

# **Audit of Moving Image Education & Media Access Centres in Scotland**

## **Summary Report**

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# INTRODUCTION

This research was commissioned by Scottish Screen in the Summer of 2007. The findings, presented in the form of a database for Scottish Screen's internal use and this published report will provide Scottish Screen and its partners with a clearer picture of the current status of Moving Image Education (MIE) and Media Access Centres and activities in Scotland. It will also help:

- To identify gaps in provision, so that resources can be targeted at areas of need
- To enable the sharing of best practice and knowledge of funding sources across the uk
- To report to funders and other stakeholders
- To inform the advocacy case for moving image education, film making initiatives and media access
- To identify funding needs and priorities
- To help partner organisations and their clients to better understand how their film education provision sits within the national context; and
- To help monitor progress under the UK Wide Film Education strategy.<sup>1</sup>

## Definitions

For the purposes of this audit, **Moving Image Education (MIE)** was defined widely to ensure that all educational initiatives involving both the analysis and/or creation of moving images are represented.

The audit encompasses all initiatives that involve:

- The watching and appreciation of moving image narratives,
- Training in film making, animation or other screen media
- Creative activities involving the creation of films, animations, interactive media or other screen narratives
- Structured moving image education in formal (with or without a curricular remit) and informal education settings.

The audit DID NOT include formal courses or training provided by Colleges and Universities, but rather those activities offered to school-aged children, to disadvantaged or minority groups, in schools, and/or through publicly supported cinemas (including specialised cinemas), Media Access Centres or other agencies.

Critical to the definition is the *involvement* of pupils or groups: an artist employed to make a film about a school performance is *not* Moving Image Education, whereas involving the pupils themselves in the filming of the performance and in the film making process - thereby reflecting on how film and theatre differ for example - *is*. Film viewing is *not* Moving Image Education in itself, *unless* it is accompanied by the teaching or critical understanding of, for example, how this medium creates meaning.

**Media Access** is defined here as public access to film making equipment and training.

The purpose of this audit was to create an overview of Moving Image Education activity across Scotland, not to record or monitor the quality or precise activity level. In order to audit a more narrow definition of the provision of MIE (for example, structured MIE that analyses the punctuation and grammar of film as opposed to simply showing children how to make a film) and to accurately ascertain the level and quality of the provision, further research based on face-to-face interviews and visits in person to schools, councils and access centres would need to be carried out.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.21stcenturyliteracy.org.uk/>

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Today, a wide range of enterprising and innovative MIE projects and film making activities exist across Scotland. These have the potential to:

- build up a fundamental knowledge base;
- create cutting-edge industries;
- introduce innovative screen media;
- position Scotland as an international leader in moving image education, technology and innovation.

MIE also has the potential to enrich people's understanding and appreciation of modern culture, where moving images (including interactive images) provide the overwhelmingly dominant form of mass communication.

**In formal education**, the vast majority of respondents (90%) were aware of MIE, though conceptions of what it is and what it can do vary widely. In schools and in council education departments there is a keen interest in MIE and, in most cases, a good (if not comprehensive) appreciation of:

- some of the educational benefits;
- the potential economic value as a career choice;
- the personal development potential of film making activity and training.

However, more work needs to be done to demonstrate and promote the value of MIE, particularly how film analysis and appreciation can:

- lead to a greater understanding of screen narratives (and narratives in general)
- promote greater literacy (as well as media literacy)
- encourage 'self-inclusion'
- promote higher educational standards across Scotland.

Equally, it is important to invest effort and resources in making and consolidating the intellectual and philosophical case for MIE.

The delivery, quality and provision of MIE varies widely from council to council across the country. Although almost all councils would like to subscribe to, for example, Scottish Screen's standards for delivery, they do not currently have the funding and resources to make this possible. The nature and provision of MIE is therefore often dependent on the enthusiasm and drive of individual teachers, Lead Practitioners or MIE providers, Creative Links officers, Cultural Co-ordinators<sup>2</sup> or other council development staff.

**Outside formal education**, a number of new Web 2.0 'cottage industries' are emerging, mainly in podcast and mobile film production, YouTube-style broadcasting and moving image social networking films.

Many Lead Practitioners, educationalists, access centre staff and Cultural Coordinators feel that this sub-sector of voluntary film making and no/low budget films could be guided, commercialised and developed into a strong, international narrowcast industry, that sees the traditional TV and cinema screen industry expanding into a new flexible, narrowcasting industry.

However, the need to secure 'project-by-project' funding for moving image work is an ongoing issue for councils, schools and arts organisations. Where it is not an express

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<sup>2</sup> Note: remit of Creative Links officers and Cultural Co-Ordinators extends across all arts and culture; few are solely or largely tasked with developing Moving Image Education. The Creative Links/Cultural coordinator roles are not defined or filled in all councils; indeed some council respondents were unaware of the activities of the cultural coordinators in their own council.

priority it can easily be sidelined when funding from a specific department or external funder dries up.

It should also be noted that there is not only a lack of standardisation in terms of the quality and the teaching methods of tutors, trainers and film makers delivering MIE, but there is also a wide discrepancy in rates of pay. Many councils and public organisations, while subscribing to the ideas of MIE, nevertheless regard tutors and trainers in the same category as video artists and do not respect the NUJ, SAU or BECTU industry rates, and do not always pay tutors for the preparation or follow-up time that educational activities require. As MIE provision expands across Scotland the issue of quality standards, standardised teaching and acceptable rates of pay for tutors and trainers will become increasingly important. An audit into the working terms and conditions within this developing sector would highlight areas of concern and develop a national set of guidelines.

