



kids  regio

Discourse on the Future of European Children's Film

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Connecting the Dots



*How do we move
towards a vital and
vibrant European
children's film culture?*

MILESTONES OF THE LAST 10 YEARS



KIDS Regio presents a lobby initiative for high-quality and multi-faceted European Children's Films. It functions as an agent between policy and society, the film industry and the scientific world in order to form a network and discuss new synergies.

Thus, the initiative supports the industry professionals by building a platform to strengthen existing networks and defining solutions to improve the status, transfer and variety of European productions and co-productions for a young audience.

KIDS Regio particularly supports original live-action feature films, which offer children a wide range of stories, genres and styles. Moreover, the initiative promotes children's film as an essential part of cultural diversity. This includes the support of film literacy and its implementation into school curricula to introduce and recommend cinema and film as an art form.



Nicola Jones



Anne Schultka

2009

2010

2011

2012

2013



1st KIDS Regio Forum in Erfurt, Germany organised by Dana Messerschmidt and Margret Albers.

KIDS Regio and The Financing Forum for Kids Content in Malmö collaborated for the first time, an event took place every following year up until now.

The European Film Academy is hosting the Young Audience Award, an idea that was initiated at the 1st KIDS Regio Forum in 2009.

Start of German initiative Outstanding Films for Children, that was discussed during the 1st KIDS Regio Forum in 2009.



In 2009, KIDS Regio was established by different European initiators and found an anchor point within the framework of Cine Regio. At the 1st KIDS Regio Forum in Erfurt, 100 participants from 17 countries set the direction for the coming decade. Following the tagline “The Future of European Children’s Film”, the participants agreed on the Erfurt Declaration in order to build a political and cultural momentum. In the following, KIDS Regio hosted a multitude of events and meeting points in Europe, acting as a mediator between academics, politicians and the children’s media industry.

In 2014, the 2nd KIDS Regio Forum entitled “Children as Audience – Challenges and Potentials from the Perspective of Research and Practice” was once again hosted in Erfurt. Experts from 18 European countries came together, aiming to detail the Erfurt Declaration of 2009 by identifying both the specific needs of the young audience and the nature of the market.

Subsequently, the needs and viewing habits of the young audience have been addressed in several events, especially considering changes in the line of distribution and the emergence of new technologies. KIDS Regio found valuable allies in The Financing Forum for Kids Content in Malmö and the Warsaw Kids Film Forum, partnering up in order to address important topics around children’s film as well as to present case studies and best practice initiatives.

2014

2015

2016

2017

2018

2019

The Creative Europe MEDIA Programme introduced a special regulation for the distribution of children’s films. In addition, greater attention was given to audience development and film literacy. The impulse for this was given at the 1st KIDS Regio Forum and taken up again at the 2nd.

2nd KIDS Regio Forum 2014 in Erfurt, Germany organised by Viola Gabrielli and Margret Albers.

The German-Dutch Children’s Co-Development Film Fund of Mitteldeutsche Medienförderung and the Netherlands Film Fund was initiated. It was first announced at the 2nd KIDS Regio Forum in 2014.



The Warsaw Kids Film Forum – a co-production and financing market similar to The Financing Forum for Kids Content – was established in Poland. KIDS Regio acted as an adviser using its valuable network.

Throughout the year, based on the demands from participants of the 1st and 2nd KIDS Regio Forum for better and more reliable research, different studies were set up, e.g. the continuous work of Dr. Steffi Ebert in cooperation with KIDS Regio and ECFA.

3rd KIDS Regio Forum 2019 in Weimar, Germany organised by Anne Schultka and Nicola Jones.



KIDS Regio Forum 2019

An open space for new ideas

*A Collaboratory
– a collaborative laboratory
– is a space open to everybody
and in particular to concerned stake-
holders, where they can meet on an equal
basis and discuss burning societal issues.
A Collaboratory focuses on real-life issues
and provides solutions that are driven by issues,
not by theory. It thus uses conceptual inter-
actions to visualise and enhance cooperation
between organisations and communities
as well as individuals, and therefore
grants powerful insights into
shared and diverse
experiences.*



*How can we learn from
each other and collectively
reach our shared goals?*

The KIDS Regio Forum 2019 was set up as an interactive conference serving as a **Collaboratory**. It enabled all attendees to reflect upon the effects of their own work, their goals for the industry, and their assumptions for the future of the European children's film. The Forum also provided them with an opportunity to internalise different perspectives and beliefs.

As the process was designed to be driven by action research, it aims at questioning, understanding, developing and improving social practices. The preliminary schedule was intentionally created to be open to real-time developments during the conference.



The set up followed the equation:



Establishing the status quo of the children's film industry, while identifying shared as well as individual challenges.

Speakers from the industry and beyond provide knowledge transfer by sharing best practices, research and inspirational thoughts.

Taking into account the previous steps, the participants individually and collectively envision a future for the European children's film.

Thematically focused groups work together to develop concrete measures and actions.

All of this combined concludes with the Weimar Declaration and the "Discourse on the Future of European Children's Film".

The Participants

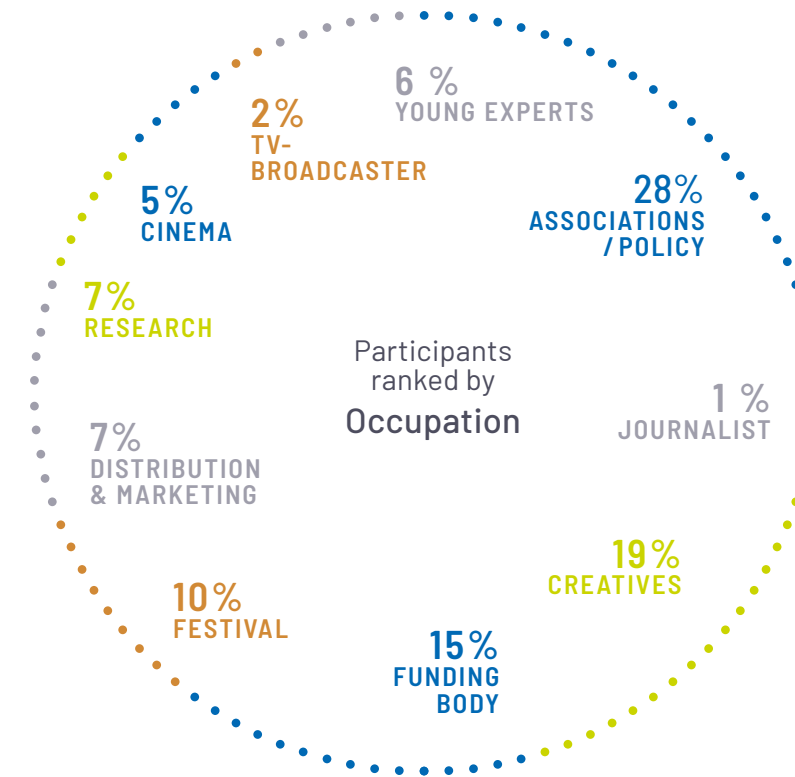
Countries of origin

Germany
Belgium
Netherlands
Croatia
Denmark
Poland
Norway
Spain
Sweden
France
United Kingdom
Austria
Canada
Czech Republic
Slovakia
Estonia
Greece
Israel
Italy
Kenya
Lithuania
Luxembourg
Finland
Switzerland

The aim of KIDS Regio was to create an interactive atmosphere in which representatives from all parts of Europe are valued experts and in which participants from different disciplines, countries and regions can get together and exchange ideas.

