

# The Finance and Promotion of Documentary Films

Case *Because of Who I Am*

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<p>Abstract</p> <p>The bachelor thesis gives an overview on financing paths available for German filmmakers. The thesis was conducted by "Supermarket Medien GmbH" in the form of project development. The main goals of the work were to define financial opportunities for the films, record and analyze the crowdfunding for outreach campaign of the film and to evaluate results. The objectives were achieved through project work, qualitative research on specific literature about this topic and with the experts' opinion on traditional and alternative film funding and promotion. The thesis determines the terms as crowdfunding, broadcaster, distributor, etc and gives an introduction to the alternative marketing tools.</p> <p>The report provides a case study about creative documentary, the way to finance it and to promote it before the release. The aim of the project was to gain 30 000 EUR to implement an outreach campaign for the film. The author has worked on the film for 11 months. The report contains description of the phases of crowdfunding, reflects communication plan and has a capacious analysis of the campaign results and suggestions for future improvements.</p> <p>In spite of unsatisfactory results of the campaign, the author that the trust-based relationship with audience is the key to success. The work can be a guidance for beginning film-makers, which need a practical guide on these issues. There are also two expert opinions, which express the experience and opinion on European and German funding, crowdfunding and promotion.</p>		
Keywords Outreach, film financing, German film market, crowdfunding, documentary film promotion		
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## 1 INTRODUCTION

When a producer is working on a film, his two main concerns are how to finance the film and how to deliver it to the target audience. These concerns can be applied to all kinds of audiovisual products, but there are some specific details if we are talking about documentary films. Films about history, art and science or fiction films are aimed to entertain the audience, but a large number of documentary films raise social and political topics which are currently important today. Through these films, the filmmaker is able to attract the attention of the audience to the several problems which need to be noticed in society. Entertainment films are targeted to make a financial profit, but social documentaries have social and educational purposes, and they can potentially catalyze positive social changes.

To make these changes possible, documentary filmmakers should use a wide range of tools that should be artistic and attractive both in terms of a motion picture and in terms of marketing tools. The producer should plan the actions so that they would contribute to the change of the attitude, values and approach of the public to the topic (Finneran, 2014). This is not an easy task, and it can be further complicated by the lack of human and financial resources in documentary film companies. These difficulties are especially related to small and middle-size production companies. Usually, these kinds of films are funded by broadcasters or, in rare cases, by private interested persons.

However, these companies still find ways to finance and promote their projects by using traditional and alternative ways for financing and promotion. This can be done, for example, by involving the target audience of the film to support the film or to participate in the promotion or to give donations to the project. Quite often filmmakers are now using financing and marketing at the same time, and the most recent example of that combination is crowdfunding.

The creative documentary *Because of Who I Am* raises a topic which is pressing in certain parts of the world, for example in the Middle East and Africa. The film tells a story of two homosexual filmmakers who are traveling worldwide and meeting homosexual artists. Some of the artists live and work in areas where the rights of the LGBT (Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender) community are protected and where the human rights movements have had a major breakthrough. However, some of the

artists have to struggle in everyday life because of their art and sexual orientation and because LGBT rights are not respected in the countries where they live. The film was made for the *ARTE/rbb* TV channel, and it has a 52-minute version for broadcasting and an extended version for cinema screens and festivals. It was produced by two production companies: *Boekamp&Kriegsheim GmbH* and *Supermarket Medien GmbH*.

The topic of human rights protection and LGBT equality, which are featured in the film, are nowadays actively discussed in the Western society and exposed in the media. At the same time, Middle East countries, African countries and Russia are creating their own media products, promoting an opposite attitude towards the issue and having a certain impact on the audience. The film is targeted first of all at the ARTE audience, who are adults from 25-40 and interested in cultural programs, and at people who are not indifferent about social and political topics. The strong outreach campaign accompanying the film does not only describe the particular feelings of the protagonists, but also calls for action for the issue. *Because of Who I Am* is not promoting the homosexual orientation, but illuminating the stories of people who are experiencing different attitudes towards their art and way of living. At the same time it is speaking for changes by describing their their work and activism.

I chose this topic for my Bachelor thesis, because I began my practical training period in the production company as a film production assistant. I started the work for the project by making an extensive background information search about the protagonists and then wrote the theoretical basis on the funding opportunities and film marketing. I realized that I wanted to broaden my knowledge on film financing in Germany, to find out the possibilities available for documentary production and to learn more about alternative financing and promotional tools. The promotion of a documentary film in the form of outreach is an interesting topic for me because it activates the audience and inspires people for changes and actions to reduce intolerance in the society. It is not a traditional way, but it has more in common with social activism, and audiovisual works have more influence on people's minds than just a call for change.

The mission of the company is to promote and to create marketing and strategies for documentary films with social and political topics, to involve potential partners and to simplify the connection between filmmakers and distributors. The crowdfunding and outreach campaign was a pilot project for *Supermarket Medien GmbH*, and in case of the success of the project, the company could attract more interest from the partners. For me, a beginner in film producing and promotion, this was my first work experience in the industry.

The thesis includes a theoretical background part on the resources for film financing, and it gives a short introduction to film promotion. In addition to that, two producers of the film shared their experiences and opinions concerning film producing. The following chapters provide the information about how the case was financed and promoted, what tools and strategies were used for it and what kinds of results were obtained. In the appendix, a full version of the interviews with the experts is available.

## **2 THEORETICAL FOUNDATION**

### **2.1 Financing opportunities of a documentary**

The term **documentary** comes from the word “document”, and the filmmaker records the reality which he is observing without a minutely written manuscript. A documentary film is close to journalism, especially if it does not only observe but also investigates a certain subject. According to Ellis (2005, 4), Grierson (1966) says that a documentary film is a creative treatment of actuality and it attempts to reach some value apart from entertainment and financial profit.

For a successful accomplishment of production, the producer should have a planned budget and an idea of the possible financing sources that he will use. For general film financing, Garon (2009, 106) has defined three major possibilities for any kind of audiovisual production: debt, equity and advance sales. In the documentary sectors, the most common ones are equity and advance sales. A non-fiction film production usually requires smaller investments than a fiction film. Filmmakers usually ask investors or institutions to support them financially, but usually there are no recoupments, be-

cause documentary films rarely make big profits (Aufderheide, 2007). That is why a debt scheme is not successful in case of documentary productions. Documentaries that are raising social issues are appropriate for more financing options than films with neutral topics, such as, for example, art and science (Warshawski, 2010). A project can be funded through partners who have an interest in the issue, or then the producer can use traditional financing possibilities.

Equity and advance sales give the producer an opportunity to fill the budget before the start of the principal photography and, if it is necessary, to increase the budget through after sales (Canfield, 2010). This model is the most common in Europe and particularly in Germany. Here, the main sources for film financing are broadcasters, covering the major production costs, state funding commissions, co-productions with producers from other countries and the support of private investors or foundations (German films, 2015). If traditional financing ways are not covering the budget, the producer can resort to alternative ways of film financing, such as **crowdfunding**. It is a request to the public to donate money for a specific project in exchange for various rewards (Armstrong, 2014).