A host of new companies providing film making training and MIE have sprung up in the last year, especially near clusters of activity. A comprehensive audit of this new industry might also be called for to monitor this new, economic activity, the emergence of an innovative industry sub-sector and to determine standards and best practise.

In Scotland today, there is the will, infrastructure and initiative, as well as the ability and skill to place Scotland in the forefront of MIE education and provision internationally.

However, at present, there is no Government or curricular-level national MIE strategy for formal education, and the extent and quality of the provision varies widely from area to area. One council officer described MIE as “very non-joined up” and viewed the Artist in Residence concept in school clusters as the solution to providing hands-on MIE.

In areas where there is a Media Access Centre, an independent cinema, or an arts centre, there seem to be more varied, vibrant and diverse film making provision and more innovative and structured MIE developments, both in terms of courses and target groups, and this suggests a mutually beneficial feedback loop between the training providers and the educational authorities. These main hubs of activity can be found near large urban areas, as well as in more remote rural areas where moving image is seen as a priority.

Many educationalists and access centres pointed out that a national strategy, or the existence of national guidelines and best practise standards, would help to make MIE a priority, secure funding to sustain to current activities and develop MIE and film making in the future.

# RESEARCH METHODS

## Time frame

The audit enquired into Moving Image Education (MIE) and access activity in Scotland during the academic years 2006–2007 and 2007–2008. Research was carried out between mid–July and the end of October 2007.

## Audit areas & organisations approached

In the audit we interviewed 129 organisations and more than 350 individuals working within them. The primary focus of the audit was Scottish organisations, although UK–wide organisations like First Light and the BBC were also interviewed.

The main area of interest was the activities of the 32 councils in Scotland who have the main statutory responsibilities for the provision and funding of education within their area. We wrote to all 32 councils in Scotland. Thirty-one councils consented to take part; only one declined.

In addition, we contacted and interviewed:

- all national arts institutions in Scotland
- all the broadcasters active in Scotland
- all independent cinemas as well as the HQs of commercial cinema chains (to establish the level of MIE activity, if any)
- all Media Access Centres across Scotland
- Enterprise Officers working in Scottish Enterprise, HIE and Determined to Succeed.

Also consulted were most (approx. 90%) of Scottish Screen’s Lead Practitioners<sup>3</sup> in Moving Image Education (though their individual details are not logged in the database).

Finally, we obtained from the Scottish Qualifications Authority a list of schools registered to teach Media Studies as a National Qualification.

## Method

The audit was carried out by two of Scottish Screen’s Lead Practitioners and took the form of a series of qualitative (and wherever possible quantitative) telephone interviews based around a structured questionnaire, with answers logged in a structured, searchable database.

The audit recognised that the provision of MIE would rarely be co-ordinated by one individual within the council. When contacting the councils, we therefore sought to interview staff in the following positions *where these roles were filled*:

- Creative Links staff,
- Cultural Coordinators,
- Quality Improvement Officers or similar development staff
- Enterprise Officers/Determined to Succeed representatives,
- Arts development staff (especially film development),
- community development and youth workers.

It is worth emphasising that in the course of the audit, we also interviewed any training provider – be it an organisation, a Lead Practitioner or a Film Artist – who plays a pivotal role in the MIE provision for a particular council. We believe that this process of interviewing top down, as well as bottom up, has greatly enhanced the accuracy of the audit.

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<sup>3</sup> See [www.scottishscreen.com/content/sub\\_page.php?sub\\_id=161&page\\_id=17](http://www.scottishscreen.com/content/sub_page.php?sub_id=161&page_id=17)

# FINDINGS

## MIE in formal and informal education – Introduction

All the interviewees across the local authorities said that they possessed an awareness of what Moving Image Education (MIE) is and its potential as a teaching tool as opposed to a subject (i.e. Media Studies).

Staff in education as well as in youth/community development expressed enthusiasm for developing and integrating MIE into the curriculum and many mentioned that MIE can be used to bring out and nurture pupil's non-academic, social and citizenship skills, both within and outside the Curriculum for Excellence.<sup>4</sup>

The vast majority (approx. 90%) of interviewees said they saw MIE as an important area for educational development now and in the future. The main reasons staff gave for holding this opinion were as follows:

- Changing the learning dynamic within the classroom, so that children would take greater ownership of their education
- Encouraging children to engage in creative writing exercises and thereby promote traditional literacy
- Team working
- Social inclusion and reaching out to marginalised communities
- Social and creative empowerment
- Reaching children who do not respond to traditional teaching methods
- Fulfilling the objectives of the Curriculum for Excellence.

However, few respondents remarked on the benefits that close textual analysis of screen narratives and an understanding of how they are commissioned and created could offer in terms of:

- Promoting a deeper understanding of contemporary culture and the library of screen narratives (TV, film, games) that young people store in their memories
- Bridging the gulf between young people's experience of culture at home and school
- Developing an understanding of the narrative process and thereby helping underpin traditional notions of literacy
- Helping formulate a notion of 'meta-literacy' (words, symbol, sound, music, image and interactivity) more suitable to the cross-platform, information society of 21<sup>st</sup> Century

It may be that this is because these outcomes are obvious and they do not need to be mentioned; however, our interviews with other Lead Practitioners suggest that these benefits are not always fully understood and that there may be some further work to do in making the intellectual and philosophical case for MIE more clearly to educational authorities.

Supporting this view, it is significant that in areas with formal and structured MIE programmes, for example those councils that base their MIE provision on BFI materials<sup>5</sup> or those who have worked directly with Scottish Screen's Lead Practitioners, the understanding and appreciation of the potential of MIE to improve overall performance was markedly stronger.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/curriculumforexcellence/>

<sup>5</sup> BFI publishes a series of teaching books with corresponding DVDs with film for analysis, aimed at various age groups: <http://www.bfi.org.uk/learn.html>

## MIE IN FORMAL EDUCATION

All councils and media access organisations with an existing commitment to MIE see it as an effective learning tool, especially in the context of the Curriculum for Excellence, in the areas of literacy, drama and music and also for the development of social skills, citizenship and team building activity.

