



22 April, 2022

Delyth Jewell MS
Chair
Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee
Senedd Cymru

Dear Chair

RE: YOUNG AUDIENCES CONTENT FUND

Thank you for your letter dated 30 March 2022 regarding the UK Government's decision not to provide further finance for the Young Audiences Content Fund (YACF) from the TV Licenec Fee and asking for any examples of the content generated and the influence of the Fund in Wales.

TAC has raised concerns that this Fund is coming to an end and that no further funding has been earmarked to continue the work to support content creation for young audiences. The YACF has been of great value to independent television producers in Wales, some of whom specialise in children's content. The Fund's 5% target for content in indigenous languages has been of great cultural importance to the Welsh language, and has been welcomed as our sector has produced new content for young audiences. We are therefore extremely disappointed that no further funding has been found for it at this stage.

The Fund has also increased plurality, adding to the quality and ambition of children's content with the associated cultural benefits for Wales, while at the same time providing a significant economic boost to the sector in Wales. The funding criteria, including one for nations and regions, have opened the door to co-production opportunities and has ensured that original and successful public service content can be delivered; therefore the influence of the Fund is wide-ranging.

TAC has written to DCMS pressing for further funding for the future. A response was received stating that the Department will undertake a full evaluation of the pilot and that the potential of further investment of public funding will be assessed against the Fund evaluation and alongside future public service broadcasting needs.

TAC has supported the Children's Media Foundation campaign and signed the Open Letter¹ to the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport, Rt Hon Nadine Dorries MP, calling for the continuation of the Fund. The letter now has over 1,000 signatures. In addition, TAC has also signed a second Open Letter² supporting the continuation of the Audio Content Fund (ACF), which has commissioned PSB content for commercial and community radio and has a criteria of nations and regions content. Like the YACF, the Audio Content Fund has also had a target of 5% for indigenous languages but is also at the end of its funding for the three-year pilot stage.

¹ <https://www.thechildrensmediafoundation.org/the-young-audiences-content-fund-campaign>

² <https://www.audiocontentfundfuture.org>

There are independent production companies who are members of TAC that have received development funding through the Young Audiences Content Fund and there is clearly uncertainty about the fate of future projects as the Fund comes to an end. I attach evidence from Telegop, Cwmni Da and Boom which provides examples of the content they have produced and the benefits and influence of the Fund to them.

The evidence shows that the Fund has opened up opportunities for companies to produce children's content for the first time, develop further series, enable the creation of digital content to attract young people to view, enable the funding of hard-to-fund programmes such as dramas for young people and create Welsh-language content that competes with SVoD services. It is no exaggeration to say that several high-quality programmes would not have been made had it not been for this Fund.

In supporting the creation of content for young audiences, the Fund has also provided work and employment opportunities, has extended opportunities for young people from mixed backgrounds in deprived areas and has given young people the opportunity to gain commissions for the first time.

Companies will certainly find it more difficult to produce children's content series as a result of the loss of the Fund and the situation is now creating uncertainty in terms of children's content production budgets for the future. The Young Audiences Content Fund has been vital in producing first-class content for children and young people in Wales and also in the Welsh language.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this information.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dyfrig Davies', written in a cursive style.

Dyfrig Davies
TAC Chair



Ymateb Cwmni Da i bwysigrwydd Cronfa YAC

Fe gafodd dau gynhyrchiad gan Cwmni Da gefnogaeth gan y Gronfa Cynnwys Cynulleidfaedd Ifanc yn 2021 sef Hei Hanes! a PersonA.

Hei Hanes!

Cyfres Ddrama ar Hanes Cymru

5 x 20' i blant 7-13 oed

Roedd y gyllideb hon yn heriol, gydag ail-greu hanes mae'r costau yn uchel a'r ffaith bod stori unigol o wahanol 'gyfnod' ym mhob rhaglen yn golygu costau uwch byth. Her arall oedd cyflwyno'r deunydd mewn fformat fyddai'n plesio y gwylwr ifanc a hefyd yr angen i gynnig deunydd digidol i'w denu i wyllo rhaglen gyfan.

