



STEPIN 2023:

WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH INDEPENDENT CINEMA?

On Thursday August 3rd, an international group of 50 prominent executives chosen among various profiles for their experience in different branches of the film industry, assembled for the Locarno Festival' eleventh edition of StepIn.

The event took place from 11.00 AM to 6 PM and was divided in 3 parts.

The following is a report of what's been discussed.



THE TOPIC

The year 2022 was a mixed bag for the film industry as a whole and set an uneven launching pad for 2023.

Theatrically it offered a box office improvement compared to the biennium horribilis 2020-2021, but still far below pre-pandemic numbers. So much so that The European Audiovisual Observatory has calculated a recovery rate, in UK and EU, of 67% (which means that admissions in 2022 were down 33% from pre-pandemic levels) and the UK film tech firm Gower Street has predicted that global box office will reach \$29bn in 2023, a 12% gain over 2022 but still 27% behind the average of the last three pre-pandemic years (2017-2019) at current exchange rates. Locally, if Denmark showed the highest recovery rate (82%), and France, Germany and the UK were also slightly above average, other countries fared much worse, such as Spain and Italy (with a recovery rate of 58% and 48% respectively). Moreover, if we have witnessed the theatrical rise of the Middle East, China is still a big question mark, if not downright missing in action, and Russia has basically disappeared as a foreign market. But the real question concerns the future of independent cinema, which is the main casualty of the current situation. We need in fact to consider that the global box office was kept afloat by a bunch of tentpole titles (Top Gun: Maverick and Avatar: The Way of Water above all), while adult-skewing titles and indie dramas severely under-performed. Add to this the constant debate on theatrical-window and factor the role of Streamers into this equation, and it's easy to predict independent cinema will have to fight even harder to bring audiences back to movie theaters.

Streaming-wise, after years of high-spending models, international expansion and subscriber growth at all costs, the focus is now on shareholder value and the priority is the bottom line (with several consequences, including staff layoffs and cuts to their production slates), while Major Studios are still debating on the future of theatrical vs. streaming, with Warner Bros Discovery CEO David Zaslav stating that their restructure will focus on franchises and theatrical and will entail a relaunch of the merged HBO Max-Discovery+ platform (now simply Max); and everyone waiting on the next moves of the recently reinstalled Disney CEO Bob Iger. All of which is having a clear impact on the future of film production. And this is without even mentioning the WGA/SAG strike with what that entails for upcoming film productions and releases.

But if we shift the focus to Europe, even without a looming strike the situation is equally challenging. According to the European Audiovisual Observatory, the median average budget of a European theatrical fiction film released - or scheduled to be released - in 2020 (the data are still pre-Covid) was EUR 2.06 million. As for the financing sources, 26% came from direct public funding, 20% from broadcaster investment; 18% from producer investments excluding broadcasters; 17% from production incentives, 14% from pre-sales excluding broadcasters, and the remaining 5% from other financing sources, debt financing and/or private equity. Which brings us to a key question: what and who do independent producers actually depend on? Public funding? Broadcasters? Now streamers?

To this regard, local production by streamers is under scrutiny in the EU. The European governments are considering how to bring the European Audiovisual Media Service (EAMS) directive into law, which means that US streamers will be increasingly subject to either levies or investment obligations. EAMS requires VoD services to have at least 30% of European works in their catalogues, but it's up to each EU country to determine how they achieve this. Most European countries have opted to introduce direct investment obligations (in France streamers are compelled to spend 20% of their annual French revenues on local content, in Italy 17% of revenues, in Spain 5%, in Netherlands 4.5%, in Switzerland 4% and in Greece 1.5%) but other countries have chosen levies instead. Denmark and Ireland are both proposing these, with the proceeds administered by funding bodies. Denmark has set the highest rate, at 6%. By contrast it is 1.8%-2.5% in Germany, depending on the size of the streamer. Whichever route governments take, more European films and TV series are expected to receive funding from streamers in the years to come. And yet, all of this is being discussed at a time when streamers appear to be much more cautious about their expenses and greenlighting.

