

Equality in the Swiss film industry

Management summary

Lucerne, 29 June 2021

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| Client

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| Proposed quote

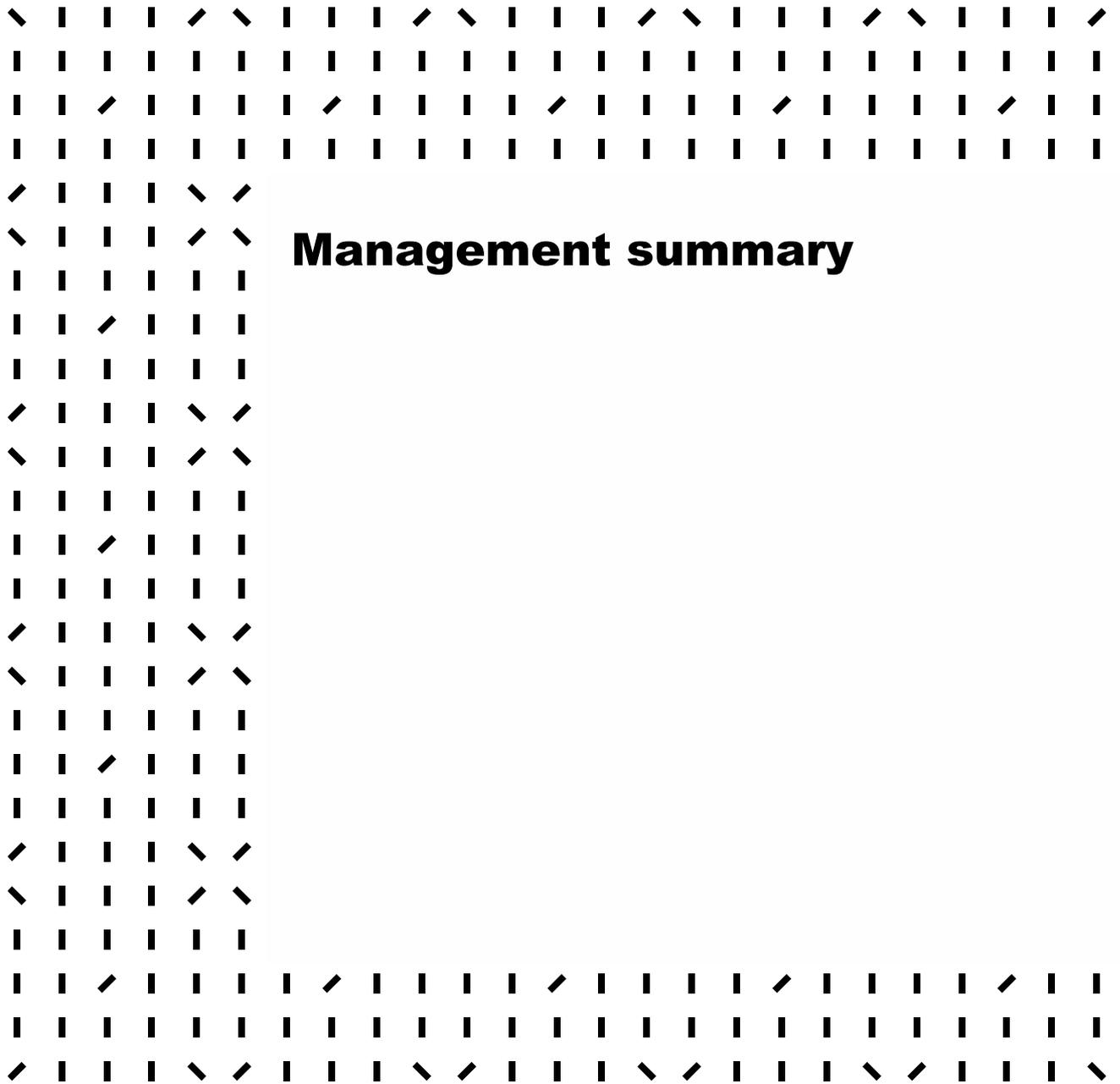
Müller, Franziska; Hertig, Vera; Thorshaug, Kristin; Prinzing, Oliver (2021): Equality in the Swiss film industry, report for the FOC, Interface Politikstudien Forschung Beratung, Lucerne/Lausanne.

| Term

December 2020 to July 2021

| Project reference

Project number 20-095



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I Aim and methodology

The Federal Office of Culture (FOC) commissioned this study to establish a solid foundation based on data and facts for future discussion on the issue of gender in Swiss film-making.