Councils with an existing integrated and structured MIE provision are keen to further develop and expand their portfolio of activities. For example, one council would like to expand its already comprehensive MIE programme in schools and in youth film clubs, and another council, in collaboration with two local community arts centres, would like to provide a more formal structure to their existing and varied MIE provision with the help of Scottish Screen.

In areas where MIE activities are not so well developed, councils as well as arts and community organisations are keen to develop more structured MIE programmes.

Funding and resources are the main stumbling blocks to further expansion of MIE. Most councils hope to secure greater funding and support from national organisations like Scottish Screen, the Scottish Arts Council and Learning and Teaching Scotland in the future.

MIE activity in primary and secondary schools tends to be concentrated in areas where there are already Media Access Centres or other concentrations of screen media, film making, television production, games development or IT activity, i.e. where there is a cluster of complementary activities that cross-fertilises and reinforces the awareness of these industries and the value of MIE activity. Unsurprisingly these areas of concentration are centred around Scotland's major cities. However, it is worth noting that in two of the most remote Council areas, Shetland and the Highlands and Islands, where access to facilities and staff is a recognised issue, the councils have developed strategies to facilitate MIE and provide varied, organised and structured MIE and film making activities.

### **MIE in formal education: main curricular focus**

In relation to formal education, staff in 90% of the councils interviewed said they saw MIE as an excellent way of fulfilling the aims of the Curriculum for Excellence. That said, the current level of MIE provision varies greatly within these councils.

Almost all Teachers and Cultural Coordinators interviewed see MIE as a valuable and valued educational activity and state that film making and MIE activities encompass all key points in the Curriculum for Excellence.

- In 29 of the 31 councils, interviewees stated that they offered some form of MIE provision as part of the Curriculum in schools.
- In 14 out of the 31 councils, interviewees stated that MIE was used as part of Curriculum for Excellence for both Primary and Secondary schools.
- In 4 out of the 31 councils, interviewees stated that MIE was used as part of Curriculum for Excellence in Primary schools only.
- In 6 out of the 31 councils, interviewees stated that MIE was used as part of Curriculum Excellence for Secondary schools only.
- In 5 councils, interviewees stated that MIE is used in specific areas of the Curriculum, such as History, Literacy, Art, the Expressive Arts, Language Learning, Environmental studies, and Citizenship.

In many councils MIE is used to enhance their schools' drama, arts and music provisions: 10 councils use MIE as part of Expressive Arts in primary schools. In secondary schools 7 councils use MIE for the Drama curriculum, 1 council for Art and Design and 3 for Music.

A few councils in more remote areas use MIE and film making as a way to support language learning and to document and preserve local dialects. For example, one rural council has an impressive MIE provision through Lead Practitioners and a local arts venue. Here, MIE is combined with language learning and public information film making, and schools make films produced in, acted in and subtitled in Gaelic and Polish. Often these films serve as an introduction to secondary school or a 'What's Where' for Polish immigrants made by the local community and the immigrants themselves in two languages. MIE serves as an integration tool as well as providing key information about the community.

In one council, MIE is used imaginatively and innovatively to promote numeracy and engineering. For example, as part of History and Maths, a P7 is animating a tall ship and a crane and use this project to calculate how much the crane could realistically lift.

### **Media Studies (NQ)**

In the academic year 2005–06, 25 of the 31 local authorities that took part in this audit had registered Media Studies as a National Qualification for level 10 to 12. Two councils were registered for Media Studies at level 13.

The total number of entries for media studies at the end of that year at all levels (ie Intermediate 1 and 2, Higher and Advanced Higher) was 2044, representing c.1.4% of total entries in all subjects. In 2007, total entries for media studies fell slightly to 2036, c.1.3% of total entries in all subjects. Pass rates in media studies were lower than average, 51.5% in 2006 (all subjects: 73.5%), and 56.5% in 2007 (all subjects: 74.6%).<sup>6</sup>

### **Inclusive learning & teaching**

Many teachers, youth workers and all of Scottish Screen's Lead Practitioners report that MIE 'unlocks' the skills and intelligence of pupils who perhaps do not fit into (or have been sidelined by) the traditional education system, or who are more naturally inclined to be 'visual thinkers'. They also report that the resultant process of self-inclusion of sidelined pupils can have a radical and positive effect on class dynamics.

### **Extra-curricular media skills**

One council in Central Scotland has developed several interesting multimedia MIE projects, for example films for the web and podcasts as well as a secure, social networking site for schools in the council. Here each school has a secure Facebook-type site, which incorporates filmed introductions to the pupils, their classes and their Teachers. Similarly, another council runs holiday DJ'ing and VJ'ing courses (Video backgrounds to DJ's mixes) for teenagers in collaboration with a local club and arts venue.

### **MIE in Nursery education and early years**

Three councils have funded innovative and well-developed projects in nursery schools. Two councils have cameras and editing facilities in every nursery school.

One council was awarded the title of National Leader for their work in producing animated introductions for new entrants in two nurseries, and another council runs a custom-made MIE scheme for three to seven year olds in three nursery schools. This course was developed by a Scottish Screen Lead Practitioner. Another council also runs a one day in-service CPD course in camera and editing skills for nursery Teachers in 12 schools.

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<sup>6</sup> Source: Scottish Qualifications Authority

## **Summary: Stand-out developments & areas of limited activity in formal education**

29 of the 31 the councils run some form of MIE activity in primary and secondary schools.