## 2.2 German model of film financing

In Germany, the state support for the culture and media industry is impressive in comparison with the other European countries. The public film funding structure is bonded with a governmental structure where film industry is actively supported on a national and regional level (Talavera Milla, 2010). It is important to note that with this support the German film industry is rapidly expanding. From 2004 to 2015, German film production has increased by 80%, and this has had a major role in the growth of international co-production which went up by 68%. The documentary budget has grown from 2006 to 2013 by 71,2% (The German Film Scene, 2014). The budget of films produced in Germany has increased from 2007. (see Figure 1)



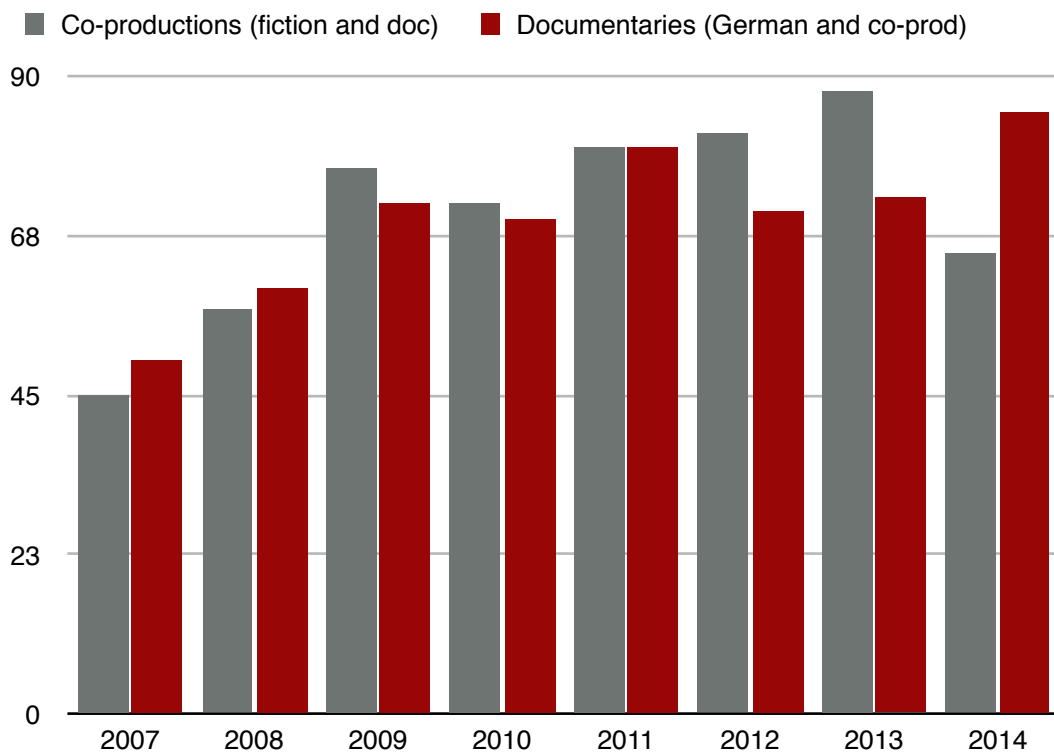


Figure 1. The budget of German films has increased from 2006 to 2013.

(German films, 2015, 2)

The European Union partly supports the film business development in Germany through the Creative Europe program. It promotes European media products and stimulates the media market (Creative Europe, 2013, 1).

One of the most remarkable phenomena in the development of film production in Europe and Germany is governmental support. The German system is far more advanced and flexible to the local filmmakers in comparison with some other European countries. Public film funding is closely connected to the state's cultural commission which supports the audiovisual sector on national and regional levels (Talavera Milla, 2010). Due to the government support, the German film industry has been growing rapidly during the last few years. From 2004 to 2015, German film production has increased by 80%, and this has had a major role in the growth of international co-production which went up by 68%. The documentary budget has grown from 2006 to 2013 by 71,2% (The German Film Scene. 2014).

German state foundations play a major role in film financing, especially for documentaries. There are two key organizations: FFA (Filmförderungsanstalt), which is the German Federal Film Fund, and the Federal Commissioner for Culture and Media. FFA is the head organization for regional funding, and the second organization is a part of parliament and coordinates the questions of culture on the legislation level (Talavera Milla, 2010).

Every German state has a regional film commission which operates on a local level (Bundesland) and is working with the companies registered there. Berlin and Brandenburg have an organization called Medienboard which funds all kinds of media projects in that area. There are two major aims for Medienboard. First of all, one aim is to make the region attractive to investors and partners for business development, and the other aim is to provide professional advice and finances for projects that could be profitable for the area. Medienboard should make Berlin the most successful city in Germany in the sector of culture and economics.

The funds are working on an equity basis, so the producer should have some other resources for film financing or invest by him. Both organizations require producers to show adequate equity interest towards financing the project, which means that the commissions are not fully financing films (Medienboard Guidelines, 2010, p.4). The possible co-production with producers from other countries, letters of commitment and interest signed by the broadcasters are valuable proofs for state funding. Medienboard and FFA have the aim to raise the number of productions and co-productions in the country. This is why they are interested if the producer has interested partners to work with. Medienboard also can extend the budget of TV films if they are valuable for the region and they have unusually high costs (Medienboard Guidelines 2010, 7). Funding is tied to an obligatory distributional contract with the right of commercial screening in the German cinemas. It does not apply to documentary films, which means that in this case the international distribution replaces the screenings in the theaters (Medienboard Guidelines 2010, 6).

Another way to finance a documentary film is advance-sales. For documentary films, advance-sales mean financing through a broadcaster. According to Cones (2013, 57), broadcast television is a supported television, including networks, independent stations and public broadcasting. TV channels are the main customers for documentary films, especially if they are not art films which can be interesting only to the certain group of people. The portal German films (2015) states that there are two main public TV corporations in Germany: ARD and ZDF. All the other TV channels are private. The government supports more willingly these public corporations than the private broadcasters (German films, 2015).

### **2.3 Financing through broadcasters and distributors**

As it was stated before, TV channel can invest the biggest part of the budget to the film. Usually, the financing of the film is happening, when the film is on pre-production or production stage. This type of contract is called **pre-sale** and is a license of motion pictures that is agreed and signed before the start of principal photography (Cones 2013, 293). Pre-sale financing allows the film company to have the documented letter of commitment from the TV channel and with it attract new partners, for example for co-production.

Usually TV channel gives to the filmmaker freedom in production, although the major things as concept and protagonists are discussed and agreed with commissioning editor. This model is more common in Germany than in the other countries (German films, 2015). The TV channel and TV company divide the copyrights for the film, but the conditions always depend on the certain type of contract. As an example, TV channel ARTE, which provided the most money for production, has the rights for Germany and France, because it is a German-French TV channel.

Previous examples were mentioned to discuss how to finance film in advance. To extend the budget or to make a financial profit from the film, the filmmaker should think consider the distribution ways as well as how the film will be available for the audience. In order to present the product to international markets and to be featured for the public, the film can participate in the film festivals or be pitched on a film

market. Pitching the project is a way to find a co-producer from another country, to find distribution channels and to build future business connections.