The organisers of the 3rd KIDS Regio Forum 2019 wanted to ensure that as many parts of Europe as possible would be represented and that no hegemonies would be established, creating a future laboratory for a stronger and more cohesive European children's film industry.

An interdisciplinary atmosphere was created, so encouraging participants to gain new perspectives on their expertise and insights into other fields of work. Following the approach that changes are only enabled by establishing new synergies, KIDS Regio invited experts from all areas of the children's film industry and beyond.



Participants ranked by Occupation

In addition to the 80 industry experts, **five young experts** were invited to participate in the discourse. The children from Erfurt, who are attending the 7th grade of a public high school, first came into touch with curated European children's films at the EFA Young Audience Award 2019.

As they had no prior experience in film literacy or the film industry in general, they gave authentic insights into the young audience's media consumption and the perception of European children's film. The three girls and two boys were given the same assignments as the industry professionals. Their conclusions were therefore valued as much as those of the adults, giving them a unique voice that found its way into the final results.

♀ 49
31 ♂



Problem Areas

Too MANY
STEREOTYPES

more
MUSIC
CHARACTER TO
IDENTIFY WITH

ADVERTISEMENT
Too
LONG

WHAT
NOW?

REALISTIC,
THE TIME WE
LIVE IN



Following up on the equation **PROBLEM+INPUT = OUTCOMES** the participants were given individual written assignments which would open a wider discussion afterwards. Even though they came from very diverse professional backgrounds, the participants **addressed similar problems** that the European children's film

44% CONNECTION OF AUDIENCE AND CONTENT

- Shortcomings in **accessibility** and **availability** of children's films
- Finding **appropriate platforms** and strengthening them with funding
- Insufficient **visibility** of children's film
- **Reach the young audience** in an overly saturated market
- Absence of **audience building** by involving children and youth
- Lack of creative **marketing**
- **Advertisement** in cinemas too long
- Tickets too **expensive**

25% CREATION OF DIVERSE AND RELEVANT CONTENT

- Challenge to develop and produce **relevant content**
- Shortfall of **support** to implement **live-action feature films**
- Not enough films from **smaller countries**
- Scarcity of **new talents** (and lack of corresponding training programmes)
- Missing **recognition** to give kids a voice to portray their perspective



industry is facing right now. Each of them cited several different issues, which, when clustered, provide a clear picture of the most problematic areas currently. Bundling 44% of the different topics in the field of "connection of audience and content" identifies this issue as the most pressing challenge for the industry.

- Not enough **music**
- Lack of **ethical/cultural diversity** – portrayal of too many stereotypes

17% CULTURAL EXPERIENCE AND VIEWING HABITS

- Cinema not important anymore, need for **eventisation**
- **Blockbusterisation**
- **Viewing habits** have changed
- Lack of **cultural** and **artistic recognition**
- Lack of **attention** for good children's films

11% STRUCTURAL CONDITIONS

- Need for **global/pan-European strategy** from development to distribution
- Lack of policy and funding for **media literacy, distribution and venues**

3% RESEARCH

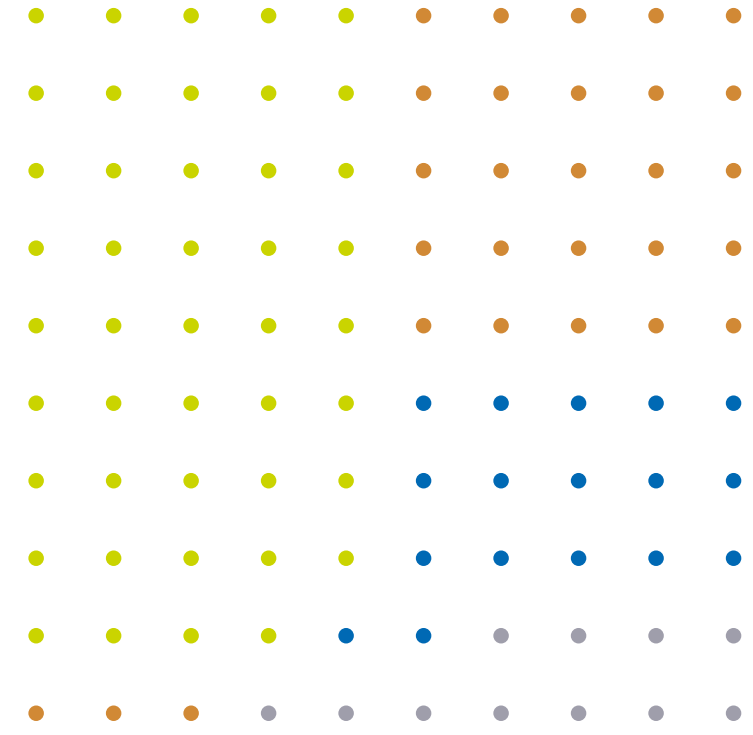
- Missing **exchange of available data**

● Young Experts' topic



What problems are the different stakeholders facing?

44% CONNECTION OF AUDIENCE AND CONTENT



25% CREATION OF DIVERSE AND RELEVANT CONTENT

17% CULTURAL EXPERIENCE AND VIEWING HABITS

3% RESEARCH

11% STRUCTURAL CONDITIONS

Input



Keynotes

In order to enrich the conversation and to add new perspectives, several speakers from different areas of the industry were invited to present best practices, data and inspirational input. This input was given through inspirational keynotes and presentations. To make sure everyone got access to the existing knowledge in the room, participants exchanged their experiences from different input sessions in small groups. Maximum knowledge transfer was achieved in this way.



Likarion Wainaina

Kenyan director Likarion Wainaina spoke about his experiences with the production of SUPA MODO, a Kenyan-German children's film. Likarion emphasized that when he started the project, he never wanted to be seen as a maker of children's films, being a real enthusiast of emotionally dark films. Children's film always being regarded as colourful, popular and full of laughter, this was everything he didn't want to be associated with. But as he was preparing an adult film about a mother whose child had a terminal illness, he came into contact with children suffering from such illnesses. He was so moved by this experience that the decision to make a film for children instead came naturally.

