SCC19R-R-0356 D

Baile na hAbhann,
Co. na Gaillimhe,
H91 X4T0

26 Meitheamh 2020
SUBMISSION IN ENGLISH BELOW

Aighneacht i scríbhinn ó TG4 chuig an gCoiste Speisialta um Fhreagairt Covid-19.
Ábhar: An geilleagar a atosú - An Earnáil Ealaíon agus Siamsaíochta.
Réimse: Na healaíona, cultúr, siamsaíocht.

Is é TG4 craoltóir teilifíse seirbhíse poiblí Gaeilge na hÉireann, a bhfuil a cheanncheathrú i nGaeltacht Chonamara, le foireann de 95 (87 FTE). Is foilsitheoir-craoltóir muid, rud a chiallaíonn gur ó chomhlachtaí léiriúcháin neamhspleácha a thagann an chuid is mó dár gcláracha. Tá an chuid is mó de na comhlachtaí léiriúcháin seo lonnaithe i réigiúin na hÉireann agus dá bhrí sin tá tionchar an-suntasach ag TG4 ar an ngeilleagar cruthaitheach lasmuigh de Bhaile Átha Cliath.

Leanúnachas craolta

Choinnigh agus d'fheabhsaigh TG4 ár n-aschur craolta i rith na paindéime. D'fhan gach ball foirne TG4 ag obair go lánaimseartha, gan dul i muinín scéimeanna fóirdheontais pá, ag soláthar sceideal laethúil de nuacht, cúrsaí reatha agus faisnéise seirbhíse poiblí, mar aon le meascán leathan d'ábhar oideachasúil, fíorasach, siamsaíochta, spóirt agus ceoil chun freastal ar lucht féachana méadaithe, idir líneach agus neamhlíneach.

Bhí solúbthacht fhoireann TG4 eiseamláireach. Tugadh isteach 'obair ón mbaile' thar oíche d'fhormhór na foirne, agus cuireadh ar chumas 95% den fhoireann oibriú ón mbaile nó, i gcásanna áirithe, amach as mol digiteach. Cuireadh pleananna éigeandála i bhfeidhm chun déileáil le haon ráig de Covid-19 lena chinntiú nach dtarlódh aon bhriseadh i leanúnachas an chraolacháin. Is éard a bhí i gceist leis seo go léir infheistíocht mhéadaithe i TF agus teicneolaíocht agus go leor nuálaíochta agus oiriúnaithe ar chleachtais oibre.

Bhí fadhbanna móra le sárú ag an bhfoireann, áfach, maidir le hoiriúnú do chianobair. Is é an rud is práinní ná cúram leanaí a sholáthar agus na dúshláin a bhaineann le scolaíocht bhaile. Chuir soláthar leathanbhanda agus nascacht idirlín inúsáidte brú mór ar ár lucht oibre freisin. Léirigh suirbhéanna foirne a rinneadh leibhéal an-ard éifeachtúlachta ó bhaill foirne i rith na paindéime in ainneoin na ndúshlán. Mar sin féin, bhí strus méadaithe, ualach oibre níos mó, aonrú sóisialta agus imní ag cur isteach ar dhaoine freisin.

Cumarsáid Feabhsaithe

Is í an chumarsáid an eochair do straitéis TG4 Covid-19. Bhí sé seo le feiceáil ar gach leibhéal - le lucht féachana agus lucht déanta ábhar, geallsealbhóirí tionscail, ranna Rialtais, gníomhaireachtaí stáit agus ár bhfoireann agus ár mbord. Bhí tús áite ag úsáid na meán digiteach chun cumarsáid a dhéanamh agus daoine coinnithe ar an eolas go mion agus go minic faoi chúrsaí an chomhlachta. Roimh Covid-19, chiallaigh cumarsáid TG4 lenár ngeallsealbhóirí go leor taistil, agus fanacht thar oíche go minic, chun freastal ar chruinnithe i mBaile Átha Cliath. Mar gheall gur glacadh go forleathan le cruinnithe digiteacha tá cruinnithe lárnaithe i bhfad níos éifeachtaí do TG4 agus tá súil againn go bhfanfaidh cruinnithe digiteacha mar chuid den norm 'cumaiscthe' amach anseo dár ngeallsealbhóirí.