After all, is the prospect of becoming increasingly dependent on streamers good news for independent producers? We keep hearing that we are currently living in a golden age for film production, but several issues seem to debunk this myth. If it's true that there has never been so much content being produced, this, paradoxically, has made life much more difficult for independents:

- Ever-increasing demand for crews, talent and locations are keeping prices high and shooting space at a premium;
- Increased energy costs and high inflation figures are adding to spiraling costs;
- Newly required crew roles such as intimacy and wellness coordinators, as well as green and anti-Covid policies, need to be built into already stretched budgets;

Add to this the challenging times adult-skewing films and upscale dramas are facing at the box office, dominated by blockbusters and franchise titles, and you can easily imagine the struggles indie producers are facing.

Which brings us to the new trend of this past couple of years, the rise of international mega-players. A number of independent companies have been acquired by bigger companies in a rush of corporate acquisitions. Just to name a few: Fremantle (Element Pictures, 72 Films, Lux Vide, Wildstar), Banijay (Beyond, Mam Tor, Grøenlandia Group), Mediawan (Plan B, Palomar), The North Road (Kinetic Content), Mubi (The Match Factory), Cohen Media Group (Hanway Films) and Candle Media (Faraway Road). While these deals can guarantee more stability and cashflow, small independent companies who can't count on this support feel in a more precarious position, and struggle to find access to talent, IPs, funding, and deals with broadcasters and streamers. But consolidation is not only a trend in the independent world. It also affects streamers (HBO Discovery is a sound example) and could soon open the doors, if not to other giant acquisitions and merges, at least to partnerships and bundles, in order to offer consumer value amid a scenario of high inflation and looming recession.

All of the above has widened the gap between small, stand-alone players and bigger companies, and the dichotomy between independence and consolidation seems to be the ultimate battlefield on which the film industry is bound to collide at all levels and in all branches (including distribution, sales and exhibition).

Hence the title of this new edition of StepIn, which underlines the current challenges endured by independent players. And while we don't believe independents will ever die (after all their death is periodically predicted every decade) we cannot deny that their struggle is real.

This will be the main theme of two of our four roundtables, with one focusing more on the battleground between independents, majors and streamers when it comes to theatrical releases, and the other on how to keep boosting the biodiversity of content and voices in the current production ecosystem where independent producers are facing an uphill battle.

But we are also going to address other important topics. Since this year we have the pleasure of hosting key executives from some of the most important international film festivals, we decided to dedicate one roundtable on the "behind the scenes" of film festivals operations, to analyze how they are able to navigate the perils of today's economy and stay true to their mandate of cultural institutions, while having to deal with crucial commercial and financial components. Furthermore, like every year, we firmly believe that besides business talk, we should keep a window open on topics of social relevance. And as 2023 marks five years since France's gender equality group Collectif 50/50 took to Cannes to protest the lack of female representation at festivals, our fourth roundtable will focus on gender equality in order to assess the situation 5 years later.

I wish you all a productive event, where we can lay the foundations for important changes.

Marcello Paolillo
StepIn Project Manager

OUT-OF-THE BOX INTRODUCTION

From 11:00 AM to 11:45 AM

*Open to all Press and Industry accredited on site
and available in Locarno Pro Online from the following day*

It has become a StepIn tradition to kick off our event with an out-of-the-box and thought-provoking introduction - a way to put our industry in perspective, and reconsider assumptions that we too often take for granted. This year, in order to tackle the status of independent cinema, we asked the contribution of a true champion of it. Ted Hope is at once an award-winning producer, a discoverer of wonderful filmmakers, a streamer startupper and a remarkable writer who has never been afraid to tell it like it is, and to sharply point out what works and what doesn't within the film industry.

Indie Film: 50 years of building the wrong thing.