Likarion stressed that **children's films are of great relevance** because of their ability to help children understand challenging situations. Just like adults, **children are capable of understanding complicated issues**. They are able to understand **emotional depth**. As Likarion Wainaina pointed out, it **is the responsibility of filmmakers to take children and their needs seriously and help them to express themselves**.

SUPA MODO was very successful internationally at children's film festivals around the world, receiving a special mention at Berlinale Generation 2018 and being the Kenyan contribution to the Oscar® in 2019.

Katriel Schory

In his 21 years as CEO of the Israel Film Fund, Katriel Schory initiated different schemes to support the film culture in Israel, also putting a special focus on content for the young audience. When he took over as managing director in 1998, the Israeli film production and cinema landscape was almost non-existent. Therefore, the support and distribution system had to be changed in order to provide a future for Israeli film and cinema culture.



The Israel Film Fund **initiated screenings in public places such as swimming pools, schools and marketplaces**. The screenings were always accompanied by Q&As with producers, actors, writers, etc. funded by the Israel Film Fund. However, the eventisation of the screenings alone did not do the trick. The Israel Film Fund consequently paid special attention to children and schools. Following the slogan **"Every free seat is a lost seat"**, they facilitated a cinema day for children on the last day of school before the summer holidays. For only 2 € the children could watch any number of films. By **concentrating on children as recipients**, they were able to build **a film-loving audience for adult content as well**.

Katriel Schory pointed out that European film and European decision-makers have a responsibility to children to create content that speaks to them. He encouraged the participants to take advantage of the **privileged situation of being a European filmmaker** and take risks - after all, there is much more to be done in order to change the current situation.



Chatrooms



*How can we share
our knowledge?*



DATA AND RESEARCH

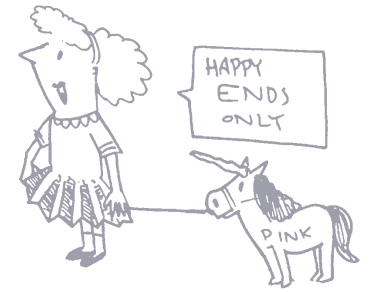
Dr. Christine Linke
Diversity of/in Children's Media



Dr. Christine Linke spoke about diversity in children's media and presented the study „Ausgeblendet. Frauen im deutschen Film und Fernsehen“ (“Fade-out. Women in German Film and Television”). The study was conducted together with Prof. Dr. Elizabeth Prommer at the University of Rostock and was published as a book in 2019. In her presentation Dr. Linke focused on the gender depiction of protagonists in German media in general and in children's media in particular. She showed that **there is an imbalance of 3 male protagonists to 1 female protagonist in German children's media**. The same applies to protagonists in the fantasy genre, such as talking objects, animals, robots, aliens, plants, etc.: 90% are represented as men and only 10% as women. Furthermore, Dr. Linke pointed out that **diversity behind the camera is directly related to more diverse representation in front of the camera**, including diversity in terms of gender, age, ethnicity, religion and social and family backgrounds.



Eva Novrup Redvall
Reaching Young Audiences



Eva Novrup Redvall from the University of Copenhagen presented her long-term research project “Reaching young audiences”, which started in September 2019. She is focusing on various aspects of audience perception such as **“What we think children would like to see” versus “What children themselves say they would like to see”**. A focus will also be put on the financing, development and production of content for children. She will work with focus groups of the target audience, researching their media usage and consumption with special attention to the concept of quality and relevance.

Esther Schmidt
“To be or not to be visible” – The Release of
Dutch Children's Films in the Netherlands

The study conducted by Esther Schmidt was initiated by the Netherlands Film Fund following the observation of a decline in admissions to Dutch children's films in the Netherlands and other countries. The study examined the success of Dutch children's film from 2011 to 2018 using qualitative and quantitative methods. She cited several factors for the decline in admissions, such as a **lack of brand awareness, wrongly set release dates, insufficient budgets for marketing, increasing digitization, a lack of film literacy, and overly expensive ticket prices**. Esther Schmidt concluded her findings by proposing strategies and recommendations, e.g. alternative ways of marketing, social media usage and better timing for cinema release dates.



CO-DEVELOPMENT AND CO-PRODUCTION

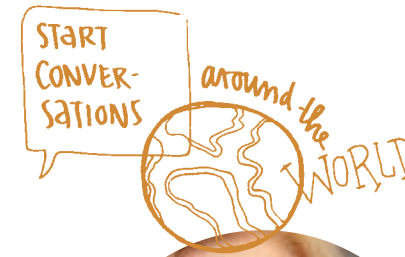


Nicholas Sando
MEDIA Case Study: Los Bando

Producer Nicholas Sando spoke about his experiences with the challenging search for co-producers and funding in the lead-up to the success of the Norwegian-Swedish co-production LOS BANDO, which received Creative Europe MEDIA funding for development. True to the principle of “Always stay at eye-level with children!” the young target audience was involved from the very start. Among other things, they shared their insight into youth language and lifestyle, leading the producers to put a special emphasis on a catchy title, poster and trailer to appeal to the target audience and to **generate a media buzz**. Nicholas Sando concludes that a **longer planning phase would have led to a better marketing strategy** and better monitoring of success and risks, concerning premieres and release dates, for example.

Marina Andree Škop
MEDIA Case Study: My Grandpa is an Alien

Croatian producer Marina Andree Škop gave an insight into the 7-country co-production of the children’s live action film MY GRANDPA IS AN ALIEN. Tasks were divided among different partners in the different countries according to their specific expertise. All co-producers were granted release rights for their countries as well. Nevertheless, MY GRANDPA IS AN ALIEN was not as successful in some of the co-production countries as they had anticipated. However, Marina Andree Škop remained hopeful, as she pointed out that **co-productions could be the future for film productions in low-capacity countries** such as Croatia, enabling them to compete in a well contested media market.



NETWORKS AND COOPERATIONS

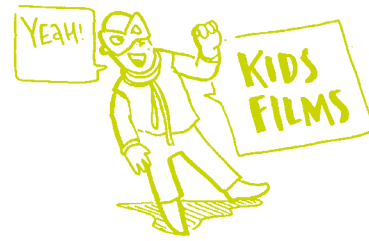
Agnes Augustin
Strategic Global Partners

Agnes Augustin, CEO of the Canadian regional Shaw Rocket Fund, presented new business and financing models for children’s media. She explained to the attendees that today’s young audience belongs to the largest generation that has ever lived – and is the **first truly global generation**, with communication and media consumption becoming more and more unlimited. Since it is the **most technologically advanced** generation of all time, it needs products that meet its needs and habits. Agnes Augustin insisted that in order to attract and build loyalty among this generation, brands and products must offer opportunities to engage and co-create, showing that they are both trustworthy and relevant. As young audiences seem to prefer personalized content from platforms such as YouTube and Netflix, she calls for **strategic alliances with new partners** to be more open to navigating the children’s film industry through disruptive times.