Coiste Covid-19 TG4
Ghlac bainistíocht shinsearach TG4 ról gníomhach ón tús chun an phleanáil éigeandála paindéime a bhainistiú. Lean muid treoirlínte an Rialtais agus chuir muid athruithe beartais sláinte agus sábháilteachta i bhfeidhm dá réir. Tá coiste inmheánach bunaithe againn ar a bhfuil ionadaithe bainistíochta, riaracháin agus foirne chun an 'Prótacal um Fhilleadh ar Obair' agus gach beart a bhaineann leis an bprótacal sin a chur i bhfeidhm.

Lucht Féachana agus an Earnáil Chruthaitheach
Bíonn babhtaí deiridh chomórtais Sraith CLG ar siúl i mí an Mhárta agus de ghnáth is é seo ceann de na tréimhsí is airde lucht féachana atá ag TG4. Bhí tionchar mór ag cailliúint an spóirt bheo ar leibhéal ár lucht féachana i mí an Mhárta, ach dhírigh muid ar ár láidreachtaí mar chraoltóir agus, ag an bpointe seo, tá an seasamh bainte amach againn mar an 6ú cainéal teilifíse is mó a bhfuil faire air in Éirinn, rangú a bhain muid amach don chéad uair riamh in 2019.

Ag tús na tréimhse éigeandála, d'ordaigh TG4 go gcuirfí deireadh le taifead neamhriachtanach ar chláir nua. Mar sin féin, bhí TG4 tuisceanach dá ról mar fhoilsitheoir-chraoltóir, agus dá réir, faoina dhualgas cúraim i leith na hearnála cruthaithí neamhspleách a bhfuil dlúth-chaidreamh aici leis. Mar cheann dár bpríomh-thosaíochtaí, d'iarr muid cúnamh a thabhairt do chomhlachtaí, a mhéid agus ab fhéidir, chun leanúnachas fostaíochta sa tionscal a choinneáil. Ach ag an am céanna theastaigh uainn fócas daingean a choinneáil ar riachtanais ár lucht féachana.

Le linn na tréimhse nuair nárbh fhéidir scannánú neamhriachtanach a dhéanamh, rinne foireann choimisiúnaithe, dlí agus airgeadais TG4 beagnach 100 conradh nua ar luach os cionn € 3M a phróiseáil, tasc ollmhór. Áiríodh ar na conarthaí seo ceannachán clár, athcheadúnú ábhair, forbairt tionscadal agus coimisiúnú clár riachtanach a léiriú go sábháilte. Chuir sé seo sreabhadh airgid a raibh géarghá leis ar fáil do chomhlachtaí go dtí go raibh sé sábháilte cláracha a léiriú arís. Rinne muid an obair seo a chomhordú le réimse leathan comhlachtaí neamhspleácha ar fud na hÉireann agus thionóil muid cruinnithe seachtainiúla le SPI (Screen Producers Ireland).

Measadh go raibh nuacht agus cúrsaí reatha mar ábhar riachtanach agus d'fhorbair 'Nuacht TG4' agus '7 Lá' samhail nua-aimseartha don léiriúchán, ag tabhairt scéalta láidre ó chainteoirí Gaeilge óna dtithe ar fud na cruinne go dtí ár dtithe féin. Thug siad fianaise dúinn freisin a bhain le croílár eispéireas Covid-19, go háirithe ó réigiúin na hÉireann.

Tionchair TG4
Tionchair ar Oideachas
Choimisiúnaigh TG4 Clár Baile-Scoile, 'Cúla4 ar Scoil', a sholáthraíonn seirbhís chuimsitheach do Scoileanna Gaeltachta agus Gaelscoileanna chun foghlaim i nGaeilge a éascú don lucht féachana. Craoladh an tsraith de níos mó ná 50 eipeasóid, arna léiriú ag 'Fíbín Media' agus le seirbhísí teicniúla ó 'Telegael', go laethúil Luan - Aoine ón 20 Aibreán go dtí an 26 Meitheamh 2020, ag clúdach croí-ábhar mar Gaeilge, Matamaitic, Stair agus Tíreolaíocht, agus freisin ag clúdach ranganna ar chruthaitheacht, na healaíona, na healaíona traidisiúnta agus sláinte agus folláine.

