A Report of *Into the Future 2013*
Think Tank about Professional Training for the Next Years

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Introduction

One of the main objectives of the Audiovisual Training Coalition (ATC, www.at-coalition.org) is to critically reflect on the state of professional training in Europe (particularly in a period of extensive changes in modes of production, distribution and exhibition) and to make propositions to maximize its impact. We have taken the view that maintaining a dialogue with the industry and funding organisations and anticipating future trends is essential. The first two ATC Into the Future conferences (ItF), in 2010 and 2012, were dedicated to training trends and relationships with national/regional public funds.

Globalization of the media industries and the birth of MEDIA International and MEDIA Mundus have produced new opportunities for European training organisations to link with partners outside the European Union and many new programmes have been in operation since 2009.

ItF 2013 was the third Conference with the goals to make proposals for the development of international training programmes — based on the analysis of the experiences made with MEDIA Mundus between 2008 and 2012 — and to elaborate challenging proposals about professional training in relation to industry priorities within the upcoming Creative Europe programme.
It took place in Berlin in July 2013 and gathered 42 professionals from 21 countries including: 21 representatives of training organisations, 7 representatives from funding institutions and 13 invited industry professionals. Day 1 featured presentations from training providers and funders. Day 2 was a day of discussion and brainstorming within five groups with subsequent feedback and plenary sharing of opinions. Day 3 was a half day during which representatives of the training organisations reflected on Into the Future 2012 and future ATC activities.

This concise report of Into the Future 2013 aims to provide a summary of the main issues discussed during the think tank together with some conclusions.

Main objectives

1. A review and sharing of experiences of international training programmes under MEDIA International and MEDIA Mundus, with a view to future priorities.

The ATC commissioned a survey from training providers, their partners and participants providing a useful factual and experiential background to reflect a variety of experiences from Asia, Latin America, the Middle East, Canada, Africa and Eastern Europe as well as the EU countries.

Main areas of discussion:

• Experiences and assessment of information exchange and networking – two of the prime aims of MEDIA Mundus.
• Experiences of script/project development leading to, for example, financing, production and co-production.
• Perspective from third countries identifying and assessing the national and international value of the training programmes.
• The EU perspective – the value to EU participants and industry.
• An assessment of the training programmes in relation to improving access to foreign markets and the distribution, circulation of films worldwide.
• Recommendations for the future.

2. A discussion and propositions about training needs, priorities, guidelines and impact in the 2015-2020 period, on European and international levels.

Main areas of discussion:

• Professional Training Fundamentals
  Positioning of Professional Training between the European and International Audiovisual Industries & the Audiovisual Marketplace.
• Fundamentals into Practice
  Professional Training Programmes' Impact.

This second part of the Conference led to concrete propositions submitted to the European, national and regional public funds as possible guidelines for the years to come in order to increase synergies and optimise co-operation opportunities.
Day 1

Presentation of
1. The programme Ties That Bind as case study.
2. Conclusions from the recent ATC survey as well as a brief overview of recommendations from 40 individual interviews conducted in advance of the conference.
3. Comments/POV’s from training providers: Bruno Bettati (Jirafa Films/Chile); Don Edkins (Steps International/South Africa), Katriel Schory (Israel Film Fund), Simon Perry (ACE), and producers Lorna Tee (Hong Kong/ Malaysia) and Jean des Forets (Petit Film/France), as well as introductory comments from Irina Orssich, MEDIA Mundus.

Summary Responses to Online Survey (May 2013)
Out of 112 professionals: 25% responded
65% non-EU
35% EU
Professional Categories:
(app. 70% producers)
(although several wore more than 1 hat) (app. 28% writers/directors)
(app. 2% other/distributors)
Specialised in:
Features (80%)
Documentaries (50%)
TV Programmes, crossmedia, animation
Programmes attended:
Majority of producer targeted initiatives (80%)
Priority fields of interest:
Financing and Scriptwriting/Storytelling (68%)
Co-productions and Networking (64%)
Company management (32%)
Marketing (28%)
New technologies (20%)
Quantitative Results