However, conceptions of MIE vary widely and there is much uncertainty regarding what constitutes best practice in this area. While filmmaking and film appreciation initiatives are widespread, it was often impossible to determine how thoroughgoing or structured these activities are and many of those interviewed were not sure which teaching materials were used – since the precise details of the training were often left to the subcontracted training provider or to individual schools and Teachers.

All Scottish Screen's Lead Practitioners use BFI educational packs. Lead Practitioners are currently delivering CPD in nine councils. Three councils who run their MIE programmes independent of Scottish Screen also base their MIE programmes on BFI materials: two councils deliver comprehensive MIE programmes based on BFI materials and one has distributed BFI packs to all schools but are unsure if these are being used.

Activities range from subcontracted CPD, informal and short-term initiatives and projects, teacher-led initiatives in individual schools; to highly organised and structured council-wide projects.

For example, on the one hand, one council's activity has been limited to hosting one in-service CPD training day a year. Here the council subcontracted MIE, arts and film making providers to provide a social inclusion animation workshop and one Media Studies CPD. Similarly, another council simply provides rudimentary animation courses in one school.

At the other end of the scale, a local digital access centre in a rural area is currently running a four year pilot MIE programme in one cluster of schools. This pilot programme is largely funded by the Scottish Executive with support from Scottish Screen to run from 2004 until 2008. However, because of its success, the programme is now being rolled out across two more clusters, encompassing 17 schools. A new staff tutor has been appointed and the programme, which now runs until 2009, is co-funded by Scottish Screen and the council. Also, this council has fully embraced MIE for all ages. A Lead Practitioner, seconded out of this council and funded by Scottish Screen, has developed an early years MIE model, aimed at three to seven years olds, and one school in the council is using MIE from nursery and throughout primary school as part of its literacy plan and work. In addition, this council also runs youth work and peer education film making schemes.

## **Conclusion: MIE in formal education - critical success factors and critical barriers**

In councils where MIE is not a fully recognised part of the curriculum, the provision is generally driven by passionate individual teachers. However, as soon as such a teacher changes their job the MIE programme in that school often falls apart, or moves to the new school with the teacher.

Passionate teachers who use MIE often seek out like minded professionals, and their schools may benefit from the additional support they manage to secure, e.g. from Scottish Screen or the Glasgow Film Theatre's Film Clubs network. However, these teachers stress that sometimes it is hard to stay motivated and often fear 'burning out' due to the extra workload they take on. All teachers who brought this up as an issue stated that their morale and resolve has been bolstered through contact with Scottish Screen, as well as Scotland's independent cinemas and media access organisations who support MIE. The type of professional support they say they value most includes:

- a Lead Practitioner visit;
- a course or twilight session;
- a CPD initiative;
- an MIE conference.

***All these pioneering teachers state that the main constraints on MIE activity are time and resources. The feeling is that MIE needs to be given a priority status if it is to secure the attention, funding and time allocation it deserves.***

# MIE AND FILM MAKING IN INFORMAL EDUCATION

## **Profile: cinema activities**

Nine of the fourteen independent cinemas in Scotland run film appreciation clubs for adults and children and some also offer a variety of film making or MIE initiatives for local residents of all ages.

These include:

- Film clubs.
- Film making workshops, both weekly clubs and holiday activities.
- Film festivals showcasing local productions.
- Specialised screenings for specific audiences: e.g. children, the hard-of-hearing, people with learning difficulties, Mothers and Babies etc.

Most independent cinemas in Scotland receive core funding from local councils and therefore their activities are also listed under the activities of the respective councils.

This audit did not find any evidence of MIE or film making activity in the commercial cinemas in Scotland, although some cinema chains sponsor activities connected to Film Festivals, e.g. Cineworld provides venues for educational events organised by the GFT as part of the Glasgow Film Festival.

## **Film clubs and societies (watching movies) in schools or community contexts**

In addition to the film programmes run by the independent cinemas, there are 23 film societies and film appreciation for children and adults in Scotland. These are run by either the councils, local arts centres (e.g. Robert Burns Centre, Eden Court in Inverness and Shetland's Arts Centre), or the independent cinemas (Glasgow Film Theatre, Belmont Cinema in Aberdeen, The Filmhouse in Edinburgh and DCA in Dundee).

Thirteen of these film appreciation clubs and cineclubs are aimed at school age children.

DCA's Discovery Film Festival which is supported by Scottish Screen reaches out specifically to audiences of school pupils across Scotland.

## **Out-of-school hours (i.e. non-curricular) film-making projects in schools and other centres**

### *Film in a Week*

Across Scotland there are 42 'Film in a Day/Week' holiday activities (these vary in length and can also be 'Film in a Day' or 'Two Weeks' etc):

- 17 are aimed specifically at school pupils.
- 25 are for teens and youth groups; of which 5 are targeted specifically at youth in socio-economically challenged areas.
- 22 are organised by councils
- 18 are organised by cinemas, community or arts organisations
- 2 are organised by independent arts providers.

The 'Film in a Week' concept is popular with half the councils interviewed planning to start holiday film activities in the next Summer break.

### *Film Making groups*

In schools across Scotland, there are 26 groups who meet regularly to make films, either as part of after school care or lunch time activities.

There are also 55 film making clubs, open to everyone, that meet on a regular basis to produce films, often with the help of a professional film maker. 20 of these film-making clubs are run by the councils, 25 by independent cinemas, arts or community organisations and 10 are organised by the groups themselves.

Most of these film making groups target children, teens or youths. 14 are specifically aimed at people in Social Inclusion Partnership (SIP) areas:

- 3 of these are aimed at adults only.
- 4 are for teenagers.
- 7 are for everyone in the area.