Cuirtear an clár ar fáil i gcomhpháirtíocht le eagrais Oideachais. Bhí comhairle agus stiúir oideachais ar fáil ón Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna, Coláiste Mhuire gan Smál, Comhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta (COGG), Seirbhís Forbartha Gairmiúla do Mhúinteoirí (PDST) agus Gaeloideachas. Chuir

Tuismitheoirí na Gaeltachta aiseolas luachmhar ar fáil maidir le cur chuige an chláir. Fillfidh Cúla4 ar Scoil i Meán Fómhair 2020 d'fhonn leanúint ar aghaidh ag tacú le scoileanna agus le gníomhaíocht oideachais.

Ag tosú an 29 Meitheamh, craolfar 'Campaí Cúla4': cúig seachtaine de champaí samhraidh. Díreofar gach seachtain ar théama difriúil, a thabharfaidh deis do leanaí blaiseadh a fháil de réimse leathan spéiseanna. Beidh téamaí ann ó Dhrámaíocht agus na hEalaíona Traidisiúnta, Cócaireacht agus Dúlra, STEAM, Sláinte agus Aclaíocht, na Meáin agus Scileanna Cumarsáide. Tá an tsraith Campaí Samhraidh seo á léiriú le tacaíocht ón Roinn Cultúir, Oidhreachta agus Gaeltachta agus Foras na Gaeilge, agus le comhairle agus ionchur luachmhar ó Ealaín na Gaeltachta agus TechSpace.

Craolfar sraith campaí samhraidh breise 'GAA Cúlcamps', i gcomhar leis an CLG agus Kelloggs. Tosóidh Cúlcamps CLG ar an 29 Meitheamh le béim ar scileanna CLG, druileanna, cluichí, cothú, agus míreanna folláine a thaitneoidh leis an teaghlach ar fad. Beidh réalta aitheanta CLG ag glacadh páirte, lena n-áirítear Rena Buckley, réalta uile Éireann Camógaíochta agus Peile Chorcaí, iománaí Bhaile Átha Cliath, Liam Rushe, agus iar-réalta peile Dhún na nGall, Kevin Cassidy.

Tionchair ar na hEalaíona agus Cultúr

Chuir sceideal TG4 béim ar chláir chultúrtha a chraoladh le linn na tréimhse, ábhar nua-choimisiúnaithe agus athcheadúnaithe araon. I measc na mbuaicphointí bhí 'Slí na mBeaglaíoch' (turas ceoil ar bhealach an Atlantaigh Fhiáin le Breandán agus Cormac Ó Beaglaíoch); 'Meitheal na mBan' (sraith ceolchoirmeacha ar líne faoi stiúir na gceoltóirí mná is fearr in Éirinn ag ceol óna dtithe féin, agus ag bailiú airgid d'íospartaigh na mí-úsáide baile); 'An Bhoirinn' (turas atmaisféarach thar cheithre eipeasóid a thugann léargas ar dhraíocht thírdhreach, agus ar phobail na Boirne).

Tá TG4 ag obair le Ealaíon na Gaeltachta chun imeachtaí Ealaíon a chur chun cinn trí 'Molscéal' (ardán TG4 do scéalta digiteacha ó phobail na Gaeltachta) agus chun saothar ealaíontóirí Gaeltachta a thaispeáint mar chuid den Oíche Chultúir ar an 18 Meán Fómhair. Ar an Oíche Chultúir freisin, tá sé beartaithe ag TG4 céad craoladh a thabhairt de 'CUMAR, a Galway Rhapsody', gné-scannán faisnéise a bhuaigh go leor duaiseanna agus a coimisiúnaíodh mar chuid de scéim mhaoinithe TG4 /An Chomhairle Ealaíon, 'ilDÁNA'. Arna scannánú thar bhliain iomlán, tá seisear ealaíontóirí atá lonnaithe i nGaillimh le feiceáil i 'CUMAR' agus déanann sé iniúchadh ar a n-áit dhúchais mar fhoinse spreagtha d'iarracht ealaíonta.

