

Supermom- Kick-Off



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IMPORTANT

ISSUES

- The workshops for single parents started
- 6 - 7.10.2011 - Project meeting Lodz

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Supermom workshops started

By Agnieszka Borowicz-Bartosik

Since late summer and autumn of 2011, the Supermom training courses have started or are going to start in almost every partnership countries. Let's have a look at the progress in the specific countries.

Lodz, Poland

– **WSINF:** The training course has started on Monday 5th of September, 2011. The group met six times in one of the class room of WSINF. This first part of the course was mostly devoted to team-building, empowering self esteem and overcoming life obstacles connected with single parenthood. Although in the group there is only one man, and the age-range is from 21 to 45 years, all participants found many similarities according to their life situations. They enjoyed conversations and different group activities. All participants eagerly are waiting for the next part of the course dedicated to film workshops. This will start on 24th of October, 2011 with the most creative part - scriptwriting.



Photo by Ariane Jedlitscha. The meeting of the training group from Lipsk, Germany.

Leipzig, Germany - wisamar educational institute & Helden wider Willen e.V.: The Supermom course started in Leipzig 4th October with 13 excited single mothers. *Getting to know the group* was the motto of the first

work session. The participants were glad to meet other single mothers and become acquainted with each other. As different as their personal and professional backgrounds are their expectations and hopes for the programme. At the first meeting the women exchanged with other single mothers about their daily problems; they discovered similarities and found understanding for each other. They are very motivated to continue the workshop and look forward to the next session, focusing on *Getting to know myself!*

Paris, France – CNA-CEFAG: The training group started five weeks ago, but the most important part of the workshop will begin on 2th November.



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Supermom workshops started

There are 6 Supermom participants in a bigger group which contains 21 persons. The scriptwriting is almost done. The shooting begins directly after the common validation of the scenarios and the participants are already eager to go on.

Padova, Italy - Associazione NET: In Italy the Supermom workshops with empowerment and "shooting a short film" started on the 25th October 2011 with 10 participants. The film workshops will give a general basic knowledge of cinema and shooting techniques. The training does not have the presumption to qualify the participants in a professional way, but to raise their interest in this field and show them a possibility of skills development. Above all it will prove them that it is possible to keep dreaming and growing every day, developing new skills and discovering new resources.

Belfast, Northern Ireland - Possibilities NI: The training began on the 17th October 2011. The training takes place over ten weeks, with each week divided into three 4 hour sessions. Film training and empowerment are joined in the Irish approach.

Participants will learn about a wide variety of filmmaking skills such as camera work;

hair and make-up; script writing and set design. Each week a relevant industry professional will lead the class in a presentation about their job and experiences within filmmaking.

The class will also take part in many practical exercises, aimed at developing their creative skills and preparing them for the short film shoot. Trips to television studios, art galleries and dance and drama workshops have also been organised so that participants can experience many different aspects of the creative industries for themselves. The training will continue until the 21st of December at which point a local screening will be held.

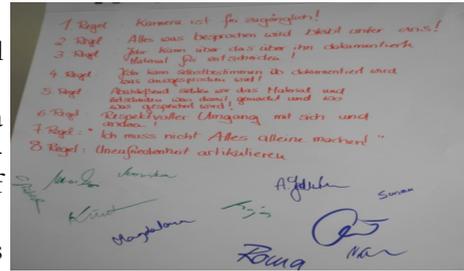


Photo by Ariane Jedlitscha: Ground rules for the workshops in Leipzig

Project meeting in Lodz

By Agnieszka Borowicz-Bartosik

On 6 & 7th of October 2011 the Supermom -Kick-Off project meeting was held in Lodz (Poland) organised by the team of The Higher School of Informatics. The meeting took place at the school premises. During the meeting the status quo was analysed and the project partners exchanged about the progress and eventual obstacles. Thanks to Nadja Loesch (Wisamar) the participants of the meeting had the opportunity to experience some practical activities offered in the Germany Empowerment-programme. Thus they gained the experience how the program works and in what way it can have an psychological and social impact on the target group of single parents.