Cones (2013) gives an explanation of distribution as selling or licensing a film to different markets along with the advertising and promotion of the film. Distribution is the process of placing a film in online or offline venues, to make it accessible for the audience. Usually it goes through theatrical release, national and international broadcasters, screenings on the film festivals, and DVD sales. The filmmaker usually plans the possible distribution ways far before of the film release (Verellen, 2010). Distribution and promotion are closely connected to each other, because without proper marketing campaign, it would not be possible to draw attention of the audience to the project.

To cover larger audience, the filmmaker can use services of national and international distribution companies. Foreign distribution company is a great opportunity to expand the market, especially if the film is produced in a small or middle-size country, for example European. Although, the filmmaker should not neglect domestic screening and video-sales, because moving only to the international markets can be risky for the projects. Filmmaker should consider economical and cultural factors, which can influence the success of the project abroad (Garon, 2009). Global distribution companies provide support for selling the film successfully. The company usually takes a percent from the sales, but have powerful connections in documentary world (Jackman, 2009). These companies could be especially useful for documentary films, because not all the production companies have enough human and financial resources to distribute film by themselves. It is easier to have a partner, who has the knowledge of different and potential markets.

Distribution contracts can be signed on any stage of project development. If the filmmaker finds the distributor before principal photography, the project can have an “advance-selling” contract, helping to attract other partners (Stoller 2003, 80). “Pre-sale” stimulate partners for co-production and can increase the general budget of the film. Besides, it opens the door to exclusive pitching forums, where some part of the

budget should be filled and gives extra points for state commission funding. The film producer is able to sell the project to other broadcasting markets, since the television networks are national and make a profit on the license fees, either sale the film to the cable/satellite outlets (Jackman, 2009). The amount of fee depends on the country and the type of the channel: cable channels are advertiser-supported, so the amount of budget for license is mostly limited, premium cable channels are less dependent on the investors and rely mostly on the audience, who pays for subscription (Kellison 2008, 109).

The most common way to find a distributor is to pitch your project at film market event. Nowadays, the majority of film markets are assigned to the film festivals, as for example DOC Leipzig or IDFA in Amsterdam. Depending on the size of the market, distribution companies, independent producers and broadcasters attend these events to find the outstanding projects and to make business together (Paar, 2010). Pitching events are the great place for networking and building contacts with potential partners. Depending on the event, the filmmaker can present the project on any stage of film production and find suitable partners for the film on a project development stage. On the pitching forums, producer can find national broadcaster for TV documentary, find interested co-producer and attract international distributors. Depending on the event, there are different ways to present the project, for example IDFA provides different pitching opportunities as Doc for Sales, where around 250 TV buyers, sales agents and producers can watch the best documentary selection, available for international market, and project at the different stage of development.

The possibilities to increase the budget of the film through several sources (see fig. 2)

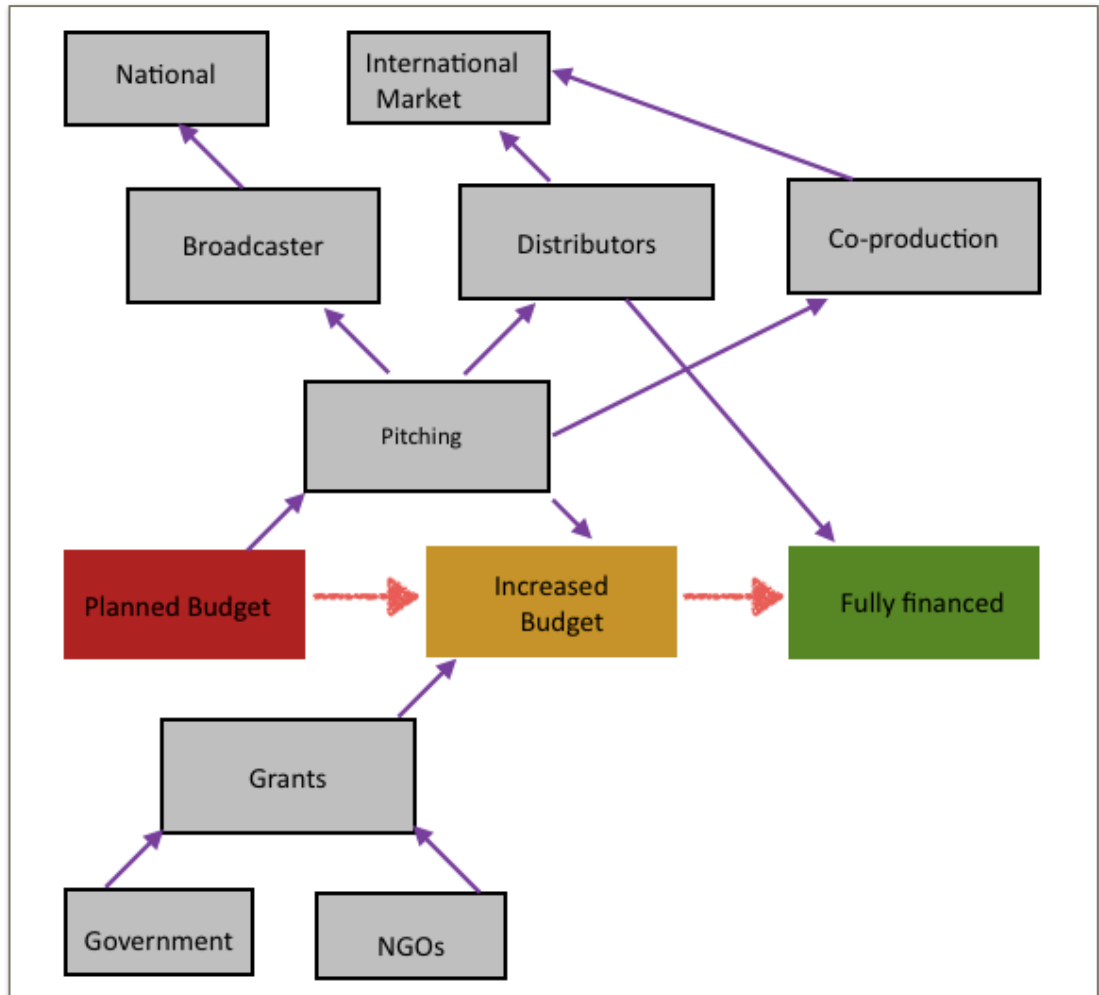


Figure 2. The value chain of project financing through pitching forums and government funds.

The scheme above is aimed to give an explanation of gaining the budget with traditional ways of film financing. After the producer has planned the budget of the film, he can apply for the funds and pitch the project to the broadcasters, distributors and producers from other countries. Cooperation with distributors and producers gives the chance to move to the international market. When the producer obtained part of the budget, he can apply for state funding to have project fully financed. Usually after this, project can start principal photography.

If the traditional financing ways are not enough to finance the film, the alternative tools can help the filmmaker to accomplish the production of the film. The most common tool for alternative film financing is crowdfunding, which now is available on the plenty Internet platforms. The definition of crowdfunding can differ; depending on the type of the project fundraised. For example, Young (2013, 14-15) defines crowdfunding as a process of soliciting financing from the public for creative, social project or to support business. At the moment, the crowdfunding platforms expand fast worldwide and more people are funding their projects this way. Kohl (2015) thinks that crowdfunding is a form of pre-sales, combined with charity fundraiser. It is true, because the donors does not expect any real financial profit from their investments, but they receive a reward or are involved in the project creation. Crowdfunding is a powerful tool for building new businesses, promoting products and releasing creative ideas.