D'fhógair TG4 agus an Chomhairle Ealaíon séasúr nua 'ilDÁNA' i mí Eanáir 2020, agus cuirfidh iarratasóirí rathúla tús le léiriúcháin i bhFómhar 2020. Is é an príomhscannán faisnéise ealaíon is déanaí ón scéim ilDÁNA ná 'Hiroshima, mo gheal geal', machnamh fileata agus cineamatach ar uafás an chogaidh, chun comóradh 75 bliain a cheiliúradh. Seolfar an scannán ag an am céanna ag Féile Scannán Chorcaí agus ag Féile Scannán Hiroshima an Fómhar seo.

Tionchair ar an bpobal

I mí Aibreáin chraol TG4 sraith, 'Gaeltacht 2020' ar staid na Gaeltachta a spreag díospóireacht ar staid na Gaeltachta. Tá sraith clár eile coimisiúnaithe againn anois chun athnuachan agus athbheochan phobail na Gaeltachta a dhoiciméadú tar éis Covid-19.

Chuir Seinnteoir TG4 áis ar fáil le breathnú ar ábhar Gaeilge agus cultúrtha do lucht féachana sa bhaile agus thar lear i rith na tréimhse Covid-19. Thug leathnú an réimse clár agus bailiúchán atá ar fáil ar an seinnteoir TG4, lena n-áirítear cláir chultúrtha, cláir faisnéise, agus ceol thraidisiúnta, agus cláir do pháistí, rogha leathan don lucht féachana. Tháinig méadú faoi thrí ar thrácht Sheinnteoir TG4 thar an tréimhse, agus tháinig méadú 50% ar an trácht ó lasmuigh d'Éirinn, go príomha ó SAM.

D'fhonn tacú le pobal na scannánóirí óga, fógróidh TG4 i gcomhpháirtíocht le BAI, ILBF (Northern Ireland Screen) agus Údarás na Gaeltachta ciste do thallann atá ag teacht chun cinn sa tionscal (scríbhneoirí, stiúrthóirí agus léiritheoirí cruthaitheacha nua). Seolfar an ciste ag Fleadh Scannán na Gaillimhe i mí Iúil.

Tionchair ar Fhéilte
Lean TG4 ag soláthar tacaíochta do na príomh Fhéilte a mbíonn muid i gcomhpháirt leo. D'fhéach TG4 le oibriú le na féilte seo chun ardán malartach a chruthú chun a gcuid imeachtaí a thaispeáint.

Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann: Tá TG4 tar éis coimisiúnú a dhéanamh ar 'Fleadh Cheoil Fhíorúil' a dhéanfaidh ceiliúradh ar cheol agus ar phobal Fleadh Cheoil mar mhalairt ar an gnáth-chraoladh a bhíonn againn i mí Lúnasa. Craolfar an sraith 4 x 90' ar an 6,7,8,9 Lúnasa. Ina theannta sin, tá cláir chartlainne athcheadúnaithe againn a thabharfaidh siar muid go dtí an Fleadh Cheoil mar a bhí, ('Fleadh Cheoil Gold').

Oireachtas na Gaeilge: Bhí príomhfhéile na Gaeilge le bheith ar siúl i nGaillimh ag deireadh mhí Dheireadh Fómhair ach tá sí curtha ar ceal. Tá TG4 ag obair le Oireachtas na Gaeilge lena chinntiú go mbeidh láithreacht fhíorúil láidir ag an bhféile ar an teilifís agus ar líne.

LGFA / TG4 @ 20: Is é 2020 an 20ú bliain ag TG4 ag tacú agus ag craoladh Peil na mBan. Nuair a fhillfidh séasúr LGFA, craolfaidh TG4 cluichí beo agus déanfar ceiliúradh ar an spórt.