"Despite all the great films that have been generated, the wonderous filmmakers launched, and all sorts of breakthroughs and shared learnings, it's time to admit Indie Film failed and now we have to start over. We never clarified our "First Principles" and as a result built something that is no longer sustainable, does not benefit the artist or the audience, and ultimately favors the privileged and the powerful. We took something that is born from love and devotion and turned it into a transactional burp at best, just another distraction amongst many, a way that our corporate overlords can practice the alchemy of transforming our attention into nine figure annual salaries. Yet, have no fear. Hope is here. We can rebuild it into something better by working together. Let us explore how."

Ted Hope

During a wide-ranging address accompanied by a slide presentation, Hope lambasted the U.S. streaming giants and studios, the Director's Guild of America, the U.S. Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, the impact of AI on the global industry and more. The veteran U.S. producer who has been in the indie trenches since 1990 when he founded Good Machine, the label behind Ang Lee's "The Ice Storm" and Todd Solondz's "Happiness" – but subsequently leaped to the other side of the fence when he became head of motion picture production in the early days at Amazon Studios – also addressed the virtues of indie filmmaking; why an indie filmmaking system should not be dependent on global streamers and studios; indie-first principles and tenets; and 19 possibilities to build a better future for the indie sector. "Stop accepting the status quo," one bullet point on the slide presentation implored. "Think of the long-term process of change & improvement." "Require back-end participation. Claw back rights: If a right is not utilized, why grant it?" "Denying back-end participation is a violation of human rights," Hope said. He also talked inspiringly about how to "re-found" the U.S. indie industry, which he doesn't consider a utopian concept.



TED HOPE
Producer

Ted's been a producer on over 70 films, studio executive on over 60, CEO of a start-up streamer, co-head of 3 production companies, executive director of a film society & festival, a Professor Of Practice at 2 universities, and founder of a post-production facility, 2 websites, 2 think tanks, & an app. Ted launched Amazon's foray into feature film production, leading them to 19 Oscar nominations and 5 wins. As a producer, his films have received 25 Oscar nominations, with 6 wins. Ted's memoir and newsletter *Hope For Film*, are both must reads. Ted helped launch the feature film careers of Ang Lee, Nicole Holofcener, Hal Hartley, and many others. His most recent films include the first narrative from Oscar-winning documentary director, Roger Ross Williams, *Cassandra*, as well as the documentaries: Evgeny Afineevsky's Ukraine War documentary *Freedom On Fire*, Marina Zenovich's *Jerry Brown: The Disrupter*, and Vanessa Hope's *Invisible Nation* on Taiwan.

PART I - OPENING KEYNOTE

From 11:45 AM to 12:45 PM

*Open to all Press and Industry accredited on site
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Moderated by Variety correspondent Nick Vivarelli, the opening keynote introduced the main topics of StepIn 2023 through the points of view and experiences of three remarkable panellists.

Bocco, who last March suddenly stepped down as president of New York's IFC Films after 17 years with the company owned by AMC Networks, opened up the discussion talking about her bitterness about the state of the indie industry in the U.S. where due to consolidation decision-making is dictated primarily by profit margins.

"We are very ripe for – you can use a lot of different words – an overhaul, a revolution, a reset. There are many ways to frame it," she said. "For me, personally, I needed to take a step back and look at: Where are we? Why are we constantly feeling like we are going up the hill? It is not a good feeling. And it's not a good place to be," Bocco added. "I've spent my entire life in distribution. My job was to help artists. My job was to facilitate a business model that enriched artists; that helped their voices to be heard and seen and hopefully make a little bit of money in the meantime," Bocco went on before specifying: "Coming from independent film in the United States, my personal goal was never: We are going make a ton of money, because we didn't."

