

# WICKED WALES FFILM

February 2022

*'Codi proffil rhyngwladol Cymru drwy ein phobl ifanc, ein hiaith, a'r diwydiannau creadigol.'*

*'Raising the international profile of Wales through its young people, our language, and the creative industries'*

## How can the cultural sector in Wales best be supported to work internationally?

This paper has been prepared to share the thoughts and the stories from one organisation's international experiences and possibly highlight common experiences shared by other organisations in Wales. We are passionate about the importance of young people working internationally and want to bring our knowledge to this important discussion.

The overall key conclusions from our organisation as to what support is needed comes down to ways of working and funding. We need to work more in partnership in Wales and be more aware of what we are all achieving. By doing this, funding could be more targeted and deliver more value for money. Project funding delivers a project but longer-term funding delivers a longer-term change.

Wicked Wales Film has collaborated internationally with many partners over ten years. We are a community-based youth organisation in North Wales with an extensive global reach. We work with young people at a grassroots level and for many years have been actively promoting Wales internationally, mainly through film.

We have screened over 1,000 international films at our festivals, working with over 40 Countries worldwide. These Countries currently include seventeen EU Countries, Russia, China, Canada, Nepal, USA, Brazil, Mexico, Iran, India, Pakistan, Australia. We have been the first contact from Wales for most of these partners.

We have a year-round international programme of collaborative projects developing the skills of young creatives in Wales. Each year we run an International Youth Film Festival screening short films made by young people from all over the world. Currently, having screened films from Wales at the Madrese Student Short Film Festival in Tehran, Iran, in 2021, we have a ten-week filmmaking project with young people from Iran and Wales.



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We were a founding member and the only UK representative on the Youth Cinema Network (YCN), currently working with over 30 Youth Film Festivals worldwide. The successful working of this network inspired our organisation to develop a new festival network in Wales which now boasts a membership of over 30 festivals.

We are incredibly ambitious to share Wales with the world. This was recently illustrated when a film made at our festival was chosen for the UK/China Contemporary Culture Festival, resulting in a global audience of over 500,000 learning about Wales from our film *O'r Graig/From The Rock*, which is about two young filmmakers who go to explore how the slate industry in North Wales created a town & a tight-knit community that's proud of its heritage.



## O'r Graig

Film: <https://vimeo.com/654065650>

Password: OrGraig2021

Artist/Arts organisation	Programme	Total post views	Total video views
Artes Mundi	Prabhakar Pachpute Exhibition	63,009	8,526
National Dance Company Wales	Plethu/Weave Project	45,509	5,200
<b>Wicked Wales Films</b>	<b>O'r Graig</b>	<b>500,244</b>	<b>51,040</b>

Viewing figures from UK/China Contemporary Festival

### How can international work be supported? What are the barriers to future development?

Many of the challenges for our organisation working internationally existed pre-Covid and pre-Brexit. However, Brexit has brought more cost and complications for taking our young people to festivals overseas and providing that life-changing experience for them and our overseas guests wanting to visit our festival.

A positive is that our international work during Covid has increased. We have embraced new online global engagement, bringing new innovations to our work. One example is the 60 young filmmakers from six countries who came together online to programme our last two festivals and choose the festival awards. Other projects which illustrate what is being achieved can be seen from our two case studies included later in this paper.

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## Support for International Work

Our experiences over ten years of international work has been in the context of working in some of the most deprived wards in Wales, where more interventions are necessary to deliver an equality of opportunity for all young people in Wales. We have recently brought talented young creatives together from all over Wales with the task of finding the films being made by their contemporaries in Wales and helping get them screened internationally. This is part of the work programme of our Ffilm Ifanc/Young Film team, a new team of young creative leaders.

In terms of support for international engagement, for an organisation based in North Wales, part of the challenge is connecting with the discussions taking place in Cardiff. Our work is strategic and successfully promotes Wales on a global stage. Our work delivers on many of the Welsh Parliament's strategic aims and objectives. Still, we don't seem to be able to develop any meaningful long-term relationships with the government, even though we are delivering on the same agendas. They have no idea what we are doing, and we don't know whom the key people to connect are. For example, given our work, we would welcome the opportunity to share our work with the Wales Global Diaspora. I am sure some of the Consular Representatives in Wales would welcome hearing about the work we are doing Countries they represent.

The second key element of support needed is the funding. Our experience has been that most funding bodies will not fund international work. Fortunately, we have received approval from the British Council and Wales Arts International to develop our work. Our work is project funded and delivered by a dedicated and talented freelance team.

Project funding does not allow for research, longer-term strategic planning and building on the work of successful projects long term. I am sure other bodies like Wicked Wales Film would like to share their knowledge and experiences to support other projects.

## Case studies

### International Youth Media Summit (IYMS)

IYMS and Wicked have been active partners for the last six years. IYMS is an organisation based in Nepal working with UNESCO, UNICEF and UN Women, helping to give young people a voice about their society through their films.

In 2021, 4 young filmmakers from Wales worked with filmmakers from Nepal, Sri Lanka and India to make short films to promote their Countries from a young person's point of view'. The project 'Our Lives Our Stories, Our Countries' delivered seven wonderfully different films. The four beautiful films from Wales shared the landscape, the language, the poetry, the diversity and the history of Wales. The films from Wales can be accessed from the IYMS website and shared with all their connections worldwide.

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In 2022 our two organisations are now hoping to deliver an incredibly exciting project working with eight other ODA Countries. 'Our House' is a virtual international cultural centre with virtual galleries, cinemas, library coffee shop and various spaces. The galleries will be curated by multiple countries artwork and films, with the theme for 2022 is 'Global Change'. We are currently waiting to see if we have been successful with our funding application.

## Ffilm Ifanc/Young Ffilm

We are working with young creatives to build an international movement in Wales for our 'Next Generation Nation in the creative industries.'

After many years of concerns and frustrations, we experienced no films made by young people from Wales being entered into international festivals, and even in Wales, they were not being seen on a big screen. Such opportunities to share Welsh culture and its language were being missed. We knew films were being made, and we had the talent in Wales, so where was the disconnect? We decided the best way to find the films was to recruit other young people. Wicked Wales has developed Ffilm Ifanc/Young Film to do this work.

In conclusion, what support would benefit organisations and Wales working internationally, helping our global reach and sharing our culture worldwide while changing the lives of young people in Wales. We need to work together, sharing our contacts, ideas, and achievements. For our organisation, we would like to know whom to talk to developing our work for the benefit of Wales and its young people. We would welcome more opportunities to access funding that can be used for the longer-term planning of international work. If we work more together, we should achieve a more significant impact and give better value for money.



*Gwnaethpwyd yng Nghymru wedi'i weld gan y byd  
Made in Wales Seen by the World*

*Wedi'i wneud yn y byd a welir yng Nghymru  
Made by the world Seen in Wales*