Atosú agus athshamhlú - teanga agus earnáil
Tá Comhairle Audiovisual Ireland IBEC, faoi chathaoirleacht Andrew Lowe (Element Pictures), comhdhéanta de chraoltóirí Éireannacha, Screen Ireland agus comhlachtaí léiriúcháin Éireannacha agus thug sí guth aontaithe agus tairbheach don earnáil closamhairc le linn na tréimhse Covid-19. Chuir sí aighneacht faoi bhráid na bpáirtithe idirbheartaíochta Rialtais, ar treoirphlean soiléir é don tréimhse atosaithe i 2021. Athdhearbhaíonn aighneacht IBEC moladh an BAI agus Chomhchoiste an Oireachtais go méadófaí maoiniú poiblí TG4 de € 6M, le héifeacht iomlán ó 2018. Thug an BAI le fios go déanach in 2019 go bhfuil straitéis TG4 'dírithe agus uaillmhianach mar is ceart' agus go bhfuil 'easpa maoinithe poiblí géar agus leanúnach' ag an gcainéal.

Maidir leis an teanga, i ngeall ar ghéarchéim Covid-19, thug TG4 faoi deara gur i mBéarla amháin a rinneadh a lán cumarsáide rialtais agus nár tugadh cuireadh do TG4 óráidí lárnacha a thug an Taoiseach a chur ar aer. Ar an iomlán, chonaiceamar teachtaireacht neamhfhiosach do chainteoirí Gaeilge nár measadh go raibh an Ghaeilge mar theanga 'riachtanach' sa ghéarchéim. Tá na blianta amach romhainn ríthábhachtach don Ghaeilge agus creimeoidh 'comharthaíocht' an Stáit nach bhfuil an Ghaeilge 'riachtanach' inbhuanaitheacht an phobail de ghnáthchainteoirí Gaeilge i sochaí na hÉireann áit a bhfuil an Béarla, de facto, mar phríomhiompróir maidir le stádas agus, go deimhin, náisiúntacht.

Tá TG4 uaillmhianach dó féin agus don Ghaeilge agus tá muid ag iarraidh ról na Gaeilge a athshamhlú i sochaí na hÉireann. Creideann muid gur cheart cóimheas maoinithe poiblí Meán na Seirbhíse Poiblí (PSM) de 75% Béarla / 25% Gaeilge a thabhairt isteach, mar a tharlaíonn faoi láthair trí Chiste Fuaim & Fís BAI.

Creideann muid gur cheart go bhfanfadh seirbhísí líneacha agus ar éileamh Craolacháin Seirbhíse Poiblí (PSB) feiceálach, in-aimsithe agus inghnóthaithe ar gach ardán agus seirbhís féachana. Tá deis iontach ag an Rialtas atá ag teacht isteach é seo a chinntiú, gan aon chostas ar an Stát, de réir mar a thugann siad reachtaíocht ar aghaidh chun an treoir Eorpach maidir leis an Treoir um Sheirbhísí Meán Closamhairc a thrasuí níos déanaí i mbliana. Thabharfadh sé sin aitheantas go pointe don ról ríthábhachtach a d'imir Craolachán na Seirbhíse Poiblí ar fud na paindéime agus is féidir leis a imirt arís sa todhchaí, má thugtar an deis dó.

Creideann muid freisin gur cheart ciste náisiúnta inchomórtais nua a thabhairt isteach d'ábhar leanaí / óige, cosúil leis an gCiste YAC sa RA.

Agus ár dtionscal ag teacht chuige féin de réir a chéile, ní bheidh athshamhlú ár n-earnála indéanta ach ó 2022 ar aghaidh ach tá gá le 'droichead maoinithe atosaithe' suntasach do 2021. Tá géarghá go dtiocfaidh fís bheoga, athshamhlaithe do chraoltóireacht na hÉireann ón gCoimisiún Meán atá beartaithe. Níor cheart go mbeadh TG4 ná an Ghaeilge in easnamh san fhís sin.