Margret Albers
Change through Action

Margret Albers spoke about the development of strategic infrastructures in the children’s media industry by presenting the **interlocking structure** of German initiatives such as the Academy for Children’s Media and the initiative Outstanding Films for Children. The Academy for Children’s Media is a script lab that was founded in the 90s due to a serious lack of original children’s content in Germany. The script lab offers its participants training in the fields of film, literature, storytelling and theatre. The Outstanding Films for Children Initiative was launched alongside the Academy for Children’s Media, bringing together public funds, broadcasters, associations and other stakeholders to provide funding and support for high-quality original children’s films in Germany. In conjunction with other projects, these initiatives are supporting a **vibrant children’s film culture in Germany**.





MARKETING & BRANDING

Marcel Lenz Producers' Impact Needed

Marcel Lenz placed particular emphasis on **the role of producers in the marketing** of children's films by talking about his experience with the strategy for the German-Luxembourgian children's Superhero movie INVISIBLE SUE. As one of the main challenges he pointed out that there are **very few financing schemes** available for marketing strategies and measures during the development and production phase. In Germany, usually only the distributors can apply for a marketing subsidy after a film has been realised. Marcel Lenz strongly advocated new ways of promoting a film like INVISIBLE SUE, explaining that **high investments will lead to later success** if different target groups are kept in mind and the **power and reach of social media** is considered early on in the production process. He also pointed out that, in order to be able to calculate and spend marketing budgets relating to original children's film on the part of the producers, additional funds have to be made available for this purpose, e.g. from the film funds provided, and that all funding bodies must recognise such costs.



Peter Zizka and Matthias Rettner Cultural Branding: The Power of Diversity

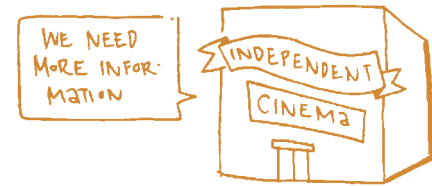
Peter Zizka and Matthias Rettner presented their social branding design strategy for a Europe-wide youth theatre project called "The Power of Diversity". With the mission of creating a **brand which encourages young people** to interact and simultaneously has the ability to incorporate the diverse cultural backgrounds of the attending European theatres, they developed a generative social brand. In order to establish a common design, the **young audience and participants were included** in the initial stages of planning, constantly discussing the relationship between the ego and the collective.



DISTRIBUTION

Philipp Hoffmann Connecting Audiences and High-Quality Films in the Digital Market

Philipp Hoffmann, CEO of Rushlake Media, presented the company's efforts to bring high-quality films to the digital market and thus to a young audience. Philipp Hoffmann argued for a **paradigm shift in distribution**, showing an increase in cinema releases in recent years and the amplitude of VOD platforms competing fiercely for the same audience. The role of distributors shifted **from merely offering content on different markets** and platforms to also **making content visible and accessible**. Rushlake Media's VOD Platform "Kino on Demand" aims to close the gap between theatrical releases and the digital market. In times of easy and low-cost access for the audience, specific strategies to ensure successful distribution across all platforms are more crucial than ever.



EDUCATION & ACCESS

Nienke Poelsma Wrap!: Building a Catalogue of European Films

The **online movie catalogue** Wrap! offers access to European children's films which receive little attention except at film festival screenings. The films distributed are always accompanied by educational material in order to strengthen the film literacy of the young audience. As Nienke Poelsma, head of Cinekid for Professionals, emphasised, their aim is to make **culturally diverse and content-rich** stories available. Wrap! purchases screening rights for **educational purposes**, e.g. for screenings at schools or at children's and youth film festivals – not only offering brand-new films but also classics. The project is funded by Creative Europe MEDIA in combination with film funding from the six participating European partners. Nienke explained that a limited availability of films and rights to these films, and different curricula in schools across Europe are challenges that must be tackled in the future to make the project sustainable.





LOBBYING & REGULATIONS

Wolter Braamhorst

Delivering the Message: A Battle of Positives

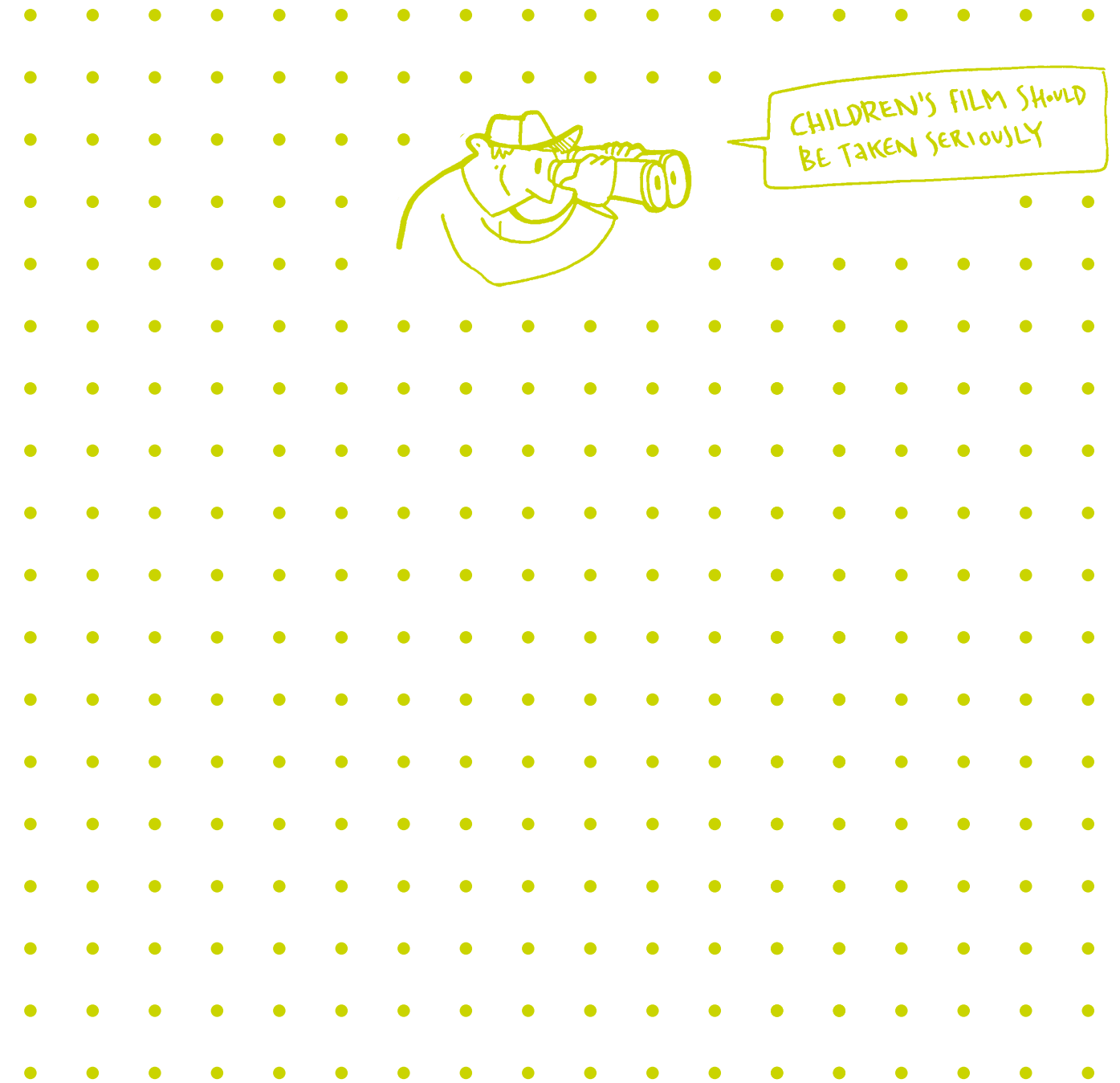
Wolter Braamhorst, representative of the cultural heritage association Europa Nostra, spoke about cultural lobbying at a European level. With a presentation of Europa Nostra's **lobbying efforts**, he built a bridge to the upcoming work of KIDS Regio for the European children's film. He made it clear that a **precise mission and message** is needed to get policy makers to listen – one that is easy to understand and to communicate. He pointed out that the **presence of KIDS Regio in Brussels** would be extremely important in order to work more closely with other initiatives and organisations, also such as Europa Nostra itself.