Corporate goals and greed causing disruption in the indie film milieu were also a big concern for Berlinale managing director Mariette Rissenbeek who noted that when she came on board five years ago the festival's budget was roughly €29 million, whereas after the pandemic, partly due to the rise in costs caused by the energy crisis, it's now up to €34-35 million. With public funding accounting for only about 33 or 34% of the Berlinale's budget they must look elsewhere, sponsors being a primary source of funding they need to rely on. This is becoming increasingly problematic. Sponsors these days have much more defined marketing goals in mind as a return on their investment, which can be a burden.

"Investment in our sponsorship work has been growing a lot and makes it more difficult to really see the money the sponsor gives you as a real income because you spend a lot on building the platform for that relationship," she said. "Maybe we have to look closer at our sponsors so we can work with those who think the same way we think, so we can use their support more in our line of where we want to go as a festival," Rissenbeek pointed out. Separately, she also noted that the Berlinale has been leading the way in one aspect of the fight for gender equality ever since in 2021 they became the first major festival to award 'Best Leading Performance', rather than Best Actor or Actress.

The negative impact of the streamer boom combined with the pandemic on the independent production model in the U.K. was the main topic on which the British Film Institute's Head of Research and Insight Rishi Coupland provided insight from a recent BFI study. Coupland explained how an unprecedented boom in the country's film and high-end TV sector has been coupled with a corresponding crisis in the independent sector. The speed and volume of this record growth has strained independent producers so much that they cannot compete with larger budget international productions on several levels – from accommodating the rising cost of production to securing cast and crew, and ultimately to reaching audiences.

"There is a 100 million pound a year dearth of money that should be going into independent film," he said, noting that this gap "Can't be made up by the public film funders."

Keynote Speakers:



ARIANNA BOCCO
Film Distribution and Content Strategist

Arianna Bocco brings with her over thirty years of leadership and expertise in the independent feature film space. Most recently as President of IFC Films, Bocco oversaw all aspects of film acquisition, marketing and pr as well as business and distribution strategy for AMC Networks' film portfolio including IFC Films, a leading U.S. distributor of independent film, Shudder, the premium streaming service dedicated to the best in horror and RLJE Films, as well as the subscription service IFC Films Unlimited. Under Bocco's leadership, the brands were consistently recognized for their impeccable taste and championing of diverse first-time directors. Bocco spent almost 17 years at IFC Films curating a library of critically acclaimed and award-winning films. Prior to joining IFC Films, Bocco was a svp of Acquisitions and Production at Miramax and began her career at New Line Cinema/Fine Line Features. Bocco is currently based in the NYC area.



RISHI COUPLAND
Head of Research and Insight | BFI

Rishi Coupland is Head of Research and Insight at the British Film Institute, where he is responsible for the National Lottery Research Fund and National Lottery Innovation Challenge Fund. Rishi leads the BFI's Research and Statistics Unit, overseeing the production of statistics and the production and dissemination of reports such as An Economic Review of UK Independent Film, Screen Business and the sustainability-focussed Screen New Deal. Rishi has over twenty years' experience within the arts, culture and digital media sectors and in 2017 was awarded a Clore Fellowship in recognition of his work. Prior to his role at the BFI, he held the roles of Head of Data Intelligence and Head of Audience Strategy at the Royal National Theatre, where he launched and lead the sector flagship Data Studio, Marketing Services Manager (Southbank Centre), and Senior Producer (Buzz-erk Productions). Rishi began his career as a technologist and engineer with multinational companies in locations across the UK and Europe.



MARIËTTE RISSENBEEK
Managing Director
BERLIN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

Mariëtte Rissenbeek is the Managing Director of the Berlin International Film Festival. Born in the Netherlands, she studied German language and literature, theatre studies and sociology at the Rijksuniversiteit Utrecht and the Freie Universität Berlin. In 1986, Mariëtte joined the film distribution company Tobis Film, handling acquisitions as well as the exploitation of ancillary German-speaking rights. In 1995, she moved into film production and worked as a producer at Ziegler Film where she produced several different film formats. In 1998, she established her own production company in Hamburg and worked with Mika Kaurismäki before moving to the Munich-based production company Hofmann & Voges in 2000. In 2003, Mariëtte Rissenbeek became responsible for international festival relationships and public relations at German Films, the German organisation for the international promotion of German cinema. She became Deputy Managing Director at German Films in 2006 and Managing Director in 2011.