Heb gyfraniad YAC Fund fyddai hon heb gyrraedd y sgrin, does dim amheuaeth. Tydi'r rhyddhad treth rhaglenni plant yn unig ddim yn galluogi Darlledwyr a Chynhyrchwyr i greu deunydd sy'n ddigon beiddgar i gystadlu â hynny sydd ar Netflix a'i debyg - sef y rhaglenni rheiny sydd ar blât i ran fwyaf o blant. Mae'r her yn fwy i ddenu'r gwylwr ifanc hyn i barhau i wyllo rhaglenni yn eu mamiaith ar ôl cyfnod meithrin.

Peth arall wnaeth y cynhyrchiad hwn, a'r ariannu tu ôl iddo, oedd ein galluogi i hysbysebu am griw amrywiol ac yn sgil hynny daeth merch ifanc o gefndir cymysg i weithio yn yr ochr dechnegol o'r criw. Ar gyllideb plant arferol byddai'r criw ychwanegol yma, o ba bynnag gefndir, ddim wedi cael ei ariannu. Llwyddodd arian YAC i Cwmni Da ddod ag aelod ifanc newydd i'r staff sydd bellach ar gynllun 12 mis yn ein hadran gamerâu / technegol.

PersonA

Cyfres Ddrama 6 x 15' i bobl ifanc 12-16 oed

Gyda'r gynulleidfa hon o ardegwyr ifanc yn cael eu colli ac yn anodd iawn eu cyrraedd, datblygwyd y gyfres ddrama hon am brofiadau bywyd ardegwyr er mwyn eu cadw i wyllo rhaglenni yn eu mamiaith yn hytrach na gorfod neidio drosodd i blatfformau amgen am ddeunydd y galla nhw uniaethu ag o.

Mae drama yn anodd ei ariannu, mae drama plant / ieuentid yn anos fyth gyda thariff yr awr yn llai o'r cychwyn er bod y gwaith angen bod yr un mor gywrain, a dweud y gwir mae angen bod yn fwy perffaith i gadw gwylwr 12-16 oed rhag fflicio.

Bu rhaid addasu sgript y gyfres hon droeon iddi ffitio'r gyllideb oedd ar gael, gyda'r weledigaeth wreiddiol yn gobeithio elfennau ychwanegol a mwy o ran ecstras a lleoliadau ayb. Roedd hyn **gydag** arian YAC fund - heb hwnnw byddai heb adael y cam datblygu cyntaf hwnnw.

Roedd hon yn gyfres a grëwyd gan sgript wraig ifanc a hon oedd ei chomisiwn cyntaf hi, er iddi sgriptio rhaglenni meithrin yn y gorffennol. Roedd yn gyfle euraidd i feithrin talent ifanc, yn ferch ac o ardal ddifreintiedig yng Ngogledd Cymru.

Cwmni Da's response to the importance of the YAC Fund

Two productions by Cwmni Da received support through the Young Audience Content Fund in 2021 called Hei Hanes! and PersonA.

Hei Hanes!

Drama Series on Welsh History

5 x 20' for children aged 7-13

This budget was challenging, with the re-creating of history the costs are high and that an individual story from a different 'period' in each programme means even higher costs. Another challenge was to present the material in a format that would please the young viewer and also the need to offer digital material to attract them to watch a whole programme.

Without the contribution of the YAC Fund this would not have reached the screen, there is no doubt. The tax relief on children's programmes on its own does not enable Broadcasters and Producers to create material that is daring enough to compete with that on Netflix and its like - those programmes that are on a plate for most children. The challenge is greater to attract these young viewers to continue to watch programmes in their mother tongue after nursery stage.

Another thing that this production allowed, and the funding behind it, was to enable us to advertise for a diverse crew and as a result a young girl from a mixed background came to work on the technical side of the crew. On a normal children's budget this extra crew, from whatever background, would not have been funded.