Reasons for participating in training programmes:
1. Career development
2. Networking & business opportunities
3. Project packaging
4. Script development
5. Increase industry co-production knowledge outside own country

Response to Programmes:
• 100% met participants’ expectations, 55% + exceeded expectations
• Overall impressions: 9 out of 10: quality of organisation, trainers’ openness to questions, general presentation
• Programme content:
  • Excellent: level of content, diversity of topics, quality of tutors
  • Good: content covered, mix of theory & practice, length of event
• 92%, programme improved access to markets outside the home territory
• 60% programme extremely improved access
• Balance of content between traditional and innovative: 8 out of 10
• Business approaches improved in
  1. storytelling tools
  2. financing structures
  3. distribution (low)
  4. marketing (very low)
• Project development or co-production strategy: 100% affected
• Strong impact on networking activities: 96% for new key industry contacts
• Level of Participants’ experience: good-excellent 85%
• Project quality: Good + 85%
• Balance of EU & non-EU participants: good 85%
• Equally beneficial for EU and non-EU countries: 78%
• Under represented countries in the existing training offer under MEDIA Mundus: African countries, Oceania, Central America, Brazil, Asia (especially Korea, China and smaller markets like Taiwan, Thailand, Indonesia) and Turkey
• On-going contact with foreign colleagues maintained by 78%
• Working together as partners + 41%
• Programme impact on:
  • project package (58%)
  • co-production partner (45%)
  • financing and distribution strategies (42%)
  • finding a project 13%
Priority interests for professional training:
1. Scriptwriting/Financing
2. Co-production/Networking/Business Contacts
3. Distribution
4. Company Management
5. Marketing
Qualitative Results

**Strongest Impact and most important benefits:**
1. Building up career
2. Awareness of you and your company
3. Networking: not only business contacts but also the peer to peer sharing, advice
4. No competition, this is an enriching, collaborative experience
5. Inspiration, creativity
6. Opening up horizons, alternative opportunities
7. Knowledge of other film landscape and understanding of craft

**Recommendations for the Future: keep MEDIA Mundus!**

- Enough project based programmes.
- More needed in: business models, business plans and strategies for sustainable businesses, company management, micro-budget filmmaking (especially from non-Western territories), new markets and new distribution strategies, audience development, including training for distributors and sales agents, cross-media.
- There needs to be more application criteria flexibility to allow for shifting the AV format: TV professionals getting to know the film world and vice versa.
- Creative Europe should also support some forgotten countries with underdeveloped or no film industries.
Proposals for the Future

After the review of the Survey responses, the Conference made proposals for the development of international training programmes.

Here is a summary of the Proposals and Comments that emerged:

Proposals

• Programmes should create a common language to bridge cultural gaps because of the vast differences in working methods, marketplace, means of communication, definitions between EU and non EU. This should first be explored through individual projects where they can discover the differences in the detail.

• Programmes should offer training that explores the challenges and distribution methods of the domestic marketplaces of the countries involved, to better understand how EU films can reach those audiences and non EU films reach European audiences.

• Programmes should focus more on distribution, marketing and audience development — bringing festival programmers, distributors more significantly into the training mix; consider introducing “audience designers”.

• Programmes should fill the gap created by the fact that there are no basic training schools available is China and the rest of Asia. Taking this step will allow MEDIA Mundus to clearly outline and influence the role of producing, financing coproducing and the relevance of cultural exception (which is being dismissed by the US studios.) in non EU countries.

• Training providers should explore ways to more effectively disseminate market intelligence, research, beyond the delivery of their programmes.

• Programmes should be evaluated in terms of measurable results vs long term impacts
  1. on projects
  2. on company business plans
  3. on the industry as a whole.

• Programmes should focus less on co-production and more on accessing audiences and the marketplace and industry sustainability.

• Programmes should present new formats in teaching screenwriting. Israel introduced a scriptwriting program where screenwriters from Bosnia, Israel, Turkey and Britain travelled to each country for a workshop exploring storytelling.

• Programmes should coordinate an exchange among MEDIA Mundus programmes in Africa as existing programmes have not had any impact working with or accessing the huge market potential on the African continent.

