



JOINING NIKO **on its way to the stars**

**Nordic children's films ability
to reach a wider audience**

A report by Alyssa Lewin, STRANGER
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Introduction

Children's films – it's easy to get a dreamy look in our eyes when reminiscing about childhood cinema visits and the thought of films suitable for children. Similarly, it's easy fall into being naive with regards to cultural policy when discussing the breadth and diversity of cinematic film selection for the younger audience. Unfortunately, reality is not as dreamlike since Nordic children's films are exposed to severe commercial competition in the shape of Anglo-American animated blockbusters.

It's important for children to experience films that depicts different worlds, communities, people, ideas and feelings in order to grow up to be independent, reflective individuals and members of society. Nordic societies are similar to the rest of the world in many ways, but differ in some respects, i.e. in view of children and child rearing, gender and LGBT issues. Therefore it's essential that children growing up in the Nordic countries also need to be exposed to films that reflect the Nordic societies of today. Film can help to strengthen a child's identity, development and health, although diversity and other options than commercial forces are required.

The report presents opportunities for initiating further discussion and for improving the market for Nordic children's film. Each Nordic country is a small

country, both in terms of language and population. Collaboration on children's films and working as a collective force has the potential to lead to substantial development and to enhance the status of Nordic children's film.

Biografcentralen, formed in 2011, is a non-profit industry organization representing arthouse cinemas in Sweden. Our interest in Nordic children's film is based on the need expressed by cinema managers to make more children's films available to show, ideally including productions from the Nordic countries.

Nobody can do everything, but everyone can do something and together we are strong!

Thanks to ...

- Alyssa Lewin and Cecilie Stranger-Thorsen.
- The Nordic Culture Fund and Film & Kino.

We invite ...

Film institutes, industry stakeholders, cultural ministries and Nordic cooperation bodies to think, act and move forward!

Jens Lanestrand

Stockholm in August 2013

Head of operations Biografcentralen



Island of Lost Souls (Denmark 2007)
Laban the Little Ghost – Spooky Time (Sweden 2007)
Niko & the Way to the Stars (Finland 2008)

Summary

This report, commissioned by Biografcentralen, concludes a situational analysis of Nordic children's film with focus on cinema distribution across the Nordic countries. It examines the question of why Nordic children's films do not travel well and brings forth the concerns of the industry.

The Nordic countries have a long history of producing high quality children's films that have gained acclaim on an international level. The films are known for presenting progressive and sensitive themes, using evocative stories often told from a children's point of view. However, despite their high quality and good intentions there is a difficulty in exploiting the commercial potential for these films outside of national borders, even for successful Nordic children's films.

The report examines screening and viewing number statistics for children's and family feature films at the cinema in the Nordic countries during the years 2008 through 2011.

The statistics show that:

- Anglo-American films dominate the Nordic children's film market
- Norway stands out with the highest amount of non-national Nordic children's films shown at the cinema
- Most Nordic children's films that travel are animated and based on well known Intellectual Properties (IPs)
- During the years 2008 through 2011 only five live action Nordic children's films made it across the Nordic borders

So why doesn't Nordic children's film travel?

The report concludes five main problems of why Nordic children's films don't travel across the Nordic borders:

- Producers choice of stories
- Distributors risk assessment
- Lack of audience awareness
- A short term perspective of the commercial potential of film distribution
- Commercial perspective

The Nordic representatives have stagnated in the traditional ways of marketing and distributing films and would most likely benefit from taking a closer look at the opportunities provided through digital distribution. Utilizing new viewing channels and possibilities for building audience awareness much earlier in the production process can offer Nordic children's films a longer commercial lifespan and reach more viewers.

All areas of the industry are intertwined. If one area is faltering, the rest wobble as well.

Therefore, the measures discussed here aims to strengthen the cooperation and dialogue amongst the stakeholders.

The report suggests measures to increase the potential for increasing the number of Nordic children's film that succeed in traveling across the Nordic countries.

” All areas of the industry are intertwined. If one area is faltering, the rest wobble as well.

About the study

This report, *Joining Niko – on its way to the stars*¹, has the ambition to ignite a discussion on the difficulties of showing Nordic children's film in countries other than the country of production and to explore ways of offering more Nordic children's films on cinema repertoires. The measures discussed in this report are also meant as a platform for the discussions that will take place at the film festival in Haugesund in Norway later this year.

In addition to statistics and information provided by Nordic film institutes and interviews with cinema managers, producers and distributors from the Nordic countries, Biografcentralen organized a seminar during the International Children and Young People's Film Festival in Malmö (BUFF), in March 2013, for representatives from various departments of the children's film industry. The wealth of information obtained in this manner is the basis of this report.

When discussing Nordic children's films ability to travel over Nordic borders it's important to look closer at which films they are competing against. In the analysis of the cinema repertoires, we looked at national and international productions – the former often based on well-known books or IPs, the latter based on brand industries with mass marketing and physical or digital presence like merchandise and/or TV-series.

