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I very much welcome the opportunity to respond to this consultation process about the future of film and television in Wales. My comments will focus on my experience of working with young people who want to be part of the future creative industries in Wales.

My comments will be an honest reflection of my own personal experiences of working to support and inspire young people with experiences in the arts and media over the last 30 years at a community, national and International level.

More recently in the last 5 years I have attended 19 International Youth Film Festivals in 9 Countries to look at their successes and effectiveness in preparing young people for the industry, particularly looking at skills development, making the connections and showcasing their short films and their Countries on an international platform. I also looked at how they were funded and the support from Governments. All the areas which I believe are pertinent to this inquiry and in particular to developing a strong and sustainable media industry, by supporting the young people now who will be part of those future developments.

I need to make the point at this stage, of the 19 Festivals which I attended over 5 years and which screened thousands of films from all over the world only ONE film from Wales was screened.

Why is that, when the young people in Wales are making good films? Could it be the lack of a Youth Film Festival structure in Wales? Festivals in other Countries are valued and seen as benefiting local communities and economies, identifying new talent, an opportunity for international engagement and showcasing their Country on an international platform.

The successes and growth of the Festivals seem to be about their value and level of support.

The work we do as a small organisation, with big ambitions, run by volunteers is a challenge and opportunities are lost. The funding regime in Wales does not support the work we are trying to develop as most of our funding is project based and does not allow for building capacity or real growth.

Our work is totally in line with the aims of the new Welsh Government Economic Action Plan but it is all about developing young people rather than supporting business, and this is where it seems to fall through the funding gaps.

We are not quite education because we are working with but outside of the learning institutions, we are not quite tourism even though we have brought over 50 international guests to Wales over the last couple of years and taken the Welsh flag and brochures to 9 other Countries , we are not quite regeneration but we could be.

A graphic illustration of the difficulties in supporting young people was the demise of the South Wales young people's Festival ZOOM, working in areas of deprivation for 10 years, a wonderful success story providing the only film opportunities to young people in areas of deprivation but it could not survive.

We have skills shortages in Wales and at the same time young people desperate to get into the industry but don't know how and in North Wales we have the added geographical barrier.

Two examples we have managed

A meeting in Cardiff – Cost to a Cardiff young person £0, cost to a person from Rhyl with accommodation and train fare £140

Training event at the BFI – Cost to young person in London £30 Cost to a young person from Rhyl £241.50

WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN

New approaches new priorities and new values with regard to the future workers of the industry.

Unless there is a change of emphasis and we invest, value and support our young creatives outside of the learning institutions we will continue to have the skills shortages and deny enthusiastic young people the opportunity to enter the industry.

Festivals can be the conduit which helps to bring this about, let us learn from the countries that have moved so far ahead of Wales in supporting their young people and delivering successful vibrant industries.

If the Assembly would like to learn more from our successful International partners, I would suggest Nisse Koltze from Station Next, Denmark and Marija Ratkovic Vidakovic who was responsible for developing the successful Four River Festival in Croatia. There would also be an opportunity for a fact finding visit to Denmark in August when the Youth Cinema Network conference takes place.

Our Programme

2016–2018 – During this period we were able to connect and support young people in North Wales with skills training and visits to Festivals in Cardiff, Birmingham, Sheffield, London, Berlin, Greece, Ireland and Serbia

2018–2019 – We will lead an Erasmus+ project with Sweden, Greece, Ireland and Croatia. The project will develop an international network for young film makers and opportunities for exchange programmes.

Developing a project with Ireland creating short films in the Welsh and Irish language

Developing an animation project with Brazil making films about the myths and legends from each Country

Continue to develop our creative hub for young people in Rhyl, working with the Rhyl Little Theatre which is home to our cinema and our newly opened Wicked Film office which will be run by our young Programmers as part of a Film Hub Wales programme.

We want to also play an active role in helping with the regeneration of Rhyl through the creative industries.

If there is an opportunity I would be very happy to give evidence as part of the consultation exercise