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Independent Consultants
Project: 'Developing a Proactively Anti-Racist Organisation'
Client: Glasgow Film
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Executive Summary

In May 2020 Glasgow Film shared a statement in response to, and support of the Black Lives Matter movement following the murder of George Floyd. The statement contained a series of Anti-Racist Commitments. A follow up statement was published in August 2021 updating customers, staff and stakeholders on progress made so far.

Following discussions and further research on how to effectively progress their Anti-Racist commitments, Glasgow Film commissioned independent consultants to produce an Anti-Racist Audit/Health Check, and to deliver appropriate training for staff, volunteers and trustees.

The audit process involved the gathering of information via confidential staff surveys, discussions with external partners and a review of internal policies, previous project reports and anonymised demographic data. A five-hour bespoke training offer 'Being a proactively anti-racist organisation' was designed and delivered to staff, volunteers and trustees.

Feedback was obtained from staff and external stakeholders, on their experiences of working with Glasgow Film, areas for improvement and what they think it means to be Anti-Racist as a majority-white organisation.

The confidential surveys, training and conversations have resulted in a co-produced action plan with input and feedback from staff, volunteers, trustees and stakeholders.

The work which has led to this report has involved more than simple transactional delivery or survey data. Challenging conversations have taken place and reflection has been encouraged. This has already led to a change in thinking within the organisation which acknowledges that the focus of equality and outreach work so far has predominantly been within programming and on screen representation, and that there is a need to better understand and invest in long-term anti-racist co-production and community engagement.

This report provides the organisation with the next steps needed to deliver an organisation-wide, effective and strategic pathway to being a "proactively anti-racist organisation". The findings, observations, action plan and thematic recommendations that emerged from this process should now inform the internal and external anti-racist priorities for the Glasgow Film.

The key themes that emerged are:

1. Moving from 'not being racist' to being proactively anti-racist
2. Investing in co-production, outreach and the redistribution of power

3. Real anti-racist co-production
4. Taking action on systemic inequality and barriers
5. Being a good-practice employer
6. Investing in the development of a learning cycle approach
7. Taking an intersectional approach

Introduction

The murder of George Floyd in May 2020 during a global pandemic shone an intense and traumatic light on state violence and racism, whilst the pandemic itself deeply exacerbated existing inequalities and discrimination in Scotland and across the globe. Glasgow Film shared their first statement about the murder of George Floyd in May 2020 with a follow up statement in August 2021 on work done to date on their anti-racist commitments: <https://glasgowfilm.org/what-we-do/update-on-black-lives-matter>

From this point, as we understand, further conversations took place within the organisation and across the sector on the way in which systemic racism influences the work and delivery of Glasgow Film. The issue of under-representation and exclusion of marginalised communities, particularly Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities, has been well documented across the arts and culture sector in Scotland. Specifically in film, under-representation and misrepresentation of communities of colour has repeatedly come under scrutiny, and furthermore, the sector itself has come under scrutiny for a lack of action. With all of this in mind, Glasgow Film sought to engage in activities and strategic planning to build their knowledge base and become a proactively anti-racist organisation.

Key Deliverables

The list below reflects the key deliverables and outputs delivered during this consultancy which were agreed upon with the Glasgow Film senior leadership team. The deliverables were adjusted from the original tender to meet the needs of where the organisation was, following recommendations from the lead consultant:

- Anti-racist training was developed and delivered for staff, volunteers and trustees based upon Talat Yaqoob's 'How to create a proactively anti-racist organisation' programme.
- An online survey was completed by 30 staff, volunteers and trustees
- Four one to one interviews were conducted with external partners of Glasgow Film (all of whom had led on anti-racist work or work directly with Black and communities of colour supporting the development of radical ideas or reviewing engagement approaches)
- Advice and support was given to aid the first meeting of the Glasgow Film Diversity Commitment Committee in October 2021
- A rapid review of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policies and practises
- The development of an action plan based upon the input from participants who attended the anti-racist training and action planning sessions, one to one interviews and from the staff surveys

Current Position

Glasgow Film has an admirable track record on inclusion, particularly with regards to the disabled community. For example, autism, deaf and dementia friendly screenings, with space for more to be done. However, on the Glasgow Film website when any individual attempts to understand what Glasgow Film is doing on 'equalities and engagement' there is only a brief explanation of this work. No reference is made to creating spaces that are also free of sexism, racism, classism and spaces that are LGBT inclusive.