There's good reason to ask what a measure of success actually is for films without well-known IPs or big marketing budgets, as the category 'Nordic' is likely to mean little or nothing to cinema audiences as an independent value. A success can therefore be anything from an audience of 5,000 for a film that is unknown to the new market, to a 100,000 expected admissions for a film based on well-known children's books where there is an active local co-producer (like in the case of *Lasse Majas detektivbyrå* in 2012 in Norway).

At the same time as there is no explicit demand for 'Nordic' content in itself (the audience can be expected to be oriented towards the familiarity and execution of the story, not its origin), a glance towards the Nordic children's TV collaboration (Nordvision) tells us that there is no inherent resistance to Nordic content travelling. Yearly, the public service broadcasters co-produce and exchange 1,915 hours of television. Though this content is curated and chosen by gatekeepers such as broadcasters and parents, this material is the backbone of the great success of the four Nordic children's channels.

Despite the final proof of Nordic films potential to travel lies in ticket sales, this report is written in the spirit of ensuring that there aren't any unnecessary hinders and to explore the possibility of facilitating the increase in available Nordic quality children's films through incremental or radical measures.

1. *Niko & the Way to the Stars* is a Finnish animated children's film that is an exception that proves the rule. Even though it is a film that is based on an original IP it has had successful distribution in all of the Nordic countries. It does, however, prove the rule that animated films usually travel easier internationally than live action films.

A short history of Nordic children's film and collaboration

An in-depth look at the history of Nordic children's film shows that this tradition was built on Nordic collaboration through common activities, benchmarking and lobbying based on Nordic successes as a reference points. For the past 10 years, this collaboration has been systematically downsized.

History

Filmmakers in the Nordic countries began making films suitable for children after WWII in the period of post war reconstruction. Along with the 'evolution' of social welfare systems and important cultural changes in post WWII Europe, a new awareness grew of the necessity of offering children meaningful cultural experiences and the concept of 'children's culture' started to develop.

Children were seen as a viable film audience and filmmakers were encouraged to make films tailored especially for that audience. In Sweden, children's films were being made as early as in 1945, in Denmark as early as in 1947, and Finland and Norway followed suit within the next 4 years. During the 1950's cinema attendance by children was record high, although films made for children only represented a small part of the films presented.

The realization that children are a particularly impressionable and vulnerable audience prompted the formation of committees, boards and juries throughout the Nordic countries to address issues involving children's film, providing information and advice, and working towards reforms.

Sweden was the first country to form a Children's Film Committee in 1948, spearheaded by four women's organizations and joined by citizen organizations, teachers, parents and educational organizations.

The 1950s brought government involvement with children's film committees and initiatives. Denmark and Norway brought film screening to schools as

the realization that film was a valuable educational tool progressed. Difficult topics were more easily discussed through the context of a film experience and seminars and courses were established to educate teachers in how to teach through film. Nordic countries were influencing each other and in 1953 the Norwegian Film Society voiced a need for a Nordic Children's Film Council. Supporting the idea, the Swedish Children's Film Committee arranged an extensive Nordic course on children and film. In 1956 the first meeting of the Nordic Centre of Films for Children and Young People was held in Stockholm and a united Nordic front was calling for tax exemptions and financial support, a Nordic grading system and the introduction of film studies in schools. Interaction between national juries, committees, film clubs and government institutions between 1956 and 1970 formed the basis of a Nordic debate.

Nordic efforts in the area of children's film were intensified in the mid-1970s. Public grants were offered for the import, distribution and dubbing of children's films. Institutes used children's film and educational consultants, and grants were provided for children's film production as well as distribution and procurement support. Children's film became part of school and library resources, and school screenings were arranged in cooperation with trade and local organizations.

Nordic Cooperation

The early Nordic efforts at collaboration bore fruit. The Nordic partnership, Scandinavian Films was initiated by the film institutes and supported by the Nordic Council of Ministers, and established an ambulatory Nordic Film Festival, including a Children's Film Festival every other year. In 1978 the first Nordic children's festival took place in Stockholm where interested parties from all the Nordic countries gath-



Christmas Story (Finland 2007)
Freddy Frogface (Denmark 2011)
The Ugly Duckling and Me (Denmark 2006)

” **A main priority was to discuss and compare children’s film in the Nordic countries. And through the festival Nordic children’s films became visible.**

ered to attend screenings of Nordic children’s film. The Swedish Film Institute compiled a program of all short films produced for children in the Nordic countries since 1976 and published facts about the films in an informative catalogue distributed at the festival. Nordic directors met to debate their views. Following a Swedish seminar in 1977 on the status of children’s film, the Danish Association of Children’s Film Clubs established an inter-Nordic network for children’s film clubs to share experiences and materials. A series of seminars was developed that were held at the following Nordic Children’s Film Festivals.

The goals of the film festivals were to improve contact between filmmakers from the different countries, to show what producers could offer in terms of children’s and youth films and to stimulate distribution of these films. A main priority was to discuss and compare children’s film in the Nordic countries and the festival made Nordic children’s films visible.

By 1992 the volume of children’s films produced in the Nordic countries had increased significantly and it became necessary to make a quality based selection of films for a main program lasting about eight hours, plus an additional program of films to be screened thematically.

