

## **Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee**

### **Film and Major Television Production in Wales: Summary of Stakeholder Workshop Group Discussions**

#### Transparency and information

- There is an absence of a detailed assessment of the sector and a general lack of information. This was a recurring theme throughout the discussions. It was suggested that it would be useful for someone to map which organisations do what in the sector in Wales.
- Transparency is needed as to how the Welsh Government spends its money – and how effective this spending is.
- The Welsh Government’s vision needs to be clarified and effectively communicated to the sector.
- Generally Welsh Government policies affecting the sector need to be far more transparent.
- The University of South Wales has made a bid for a screen industry cluster in Cardiff – under the UK Government’s Business Strategy Fund. ‘Screen Lab’ will play a research and development role and will aim to provide meaningful data on what works in Wales.
- The workforce needs to be mapped.
- The withdrawal of Creative Skillset in Wales was a huge blow – it has not been replaced. It remains present in the English regions. In its absence it is not clear who is mapping the skills in the Welsh film workforce.

#### Education/skills development

- Content of media courses may be out of date. Courses should also cover the business skills needed to prosper within the sector. This needs to happen from secondary school education through to masters provision. Generally, there needs to be more integration.
- There is currently no specialised film school in Wales. USW (formerly at the Newport Film School) is the closest thing we have to a specialised film school in Wales. Scotland has recently opened a National Film and TV school hub which is based in their BBC Scotland’s studios. More info on the links below:

- <https://nfts.co.uk/school/nfts-scotland>

- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediacentre/latestnews/2017/scotland-film-tv-school>
  - [New scheme to 'turbo-charge' BBC Wales's commitment to recruiting talent from under-represented communities.](#)
- Internships need to be integrated into the film education system – paid internships; these are essential to diversity within the sector.
  - Shadowing and mentoring within the sector needs to be progressed.
  - There should be incentives in place to encourage more film based career paths.
  - In light of Brexit, skills need to be developed domestically.
  - The independent producer base needs to be developed. There is a clear need for a strategy here.
  - Skills: there are about 20 different areas that require an upskilling in Wales. Transferrable skills should also be looked into – electricians are needed on film sets but they are not dependent on the sector. Perhaps there is something to learn from this.

### Investment

- Investing in British independent films is very risky – generally these films do not make money.
- Investment depends on a company's KPIs
- Demand for new content is huge.
- Welsh Government funding within the sector – more stipulations are needed to build a healthy ecology – it should not be based solely on financial return. The large scale of projects invested in from the Welsh Government's Media Investment Budget precludes Welsh companies' involvement. Productions attracted to Wales by the MIB spend money here and then leave, providing little legacy.
- 2017 saw the largest inward investment in the sector - £1.9b across the UK. The Committee may want to investigate how Wales can get a bigger portion of this money.
- Branding is very important within the sector – it guarantees a certain amount of distribution which is essential when attracting investment.

### Welsh Government investment

- The Welsh Government is struggling to spend its Media Investment Budget (MIB).
- The MIB is very opaque. As it is focused on financial return it tends not to fund independent producers as they are deemed too risky.
- The target ratio for financial return for the MIB is 10:1.
- It was suggested that there should be two strands of the MIB – one focused on financial return, the other on supporting indigenous Welsh produce.
- Decisions need to be taken – the Welsh Government's aims are not clear.

### Diversity

- Iris Festival (in Wales) has the biggest fund for LGBTQ support in the world.
- The BFI Diversity Standards are set to be published in April of this year.
- Putting diversity on the agenda of studios is very difficult – though it needs to happen.
- There is one female director active in Wales (Rungano Nyoni, who won a BAFTA this year for Outstanding Debut by a British Writer, Director or Producer).

### Current climate

- There is a lack of labour force – this leads to wage inflation and makes the UK less attractive to film makers.
- Film makers in Wales often take their business to England as they do not have the right contacts in Wales – even though they want to work with Wales based professionals.
- The time is right to make positive changes in the sector – Ofcom are introducing portrayal requirements for the BBC, S4C and BBC are investing etc.

- More needs to be done within Wales to support Welsh film produce – Welsh films are not being shown enough in Welsh cinemas.
- Film makers have no control over content made for the BBC – who can exploit it internationally etc.
- In TV there is a terms of trade framework – there is not one for film.
- The terms of trade framework is very important in relation to making a profit from digital content.
- Though the BFI is vocal in relation to its support of the nations and regions they have no permanent presence in Wales – they do not practice what they preach.
- Ffilm Cymru does very good work with the little money it has – an example was given of them issuing lots of small repayable loans.
- Ffilm Cymru’s ‘Foot in the door’ scheme has been very effective at facilitating entry into the industry.
- Co-production is becoming increasingly necessary.
- There is a very limited budget for marketing films in Wales. Festivals are “hugely important”.
- Between 2007-2017 there has been significant nominal growth in the industry in Wales.
- There is not an obvious centre of the Welsh film industry.
- There is very little support for Welsh language film-making.
- Generally, the money that trickles back to film producers is miniscule - producers need support between productions.

#### Points to note

- Film tax credits, infrastructure and a sufficient skills base are the three ingredients for a healthy production ecology.
- Animation and games should be included in the inquiry.

- Witnesses talked about “Screen Alliance Wales”: an arrangement between the Welsh Government and Bad Wolf Productions. There was little clarity as to what this entity did, or plans to do.
- To what extent is Intellectual Property developed in Wales, and does it stay in Wales?

#### Possible case studies

- South Korea has a thriving indigenous film industry the Committee may wish to look at.
- The peach symbol used in Georgia (USA), if shown on screen, qualifies the film makers for extra tax credit.
- Northern Ireland Screen is a good example of how to attract inward and domestic investment.
- A recent publication ([Go West](#)) provides an overview of the history, evolution and current configuration of the film and television industries in the Bristol region.