Keynote Moderator:

NICK VIVARELLI
Variety | Italy and Middle East correspondent

Born in Florence to an American mother and an Italian father, Nick Vivarelli has spent plenty of time in both countries. After studying comparative literature at New York University, he dabbled as a literary translator and art gallery organizer before venturing into journalism and film. Since then, he has worked for several media outlets, including The Associated Press and Newsweek. A regular on the international festival circuit, he is currently Italy and Middle East correspondent for Variety. He is also the author of "Slalom," a Tuscany-set thriller published by Manni Editori in Italy and co-director of the documentary "Life As a B-Movie: Piero Vivarelli" that went to Venice and won Italy's Nastro D'Argento 2020 for best doc on cinema.

PART II - ROUND-TABLES SESSION

From 2:30 PM to 4:30 PM

StepIn Participants Only

After the opening keynote, the participants were divided in 4 different round-tables, each one with a Moderator and a Notetaker, to discuss specific issues related to the main topic of the event.

TABLE 1: The Theatrical Battlefield between Independents, Majors and Streamers

Moderator: Susan Wendt (TrustNordisk)

Notetaker: Christine Eloy (Europa Distribution)

TABLE 2: How to keep boosting the biodiversity of content and voices in the current production ecosystem

Moderator: Diana Elbaum (Beluga Tree)

Notetaker: Nicholas Kaiser (Paradise City)

TABLE 3: The Behind-the-Scene of a Film Festival between commercial and financial components, innovation, operations, and cultural policy

Moderator: Mariëtte Rissenbeek (Berlinale)

Notetaker: Allison Gardner (Glasgow Film)

TABLE 4: Gender Equality & Diversity Representation 5 years after Collectif 50/50 took to Cannes to protest the lack of female representation

Moderator: Raphaël Gribé Marquis (Collectif 50/50)

Notetaker: Laurence Lascary (De l'Autre Côté du Pèriph)

**TABLE 1:
The Theatrical Battlefield between Independents, Majors and Streamers**

Moderator	Notetaker		
<p align="center">Susan Wendt Trustnordisk Managing Director Denmark</p>	<p align="center">Christine Eloy Europa Distribution Director Belgium</p>	<p align="center">Sumyi Antonson NEON SVP Marketing & Distribution USA</p>	<p align="center">Arianna Bocco Film Distribution and Content Strategist USA</p>
<p align="center">Rishi Coupland BFI Head of Research and Insight UK</p>	<p align="center">Sejin Croninger Paramount Pictures EVP Worldwide Acquisitions USA</p>	<p align="center">Fatima Djourer Europa Cinema Head of Int'l Relations France</p>	<p align="center">Erin Farrell Film Movement Manager of Exhibition and Educational Sales USA</p>
<p align="center">Kim Foss Camera Film A/S CEO Denmark</p>	<p align="center">Igor Kupstas O2 Play Director Brazil</p>	<p align="center">Arvid Liedtke Yorck Kinogruppe, Berlin On-demand streaming and Film Programming Germany</p>	<p align="center">Andrea Romeo I Wonder Pictures Founder & General Manager Italy</p>
<p align="center">Amanda Trokan MUBI Senior Programming Director, North America USA</p>			

TABLE 2:
How to keep boosting the biodiversity of content and voices in the current production ecosystem