However, Glasgow Film does have a much longer history of diverse programming and commitments to awareness raising events, for example during Black History Month. Upon further search, there is a more specific narrative on support for the Black Lives Matter movement and an accompanying set of Anti-Racist commitments and details on the extent of outreach to Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities and participation levels. **It would be recommended for this to be clearly part of the 'equality and engagement' section of the website.** The more easily this information is found, read and held to account, the higher the level of trust in this work. It is clear that there is interest, passion and commitment to take this work forward, but what is missing is the understanding and investment into what anti-racist delivery should be and what it looks like in practical terms.

Transforming the organisation into action-focused delivery

There are multiple Anti-Racist commitments on the website which were discussed with some staff before publication. For example; 'We will actively seek employees/volunteers/Board members from under-represented groups and put in place support structures to achieve and sustain racial diversity in the workplace'. These are welcome as are regular updates made public via the website. However, Glasgow Film is already behind on a number of commitments, and what this suggests is, in the speed to respond and deliver change on anti-racism, whilst admirable, the commitments are not necessarily based on evidence on what needs to be (or can be) delivered. Instead, fewer commitments, which are based in evidence, which are delivered on time and which are focused on what communities of colour are actually looking for would be not only be more effective but also have a greater impact on the end goal. Alongside an evidence-based approach, a full and evaluated operational plan is required to assist the organisation to meet its ambitions and allow accountability from within and through the governance processes of the organisation.

Currently, there is a gap between intention and action which will remain unless a clear plan is created, deadlines are met and a wide-ranging staff team is given the responsibility, time, resources and support to deliver across different levels and departments of the organisation.

Key themes emerging from consultant's observations and review, staff survey and external stakeholder interviews

1. Moving from 'not being racist' to being proactively anti-racist

There is a strong internal narrative that focuses on Glasgow Film's interpretation of their culture; "we're inclusive" or "we're not racist", whilst this may be true, it equally may add to an objectivity bias and assumption of there being no problem to solve. Simply assuming an inclusive culture does not create one, nor does simply not being racist, within a racist society. However, across the staff and volunteer teams there is an awareness and understanding that being 'inclusive' does not mean racism is being actively tackled. A proactive strategy is required and must start from an objective standpoint in the organisation and across the sector.

More internal work should take place so that all staff understand what anti-racism is and how inequality manifests within the organisation's delivery, as well as building relationships to understand what work has been done across the sector. Reflective work should take place by those with power (e.g. managers) to better understand their role in this work and how to lead by example.

When interviewing stakeholders and surveying staff and volunteers, many discussed the need to embed an anti-racist approach that exists throughout the year rather than being a topic of discussion simply during particular awareness raising days or months, what was said included *"embedding anti-racism into the core programming and not doing 'tokenistic' events at regular intervals"*.

There is a very real tension in that audiences and current staffing is predominantly white and anti-racism work must be led by black and communities of colour. There could be a danger that the driver for change is performative allyship and is not formative internally and externally.

"Stand alongside black and communities of colour, especially those in creative industries"

Suggested recommendations to support the delivery of this work:

- a) Managers should further develop their anti-racist leadership through further training and regular reflection to deepen their understanding of the role they play in developing and maintaining an actively anti-racist culture.
- b) Glasgow Film should encourage the wider staff team to build strong relationships with anti-racist partners, and support year-round work with partners in all areas of the business, outside of programme/events such as Black History Month. The ideal scenario mentioned by those surveyed and interviewed was to use current relationships and calendar events as *"a springboard"* for more and deeper engagement.
- c) There needs to be active ongoing anti-racist work embedded across the organisation so that the work is not perceived as time limited, or performative but becomes part of Glasgow Film's ethos, values and mission. To enable this an internal operational strategy should be developed and reference to this should be included in job descriptions, training and appraisal expectations.

2. Investing in co-production, outreach and the redistribution of power

Glasgow Film cannot wait for audiences to come to them. The key question is what will Glasgow Film do to get to marginalised communities? There needs to be

organisational wide focus on co-production with communities, giving them a stake in design and delivery, so it is fit for purpose for communities of colour and trusted by them. The strength of Glasgow Film is that the GFT is a publicly funded, well known cinema with existing infrastructure and resources, able to do co-production well and lead by example. Interviewees said: *“Film, anyone can do it and the challenge is that you need an infrastructure and black and people of colour need it more than ever. The GFT can become a community access hub”*. *“Arts space, film space is very powerful”*. Survey respondents said working with diverse programmers and communities is *“exciting/good as it brings outside voices not rooted in the culture of an organisation”*.