Le meas agus buíochas

____

Alan Esslemont
Ard-Stiúrthóir TG4
Director General TG4
Alan.Esslemont@tg4.ie
+353 87 2308855

SUBMISSION IN ENGLISH OVERLEAF

Baile na hAbhann,
Co. na Gaillimhe,
H91 X4T0

26 Meitheamh 2020

Written submission from TG4 to the Special Committee on Covid-19 Response.
Topic: Rebooting the Economy - The Arts and Entertainment Sector.
Area: The arts, culture, entertainment.

TG4 is Ireland's Irish language public service television broadcaster, headquartered in the Connemara Gaeltacht, with a staff of 95 (87 FTE). We are a publisher-broadcaster which means that most of our programming comes from independent production companies. Most of these companies are situated in Ireland's regions and thus TG4 has a very significant impact on the creative economy outside of Dublin.

Broadcast continuity

TG4 have maintained and enhanced our broadcast output throughout the pandemic. All TG4 staff have remained working fulltime, without recourse to wage subsidy schemes, providing a daily schedule of essential news and current affairs and public service information updates, along with a broad mix of educational, factual, entertainment, sport and music content to engage an increased viewership, both linear and non-linear.

The flexibility of TG4 staff has been exemplary. Remote working was introduced overnight for most staff, with 95% of the workforce being enabled to work from home, or in digital hub type scenarios. Emergency plans were put in place to deal with any potential outbreak of Covid-19 to ensure no break in continuity of broadcasting would ensue. All of this entailed increased investment in IT and technology and a lot of innovation and adaptation of work practices.

Staff have however faced major issues in adapting to remote working. Most pressing have been provision of childcare and the challenges of home schooling. But the provision of broadband and serviceable internet connectivity has also put huge pressure on our people. Staff surveys undertaken indicated a very high level of efficiency from staff throughout the pandemic despite the challenges. However, increased stress, greater workload, social isolation and anxiety were also major factors for people as well.

Enhanced Communication

Key to TG4's Covid-19 strategy has been communication. This has been apparent at all levels – with audiences and content makers, industry stakeholders, Government departments, state agencies and our staff and board. Use of digital media to communicate has been to the fore and regular, detailed information provision is the norm. TG4's pre-Covid-19 communication with our Dublin-based stakeholders meant much travel, and often overnight stays, to attend meetings in Dublin. The widespread acceptance of digital meetings has made centralised meetings much more efficient for TG4 and we hope that digital meetings will remain part of the future 'blended' norm for our stakeholders.

TG4 Covid-19 Committee

TG4 senior management took an active role from the start to manage the emergency pandemic planning. We have followed Government guidelines and implemented health and safety policy changes to reflect this. We have established an in-house committee made up of management, administration and staff representatives to implement the 'Return to Work Protocol' and all measures pertaining to that protocol.

Audiences and the Creative Sector
The closing stages of the GAA League competitions take place in March and this is usually one of the periods of highest viewing for TG4. The loss of live sport impacted greatly on our audience level in March, but we focused on our strengths as a broadcaster and, at this point, we have regained the position as the 6th most watched television channel in Ireland, a ranking we achieved for the first time ever in 2019.

At the beginning of the emergency period, TG4 ordered that all non-essential production of new programming should cease. However, TG4 is very aware, as a publisher-broadcaster, of its duty of care towards the independent creative sector with which it has a symbiotic relationship. Assisting companies, as far as possible, to maintain continuity of employment in the industry was one of our top priorities, combined with keeping a firm focus on the needs of our audiences. During the period when non-essential filming was not possible, TG4's commissioning, legal and financial staff processed almost 100 new contracts worth over €3M, a mammoth task. These contracts included programme acquisitions, the re-licencing of content, development of projects and the commissioning of safely produced essential programming. This provided much needed cashflow to companies until it was safe to produce again. We co-ordinated this work with a wide variety of independent companies throughout Ireland and held weekly meetings with SPI (Screen producers Ireland).