### **Are moving image productions exhibited or distributed? How?**

Productions will almost always be burned to DVD or published in some multimedia format (e.g. interactive DVD) to be screened for family and friends. Where possible these will also be exhibited online, at the local independent cinema, a local arts centre or as part of a local film festival. In many cases, films made by Scottish groups have been screened at festivals worldwide and won national and international awards. The organisers and producers – be they film clubs, councils or cinemas – are themselves in charge of organising screenings and festival distribution.

### **Projects/courses with the main emphasis on community/social inclusion**

Increasingly councils, community engagement groups and companies use MIE and film making as a social inclusion and integration tool. This is often intended for geographically or socio-economically disadvantaged groups in society, like MCMC formerly NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) learners, or people living in Social Inclusion Partnership (SIP) areas.

In councils and organisations where MIE is established as a social inclusion or community engagement tool, all of the interviewees commented on how MIE can be used to include the excluded and engage the disengaged.

In the councils where MIE is not already used with socially disengaged groups, social and community workers immediately saw the potential and expressed a keen interest in developing MIE programmes for these groups.

The use of MIE in this way seems to be growing, with many councils interested in learning more about such programmes and in developing social inclusion film making programmes.

## **Conclusion: MIE in informal education – critical success factors and critical barriers**

### **Significant developments in film making projects and activities: New Industries**

A number of new companies that provide film making mentoring and tuition to disadvantaged and disenfranchised groups have sprung up in Glasgow, Aberdeen and Edinburgh in the past few years, e.g. Media Co-op (specialising in work with asylum seekers and refugees) and Plantation Productions (specialising in providing film making skills in SIP areas).

In the course of compiling this audit, we interviewed representatives from these companies wherever possible and practical; however, a comprehensive audit of this new industry might be called for to monitor economic activity, the emergence of a new industry sub-sector and to assess standards and ethics.

### **Significant developments in film making projects and activities: Clusters of Activity**

In areas where there is a cluster of industry activity, e.g. a Media Access Centre, an independent cinema, or an arts centre, there seem to be more varied, vibrant and diverse film making provision and more innovative MIE projects, both in terms of courses and target groups. The testimony of the interviewees seems to support the assertion that this is a mutually beneficial feedback loop between the training providers and the educational authorities.

Moreover, the curricular MIE provided by the councils in areas close to these clusters of informal activity is more likely to be structured, organised and delivered to high standards, and to be informed by the 'literacy' approaches promoted by Scottish Screen and the BFI.

The informal MIE and film making activity delivered by these councils is also more varied and more readily available and accessible.

### **Significant developments in film making projects and activities: Challenges**

From the councils' and existing providers' perspective, funding and sustainability is a challenge to MIE vocational training and informal learning. For example, one council and an established access centre say that the problem with informal learning is that it is almost always funded project by project, from a variety of different sources, and it is therefore difficult to plan coherently beyond the end of the current project. Moreover, if the source of the funding changes, the priorities of the project, the objectives and the targeted communities may also change.

# MEDIA ACCESS CENTRES

## Introduction

There are currently 21 Media Access Centres in Scotland:

8 are based in the major urban centres:

1. BBC Scotland, Glasgow
2. GMAC , Glasgow
3. Pilton Video, Edinburgh
4. CSV Media Action, Dundee
5. Central Library, Aberdeen
6. Media Unit, Aberdeen
7. Peacock Visual Arts Centre & 360 TV, Aberdeen
8. Station House, Aberdeen.

13 are in smaller towns and regional centres:

1. Angus Digital Media Centre, Brechin
2. Arts In Motion, Evanton
3. The Art Store, Melrose
4. Caley Centre, Stevenson
5. Click Community Centre, Alloa
6. Federation of Community Learning Centres, Greenock
7. FPS Media, Motherwell
8. Green Banana, Dalkeith
9. MIMAC Rushes, Kirkcaldy
10. Shetlands Arts Trust, Lerwick, Shetlands
11. Taigh Chearsabhagh, Loch Maddy, North Uist
12. Voice of My Own (VOMO), Selkirk
13. West Lothian Youth Theatre, Livingston.

All the Media Access Centres agreed to take part in this in this audit.

## Profiles of activities

The main focus of the Media Access Centres is to provide:

- a) access to (and/or hire of) film making kit and editing facilities to members of the public, or to groups involved in training; and/or
- b) media training in the use of this equipment and the creation of screen narratives.

Of the 21 Media Access Centres:

- 12 provide all services to the general public: fixed facilities hire, kit hire and training in production techniques (editing, camera work, sound and lighting).
- 5 provide kit hire (camera, lights, sound recording equipment) and fixed editing facilities but do not offer training.
- 1 provides editing facilities and training solely in editing.
- 1 provides training and fixed facilities but does not hire out equipment.
- 2 provide kit, editing and training only to referred groups and community groups.
- Glasgow Media Access Centre (GMAC) manages Scotland's production scheme *GMAC Shortcuts*.

BBC Scotland's Learning Space will open formally in early 2008 and will provide courses and access to facilities at their Pacific Quay site, but its precise programme (at October 2007) is not yet finalised.

Other forms of media centre do exist but these are targeted at specific, closed groups. For example, in North Lanarkshire, Bellshill Academy functions as a Media Access Centre for schools in the council. The centre also produces corporate DVDs for the council and voluntary sector. Similarly the local charity SWAMP (South West Arts and Media Pollock) provides access to filmmaking equipment, editing facilities, sound recording studios but is not readily available to the general public. Since these organisations' facilities are not open to the public or to other community groups, they do not figure in the list of 21 Media Access Centres as defined for this audit. Scottish Screen may want to consider auditing these other organisations (community groups, charities, training providers) at some later date.