Suggested recommendations to support the delivery of this work:

- a) To focus on the development of outreach, and identify genuine opportunities for members of communities of colour or creatives of colour to feed-in and influence the work of Glasgow Film, supporting design and delivery as well as evaluation and co-production.

3. Real anti-racist co-production

“Reach out to more diverse communities. Actively engage with Black and Asian communities in Glasgow. Not just show diverse films or support Black History Month but promote it, shout out about it and link it to issues non-white people face. Be honest, be unafraid to face it head on”.

There is some co-production taking place and a recent example was cited as part of Black History Month 2021. There are some active partnerships with anti-racist organisations during times in the year but this can and should be widened to be a core part of the annual programme.

Suggested recommendations to support the delivery of this work:

- a) Work with existing networks throughout the year and focus on understanding and sharing policies and practices from the Black and Minority Ethnic voluntary and community sector in Glasgow. Specifically, their experiences of delivering anti-racist work and how to embed this learning into co-production.
- b) A specific one-year co-produced programme should be invested in with a view to this becoming wider and more mainstream across the organisation’s activities (this is a starting point only from which more should be developed).
- c) The commitment to work within and with communities of colour should be pursued with grassroots communities directly. Effort must be made to research and engage with communities of colour and identify at least two groups to initially work with closely with (the partnership agreement should include financial support and resources to enable the development, delivery and outreach).

4. Taking action on systemic inequality and barriers (influencing the sector and funders)

Glasgow Film and the GFT stands out from other independent cinemas as progressive and inclusive. However, what is the active role of Glasgow Film beyond its own organisation? To be part of a wider movement of culture change, Glasgow Film should more actively and publicly influence the wider film, cinema and arts sector (across Scotland, the UK and internationally) through the production of an anti-racist 'pledge' and by sharing the organisational journey towards being an active anti-racist organisation.

"Systemic and often not realised. The industry is going through a process of reflection and understanding within. More finances and investment in staff recruitment are needed".

"Through that you start to develop people who could work for you in five years' time, diversifying the arts".

Suggested recommendations to support the delivery of this work:

- a) Devise and publicly share Anti-Racism 'pledge'.
- b) Continue to share updates and key learnings with the audiences and the wider sector.
- c) Create partnership agreements which emphasise what the team should look for in good partnership working and what they should expect from partners as anti-racist advocates (and what to do when this does not happen).
- d) After the first year of delivering an anti-racist influencing approach and championing the pledge, Glasgow Film should reach out to leading funders like BFI and Creative Scotland to share the learnings and challenges and push for sector wide improvements.

5. Being a good-practice employer

There is good awareness of current equality, diversity and inclusion practice within the staff and volunteer teams. The Equal Opportunities policy 'sits' with Glasgow Film as the employer but is not a living breathing document yet and is providing a basic HR function at present. It is of course important to have equalities policies and processes that focus on HR specifics such as recruitment, however that is often not where culture change happens. How will the organisation bring the policies to life? How do staff learn and know about this beyond it being something in a handbook? There is a need for regular reminders and engagement with staff on these policies to build up an understanding of what equality, diversity and inclusion means for staff in their respective roles; to build up an awareness of anti-racist practice and how it links to the day to day; and to create spaces for staff to have open and frank discussions on progress and learning needs. Ensuring legal compliance on equality and inclusion is essential and should be pursued (as well as updated), however this will not produce the leading role that Glasgow Film wish to play on being a proactively anti-

racist organisation and developing best practice, so therefore it cannot be left to any one HR role or function to deliver this work throughout the organisation.

Suggested recommendations to support the delivery of this work:

- a) An HR led review of legal requirements and internal policies.
- b) Review and develop recruitment processes, advertising and induction processes for all staff. This should include a requirement for all job descriptions to have a specific responsibility on how that role will enable an inclusive and anti-racist culture. This review should also include a conversation between manager and new employee about the anti-racism strategy and what it means for their role during the induction period.
- c) Set a managers' plan and ensure they understand their roles in delivering an anti-racist culture in terms of inductions, staff appraisals and partnerships.
- d) There should be annual reminders for all staff on procedures such as complaints, equalities policies/strategy etc.

6. Investing in the development of a learning cycle approach

Programming is a key feature of Glasgow Film, and where most examples of 'anti-racist' engagement are currently focused. However, there are many activities happening in the organisation where race equality work is on the periphery and could be pursued further or given a more strategic focus (e.g. school activities and community engagement). There is a need for more synergy internally with what is happening outwardly.