## **2.4 Crowdfunding**

Crowdfunding campaign includes many different features for business or art projects and they depend on project type. First of all, it is a fundraising tool to bring the project to life. Moreover, it is an effective tool to attract attention to the product before it is released. The crowdfunding platforms give the opportunity to create a webpage for the promotion, using all available media tools, as photos, videos, text, as well as attaching social media links to show the project to the users (Steinberg, 2012). Bershen (2010) points it out that the crowdfunding platforms provide tools for effective promotion and stimulate interest of the audience towards the project. At the moment, crowdsourcing platforms organize workshops and give necessary information for potential campaign runners. This is very important for the projects with small marketing budget, because this kind of promotion requires less financial investments. Crowdfunding can solve two major problems with the project: financing it and creating the interest before the release. Besides that, it is a tool to make a remarkable experience for the owner of the product and fans of the project.

The model of crowdfunding appeared in the USA, when an American musician built a website, where fans could financially support the bands for producing digital recordings; he later added fundraising for film and photography projects (Freedman, 2015). At the moment crowdfunding is expanding in Europe - the Kickstarter started to support the German platform in May (Kickstarter, 2015). There are four main forms of crowdfunding, which are equity-based, donation-based, reward-based and debt-based crowdfunding (Clare, 2012). Equity-based scheme works when people invest money into the project in exchange for equity in the project. That possibly can be share in business or product. The other form is donation-based form, which does not require any material reward; it can be "thank you" or a postcard. The next form is reward-based scheme and this one is the most common right now. The donors receive gratitude from the product owner. It allows to make the connection with people, who are interested in what is going on the project. Debt-based crowdfunding means that people pledge to the project, but then the owner should return them their donations (Armstrong, 2014).

Crowdfunding has a lot of advantages, as for example it minimizes financial risk for the project owner. For example, the owner is not obligated to give away equity or intellectual property rights, in the case of failure (Young, 2015). So, the leader of the project does not need to do repayments and share the copyright with the donors. During fundraising process, the owner gets the feedback on the project from its the fans and donors. Reaction of the audience shows the opinion on the product in general and it is clear how many people are interested in it, how much they are able to donate, what are the mistakes and the positive sides of the project. Interest of the target group can attract the possible partners or investors, who would like to participate in your project (Briggman, 2015).

However, there can be some problems, which can make crowdfunding a complicated process. The major problem that meets all the project owners is that campaign requires a lot of human resources and attention, and could be compared with a full-time job (Kohl, 2015). Another risk is that when publishing your project in the Internet, not protected intellectual property could be in a danger (Blanchard, 2013). And the main fear of all the crowdfunding project owners that if the funding is not



reached, all the finances would be returned to donors and it can be bad for the product reputation as well.

To overcome these kinds of problems, the key tool that the project owner should use is communication with his audience. It is vital to make a research on the target audience, both on the failed and successful projects. The project owner should set up adequate goals and have a clear idea why people need this project and know how to engage them in donation (Hogue, 2015). Besides that, the success of the campaign is based on trust-relationship between the parties. That is why, Kohl (2015) advises first of all to appeal to your friends and family, because the level of trust is the highest in these circles. The second target group would be people, who are visiting the same media as primary group and do not have any straight relation to the owner but are secondary connections. The third group could be people, generally interested in the topic of the project.

The experience of the campaigns, which were successfully pledged, shows that the best time frame for the crowd funding campaign is 25-30 days, not including the research and the huge amount of preparation work.

All above can be related for fundraising finances for the film making as well. When the project has an interesting or a controversial topic, the audience can participate in crowdfunding with more enthusiasm. Comparing the crowdfunding for the film with other business projects, I would say that there are only minor differences in between. The audience can be easily attracted with good visual product, which could be a trailer or a teaser for the film. And as business projects, the campaign can be a financial and promotional tool. In case of the interest of the target audience to the film, filmmaker would know if his work is attractive and actual for people he is making it for.

Generally speaking, financing a documentary film is not an easy task, but obtaining the knowledge and experience for applying to the state commissions and proposing to the broadcasters, other producers and distributors can help to accomplish the film. For extra financing and alternative promotion, the producer can start crowdfunding campaign, however he need to be sure in his competence.

## 2.5 Setting objectives for promotion

During the film production, producer is concerned about not only how to finance the film, but how to deliver it to the target audience and promote the project. There are traditional marketing tools, to promote media product to the target audience, but in case with documentary films, producer has an ability not only to show the film to the public, but invite people to participate in the subject and this process is called “outreach campaign”.

The term “outreach” is defined as any communicational or marketing effort, which involves more than one person to work in cooperation and with unified message strategy to achieve aims or serve shared interests (Ivancin, 2011). The outreach requires a common goal and organized cooperated work in the group. Relating to the documentary, outreach campaign is a complex of promotional actions, intended to raise the interest of the audience and in the end to achieve changes within the society or certain group of people.

The main difference between traditional film marketing strategy and an outreach campaign is that outreach is active on the both sides: from the filmmaker and from the audience. The communication between these two sides is mutual and the audience does not only passively percept the information, provided by the producer.

There are several conditions, that need to be abided for successful campaign and the basis for that is trust from the audience. The involvement of the audience into campaign as well planning distribution ways is a long way and it starts in advance, because building trust-based relationship for the further engagement is a long process (Verellen, 2010).

There are several factors that should be obeyed, to keep the interest of the audience and which could be the basis for trust-relationship between it and filmmaker. The strategic planning of outreach campaign is quite similar to the usual marketing campaign. The producer should have a clear image of the audience and their motives to

be interested in the project. Second part of the proper strategy is the goals, that filmmaker sets up for the target group and knowing why they would be reached.

The film is the core of the campaign and it should be a qualitative media product, to be able to compete with other documentary films and to be interesting for the audience in general. Film gives the audience an opportunity to share the experience of the protagonists, but not going through it by themselves. The film is able to build the connection between the audience and the filmmaker, showing that they have the same interests, and building the relationship between them (Finneran, 2014).

If the producer knows his target group, he would know how deliver the main message of the campaign to it. To do this, the team should choose proper channels to share the information with the community. This can be implemented through social media, website, media coverage (press, TV, radio), mutual partnership with NGOs and corporations (Verellen, 2010). The growing resources for funding, media partners and platforms, film funding programs - any kind of collaboration raises the awareness of the film and increases the future impact of it.

As it was stated before, international distribution is the great tool to expand the market and to cover the bigger audience. When the filmmaker sells the license for broadcasting or screening abroad, he should take in consideration cultural and social specifics of the country. The audience can have same interests, but because of different values, the topic can be perceived differently. The campaign and the film should be adapted for language and culture-wise.