### **Scottish Screen**

Scottish Screen provides funding and lobbying for Moving Image Education, media access, and industry training, but does not hire out facilities or provide training itself, other than as a partner and funder of, for example, part-funding the production scheme *GMAC Shortcuts*.

### **Provision**

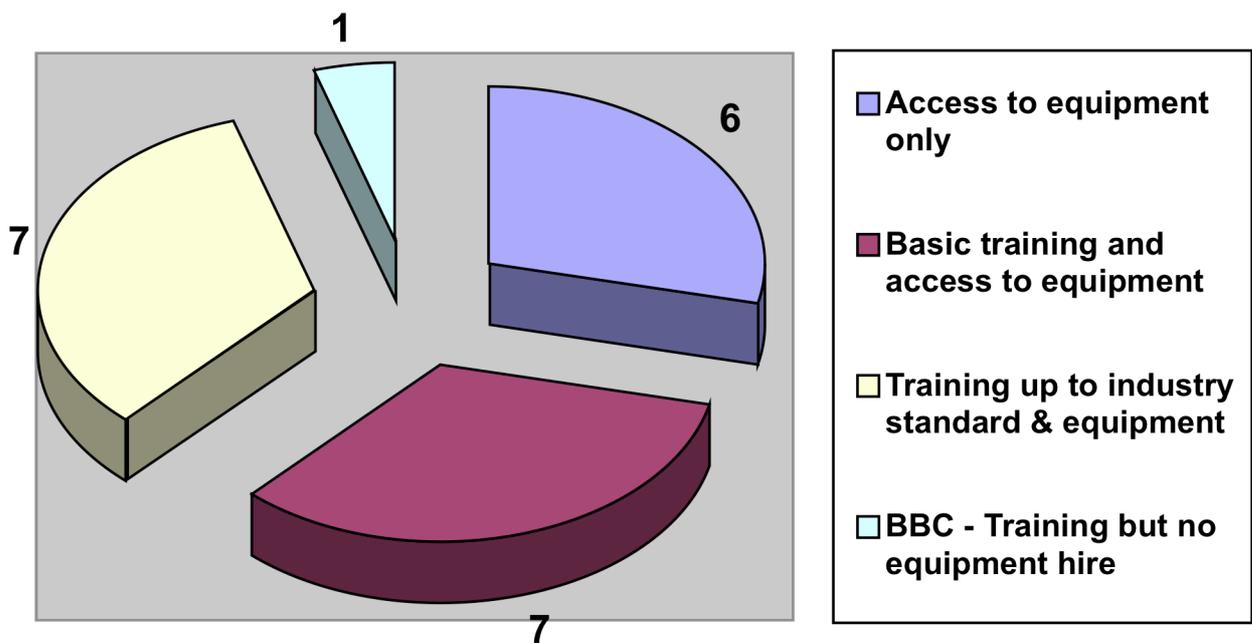
With only 21 Media Access Centres across Scotland serving a population of approx 5 million people (ie one access centre to every quarter of a million people), it would be imprudent to suggest that any area is particularly well-served. Most staff interviewed at the Media Access Centres claimed that they faced ongoing shortages in terms of staff and the availability of equipment and editing facilities which would also seem to suggest that demand for these facilities and training services outstrips the available supply.

The Central Belt is best served both in terms of the number of Media Access Centres, as one would expect given its population (3.55 million or 70% of the Scottish population live in the Central Belt according to the General Register Office for Scotland 2001). Better transportation in this region also makes it is easier to reach the Media Access Centres via road and rail than in more remote parts of the country. Thus most rural areas have poor access except where they are fortunate enough to live in towns where Media Access Centres do exist.

Nevertheless, two of the most remote areas have slightly better access thanks to local facilities, though a limited provision of industry standard training by media professionals. Others have no access to a local Media Access Centre. The example of one council library which loans equipment to the public might provide a model for addressing this access issue in more remote areas.

### **Projects and courses with the main emphasis on entry to the media industries**

Fourteen of the Media Access Centres offer entry level training for groups and individuals in the use of film making and editing equipment. Seven of these provide more focused training aimed at entry into the film and TV industry for groups or individuals: GMAC, ADMC, MIMAC-Rushes, CSV Media, Pilton Media, The Station House and Peacock Visual Arts. GMAC is the only access centre that delivers an organised production scheme for professionals with BBC and Scottish Screen's *GMAC Shortcuts*.



