Winston Churchill Memorial Trust

Practical strategies for increasing cultural diversity in broadcast media

Author: Andrea Ho
2015 Churchill Fellow
THE WINSTON CHURCHILL MEMORIAL TRUST OF AUSTRALIA

Report by ANDREA HO - 2015 Churchill Fellow

CHURCHILL FELLOWSHIP to study practical strategies for increasing cultural diversity in broadcast media

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Signed : Andrea Ho
Dated : 4 July 2016
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glossary

Diversity shorthand for cultural diversity, but also includes gender, disability, LGBT, and other categories. It is used as an umbrella term because all organisations addressed cultural diversity as part of overarching strategies that dealt with two or more of these categories.

BAME Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic, an acronym commonly used in the UK when discussing cultural diversity.

Public Broadcasters/Broadcasting funded by the public, ie. taxpayers. In this report this includes the BBC, Sveriges/Swedish Radio (SR) and Swedish Broadcasting, Danish Radio (DR), and in Australia, the ABC.

Commercial Broadcasters/Broadcasting funded by private means, principally advertising. In this report this includes Sky, Channel 4 and ITV.

Creative (content) TV or radio content of a creative, typically non-factual and/or entertainment type. Examples include fictional dramas, soap operas, comedy, and reality formats such as cooking or dancing competitions, quiz programs.

News/Factual (content) TV or radio content of a factual, typically informative type. Examples include news bulletins, documentaries, current affairs programs, magazine-style programs, talkback radio, spoken word radio/TV.
introduction

Media is a mirror society holds up to itself.

Media records our lives and the world around us through news and factual content; it explores our hopes and fears, demons and desires, through creative content. When media represents the stories of only part of a society, it reflects to us a limited and inaccurate sense of ourselves.

Through this we unconsciously conclude that some people matter more or less than others; that some stories have value, whilst others are worthless; and we shape our society accordingly.

When some voices are not heard and some faces not seen, it is as though they don’t exist - first in the media, then in public policy, in community, in leadership.

Conversely, where the stories of all members of society are represented in the media, we receive a true picture of ourselves; thus we have the chance to reflect on, and act upon, the interests of all - rather than a privileged elite - in an informed and knowledgeable way.

When I proposed this fellowship to the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust, it was in an environment where cultural diversity in the Australian media clearly lagged behind that of the Australian population. There were pockets of interested people commenting on and working to improve the status quo, but no significant improvements or even broad industry dialogue existed.

Meanwhile, in other parts of the world, a strenuous debate about media and diversity was well underway.

In Western Europe, as in Australia, mass broadcast media struggles to retain audience as our communities become more diverse, less homogenous; audiences are now spolt for choice, and broadcasters must work harder to reach and engage listeners and viewers.

Cultural diversity has become a rallying point since acclaimed performer Sir Lenny Henry lit a fire under the UK industry with his BAFTA Lecture in March 2014, when he castigated creative industries for unreasonably low black and ethnic minority (BAME) representation of 5.4% compared to a Black and Asian population in London of around 40%. He lamented the need for UK performers to seek work in the US due to poor prospects in the UK. He also proposed a number of strategies for tackling this disparity.

In Western Europe, broadcasters sat up and listened to the diversity message. Those already trying to improve cultural diversity redoubled their efforts; others acted to pick up their game.

The Australian media industry has yet to mobilise in a similar fashion; here, then, is an opportunity to learn from our peers abroad.

Since my proposal was accepted by the Trust, the media and public dialogue around diversity has begun to grow in Australia.

In the weeks I undertook the Fellowship travel the dialogue exploded, with the #logiessowhite fracas breaking, and statements by outgoing and incoming ABC Managing Directors regarding the need to do better with cultural diversity.

It is into this pivotal time that I deliver this report, with hope that it will contribute to a genuine, lasting change in Australia for the benefit of all.

This report is entirely the product of my own observations, and the conclusions are my own; it in no way represents the views of my present or past employers or colleagues.

No report is the product of one person working alone. My sincere, lasting thanks go first and foremost to every person who consented to be interviewed, providing the necessary insights. Without your generosity there would have been no Churchill Fellowship.

To all at the ABC who made it possible for me to take up the opportunity of the Fellowship, I am deeply grateful.

To those dedicated colleagues in the ABC and elsewhere in the media who have long held and worked towards the vision of a representative media in Australia, thank you for keeping the dream alive.

Great thanks to all at the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust Australia for your confidence in selecting this project, and guidance with the practicalities of the Fellowship.

And love to my husband, for keeping the home fires burning.
executive summary

Project: to investigate practical strategies for increasing cultural diversity in broadcast media

Summary of project
This project proceeds from the assertion that Australian media should accurately reflect the cultural diversity of the Australian population and the culturally-diverse lived experiences of Australians.

Over a 6 week period I visited broadcasters and organisations, learning about content and staff in the context of cultural and other diversity:
Broadcasters: Sky Atlantic; BBC (TV and Radio); Channel 4; BBC; Swedish Broadcasting (TV/Education and Radio)
Organisations: Creative Diversity Network; Think Bigger; BAFTA.
In the following locations: London, Manchester, Birmingham, Hull, Stockholm, Malmö.

All organisations visited were acting to improve cultural and other diversity, to catch up to the diversity of the population. This was considered both a moral imperative, and a sound business strategy for reaching new audiences, to ensure revenue streams, relevance and survival.

There was no one single ideal way to improve cultural diversity evident. But there were common themes and areas which recurred in all broadcasters’ diversity activities. These are:

- Leadership: strong executive leadership which supports improved diversity enables large-scale change by outlining a vision for managers and staff, and giving them the agency to act.
- Define the diversity to be addressed: setting a clear description of diversity creates a common understanding which can then be applied to organisational goals.
- Counting diversity: collecting and analysing data about the organisation’s diversity and comparing that to the general population shows the areas for an organisation to address. Periodically collecting data allows measurement of progress against goals.
- Targets: whether for content, personnel, or both, targets are a clear goal that all can see and work towards. Setting targets is widespread practice in the UK, and also occurs in Sweden.
- Staff (new): bringing in diverse staff is regarded as a lever for more diverse content. Broadcasters are changing recruitment practices, training, career progression and workplace culture to secure and retain diverse staff.
- Staff (existing): existing staff also have a crucial role to play in improving diversity, and can be trained and supported to do so.
- Content: existing content offers are not suiting culturally diverse audiences, so broadcasters are trying new content models. This is an area of intense experimentation, and most broadcasters have not yet settled on a standard content model; due to shifting audience needs, they may never do so.
- Partnerships: broadcasters worked with industry bodies and charities to find diverse staff and train them. A most remarkable partnership was that of UK TV broadcasters cooperating with each other to create a pan-industry system to count cultural diversity.
- Outreach & Image: to reach new audiences who they hope will consume their increasingly diverse content, broadcasters must introduce themselves to viewers and listeners who have more choice than ever before. Some broadcasters have to actively work to reverse audience perception that they only cater to white, male, middle-class people.
- Time and Resources: content makers and grass-roots managers were keen to act on the diversity message, but acknowledged it required extra work. They sought different kinds of time and resources to make the change possible.

Highlights: All visits and meetings were valuable. If pressed to single out any, these were the most intense:

- The BBC’s 3rd annual diversity week, called “Reflect and Represent”, including the launch of their new Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2016-2020
- The Swedish Broadcasting arm in Malmö (primarily radio) gave the single best opportunity to examine the whole business by speak with broadcast staff from producers through to managers
**Major lessons & Recommendations:**

The following points all relate to current practice in the UK and/or Sweden. All could be adopted in Australia.

1. Strong vision and endorsement by executive leaders has a profound positive effect on an organisation’s approach to increasing diversity. It’s recommended that any executive leader in favour of increasing diversity should speak out strongly and repeatedly.

2. Targets and concrete goals are an effective, transparent way to outline the desired change. They should be set by any organisation wishing to make concrete change.

3. Measuring diversity in content and staff, and comparing with population data, is the most reliable way to set meaningful concrete actions such as targets and goals. Regular measurement is the best way to demonstrate progress. This is rarely done in Australia, yet should be achievable here.

4. ‘Cultural diversity’ can and should be treated as a workplace competency, for the purposes of staff recruitment, training, and advancement.

5. It is possible for competing broadcasters to work together to improve diversity. This is happening in the UK television industry, with concrete outcomes such as developing and implementing a pan-industry counting system. No such dialogue, let alone collaboration, exists in Australia. The UK example should be examined further and ideally emulated.

6. Diversity must be tackled both on-air and off-air. These are equally important. There was no one outstanding approach to improving either; rather, a range of methods were used, so Australian broadcasters should be confident in devising their own approaches.

7. It is efficient to tackle cultural diversity together with other kinds of diversity. There are attractive economies of scale with this kind of multicategory approach. This is recommended in Australia.

8. Partnerships can help share the task of increasing diversity. Broadcasters should seek out and establish suitable new partnerships.

9. If broadcasters are aiming to reach new diverse audiences, they need to reach out to these target audiences and court them; improved content and personnel are not sufficient in and of themselves to attract them. Good comms is essential.

10. It takes extra work in the short term to change the status quo; make time and resources available.

**Dissemination:**

Even before the publication of this report, I am already putting this information to use at the ABC in my additional role as Diversity Lead for the 2016-2020 Radio Strategic Plan, and Chair of the Radio Diversity Action Group, and working with Diversity Action Groups in other Divisions.

When this report is accepted, I will:

- publish the body of this report in serial format in relevant electronic forums including LinkedIn, Facebook, targeting groups concerned with cultural diversity;
- Work with ABC Radio National to produce an on-air special;
- Pursue opportunities to publish findings in other outlets;
- Explore a pan-industry dialogue through a neutral body eg. the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission
- I am willingly available to speak to this report and topic in public forums - please request.

Andrea Ho
Local Manager, ABC Canberra

E  ho.andrea@abc.net.au
BH  +61 2 6275 4615
M  +61 400 864 768

GPO Box 9994
Canberra ACT 2601
Australia
fellowship programme

France

Relevant sessions at Radio Days Europe conference:
The Diversity Challenge - Remaining Relevant: Susan Marjetti, Exec Dir Radio CBC
Solution-focused journalism: Ulrik Haagerup, News Director DR (Denmark)

England

Sky Atlantic Zai Bennett Director Sky Atlantic
Sky Atlantic Anne Mensah Head of Sky Drama
Sky Atlantic Lizzie Grey Executive Producer, Sky Drama
Sky Atlantic Marvyn Benoit Emerging Commissioners Program participant
Sky News Afura Hirsch Social Affairs Editor
Channel 4 Ramy El-Bergamy On-Screen Diversity Executive
Channel 4 Andy Stevenson Emerging Commissioners Program participant

BBC International Fiona Crack News Deployments Officer, BBC World Service; 100 Women
BBC Academy Simon Broad New Talent Program
BBC Academy Caron Foster Co-ordinator, Journalism Training Scheme
BBC Academy Rem Conway TV Production Apprentice
BBC Academy Stephen Tranchard Digital Journalism Apprentice

BBC 5 Live Jonathan Wall Director, 5 Live
BBC 5 Live Heidi Dawson Editor, Management team, 5 Live
BBC Elonka Soros Creative Diversity Lead
BBC Winston Phillips Project Manager, and Chair Black and Asian Forum
BBC Aaquil Ahmed Head of Religion
BBC Tunde Ogungbesan Lead Diversity, Inclusion & Succession BBC
BBC (various staff) brief comments

Creative Diversity Network Tanya Mukherjee

Think Bigger Edi Smockum Director

BAFTA Niyi Akeju PR & Learning Campaigns Manager

Community Salma Ali & extended family

Sessions: BBC ‘Get In’ - apprentice open day, Salford (Manchester):

Explanation of career paths and entry level opportunities
Apprentice panel discussion
Masterclasses x 3 - storytelling, OB planning, employability
Q&A - interested applicants and parents/guardians

Andrea Ho at the Winston Churchill memorial, Whitechapel, London
fellowship programme continued

Sessions: BBC ‘Reflect & Represent’ - diversity week, London:

Reporting on Religion: cultural and diversity implications
Recruiting Diverse Teams
Everyday Sexism
Screening: Miss Representation
Diamond presentation
BBC Pride event
Launch: Women’s networking program
Is the EU referendum coverage a turn off or turn on?
Launch: BBC Diversity and Inclusion Strategy
Mandela Lecture

Sweden

Swedish Radio Ulla Svensson Strategy and Program Development
Swedish Radio Anders Held Director International Affairs SR
Swedish B’casters Janiche Opsahl Diversity strategist, UR educational co.
Swedish B’casters Mikke Ulsson Diversity worker, children & youth UR
Swedish B’casters Dag Strömqvist Diversity & Inclusion Project Manager, Swedish TV
Swedish Radio Robert Frisk Project Leader, P4 & P5 Stockholm
Swedish Radio Rouzbeh Djalaie Editor, P4 & P5 Stockholm

Swedish Radio Anne Sseruwagi Editor In Chief SR Malmö
Swedish Radio Danina Mahmutovic Executive Producer, Din Gata, P3 SR Malmö
Swedish Radio Juan Havana Presenter, Din Gata, P3 SR Malmö
Swedish Radio Mona Hadad Presenter, Din Gata, P3 SR Malmö
Swedish Radio Hamza Ftouni Presenter, Din Gata, P3 SR Malmö
Swedish Radio Nadia Jebril Presenter, P4 SR Malmö
Swedish Radio Sandra Markensson Producer, P4 SR Malmö
Swedish Radio Susanne Fatah Presenter, P4 SR Malmö
Swedish Radio Lotte Malmstead Documentary Producer, SR Malmö
Swedish Radio Erik Mikael Karlsson Program Head P1 & P2 SR Malmö
Swedish Radio David Rasmusson News Editor SR Malmö
Swedish Radio Anja Gatu Program Content Director, SR Malmö
Swedish Radio Ann-Marie Lindqvist News Content Director, SR Malmö
“Australia is a culturally diverse country. The 2011 Census of Population and Housing reported that of Australia’s 21.5 million people, about one quarter were born overseas, with a further 20% of residents having at least one parent born overseas.”

Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2013

At this time and place [first half 2016, northern Europe] there is a robust and energetic dialogue about representative diversity in many areas of life, especially mass media. There has not been a time in recent history where diversity has been more discussed more seriously - nor where mass media has had so much at stake as a consequence of how they approach representative diversity.

The media landscape is changing; mass media can no longer assume survival by producing what it had previously produced in an environment of limited local competition and reliable revenue streams.

It’s also a time when under-represented audience groups no longer have to put up and shut up: they can easily voice their dissatisfaction with inadequate mass media, and if they see no improvement can disengage entirely from mass media and turn to a plethora of alternatives.

So in a real sense, the future of mass media is no longer assured, but has the very real possibility of disappearing altogether. Accordingly, the industry has a very real interest in (re)building audience, as a matter of survival.

Culturally diverse people are an audience section which has traditionally not been targeted by mass media; however, they are a growing audience segment. So it’s logical that the industry turns to this audience now.

This is as true for Australia as for the UK and Sweden, and many other countries.

This project is focused on practical strategies for increasing cultural diversity. It documents a sample of practices observed by visiting a selection of prominent broadcasters and industry groups known to be active in the diversity space. The intent is to outline a range of strategies, where possible gauge what worked and what did not, and report on these.

Important elements of the Fellowship travel plan included:

- visiting a mix of public and commercial broadcasters, to discuss and/or observe approaches based on different business imperatives;
- Visiting aligned industry bodies which either drove or implemented various initiatives in partnership with broadcasters;
- Examining a broad range of actions and initiatives, concerning both on- and off-air/screen, in creative and news/factual content areas;
- Speaking to people participating in these initiatives at different levels, from leadership to policy/strategy formation to grass-roots implementation;
- Visiting more than one country with a dominant white population and significant culturally diverse minorities, these being England and Sweden, so that a range of approaches might be noted.

Based on this visit to the UK and Sweden, there is no one single, or best practice, for deciding on, researching, and implementing practical strategies to increase cultural diversity. Organisations take different approaches, both whole-of-business and between teams and individuals within each business. This is in itself a lesson: that solutions can and need to be as diverse as the audience and the broadcasters.

All organisations’ diversity strategies approach cultural diversity as part of a suite of under-represented groups, typically including women, disability, LGBTI. This report includes information about some initiatives concerning these other areas, because practical strategies can often be adapted.
Themes

Whilst each person I spoke with in each organisation had a unique methodology, universal themes and areas of activity emerged. This report is similarly grouped, describing the activities of different organisations under relevant thematic areas:

- Leadership
- Define the diversity to be addressed
- Counting diversity: collect and analyse data
- Targets
- Staff (new)
- Staff (existing)
- Content
- Partnerships
- Outreach and Image
- Time and Resources

It’s important to note that each organisation’s approach paid attention to many or all of these themes.

Leadership

It was clear from every interview that addressing diversity in a systematic manner was made possible through the endorsement of leadership at all levels, and most especially from the highest organisational levels.

Leadership was crucial in the following areas:

- Articulating the case for change: building and presenting a cogent argument for audience and organisation alike that increasing diversity is for the best, whether morally, best business practice, or both, and integrating this case for change into all other aspects of the business;
- Creating a culture that supports change: communicating to the whole organisation, from supporters to naysayers, that diversity is a priority and every person was expected to work towards this organisational goal;
- Clarifying the diversity task: setting a strategy that clearly outlines the content and organisational change expected (eg. goals, targets);
- Agency: endorsing and supporting the actions of content makers and support areas, staff and other managers, to act to increase diversity;
- Transparency: regular, evidence-based reporting and other feedback on progress.

Executive leadership

Executive leadership, for this report being the governing board, chief executive, and senior executives of an organisation, was the key to a whole-of-organisation approach to diversity.

The endorsement of executive leaders enables broad change, and motivates those in the organisation to work together for that change. It also provides motivation for change-resistant pockets by mandating they get on board, or get out. It is a unifying element.

At present the BBC’s approach to diversity clearly benefits from the leadership of Director-General Tony Hall. In the foreword to the BBC’s new Diversity Strategy, he clearly articulates his commitment to increasing diversity, leading the BBC by example. He writes:

“Diversity really matters – both for me and for the BBC... These areas have been a priority to me since I returned to the BBC as Director-General. But we can - and must - do more.”

Tony Hall was mentioned repeatedly by many different BBC staff from all levels as the key figure in the broadcaster’s current change efforts - he is evidently an inspiring figure.

Tunde Ogungbesan is the Head of Diversity, Inclusion and Succession at the BBC; he was in 2015 by Tony Hall and has led the creation of the BBC’s new 2020 Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, launched on 29 April 2016.

On the role of leadership, Ogungbesan reflected on his previous experience working with Shell, where he was part of a team that travelled to organisations including Apple, Coca Cola, GLK and Microsoft looking at diversity:

“We went round trying to find out what their best practice was, how had they been successful in this space. The number one thing that came up every single time was visible leadership.
If you’ve got the visible leadership you’ve got the chance of pulling this [increased diversity] off. The good thing about the BBC is that Tony Hall is all for this. His Exec team is all for this, they all backed it.”
Swedish Radio’s Director International Affairs Anders Held also spoke of the importance of executive leadership, such as Director General of Swedish Radio Cilla Benkö, in supporting diversity in his organisation:

“I think it’s really important to have the management giving priorities to this, because it opens up for others to take initiative.

“You need ambassadors anyway, people who really believe this is important. But [managers] have also greater freedom of movement... they can do more if they feel they are working within the goals for the organisation.”

At Sky Atlantic, the leadership of former and current Sky Atlantic Directors underlines the team’s commitment to diversity.

Former Director of Channels Stuart Murphy gave specific leadership attention to diversity; his vision and practical actions such as setting their first diversity targets are cited today by Sky Atlantic leaders including Zai Bennett, Director of Sky Atlantic, as having an ongoing influence on their approaches to improving diversity.

General Leadership

General leadership, for this report being middle management and below, is a crucial element to the success of any change, including increasing cultural diversity. Leadership at a general level enacts the ‘how’, whilst continually articulating and reinforcing the ‘why’. General leadership can drive increases in cultural diversity without executive leadership, but it will likely be limited to a particular leader’s sphere of influence.

With executive leadership endorsement, general leaders have a mandate to act, and the support of the whole organisation behind them.

At Swedish Radio in Malmö I observed a strong example of where practical leadership, supported by Swedish Broadcaster’s executive mandate, is having a profound effect on the local team.

Anne Sseruwagi, the Editor-in-Chief of Swedish Radio in Malmö, took on the station’s most senior leadership role some five years ago with the specific goal of improving diversity.

From a culturally diverse background herself and with years of minority Finnish language broadcasting and leadership under her belt, Sseruwagi has tackled diversity in SR Malmö’s general programming with a very practical approach.

She has undertaken a range of highly practical steps and projects relating directly to everyday content-making and team makeup (examples of which appear later in this report).

Sseruwagi’s practice continues to build on the foundational leadership of Ulla Svensson, whose general leadership started a firm move towards a station that better represented its community. These two impressive women are excellent examples of the level of change that can be achieved by general leaders.

Sseruwagi noted that whilst important, leadership is not a universal fix. Leadership makes change possible for team members, but the team members in turn must take the organisation in the new, desired direction.
Define the diversity to be addressed

‘Diversity’, even ‘cultural diversity’, are broad terms which when applied to broadcast media may mean many different things. Within organisations, individuals interpret ‘diversity’ and related terms quite differently.

To ensure everyone understands one another and can work to a common goal without constant guidance, it is necessary to define diversity.

Each of the broadcasters in both the UK and Sweden define their areas for diversity action based on comparative analysis between general population (derived from government-based census data), and internal content/production/staffing numbers, selecting a limited number of diversity ‘types’ where the gap was greatest, and setting out to address these.

In the UK, the BBC also referred to the Equalities Act of Parliament for further guidance.

In Sweden two additional factors were taken into account when defining diversity: Swedish government legislation for ‘protected minority language groups’ (Finnish, Meänkieli, Sami, Yiddish, Romany), and the United Nations Charter for Human Rights, to which Sweden is a signatory.

These factors were seen as relevant by Swedish Broadcasting due to their status as a taxpayer-funded public broadcaster. However it’s worth noting that the BBC, whilst similarly a publicly-funded and -oriented broadcaster, does not use the UN as a reference point in this matter.

All diversity definitions observed included cultural diversity, but never in isolation; rather, always as a part of a diversity action plan that included other groups.

Organisations typically pinpoint the following groups for diversity action at present:

- Gender: specifically, women
- Sizeable cultural and/or language minorities
- Disability
- LGBT/LGB

Socio-economic diversity - sometimes referred to as class - was widely discussed in all organisations as an area for attention, and in some places was linked to geographic diversity, or differing levels of formal education; all organisations were mindful of how socio-economic or geographic diversity can also amplify other kinds of minority disadvantage.

Channel 4 referred to social mobility and social disadvantage as an emerging area for attention in recruitment; the BBC have pledged to gather socio-economic data about new employees. However to date this category has not been targeted as systematically as the four others.

Diversity categories applied to content and workers through targets were not always universal in an organisation.

Where diversity categories were united under a single umbrella for strategic purposes, for example a Diversity Strategy, it had the following perceived advantages:

- A clear leadership approach
- More efficient use of resources
- Ease of messaging to workers, content makers, audience and other external interest groups;
- Universal relevance/application of certain measures, eg. Training, entry-level employment schemes, leadership development programs

The kinds of diversity counted by different organisations includes the following:

Diamond - all major UK TV from mid-2016
Diamond is a pan-industry measurement system developed by the UK TV industry, due to be launched in June 2016. In terms of defining diversity, Diamond will count gender, gender identity, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation and disability.

Diamond will measure both the actual diversity of the people working on the content via self-declaration, and also the portrayal of characters/guests on-screen ie. as they appear to the audience.

(More about Diamond under the theme ‘Counting Diversity’)

BBC - whole-of-organisation - Diversity & Inclusion Strategy 2016-2020
BBC has set employment targets covering the following categories: gender; Black, Asian and ethnic minority; disability; LGBT.

The manner in which these are regarded and measured varies:

- Gender: male or female, by visibility
- Black, Asian and ethnic minority: self-declaration and visible identification (ie. other than white)
- Disability: self-declaration
- LGBT: self-declaration

On what ‘visible’ Black, Asian and ethnic minority actually meant, Tunde Ogungbesan (BBC) said:
“What that category is really talking about is visible difference. ... So if I look at a person and can’t tell that that person isn’t English, an English indigen... officially that person [might be] an ethnic minority, but not for these figures. This is really about visible differences. So if a person is from Iran, you can tell from their skin colour, that person looks different... a person is from Turkey, still looks different, so that’s a visible difference.”
AH: “You’re talking about non-Anglo-Europeans...”
TO: “Yes, yes. So that’s what that’s really saying.”

Channel 4 - whole of organisation - 360° Diversity Charter
Channel 4 has the 360° Diversity Charter that sets employment and content targets in the following categories: black, Asian and ethnic minority, disability, LGBT, gender and social mobility.
First set in 2015, the 2016 Charter has a strong emphasis on disability, calling 2016 the ‘Year of Disability’ and featuring very ambitious targets.

Sky - all UK-produced content (excluding Sky News)
Sky has a simple diversity target: 20% black, Asian and ethnic minority in on- and off-screen roles. This applies across all productions and ‘significant’ roles, eg. starring actors, senior producers, writers, must also show 20% BAME.

Swedish Broadcasting - whole of organisation language targets
Swedish Broadcasting counts the five groups that have Minority Language status by government decree: Finnish, Meänkieli, Sami, Yiddish, Romany.

Swedish Broadcasting must report on their broadcasting in these languages to the Swedish government. However, they are unable to count their new mixed-language content, and cultural content in the Swedish language, towards those government reports.

The importance of defining diversity is crucial: it gives diversity a concrete shape, which in turn ensures a diversity vision can be described and understood and goals articulated, thus making action possible.

Without a clear definition, any diversity plan or strategy cannot be understood clearly by all.

The best an organisation might achieve is pockets of disconnected change according to everyone’s differing interpretation of diversity; the worst that might happen, if people cannot conceive of what is being asked of them, is nothing at all.
Counting diversity: collect and analyse data

“It’s really noticeable that once you start keeping count, you start realising the problem. Because until you see the numbers in front of you, you don’t realise.”
- Heidi Dawson, Editor, BBC 5 Live

“Unless you’ve got the data, the evidence, you cannot know where to apply the interventions.”
- Elonka Soros, BBC Diversity Lead (outgoing)

All of the broadcasting organisations visited take an evidence-based approach to improving cultural and other diversity. This requires evidence: data about diversity in both content and workers.

An evidence-based approach was cited by almost everyone interviewed as strengthening the argument for improving diversity.

It makes it possible to understand the present diversity status of a staff body or content output, as well as set meaningful goals.

Though most interviewees supported counting, no individual interviewed saw data as a solution in itself. Many interviewees, even those who favoured use of data, were aware that counting risked turning data into a box-ticking exercise.

A few were against counting, but they were in a minority. Most felt data, if used thoughtfully, to be a useful and even essential tool.