After the campaign is implemented, the producer should evaluate if he succeed to build trust-based relationship with the target group. When the outreach is over and the techniques are used, the results would not be visible right after the release. Documentary films usually do not make a big profit, but their success and impact are noticeable after some time. The influence, which the film and the campaign have on the society, is named "impact". Documentary and the outreach campaign lead to the social and cultural changes: behavior patterns, values, social norms (Kelly, 2013; Verellen, 2010, 3).

The impact has several dimensions, following each other and according to them, producer can evaluate the success of the campaign. The core of it is a strong story and the next level should be the awareness that the project can appeal from the audience. If the audience is into the topic and is ready to take part in it, the next step should be engagement of the audience, which will lead to the strong movement and in the end it should lead to the social change.

The producer can use that scheme to evaluate the results of the campaign (see fig. 3)



Figure 3. Creative Dimensions of Impact

(Barret, Leddy, 2008).

Campaign, especially if it inspires the audience for actions, can be a powerful for social changes. There are different kinds of actions: people can, vote, volunteer, sign petitions, and organize meetings or protests. They can support the campaign morally or financially, and crowdfunding can be perceived as one of these actions. Audience is

paying the attention to the problem and donating for the change towards it. It is important to point out that crowdfunding can be the part of outreach, which brings social and financial profit.

## **2.6 Perceptions of film professionals**

### **2.6 Perceptions of film professionals**

For the full picture on European and German financing capabilities, I have conducted interviews with experts in documentary field: the impact producer of the campaign, who decided to launch crowdfunding campaign Stefano Strocci and Nils Bökamp, one of the directors of the film, who also has produced two films within framework of his own production company. Both of them were asked questions in the areas of their competence.

Stefano Strocci has been working in the documentary film business for twenty years and he was a producer and consultant for several documentary film projects, especially for those, which required outreach strategy or crowdfunding campaign. The interview with him was recorded and it was done before the preparation phase but several questions were asked after the release of the film.

When I was preparing questions for the interview, I focused on the areas of competence for each of the expert. As Stefano is an impact producer, he had experience with traditional and alternative film marketing tool and he was an advisor for crowdfunding campaigns. Besides that, he was promoting his own film about politics and it was important to ask him to share his experience on documentary film marketing. Moreover, Stefano has worked in film producing for last twenty years and was involved in a large number of international productions, so he has the knowledge of film financing in different countries and rules of pitching forums. He mentioned the procedure of searching for co-production partners, explained pros and cons, told about the financial flow after letters of interest and commitment. His advice is valuable for the filmmakers, who do not have a wide experience in financing or selling the

project to the broadcasters or distributors. I would say that the interview with him was an important part of my knowledge in film producing.

In his opinion documentary film market has been growing quite fast in last 15 years and the reason to it is the amount of film festivals and markets, assigned to them. The obstacle is that there is overload of them and the broadcasters are spreading to different events, which is not really good for the film business. It is really hard to catch the broadcaster that you need or distributor for the certain country. The film markets are more topic-orientated and divided to the leagues, so to enter IDFA or Sheffield, filmmaker should possess the certain budget percent and only then pitch a project to the broadcaster. The requirements of the obtained budget depend on the festival, but usually it is between 25-50%. For the beginning filmmaker, advises Strocchi, it is more effective to go to Barcelona or Tesseloniki, because the access is free and it is easier to apply. For alternative film financing, film school graduates are able to apply to the master schools, which provide financial and professional support at all stages of film production.

Film markets are also the places to find a partner for co-production, which can open the door to the international broadcaster as well. Co-production is a way to increase the budget and get the points on the application to the film funding institutions. Currently, the best countries for the film financing are Central Europe (Germany, France, UK) and Scandinavian countries.

Strocchi curated crowdfunding campaigns before and he thinks that crowdfunding cannot be the main source of film financing, but can be used as additional. In his opinion, the crowdfunding is mostly working when there is trust-based relationship with the target group and mostly only personal contacts can bring money. This path was mentioned in the communicational strategy. Usually, the amount of donors, who were reached through media, represents only 5% percent and 60-70% are people, who have been contacted personally, but it will be featured in the report later.

Stefano Strocchi also gave his opinion on the outreach topic. He says that the project should be based on a current occasions and be actual, because the topic should be visible to the audience. There are some methods, which were used in Denmark, when the filmmakers engaged protagonists to protest in front of the parliament. Journalists picked up the issue, so the film was featured in the media and it was released on the peak of interest to the issue. The best tools to promote the film, he

points out, are to create an interest to the protagonists and then to captivate the community as well. It is important to focus on the right topic and to develop the interest in the right place.

The topic of the second interview with Nils Bökamp was dedicated to the German film market, its past and development. Bökamp has an imposing professional experience as a producer and director; he has a good knowledge of the German film industry. Nils Bökamp studied film production, has produced 7 films and directed 3 of them. He has a deep knowledge about film financing in Germany and shared his experience on financing and operating on film markets.

Nils Bökamp says that IDFA and Doc Leipzig are the best markets for German productions, Sundance and Hot Docs are more targeted to the US market and film festivals and Cannes and Berlinale are more prestigious. Concerning funding, he mentions that main German funding capabilities are the public television, cinema funds and EU. In his opinion, the main starting point is to find a partner for cooperative work and then to find a market for the project. However, in his opinion Berlin is the great place for talent, but the main obstacle is high competition. Munich and Düsseldorf are more available to filmmakers, because the scene is smaller. He pointed out that the majority of his partners are not based in Berlin.

Graphic shows the comparison of film funds in German regions (see Figure 4)

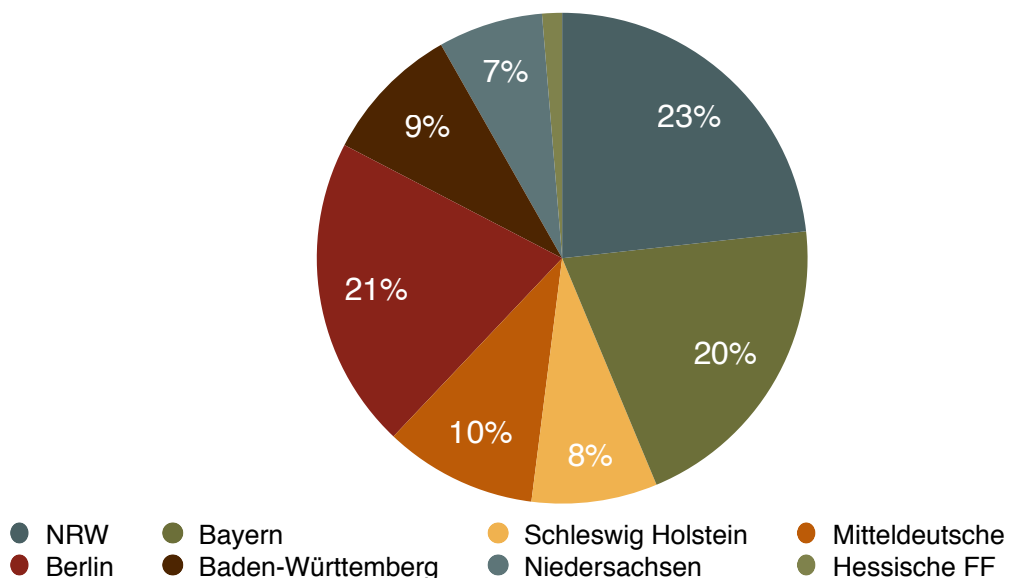


Figure 4. *Nordrhein-Westfalen*, Bayern and Berlin have the biggest budgets for state film funding (German Films, 2015).