Moderator	Notetaker		
<p>Diana Elbaum Beluga Tree Producer Belgium</p>	<p>Nicholas Kaiser Paradise City Producer UK / France</p>	<p>Carlo Cresto-Dina Tempesta Producer Italy</p>	<p>Daniel Dreifuss Anima Pictures Producer USA / Germany</p>
<p>Stefanie Fahrion Film 4 Head of Distribution and Sales UK</p>	<p>Ted Hope Double Hope Producer and Film Analyst USA</p>	<p>Pamela Koffler Killer Films Co-Founder and Producer USA</p>	<p>Corinna Marschall MEDIA Desk Suisse Managing Director Switzerland</p>
<p>Maren Olson 30 West Executive Vice President of Film USA</p>	<p>Wolf Osthaus Netflix Sr. Director Northern Europe (DACH, Benelux, Nordics) Germany</p>	<p>Noa Regev Israel Film Fund CEO Israel</p>	<p>Marianne Slot Slot Machine Producer France / Denmark</p>

TABLE 3:
The Behind-the-Scenes of a Film Festival
between commercial and financial components, innovation, operations, and cultural policy

Moderator	Notetaker		
Mariëtte Rissenbeek Berlin Film Festival Managing Director Germany	Allison Gardner Glasgow Film CEO UK	Frederic Boyer Tribeca Film Festival / Les Arcs Artistic Director France / USA	Raphaël Brunschwig Locarno Film Festival Managing Director Switzerland
Matthew D'Silva Film at Lincoln Center Associate Director, Database Operations & Analytics USA	Eugene Hernandez Sundance Film Festival Festival Director and Head of Public Programming USA	Elise Jalladeau Thessaloniki Film Festival / Smart7 General Director Greece	Fernando E. Juan Lima Mar del Plata Film Festival President Argentina
Mimi Plauché Chicago Film Festival Artistic Director USA	Sung MOON JEONJU Film Festival Programmer South Korea		

TABLE 4:
Gender Equality & Diversity Representation
5 years after Collectif 50/50 took to Cannes to protest the lack of female representation

Moderator	Notetaker		
<p>Raphaël Gribé Marquis</p> <p>Collectif 50/50</p> <p>Board Member & Producer</p> <p>France</p>	<p>Laurence Lascary</p> <p>De l'Autre Coté du Pèriph (DACP)</p> <p>Producer</p> <p>France</p>	<p>Fatih Abay</p> <p>European Film Academy</p> <p>Diversity & Inclusion Officer</p> <p>Germany</p>	<p>Anamaria Antoci</p> <p>Tangaj Production / European Women's Audiovisual Network (EWA)</p> <p>Managing Director / Executive Director</p> <p>Romania / Francia</p>
<p>Clare Baines</p> <p>BFI</p> <p>Disability Equality Lead</p> <p>UK</p>	<p>Andreas Bühlmann</p> <p>Swiss Films / Pink Apple Film Festival</p> <p>Head of Festival & Market / Artistic Co-Director</p> <p>Switzerland</p>	<p>Matthias Bürcher</p> <p>Federal Office of Culture - Bundesamt für Kultur</p> <p>Head of Specialist Unit Distribution and Diversity</p> <p>Switzerland</p>	<p>Frédéric Cornet</p> <p>Cinema Galleries, Brussels</p> <p>Managing and Artistic Director</p> <p>Belgium</p>
<p>Miranda Gower-Qian</p> <p>BFI</p> <p>Inclusion Lead - Projects & Partnerships</p> <p>UK</p>	<p>K.J. Relth-Miller</p> <p>Academy of Motion Pictures</p> <p>Academy Museum Associate Director of Film Programs</p> <p>USA</p>	<p>Elias Ribeiro</p> <p>Realness Institute / Urucu Media</p> <p>Co-Founder & Executive Director</p> <p>South Africa</p>	<p>Susana Santos Rodrigues</p> <p>IndieLisboa</p> <p>Co-Director</p> <p>Argentina</p>
<p>Miranda van Gelder</p> <p>Hoogt on Tour, Utrecht</p> <p>Film Programmer</p> <p>Netherlands</p>	<p>Enrico Vannucci</p> <p>Eurimages</p> <p>Deputy Director</p> <p>France</p>		

PART III – WRAP-UP SESSION

From 5:00 PM to 6:00 PM

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During this conclusive session, moderated by Variety correspondent Nick Vivarelli, all participants gathered together once again, as the four notetakers from the previous session presented a brief summary of what's been discussed during the round-tables, and offered their conclusions.