Magdalena Dzbik

European Support for Young Audience Content

Magdalena Dzbik, policy officer at **Creative Europe MEDIA** - European Commission, presented the MEDIA Programme, which has supported the audio-visual industry financially since 1991 in the phases of development, distribution and promotion of European content. The programme includes support for audience development, training, market access and TV programming, as well as cinema networks and festivals. Several support schemes specifically address young audience content (e.g. in TV Programming and Development Single schemes). These schemes include special measures such as the admission of an additional 5 points in the selection process for projects targeting young audiences. **The aim is to reinforce a focus on young audience and animation content produced in Europe.** Magdalena also briefly explained current preparations of the new Creative Europe MEDIA Programme 2021-2027, which is being negotiated in the European Parliament.

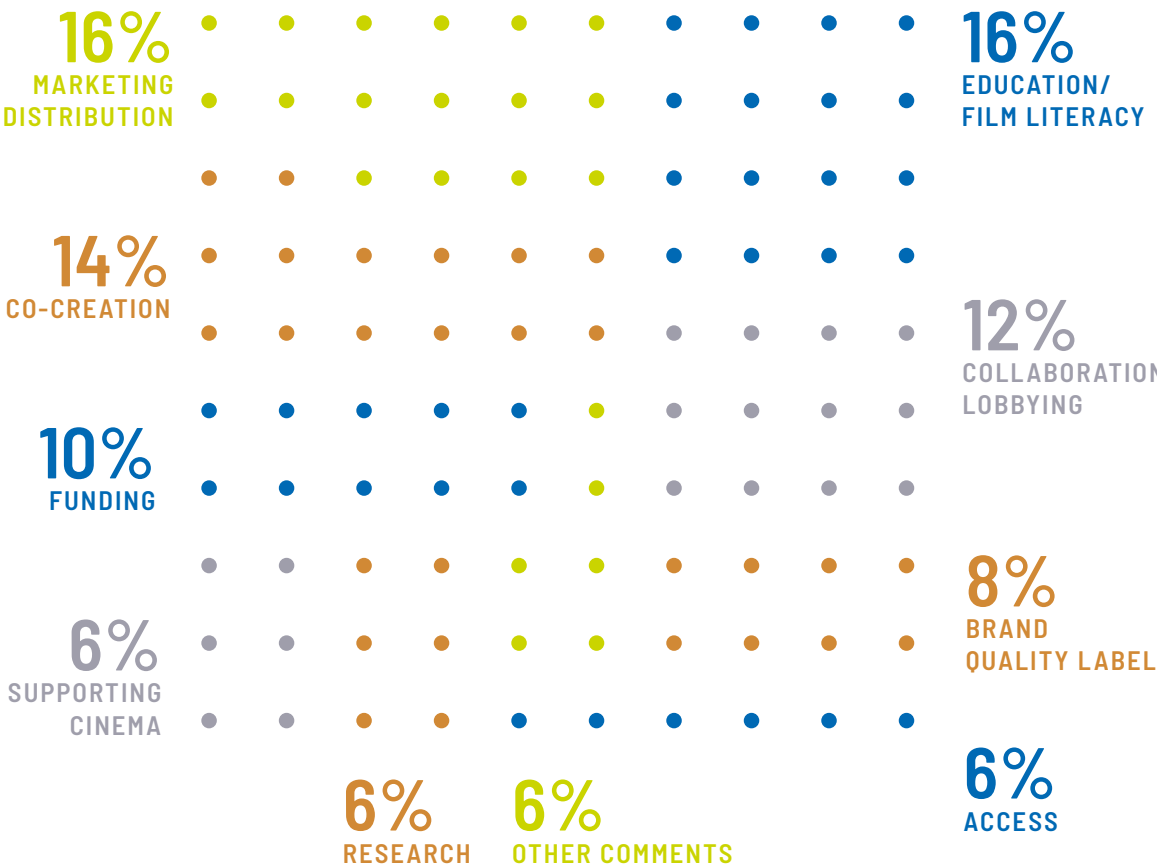




Visioning

Based on the presentations and their input, the attendees were again given written assignments. They were asked to envision a possible future for the European children’s film and to define what steps should be taken to reach future goals. Those individual visions were shared and discussed in small groups and later found their way into specific focus groups and ultimately into the Weimar Declaration.

All of the individual points in the vision statements were clustered. The percentages show what proportion of topics were bundled into certain areas. This overview of issues clearly shows where the industry needs to move forward. To achieve positive change, the experts already considered first measures that could be taken.



What needs to be done?