### **3 PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CASE**

#### **3.1 Objectives**

This development project is to explore financing and promoting opportunities for a documentary within specific target group. In order to accomplish the main goal of the work, the author set up following objectives:

- to define financing sources for “Because of Who I Am”
- to describe the process of crowdfunding campaign for the film promotion
- to evaluate promotional success of the film of the project

#### **3.2 Preparation phase**

The crowdfunding campaign for the film was important for the company and for the project in general. It was the first project labeled with the company name as well as its first crowdfunding experience. The aim was to show the abilities of the company and attract production companies and independent producers to market their films. The goal of the company is to campaign films, its outreach and distribution.

For the film, the crowdfunding campaign had informational and financial perspective. Within the campaign, we planned to draw the attention of the target group and to combine outreach and crowdfunding campaign at the same time. The audience would be involved into the campaign from the beginning and when the target group know the project, then the team would launch an outreach campaign.

The choice of the platform was a hard decision as well. When the campaign was only planned, Kickstarter did not function in Germany, so it was decided to set up on the Dutch version of the website, but on the 12th of May, Kickstarter opened the German fundraising portal and the choice of the platform was no longer the question. That



was supposed to be another help to draw the attention to the project, because it was a chance to be one of the first campaigns, launched in Germany.

The Kickstarter campaign was targeted to raise 30 000 EUR in 27 days. The team, which was working on the campaign, consisted of three members: the producer, PR manager and the producer's assistant. The roles were divided in the certain way: the producer was managing the process and was responsible for the major decisions. The PR manager and producer's assistant were working with social media channels, communicating with partners as media and NGOs, updating the Kickstarter page and tracking the results. The PR manager was responsible for German speaking partners and the producer's assistant for international.

The target group was people from 25-40, who are personally related to LGBT community or who are not indifferent to the social activism and do care about the equality and human rights protection. They are interested in the social and political movements, following the news and informed of the current situation in the world, they are engaged to be active in these topics, either physically as going on the demonstrations or voting, signing petitions or financially support the campaigns similar to the case on the fundraising platforms.

It was planned to reach the wide range of activists in the certain countries: the USA, Germany, Netherlands, the UK and Ireland, as those are the most progressive countries in sense of LGBT rights protection. Germany is included, because it is the country of origin and the film was made in German, so the opportunity to reach local target group supposed to be high. The Eastern countries, where LGBT community is not respected or banned, were not included in the primary target group, because it would be either above the law or not be accepted by society of those countries in a proper way.

In order to reach the target audience, and being guided by the previous experience of crowd funding campaigns, it was decided to get in touch with NGOs, media resources, Facebook communities and public pages, dedicated to LGBT rights, equality,

human rights protection, queer art, etc. The author created the list of those organizations, and PR supplemented it with his groundwork as well.

The purpose of the outreach campaign was to raise the awareness of LGBT (Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender) community in Europe and in the Middle East countries as well as open the discussion about the rights and equality of this group. This could be done through three following actions:

The first action, which was planned is a community screening tour, which would take place in Germany firstly and then in the other countries of European Union. The screenings supposed to be organized in the art venues as cinemas, art galleries, museums with the coordination and support of the local LGBT or/and human rights protection organizations.

Secondly, to amplify the interest of the local communities to the film, it was planned to implement the billboard campaign with artworks by artists, featured in the film. These billboards illustrated the stereotypes, which LGBT people have to face and the billboards were made in a manner of “reverse marketing”.

The last action was to create a web-platform, to provide the audience with the full information about the film tour and invite LGBT artists to join the campaign and submit their works for further collaboration.

The term “outreach” is used because the audience was not only influenced by the strategy, but was also engaged to take part in it, for example to share the experience on the platform or create its own billboard, to organize the screening in the organization or gallery, etc.

### **3.3 Communication plan**

The team used the communication strategy, suggested by the impact producer and head of the campaign Stefano Strocchi. The strategy divides the audience in two major groups: personal contacts and audience, reached through social media.

The communication flow was divided to three categories (see Figure 5)

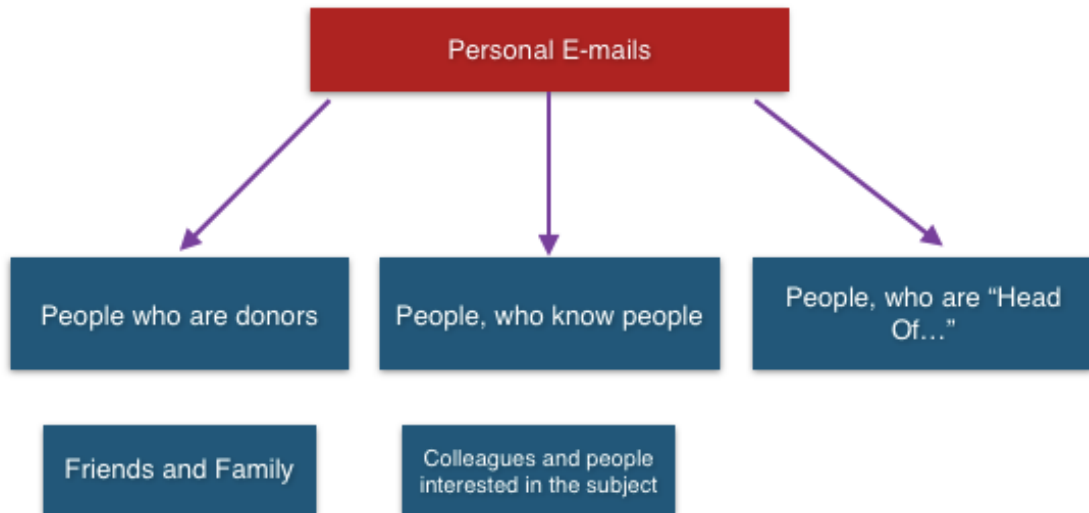


Figure 5. Communicational strategy with the primary target group, created by Stefano Strocci.

First target group consists out of donors and people, who can be active to share the information about campaign personally and through social media channels (Hogue, 2015). Apart from family and friends, people who know people in the community can make a huge input in the communication flow, because they deliver the message to the people, who are interested in the issue. Those are filmmakers, artists, human rights activists, etc. Moreover, the subgroup "People, who are the head of" can share the info in the social circles because of their social status or career, and their opinion or request can have an influential power.

Another useful tool for promotion are newsletters. They are considered as quite effective tool and they are able to reach approximately 20% of the target group. People, working for issue-related organizations (Schwules Museum, Amnesty Queer,

Amnesty Germany, etc.) or subscribed to the newsletters, are possibly interested in the topic and can donate. Usually, this group is more engaged to the social activism and their behavior is more controllable.