One strong voice who spoke against counting was Ulla Svensson, a strategic manager and program developer for Swedish Radio. She is a strong advocate for Susan Marjetti (CBC)’s approach of growing diversity in staff particularly in on-air and management roles, but thought that setting targets and counting staff was “weird”.

“When we do that, that’s when we become insecure and we need to have some facts to show.”

She believed that metrics did not fully encompass the complexity of diversity in any given situation, and advocated for managers to take a more nuanced and hands-on approach to recruitment and content. Svensson is confident in her approach to improving diversity, where others may not be as confident.

All organisations visited have to date collected their own diversity data in their own way to suit their diversity focus and initiatives. Therefore at present there is no easy way to compare the approaches of differing organisations.

Counting content

Counting diversity in content was by no means universal, but neither was it rare. Diversity in content generally referred to the diversity of the participants, whether broadcasters, content makers or guests. It sometimes referred to the description or storylines of creative/dramatic content; with factual/news content, guests were usually counted, but the content of stories was not.

In television, diversity was more easily counted: cultural diversity, in the form of visible minorities, gender, and physical disability was more readily apparent. LGBTI was often detectable in characterisation, though harder to observe in factual content.

Counting diversity in radio presented challenges, in that voices and names do not readily or reliably show any kind of diversity other than gender. Producers were more likely to rely on background knowledge of guests to do any kind of count.

Processes were prosaic: watch or listen and count, keeping some sort of data record.

The only system of particular note observed was the Diamond counting system, which is set to supersede existing TV systems in any case; see p.17.

Swedish Broadcasting uses an external monitoring company to do an independent count of what diversity is visible to the audience. The company counts gender, sexuality, language, disability. However, this data was described by some staff as being vague, and not optimised in a strategic way to change the status quo.

At Swedish Radio Malmo, Editor in Chief Anne Sseruwagi has for the past five years counted diversity in local content several times a year. Sseruwagi uses the information to show workers where diversity of their content (guests, stories) falls short of diversity of the local population, and has found it extremely helpful in changing work patterns to increase diversity.

At BBC 5 Live, the approach has evolved at a granular level. Editor Heidi Dawson noted that many of their news programs have started to keep their own count of diversity of guests on their own program.
The BBC Trust has previously monitored and analysed talkback callers, and the 5 Live teams continue to monitor diversity in their talkback. As we talked, Dawson was able to flip through different programs’ monthly data.

In terms of how the practice of counting fitted into the station’s culture, Dawson said,

“It goes against how we used to work. I think as journalists we don’t really like tallies, because we say we want to be driven by the journalistic agenda. But actually I think the penny’s starting to drop, that until you start monitoring you don’t actually know whether you’re doing well or not doing well, and actually there’s no harm in just monitoring it. What I’ve noticed is that when you start monitoring, people themselves realise and go, oh hang on, that’s not ideal is it.”

Whether or not content-making staff are motivated to keep their own data also had a practical side. Dawson again:

“[Systems] are crucial. If it’s dead easy to update, takes you 30 seconds after you’ve booked a guest or had them on air, then you’ll do it. If it involves even five minutes of extra work, why would you? Because these teams work long, long days, unsociable hours.”

From a range of discussions it became clear that monitoring allowed managers to open meaningful conversations with workers about diversity, and it was easier to begin with metrics before looking at targets.

**Counting staff**

As for content, quantifying the diversity of an organisation’s staff was largely viewed as a useful and necessary action, though not without drawbacks.

Workforce diversity in the organisations visited relied almost entirely on self-declaration. The success of self-declaration lay in staff confidence around why the data was being collected, and how that data was used.

Typically, managers were clear about why the staff data was needed; staff, less so.

In the BBC, the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2016-2020 includes a plan to gather better staff metrics around diversity:

“We will, for the first time, gather socio-economic background data on all our new entrants, including educational history, family income and post codes. This will allow us to develop robust data on where we need to target further interventions.”

Knowing these facts about staff allows organisations to clearly see gaps: for example metrics would confirm whether an organisation might be making progress in entry level staff, but not in on-air talent, technology workers, management. This information could in turn prompt corrective actions such as career tracking, or support such as mentoring.

But amongst the broader staff groups, reservations were observed. Some workers did not wish to be categorised as diverse, for fear of being singled out and receiving ‘special treatment’ (positive or negative, and either real or perceived by others). Some wished to ‘fly under the radar’, simply not seeing the point of being identified as diverse.

This is something organisations have to address if they intend to rely on self-declaration for information about their staff.

BBC Diversity Lead Elonka Soros said,

“There are some people who don’t want to declare. We have a big issue with disabled people, especially around disability where adjustments might have to be made - people would rather struggle on than let people know they have a disability... But of course they fall into trouble at work... So it’s getting the message across - look, it’s in your interest to declare. BAME - I find this one weird, because if you’re black, you’re black, there’s no point pretending. Just because you don’t tick the box on the form, isn’t going to make any difference to how people are going to treat you.
But it does help us, the business, to be able to look at things like, how many people from minority backgrounds are applying to us, getting through to interview, how many people are actually getting a job... and then you can put the intervention in the right place.”

Ambivalence about declaring one’s diversity was well summed up in comments made by Jayde Pearson, a producer and broadcast assistant from BBC Birmingham.

Now a full-time employee, Pearson joined the BBC through the apprenticeship scheme. She is black, hails from the Midlands; a bright, capable and motivated young woman, she has multiple workplace achievements under her belt. In discussing how Jayde intended to pursue career progression, we had the following conversation about how she overcame her reluctance to self-declare her cultural diversity:

JP: Now I’m one of these people, before, I didn’t believe in, you know, you fill out the forms and you say are you black, are you this or are you that. I never used to like it.

AH: Why didn’t you like it?

JP: Because I thought, well why does it matter? But I realised it actually does matter. And the reason why it matters, is because if I choose not to disclose whether I’m black, or whatever, that means I’m not counted. When they say, there are no black people, it’s not that there are no black people, there are black people there, they’ve just chosen not to say.

So I need to stand up and be counted, so I’m represented. So that people know I’m here. Same thing for gay, lesbian, trans. What does it matter?

Actually it does matter, because how you can you turn around and say, oh this organisation doesn’t have anyone like me, when you are in there, [but] you choose to kind of go under the radar and not disclose.

AH: Do you think some people might choose not to disclose, to fly under the radar, it’s more natural for them?

JP: Yes I know, but you can’t have your cake and eat it. The only way we can address these problems, is if we know who’s here. If we don’t know you’re here, we’ve got no point of reference.

Pearson has changed her mind about declaring her diversity to her employer, and is clear about her reasons why. But she felt the opposite at first because she didn’t appreciate the purpose of self-declaring.

So organisational communication around the role of data in strategic diversity plans can play a role to ensure self-declared data is robust.

Public data: an essential reference point

All organisations visited used public data about their communities to set their diversity goals.

Interestingly, the BBC has used census projections for targets in their 2020 Diversity & Inclusion Strategy; the targets are so-called ‘stretch targets’, set just above projected population levels.

Diamond: ‘a game changer’ for the UK

In the UK, individual practices by screen-based broadcasters collecting their own data is about to be superseded by the introduction of a new pan-industry counting system, Diamond (an acronym for Diversity Analysis MONitoring Data), scheduled for launch June 2016.

A unique initiative worldwide as far as the UK industry (and others) can determine, it’s being described by the administering body, the CDN (Creative Diversity Network) as “a game-changer”. CDN’s Tanya Mukherjee said, “It’s a really interesting tipping point. In a way it’s fantastic for UK broadcasters to be so much on the front foot… there’s no reason why other people can’t follow.”

Diamond has been developed cooperatively by the BBC, Channel 4, ITV and Sky, co-ordinated by CDN, and with input from other industry bodies; it will be adopted by all major TV broadcasters in the UK, and will count diversity both on- and off-screen.

Diamond’s self-stated aim is to be able to accurately say: “Who’s on TV?” and “Who makes TV?”

At the time of writing, Diamond will launch counting of creative TV content, with pilots for News and Sport.

To begin with, reporting will be annual, moving to half-yearly in time; Mukherjee hopes to see it move up to quarterly. The CDN will manage reporting whole-of-industry data; the level of reporting is still a matter of negotiation, and CDN hope to be able to release more detail over time. Organisations will of course have access to all of their own data.
There were early concerns about privacy of participants, so the system has been built with high levels of personal anonymity and data security; no paper is involved, Diamond is entirely online.

Diamond is based on self-reporting: it requires participants to enter data, and to do so correctly. To address this, all participants are undergoing rigorous training in the mechanics of using the system correctly; at the same time, broadcasters are ‘winning hearts and minds’ by talking up the initiative.

Only time will tell if this reliance on goodwill provides an accurate snapshot of the industry, although the generally positive approach by participants ahead of its launch is a good sign.

There is detailed information about Diamond available online which does not need to be repeated here; see ‘Further Reading’ appendix.

Understanding the data: effective analysis

It is one thing to gather data, another to be able to read it effectively and use this knowledge to improve the status quo.

As an example, Fiona Crack, News Deployments Officer for BBC World Service and leader of the high-profile content initiative BBC 100 Women (for a summary of this initiative see Content p. 32-33), said a firm grasp on analytics really helped her ability to better understand the relationship between content and audience.

“It took me a while to learn to read the analytics. I really had to get someone to sit me down to go, what can I extrapolate from this.

For example one of our stories this year was, ‘Desperate not to have children’: it did really well, had nearly 4 million hits in 36 hours, it was huge... but that 4 million, it’s about whether it’s hits or unique views, it’s about how you use your analytics from your social media outlets. You can’t add them all up and come to a [figure], it’s not that.

You really need to pore over it to really understand what kind of impact it made. Because everyone can quote these big things. You have to look at it, see what it did and where it did its stuff.”

The project’s analytics clearly showed that the numbers of women engaged with the content went up, as expected.

What the analytics also showed Crack was that the numbers of men engaged did not drop - an unexpected outcome, and an important piece of knowledge that made the analytics analysis worthwhile for her.

Quantitative data may tell an organisation whether or not they have representative diversity in their job applications, but not why. It can tell them that the attrition rate for diverse workers is higher than that for non-diverse workers, but not why. Even trends gleaned from repeated data measurements does not explain causality.

This type of qualitative analysis did not appear to be being undertaken by any one organisation in a formal way, but there was evidence that those working in diversity areas are well aware of needing to understand ‘why’, and many made anecdotal observations based on data plus experience.

Qualitative information on content

The bulk of content-related data being collected by organisations appeared to be quantitative. There are signs that some qualitative diversity information is being gathered - however it did not appear systematic.

In particular there was interest around ‘portrayal’ in both creative and factual content, but the only visible plan for counting portrayal was the UK’s Diamond system.

Rather, it was evident in conversation that content teams which had a heightened awareness of diversity also tended to be aware of the quality of portrayal as being important.
Targets

Targets are a natural follow-on from collecting and analysing data about both content and workers. Where data is compared to average population and a gap is evident, it is a logical next step in the change process to describe what change is needed; targets are an unambiguous way of doing so.

In the organisations visited, targets were generally viewed as a necessary element in increasing diversity. Reasons offered for this included:

- Articulating a clear goal for the organisation to work towards, maintaining focus of effort
- Making a public statement of commitment to change
- A measure by which the organisation and/or individual performance can be assessed

Targets were not uniform across the industry, or by country, but varied according to the organisation.

Parameters were typically a defined group or groups, a defined level of increase sought, and a time frame in which this increase was to be achieved.

Many organisations were on to their second or even third round of targets. Targets were evident for on- and off-air staff, recruitment, content, and guests.

Some organisations, like Sky Atlantic, set fewer, simpler targets so as to keep their objectives clear; at the other end of the scale, the BBC has set multiple on- and off-air targets, in some cases adjusting these for different local areas.

Head of Sky Drama Anne Mensah, explained her experience of the advantage of simpler targets:

“I have to say simple targets really helped us. It helps to have really unifying, simple - like no more than two or three things to line up behind.

Because if they’re really simple and there’s not too many of them, you can’t duck them. Whereas if there’s loads of things, and it’s really complicated, you can side-step everything.

Even if you just have one really simple goal, but you all did it, then you’d have done something.”

Further, Mensah felt that setting targets effectively set rules in the least constraining way: the indies they commission are free to apply whatever methodology they like to improve diversity, as long as the targets are reached. In this way, the solutions are bespoke and owned by the teams - the opposite of imposing projects or measures from the top down, which may not be suitable and therefore will not succeed, or be rejected.

Sky’s target of 30% BAME/minority off-and-on-air is considered ambitious within the industry, but it does not appear to apply to Sky News, to avoid perceptions of editorial interference. Other organisations do include their news content in targets, eg. Swedish Radio Malmö.

Channel 4 and BBC have much more detailed targets relating to content and staff; these are best read in their current diversity strategies. For links to these, see the Appendix.

Selected targets themselves were the subject of debate (too high, not high enough), as were the outcomes (targets not reached by deadline=failure vs general improvements=success).

Many people liked targets for the reasons above, whilst some did not like targets, believing them too prescriptive.

But the fact that targets are routinely set by broadcast organisations did not seem controversial in either the UK or Sweden. They appeared to be a ‘fact of life’.

A note about language: In the UK, ‘quotas’ which must be forcibly met, are prohibited by law; all measures around diversity are set as ‘targets’, seen as a more aspirational term.
Staff: new

In the drive to increase diversity, should staff (on- and off-air) be addressed before content, or vice versa?

Most respondents answered diversity in staff, but only just; others said both were of equal importance. All agreed that diversity in both staff and content are key and needed to be addressed simultaneously.

Additionally, there was general agreement that until diversity in staff was improved, diversity in content could only improve so much.

Many people talked about not just recruiting one or two diverse staff members so that they had a ‘token’ representative of that group, but rather about the need to achieve a ‘critical mass’ of diversity in the room, whereby diverse people were able to exert editorial influence and not be dismissed.