• MEDIA Mundus should support a fund being created for African filmmakers, matched by African $ to make African films, encouraging collaboration among African countries inspired by MEDIA Mundus model.

• Programmes should throw more support behind crossover labs to address the number of new platforms available, to cultivate greater creativity.

• Programmes should focus on developing investors to better recognize investment opportunities.

• Programmes should focus on Best Practices Exchanges to cultivate dialogue among exhibitors, sales agents, distributors to work together.

• Programmes should embrace boldly the most innovative independent approaches to training and development (e.g. digital approaches, international ‘laboratories’
for 3–6 months of intensive work), giving independent filmmakers working across borders, the opportunity to innovate, take risks and fail as well as succeed.

- Training providers should **explore more programmes in the large and active markets of Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore** for potential collaboration.

**Comments**

- There needs to be a better circulation of world cinema both ways through cooperation, co-production, collaboration.
- Important to explore the impact of MEDIA Mundus on regions outside the EU so that conclusions can be drawn from what is working and what is not.
- As Europe is at the beginning of a long decline, it needs to reach beyond its borders for new partners, to survive against invasive Hollywood.
- The impact of training, working with a non EU country, is similar to the waves that flow out from a stone thrown into water – the impact cannot be predicted.
- As Asians are less open to sharing, there is a general lack of trust in collaboration
- As co-productions, contracting, spending is very different to Asian producers, Asian producer skill sets do not match those of European producers.
- MEDIA Mundus funded programmes served as a catalyst; stimulating co-production (Chile now invests in minority co-pros); the Chilean government is considering how they could fill the role of independent distribution; training is now a priority; Latin American countries are exploring regional incentives; Turkish filmmakers have convinced their government to support their attendance at MEDIA Mundus funded programmes.
- ACE has developed an effective global community of professionals where ‘nobody is teaching, everybody is learning’.
Summary of Day 1

The Methodological Approach
1. More analysis in terms of differences between EU and non EU starting points
2. More dynamism in terms of diversity in age, background, experience of participants
3. Change of mentality so that MEDIA Mundus and training providers consider themselves allies in addressing funding challenges
4. More awareness of the different programmes available within countries to look for collaboration and to improve effectiveness of MEDIA Mundus funded programmes across borders

Impact
1. Common points of reference need to be established between partners in advance of programmes being delivered
2. Context for films to travel more effectively can be supported through EU training providers having a better understanding of the domestic markets of non EU partnering countries
3. Structuring effects. MEDIA Mundus funded programmes are effectively encouraging non EU partners to lobby local governments for a change in policies, funding, support
4. Data collection on successes both in terms of short term and long term impact and results needs to be communicated more effectively nationally/internationally at all levels of government

Day 2

Group Discussions
Incorporating the themes from Rolf Orthel's documentary “Questions”, participants entered group discussions to address the goal for Day 2: to elaborate challenging proposals about professional training for the audiovisual industry within the upcoming Creative Europe programme.

The format for discussion in each group varied considerably as did the presentations by Group Leaders at the end of the day. Some followed a review of each of the proposals presented in the document proposed by Pierre Agthe Some Proposals for European and International Professional Training for the Next Years, while other groups were much less structured. In summary, the original proposals are presented below followed by proposals and comments that best relate to the 13 propositions.
Group Feedbacks

1. Priority Formats

The history of cinema shows that all new formats (TV, video, new media, etc.) tend to become complements to film production, rather than to supersede it. Therefore, feature and documentary film should remain the priority formats to be addressed by professional training programmes for the next years. This should not be taken as an “old school” statement, but rather as a positioning to define a clear-cut professional training strategy.

Proposals

1. Training should expand to specifically develop training for genre films (horror/thriller) as well as family films, to open up to a broader diversity of filmmakers and audiences.

2. Training should explore and develop new business models that will transform the film industry much as the music industry has undergone.

3. Training programmes should include understanding audiences and the marketplace as part of their syllabus.

4. Training programmes should invest more in script development.

5. Training programmes need to move beyond only supporting ‘auteur’ filmmakers/projects to support producers who are developing audience driven projects.

