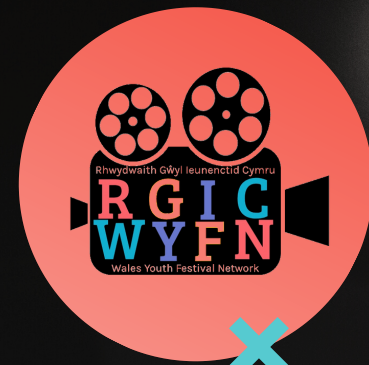


YOUNG PEOPLE AND INDEPENDENT CINEMA

DEVELOPING A MARKETING/OUTREACH PLAN



CURRENT SITUATION

These days most film festivals and independent cinemas recognise the need to engage with young people. They are, after all not just an audience for now but the audience of the future and evidence suggests developing a rapport with local young people is most definitely an investment in the future audience of your organisation.

However, how to go about bringing young people into screenings and events isn't as simple as just putting on a film and opening the doors – as we all know. A plan of action – in the shape of a marketing/outreach document can really help an organisation to focus on what the strategy is for developing young people as a regular core audience.


Also, with so much activity taking place online now it is worth considering whether some online engagement/activity might be a useful way of making initial contact as this can then act as a gateway towards bringing young people into venues. See the resources section for more suggestions around online screenings/activity.

Clearly there are safeguarding implications for any work which takes place with young people aged under 18 and/or with vulnerable adults (including staff and volunteers). See the resources section if you need help ensuring your organisation is fully up to speed with safeguarding policies and procedures.







THINGS TO CONSIDER



Developing a marketing/outreach strategy to engage young people may take some time if this is a new area for an organisation. If, however, the numbers of young people already attending screenings is reasonable and you have solid local connections with partner organisations such as schools, colleges and youth groups, then defining what it is that you are already doing is a good place to start. When developing a marketing/outreach plan there are several things to consider:

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1. What is the Goal?
 2. Developing a Marketing Plan
 3. Identify Your Strategy
 4. Consider existing Models of Practice
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STEP 1: THE GOAL

The goal may be simple – to bring in more young people to watch independent films. 'Buy-in' from senior managers, board members, key stakeholders and staff is essential as implementing any goal needs to fit with an organisation's mission and key values.

If the organisation is supportive then practical things to consider might be:

- What your programming policies are (do you for example screen a minimum number of independent British and International films?)
- Do you have a membership scheme (and if so what does this offer e.g. money off concessions, including food and drink, some additional free tickets throughout the year, invite a friend for free, invitations to special screenings and events)
- Do you offer a sliding scale for ticket prices?
- Are your screenings inclusive and is your programming policy diverse?
- If you are based in a more rural area, have you considered transport? Some young people are very restricted by the timetables of public transport – consider varying the start and finishing times of screenings
- Do you offer added value - Q&As, introductions, workshops etc
- Do you offer ways for young people to get involved with the programming? – for example do you have a young people's programming group? Do you have intern/volunteer opportunities, and ideally do you offer any paid employment for young people/ are young people on the board of your organisation?
- How do you market your offer to young people? Are you confident using social media?

STEP 2: DEVELOPING A MARKETING PLAN

Most film venues and festivals will already have a marketing plan which include sections on priority audiences. This will be a good place to start to see if your plan needs updating to reflect engaging with young people as a target audience. Adaptability can be key and one model of marketing plan might not work for all. The plan also needs to be fluid to accommodate change and challenges. Audience development takes time and mistakes can happen, despite having everything in place, developing a new audience can be slow for any an organisation and there will be some trial and error along the way. Learn from mistakes and evolve, you will get there. The marketing plan as such can be a 'living document'.

There are plenty of templates available online if your organisation doesn't have one and help and training are available from lots of sources including:

- The Audience Agency**
- WCVA The Audience Agency**
- Independent Cinema Office: Independent Cinema Office**

STEP 2: DEVELOPING A MARKETING PLAN

A marketing plan generally is all about outlining who your target market is, how you will reach this market with a view to ultimately creating audience loyalty. A well thought through marketing plan can be used to keep an organisation on track, to help secure funding and to demonstrate to funders your core business strategies and how you will implement them. It should be revisited regularly throughout the year.

Key to a good plan are the following:


- **Defining your audience – perhaps conduct some research so that you have some up to date data**
- **Identifying marketing strategies to reach and communicate with your audience – programming publicity flyers, posters, social media, mailing list, networking etc**
- **Evaluating the success of your programming and gathering audience data and response**





STEP 3: IDENTIFY YOUR STRATEGY



Talking with and listening to young people is crucial. Getting feedback from those you are trying to engage with is important. What are the younger members of our society interested in and are you going through the right channels in connecting with them and in the right tone of voice? Be prepared to embrace new digital platforms but only do this if you have the confidence and resources in place first.



Your strategy to engage with local young people will need you to identify the following:

- **The offer**
 - **Aims**
 - **Objectives**
 - **Timelines for delivery**
 - **Staffing and Resources**
 - **Partners**
 - **Budget**
 - **Evaluation** – is this data based (ticket sales, audience surveys) or anecdotal (e.g. through focus groups, vox pops etc)
 - **Legacy** – how will you build on developing this audience and offer future opportunities for young people?
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This will take to work through, gather information and consult with staffing teams and stakeholders.



STEP 4: EXAMPLES

Into Film Cymru is a good place to start if you are looking to find out about different ways of engaging young people. For young people aged 5-19 and in education, Into Film is a valuable resource for school-run film clubs, creative and critical film-related competitions, filmmaking awards and year-round school cinema trips including The Into Film Festival, the largest free film festival for young people in the world! Into Film works closely with cinemas, film societies and film hub member organisations to help develop relationships between schools and their local venues. If you'd like to find out more or discuss how Into Film can support your organisation, email cardiff@intofilm.org

There are also numerous examples of cinemas and film festivals engaging successfully with local young people in terms of their programme offer and running young programmers groups.

If you are looking for inspiration taking place in Wales consider:

Wicked Wales Films: Youth organisation | Wicked Wales | Wales

Torch Theatre: Young Film Ambassadors

Cell B: CellB - Creative, Blaenau Ffestiniog, North Wales

And outside of Wales:

Lumi, Queens Film Theatre, Belfast: LUMI | Queen's Film Theatre

We are Parable

Glasgow Youth Film Festival

Film Hub South East: this is a very successful support network for young programmers groups across this region, offering programme support, training and networking. For more information:

Young Film Programmers' Network - Independent Cinema Office

RESOURCES

Developing Online screenings/festivals

Going Virtual: Staying Connected with Audiences Online - Film Hub Wales | Canolfan Ffilm Cymru %

Resource: Taking Festival Events Online | Ffilm Cymru (ffilmcymruwales.com)

Safeguarding

FAN Young Audiences Safeguarding Resource

For further support with engaging young audiences or advice on setting up a Young Programmers group, contact:

Wales Youth Festival Network Coordinator, Lorraine Mahoney lmahoney.wyfn@outlook.com

BFI Fan Young Audiences Lead, Moira McVean: moira.mcvean@filmlondon.org.uk



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WYFN is an informal network of film festivals and exhibitors across Wales. The network has been set up to support young people seeing more independent films and to support and promote screenings, festivals and events for young audiences. The network is supported by Wicked Wales Films. Thanks to members of the WYFN advisory group for help with this document.