The planning groups for these festivals had become the natural sounding board on all matters pertaining

to Nordic children’s film. Moreover, the Nordic models for supporting the production, import, distribution and screening of children’s films have aroused international interest.

In 1994, Nordic film cooperation changed its model and the cooperation became more pragmatic and allowed for each country to create individual strategies and compete with each other as well as working in partnership.

The film festival had been a very effective way to support and spread awareness of Nordic children’s films. When the Nordic Children’s Film Festival was closed down in 1998, Scandinavian Films took the initiative of establishing the New Nordic Children’s Film Festival (NNCF) to continue to promote the interests of Nordic children’s film, but already in 2005, the Film Institutes began to redefine their funding priorities and the NNCF was discontinued. Film festivals, which had provided important meeting places and forums for the exchange of ideas and experience for Nordic film consultants, educators, manufacturers, distributors and audiences became affected by the gradual downsizing of funding and cooperation. Without any form of Nordic support, a systematic dismantling of Nordic initiatives has taken place. Nordic films still compete in the national film festivals BUFF – the International Children and Young People’s Film Festival in Malmö (SE), BUSTER – Copenhagen International Film Festival for Children and Youth (DK), Kristiansand International Children’s Film Festival (NO), The Oulu International Children’s and Youth Film festival (FI). However, Nordic cooperation has been rationalized and scaled back. Due to the recent digitalization of production and distribution, and the increase in international competition in the children’s market, the situation for Nordic children’s films has worsened.

Support systems

The Nordic film institutes all operate under the auspices of their national Ministries of Culture and they all have the same fundamental mission, to stimulate national film life. The Nordic countries film institutes' provide subsidies in three principal areas: development, production and distribution. Similarities between the Nordic support systems exist mostly in the following areas:

Production

All of the film institutes provide support for national film productions and co-productions, which most often require national creative or technical involvement and an agreement for national distribution.

Import

With the exception of Iceland, all the Nordic film institutes provide import subsidies. The principle for import subsidies is to provide support for distributors of art house films that subtitle and market the films. These subsidies cover 50–80% of expenses, with some variation of terms from country to country (see Appendix 1).

Dubbing

Dubbing subsidies can be applied for in all of the Nordic countries except Iceland. Dubbing subsidies are allocated within the range of EUR 13,000–39,000 (for specific national support, see Appendix 1)

School Cinema

School cinema is offered in all Nordic countries. However, this is not arranged by the film institutes although they provide educational materials (see Appendix 1).

Even though the Nordic countries' film systems mostly share similarities there are some differences as well:

Children's film commissioners

Denmark is the only Nordic country with film commissioners specifically for children and youth films.

Film & Kino

Norway holds a unique situation where most cinemas are owned by the municipalities. Film & Kino is a combination of a member organization for Norwegian municipalities and for the cinema and video industries. Film & Kino doesn't allocate any subsidies for production of professional films but provides support for distribution costs and for film related activities such as film courses, teacher training etc.

Nordvision

The Nordic Public Service broadcasters collaborate in co-production and program exchange through Nordvision. A closer description of the public financing systems and collaboration is included in Appendix 1.



No Network (Iceland 2007)
Mamma Moo and Crow (Sweden 2008)
Elias and the Treasure of the Sea (Norway 2010)
Disco Worms (Denmark 2008)



Nordic children's films don't travel

Origin of the repertoire

In the Nordic countries, Nordic children's films only represent a small part of the Nordic cinema repertoire. Anglo-American films dominate the Nordic children's film market considerably.

When examining the statistics it becomes evident that:

- During the years 2008 through 2011 over 50% of the children's films shown in the Nordic countries were Anglo-American films.
- During the years 2008 through 2011 Nordic titles (excluding national productions) were much less represented, accounting for an average of 7% of the total children's films shown.

One reason for this is of course the sheer number of Anglo-American films available whereas the amount of Nordic children's films being produced is significantly lower.

National variations

When looking closer at the individual Nordic countries it becomes evident that all of the five countries had a relatively low percentage of non-national Nordic children's films circulating annually at the cinema during the years 2008 through 2011.

- Norway showed an average of 14% non-national Nordic children's films
- Sweden showed an average of 8% non-national Nordic children's films
- Finland showed an average of 7% non-national Nordic children's films
- Denmark showed an average of 5% non-national Nordic children's films
- Iceland showed an average of 4% non-national Nordic children's films

Although the numbers vary little from country to country, Norway stands out with the highest number of non-national Nordic children's films shown, and Iceland the least shown. This may be expected considering Iceland being the smallest of the Nordic countries. However, when examining the number of Nordic children's films shown in Sweden, Denmark and Finland, the average percentage lies closer in range with Iceland than Norway. One reason why Norway show more Nordic children's films may be due to Norway having had a strong tradition of showing and viewing TV-productions and films from their neighboring countries. It's a natural part of Norwegian culture and the audiences are more accustomed to Nordic films. It was pointed out during the workshop at BUFF that the absence of familiarity and lack of knowledge among the general population about Nordic films was one of the major issues for Nordic children's films not doing so well at the cinema.