16% MARKETING / DISTRIBUTION

- 25% of screening time for European children’s films of all genres
- Holistic distribution strategies
- Producers involved in marketing from the beginning
- New creative ways to reach the audience
- Live interaction with the film, e.g. Augmented Reality and meeting actors after watching the film in the cinema
- More adverts for “unknown” movies
- Strong voice in the digital conversation
- European platform for audiovisual content available in all European languages and major immigration languages

14% CO-CREATION

- Kids in active roles (development, marketing, research)
- Dedicate time, space and funding to listening to, understanding and involving kids
- Collaboration with kids in different stages to ensure relevance and word of mouth
- Mutual learning is self-evident



12% COLLABORATION / LOBBYING

- Weimar Declaration to be implemented in EU regulations
- Pan-European support structure
- KIDS Regio office in Brussels
- Partnerships with colleagues in the cultural field across Europe
- Implementation of an “ambassador for children’s film”
- Forums for professionals, including representatives from outside the children’s media industry

16% EDUCATION / FILM LITERACY

- Film education as the core of media education
- All school curricula in EU countries to include film literacy programmes
- Strong connections between cultural and educational sectors
- Political authorities need to understand that film has the ability to foster social competence



● Young Experts’ topic



10% FUNDING

- 25 % quota in funding for Children's Film
- EU Commission will dedicate funding to development and marketing of children's films
- Flexibility in funding
- Cultural funding for cinemas

8% BRAND / QUALITY LABEL

- General change in positioning children's culture as a quality label in Europe
- European children's film as European cultural heritage
- EFA Young Audience Award – new branding similar to Eurovision Song Contest

6% ACCESS

- Easy and affordable access to quality European film
- Free entry for children to arthouse films
- Lower ticket prices



6% SUPPORTING CINEMA

- The magic of cinemas should be kept alive
- Promotion and preservation of cinemas as epicenters of experience for the community
- Cinemas as dedicated space for audiences of all ages

6% RESEARCH

- Essential research on children's film
- Research on gender and diversity in children's film
- Research on behalf of film funds to back up decisions

6% OTHER COMMENTS

- Reform the age rating system to introduce smaller age gaps
- No language barriers due to translation tools
- Social campaigns to inform parents how films can influence children
- Young Experts' topic

Focus Groups

Inspired by the vision statements, focus groups were set up to concentrate on specific topics. The aim of each respective group was to come up with concrete proposals and clear demands. These build the basis of an action plan on the path towards a vital European children's film culture – the Weimar Declaration.



Which areas require change and what measures have to be taken?

Focus Group

LOBBYING & REGULATIONS

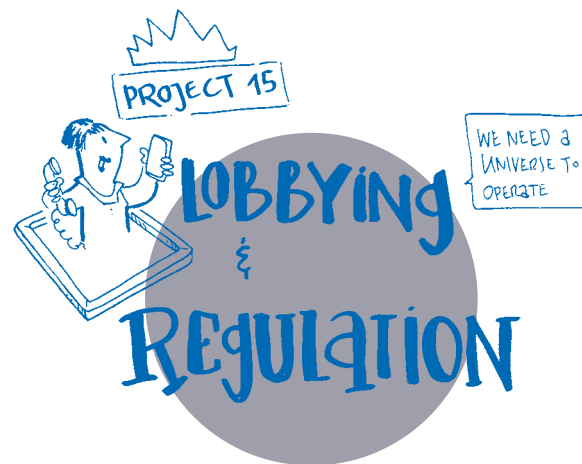
Finding allies and working together

In the focus group *Lobbying & Regulations*, a vision for the representation and the rights of children in Europe is being articulated, in which:

- Each child in Europe has the right to have access to and a variety of European films
- Each child in Europe has the right to be duly represented in film and media
- Each child in Europe has the right to acquire competencies that lead to media and film literacy

In order to achieve this vision, it was proposed that a strategic partnership of KIDS Regio and ECFA should be established. It aims to build the leading network for the representation of children's film on a regional, national and European level. To do so, ECFA and KIDS Regio will PROMOTE their mission through a network of advocates across Europe, they will REFRAME the idea of children's film as a top-quality product, and furthermore, they aim to OPTIMIZE skills and competences in this field.

As a result, and this is a clear mission, the idea of PROJECT 15 is the core goal. Children up to the age of 15 make up about 15% of the European population. To give them access to film that represents them appropriately, 15% of the entire funding must be allocated to children's film and media projects, which also means that 15% of the total screen time must be devoted to children. It is moreover necessary to dedicate 15% of film school curricula to children's media. PROJECT 15 is a lobbying tool to articulate the objectives of KIDS Regio and the European children's film industry in general.



KIDS Regio, together with partners, aims to take the following necessary steps to achieve this goal:

- Create a network of advocates (in other associations and institutions)
- Build strategic partnerships (EFADs, EBU and other European associations)
- Establish an office in Brussels, shared by KIDS Regio and ECFA
- Appoint a high-profile spokesperson
- Together with likeminded institutions, declare the European year of children's rights, taking responsibility for the promotion and screening of children's media and films
- Provide reliable data about children's media and make it transparent, available and visible on a larger scale
- B2B information on European funding for children's media
- Support training and development programmes with a special focus on diversity in children's media
- Build bridges with the educational field to improve children's media literacy
- Create an advisory board of children led by KIDS Regio and ECFA

Focus Group

NETWORKS & COOPERATIONS

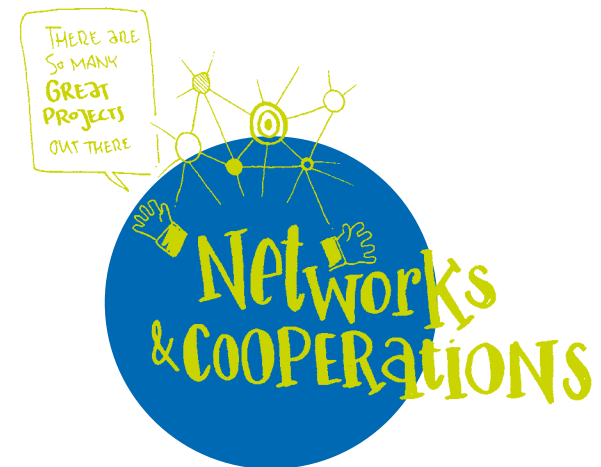
Linking initiatives and sharing best practices

The focus group *Networks & Cooperations* pointed out the urgency of staying in regular contact. Furthermore, it would be useful to meet in smaller groups on various occasions throughout the year, e.g. at film festivals. These meetings ought to be used to discuss concrete topics in accordance with the Weimar Declaration. Additionally, it was suggested that a digital magazine or hub should be set up to provide a Europe-wide structure portraying data and best practice examples to learn from each other.

Putting these thoughts together, the experts called for a formalized structure like the close partnership between KIDS Regio and ECFA to create a better synergy between the stakeholders of the children's media industry. The aim of the cooperation should be structured knowledge transfer and regular meetings on best practice and policy exchange.