**Chart 1 - Media Access Centres: Profile of core activities**

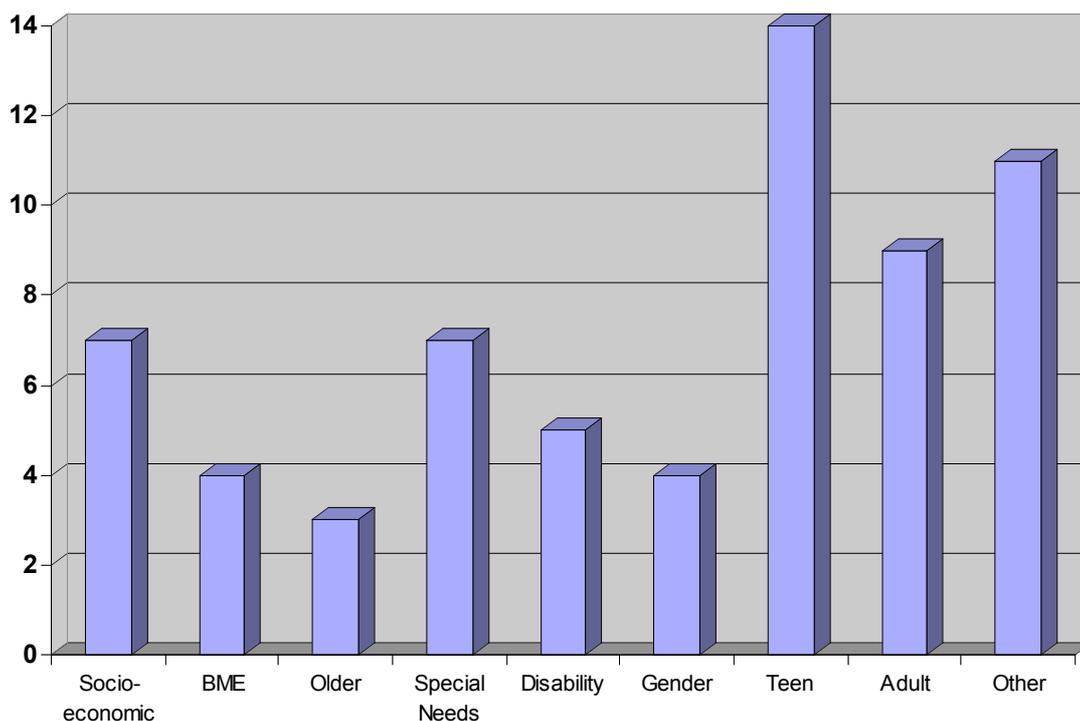
**Group/s of learners/clients (ages, backgrounds etc)**

Media Access Centres are open to everyone, but most organised projects and initiatives are aimed primarily at young people and youth groups. That said, there is an increase in the number of projects aimed at groups aged 60+ as well as deprived socio economic groups, especially More Choices More Chances (MCMC, formerly NEET) and SIP groups. A few initiatives aimed at integration have sprung up around the Asian and Chinese Communities (e.g. through GMAC). In rural areas there are currently a few active projects aimed at integrating new Polish Communities.

Media Access Centres target a wide range of groups. The staff engaged in MIE and other training are clearly interested in training for altruistic reasons; however, all Media Access Centres need to retain staff and spoke about the consequent need to target their provision towards the funds available and the aims of each individual fund.

Since the funding sources vary significantly from year to year, staff spoke repeatedly of the problem of providing continuity of programming for specific groups from year to year. For instance, the funding that is currently available for MCMC/NEET groups and projects aimed at SIP areas is creating an increased number of initiatives for these groups.

The audit asked whether the Media Access Centres targeted any specific groups and their responses are recorded in the table below.



**Table 1 – Media Access Centres: Areas of activity by specific target group.**

It should be noted, however, that two Media Access Centres claim to target all groups, while two others claim to target no group in particular. It was also clear that many organisations targeted their activities towards areas where funds existed for predefined target groups. This means that these responses may be of limited value in determining specific areas of interest beyond a general trend towards targeting young people.

### Numbers and hours involved

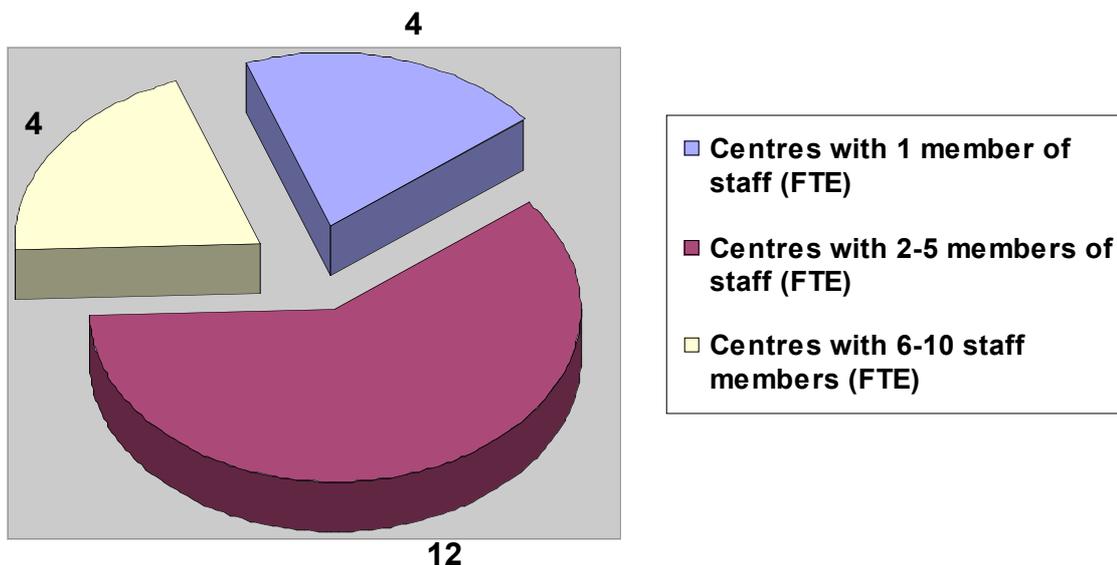
Courses and training can be individually tailored or be targeted at specific groups. Some national schemes have hundreds of participants, for examples the BBC’s training schemes *Blast* and *School News Report*, national initiatives like BBC’s and Scottish Screen’s *GMAC Shortcuts* and council-wide projects.

All access centres are open daily, during business hours, and some also open evenings and weekends.

### Resources: equipment and staffing

Twenty Media Access Centres hire or lend out cameras, light and sound kit as well as provide access to editing facilities and sound studios or software. Equipment is rented to the public at various rates, from full to nominal fees; facilities and kit hire are sometimes free when used for a specific project or area. One council has an editing drop-in facility for schools and the public, and also lends out camera equipment through its central library.