It was also seen as important to ensure that diverse staff were not constantly singled out as diverse, even when done in a well-meaning way; as some diverse staff pointed out, they were not a spokesperson for their country of origin or sexuality or disability, and anyway they just wanted to get on and be journalists or producers and not focus on their difference all the time.

For an example of good practice, Sky News broadcaster Afua Hirsch said she felt it was significant that The Guardian hired her as their Legal Correspondent, not in some more stereotypical area such as race and equality, or music, or sport.

Hiring diverse staff to reflect the diversity in the audience was seen by many managers not as a nicety, but as essential. For example, for a newsroom vacancy in Malmo, they were seeking to hire someone who spoke Arabic, because they need an Arabic-speaker simply to do their job effectively for that community.

All organisations were working to address recruitment at entry level, and for higher levels including senior leadership roles.

Methods for doing so varied greatly between organisations, affected by various output models, funding, and so on. These ranged from setting targets for the independent content suppliers to meet on commissioned programs, through to devising full apprenticeship and undergraduate education programs drawing in young school leavers with no tertiary qualifications.

Recruitment

Recruitment processes were discussed by all broadcasters, specifically the view that managers tend to ‘hire in their own image’.

At least one broadcaster, the BBC, is looking to remedy this by insisting on minimum diversity in all recruitment panels, mandated in their Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2016-2020.

Other recruitment aspects discussed included definitions of merit, how to hire people with strengths in diversity, how to attract diverse candidates, and how to measure diverse candidates accurately against non-diverse competitors (including tackling unconscious bias in hiring managers).

Dealing with the culture of ‘who you know’

The media industry is frequently described as relying on ‘who you know’, and that presents a real hurdle for women, culturally diverse, LGBTI, disabled and socio-economically disadvantaged people.

There is a strong industry culture of networking, and this has had a track record of affecting recruitment. People talk about ‘who you know’ being as important as ‘what you know’. That is thought by some to have contributed to the narrow demographics of media workers.

The Creative Skillset organisation has for several years compiled a ‘census’ of the ‘creative industries’ (including broadcast media, film, gaming). The most recent results show a decrease in diversity in the creative industries over the past 12 months, something which Tanya Mukherjee of the The Creative Diversity Network (CDN) found dismaying.

“This is my personal view, but I don’t think anyone ever really examined the root cause of the hiring practices of such an informal network that television is - the word-of-mouth, the nepotism, the six people that go from show to show because the producer knows them.

I think there’s still a lot of work to do around that area, that is definitely not cracked. That is such a driver for everything else.”

Sky News broadcaster Afua Hirsch was blunt:

“Not very long ago at all, people generally got jobs in the media, print and broadcast, by their dad introducing them to his best friend, or going to work...
with a family friend, or a relative, and that was literally the way in. A lot of jobs weren’t even advertised.

I think there’s still too much of a reliance on unpaid work experience which privileges people who can afford to work for long periods unpaid, who have similar cultural frames of reference and can get along with people.

I think those informal avenues to work massively disadvantaged people from different backgrounds... so it just perpetuates the same demographic getting access again and again.”

For organisations that hire under a defined public-style structure, the challenge is rethinking recruitment guidelines where the interpretation has become so rigid as to limit diversity.

_Avoiding hiring in your own image_

How to measure diverse candidates accurately against non-diverse competitors (including tackling unconscious bias in hiring managers) is a challenge for the industry.

Winston Phillips, BBC Project Manager and Chair of the BBC’s Black and Asian Forum, described his observations of this behaviour:

“People say that you recruit in your own image, and I guess there’s a large element of that that goes on in the BBC, especially at [leadership] level.

When you talk about it in that world, you talk about the Oxbridge thing, you’re talking about playing rugby, you know, the circle that you need to move in, in order to be able to develop and move up.

And by and large, BAMEs don’t play in that same sort of circle.”

To combat this, in their new 2016-20 Diversity & Inclusion strategy the BBC has mandated a blind application process: all applications are stripped of identifying information that could lead to unconscious bias, including name, age, place of schooling. In fact this system has been in place for some months, in anticipation of the Strategy.

The BBC is now also requiring managers and personnel interviewers to undergo Fair Hiring training and Unconscious Bias training in an effort to support better recruitment practices and outcomes.

**Levelling the playing field**

There is an acknowledgement that some applicants, by virtue of their education or their social environment, may have in effect been coached to perform well in an interview, leaving other capable applicants disadvantaged.

In the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2016-2020 the BBC is taking practical steps to directly address this through coaching applicants in how to apply, according to Tunde Ogungbesan.

“There’s an argument that if you end up going to the better universities, the stronger universities, that they’ve prepped you on how to answer these application forms. So to help counter that we’re putting in place pre-application training for those who want it...

We’ve got an employability open day to help you learn how to complete application forms, learn interview techniques, so it’s even taking you a little bit further than the pre-application. If you did get an interview, how are you going to turn it on, put your best self forward for the interview. We’re hoping that will level the playing field a bit.

I was asked by another radio station yesterday whether this was positive discrimination. I said it’s not positive discrimination because that’s illegal in the UK. What it is, is positive action. And the second question that came from that was, are you giving some people an unfair advantage? And I said, no we’re not, what we are doing is levelling the playing field.”

Tackling embedded preconceptions about what to look for may take a fair bit of unlearning on the part of the hiring managers.

The BBC’s apprentice program, which aims to bring in very different people at more junior levels, has had to build an entirely new screening procedure to make this possible. Simon Broad described their approach:

“We’ve learned that recruiting apprentices is a different activity than recruiting more ordinary staff members. For many of our apprentices, it’s the first time they’ve ever filled out a job application, been to an interview, for many of them they’ve got very little to talk about.

You can’t ask the same competency-based questions, [such as] tell me about a time when you’ve had to deal with a difficult customer, or when you’ve had to deal with conflicting deadlines, because apart from a
couple of projects or playing on the football team or whatever they haven’t got much to talk about.

So we have to dump that approach... we’ve moved from competency-based to strength-based. And rather than saying, tell me about a time when? we say, tell me what you’re interested in, tell me what you’re good at? How would your family and friends describe you? What would your dream job be? What gives you energy?

We ask them lots and lots of questions rather than a few questions with lots of probing. And it’s quite a different approach to assessment, and quite difficult [for hiring managers] to unlearn old habits. But it gives everybody much more energy, and at the end of the day I think gives everybody a much more level playing field.

You know the thing I keep on about is we need to recruit on potential not polish. And particularly when you’ve got a diversity challenge, it’s very easy to be blinded by those people who have been well rehearsed, they’re going to ask you a question about teamwork so think about a good example for that, because they’ve got supportive parents and teachers that allow them to do that.

But other kids who’ve got more potential, are more talented, but haven’t had that sort of support, they flounder in that sort of environment. So in fact that strength-based approach allows people to really shine if they’ve got the ability.”

“I have a colleague who said that she knew, had called persons [and asked], ‘Why didn’t you search that job?’ [they replied], ‘Why? I won’t get it. Why should I?’ So they don’t even search it. It’s a big problem.”

Ulsson’s colleague Dag Stromqvist is working to develop networks in communities they wish to target in order to create trust and hopefully elicit some applications from desired candidates when vacancies arise.

BBC Production apprentice Rem Conway described how he had to overcome his own preconceptions of the BBC to apply for an apprenticeship:

RC: “When I first came across the application form and everything to do with the BBC, I’ve always looked at the BBC as a white middle class company. Always.”

AH: “Did you want to work here even when you thought that?”

RC: “I did. Because I wanted to be the difference, I wanted to be the change, it was something that really made me want to go in there and be able to represent a certain community, represent places where I’m coming from. I love a challenge, that’s how I am. So I was like, yeah, I need to do this. But it can be scary because you think, you know, are they going to respond to someone like me?

And then I realised, this is exactly what they need. They need to diversify, they’re owned by the public, so they need to start representing the whole of the public. So what I was at first thinking was a disadvantage became an advantage.”

For apprenticeships and traineeships, the BBC has created entirely new ways of reaching out to attract diverse applicants, from using social media to advertise vacancies, to a new online interface for lodging job applications, to actually physically fronting up in communities and holding ‘job open days’ for interested people.

Addressing merit; hiring people with strengths in diversity

As expected, organisations have had to examine the question of merit. The broad consensus is that ‘merit’ is a concept that, when applied properly, describes a person’s fitness for the job, and compares them with other candidates for an outcome.

However, when the merit concept is applied in the real world, it was apparent that inappropriate measures were being applied to indicate merit in some situations, that produced homogenous results.

How to attract diverse candidates

There is a particular challenge for organisations undergoing a change of approach to diversity, to be seen as opening doors which might have been thought of as shut to diverse candidates. Even getting diverse people to look at job vacancies might take additional effort.

Mikke Ulsson from UR in Stockholm related a common experience frustrating hiring managers in media:
For example: to aid with shortlisting for a reporter vacancy, a HR representative or hiring manager might automatically exclude all applicants without a tertiary qualification. But a tertiary qualification is not a mandatory requirement to do a reporter’s job (unlike say, to be a surgeon); requiring one may needlessly exclude people who could not afford to study at university but who have the right skills through working on a local newspaper or community radio station.

So some organisations reported reviewing recruitment procedures and training hiring managers to reduce instances of ‘false merit’. Some hiring managers reviewed their definitions of merit to include capacity for diversity as a desirable characteristic, especially where organisational objectives included increasing a more diverse audience.

‘Capacity for diversity’ or ‘competence in diversity’ is an ephemeral concept, but concrete indicators can be set. A hiring manager may ask for a portfolio or showreel that shows diverse content, diverse community contacts, speaking other languages, having a lived experience in a diverse community or environment, diverse story ideas. Therefore, capacity for diversity is not simply ‘being female’ or ‘being Asian’ but assessing a more nuanced range of experiences and achievements and potential.

Whilst this may at first seem strange, several hiring managers noted that many other skills or traits that are highly sought in broadcast media are also ephemeral concepts with concrete indicators, for example ‘creativity’, ‘news sense’, ‘teamwork’. If there is no trouble hiring for these skills, similarly there should be no trouble setting diversity as a desired competency and hiring accordingly.

Ulla Svensson from Swedish Radio says that for her organisation, diversity competence is now built into their standard recruitment. It refers to three indicators: personal networks, personal experience, and languages.

Svensson makes that point that this does not automatically discriminate in favour of ethnic or other minority groups:

“Katja Magnusson, who is our very Swedish correspondent in Turkey - she speaks Arabic. So she has that. And of course she is a very good reporter... she also has the network of all these people. She has two out of three.”

In terms of merit, these hiring managers felt they could justifiably prioritise for diversity in their recruitment if that was what the team needed, in the same way that they could prioritise another skill or attribute such as political experience, or a science or arts background.

Just as for one vacancy you might seek to hire someone with greater editorial experience, and for another someone with contemporary social media skills, so you might also prioritise someone who brings a diverse experience or point of view which the team needs.

Schemes and programs

Some of schemes that were observed, discussed or mentioned include:

Creative Skillset: Emerging Commissioners Program - Participants included Sky, Channel 4, BBC, ITV

BBC Academy: a range of schemes including:

- apprenticeships in TV production, digital journalism (entry level, restricted eligibility - no uni graduates, qualification at end of course, no guaranteed ongoing employment);
- Degree courses in technology;
- Information days, and support days aimed at helping job seekers submit a more competitive job application.

BBC (other)

- Mentoring: a women’s mentoring scheme was formally launched on 27 April
- Mentoring: a staff-organised mentoring scheme for culturally-diverse workers has been organised by the BBC Black and Asian Forum

Other broadcasters run various schemes and programs; just some which are noted but were not able to be visited as part of this Fellowship include:

Sky Academy - various, including Apprenticeships and Graduate Traineeships

Channel 4 - various, including the Production Training Scheme;

ITV - various, Graduate Traineeships and Apprenticeships

Schemes can be viewed through both positive and negative lenses, often simultaneously.

In their favour, schemes are viewed as a good way for diverse people to break into the broadcast industry or to advance careers. They open doors that up to now have
been closed due to unconscious bias or informal systems of patronage, and prompt managers to hire and promote more widely.

Schemes can allow for participants to receive additional support such as skills training and networking which equip them to survive in a highly competitive environment and which they have not gained elsewhere.

The BBC has developed an extensive training program aimed at pre-entry-level applicants. This stems from a realisation that the people they wished to hire did not aspire to work at the BBC, or in the media at all, and were not seeking or receiving appropriate training to be hired even at entry level.

Simon Broad, the Head of Operations & Development with the BBC’s New Talent Team, pointed out that the BBC has traditionally been a graduate employer, recruiting largely from universities, but the New Talent Team is deliberately moving beyond this model.

“I myself was a product of that; I joined as a graduate trainee in the 1980s and have forged a career in the BBC ever since. I think that if you do that, you tend to get the same old, same old in terms of the white majority...

I think that has become increasingly unacceptable not only for a publicly funded organisation like the BBC to not reflect its audience, but I think also that people across the BBC understand the good business sense of making sure that from audience perspective, just from a talent perspective that we fish in every pool that’s available, because we want the most creative the most inventive, the most problem-solving talent out there, and if you only fish in one pool you only get a certain amount of talent.”

So the BBC has elected to cease relying solely on graduates coming to them, and instead has built programs where they select and train the people they want, in the skills areas they need.

The BBC began by designing a broadcast engineering degree course to address a desperate shortage of engineers generally and women engineers in particular; they have since added apprenticeships in TV Production and Digital Journalism, and look to recruit for cultural and socio-economic diversity in these. The BBC operate these in partnership with registered education providers.