The following objectives should be realised:

- Establish a mapping of data, funding and best practices
- Coordinate strategic partnerships
- Establish 3 meetings per year, with different topics, taking place on different occasions



Focus Group

CO-DEVELOPMENT & CO-PRODUCTION

Cross-border collaboration and strategic infrastructure

The focus group *Co-Development & Co-Production* demanded that the European children's film (mostly live-action) should be included regularly on the agendas of existing organisations such as funds, training programmes as well as networks and associations. Ideally, an advocate is to be established in each of these institutions, who would then form a network of their own. This should lead to an improvement of the image, recognition and visibility of children's film. This aim should also be reached by the following short- and long-term measures:



SHORT-TERM:

- Better international network of film funds and producers: call for the EFADs, Cine Regio, Europa Cinemas and producers associations to meet in working groups on children's film
- Strengthening existing financing forums for children's content (The Financing Forum for Kids Content Malmö, Cinekid Festival Amsterdam, Warsaw Kids Film Forum)
- Provide an overview of funding, research and training programmes for children's films (European Audiovisual Observatory, Olffi, Creative Europe MEDIA Desks)
- Work towards the new Creative Europe MEDIA programme to focus on content for young people
- Level playing field: establish equal conditions for children's films in terms of funding and support

LONG-TERM:

- Set up children's films screenwriting programmes similar to the Academy for Children's Media in Germany or the Torino Film Lab for Kids in Italy in other countries, and on a European level
- Attach co-development funds to training programmes supporting audience building and co-creation
- Put special emphasis on children's content in the Creative Europe MEDIA programme and Eurimages
- Regularly publish a study and an action plan for European children's film
- Introduction of a European children's film day

Focus Group

EDUCATION & ACCESS

Availability and knowledge transfer



The focus group *Education & Access* firstly pointed out three measures for an improvement of the status quo in the field of education:

Firstly, the integration of audio-visual media as part of children's education, taking into account that the curriculum should be kept up to date continuously. Active integration of audio-visual content into the curriculum is called for, promoting film and other forms of media as well as storytelling as an art form. The understanding of technology in order to be able to use it properly is also closely connected to this.

Secondly, the integration of audio-visual media for young audiences in the curricula of universities needs to be addressed. In this context, the focus should not only lie on marketing and economy but also on emphasizing storytelling for children in particular. Work with best practice examples is strongly recommended.

Thirdly, the integration of audio-visual media for young audiences in professional training for the industry by teaching models of integrating children into the development and production process. The acknowledgment of mutual learning as well as thinking outside the box should be strongly encouraged.

Furthermore, the group pointed out different actions to make children's media more accessible:

Firstly, the entry level must be lowered. This can happen through better availability, reduced ticket prices and increased attention to the needs of the target audience.



Focus Group

DATA & RESEARCH

Collection, provision and information exchange

The focus group *Data & Research* pointed out that successful lobbying requires comparable and accessible data. This includes research on content, audiences, film literacy practices and production culture. In this context, the following objectives were proposed:

- Initiate research by developing a common questionnaire to be used to collect comprehensive qualitative data at children's film festivals in Europe
- Create a network for research on children's film by connecting researchers active in this field
- Make results available and accessible on a common platform
- Include film literacy in the yearly Global Media and Information Literacy Week led by UNESCO

Secondly, cultural platforms such as museums, cinemas, theatres, libraries, etc. have to be connected with each other and screen high-quality curated content for the young audience. This also means that offline and online experiences must be curated on behalf of the audience. The acknowledgement of machine learning in the field of personalized content is closely connected with this.

In order to achieve these objectives, the following recommendations are proposed:

- Install a regular symposium for exchange
- Establish funding schemes for the purchase of technology, especially in regard to the feasibility of media literacy projects in schools
- Leverage existing programmes
- Train the trainers, e.g. teachers, lecturers, pedagogues



Focus Group

MARKETING & BRANDING / DISTRIBUTION

Enhancing visibility and awareness



In the focus groups *Marketing & Branding / Distribution*, different challenges in the marketing and accessibility of European children's films were discussed. To put the conclusions into concrete terms, each of the objectives have to be reviewed on an international, national and local level.

One of the main problems agreed upon was competition from US-Blockbusters. This competition must lead to new marketing strategies and budgets to enhance the visibility of European children's films. As a result, it was advised to set up a marketing laboratory for producers to already develop marketing strategies in the development and production phase. This consequently means that a specific training programme for the marketing of children's content should be provided.

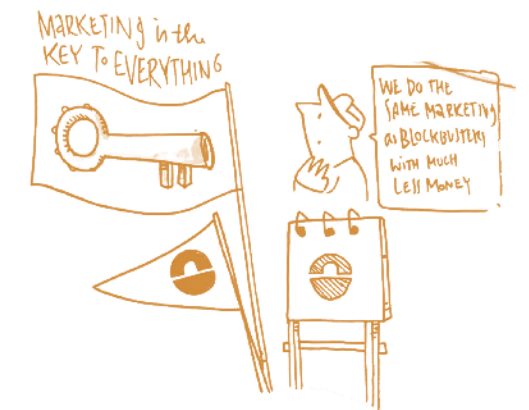
It was also pointed out that schools across Europe should have an obligation to screen European children's films to build up greater awareness of these films as an art form. In addition, various communities that are important for brand building, such as online communities and local communities (festivals, clubs and libraries) should be identified and included in the process.

In the focus groups, it was apparent that access needs to be improved in order to lead marketing strategies to success. Therefore, the groups insisted on better communication between cinema owners and distributors as well as producers to reshape cinemas as a discovery space that offers more than just showing films.



All in all, the following aspirations should be pursued:

- Develop a brand that presents European children's film as an art form
- Production of an image trailer for the European children's film
- Re-brand cinemas as a discovery space
- Develop a brand for the different target groups B2B, caretakers and children (with focus on different age groups 0-4, 4-6, 6-9, 9-12)
- Provide regular access for schools/children through specific curriculum changes and special screenings
- Support producers and creators in the process of developing appropriate marketing strategies involving exhibitors
- Initiation of a marketing workshop for European producers of children's films, which will take place on a regular basis
- Initiation of a Master's programme in marketing for European Children's Film at film schools and/or universities
- Making rights regularly available on different platforms





Weimar Declaration

Connecting the Dots Towards a Vital European Children's Film Culture

On the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the Erfurt Declaration adopted at the 1st KIDS Regio Forum, 80 representatives from 24 countries attended the 3rd KIDS Regio Forum in Weimar and worked towards a Weimar Declaration to revise their work and the demands ensuing from 2009.

The participants of the 3rd KIDS Regio Forum address this declaration to regional, national and European politicians and policy officers, as well as all associations and institutions connected with the film industry, calling upon them to do everything in their power to actively support the development, access, visibility and promotion of European children's film in the spirit of this Weimar Declaration.

In 2018, according to Eurostat, the 28 EU member states had 512.7 million inhabitants, of which around 15% were younger than 15 years. The European Audiovisual Observatory lists an average of 1,119 fictional feature films produced between 2014 and 2017 in the EU. In the same period there has been an annual average of 78 feature fiction films for children. This means a percentage of only 6.97%.¹

Following up on the Erfurt Declaration 2009, there is a consensus among the 80 professionals from 24 countries – implemented and enabled with the help of the KIDS Regio Network – that the support of children's films with a special focus on original live action features is necessary **because:**

- These films form an essential part of the concept of **cultural diversity** and represent valuable means towards media literacy and cultural as well as personal education, especially in **transferring values**.
- **Original stories** have the power to move towards a new narrative that provides a wide variety of genre, subjects and styles as well as different types of storytelling.