Higher numbers in Norway could also be attributed to their municipal cinema system, which requires cinemas to show an extensive range of children's films as the bylaws of several municipalities state that they should prioritize art house films for children. Norway is also the Nordic country that allocates the most for distribution subsidies, 80%.

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Which films travel across the Nordic borders?

It's mainly animated children's films that are distributed to other Nordic countries and live-action children's films are sorely underrepresented. During the years 2008 through 2011 only five live action films made it across the borders *No Network* (*Duggholufólkid*, IS), *Christmas Story* (*Joulutarina*, FI), *Lost in Africa* (*Kidnappet*, DK), *Island of Lost Souls* (*De fortabte sjæles ø*, DK) and *Superbrother* (*Superbror*, DK). With few exceptions it's the same films that are shown outside the Nordic borders. Examples of recurring traveling titles are the animated films *Mamma Moo and Crow* (*Mamma Mu och Kråkan*, SE) and *Elias and the Treasure of the Sea* (*Elias og jakten på havets gull*, NO), which is most likely due to the fact that animated films are easier to dub.

That many of the films are based on well-known IPs and established characters that already have a fan base have been concluded as another reason. This makes it easier to distribute the films and draw upon the audience that the IPs has already established. Examples of Nordic characters that originated from literature and have been successful in crossing national borders are *Laban the Little Ghost* (*Lilla Spöket Laban*) from Sweden and the Finish *Moomintroll* (*Muumi*).

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How well do they do? – Admission numbers

Some of the Nordic countries have produced national children's films that on occasion have generated high box office numbers within their own country, sometimes even surpassing big IPs as *Harry Potter*. However, a film's success domestically does not guarantee success across borders or even Nordic distribution. Films from other neighboring Nordic countries travel on a low scale and receive fluctuating admission figures. The admission figures for non-national Nordic children's films for the years 2008 through 2011 vary significantly. When shown in Norway the animated film *Mamma Moo and Crow* (*Mamma Mu och Kråkan*, SE), based on a well-known Swedish book and TV-show, reached over 71,000 admissions. The same year in Norway, the non-national Nordic children's film with the lowest admission figures was the original IP *Desmond the Swamp Barbarian* (*Desmond & träskpatraskfällan*, SE) at a mere 8,492 admissions.

Why don't Nordic children's film travel?

As we have seen, Nordic children's films are not often screened in Nordic countries other than the country of origin. Based on the discussions at the BUFF seminar, interviews with industry representatives and the gathered statistics, the report concludes the following issues to be the fundamental problems for why Nordic children's films don't travel across the Nordic borders.

Producers' choice of stories

As we have seen from the statistics, most Nordic children's films being made are based on children's IPs already well-known to the domestic audience. Basing a children's film on a well-known IP might be a guarantee for national success, but the ability to travel and achieve distribution in other countries can be challenging since these IPs are not usually known outside of the country of production. Because of this, more work is involved in getting the film distributed and attracting an audience internationally. This fact alone can't be held accountable for low admission numbers but it certainly plays a large part in it.

Lack of long-term planning

Producers admit it sometimes feels like a lost cause working towards international distribution and therefore focus on the domestic market. A common

” **Establishing a plan for international distribution as early as the development phase would be beneficial for both producers and distributors.**

platform for distributors and producers is lacking, making it difficult for them collaborate. Producers also admit the need to start working on establishing international distribution channels much earlier in the process. Distributors enter the process much too late and therefore have little time to distribute and market the films.

Establishing a plan for international distribution as early as the development phase would be beneficial for both producers and distributors. If a film doesn't have a very dedicated producer/co-producer and a committed distributor working together, international distribution is not very likely to happen or is not likely to be successful. That is why co-productions are extra beneficial from a distribution standpoint. Co-production means ownership in multiple countries and therefore also distribution channels in more than just one country.

Distributors risk assessment

Distributing a film is costly and there is always a monetary risk involved. Not many distributors are able to take the financial risk of distributing a film whose success they are uncertain of. Hence, distributors frequently choose Anglo-American children's films that most often have already achieved audience awareness and as a result are more likely to create enough admissions to be profitable. Distributors state that they would like to take on more non-Hollywood children's film productions but they risk losing too much money in doing so. Even with subsidies the financial burden is still high.

International distributors often want to delay committing until they can evaluate how a film is received domestically, making the process of distribution long and uncertain. The film loses its buzz along the way and often receives little attention when it's finally distributed in other countries. In some cases,

international distributors chose to launch a film on television before screening it at the cinemas in order to see how the film is received in the hope of using television as an incentive for generating interest in the film. However, this strategy is sometimes in conflict with the film being screened at the cinema at a later date. Distributors argue that filmgoers are less likely to see a film at the cinema if it has already been broadcast on TV.

Audience awareness

Getting sufficient admission numbers for Nordic children's films is a big problem. As we have seen there is only a small selection of Nordic children's films available at the cinema and the fewer Nordic films available, the less accustomed audiences are to view stories that are not based on well-known IPs.

At present, the audience have too few titles to choose from and too little knowledge of which films are actually being offered. Nordic children's films are almost invisible to the audiences due to unknown IPs, lack of marketing efforts and short screening periods.