The second major target group are people, who can be reached through press and social media tools. The rate of the social media is lower than with e-mails. In the case with e-mails, the percentage of people, who would follow the link, generally is 1-5%. When it comes to the social media, the result is between 0.4-0.8% for the major social media channels as Facebook and Twitter. And only 2% of visitors, who have seen the page in media, would donate on Kickstarter (Hogue, 2015). Protagonists can have an influence on the audience as well, because they have a lot of fans, but their behavior is not really controllable. The team estimated that group to be 40% from all donors.

Some part of them have been contacted in advance, to get the contacts of people, responsible for public relations and others only when we has the link for the campaign. It was important, so we could introduce the project and get the feedback on it from people, who are into the community. The further communication with them could be more effective, because it would be more personal.

The comparison of contacted partners is shown in the chart (see Figure 6)

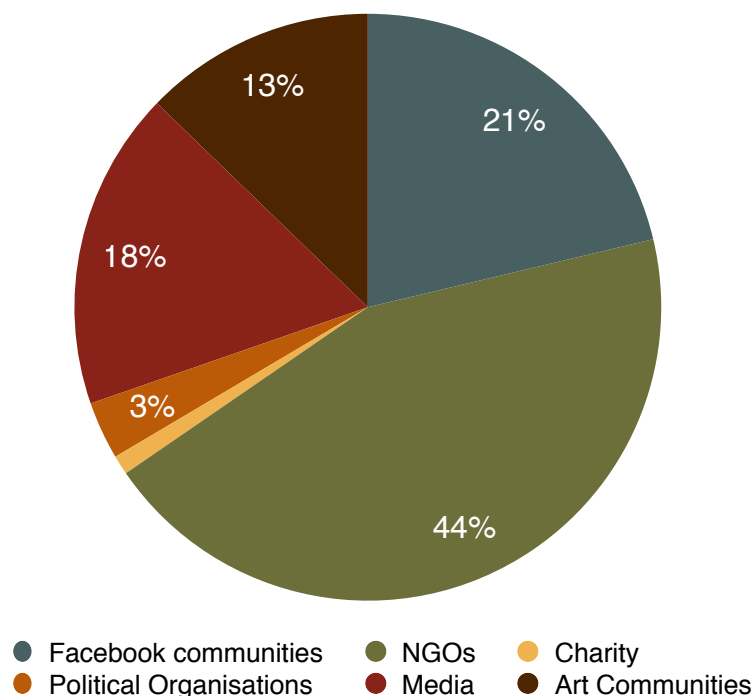


Figure 6. The percentage of contacted informational partners.

The numbers of the contacted partners were derived from my research on the organizations and media resources. (See Tab. 1)

Facebook communities	NGOs	Charity Organisations	Political Organisations	Media	Art Communities
40	83	2	6	33	24

Table. 1 The amount of contacted partners

### 3.4 Execution Phase

My own role as the producer's assistant was to help the impact producer and PR-manager of the campaign to organize the work and the tasks. First of all, I was responsible for preparation work for the campaign, which included research on potential partners, either informational or financial. I created the table with the media resources (blogs, magazines, communication platforms, news, LGBT and human rights protection platforms) and NGOs and NCOs that we could possibly contact for cooperation as well. The main emphasis of my research was on human rights protection and equality related sources.

I have created the e-mail template, in which I have explained why their support is important for our project and what I would like to ask them for. The main request was to write a short personal opinion about the project and publish it on the Facebook page. For NGOs, I have asked to include the link to the newsletter, which are usually sent to the members regularly.

During the campaign, I was in charge of all social media channels, that the team has used for the project. I was responsible for inviting people to like the page, contacting Facebook pages for making contacts with administrators and their communities. To-

gether with PR manager, I have created a strategic content plan for social media accounts, which were implementing in shift.

For social media promotion, we have used five general channels:

- The Facebook page of the film
- The Facebook page of the film's production company
- Twitter of the Film
- Twitter of the Director (Benjamin Cantu)
- Twitter of the Director (Nils Bökamp)

The general information about the film, the campaign and the protagonists was concentrated on the film related Facebook and Twitter pages. The Facebook page of the company gave the insights to the working process of the company and the promotion of the campaign. The usage of the Twitter accounts of the director was made in order to make promotion more personal and increase the attention of the followers from filmmaking business and personal contacts as well.

I divided posts in social media into the categories. It was important to get attention to the campaign and at the same time to feature protagonists. I attached the links from the press and media, where the protagonists were remained. It was extremely effective, especially with the artists, who are active in the media and have a blog (Dustin Lance Blake).

The information about the progress and rewards of the campaign was updated 4 times per day, plus "Thank you" note for the donors, who pledge 10 euros. The content was divided to several categories: "Film" and "Campaign". In the "Film" there was an information about the protagonists, links to their art and the trailer. Rewards, thank you notes and updates related to the "Campaign" and were accompanied with the link on Kickstarter.

Unfortunately, we did not have a lot of original content, which could be renewed for every post, so some information published was cycled. Every day I researched the news on the LGBT and equality topics, which can be reposted in the social media

channels and attract the target group, to like more and due to the Facebook policy, if the post is opened, the friends of the user are able to see what has been liked.

The graph illustrates three kinds of activities, which fans of the page were doing, during the dates of the campaign and after film release. (see Figure 7)

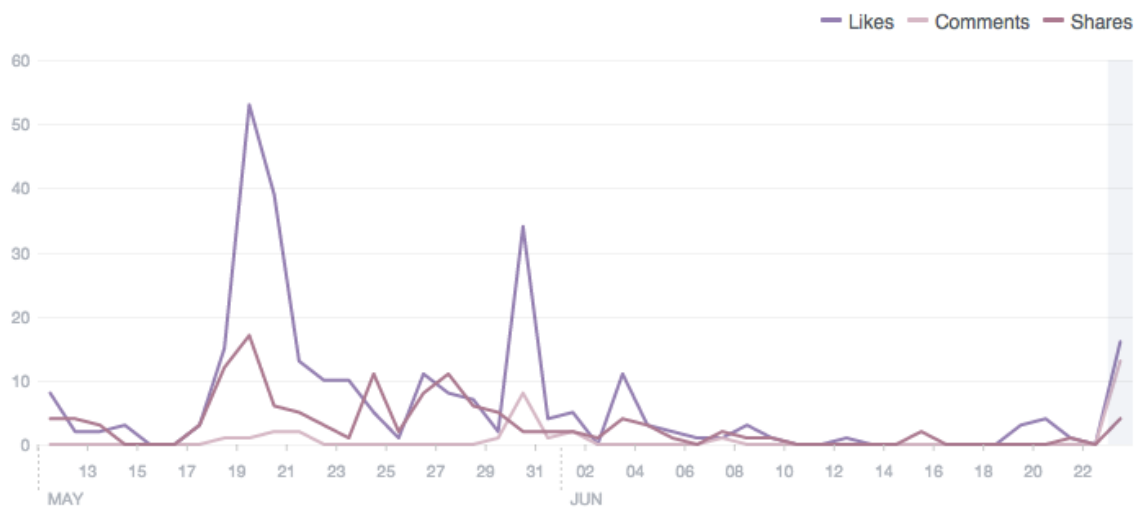


Figure 7. Illustration activity of the subscriber on the Facebook page of the project (Facebook, 2015).