Other entry level schemes the BBC runs include traineeships and work experience. At any given time the BBC may have some 300 people on one of these schemes.

At the BBC “Get In” open day in Salford on 9 April 2016, two current apprentices, Steve Trenchard and Rem Conway, spoke to visitors about their experience.

Reflecting later, both talked about the attractiveness of the schemes giving an affordable educational path with a relevant qualification at the end. When you do not have the safety net of affluent parents, financial stability is a real consideration; their reflections indicate that apprenticeships can open possibilities for people with limited financial means, or from distant geographic locations, to pursue a career in media.

The fact that apprenticeships covers school fees and apprentices are paid an entry-level wage makes it a more viable option than attending university which costs students thousands of pounds per year; it can make it possible to relocate to London or Manchester.

For Steve Trenchard, industry opinions about apprenticeships are changing for the better:

“In the past few years I think apprenticeships have really come to the fore, because of the price tag now attached to uni... I think before, people treated apprenticeships like oh we’ll, you’re just kind of working, but now they’re seen as a serious option.”

On-the-job training and support from the BBC Academy may also speed up the career progression of successful apprentices, who if they had simply been hired in an entry level role may have spent years acquiring skills much more slowly. For the BBC, improving career progression is necessary if they are to make up for lost time and reach their diversity targets not just for entry level workers but in more senior positions.

Both young men are ambitious, and aiming high in their next steps after finishing their apprenticeships: Trenchard is keen to join the 5 Live team, whilst Conway wants to step up to directing television drama. Through their apprenticeships they have both already worked in
their respective areas of interest, so their ambition is realistic.

Faster career progression could help to stem attrition rates of diverse workers, who in addition to the slow progression of traditional on-the-job learning may face other structural barriers to timely advancement. Conway:

“I’ve got a very clear vision of what I want to do in TV, in production. If I was just running for a year, two years, three years, I’m going to start feeling like, this is just a job. And I’m going to start to dislike it, and I’m going to start to think about leaving. Which since I’ve been there, has happened to runners - they just think about leaving because they’re just running, that’s all they’re doing but they want to do more.

I’m more of a person who creates my opportunity. If it’s not there I’ll just create it, I’ll make it be there. Some people are not like that. So I think it’s harder without these schemes.”

Diversity measures can serve to improve the business in other ways. The Digital Journalism Apprenticeship, launched in 2015, is interesting because of its multiple outcomes: not only to increase diversity of staff, but also to future-proof the BBC by supporting a generational shift in journalism techniques.

Carol Foster, the Coordinator for this scheme, said,

“This is where you have to box clever sometimes, you have to figure out what you want at the end, and then start building it from the beginning. So what we’ve done is, we’ve looked at our apprenticeship schemes so we are not employing people to do the jobs that are already existing.

What we’re doing is training them up to be new types of journalists, new types of producers, and so for the ten digital apprentices that we’ve got in journalism right now, they are learning things that are properly cutting edge. They are so far, in terms of technology, ahead of the game, [ahead of] other journalists in newsrooms.

Now what happens is that the traditional journalists, they share their skills, but the digital journalists go back to the traditional journalists and teach them as well. So we do tie-ups, and this is one of the things we’re looking at at the moment.

A correspondent will go out and will file for radio and file for TV. And what I’m trying to do is put our apprentices alongside that correspondent to then support them - because it’s a lot to do, radio and TV, and this is a problem that the whole industry has had for years, where it’s like: you had to do this, and now you have to do this, and now you have to put another broom in a certain place, and do some more as well.

So what we’re having to do is support those traditional journalists with somebody who’s all over the social media, who’s all over the digital spectrum and at the same time they train each other, and that’s the most important thing.”

As diversity becomes desirable, competition for skilled and capable diverse workers will increase, so a robust training scheme equipping multiple new workers and embedding them into your company is a logical investment in a future-proofing strategy.

On the down side, schemes can also be viewed as limited points of entry or progression for diverse people, which do not challenge current exclusionary practices and therefore ultimately do not change the organisation’s culture to a more diverse approach.

They may allow managers to disengage from acting to improve diversity - in effect, managers can let the schemes do the ‘heavy lifting’ to get diverse workers in, and avoid examining and changing their usual hiring and promotion practices.

This was summed up well by BBC staff member Jayde Pearson. A graduate of the BBC’s apprentice scheme, Pearson is now a producer and broadcast assistant at BBC Birmingham; after multiple unsuccessful efforts to get into the BBC, at age 26 she restarted her career by gaining an apprenticeship, which for her entailed a drop in status and pay.

Whilst glad of the path this opened up, and acknowledging that the scheme gave her relevant work skills she did not possess that made her employment possible, Pearson has come to view schemes with some scepticism.

JP: There was a scheme that took place probably about a year or so ago, and there was four black and ethnic minority people who were chosen to work under the Director-General on some leadership program. And it’s like, these are four capable people from the black and minority ethnic community, they’re now being chosen to work to the Director-General, so without this scheme they wouldn’t be there. Why does it take a scheme for them to get to that position? ...

I would like to see somebody just rock up and apply for a management role and just get the management role, work their way up in the management role, not have a special thing to come in, just drag these
people, you know, let’s ‘take them out of the ghetto’ and give them a platform.

BBC Head of Diversity, Inclusion & Succession Tunde Ogungbesan believe schemes have a place in improving diversity, but only as part of a much broader approach. As a result of staff consultation, schemes are featured but not central to the 2020 Diversity & Inclusion Strategy.

“It wasn’t necessarily about schemes this time, it was about creating a culture where people felt they would be treated equally when they try and move forward with their career.”

Retaining and supporting diverse staff

Some organisations were grappling with how best to support diverse staff once they are recruited, to keep them in the organisation and progress their careers; ideas and methods for doing this were fewer, but emerging, and ranged from tracking staff via HR, through to mentoring schemes. Issues seen to be at play included a person being one-of-a-kind in a team; facing bias, whether unconscious or overt, from team members or in the organisation itself; perceptions from others that a person was only hired because of their difference.

Sky News’s Social Affairs and Education Editor Afua Hirsch is an accomplished journalist and barrister, and has worked in demanding roles from foreign correspondent for The Guardian to international development. Nevertheless, even someone of her calibre can see how others might choose to perceive her appointment to Sky News. Hirsch said,

“I feel very conscious that my appointment comes at a time when there is this very vocal emphasis on increasing diversity, and I think that can create some challenges because people may tend to see it as a kind of nod to diversity rather than an appointment on merit which it was...

I think it’s a challenge for anyone in my position, if you come in as a minority person in an organisation which historically hasn’t been very diverse at a time when they’re really trying to diversify, people will always be tempted to see you as some kind of affirmative action project rather than a merit-based appointment.”

Hirsch commended Sky as a welcoming workplace, but points out that on-air presenters everywhere will inevitably encounter less-welcoming listeners:

“You get a lot of quite horrible feedback from people - racist, sexist emails and tweets, from people who are clearly just offended by the fact that you exist and are on their TV screens. I’m quite thick-skinned... but you are conscious... that there are people who don’t like the fact that you are on air and that’s just something you have to live with.”

These kinds of reactions are something diverse staff must be equipped to deal with; managers need to be aware of this and build into their support of diverse staff.

Again, there seemed to be no single outstanding scheme or plan for increasing cultural diversity of staff through recruitment that is better than any other; the best conclusion to draw here is that a myriad range of solutions is needed, and should be adapted/changed over time as required.

Examples of projects to retain and support diverse staff

Mentoring: On Wednesday 28 April the BBC launched their Women’s Networking Program. A call out for both mentees and mentors was made, and around 20 mentees were selected and matched with women mentors. All were brought to BBC Broadcast House in London for the launch, allowing many to meet face-to-face for the first time - mentors and mentees are not necessarily located in the same workplace.

The Mandela Lectures are a project of the BBC’s Black and Asian Forum

Staff-based support: the BBC Black and Asian Forum is a staff-organised group. Originally set up many years ago as a loose peer support group it has become more formally structured and purposeful.

The BBAF supports networking, career development and progression for all BAME staff, pushes for greater BAME numbers in executive leadership, and seeks to reduce the attrition rate of BAME staff. A key activity is a mentoring program: the BBAF created and trialled a small program first, and have since involved the BBC Diversity Centre to expand it to involve over 40 pairs at present.
Chair Winston Phillips cites retention of BAME staff, taking member issues to executive leadership, providing policy input, and even offering consultation on content as other important activities. It receives some small funding for activities, but remains self-determining. The fact that this is a staff-driven group is unique.

Conversely, Afua Hirsch said that Sky did not have such a peer-support group, and she believed the organisation could help staff by supporting the establishment of one. It is worth exploring how such staff bodies could be fostered within other organisations for the purposes of retaining and supporting diverse staff.

Flexible programming: Swedish Radio in Malmö has in some circumstances adjusted the typical programming schedule, creating work patterns that might better suit the people they wish to attract and keep.

For example, the Evening Program, co-hosted by Nadia Jebril and Måns Nilsson, broadcasts nationally on P4 from the Malmö studios on Thursday and Friday; another team based in Gothenberg presents the program Monday-Wednesday.

Flexible working: The BBC’s Diversity and Inclusion 2016-2020 Strategy specifically mandates improving flexible work practices to support diverse workers.

The obvious target of this action is women, who still shoulder a disproportionate share of out-of-office work, but the strategy should also benefit people whose community obligations or disability or health issues may make a 5-day working week difficult.
Staff: existing

In all discussions about staff and diversity, there was a clear understanding that no organisation is looking to radically overturn their existing skilled and experienced workforce; therefore recruitment is likely to be a gradual path to improving cultural diversity of the workforce, with lasting change a long-term goal.

Therefore changing workplace culture to embed a capacity for reflecting diversity into an existing staff body with low diversity was considered important by all organisations. They addressed it through a range of short- and long-term measures.

Methods include (usually one or more of):
- Leadership
- Training
- Targets and associated reporting
- Performance reviews and incentives

[Leadership and targets are addressed as separate themes, please look to those for more detail.]

Training

Similar to recruitment, those in both training and leadership roles spoke of ‘diversity’ as a capacity or skill which could be required of existing staff, and could be taught. In this context, a capacity for ‘diversity’ was compared to other amorphous characteristics that nevertheless have tangible outcomes and are central to the skill set of broadcast media such as ‘creativity’, ‘news sense’ or ‘teamwork’.

‘Competence in diversity’ was described as ‘representing the audience’ or ‘knowledge of the audience’, which firmly grounded it as an aspect of existing business goals for any broadcaster.

Diversity Strategist at UR Janiche Opsahl says,
“You have to look upon diversity as a knowledge. A knowledge that you have to achieve, you are not born with it. Because many people look upon diversity knowledge as a feeling, a gut feeling, or just engagement, but it is actually a knowledge. You can learn it... and that’s why you can recruit people with knowledge from diversity.”

Some organisations took the approach that their content makers would learn skills in ‘diversity’ of their own accord; others are developing, or already providing, training.

When I raised the possibility of cynicism from existing staff, or barriers to change such as time or resources, managers looked to their organisation’s highest leaders to provide both the means (time, resources, training) and the motivation (making it a business requirement).

Training to address behavioural change is another factor. BBC’s Head of Diversity, Inclusion & Succession Tunde Ogungbesan says educating managers is the priority, and the Diversity and Inclusion 2016-2020 Strategy mandates it for BBC managers, because at Tunde said, “They have a big role to play in this, to make this work.”

At the BBC, some unconscious bias training has already been rolled out. Senior editorial staff at BBC 5 Live spoke highly of the diversity training they received.

BBC 5 Live Controller Jonathan Wall talked about the lasting impact it’s had on the depth of his and his team’s approach:
“We’ve probably had to recognise that we all had a bit of unconscious bias and that we had to recognise perhaps where, in a management team, if you’re short of women, or short of black and Asian faces, or short of older people, whatever other unconscious bias demonstrates itself the most, and not being defensive about that really.
Of course we’re not sexist or racist as a station, but it’s a bit deeper than that, it’s more subtle than that. Recognising that, and owning up to some of the things that you might have not got right.”
BBC Diversity Lead Elonka Soros recommends imbuing diversity training of any kind with the same importance as any other workplace training, as something that’s necessary for their job.

“Every time we bring in a new piece of computer software or a new piece of kit or whatever, people have to learn it because they think it’s important for them to do their job.

With this stuff, I think people need to perceive it, and managers need to be holding people to account around diversity, in the same way as if someone was getting the law wrong, making legal mistakes, or making editorial errors.”

**Workplace culture**

Leaders need to work on their organisation’s culture to ensure diversity becomes incorporated. As a large organisation employing thousands of staff, the BBC was a broadcaster where workplace culture is definitely a factor to contend with.

The BBC’s Black and Asian Forum chair Winston Phillips noted that the BBC Trust has previously researched and found evidence of a culture where diverse workers were afraid to report discrimination, and where poor behaviour by ‘stars’ was excused. Phillips noted that the BBAF had discussed this issue with current BBC Director General Tony Hall, and had received a commitment to address this situation in future.

BBC Diversity Lead Elonka Soros observed that large organisations risk losing the advantage of new diverse staff if the culture amongst existing staff is not open to the change they bring.

“What is really interesting, is when you have young journalists or young program makers who’ve come in - they’ve grown up in a much more diverse society, so they actually start from a better place.

And then we - as an older person - ‘we’ the institution, somehow moulds them into the old people so they lose all of their language, and they lose all of their ideas, because actually what they see is the stuff that gets rewarded is not that kind of stuff.

So after a while of pitching in ideas or maybe making suggestions that have got diversity at the centre of them just because these young journalists, that’s their real lives, they realise that actually, that’s not going to get commissioned, or that’s not going to get them brownie points in the newsletter at the end of the week, so they start pitching stuff like everybody else. And before you know it, we’ve got even more clones.