According to distributors and cinema managers, there is only a small window of opportunity for children's films to be viewed at the cinema. They point out that the times children go to the cinema are often limited to a few weekends a year. Therefore people tend to pick the "safe bets" such as films that have received a lot of media attention or films that have been seen and recommended by friends. The audience is fast to disregard the unknown Nordic films and to choose a familiar Hollywood production when time and money is scarce. Stories unknown to the audience need to make themselves known to the public and therefore it's crucial to create enough pro-

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motional power for the product. Distributors and cinema managers need to interact and communicate with the film's target audience.

Commercial perspective

Even though a producer's main task is to make the film, it would be advantageous if producers adopted a cradle to grave perspective. However, producers often have many projects lined up and little time left over to dedicate to other aspects of a film's lifespan, which is the effect of the reasoning that being successful in a subsidy funded industry equals having many projects in development simultaneously. From a business stand point, neither producers nor distributors make long-term plans or have the business perspective in mind when utilizing IPs and audience engagement. This makes it difficult, if not impossible, to nourish the potential for audience engagement and commitment that could be established and capitalized upon long-term.

The Nordic stakeholders may need to look more closely at the opportunities provided through digital media. Utilizing new viewing channels and possibilities for building audience awareness much earlier in the production process has the potential to offer Nordic children's films a longer commercial lifespan.



Pettson & Findus IV – Forget-Abilities (Sweden 2009)
The Apple & the Worm (Denmark 2009)
Kurt Turns Evil (Norway 2008)

New possibilities to consider and utilize

Besides increasing international competition from new digital production possibilities, digital distribution channels also pose both challenges and opportunities for producers. On the one hand, producers face not only greater international competition from new players and a vast variety of content but also contributing to eroding traditional business models as piracy forces distributors to collapse the “window-model” of capitalizing on a film.

Most films have a week to prove their worth in the cinema in the national market, and the income from dvd-sales is in sharp decline. From this perspective, it's becoming much more challenging to create revenue from old models, if the audience isn't exposed to the film immediately. It's also worth noting that competition is from other feature films, as well as all kinds of digital content and services distributed on platforms that surround us in everyday life. The decision to buy a cinema ticket for 90 minutes of entertainment is made in competition with web videos, games, social media, or pre-paid content from Netflix or other services. Even more important than that, the decision to choose an Anglo-American animated blockbuster in cinemas is easy and attractive for parents and children to make.

On the other hand, the new distribution channels also means new possibilities for children's producers, in ways we have not really started to explore. In addition to the 'long tail' effect of digital content not needing storage and old content therefore being readily available to users who would want to pay per view or via subscription, the new distribution channels also represent an erosion of the old gatekeeper structure of who decides what will hit big and small screens.

Meanwhile, social media provides easy and cheap access to niche audiences, giving creatives who open up the process an opportunity to build audiences from day one, even funding productions – or at least

proving that there is an interest for them. Without underestimating the emergence of new power structures in such a landscape, it's important to remember that this period of uncertainty also offer opportunities. To take advantage, however, it's important that producers and distributors revise the process of development, production, distribution and marketing, realizing that building an audience starts with the first draft of the script.

The development the past couple of years with the popularity of Nordic content internationally, the hits of the Swedish “The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo” films, the British popularity and US remake of the Danish *The Killing (Forbrydelsen)*, along with the Netflix commission of NRKs Lilyhammer – and dare we mention the Finnish multi-screen success “Angry Birds” – points to how geographical borders are disappearing for great content. Such success stories should surely be an inspiration for Nordic children's producers to conceive a new variety of content and reach a whole new international market for their stories.

Some current Nordic projects are trying to explore and test new ways of distributing films to reach the audience. The Nordic Council of Ministers has initiated a feasibility study on a Nordic web portal for distribution of documentaries and short films to schools.

In July 2012 the Nordisk Film & TV Fond launched their video on demand (VoD) initiative, Scandi Sensation, on the MUBI online film platform. The initiative is dedicated to showing films from the Nordic region and has already surpassed its targeted estimated downloads less than halfway through its trial period. Close to 100 Nordic classics and recent films have been screened through Scandi Sensation. The service offers both pay and free viewing options and has already been used in over 150 countries worldwide.

As we have seen, the report has established five fundamental issues of why Nordic children's films do not travel well across the Nordic borders. The issues indicate the need for a more structured dialogue between the industry's stakeholders. Measures should be taken to utilize the opportunities that already exist and to establish better communication and collaboration within the industry in the Nordic countries. In addition, some new measures are suggested.

Since the Scandinavian Films collaboration became more informal, little collaboration between the Nordic film institutes takes place and a mutual platform has ceased to exist. The industry expresses a lack of a Nordic collective spirit and valuable flow of information. Perhaps the film industry should take inspiration from the Nordic children's TV-industry that has developed a continuous dialogue and exchange of experience and knowledge.

The following measures presented below aim to strengthen awareness and serve as a basis for further discussion. We can't force measures on stakeholders but we can inspire. If there is to be any real change it needs to come from within the industry.