Comments

• Trainers are at the beginning of the process and need to respond to and reflect the changes that are currently happening – with new formats, new ideas, new people.

• Training should bridge the gap between art and commerce more effectively.

• Training should look for ways to work with new professionals in new programmes, to move beyond involving the same ‘strata’ of clients across the board, drawing from participants who may not be directly involved in the industry.
2. Creativity

The market-oriented approach of MEDIA is relevant to preserve and develop the competitiveness and economic potential of the European audiovisual industry. However, as a public funding scheme devoted to an industry that is primarily cultural, MEDIA also emphasizes creativity. In that perspective, professional training should be reinforced as the space and time for bold experimentation, expansion and dialogue; it should be promoted as a counterweight to the centripetal force of the market. In other words, creativity — even if it cannot be taught — should be at the heart of professional training activities.

Proposals

1. MEDIA should sponsor regular conferences for training organizations and trainers to come together and share innovative programming ideas, innovative training practices and to explore new possibilities for collaboration and new designs in programming.

2. Training programmes should schedule time for creative exploration of projects in addition to the business focused elements.

3. Training programmes should develop creative producers to generate new ideas from books, current events etc.

Comments

• Creativity is not something in isolation. It should be integral to the the overall discussion of creative industries that also includes entrepreneurship and technological implementation.

• Market thinking should embrace the cultural vs. commercial dichotomy. It is not either/or.
• Training providers need to remain open to new ideas and approaches from the up and coming generation. It is also important to recognize that although past experience may not be relevant, the expertise of those who have been in this field for many years can help to shape and execute the new ideas.

• Key to training is to begin with a very clear understanding of the significant cultural differences in contracting, financing, definition of roles (a producer in Europe has a very different role than a producer in China or India) etc, and then to creatively introduce programming that effectively bridges these differences.

3. Cooperative Processes

The value and efficiency of the transmission of skills, new practices and networking has been recognized for many years as core aspects of professional training. **Co-operative processes** [for example between writer-producer-director, or producer and distributor, or the workflow from camera to post-production] are **decisive on and between all levels of the industry, and should therefore be emphasized within training activities.**

**Proposals:**

1. New training programmes should introduce ‘studios’ that will allow directors and actors to explore material without fear of failure.

**Comments**

• It is important to understand the domestic market of the non EU countries, to look at the bigger picture rather than focusing only on specific projects. Training should more effectively address the needs of the industry in the partnering country.
4. Company Development

The training programmes should support the consolidation of the industry by providing — in addition to coaching for professionals and projects — more coaching in company development and management, in order to ensure their viability.

Proposals
1. Although company development is not always relevant to each program, it is relevant to every individual. It is the core skill needed to survive in this industry, and thus it should be addressed in every program.
2. Training programmes for producers should all include entrepreneurship as part of their syllabus.
3. Explore the possibility of introducing cash awards/scholarships for developing people and companies.
4. Training should explore the possibilities of providing scholarships for participants to work with production companies.

Comments
- There is a need to create new business models to transform the film industry as the music industry was transformed.

5. Expansion of Training Fields

Due to the importance of the cooperative processes mentioned under Point 3, the professional training fields supported by MEDIA Training so far (economic, financial and commercial management / new audiovisual technologies / script development) should be expanded to include directing (more than it is currently included), techniques (from camera to postproduction), and acting for the camera.

Proposals
1. A feasibility study should be created to determine if it would be feasible for training funds to be directed toward studios with sounds/lights/editing etc for learning while doing in an active work space.
2. Training needs to determine which skills among cultures are adaptable and build training programmes from there. In China, there is no basic film training — even the European concept of ‘producing’ (production/spending/contracts) is foreign to ‘producers’ in China — their skill sets do not match the expectations of EU producers.
3. More workshops should be dedicated to alternate methods of telling stories or reaching audiences than traditional cinema and TV such as video games, transmedia.
4. Programmes for public funders should also gather distributors, sales agents, producers to address the challenges of distribution and determine if it’s possible to create a force that can stand firm against the American studio invasion.
5. Workshops for directors should be training leaders: it is not enough to be talented as a director. Directors also need to explore 1) the different capacities of each medium and 2) the importance of the audience.
6. More programmes are needed to establish a commonality of terms and ways of working in post etc which are generally so different from country to country.
Comments
- Diversify client base to include young and old encompassing wide cultural differences and possibly different industry backgrounds.