The *quantitative data analysis* applies available secondary data to examine the gender distribution in training, professional film-making, film funding and film exploitation/success. The study is based, inter alia, on the results of the FOC Gender Map survey with data on Swiss cinema feature films from 2017-2019. The *in-depth analysis* aims to find answers to the question of why the proportion of women in Swiss professional film-making is lower than the number of women undergoing training for a career in the film industry and to establish which measures could remedy the situation. An online survey of Swiss film school graduates from 2014 to 2017 was conducted to find some answers. There were also in-depth interviews with 16 film-makers and ten interviews with representatives of institutions involved in funding films, tertiary education establishments, professional associations and experts from outside Switzerland. The results and recommendations of the study are broadly outlined in this paper. The overview at the end of the management summary presents a snapshot of the findings.

I Results regarding the equality situation

The quantitative data analysis leads to the following statements regarding equality between men and women in Swiss film-making:

- *In spite of equality in training (equal number of male and female graduates from Swiss film schools) there is a gender imbalance in Swiss film-making.* Women comprise 37 percent of the members of professional associations in the film industry. The proportion of women in public-sector financed Swiss feature films varies by job category according to the FOC Gender Map survey (2015–2019). It is highest in editing/montage (53%), lowest in camera work (13%) – with directing (29%), production (35%) and screenwriting (34%) coming in between.
- *Entry into the profession is seen as extremely challenging by women and men.* Many directors only make one film and then no more, more often in the case of women than men.
- *Women are neither advantaged nor disadvantaged in Swiss film funding.* The proportion of women applicants corresponds to the proportion of successful applicants and the awarded funding at between 31 and 35 percent.
- *While films by female directors have similar or even more success at festivals than their male counterparts, female film-makers form a clear minority when it comes to television.* The share of royalties and works registered to women with Suissimage lies at around 30 percent.

The study also indicates *differences in remuneration between women and men* in Swiss film-making. The evaluation of salary data by Suissimage (2016-2019) shows that women earn less per film on average than men - both for screenwriting (17% lower salary on average) and directing (8% lower salary on average).

The *European benchmark* clearly indicates that Switzerland is average by European standards regarding the proportion of women involved in directing and screenwriting. While some countries tend towards higher female representation than Switzerland (e.g. Sweden, Austria), other countries are lower (e.g. Italy, Germany).

The study also found the following regarding equality *on-screen*: there are more leading female roles in feature films (47%) than documentaries (34%), whereby the share of women in front of the camera decreases markedly from the age of 40.

I Explanatory factors and recommended measures based on the results

According to the in-depth analyses, there are two central explanations for that: firstly *stereotypical role models* in the form of (whether unconsciously or consciously) externally imposed attributions and internalised self-doubt among women, secondly *structural barriers*, mainly due to restricted access to the buddy system for women and unsuitable working conditions (e.g. incompatibility of work and family commitments).