Yes it’s really important that we bring in people from diverse backgrounds. But we as a culture have to change. We have to reward the stuff that we want to see on air, because otherwise we’ll just keep going round and round in circles.”

Similarly, Sky News broadcaster Afua Hirsch said,

“You get in all of these really dynamic young people from different backgrounds, but then you haven’t got a culture where they can thrive. And you’ve got all of the old cultural barriers and prejudices that work against them.

So I think it’s one thing to get them in the door and it’s a big thing; but another thing is retention.”

When asked to reflect on which practical steps worked to address workplace culture, Soros explained:

“The first thing is, you need really good leadership. Because if you don’t have a leader who is committed to making the change in the culture, the change isn’t going to happen...

Then you need to be congruent and consistent. Once you’ve set out your stall, you can’t then have loads of caveats and exceptions, and ‘oh it doesn’t matter because Bill’s talent’ - no.

If you set out your stall, those are the rules that we work by and we stick by them. And again you need a leader who’s going to do that.”

At Swedish Radio, Editor-in-Chief at Malmo Anne Sseruwagi tackles workplace culture through the overt measure of building cultural diversity improvements into the job plans for all staff members. Not just content
makers, but technicians, all workers, are asked to work with her to set diversity-related goals in their job plans.

When staff demonstrate they have achieved these goals, Sseruwagi backs good performance with financial reward:

“Those who have been working well and are enthusiastic and [have] good results and can be role models - they have also got better salary today.”

A workplace culture that disadvantages some necessarily advantages others; any move to level the playing field for diverse workers may mean some existing non-diverse staff feel ‘left out’ or otherwise disadvantaged by measures to support diversity – sometimes described as ‘loss of privilege’.

Their unhappiness will be very real for them but is unlikely to be met with sympathy by diverse staff themselves. Leaders will have to recognise and manage any such pushback.

Sky News broadcaster Afua Hirsch said,

“I remember when I was at The Guardian being really involved in this BAME network and people complaining, oh, where’s the white men’s network? It’s like, it’s the rest of the paper. But people do take umbrage to it, and I think people need to get over it and realise, this is not a level playing field, so you need things that support people.”
Content

Content is central to attracting and serving audience. Mainstream broadcast media in both the UK and Sweden continues to rate less well with audiences from culturally diverse and other minority backgrounds. Competition for eyes and ears has exploded in the past decade. Therefore increasing content which is both attractive to these audiences, and features faces and voices drawn from these audience groups, is a priority for all broadcasters.

Content targets have been set by some broadcasters, and range from ‘more black faces on TV drama’ to ‘black storylines’ to ‘a woman on every Breakfast radio program’ (UK), or mandated programming hours per week in the Finnish language (Sweden).

The relationship between diversity in the make up of staff, and diversity in content, is important to acknowledge. The BBC’s staff diversity targets to 2020 are actually set at slightly higher than forecast population figures; BBC Diversity Lead Elonka Soros explained why this is desirable:

“If you say okay we have 10% African people let’s say, and we’re going to put 10% African people - they’re going to be on 10% of the time, then that’s going to be still very piecemeal and dotted around, when those African people are part of our society 100% of the time.

So we need to find a way to make their appearances authentic, consistent, regular and across all out of the output, so they can feel like any time of the day when they turn on the TV they might see themselves, or they might hear their culture reflected. Or at least they’re not going to see or hear something that offends them because they are front of mind even when they’re not front of camera.

And for all kinds of diversity, people are thinking, actually, how are we portraying this, what are we saying. If you want to make a gag and it’s offensive, that’s fine - so long as we do those things consciously, we make conscious decisions to offend. If we are going to offend I think it should be a conscious decision because it’s a comedy thing, or it’s a piece of a drama. But in a news bulletin - why? No. Or a factual program that some people might find offensive - that’s fine, so long as you’ve explained your editorial background to it and you’ve got some sort of balance over time or it’s a balanced story.

But the kind of casual offence, and offence by omission, but the fact they’re just absent - that’s unacceptable.”

Different content genres find different challenges in increasing diversity.

News and current affairs content makers in both Sweden and the UK cite the challenge of finding diverse ‘experts’ or guests who are ‘voices of authority’, as most typical authority figures in UK and Swedish societies, from politicians to academics to business leaders, are male, white, older and middle class or wealthy.

There is also a fear in the minds of some that imposing diversity targets could interfere with the ‘news agenda’.

It is difficult to solve, unless the broadcaster is willing to change the way in which they report news and current affairs – eg. relying less on ‘voices of authority’, and more on guests from other parts of the community to speak on a topic. So program practices have to be examined and probably changed to make this possible.

On the other hand, reality TV, being focused on creating characters from so-called ‘ordinary’ people and with the imperative to chase big audience numbers for success, had anecdotaly good rates of diversity.

Channel 4 commissions a large proportion of reality TV, and the station’s On-Screen Diversity Executive Ramy El-Bergamy credits diversity as an actual success factor for its reality TV lineup.

“If you look at something like First Dates, which is the dating show set up in the restaurant... I think that show works because of the amount of diversity that comes through its doors. Shows like Gogglebox work because of its diversity.

And then there are other shows where disability for example are at the heart of the shows, so a show like Undatables is an incredibly beautiful, moving piece of work, because that is essentially about disabled people just wanting to find love which is a universal thing. I think Channel 4 Does that very well, and I think it’s because of diversity that these shows are so popular.”

AH: “You think that that’s the crux of the popularity with audiences?”

REB: “I definitely believe that. I think if we were to watch First Dates and you have, you know, a 25-year-old white man and and 25-year-old white girl and that was the same couple in different guises throughout the series, it just gets incredibly dull. So the magic of First Dates is you have LGBT, you have mixed-race coupling, you have disability in there, so it represents everything, and that makes First Dates an incredible show because it’s all about love in its different forms.
“And we’ve all experienced first dates, whether we’re black, white, Asian, disabled, gay, straight, trans, whatever it is, so we can all relate to that. And the only way we can relate to that is if it’s covering all aspects of society, and I think that’s why First Dates is as big as it is.”

Including diverse people in content has traditionally faced media-craft hurdles, including claims that a guest or caller speaking with an imperfect grasp of the local language or an accent cannot be easily understood. This is especially so in radio, where listening is not supplemented with pictures, and clarity of voice is a highly-regarded craft skill.

Ulla Svennson who works in Strategic Program Development for Swedish Radio has worked with her teams to overcome a ‘fear’ of accents. As a journalist in the 90s who hailed from the south of Sweden, Svennson experienced audience disapproval for her southern accent; she believes an on-air revolution of sound is essential for increasing diversity.

“People [say immigrants] speak bad Swedish. No they don’t. View it the same way you view accents. It’s a richness.... Our job is showing the richness of accents as well.

In the old school you were not able to do that, you were supposed to be trained, and you were not allowed to have women - it’s all part of the same transition... This is a path we have to go. It follows the same patterns, it looks the same, we go through it over and over again with new groups, and we need to do it.”

With regard to minority languages being portrayed in broadcast media, especially in news and current affairs, Svennson makes an interesting point about how English media in effect obliterates other languages, and with it removes cultural diversity.

She is actively working with Swedish Radio to make room on mainstream stations to hear the diversity of languages spoken in the community, and advocates strongly for broadcasters to include a greater variety of languages.

AH: “People would think it strange to hear languages other than English on the ABC...”

US: “I would say this is the arrogant view you can have when you’re part of a world language. Swedish will never be a world language. The Swedes are taught that Swedish is a very very small language.

So even when it comes to English, and German, and French, you hear quite long sound bites [on Swedish Radio] with people in a different language. You train [listeners] and I think it’s part of our job to train them. For instance, in Germany you don’t subtitle, you dub movies; in Sweden you subtitle everything. It opens up your world.

It’s a bigger issue, about identity and language. I start laughing when I listen to the BBC, they voice-over everything. To me, that is very arrogant...

Even if I don’t understand Mandarin, if it’s a good interview, I want to grasp the emotion of the interviewee, and I don’t do that when you voice-over the whole thing.

Why put the energy into even taping it if you’re not going to play the clip?”

Svensson argues that the act of translation can introduce inaccuracy; she takes the more radical view that it may well be better for some listeners to hear and understand the audio in its original language and others to not understand it at all, than for all listeners to receive an inaccurate translation.

Methods to increase diversity specifically in content are as varied and unique as the teams making the content. It is the area in which broadcast staff have the greatest autonomy, and show the greatest creativity in problem-solving. Here are some examples of interest.

Modernised programming model: greater localism, sourcing staff differently

Din Gata, Swedish Radio, Malmö:
Rendered in English, ‘Din Gata’ means ‘your street’, and this name underpins the station’s approach. Effectively, Din Gata is a station within a station: it is two local weekday programs, breakfast and late afternoon, inserted across the national youth network P3 for the Malmö audience.

The “Good Morning Show” (Breakfast) is presented by Juan Havana and Mona Hadad; “Afternoon Show” presented by Angelika Luxander and Hamza Ftouni; and Din Gata EP is Danina Mahmoutovic. They are an energetic crew possessing an exciting mix of media professionalism and social-cultural subversion.

Juan Havana is a musician and DJ, deeply connected to hip-hop culture which is very popular particularly in inner city/suburban areas and culturally diverse communities, but not broadly reflected in Swedish music radio.

Juan describes the non-standard recruitment method used by Ulla Svensson to being him in to Swedish Radio:

“I had a career before radio. I was touring a lot, playing a lot with a local group. I was a musician, a DJ as well. So this woman called me up and wanted to meet me so I invited her over to my neighbourhood where I was located at, at that time. I told her to come at midnight, because I was in the studio working.

And that was like my test as well: come out to the neighbourhood, come on, come out. And she actually did, she knocked on my door, found her way to the studio that was based underneath a local school. I started DJing for her.

And she was like, how would it be if you were on the radio?... She was like, you want a job, you can have it. And the rest is history.”

Mona Hadad achieved a journalism degree from a UK university and scored a regional job in the BBC, but says she was told firmly not to aspire to an on-air role:

“The first thing they said to me was, you don’t look British, you don’t have a British accent, so we can offer you a job - but behind the scenes.”

Dissatisfied, Hadad returned to Malmö. She found an on-air opportunity as Good Morning Show co-host with Havana, where her youth and worldliness and lived experience (she is from Iraqi heritage) are assets. She feels that they create smart content that directly appeals not just to under-served parts of Malmö, but to the Malmö youth community as a whole.

“The topics that we talk about is injustices, it’s sexism, it’s racism on a daily basis, it’s feminism. I think these are the topics that we talk about, this is the things that we talk about when we’re with our friends, and bringing this to the radio says a lot about us.

It says a lot about our listeners because they’re very, very involved. They respond, either by mail, or - we’re very active on social media, so we have snapchat, instagram, facebook.”

Din Gata Executive Producer Danina Mahmoutovic believes Din Gata is an example that all Swedish Radio channels could learn from and emulate. I observed broad agreement within Swedish Radio that Din Gata is an outstanding example of quality content and format arising from diversity imperatives; however, an attempt to replicate this model in Stockholm was ultimately deemed unsuccessful, and Swedish Radio Stockholm is now experimenting with other approaches.
Contemporary programming models: moving away from the 5/2 programming week

Evening Program, Swedish Radio, Malmö:
The 5/2 programming schedule model, referring to 5 weekdays and 2 weekend days, is a construct long used by broadcasters, mirroring the rhythms of a historically typical 40-hour work working week across many societies.

However, this 5/2 programming schedule model can be viewed as a hindrance to increasing diversity in broadcast media. In live programming (radio, TV news/factual) a work requirement of 5 days of intense work per week, of which shift work is an inevitable part, requires a full-time professional commitment to the medium.

It is difficult to start non-professional broadcasters and producers in this punishing environment; people who can make this commitment, and then survive and thrive, are arguably from a limited mould.

However, there is no absolute rule that insists 5/2 is the only way to work in broadcasting. Indeed, key societal structures such as office work, retail, recreation, worship and more have already become more flexible than this and the broadcast sector is lagging.

Adopting different schedule models such as 4/3, or 3/2/2, over a seven day week, may do less harm to audiences than previously thought, while being more sustainable for diverse staff sought by broadcasters.

It could open up broadcasting to people from diverse backgrounds who are not white, male, middle-class, middle-age journalists/broadcasters, whose lives comprise of more than a singular, consuming commitment to work.

An example of this is the Swedish Radio evening program on P4 (local radio). The program is co-hosted by Nadia Jebril (Palestinian-Swedish) and Måns Nilsson (ethnic Swedish), and airs on Thursdays and Fridays - Monday through Wednesday is provided from the SR station at Gothenberg.

Other programming models and projects:

BBC Breakfast programs: co-hosting
Previously featuring almost entirely male presenters, the BBC is now working towards having female presenters on at least 50% of all Breakfast programs. In the majority of cases this has resulted in appointing female co-presenters with existing male presenters.

Some of those interviewed thought this was a clunky method for balancing gender, but the move certainly increased numbers of women on-air.

Diversity Week: Swedish Radio, Malmö
When Editor-in-Chief at Malmö Anne Sseruwagi arrived in Malmö five years ago, cultural diversity in on-air content sat at about 8% - well below the population of the city where immigrants comprise over 30% of the local population (not including Swedish-born people with one or both parents born abroad). Even after stating her goals for the station, improvement was slow.

To prompt staff to act more quickly to address diversity in on-air content, Sseruwagi issued a radical challenge: for one week, all content produced by the station was to feature only guests with a culturally diverse background.

The challenge was thoroughly discussed by staff; responses ranged from great enthusiasm to deep scepticism, but eventually all agreed to give it a go.