News and current affairs were deemed essential and 'Nuacht TG4' and '7 Lá' developed a brand-new model for production, bringing Irish speakers with compelling stories from their homes throughout the globe into our own homes. They also brought us testimony which touched the core of the Covid-19 experience, especially from Ireland's regions.

TG4 Impacts
Impacts on Education
TG4 commissioned a Home School Programme, 'Cúla4 ar Scoil', providing a comprehensive service to Gaelscoileanna and Gaeltacht Schools to facilitate learning as Gaeilge for viewers. The series of over 50 episodes, produced by 'Fíbín Media' with technical services by 'Telegael', broadcast daily Monday – Friday from 20th April until 26th June 2020, covering both core subjects, such as Irish, Mathematics, History and Geography, and also covering classes on creativity, the arts, traditional arts and health and wellbeing.

The programme is produced in partnership with Educational bodies, including advice and educational steer from the Department of Education and Skills curriculum, Mary Immaculate College, An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta (COGG), Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) and Gaeloideachas. Tuismitheoirí na Gaeltachta has also provided valuable input and feedback regarding programme's approach. Cúla4 ar Scoil will return in September 2020 with a view to continuing to support schools and educational activity.

For the Summer months, 'Cúla4' will switch focus from Schools to Summer Camps. Starting on June 29th, 'Campaí Cúla4' will host five weeks of summer camps. Each week will focus on a different theme, that will give children the chance to get a taster of and experience a wide range of interests, from Drama and Traditional Arts, Cooking and Nature, STEAM, Health and Fitness, Media and Communication Skills. This Summer Camps series is being produced with support from, Roinn Cultúir, Oidhreachta agus Gaeltachta and Foras na Gaeilge, and with valuable advice and input from Ealaín na Gaeltachta and TechSpace.

An additional 'GAA Cúlcamps' summer camp series will be broadcast from 29th June, in conjunction with the GAA and Kelloggs. The GAA Cúlcamps will start on June 29th with an emphasis on GAA skills, drills, games, nutrition, and wellness segments that will appeal to all the family, and with input from well known GAA stars including multiple All-Ireland winning Cork Camogie and Football star, Rena Buckley, Dublin hurler Liam Rushe and former Donegal footballer star Kevin Cassidy.

Impacts on the Arts and Culture
TG4's schedule placed an emphasis on broadcasting cultural programmes, both newly commissioned and relicensed content. Some highlights included 'Slí na mBeaglaíoch' (a musical journey along the Wild Atlantic way with Breandán and Cormac Ó Beaglaíoch); 'Meitheal na mBan' (a series of online concerts led by Ireland's top female musicians and artists performing from their own homes, and fundraising for victims of domestic abuse); 'An Bhoirinn' (an atmospheric journey over four episodes which gives a glimpse of the magic of the landscape, community and custodians of the Burren).

TG4 is working with Ealaíon na Gaeltachta to promote Arts events through TG4's 'Molscéal' (Gaeltacht community digital stories portal) and to explore ways to showcase the work of Gaeltacht artists as part of Culture Night on September 18th. On Culture Night TG4 plans the premier broadcast of 'CUMAR, a Galway Rhapsody', an award winning documentary feature film commissioned as part of the TG4 / Arts Council funding scheme 'ilDÁNA'. Filmed over a full year, 'CUMAR' features six Galway based artists and explores their homeplace as a source of impetus for artistic endeavour.

TG4 and the Arts Council announced a new season of 'ilDÁNA' in January 2020, and successful applicants will commence productions in Autumn 2020. The latest arts documentary feature film from the 'ilDÁNA' scheme is 'Hiroshima, mo ghrá geal', a poetic and cinematic meditation on the horror of war, to mark the 75th anniversary. The film will be launched simultaneously at the Cork Film Festival and the Hiroshima Film Festival this autumn.

Impacts on community
In April TG4 broadcast a debate-provoking series, 'Gaeltacht 2020' on the state of the Gaeltacht and we have now commissioned a series of programmes to document the renewal and revival of Gaeltacht communities following Covid-19.