Photo by Mateusz Malesa. Nadja Loesch is demonstrating Empowerment-techniques with Matthias Petzoldt

Media pedagogical aspects were also discussed with Ariane Jedlitschka (Helden wider Willen) and Grace Sweeney (PossibilitiesNI). The partners agreed on technical standards for the shooting. The public event was organized at the school premises. Two speakers – professor Iwona Janicka, psychologist, representing WSINF and The University of Lodz as well as Malgorzata Beda, psychologist from The Family Help Center in Konstatynow nearby Lodz - discussed the polish situation of parents and children living in households lead by single parents. Guests could hear about the situation of single parents in Poland, its genesis, the role of mother and father, difficulties and quality of life of single parents.

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Interview with Screenwriter Chris

By Whitney Rozelle

Chris Baugh is a screenwriter and development producer at Sixteen South, an award-winning production company in Belfast, Northern Ireland. Chris presented about scriptwriting at the Supermom film skills course in Belfast. He later kindly agreed to answer a few questions about his profession for the benefit of the other Supermom Project participants and followers.

To start off, could you tell me a bit about how you first became interested in screenwriting, and what kind of preparation you had for that as a career?

I had always known, since I was in school, that I wanted to be a writer. I just wasn't sure what kind of writing I wanted to do, until I learned that you can really do film as a career, and that there is a lot of scope for writing in that. So I did a film course in college and learned about all types of roles within the film industry, and got a lot of very practical, hands-on training. Meanwhile, I was constantly writing scripts and learning a lot about that.

And how did that develop into a career for you?

Like everyone who wants to get into the film industry, I had to start at the bottom! So after college, I got a job as a runner at Sixteen South, the company that produces 'Sesame Tree' (the BBC version of children's show 'Sesame Street'), which is made here in Northern Ireland. I loved working on the show! After about two years of working as a runner, I proposed a script for an episode of the second series of the show, and the producers liked it. So then I started writing scripts for 'Sesame Tree', and now I work for Sixteen South as a scriptwriter and development producer. I also write my own short screenplays and direct those films independently. It really helps to know both sides of the equation—developing and writing, and then turning it into a film. But I would say I'm definitely a screenwriter first and a director second; I would only really direct my own screenplays.

Had you always intended to focus on scripts for children's shows, or are you interested in other genres as well?

I hadn't really focused on one genre or a specific audience; I just liked working on 'Sesame Tree', so I decided to write for that particular show. If the story is good enough, I don't have any preference for which genre or what age group I'm writing for. I like a lot of different types of movies and TV shows myself, and I think it's generally very useful for a screenwriter to watch a broad range of film because it makes you more creative in your writing. My own short films reflect the wide range of my interests because of that.

How would you describe your work-life balance? Do you have a flexible schedule or a time-bound one, and do you work erratic hours or fairly regular ones?

It depends on what stage I'm at with development and production. During the development and writing stage, we have normal 'day



Chris Baugh, screenwriter (private photo)

job' hours that are fairly regular because I work as part of a team. This is really necessary in screenwriting, because unlike other types of writing that can be more solitary and independent, there are a lot of factors that feed into and influence a screenplay. Plus, I really rely on my colleagues for feedback and collaboration on the scripts—it produces something much more workable when everyone contributes. There is also some travel involved in that, when the development team goes to different markets to try to get new shows off the ground.

Then there's production, which is an entirely different matter! I do spend a lot of time on set, and at that point, my hours are dictated by what is necessary for the shoot. There are a lot of long days of over 12 hours, and the schedule can be outside normal working hours—for example, if a scene has to be shot at night.

Finally, for someone who is interested in pursuing screenwriting, what kind of characteristics and motivations would they need to have, or what should they start by doing?

To be a screenwriter you really have to be willing to read a lot of other people's scripts (and other literature) and then write a lot—for a couple of hours every day—in order to get the hang of it. I did this for many years, while working other jobs, before I ever actually had a career as a screenwriter. And now, even though screenwriting is my job, I still try to write on my own for an hour or two every morning. It's best to set aside a few hours to write every day, outside of school and work and while you have no distractions (for me, the early mornings work best). So you need to have a lot of discipline and stick to your routine, and just keep writing and working your way into the film industry until you get the chance to present one of your scripts. And then keep writing some more!

How To Become... A Screenwriter?