YAC funding enabled Cwmni Da to succeed in bringing in a new young member of staff who is now on a 12 month scheme in our camera / technical department.

PersonA

Drama Series 6 x 15' for young people aged 12-16

With this audience of young teenagers being lost and very hard to reach, this drama series about the life experiences of teenagers was developed to keep them watching programmes in their mother tongue rather than having to jump over to alternative platforms for material they can relate to.

Drama is difficult to fund, children/youth drama is even more difficult with the hourly tariff being less from the outset even though the work needs to be just as elaborate, in fact it needs to be even more perfect to keep viewers aged 12-16 from flicking.

The script for this series had to be adapted on several occasions to fit the budget available, with the original vision hoping for additional and larger elements in terms of extras and locations etc. This was **with** YAC funding - without this it would not have left that first stage of development.

This was a series created by a young scriptwriter and this was her first commission, although she had scripted nursery programmes in the past. It was a golden opportunity to nurture young talent, a female and from a deprived area of North Wales.





Ymateb Boom i bwysigrwydd Cronfa YAC

Boom Plant yw un o gynhyrchwyr mwyaf, yn ôl oriau cynhyrchwyd, ym maes cynnwys teledu plant yn y DU. Yn graidd i hyn mae ein gwasanaethau meithrin (Cyw) a phlant (Stwnsh) i S4C, sydd fel Darlledwr Cyhoeddus yn un o fuddsoddwr mwyaf cynnwys i blant, gan gydnabod y cyfraniad allweddol mae'r cynnwys yn ei gael at ein diwylliant ac i'r iaith Gymraeg. Mae gan Boom Cymru brofiad o ddatblygu fformatau llwyddiannus ar gyfer S4C, sydd wedi arwain at gynhyrchu fersiynau Saesneg o Prosiect Z (2 gyfres o Project Z ar gyfer CiTV) ac Y Liffert (Ludus ar gyfer CBBC).

Mae'r YACF wedi galluogi Boom Plant i greu ac ennill comisiynau mwy uchelgeisiol ar gyfer S4C a Channel 5; cyfresi na fyddai wedi gweld golau dydd ar sail tariffau presennol y darlledwyr, yn enwedig drama i blant a chyfresi arloesol. Mae'r YACF wedi ei anelu at gynnwys i Ddarlledwyr Cyhoeddus gyda lwfans penodol wedi ei glustnodi ar gyfer ceisiadau ieithoedd brodorol y DU; golyga hyn bod S4C a'r sector cynhyrchu yng Nghymru yn medru manteisio yn sylweddol o'r Gronfa. Mae hefyd wedi agor y drws i gyfleoedd cyd-gynhyrchu i gynhyrchwyr S4C a Chymru gan fod creu fersiwn Gymraeg yn ychwanegu mantais bendant at gais i'r Gronfa.

Hyd yn hyn mae Boom Plant wedi cynhyrchu tri phrosiect a gefnogir gan YACF, ac ar fin dechrau cynhyrchu ar y pedwerydd, sef

- Y Gyfrinach (S4C)
- Meet the Experts (Channel 5)
- Byd Tad Cu (S4C) cyd-gynhyrchiad "The World According to Grandpa" gan Saffron Cherry ar gyfer Channel 5
- Y Goleudy (S4C)

Cyfanswm refeniw'r prosiectau hyn yw tua £ 2.5m gyda'r mwyafrif helaeth o'r gwariant a'r gwaith yn digwydd yng Nghymru.

Mae Meet the Experts a The World According to Grandpa wedi perfformio'n dda ac wedi cael eu hail-gomisiynu, yn ddibynnol ar sicrhau cyllid gan YAC.

Mae credydau Treth Plant, ynghyd â'r YACF wedi bod yn hanfodol i wrthdroi'r gostyngiad mewn buddsoddiad gan Ddarlledwyr Cyhoeddus yng nghynnwys Plant ar draws y DU. Mae hefyd wedi cynnal amrywiaeth dewis, gwella ansawdd ac uchelgais cynnwys Plant â'r budd diwylliannol cysylltiedig i Gymru, ac ar yr un pryd rhoi hwb economaidd sylweddol i'r sector yng Nghymru.