1. Discussing the terms for innovation

The Nordic film institutes bylaws states they should work towards diversity and innovation. Systematic benchmarking and discussion of the trend in children's film productions within the film institutes and the industry might prove beneficial for future incentives.

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2. A meeting place

Just as there is a need for greater audience awareness there is a need for the industry to become better acquainted with the film selection, representatives and conditions in all of the Nordic countries. Currently, a meeting place that prioritizes discussing and screening Nordic children's film specifically doesn't exist, such as the bi-annual Ebeltoft festival provides for the Nordic Children's TV industry. A meeting place would create networking opportunities and help establish and maintain a dialogue between the Nordic representatives. A common arena for discussing film would also enable the industry and funding bodies to critically discuss initiatives and incentives for increasing innovation and original IPs. Such a meeting place could potentially be arranged in collaboration with one or more of the existing Nordic TV and film festivals.

3. Nordic Film package for VoD

Other viewing possibilities should not be seen as a threat rather as untapped opportunities. There is a need to encourage both children and adults to become acquainted with Nordic children's films and VoD is a good opportunity for exposure. It's not the most financial profitable means of distribution but definitely one of the most lucrative in terms of high exposure. Similar to Nordisk Film & TV Fond's collaboration with MUBI, collaboration with Netflix, for example, would be beneficial.

4. A Nordic children's film prize

As of now the audience is not well informed about Nordic children's films that are being made or shown at the cinema. The lack of information makes it difficult for the audience to decide if the films on offer are of interest to them. A prize for the best Nordic children's film would make a nominated film stand out and ultimately provide a stamp of quality for the

winning film. A prize might not have immediate effect, but would indirectly be regarded as a kind of branding for the nominated films and the audience would view the prize as a stamp of quality. Furthermore, a prize for the best Nordic children's film based on an original IP could also be handed out, encouraging film makers to work with new stories. The award would indicate that the branch consider it as a category worth highlighting and children's film makers would be rewarded, if not economically, at least with more prestige.

5. Tweak the marketing and import subsidies

It's almost a catch-22 scenario: Nordic children's films most often go unnoticed by the audience, partially due to only a small selection of Nordic children's films being shown at the cinema and lack of marketing efforts. Distributors and cinema managers claim that they can't afford to invest resources in films that are not likely to make a profit and therefore they invest in films with higher profit potential. Nordic children's films will not receive more attention if they are not made more noticeable. To help create more promotional power for the films and minimize the financial burden for distributors in order to give them the

ability to distribute a larger selection of Nordic children's films, it would be beneficial to allocate distribution and marketing subsidies specifically for imported Nordic children's film, for example through Nordic Film & TV Fond.

6. The chosen ones

If, for example, Nordic Film & TV Fond were to provide top financing for the distribution and marketing of specifically hand-picked Nordic children's films, it would help to provide those films with the marketing power needed to create enough attention so that they become noticeable to an international audience.

7. Nordic children's film support for exhibitors

Cinema exhibitors are an essential link between distribution and the audience, and they possess expertise in the local audience market. Financial support directly allocated to exhibitors may be one option to increase the opportunities for children to view more Nordic children's films. Similar support system is available today for screening European films by MEDIA/Europa Cinemas. Implementing such support would require dedicated money on a Nordic level.

Resources



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Statistics from

Danish Film Institute (www.dfi.dk)

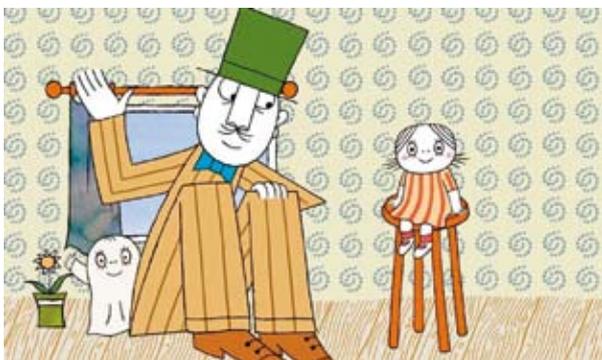
Finnish Film Foundation (www.ses.fi)

Icelandic Film Centre (www.iff.is)

Norwegian Film Institute (www.nfi.no)

Swedish Film Institute (www.sfi.se)

Film & Kino, Norway (www.kino.no)



Superbrother (Denmark 2009)

Don't be Afraid, Tall Uncle (Sweden 2011)

Contributors

The following people were interviewed, consulted or participated at the BUFF seminar, March 2013.

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The Great Bear (Denmark 2011)

Appendix I. Funding bodies and support schemes

Import subsidies

Distributors of imported art house films in Denmark can apply for subsidies for the production of copies, translation and subtitles, maximum 50 % of the cost and a limit of DKK 30,000 per title. The distributors can apply for support for the marketing of the film. For this the subsidies can be provided for a maximum of 65 % of the budgeted marketing cost up to DKK 150,000. At least 50 % of the marketing subsidies must be used in connection with cinema launch. The criterion for receiving these subsidies from DFI is that the film must be booked in at least 15 Danish cinemas. Dubbing subsidies are allocated up to a sum of DKK 150,000.