The guidelines were simple: newsworthy content was to be selected as usual and news of the day receive the usual prominence - business-as-usual was to be maintained.

The only change was that for commentary, guests were required to have a culturally diverse background. (Exceptions were made for unavoidable key figures, eg. the Prime Minister.)

Over that week, the percentage of culturally-diverse guests soared to between 70% and 80% in news bulletins, and over 80% in programs.

On top of being proud of her team’s achievement, Sseruwagi noted a range of effects:

There were more live in-studio guests. Sseruwagi:
“These people who you get on the phone, you get them easily, you know, I can call this institution... Getting new people, you have to meet them.”

There was an increase in women guests, something Sseruwagi didn’t anticipate.
“Because we had to make stories, we couldn’t find an ‘expert’, we had to tell the story in a different way so we had to find somebody else who can reflect and discuss the topic. So somehow naturally we got more
women... I mean, it was simply more interesting radio in many ways.”

Disparity in social structure took on a personal aspect for her staff.

“One thing [that] was also an eye-opener was, you could see some of my staff, being the privileged white middle class people, you theoretically understand that there is a hierarchy in society. But they they really hadn’t been reflecting [on] it.

You know the fact is that when you have to start thinking, we do this news and then you start looking - who can I find now that I cannot interview a Swede, or that I have to find diversity in one way or another, where do I find it? Which level of society? The whole socio-economic structure became so clear: you know, like where are, who are the decision makers? Who are the influential people? Where are women? It was so interesting.”

The team took care to maintain their usual quality during this experiment, and audience did not object to what they heard. When planning for the week, Sseruwagi said some staff predicted an audience backlash. On air, staff did not tell listeners of the challenge.

Sseruwagi said the number of audience reactions could be measured on one hand. Relating a conversation with one caller, she said he asked her, “’What’s happening, aren’t we Swedish people anymore interesting, what is this?’ but a little bit confused because [he] wasn’t really sure he was hearing right or not.” Sseruwagi was pleased that overwhelmingly, listeners were not turned off by diverse voices on air.

The station has maintained higher levels of cultural diversity on air since the challenge, according to their own measurement.

Sseruwagi says the current percentage of culturally-diverse guests in content is about 28%; her goal is 30-35%, in line with immigrants as a percentage of the population. She said,

“After that week, we never went back to those really low figures... it was an eye-opener, I think people saw the need. Before it was so difficult: ‘we don’t find [the guests]’, ‘we don’t have time’... [but] it wasn’t impossible. It took a little bit more time but it wasn’t impossible.”

**100 Women: BBC World Service**

Another interesting example of concerted talent-sourcing is **BBC 100 Women** in brief, 100 Women aims to “host a global conversation about women, by women, for everyone”.

It was born out of BBC World Service’s coverage in 2012 of the rape and murder of physiotherapy student Jyoti Singh on a bus in Delhi, India following a trip to the cinema with a male friend, a story which generated intense audience interest, especially amongst women.

The initiative comprised several parts, including a heavy editorial focus on air and online during October, a keynote public event over several days drawing together 100 selected women (some physically in London, others remotely via digital communication), and an ongoing online space where stories about and by women continue to be collected.

Fiona Crack, News Deployments Officer for BBC World Service and leader of this high-profile content initiative, describes the overall tone as “aspirational”, and estimates some 70% of 100 Women content is online/mobile first, a lot of it video.

Crack said the initiative has expanded the number of women used by the BBC as expert commentators, especially in traditionally male-skewed fields.

Crack’s experience of diversity and audience engagement mirrors that of Sseruwagi’s in Malmö: that diversity in guests is not a negative for audience. In fact, it suits current audiences whilst at the same time presenting content of interest to target audiences. Of the 100 Women project, Crack said,

“The audience reacted in ways we really only dream about... It trended number 1 in the UK all day; it trended number 2 worldwide with peaks throughout the day. It was far more successful than we thought it’d be, and that’s because of the [audience] appetite. It had hit something that was needed.
“And what was really interesting was, in that first year, 2013, we saw more women coming to the content, but we didn’t see a drop-off of men.

“What this is about is a broader range of news, an acceptance about what is news. It’s actually away from a slightly male-skewed agenda of quick, analytical, masculine subjects and formats, and traditional set ‘man-behind-the-desk’-type stuff. So actually, while it is about women, it’s also about news-gathering and feature-making in the digital age and thinking about how audiences are coming to it.”

The reporters themselves are experienced journalists from culturally diverse backgrounds. Djalaie looked for a particular mix of skills and attributes for these roles:

“There are people who would say the diversity background is more important than being a journalist, but I’m not sure about that. The thing is, there’s always a convention, you have to have the diversity in the background, as a competence, as a tool for the job. But it’s not enough. You have to have the basic journalist skills.”

The content they are commissioned to produce aims to feature new voices, and stories which differ from the traditional news agenda. New voices may be the centre of their own story, or a reporter may be tasked to find a new voice to add a fresh point of view to an existing story being produced at Radio House.

With local stories, Djalaie asks his team to consider ‘what is news?’ and to propose new content to answer this question in non-traditional ways.

News Models for Mixed-Language Content
In Sweden, one of the most significant minority groups is from Finland. A large number of Finnish immigrants came during and after WWII to either escape the war, or to fill labour shortages; a typically working-class population, today that group experiences socio-economic disadvantage as well as social marginalisation. The Finnish language is unrelated to Swedish, so the language barrier is significant.

Finnish-language news and programs are well-established at Swedish Radio, and this department has the largest output and staff of any minority language group. Recently the department has begun broadcasting with different program models.

The new models tend to be more informal, and interactive with the audience. They also acknowledge that there are growing numbers of Swedish Finns who...
may not rely on first-language broadcasts but do need culturally relevant content. (Swedish Radio also has a charter obligation to reflect the cultural identity of their Finnish-origin population.)

Ulla Svensson works in Strategic Program Development for Swedish Radio, and she has been working with the head of Swedish Radio’s Finnish Radio division to strategically develop new program ideas and styles that target Swedish Finns who have Swedish as a first language.

One experiment is 3-minute news bulletins which are presented in Swedish, but where all the interviewees speak in Finnish; these are aired not only on the Finnish channel, but on P4, the Swedish Local Radio network which also has the largest listener base.

Svensson’s team tested this idea with Finnish-culture focus groups, and modified the concept based on their feedback, eg. opening the bulletin with the casual Finnish word for ‘hello’ - it made the staff feel a bit silly, but it resonated with the focus groups.

Another new model is an evening talkback-based program on P4 featuring as the main host a high-profile print journalist whose father was a Finnish war child - he has a Finnish surname, but never spoke Finnish.

He was teamed up with a co-host, a Finnish speaking broadcaster from Swedish Radio’s Finnish unit. Svensson describes the premise for the show: “She is like his coach. There, they speak Finnish and Swedish, in search of his Finnish identity. And you can phone in and speak the language of your heart. So if you want to speak Finnish on air, you can do that.”

The program in effect shows the main host as a cultural ‘work in progress’, who is growing with the help of the audience, and gives a very human context to being a person caught between two cultures. It also normalises a minority language on a national broadcast channel, an unusual step according to Svensson:

“We are trying to make P4 more open-minded... we’re using this as opening and widening the perspective, and inviting new people [to listen]...

And of course at first people were a bit pissed, but now that’s calmed down. Maybe a month. I mean, people are still annoyed, but it’s not like a heatwave.”

Svensson says the way she was able to stand up to her managers in the face of initial audience criticism was by making sure the program quality was very good.

It has also opened doors within the organisation between regular Swedish Radio and the Finnish unit to share content and staff, and for good quality Finnish stories to make their way to mainstream station P4.

Significantly according to Svensson the model has also taught Swedish Radio about different ways they can approach making content on P4 that brings in other minority cultures and languages whilst being of good quality for Swedish-speaking listeners.

A priority is Arabic, the fastest-growing language other than Swedish, and set to become more widely spoken than Finnish. SR has launched programs featuring Sami, Miänkeile and Arabic languages.

New models for news: Solution-focused journalism

“People don’t need more news. They need better news.”
- Ulrik Haagerup, Head of News at DR (Danish public broadcaster), at Radio Days Europe 2016

Another point of discussion with several news/factual broadcasters was making the format and tone of news more attractive to targeted minority audiences.

Traditional Western news reporting has a highly adversarial, negative, problem-oriented approach, and heavily features experts or pundits in critical mode. Older, male, white speakers dominate as authorities, from journalists to story subjects to guests.

Traditional news also relies on the audience assuming a range of unspoken social and cultural constructs for understanding and brevity - stereotypes - which at best may not resonate with diverse audiences, and at worst may be incorrect and offensive to diverse audiences.
Head of News at DR (the Danish public broadcaster) Ulrik Haagerup, presenting to the Radio Days Europe conference in March 2016, described traditional adversarial-style news as a ‘boxing match’: where news is not reflecting the world as it is (no matter what journalists think) but rather where editorial choices lead to an emphasis on negative themes such as crime, conflict, disaster, misfortune and mishap which are lionised by the industry but are offputting to many in the audience.

Meanwhile, those who do consume this news develop unconscious biases based on the skewed news stories.

Just two examples used by Haagerup showed why culturally diverse audiences are amongst those put off by traditional news:
- Journalism is a filter of the world, not the world as it’s perceived by people. Think about Africa: what concepts come into your mind?
- Our over-concentration on crime distorts public views on everything from the percentage of Muslims in our population, to unemployment rates, to teen pregnancy numbers.

Haagerup advocated a revised model of news in which multiple aspects of a story are told, not just the negative aspects. The aim is not to abandon critical-style news, but to recognise it is only one of way of telling a story, other ways are equally valid, and taking a varied approach is not contradictory but rather is more likely to get closer to representing the lived experience of the audience.

Haagerup summarised this by saying, “Constructive is not the opposite of critical”.

It was interesting to note that the Solution-Focused Journalism model was brought up by people at both Swedish Radio and the BBC as something they were looking into, or even trialling, as one way to adapt their content to suit more diverse audiences.

Reversing the norm: a project

Speaking with a small team of interested collaborators in diversity at Swedish Broadcastings Education Unit, UR, they described a content project in which stereotypes of ‘normal’ were challenged, and which was used for internal education.

A colleague of Dag Strömquist made an 18-minute film in which all but two of the actors portraying the characters were visibly disabled.

Janiche Opsahl organised a screening for the executive management group, where it had a powerful impact. Strömquist said:

“I have never sensed that feeling - during the movie and after, people were so touched. It was so peculiar and fascinating. 18 minutes of reversed-normative movie - BAM. That’s very effective.”

Subtlety of diversity in content

All broadcasters discussed the ways in which they strived for subtlety in their representations of diversity. Subtlety was closely linked to authenticity and a good standard of media craft.

Examples of good practice included featuring guests from diverse backgrounds talking on everyday subjects unrelated to their diversity; front-facing broadcast staff hosting general programs rather than programs relating to their diversity; content makers and editors being aware that content is always produced from a certain point of view, and not assuming a non-diverse point of view to be the ‘default’.

For example, Swedish Radio ‘Kvällspasset’ ['After Work'] program presenter Nadia Jebril, in relation to herself as a co-host, brings her lived experience of being a “typical Swedish girl” who also has a Palestinian background.

She talked about how she and her co-host Måns Nilsson use their different lives as a point of conversation on air, but more along the lines of, say, Jebril having many siblings and a big noisy family, and Nilsson having few. Jebril said,

“We don’t ethnify ourselves all the time.”

She and producer and producer Sandra Markensson also related an example from earlier that week when a talkback caller whose Swedish was poor rang in to share a story. Markensson said,
“We let her take time, we didn’t interfere with her story. And in the end she delivered a story as well as anybody else.”

Jebril added, “It’s very sensitive, because one can be in the studio and just change the way you talk and talk to her like she was a baby - I don’t even know how to act like that because I don’t work like that.”

That subtlety is just as important with regard to the content makers. Regarding Swedish Radio Stockholm’s community-based reporters, Commissioning Editor Rouzbeh Djalaie said,

“Having the diverse background, the foreign background, should not be the [reason] to work in the suburbs of Stockholm.

It’s a kind of segregation if you send your reporters of diverse background to the suburbs and the others do other work.”
Partnerships:

The UK broadcast industry in particular worked with aligned non-broadcasting, non-production bodies to devise plans of action, source and train new diverse staff, train existing staff, engage in industry and public dialogue about diversity, and more.

These non-broadcast or non-production bodies were integral to independent industry assessment (through activities such as data collection), the development and/or implementation of practical strategies, as well as to support diverse media workers in building pan-industry careers.

In an era where large broadcasters are on short commons, these bodies provide useful grass-roots services to improve diversity for the industry as a whole.

Prominent amongst these organisations:

- CDN (Creative Diversity Network)
- Creative Skillset
- BAFTA

These organisations can fill gaps, such as skills training, not provided by broadcasters. They can also connect broadcasters and industry workers or aspirants.

The CDN, working with its members - the major broadcasters - has by its nature been able to develop pan-industry initiatives.

The first of these designed to tackle diversity in television leadership was ‘Emerging Commissioners’. The program places selected people already experienced in television production to work at commissioner level for 12 months.

Emerging Commissioner participants were placed at all four major TV channels, in real, well-paid jobs.

CDN also partnered with Creative Skillset which supplied high-level executive training for participants.

Broadcasters also cited individual relationships with charities which deal with employment - typically, charities which coached people who were long-term unemployed, or released from prison, or for some other reason were experiencing employment difficulty; these partnerships usually involved placing people into broadcast organisations on work experience, internships, or perhaps traineeships if appropriate.

Finally, some broadcasters cited working with community organisations based in diverse communities, which the broadcasters were also seeking to address - these were most often ethnic community organisations.