By *Agnieszka Boronicz-Bartosik*

Who is a screenwriter? It is a person who creates literary texts, which are the basis for a film, a play or a television programme. The texts should contain plot, sketch of characters, description of places and dialogues. Being a screenwriter means having some necessary skills and features like creativity, ingeniousness and literary talent. Ideas for a film or a play should be remarkable, provocative and not leaving people indifferent. "The idea for a film should be so strong, that any screenwriter could not spoil it. The scenario, however, must be so strong, that any director could not spoil it" – stated one of the famous Polish screenwriting tutor. A screenwriter should also have creative imagination, ability to observe people's behavior, clarity of thinking and knowledge about film and theatre. Let's see how a career path can look like for someone who wants to become a screenwriter in Northern Ireland, Italy and Poland.

Becoming a writer in **Northern Ireland**, especially for screen and television, can be a tricky business. There is no clear path or training that people can follow and many different routes to take. Some people attend courses and classes; others find agents and work with other writers. There is no right or wrong method and it is entirely dependant on what kind of writer you are. Do you work best on your own? Do you need motivation? What is essential is that you keep practising. Writers must write, and it seems simple, but all writers must practise to develop their styles. Set aside time each day when you can work, even if this is only for an hour or two. Contact other writers who can review your work and give you advice on story, structure and character. Writing is a discipline and it takes both time and effort to get it right. Don't be put off or disheartened if you don't get it right away, keep practising and you'll get that script written.

"As scriptwriter you have to follow precise techniques" – says **Italian** director and scriptwriter Leandro Giribaldi. The story written by a scriptwriter will be always dependent on the film that will be produced, considering the costs and feasibility, too.

The screenplay is a tool to realize a product, the film, that will make "history". And screenplays rarely make "history", except if they are objects of study. In Italy different schools exist training scriptwriters, but independent from the school a future scriptwriter needs talent in writing and invent original stories, always bearing in mind that your product is a tool to shoot a film".

The best way to become a scriptwriter in **Poland** is to graduate studies with M.A. degree in Cinematology or Theatre Arts at one of the universities. The next step is to finish two years playwriting studies. The most famous classes are held in The Lodz Film School (PWSFTviT), also called "Filmowka". Preliminary requirements are quite strict: it is necessary to provide a short film story or film scenario and also proofs of literary or journalist's oeuvre.

Other places for screenwriting education are: Film and Television Academy in Warsaw, Krakow Playwriting School and two other courses held by Camerimage Festival school in Torun. But it is still the truth that the best Polish scriptwriters are learning abroad.

After their studies scriptwriters must try to find interested film producers on their own. Very popular are playwriting competitions, which are designed for artists without appropriate education, but talented and writing great scenarios.

In **Germany** there is the possibility to study at a public or private film academy such as DFFB, the Film Academies in Stuttgart and Potsdam or also at the University of Hamburg. Besides, there are different recognized Screenplay Workshops, e.g. in Munich, Niedersachsen and Cologne. Already the degree theses are forwarded to producers.

Media funds give support for the development of promising scripts but helpful is a recommendation from a producer and/or director.

Lateral moves are possible but very difficult. Patience and a good network is needed besides enjoying writing.

Adapting The Supermom Training Handbook

By *Whitney Rozelle*

One of the major tasks of the Supermom Project was to design a training course that combined two very different topics: 1) a course of film skills training, leading up to the creation of a short film; and 2) an empowerment and personal development training tailored for lone parents.

To begin the process, German partner Helden wider Willen provided an outline of the film skills training course that they had used to train lone parents on the SuperMutti programme. Possibilities NI then provided the partners with Motivate, a confidence-building training course that Possibilities NI had developed specifically for lone parents. The personal development training materials were then abridged and merged with the film skills training to create

Each partner organisation was responsible for further adapting the course to suit their target group and the circumstances of the training. These adaptations took into consideration such practical issues as the number of hours the course would run per day and the specific exercises the trainer would use for each topic. However, all the partners agreed to abide by the guidelines laid out in the Supermom Training Handbook, including the topics to be covered and the total length of time for the course. This standardisation will allow the partners to compare the pilot courses in each country, and the feedback from each country's pilot course will be included in the final Project Report.