Subsidies for foreign film distribution can be applied for by distributors in Sweden. Priority is given to subsidies for films where the production country is not often represented in the Swedish repertoire and that have limited commercial viability. Children's and youth films are also a prioritized category. Distributors with an art house film profile can apply for the cinema launch of multiple titles spread throughout the year for a maximum amount of SEK 1.5 million per year. Other distributors may seek subsidies for individual titles for a maximum amount of SEK 200,000 per title. The applicant's financial contribution has to be at least 25 % of the films launch costs. In Sweden dubbing subsidies of imported children's film can be granted to a maximum of SEK 300,000 per film.

In Finland, a film that has received import subsidies must be distributed in a Finnish and a Swedish version. A film imported and distributed in a minimum of three prints can be granted a maximum of EUR 12,000 in support. A film distributed in two prints can receive EUR 10,000 at most and a single-print distribution EUR 7,000. The support can only cover a maximum of 50 % of the total importing and

marketing costs and the dubbing of children's and family films can be supported up to 50 % of the actual costs to a maximum of EUR 20,000 per film.

Norway's Film & Kino offer a subsidy that covers up to 80 % of the cost of importing and marketing selected movies to Norway. The selection is made by Film & Kino film advisors in collaboration with program managers at Oslo Kino, Bergen Kino and Trondheim Kino and these cinemas also guarantee the screening of the film.

Dubbing subsidies are usually between NOK 100,000–300,000 per film. There isn't a fixed maximum sum, although NOK 300,000 is the unofficial limit. The total annual budget for dubbing subsidies is NOK 1 million.

In Iceland, the support system is small and doesn't provide any support for import distribution or dubbing.

International support

The Nordic film institutes are often by far the most important and decisive financiers of national film production. However, other subsidy opportunities are available on an international level.

Nordisk Film & TV Fond is an important financier for both feature films and television productions in the Nordic countries. They endorse cross-national Nordic productions by providing financial support for development, distribution and dubbing. To qualify for support from them, distribution in more than one Nordic country is required.

The MEDIA Programme (EU's support program for the European audiovisual industry) provides financial support for the development and distribution of film and television drama, but not production. At present, specific support for productions aimed at a younger audience is not available.

As the name indicates, Europa Cinemas is a net-

work for cinemas focusing on European films. Europa Cinemas allocates financial and operational support to cinemas that screen a significant number of non-national European films, as well as to cinemas that promote European films aimed towards a young audience. The support is a maximum of EUR 1 per admission.

School Cinema

All Nordic countries provide school cinema viewing in order for school children to watch movies, for educational purposes, at the local cinema during school hours.

The common movie watching experience provides students with a starting point for discussions on a variety of different issues. The film institutes and organizations develop and provide educational materials and are made available with the films in the form of movie tutorials, articles, and educational documentation. The school cinema format in the Nordic countries varies somewhat from country to country. Generally, the format is arranged locally, either by individual schools, cinemas or municipalities, and is not handled by film institutes.

Nordic children's films are popular choices for screenings at school cinema and a film can therefore reach rather high admission numbers. However, this is not lucrative for the film industry because the revenue from these screenings are much less than reg-

ular cinema screenings and therefore not financially lucrative. Distributors argue that they don't have the means to engage in non-commercial screenings that require time and resources but provide only a small income.

Children's films on TV

Nordic Public Service collaboration (Nordvision) has a long-standing tradition of co-producing and exchanging programs for the five broadcasters, as well as the very successful Scandinavian children's channels (DRs Ramasjang and Ultra, NRK Super and SVTs Barnkanalen), proving that there is an interest for Nordic children's material across Nordic borders, if this material is selected, adapted and presented in a suitable manner. The children's channels have little or no tradition of showing Nordic children's films, though SVT indicated in March 2013 that they might reconsider. With the considerable volume needed for these new channels, larger series are being requested. For many producers of children's films, selling to the broadcasters means making a 'TV-version' of their film of 4x22' minutes or a similar suitable format, which already is part of the planning in many productions. Selling such a TV-version to one of the broadcasters rarely means that Nordic distribution is guaranteed, though, as the acquisition of such external productions is negotiated outside the Nordic collaboration.



A Tale of Two Mozzies (Denmark 2007)
Moomin and Midsummer Madness (Finland 2008)

Appendix 2. Statistics

The admission numbers for Nordic children's films cited here are based on the statistical sources available. One should be aware that the numbers summarize tickets sold for films screened per year, sometimes also covering the whole screening period for the films shown. They may therefore include spill-over or re-runs of films produced earlier years and aren't representative for the number of films produced. Likewise,

the countries count admission numbers differently, some including school cinema screenings while others exclude these. Also, no country categorizes children's-, youth and family films in the same way. The question of what constitutes a children's film has had to be judged with a certain amount of subjectivity. Despite these precautions, the tendency of the numbers remain clear.