Boom's response to the importance of the YAC Fund

Boom Plant are one of the largest producers of Children's TV content by volume in the UK. Key to this is our pre-school (Cyw) and older children's (Stwnsh+) services for S4C who are a significant PSB investor in children's content given its crucial cultural importance to the Welsh language. Our track record of developing successful formats for S4C has led to Boom Plant producing English language versions of Prosiect Z (2 series of Project Z for CiTV) and Y Liff (Ludus for CBBC).

The launch of YACF has enabled Boom Plant to pitch and win more ambitious projects for both S4C and Channel 5, which previously wouldn't have been affordable by the Broadcasters based on their existing tariffs, in particular children's drama and more ambitious live action series. YACF funding criteria, ie free to air PSB content with UK indigenous language applications being strongly encouraged, means that S4C and the Welsh production sector are significant beneficiaries of the Fund. The funding criteria has also helped provide more co-production opportunities for S4C and Welsh producers given the strength their involvement will add to applications.

To date Boom Plant have produced three YACF supported projects and are currently in pre-production for a fourth, ie:

- Y Gyfrinach (S4C)
- Meet the Experts (Channel 5)
- Byd Tad Cu (S4C) as a co-production of Saffron Cherry's "The World According to Grandpa" for Channel 5
- Y Goleudy (S4C)

These projects have combined revenue of c. £2.5m with the vast majority of the spend and employment being in Wales.

Meet the Experts and The World According to Grandpa have both performed well and have been recommissioned for series two subject to confirmation of YACF funding.

Together with the availability of Children's Tax credits, the YACF has been critical in reversing the reduction in investment in PSB Children's content nationally, increasing plurality, upping the quality and ambition of Children's content with the associated cultural benefits for Wales, and at the same providing significant economic growth to the sector in Wales.

boomcymru



Ymateb Telesgop i bwysigrwydd Cronfa YAC

Mae Telesgop yn newydd i gynhyrchu rhaglenni plant. Mae'r ffynhonnell YAC wedi caniatáu i ni fuddsoddi i sicrhau fod ein cyfres gyntaf i CYW sef "Fferm Fach" y gorau y gallai fod. Heb arian YAC fe fyddai wedi bod yn amhosib ffilmio'r gyfres yn ystod Covid 19 a phandemig y fflw adar. Roedd y ffynhonnell ychwanegol o gyllid nid yn unig yn allweddol wrth greu animeiddio ar gyfer y gyfres ond hefyd wedi ein helpu wrth orfod ail drefnu yr amserlen ffilmio oherwydd y pandemig.

Roedd y cyllid ychwanegol yn caniatáu i ni fuddsoddi ymhellach mewn datblygu ar gyfer ail gyfres ac i ystyried datblygu a chynhyrchu pethau ychwanegol i'r gyfres e.e. deunydd darllen digidol. Fodd bynnag, mae cau'r gronfa hon nawr yn golygu bod ein cyllideb ar gyfer yr ail gyfres o "Fferm Fach" yn llawer mwy tynn ac mae'r sefyllfa'n llawer anoddach heb sicrwydd cyllid.

Telesgop's response to the importance of the YAC Fund

At Telesgop we are new to producing children's programmes. The YAC Fund has allowed us to invest time and planning so we could make sure our first CYW series "Fferm Fach" is the best it can be. Without the YAC fund our production would not have been able to be shot during the Covid 19 and Bird Flu Pandemics. The extra funding was not only instrumental in creating animation for the series, but also helped us when we had to rearrange the filming schedule due to the pandemic.

This extra funding allows us to invest further in development time for a second series and to consider developing and producing spin-offs/add-ons to the series eg digital reading material. However, the closure of this fund now means that our budget for the second series of "Fferm Fach" is much tighter and the situation is much more difficult without the assurance of funding.

Will Samuel, Cynhyrchydd / Producer

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