The TG4 Player has provided a point of access to Irish language and cultural content to audiences at home and abroad throughout the Covid-19 period. Expanding the range of boxset content available on the TG4 player, including Cultural, Documentary, and Traditional music programming, gave audiences a wide choice of viewing. Traffic to the TG4 player over the period increased threefold, with a 50% increase in traffic from outside of Ireland, primarily from the US.

In order to support the community of young film-makers, TG4 in partnership with BAI, Northern Ireland Screen's ILBF and Údarás na Gaeltachta will announce a fund for emerging talent in the industry (new writers, directors and creative producers), which will be launched at the Galway Film Fleadh in July.

Impacts on Festivals
TG4 continued to provide support to our 'Key Events Partnerships' and worked with the organisers to create an alternative platform to showcase their events.
Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann: TG4 has commissioned a replacement 'Virtual Fleadh Cheoil' which will celebrate the Fleadh Cheoil music and community as an alternative to our usual Fleadh Cheoil broadcast in August. The 4 x 90' series will be broadcast on the 6,7,8, 9 August. In addition, we have relicensed nostalgia archive programmes from older years of Fleadh Cheoil ('Fleadh Cheoil Gold').
Oireachtas na Gaeilge: The main festival of the Irish language was due to be held in Galway in late October but has been cancelled. TG4 is working with Oireachtas na Gaeilge to ensure that the festival will have a strong virtual presence on television and online.
LGFA/TG4@20: 2020 is TG4's 20th year of supporting and broadcasting Ladies Gaelic Football. When the LGFA season returns, TG4 will broadcast live matches and celebrate the sport.

Re-booting and re-imagining – language and sector
The IBEC Audiovisual Ireland Council, chaired by Element Pictures' Andrew Lowe, is composed of Irish broadcasters, Screen Ireland and Irish production bodies and has given a unified and constructive voice to the audiovisual sector during the Covid-19 period. It made a submission to Government formation negotiations which is a clear blueprint for the re-boot period in 2021. The IBEC submission reiterates the recommendation by the BAI and the Joint Oireachtas Committee of an increase of €6M in public funding with full effect from 2018. The BAI noted in late 2019 that TG4's strategy is 'suitably targeted and ambitious' and that the channel suffers from 'chronic public underfunding'.

Regarding language, TG4 was aware, in the heat of the Covid-19 crisis, that much government communication was solely in English and TG4 was not invited to air key speeches by An Taoiseach. Overall, we perceived an unconscious message to Irish speakers that Irish was not deemed an 'essential' language in the crisis. The coming years are crucial for the Irish language and 'signalling' by the State that Irish is 'not essential' will badly erode the sustainability of a community of habitual Irish speakers within Irish society where the English language, de facto, is the main carrier of status and, indeed, nationality.

TG4 is ambitious for both itself and the Irish language and the reimagining of the role of Irish in Irish society. We believe that a Public Service Media (PSM) public funding ratio of 75% English language /25% Irish language should be introduced, as happens at present through the BAI Sound & Vision Fund.

We believe that Public Service Broadcasting (PSB) linear and on-demand services should remain prominent, findable and discoverable on all viewing platforms and services. The incoming Government have a golden opportunity to ensure this, at no cost to the State, as they bring forward legislation to transpose the European directive on Audiovisual Media Services later this year. That would in no small way go toward recognising the crucial role that Public Service Broadcasting has played throughout the pandemic and can play again in future, if facilitated to do so.

We also believe that a new national contestable fund for children/youth content should be introduced, similar to the YAC Fund in the UK.

As our industry gradually recovers, the re-imagining of our sector will only truly be achievable from 2022 but a meaningful 're-boot funding bridge' is needed for 2021. Through the proposed Media Commission the development of a vibrant, reimagined vision for Irish broadcasting is essential. TG4 and the Irish language should not be missing from that vision.

Le meas agus buíochas

____

Alan Esslemont
Ard-Stiúrthóir TG4
Director General TG4
Alan.Esslemont@tg4.ie
+353 87 2308855