There is a strong awareness amongst staff of the Short Circuit project, Welcome to the Afrofuture season, Black History Month, Movie Memories and Autism friendly screenings. The accessibility programmes and Black History events were frequently cited as examples of inclusion good practice.

There was a general sense of wanting to be able to challenge racist behaviours and learn more in an environment that fosters open discussions and has systems in place to report racism and discriminatory behaviours.

The Senior Management team should facilitate better sharing of what is working well and what could be improved on by, update the wider team on new initiatives and partnerships that have a focus on anti-racism and equalities led work and ensure best practice is imbedded across the board.

Suggested recommendations to support the delivery of this work:

- a) Glasgow Film should develop a training and learning cycle for all staff, provide regular anti-racist and wider equalities updates by email, deliver equality inductions at key points in the year, bring in training consultants and link to Glasgow Film case studies and experiences so staff can build on and refresh their learning each time they attend and are part of the organisation's overall learning and progress.

- b) The question ‘How are we building an anti-racist and inclusive culture at the Glasgow Film?’ should be addressed at the end of regular team meetings to ensure this remains high priority.
- c) Now and going forward there needs to be more linking together and learning from all the areas of work, with staff, volunteers and Board members, external partners, curators and freelancers sharing their experiences of working with the Glasgow Film and what can be improved upon.
- d) Develop an internal feedback loop for those who were unable to attend the action planning training session to build more awareness, ownership and understanding of anti-racism and being part of a proactively anti-racist organisation.

7. The need for an intersectional understanding which takes race, class, gender and disability into account

There is a need for greater awareness of what taking an intersectional approach means, both within Glasgow Film as well as within the wider creative sector. Without taking an intersectional approach that considers race alongside gender, class, disability or sexuality or gender identity, there is a likelihood that inequality for those furthest away from access to opportunity is exacerbated or overlooked. As such work on anti-racism also needs to have a class, disability and gender lens, ensuring that engagement or activities think about the compounding discriminations faced by (and looks to overcome those) women of colour, disabled people of colour and working-class communities of colour, and more. The more this is written into strategic delivery and understood across the organisation, the more effective and more robust the anti-racist response. This was acknowledged and stated by multiple respondents in the interviews and survey:

“Quick action on BLM and not enough thought on intersectionality and racial equity”

“A lot of organisations geared into action by trauma. An active anti-racist practice and not ‘race’ stuff. Understanding the experiences of Black and brown staff and power over analysis”

“Racial equality - the terms must be defined by Black and People of Colour themselves”

Suggested recommendations to support the delivery of this work:

- a) Review the way in which data of audiences, engagement methods and volunteers are gathered to allow intersectional analysis (e.g. understanding women of colour experiences)
- b) Create a ‘key questions’ list which asks staff to consider different communities and intersecting inequalities when planning events, programming or recruitment to ensure accessibility and inclusion is considered alongside the impact of compounding and multiple inequalities.

Further observed context

What has been learnt overall from the organisation via observations from consultant:

- Whole organisation ethos and practices of accountability and transparency are very strong, for example the data on staff composition and staff pay
- Staff satisfaction and connection to Glasgow Film as an employer is high (internal Staff Survey 2021).
- There is an internal commitment to anti-racism, challenging racism and developing matching systems that facilitate open discussions for all staff to share concerns and problem solve.
- EDI focus on compliance and employer led - the EDI statement and Employee handbook need updating and to form part of an overall strategy.
- The Diversity Commitment Committee met for the first time in October, more input, support and resourcing are required for the committee in actioning the next steps, setting the pace and building in accountability systems that are robust and safe.
- Inclusive cycle and track record on accessibility programming in screenings and during film festivals, involvement of partners/freelancers on Black History Month, events, screenings with black and people of colour. The key question is why is this not translating into diverse audiences, jobs and staffing from Glasgow and beyond?
- Systemic barriers in recruitment and pipelines, are those barriers understood and acted upon? As staffing has been overwhelmingly white year on year and not reflective of the Glasgow's population of settled communities of colour.
- Audiences continue to be very white for Glasgow Film/Glasgow Film Festival (based upon data collected over 3-year period 2019-2021).
- Black Lives Matter (2020), there was an increase in screenings by Black filmmakers and raising discussions. A shift in involving more of black and communities of colour in co-designing screenings. A socially conscious step change within Glasgow Film to be more inclusive and 'showing inclusion'. throughout the year and not only for example during Black History Month.
- How are Glasgow Film staff contributing to their work in anti-racism intersectionality and allyship? Are there individual examples of people's activism, lived experiences and active allyship that can be shared internally