The main topics discussed during the "theatrical battlefield" roundtable were ways to lure audiences back into movie theatres after the pandemic – a key one being "content curation" – along with a firm reiteration of the fact that theatrical remains a fundamental pillar of the indie industry. Europa Distribution director Christine Eloy, who was the session's notetaker, cited the Danish Cinema Club curation scheme under which a selection committee picks ten quality films each season, offered at half price, in movie theatres as a success story. She also underscored the need for data sharing about how movies perform "locally, but also internationally." Eloy also pointed out that with different types of windowing for films "audiences are confused." There is a need to train audiences to go back into the "good old model" of theatrical by re-instating firm clear windowing after some windows collapsed during the pandemic.

Development is key; it can make a good movie great, but [for indies] in the current [European] ecosystem it is underfunded," said Paris-based producer Nicholas Kaiser of Paradise City – whose credits include Luca Guadagnino's "Call Me by Your Name" – and was the note taker of the biodiversity of content round-table. Kaiser also pointed out that an integral aspect of indie industry is that "Producers can have an amazing impact on a film, personally, and not just in their financing and admin role. And they need to get more credit for this." He also underlined that "question of budget is vital" citing Celine Song \$35 million arthouse hit "Past Lives." During the keynote conversations the BFI's Rishi Coupland cited a recent study on the indie industry in the U.K. where "budgets are really flatlining."

Allison Gardner, CEO at Glasgow Film, said the Behind-the-Scenes of a Film Festival round-table echoed concerns expressed during her keynote by Berlin Film Festival Managing Director Mariette Rissenbeek – who was the session's moderator – one being that festivals are feeling economic pain but don't want to be beholden to corporate sponsors. "We have a vision, a mission, and values, and we have to stay true to those values" and re-evaluate partnerships, Gardner said. More broadly the session thrashed out the complexities of ethical fundraising and difficulties in their interactions with various government stakeholders and agencies. New forms of partnerships and collaborations with movie theatres were discussed, as was the possibility of including streaming platforms among partners, which was not met with much favour, though it was not ruled out outright. Ticket pricing was talked about and the need to balance that with shrinking budgets. It was pointed out that most festivals have a younger demographic but, as Gardner put it: "Culture has a price."

At the Gender Equality and Diversity Representation table French film producer Laurence Lascary, whose De l'autre côté du périph' company champions young auteurs from diverse backgrounds, said a primary concern is the need for training. "We all agreed that the industry still has a lot of progress to make in terms of [understanding] diversity," she said. "When it comes to linguistics, what are we talking about when we say 'diversity,' 'inclusion,' or when we talk about 'underrepresented' communities?," she added. "We believe in training so that everybody has the tools to create the change and also feel safe about it." Lascary also underlined that diversity representation is not something that should take place just at a level of above-the-line, but should also be taking place at a level of those working in the below-the-line segments of the industry. Also, "data is fundamental," Lascary pointed out. And it's not easy to collect. "How can you engage producers to share their data? How can you collect data below-the-line?" A proposal was made to create a network of diversity data collectors across different countries and organisations.

Wrap-up Speakers:

CHRISTINE ELOY

Europa Distribution | General Manager

NICHOLAS KAISER

Paradise City | Producer

ALLISON GARDNER

Glasgow Film | CEO

LAURENCE LASCARY

De l'Autre Côté du Pèriph (DACP) | Producer

Wrap-up Moderator:

NICK VIVARELLI

Variety | Italy and Middle East correspondent

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