All the Media Access Centres that offer equipment hire state that funding is always an issue. Many highlight that project-by-project funding creates an inability to plan ahead and secure long-term contracts for staff. For example, a large metropolitan access centre would like to see more staff on longer term contracts and a rural access centre with one staff employed mentions that with extra staff the centre could be open during evenings and weekends and thereby offer a better service to the community. Most stated that they would like to be able to offer more up-to-date equipment.



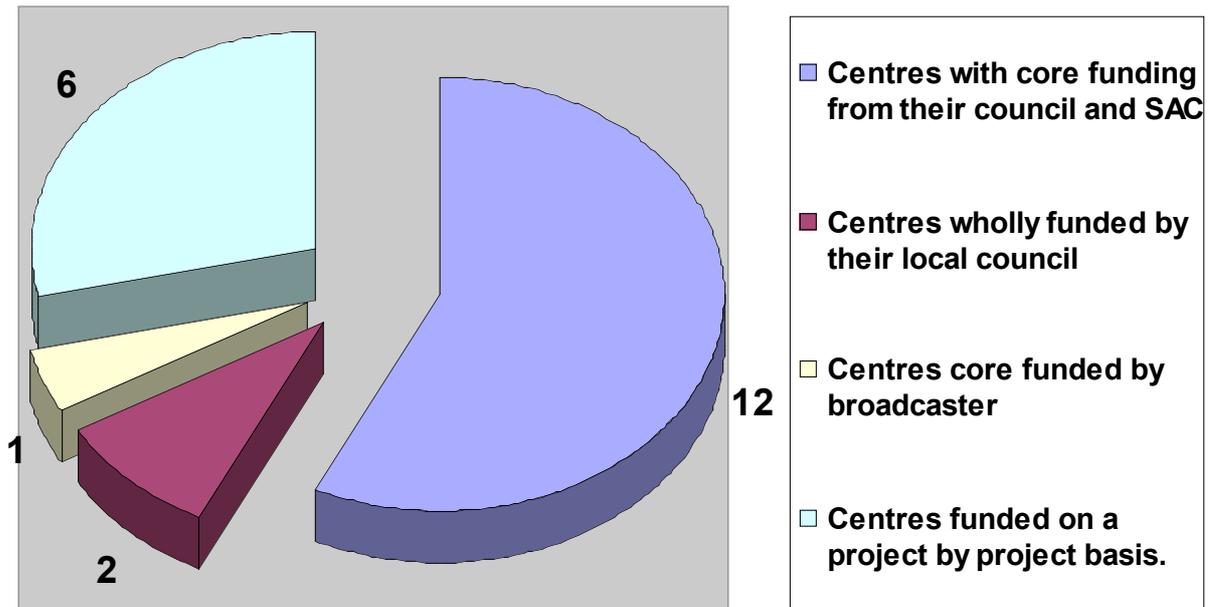
**Chart 2 - Media Access Centres: Number of full-time equivalent (FTE) staff**

### **Costs, funding and partners**

All Media Access Centres stated that the prevalence of 'project-by-project' funding (as opposed to core funding) makes creating sustainable business plans difficult. All cited this as the main reason why many access centres have been forced to close down in recent years (e.g. Edinburgh Media Base and YPSO) and many face an uncertain future.

Only those Media Access Centres who receive core funding from their local council seem to be able to diversify and expand with any confidence. Nonetheless, these often feel under-funded, under-valued by the professional film-making community, and under threat from independent companies and 'video artists' with their own cameras and equipment who compete as training providers.

The audit looked into core funding of the centres. Of the 21 Media Access Centres, 13 are core funded, either by their councils or the Scottish Arts Council. 2 Media Access Centres are run and core funded directly by their respective councils. The BBC's new learning facility at Pacific Quay is core funded by the BBC. 6 access centres are 'project-by-project' funded either by the SAC, by the Lottery or by a combination of national, community, regeneration or arts grants. Five of these are based in smaller towns in rural areas and one in a large city.



**Chart 3 - Media Access Centres: Where core funding comes from**

**Inge Sørensen & David Griffith**

**Oct 2007**

## **APPENDIX 1 - INDEPENDENT CINEMAS**

1. Adam Smith Theatre, Kirkcaldy.
2. The Belmont Picturehouse, Aberdeen.
3. The Cameo Cinema, Edinburgh.
4. Dundee Contemporary Arts, Dundee.
5. The Filmhouse, Edinburgh.
6. Glasgow Film Theatre, Glasgow
7. Macrobert Arts Centre, Stirling.
8. The Pavilion Cinema, Galashiels.
9. The Picture House, Campbeltown.
10. The Robert Burns Centre, Dumfries.
11. Screen Machine, mobile cinema based in Inverness.
12. The Studio Cinema, Dunoon.
13. The Studio Cinema, Fort William.
14. The Wynd, Melrose.

## **APPENDIX 2 - MEDIA ACCESS CENTRES**

1. BBC Scotland, Glasgow
2. GMAC , Glasgow
3. Pilton Video, Edinburgh
4. CSV Media Action, Dundee
5. Central Library, Aberdeen
6. Media Unit, Aberdeen
7. Peacock Visual Arts Centre & 360 TV, Aberdeen
8. Station House, Aberdeen.
9. Angus Digital Media Centre, Brechin
10. Arts In Motion, Evanton
11. The Art Store, Melrose
12. Caley Centre, Stevenson
13. Click Community Centre, Alloa
14. Federation of Community Learning Centres, Greenock
15. FPS Media, Motherwell
16. Green Banana, Dalkeith
17. MIMAC Rushes, Kirkcaldy
18. Shetlands Arts Trust, Lerwick, Shetlands
19. Taigh Chearsabhaigh, Loch Maddy, North Uist
20. Voice of My Own (VOMO), Selkirk
21. West Lothian Youth Theatre, Livingston.