Origin of children's films shown at the Nordic cinemas 2008 through 2011

ORIGIN OF CHILDREN'S FILMS SHOWN AT THE NORDIC CINEMAS 2008						
Country	Do-mestic	Nor-dic	Eu-rop-e	Anglo-Am.	Other	Total
Norway	2	8	2	23	0	35
Sweden	3	3	3	15	1	25
Iceland	3	0	4	26	0	33
Denmark	7	2	4	18	1	32
Finland	4	2	4	12	1	23

ORIGIN OF CHILDREN'S FILMS SHOWN AT THE NORDIC CINEMAS 2010						
Country	Do-mestic	Nor-dic	Eu-rop-e	Anglo-Am.	Other	Total
Norway	7	2	3	22	1	35
Sweden	3	3	5	17	1	29
Iceland	0	3	2	26	2	33
Denmark	9	1	11	24	1	46
Finland	2	0	4	19	2	27

ORIGIN OF CHILDREN'S FILMS SHOWN AT THE NORDIC CINEMAS 2009						
Country	Do-mestic	Nor-dic	Eu-rop-e	Anglo-Am.	Other	Total
Norway	6	4	4	12	1	27
Sweden	4	2	2	14	0	22
Iceland	0	0	2	29	1	32
Denmark	7	3	4	17	2	33
Finland	0	2	1	12	2	17

ORIGIN OF CHILDREN'S FILMS SHOWN AT THE NORDIC CINEMAS 2011						
Country	Do-mestic	Nor-dic	Eu-rop-e	Anglo-Am.	Other	Total
Norway	7	3	3	19	2	34
Sweden	5	1	5	21	3	35
Iceland	2	3	3	29	2	39
Denmark	5	0	4	18	2	29
Finland	4	2	2	13	1	22

Non-national Nordic children's films shown at cinemas in the Nordic countries 2008 through 2011

NON-NATIONAL NORDIC CHILDREN'S FILMS SHOWN AT CINEMAS IN DENMARK			
Year	Origin	Title	Admissions
2008	Sweden	Mamma Moo and Crow	23,399
2008	Finland	Niko and the Way to the Stars	92,028
2009	Norway	Kurt Turns Evil	1,412
2009	Finland	Moomin and Midsummer Madness	6,323
2009	Sweden	Pettson & Findus IV – Forget-Abilities	36,336
2010	Iceland	No Network	1,268
2011	None Shown		

NON-NATIONAL NORDIC CHILDREN'S FILMS SHOWN AT CINEMAS IN FINLAND			
Year	Origin	Title	Admissions
2008	Norway	Elias and the Royal Yacht	12,754
2008	Sweden	Mamma Moo and Crow	43,882
2009	Denmark	Disco Worms	12,761
2009	Sweden	Pettson & Findus IV – Forget-Abilities	60,349
2010	None Shown		
2011	Norway	Elias and the treasure of the sea	2,812
2011	Sweden	Don't be afraid, Tall Uncle	6,921

NON-NATIONAL NORDIC CHILDREN'S FILMS SHOWN AT CINEMAS IN ICELAND			
Year	Origin	Title	Admissions
2008	None Shown		
2009	None Shown		
2010	Denmark	The Ugly Duckling and Me!	1,775
2010	Denmark	Jungo Goes Bananas	3,567
2010	Finland	Niko and the Way to the Stars	5,830
2011	Norway	Elias and the treasure of the sea	462
2011	Finland	Niko and the Way to the Stars	573
2011	Finland	Moomins and the Comet Chase	1,752

NON-NATIONAL NORDIC CHILDREN'S FILMS SHOWN AT CINEMAS IN NORWAY			
Year	Origin	Title	Admissions
2008	Sweden	Desmond & The Swamp Barbarian Trap	8,492
2008	Denmark	A Tale of Two Mozzies	10,260
2008	Finland	Niko and the Way to the Stars	10,386
2008	Finland	Christmas Story	13,903
2008	Sweden	Laban the Little Ghost – Spooky Time	21,691
2008	Denmark	Jungo Goes Bananas	58,210
2008	Sweden	Mamma Moo and Crow	71,933
2008	Finland	Moomin and Midsummer Madness	22,366
2009	Iceland	No Network	6,429
2009	Denmark	Disco Worms	18,233
2009	Sweden	Laban the Little Ghost – Nicest Ghost Around	21,588
2009	Sweden	Pettson & Findus IV – Forget-Abilities	63,540
2010	Finland	Moomins and the Comet Chase	10,337
2010	Sweden	Laban the Little Ghost – Rattle and Rolls	16,647
2011	Denmark	Lost in Africa	8,891
2011	Denmark	The Great Bear	15,912
2011	Denmark	Freddy Frogfac	21,186

NON-NATIONAL NORDIC CHILDREN'S FILMS SHOWN AT CINEMAS IN SWEDEN			
Year	Origin	Title	Admissions
2008	Finland	Christmas Story	3,778
2008	Denmark	Island of Lost Souls	6,605
2008	Finland	Niko and the Way to the Stars	19,807
2009	Finland	Moomin and Midsummer Madness	10,285
2009	Denmark	Disco Worms	35,064
2010	Denmark	Superbrother	423
2010	Denmark	The Apple & The Worm	3,846
2010	Finland	Moomins and the Comet Chase	13,645
2011	Norway	Elias and the treasure of the sea	8,167



Lost in Africa (Denmark 2010)
Jungo Goes Bananas (Denmark 2007)





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