they do and they're only there to push paper around and....consequently have been quite resistant to any interventions that come from the [BBC] Diversity Centre<sup>81</sup>.*

(Key Industry Professional)

BCIDN has succeeded in getting the broadcasters to sign up to its manifesto and submit reports that outline each of their action plans to achieve increased on and off-screen representation of disability; an associate member of the BCIDN maintains that the network works by putting 'gentle pressure' on the broadcasters. Each of the major broadcasters has pledged to set onscreen disability portrayal targets. Hence it has proved that it has an influential role to play in increasing awareness about disability and the number of disabled professionals in the industry.

80 <http://www.employers-forum.co.uk/www/bcidn/>. Accessed 18 September 2007.

81 The Diversity Centre is within BBC People, the human resources division of the BBC.

### 3.7 Equity Equality Forum

The Equality Forum is an informal forum of Equity, the actors' union. It is made up of different committees each of which deals with some of the main issues within diversity in the UK film and television industries such as sexuality (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender/LGBT committee), gender, disability and ethnicity. The committees advise the Equity council, which is the governing body, on issues pertaining to each of them. The different committees in the forum preserve their individual identities but are governed by one common agenda that maintains their cohesiveness. The committees campaigned for an Equalities Officer who now co-ordinates the activities of all the committees in addition to research and examining ways in which Equity can make real progress in promoting diversity. The committees meet four to five times a year and send motions to the council that should eventually influence the plan of action of the union.

### 3.8 Pact Diversity Pledge and Guide

Pact has launched a voluntary diversity pledge for its members to sign to demonstrate their commitment in promoting diversity in the sector. It contains nine points that address fair recruitment and treatment of professionals from diverse backgrounds, flexible working, equal opportunity policy, diversity training, monitoring the workforce and taking part in diversity related events. Pact has also introduced a diversity guide developed by its Diversity Policy group, which is made up of Pact members from across the sector to help independent production and distribution companies to implement the diversity pledge in their organisations (Pact 2007a). The Pact Diversity Guide (2007a) offers practical advice to implement each of the nine points of the diversity pledge. It is described by a key sector professional as a tool kit that offers practical suggestions to improve diversity in a strategic way. The diversity pledge and guide can be downloaded from the website of the employers' forum<sup>82</sup>.

<sup>82</sup> <http://www.employers-forum.co.uk/www/bcidn/manifesto/2006-action-plans/pact-bcidn-report.pdf>

### 3.9 BSAC Report and Recommendations

In 2000, the British Screen Advisory Council (BSAC) established the BSAC committee for Ethnic Minority Employment in Film at the request of Chris Smith, the then Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport to explore ways to improve the number of ethnic minority professionals in the industry to represent diversity in the population in Britain (BSAC 2001). The BSAC committee published the report, *Achieving Diversity in the Film Industry*, in 2001 which put forward a five year programme with proposals to improve cultural diversity in the sector and assigned the UK Film Council the responsibility of implementing the recommendations.

The report recommends the establishment of an 'Ethnic Minority Action Group' (overseen by the UKFC) and entrusts it with the responsibility of administering the five year programme. It also lays out six action points for the first year after which the Action Group should set further targets depending upon the progress of the action points. The six action points are (BSAC 2001):

- Sensitise the industry
- Create an online employment database
- Implement monitoring systems
- Develop voluntary code
- Develop training programmes
- Set targets

A key sector professional believes that UK Film Council, Skillset and other sector bodies and broadcasters have implemented most of the action points recommended in the report. Skillset has funded schemes that provide training targeting ethnic minority groups and for monitoring the number of ethnic minority professionals working in the sector through the film production surveys and annual census as per the recommendations of the report. The online database of ethnic minority professionals, recommended in the report, was established by Channel 4 but, as a key sector professional claims, it now seems to have been abandoned for reasons unknown. Most of the broadcasters have set up employment and portrayal targets for ethnic minority professionals which was one of the recommendations of the report.

Though most of the recommendations made by the report have been implemented, the lack of speed at which they were fulfilled is a point of contention. A key sector professional argues that there was a lack of speed in the implementation of the recommendations; it had taken about five years for the voluntary code (the UK Film Council Equalities Charter) to be signed and the UK Film Council diversity tool kit was brought out only in 2006 (see 3.10).

## 3.10 UK Film Council Equalities Charter and Tool Kit

### 3.10.1 The UK Film Council Equalities Charter

The UK Film Council set up Leadership on Diversity in 2005, a group made up of the film sector's guilds, trade associations, unions and key employers that provides a framework for action and to help 'the industry to realise the opportunities from diversity in film'<sup>83</sup>. The Leadership on Diversity is a separate initiative and not an action group formed to implement the BSAC recommendations.