These kinds of partnerships were more about building better relationships and understanding between both parties, and might involve projects such as outside broadcasts or feature content.

All broadcasters visited said their partnerships were useful, productive elements in their efforts to increase diversity.
Outreach and Image:

Strong leadership, a clearly defined plan, and changing content and staff, are all key elements for successfully improving the cultural diversity of a broadcast organisation.

However, for this change to have broad community value, the audience needs to be informed and brought along on the journey.

All broadcasters suffer, to varying degrees, public perceptions that they do not cater for or are not interested in diverse audiences for their content, or in hiring diverse workers. All broadcasters are working to reposition their public image to reach diverse/minority parts of the community.

Competing for new audiences through awareness-raising - marketing - is a space in which commercial broadcasters tend to operate more effectively. Channel 4’s approach to the London Paralympics in which the games were marketed not as ‘worthy’ or ‘the right thing’, but as ‘superhumans’ - exciting must-see content in its own right - was an outstanding shift in marketing diverse content to a broad audience.

Channel 4 continues to look at ways to build on this marketing success, including by owning the ‘superhuman’ concept in new programming.

Channel 4’s On-Screen Diversity Executive Ramy El-Bergamy said,

“We kind of sold it as though the Olympics was the warm up for the Paralympics and I think that’s what we did very well at the channel...

I think what that campaign did really well was... almost for want of a better phrase, these people aren’t like us, they’re better than us. And I think that was why it was so popular, it was saying they might be disabled but they can do a lot more stuff than you can do.

I think that was a real watershed moment for the channel for broadcasting. It felt like there was real momentum that came up off the back of that.

And if you look at research that came after the Paralympics in 2012, the channel’s coverage of the Paralympics actually increased the positive representation of disability amongst people.”

The public broadcasting sector has traditionally been less focused on marketing, relying more on reputation and audience identification with the brand and underpinned by a strong, assumed social compact. Consumption habits start early, eg. through children’s content, and are periodically reinforced through broad community interest content from sport to culture. Nicknames such as ‘Aunty’ embody this relationship.

However, public broadcasters’ reliance on cumulative loyalty is ineffective when dealing with audience sections which have not grown up with their content, or who do not share a social identification with test cricket or Scandinavian poetry.

In today’s environment of global media options, it is no longer sufficient to simply build the content and hope the audience will come.

BBC Diversity Lead Elonka Soros points to this audience shift away from mass broadcasting and towards niche and online media, as a primary driver in raising the importance of diversity in broadcast media.

“Nobody will get to 30 and think, oh, I must switch on that BBC stuff I’ve never, ever watched in my life because I’ve been getting a cartoon from this network, getting music from this place.

They’re not going to suddenly switch on at 30. We’ve lost a whole load of people already.”

At Swedish Radio in Malmö, where significant shifts in one-air lineup and content have occurred, audience figures have not to date shown much change.

Outreach to non-listeners in diverse communities has consisted entirely of efforts by the local station, limited to editorial-based activities such as outside broadcasts, community visits and forums. Where possible they have made best use of required actions such as setting up a community feedback group to target non-listeners.

Editor-in-chief Anne Sseruwagi described how her station tackled the mission, given to all Swedish Radio stations, to build a public network:

“We decided that our public network is going to be for those for those who don’t yet know about us. So we decided that each person had a few days in a team, we created teams, and we said now today go out, meet people and you have to come home with at least 10 people for our public network and they have to reflect diversity. They have to be new listeners, they have to be new.

And it was a lot of fun because we went in teams to different parts of the city and we went to different parts of the area, and met people, talked about our public network, talked about Swedish Radio, and in
that way we got this base of public network that kind of reflects cultural diversity."

But it's fair to observe that whilst the Malmö station is making great effort with its content and staff and outreach, it has not yet found a way to communicate this change effectively to the audience. Indeed editorial teams are probably not well equipped to do so.

In the UK, the BBC has recently released a suite of marketing images reflecting the organisation’s commitment to increasing diversity. Some of this material was published to promote the new Diversity and Inclusion Strategy; other images, such as the photo here promoting BBC3 taken at the front reception desk for New Broadcast House in London, show diversity being integrated into more general marketing.

Material of this scale and prominence is very powerful, and backs diversity improvements being made in content making.

This kind of visual messaging is necessary if a disengaged audience is to hear the message that a broadcaster has changed.

Swedish Radio’s Director International Affairs Anders Held reflected on the relationship between visual communications and messaging from leadership, in strengthening a diversity message.

“I remember talking about this... what does our printed material look like? Does that reflect diversity?... but also in the everyday discussions, because of the priority being given by management. I mean, Cilla [Benkö, Director-General, Swedish Radio] herself often comes back to that, saying, this is something we did very well, this is a good project, or we didn’t reach these goals, we have to be better on this.

So coming back to that all the time, that’s educating people I think, not something that’s happening in a corner.”

Internal Image

All organisations need to tell the diversity story to existing staff inside the organisation, and be prepared for a robust internal dialogue.

Firstly, it’s necessary for a communications strategy that supports the change, explaining it to all staff and owning it confidently, if it’s going to succeed. Sky News broadcaster Afua Hirsch described it as,

“confronting it head on, creating an atmosphere where people get why that’s needed. Because if you do it clandestinely without explaining it, it just causes resentment you know.

And that’s the last thing, as somebody from a different background, who’s already feels self-conscious, that you stand out, the last thing you want is your colleagues looking at you [thinking], why are they getting help and I’m not, it’s so unfair, they’re only here because they’re black...

I don’t think the battle for hearts and minds has been won yet in that respect”

Robust internal dialogue is needed also for current employees of diverse background who have worked in less-than-welcoming environments and may be sceptical or even cynical about proposed improvements.

Whilst potentially the strongest supporters of change, diverse staff may have conflicting views: pleased that change is being articulated, frustration at the lag, doubt that any announced strategies will succeed or go far enough, scepticism about the permanence of change, a feeling that managers may be giving the issue lip-service, bitterness that it has taken so long or that they were not heard when they may have previously spoken up on this issue.

On the day the BBC launched their Equity and Diversity Strategic Plan, I asked BBC English Regions broadcaster and journalist Devon Daley what he thought about the plan, and unsurprisingly he is reserving his opinion for now. He replied,

“I’ve been in the BBC since I was in short trousers, and diversity has been mentioned all those years. I’m now in long trousers, and we’ve finally got a document. Hey, come back in five years - I’ll believe it. Right now - I’m just feeling the paper...
You’ve told me you’re going to make me a nice dinner, full of Australian delights. You’ve shown me the picture, you’ve shown me the table and the chair. I haven’t tasted it yet.”

**Risk Management**

Mainstream broadcasters can be viewed as risk-averse organisations: in the weeks since returning from this study tour the debate around the Diamond counting system has turned to the frustration of diverse groups who feel that the limited reporting and degree of anonymised publishing will aid broadcasters to obscure their real state of diversity. **Concern has become intense enough to cause Union rumblings.**

In the area of cultural diversity where broadcasters do not have a great deal of reputation to lose but a great deal to gain, there may be value in foregoing a safe approach, and instead owning both the poor current situation and the path to redress.

Meanwhile, in any moves to proactively include previously excluded groups to make up for lost time, there will inevitably be those who take exception to what they might experience as a loss of access or primacy (which some might refer to as a loss of ‘privilege’).

Also in the weeks since returning from this study tour, some media in the UK are reporting **negative reactions to the BBC’s targeted trainee schemes.** Again, these are reactions broadcasters will have to anticipate and manage.
Time and Resources:

*Resources relating to content*

The contemporary broadcast media business is very lean, and typically there’s little fat to be put towards diversity measures.

Content makers described looking for support to supplement their regular practice; suggested measures included:

- Time out from regular tasks to establish new contacts and find new diverse guests
- Days off air to spend outside the office, with the target diverse communities to network, gather knowledge and stories
- Advice/recommendations from partner organisations to find the diverse talent they needed
- Room (eg. an extra couple of days for production) to acclimatise new, promising diverse workers who were not quite up to speed.

Where these were provided, it was typically for a limited period, not ongoing; teams were expected to use short-term assistance to permanently improve their practice.

Other resources that already exist within organisations were being used, but probably not to their fullest extent.

For instance, expertise of colleagues - an example of where that was happening was with the BBC’s Black and Asian Forum, whose members had recently been asked to consult on an *EastEnders* storyline featuring black characters.

However there is also a risk of wearing out colleagues or a small circle of commentators. Swedish Radio Din Gata’s Juan Havana has started to politely decline requests from sister station P4. He and colleague Hamza Founi talked about their push-back:

JH: “Last time I was asked, I declined. [My colleague] said, oh there was an earthquake in Chile and I said, I’m sorry, I’m about to hit my radio show, I can’t talk to you about that right now, I haven’t talked to my cousins or nothing. Like I was up all night waiting for some Chilean news - no I wasn’t.”

HF: “I do not represent my whole country!”

Again, managers must recognize this potential for stereotyping within their staff group, and ensure all staff make the effort to widen their pool of expertise.

*Resources relating to staff*

Similarly, managers were seeking to spend more time and resources to get outside the office and away from their regular tasks. This was in order to:

- Source new diverse contributors and staff
- Spend time in target communities, getting to know people and issues
- Network in target communities - raise the organisation’s profile

Some organisations or departments may choose to assign people whose work in part or whole is to improve diversity.

There are full-time dedicated workers and diversity teams at Channel 4 and BBC.

At Swedish Broadcasting’s education arm UR, several staff have been given one or two days a week away from their usual jobs to work specifically on diversity projects.

Elsewhere in Swedish Radio, staff remain in their full-time jobs, but the remit of some of those jobs has changed to include a large proportion of diversity work.

Whilst I was in Sweden, a proposal for a full-time diversity project manager role to be created for Swedish Broadcasting UR was approved and funded, which was exciting for Janiche Opsahl who put forward
the idea. At time of writing, the position is being recruited for.

_Time for the change process_

All broadcasting organisations discussed time as an aspect of working to improve cultural diversity, but in different ways.

Allowing time: There was broad agreement that time needed to be given to building cultural diversity in the staff body - the process couldn’t be rushed if success was to last.

This was mentioned in the following contexts:

- Recruiting diverse staff at entry levels
- Promoting diverse staff to management/leadership roles
- Achieving a critical mass of representative diversity in workplaces or teams
- Changing workplace culture regarding both staff and content

Time is short: simultaneously, broadcasting organisations spoke often of how diversity in staff was not only needed very quickly, it was in fact long overdue. Therefore there was an urgent need for change.

This was mentioned in the following areas:

- Reaching and serving diverse audiences
- On-air content: creative, news/factual

This dual sense of time presents a dilemma: if diversity of personnel is believed necessary to improving diversity of content, but a change of personnel is believed to take more time than a change of content, then two risks are apparent:

- Unauthentic content will deter target viewers/listeners, contributing to shrinking audience and revenue levels;
- Audiences will find satisfactory alternative media and become impossible to win back.

Again, the best advice from broadcasters was to be aware of these push-pull factors, invest what time and resources it was possible to spare, and manage issues as they arise.
Conclusions and recommendations

Major lessons & Recommendations:

The following points all relate to current practice in the UK and/or Sweden. All could be adopted in Australia.

1. Strong vision and endorsement by executive leaders has a profound positive effect on an organisation’s approach to increasing diversity. It’s recommended that any executive leader in favour of increasing diversity should speak out strongly and repeatedly.

2. Targets and concrete goals are an effective, transparent way to outline the desired change. They should be set by any organisation wishing to make concrete change.

3. Measuring diversity in content and staff, and comparing with population data, is the most reliable way to set meaningful concrete actions such as targets and goals. Regular measurement is the best way to demonstrate progress. This is rarely done in Australia, yet should be achievable here.

4. ‘Cultural diversity’ can and should be treated as a workplace competency, for the purposes of staff recruitment, training, and advancement.

5. It is possible for competing broadcasters to work together to improve diversity. This is happening in the UK television industry, with concrete outcomes such as developing and implementing a pan-industry counting system. No such dialogue, let alone collaboration, exists in Australia. The UK example should be examined further and ideally emulated.

6. Diversity must be tackled both on-air and off-air. These are equally important. There was no one outstanding approach to improving either; rather, a range of methods were used, so Australian broadcasters should be confident in devising their own approaches.

7. It is efficient to address cultural diversity together with other kinds of diversity. There are attractive economies of scale with this kind of multicategory approach. This is recommended in Australia.

8. Partnerships can help share the task of increasing diversity. Broadcasters should seek out and establish suitable new partnerships.

9. If broadcasters are aiming to reach new diverse audiences, they need to reach out to these target audiences and court them; improved content and personnel are not sufficient in and of themselves to attract them. Good comms is essential.

10. It takes extra work in the short term to change the status quo; make time and resources available.

Dissemination:

Even before the publication of this report, I am already putting this information to use at the ABC in my additional role as Diversity Lead for the 2016-2020 Radio Strategic Plan, and Chair of the Radio Diversity Action Group, and working with Diversity Action Groups in other Divisions.

When this report is accepted, I will:

- publish the body of this report in serial format in relevant electronic forums including LinkedIn, Facebook, targeting groups concerned with cultural diversity;
- Work with ABC Radio National to produce an on-air special;
- Pursue opportunities to publish findings in other outlets;
- Explore a pan-industry dialogue through a neutral body eg. the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission
- I am willingly available to speak to this report and topic in public forums - please request.

Andrea Ho
Local Manager, ABC Canberra
E ho.andrea@abc.net.au
BH +61 2 6275 4615
M +61 400 864 768
GPO Box 9994
Canberra ACT 2601
Australia
### Appendix

**Further Reading**

This report makes reference to a variety of documents. For those interested to read further, here are links to those published online.

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