6. Transversal Topics

New media, trans and crossmedia (post HD, 3D, etc.) are mainly transversal topics, meaning that they are related to a large extent to one or several of the film oriented training fields mentioned under Point 5. They should therefore be covered more in-depth within said fields, rather than separately. In other words, the training programmes should integrate these topics as part of any nowadays film package, whether in development, production or distribution. Another but close transversal topic is the bridge (in terms of content and form) for remaining in touch with the audiences of tomorrow. The consolidation of that bridge should be emphasized in all possible ways by the training providers and programmes.

Proposals
1. Given the number of new formats for delivery through cinema, transmedia, the web, more programmes need to offer alternative ways to teach and explore storytelling and look for programmes where writers from different countries can explore the processes together.

Comments
- Storytelling is at the core, and linking to the audience the main issue, and how we can use new technologies for such purpose.
- Storytelling has to be approached fully aware of its potential across platforms. Storytelling offers a potential to games, transmedia, creating brands, etc. in the industrial context.
Considering the rapid development of international exchanges, of co-productions and distribution, as well as the promising experiences made so far under the MEDIA Mundus programme, **professional training should emphasize the extension of its activities beyond European borders, at an international level.** Nevertheless, to make sense, international **training activities have to take into serious consideration the reality of the addressed markets** (coproduction agreements among concerned countries in particular).

**Proposals**

1. It is often very difficult to understand the training needs of non EU partners despite the preparation towards the training program – **more R&D is required to determine in advance how the training program can better reach/influence the development of non EU markets.**

2. Regional funds often can best evaluate the needs of their industry and should have access to MEDIA Mundus funds. The expense of bringing a few trainers to teach a **whole workshop can be more cost effective than sending filmmakers internationally** to train, 1 or 2 at a time.

**Comments**

- An International focus rather than a “Euro centric” focus is crucial to the health of European culture.
- MEDIA Mundus serves as a significant catalyst for co-production but distribution remains a huge problem.
- Regional funding guidelines sometimes do not support the co-pro projects that come out of MEDIA Mundus funded programmes.
- International programmes can influence government policy and support within non EU countries.
- Learning is reciprocal – EU learns from non EU professionals and vice versa.
- International networking needs to be recognized as one of the greatest assets of training short term, and long term.
- One producer can influence change in their country in terms of the attitudes towards training and development, the market accessibility and the Industry as a whole.
8. Evaluation Indicators

Even if training programmes are an integral part of the development, production, distribution and marketing process, they should not be evaluated on the basis of success indicators belonging to the audiovisual industry or to the products themselves (e.g. the number projects produced, their box-office gross), since the realization of these products depends on too many other factors (political, economical, cultural, etc.) besides training. Therefore, training programmes should be evaluated — taking into account creativity and experimentation, skills and new practices, networking and cooperative processes — with respect to

- the evolution of the individual careers
- the evolution of the projects
- the evolution of the companies.

Comments

- When designing and delivering a training course, it’s key that the provider knows in advance who they most wish to meet and influence and how they want to measure results in terms of
  1. projects
  2. company business plans
  3. the industry as a whole.
9. Evaluation Tools

Such evaluation could be done on the basis of:

- a clear positioning of each training programme with respect to the three major services mentioned under Point 4: coaching for professionals / project coaching / coaching for companies
- a questionnaire submitted to the participants and focusing on the three services and their impact for each participant/project/company
- internal and external reports based on the same grid. The existing evaluation tools should be revised in this perspective.

Both the questionnaires, anonymously collected, and the external reports should be fully accessible to the training providers to enable them to update their programmes, if necessary.

Proposals

1. Training organizations need to be creative about designing their own evaluation tools and methodology and then defend their approach when applying for funding.
2. Evaluation and indicators need to be revisited and the process improved. It is not only about data gathering and the collection of statistics but it is also for MEDIA staff to have more dialogue with training providers to understand how processes work and the objectives of the individual program.