The Equalities Charter for Film is a public pledge which has been developed by the Leadership on Diversity forum. The signatories of the charter pledge to identify and tackle the barriers that lead to exclusion and underrepresentation in the film industry, encourage people from all communities to access and enjoy film culture, welcome employees from all communities and adopt the best possible practices and policies to achieve an industry that reflects and serves the diversity of the society. They also promise to encourage skilled and talented individuals from all communities to progress their careers and remain involved at all levels of the UK film industry, across the value chain, develop and adopt internal equality and diversity policies and practices (including equalities training for personnel) and proactively monitor and update them, celebrate and take steps to promote and increase onscreen diversity.

The charter was signed in 2005 by representatives from the following organisations: The UK Film Council, BAFTA, BBC Films, BECTU, BSAC, British Video Association, the Casting Directors' Guild of Great Britain, Channel 4, The Cinema Exhibitors' Association, the Directors Guild of Great Britain, Equity, Film Distributors' Association, New Producers' Alliance, Pact, The Production Guild, Production Managers Association, Skillset, UK Post, Vue Cinemas and the Writers' Guild of Great Britain and Leo Davis (Casting Director).

### 3.10.2 The UK Film Council Tool Kit

The UK Film Council tool kit is an online resource guide that gives information about diversity in the UK film and television industries and ways to promote it. It can be accessed from the UK Film Council website<sup>84</sup>. The tool kit gives a snapshot of diversity in the film industry and the UK population, making a case for the need for the sector to be representative of the society in general. It provides practical advice to improve diversity in three sections: audiences, workforce and content & portrayal. Several case studies are published under each of the categories. The tool kit also explains the disability discrimination law and the employment law that are important in the promotion of greater diversity in the sector. It highlights the information that is important for various groups of the supply chain such as producers, distributors, exhibitors, employees and freelancers.

The UKFC tool kit is wider in its scope than the Diversity Guide brought out by Pact (2007a). The Pact guide focuses on practical advice in relation to the production workforce whereas the UKFC tool kit also covers audiences and onscreen portrayal.

83 [http://www.skillset.org/skillset/press/2005/article\\_3774\\_1.asp](http://www.skillset.org/skillset/press/2005/article_3774_1.asp). Accessed 6 August 2007.

84 See <http://www.diversitytoolkit.org.uk/>. Accessed 6 July 2007.

### 3.11 Summary

The major broadcasters have taken steps such as **portrayal targets and action plans** to increase onscreen diversity and **positive action** is used to attract talents from diverse communities, although there is often fear of negative public reaction. **Specialist television programmes** provide training opportunities but also tend to limit the employment prospects of disabled and EMG professionals.

Key sector bodies have formed strategic partnerships to address the lack of diversity. Skillset's *Audio Visual Entrepreneurship Development Partnership* is designed to test and promote new means of combating discrimination and inequality in the labour market. Cultural Diversity Network (**CDN**) and Cultural Diversity Network North (**CDN North**) aim to persuade the broadcasters and independent production companies to increase the representation of ethnic minority groups in the workforce and in onscreen portrayal. **BCIDN** acts as a pressure group that encourages the industry to increase the representation of disabled people in employment as well as onscreen portrayal. Producers Alliance for Cinema and Television (**Pact**) diversity pledge is a voluntary pledge launched to encourage the independent production sector to commit itself to promoting diversity and its Diversity Guide offers practical advice.

Since the British Screen Advisory Council (**BSAC**) report, *Achieving Diversity in the Film Industry* (2001), which put forward a five year programme to improve cultural diversity in the industry, the **Equalities Charter for Film**, a public pledge, has been developed by the Leadership on Diversity forum. **The UK Film council** has also launched a tool kit, an online resource guide that gives information to improve representation of ethnic minority groups and disabled people in the audiences, workforce and onscreen portrayal.

## 3.12 Recommendations

- Employment targets need to be closely scrutinised; public awareness of the benefits of positive action would reduce the possibility of backlash.
- Long-term evaluation and monitoring of initiatives against their aims and objectives are important and findings should be made public.
- There should be research into the link between employment and onscreen portrayal particularly in relation to specialist programmes.
- There should be more programme-makers rather than human resources officials from independent production companies and the broadcasters in networks such as CDN and BCIDN.
- Independent production companies should be encouraged to invest more and take into account issues of diversity in the training of the sector workforce.
- There should be formal evaluation of the implementation of recommendations from BSAC's 2001 report, and the diversity records of the sector in the interim period, in order to inform a future strategic action plan for the sector.
- The work of the UKFC since its inception in 2001 in relation to improving diversity should be evaluated.
- CDN and CDN-North should ensure that their activities include all the regions in the UK.









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