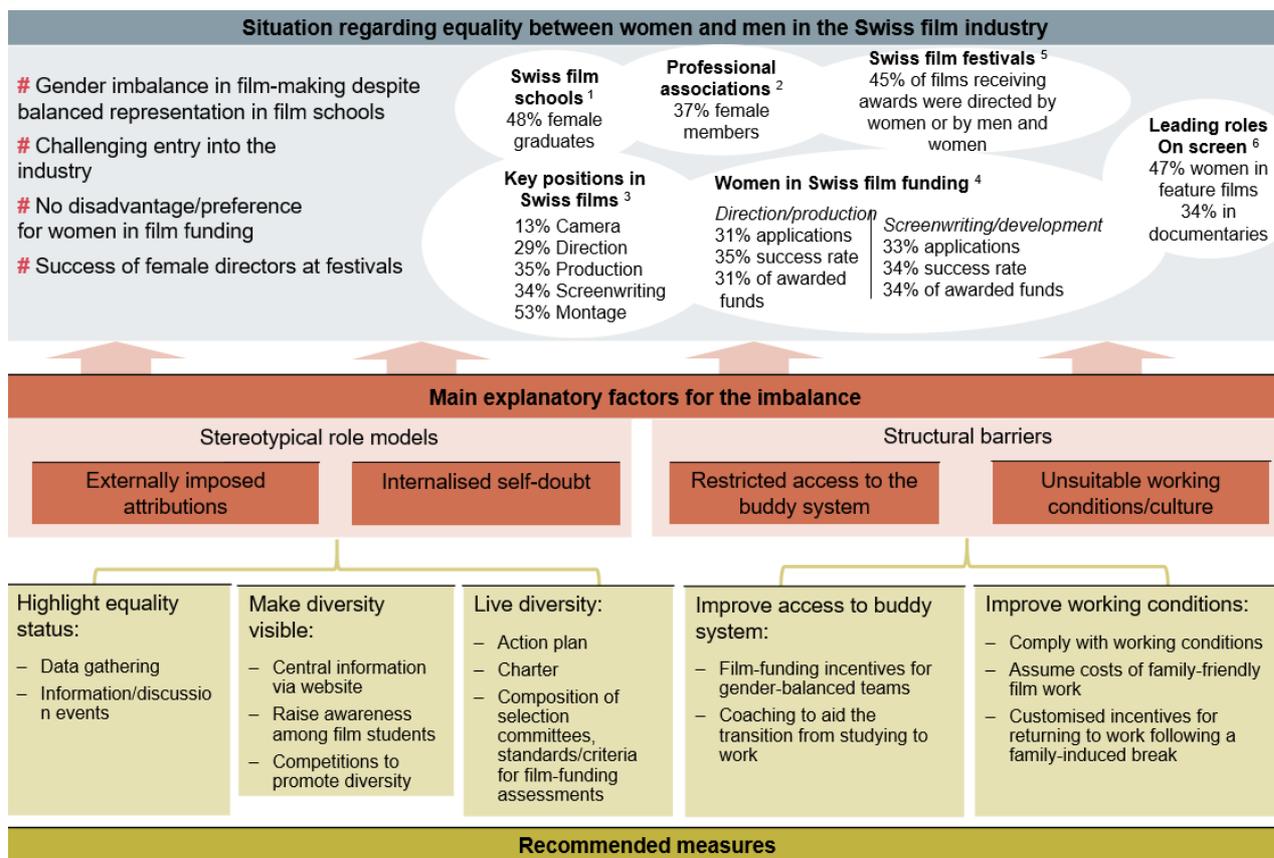
The study team takes the view that, based on these explanatory factors, there is a *combination of different measures* that could be implemented to increase female participation in film-making and thereby promote gender equality.

- Measures designed to highlight the current equality status (e.g. through data acquisition, information/discussion events), draw attention to diversity in Swiss film-making (e.g. through centralised information dissemination on a website, raising awareness of the issue among film students or holding competitions to promote diverse film content) are recommended as ways of overcoming stereotypical role models, as well as being conducive to living this diversity (e.g. through an action plan/diversity charter, appropriate composition of selection committees and application of standards/criteria in film funding).
- Measures designed to facilitate access for women to the buddy system are recommended to overcome structural barriers (e.g. through funding incentives for gender-balanced teams, coaching for the transition from studying to work) and improved working conditions (e.g. by assuming the cost of family-friendly film work or customised incentives for returning to work following a family-induced break).

Some of these measures are already being implemented by different parties. For example, childcare costs are included in the production budget (by the FOC and regional funding institutions), the gender charter which has been signed by almost all Swiss film festivals, and data collection on equality (by the FOC, regional funding agencies, Swiss Broadcasting Corporation (SRG SSR)). Notwithstanding these ongoing efforts, it is important to anchor the visibility and significance of equality and diversity still more firmly in the Swiss film industry.

The chart below summarises the main findings regarding gender equality of women and men in Swiss film-making, the central explanatory factors behind the imbalance as identified by the study's results and the associated recommendations for countering the imbalance.

Overview of the study's results and recommendations



Source: Interface 2021 chart.

Legends: References for presented data: ¹ = Tertiary education statistics from the FSO for 2008 to 2019; ² = Data from professional associations from 2019/2020; ³ = Data from the FOC Gender Map on publicly financed Swiss feature films from 2017 to 2019; ⁴ = Data from applications to different Swiss film funding institutions in project development and production from 2015 to 2019; ⁵ = Data from Swiss films from 2012 to 2019; ⁶ = FOC Gender Map data, 2017-2019.