Comments

- MEDIA needs to be more proactive in collecting results and the impact of the programmes locally and internationally.

10. Research and Development

In order to secure constant and creative updating of the programmes, the training budgets should foresee a lump sum of 5% of the overall costs of each programme, to be invested every second or third year for Research and Development. Besides using the results of the documents mentioned under Point 9, the updates should be prepared via surveys, external expertise and think tanks.

Proposals

1. Although R&D cannot be financed separately at this time, under the heading of dissemination and evaluations, goals can be set to create new designs/new targets for a program indirectly allowing for R&D.

11. Financing Policy

To play their role within the industry as defined above, the training providers and programmes need sustainable financing. In that perspective, a quadripartite platform encompassing MEDIA Training, national/regional funders, training providers and professionals’ representatives should be established to develop a concerted financing policy.
Proposals

1. As training organizations and MEDIA are allies, strategies need to be developed to bring other funders, and regional support on board both within Europe and beyond, to invest in training and development.

2. MEDIA Mundus should contribute to the development and support of regional networks to improve distribution avenues for films beyond their borders.

3. With the rise of Regional Funds in Europe, a phenomenon of the last 10 years, these Funds should be able to apply to MEDIA for programmes that would directly benefit their regional industries, working with other regional industries and bringing in EU professionals as resources and trainers.

4. MEDIA should explore common strategies among funding bodies that can help each other eg Iberamerica.

5. Training providers should explore links with trade unions such as directors guild, writers guild, DOP guild to identify the needs of the industry and contribute to the cost of delivery.

6. Bring funders together to explore partnerships, common programming needs, solutions to challenges etc as BPX should continue.

Comments

• Despite the focus on training it is evident that funding issues directly affect the programmes and the effectiveness of the delivery

12. Financial Aim

Currently, the annual investment for professional training in Europe can be estimated at around 25 million Euros or 1% of the overall investment for film production (2.5 billion Euros for around 1'200 feature films per year). The financial aim of the quadripartite platform should be to double the amount earmarked for professional training.

Proposals

1. Research and development needs to be included as a percentage of each training budget to ensure that proper preparation goes into fully understanding the differences between film cultures in designing the programmes.

2. Ensure that international training programmes have an overall % of the Creative Europe global budget.
ATC should be acknowledged and financially supported by MEDIA to act as the representative coordination body for the benefit of the development of professional training programmes and providers. Over the years to come, the coordination activities should focus on:

- **lobbying** for and promotion of professional training within the industry, within decision and funding bodies on national, regional and European levels
- **capitalizing on training experiences** to raise the didactic and creative levels of the programmes and stimulate their risk capacity
- **training the trainers** as key players at the didactic and creative levels of the programmes
- **encouraging transversal activities** such as the training of decision makers
- **establishing a European database** of professionals to be used for promotion of training activities
- **renewing training options** for the future.

**Proposals**

1. Training organizations should **consider hiring a lobbyist that can effect change in policies and attitudes at government levels.**
2. A **clear agenda for the future** is needed.
3. A **global platform should be created for all training providers and participants, to report activities, impact and results**, building an international community for networking and audience outreach. This platform could also assist in collecting results for lobbying governments to help spread the word about the effectiveness of the programmes.
4. A **global registry of trainers should be created** to be shared among all training organizations to ensure the rotation of talent among the different programmes and the introduction of new talent.
Final Remarks

• Trainers are invaluable capacity builders.
• MEDIA Mundus funded programmes have had significant influence in affecting/developing industry talent beyond EU borders.
• Both MEDIA and the training providers are allies on a mission to address international training needs that will not only strengthen the industry skill sets of non EU countries, but will reinforce the EU’s position in providing content to the global marketplace.
• Creative Europe needs to support and nurture within the training programmes, the rebalance of freedom and creative expression vs finance and business.
• Both the short term and long term impact and results from the last 7 years of the MM programmes needs to be loudly celebrated and promoted to ensure that funding continue to be available for similar (and new!) international training programmes for the future!

Helping to Shape and Execute New Ideas