¹ Data provided by the European Children's Film Association (ECFA) in cooperation with Dr. Steffi Ebert from the Martin-Luther-University Halle-Wittenberg.

European film has the ability to portray diversity, make it tangible for Europe's (future) inhabitants and thereby foster **European identity**. It is agreed that forward-looking cultural change is needed to lead to a situation where watching children's films from various cultures becomes normality for young people. Children are the audience of today and tomorrow. They deserve multi-faceted, high-quality content that takes them, their needs, views and dreams seriously. Children's film functions as a cultural asset with high social relevance helping to acquaint the young audience with both diverse cultures and the European Film.

It is therefore necessary to instigate strategic actions to give children's film more visibility and recognition in order to empower young people.

Based on these principles, the participants of the 3rd KIDS Regio Forum agree on an agenda of 5 points, aiming at strengthening live action feature films for children:

1. Extend and Improve Research & Data

Carry out **comparable** research and collect data in all areas of European children's film including content, audiences, film literacy practices, production culture and circulation.

Provide **mapping** for all areas of children's film and make it easily **accessible** on established websites (KIDS Regio/ECFA).

Prompt the **European Audiovisual Observatory** to incorporate children's film as a category in all relevant research.

2.

Emphasize Cooperations, Networks & Lobbying

KIDS Regio and ECFA create formalised structures and build **strategic partnerships** to form a leading network representing children's media on the regional, national and European level.

Promote children's film as a meaningful cultural asset through a network of **advocates** within relevant European associations and institutions, and appoint a political representative.

Project 15+: Dedicate **at least 15%** of funding, and content in cinemas, on TV and platforms as well as in the academic curriculum of film schools to children's film.

3.

Strengthen (Co-) Development & (Co-) Production

Encourage the set-up of **Children's Film Screenwriting Programmes** that foster diverse storytelling for a young audience in many EU territories.

Establish a **strategic infrastructure** that links co-development programmes with co-production and training in order to further develop the European children's film on a (trans-) regional/national level.

Strengthen existing **Financing Forums** to ensure continuous (co-) development, (co-) production and financing of live-action feature films.

4.

Reinforce Distribution & Marketing

Create an infrastructure on a European level coordinating existing, and implementing national initiatives which **provide access** to European Film for schools and children on a regular basis.

Already provide support for marketing strategies already in the development phase and incite the use of new and experimental methods, involving producers, distributors and exhibitors, to **reach the young audience**.

Introduce a **Master's degree** in film marketing, including seminars especially targeted at children's film, as well as introducing a focus on children's film in existing training programmes.

Produce and establish a **trademark opener** for European Children's Film screened in cinemas.

5.

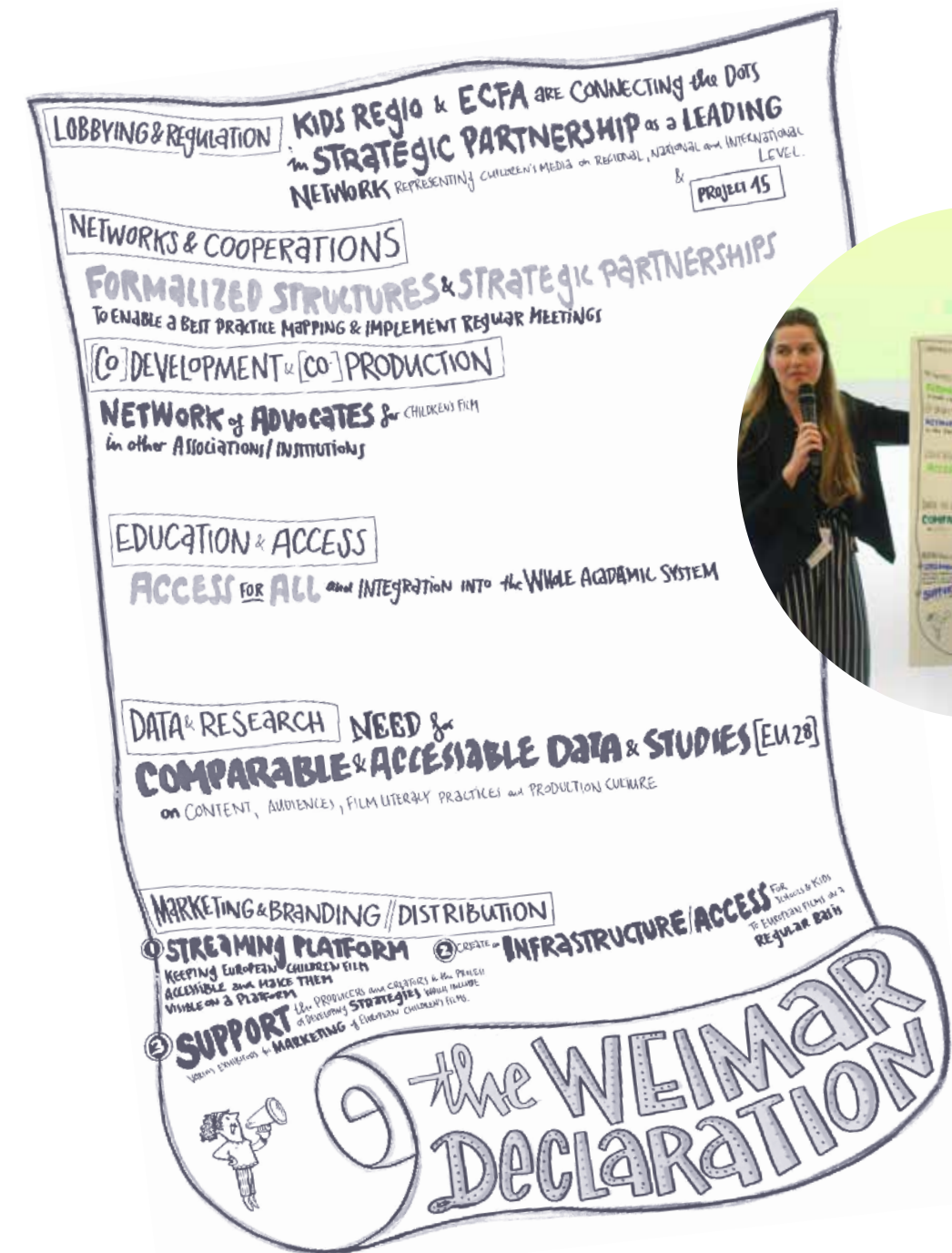
Enhance Education & Access

Recognise film education and media for children as an **essential service** with the same status as any intellectual subject in schools, universities and training.

Provide training for professionals including teachers and film makers on how to connect the young audience with film and meaningfully include them in the process of creating, commissioning and assessing films.

Establish the cinema as a **discovery space** and include **festivals** as agents and partners in providing access.

Working on this agenda will enable films for children to become more visible and more successful on the way to a situation in which making feature films for children is a natural and selfevident part of the European film culture and industry.



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