I had the contacts of the responsible for media contact persons and wrote the press release in two languages: Russian and English, which has been sent to every media resources, that we would like to work with together. I used my personal contacts in Russian media to get attention from them as well and the project was featured in few of them.

Concerning the crowdfunding process, I have replied to all the backers, who donated to the project, updated the page on Kickstarter and was sending personal updates to the participants.

## 4 OUTCOME

### 4.1 Financial perspective for Because of Who I Am

The initiative to make the film about the queer artists all over the world was coming from the TV channel ARTE, because of the exhibition, opening in May. The directors and the commissioning editor agreed on the concept and the team started to work on the film production.

ARTE provided 90 000 EUR, which is almost 65% percent of whole budget. It was received during the production process. To create 80 min version and have an opportunity to make a premiere event in Berlin, producers have applied for “TV-Event” grant from Medienboard, which is a regional commissioning fund in Berlin.

Medienboard, as the governmental organization have a quota for documentary production. “TV-event” means the opportunity to get the budget extension for the certain exceptional projects. Another 35% of the budget, which is 50 000 EUR were granted to the project from this fund. According to the German taxation system, 7 percent of the budget is extracted and the rest received by the production company. For the campaign, the minimum budget was established, for example to pay for the PR manager and for the promotion materials.

For the outreach campaign, there was no budget established except 30 000 EUR, were planned to earn through crowdfunding campaign. It was planned that in case the crowd funding was not successful, outreach implementation was not possible as tour, billboards, the platform, etc.

Copyrights for the project worked in the following way. The rights for German and French territories belongs to ARTE, but the channel is a part of media holding ARD, which means that the holding has rights to screen the film on other German TV



channels as well. In France, the film can be screened only by ARTE. For other world territories, the production company has a right to sell the license to distributors.

The producers of the film attended the Tessaloniki film festival to find potential partners and it was pitched to the broadcasters from the other countries. The project was aiming to the world sales and using services of distribution companies, as it was agreed with AfriDoc, because two of the artists, featured in the film are from Africa and there was interest because of it. AfriDoc possibly could screen it on TV channels or local film festivals. In the list of other interested partners were SVT, Finland, Greece, probably Belgium and Netherlands, but on the (20.09) there was no official approval from the partners.

The sales to the countries of artists origin were unlikely possible, because almost all the countries are homophobic and TV channels would not buy the film. One of the artists lives in the UK, but in Tessaloniki, there were no representatives from Great Britain, so there was no negotiation about that.

The possible future of the film, apart from TV broadcasting can be a potential participation in festivals, dedicated to the human right and LGBT issues.

## **4.2 Marketing perspective**

Kickstarter campaign started on the 27th of May and was finished on the 15th of June. The overall amount of money, collected on the Kickstarter, was 4,995 Euros. The team succeeds to reach 88 backers from different countries.

The campaign existed for 14 days and then it was shut down. The first discussion in the working group about interrupting the campaign was raised on the 7th day of crowdfunding, analyzing the first results. It was obvious, that with the gained result of 2500 EUR in the first week and with the final goal of 30.000, it would not be possible to obtain the money in the next 20 days. The associate producer, as the leader of the campaign and other members of the team agreed on the decision to stop the crowdfunding process.

The graph shows the financial activity of donors (see Figure 8).

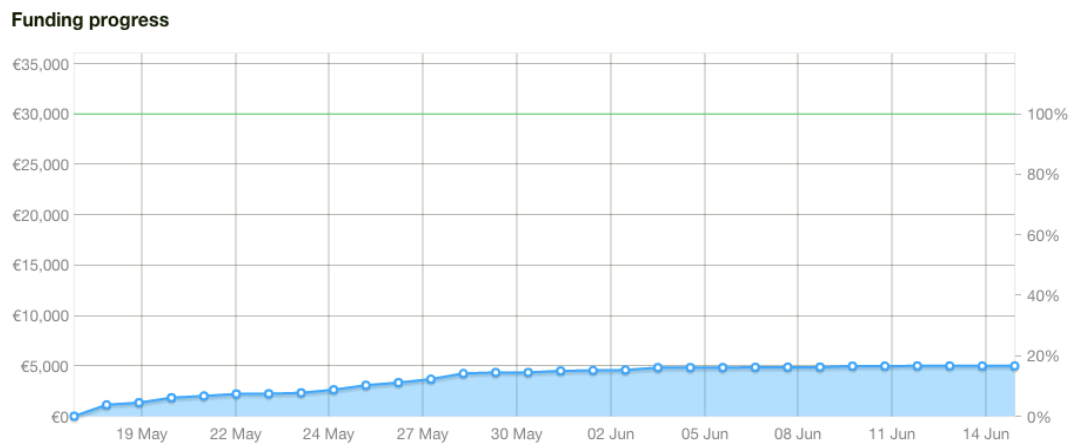


Figure 8. Funding progress of the project

(Kickstarter, 2015)

Social media policy of the project was more effective than the other communication channels. PR manager and me in the role of producer's assistant were responsible for social media accounts related to the campaign. Social media policy was more effective than other communication channels. I created the Facebook page of the film in November and I was responsible for the public image of the company in social media. The rise of followers from that time till the release of the film can be seen on the illustration below. On the 25th of June, the amount of people, liked the page was 505.

The graph illustrates the results of the social media campaign in numbers of the fans (see Figure 9)

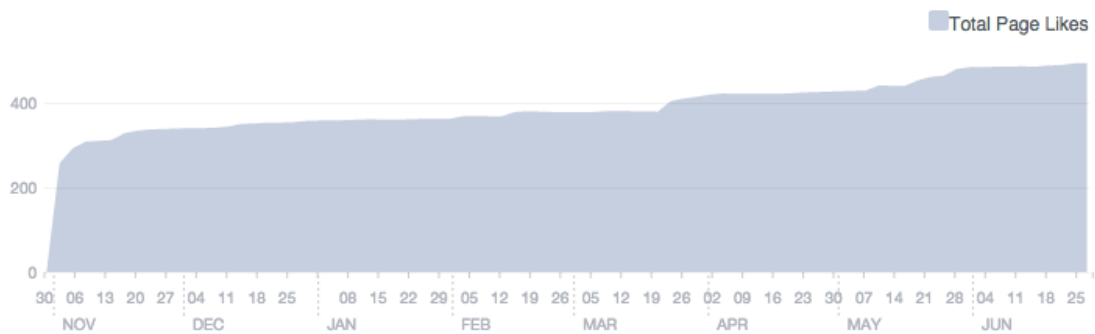


Figure 9. The raise of the subscribers to the page

(Facebook, 2015).

During the campaign, as it was stated before, the page was updated 4-5 times per day in different timeframes in order to interest the audience from several time-zones (USA and Australia) and posts appeared in the newsfeed in the audience peak-hours. For the first week the amount of publications was quite moderate, but after the discussion with the team, it was decided to increase the amount of posts to ten, which led us to the fact, the fans preferred to hide the post about the project, irritatingly often popping up in the newsfeed.

After the campaign was shut down, donors received their prizes, although the aim was not reached. People pledged for the invitations were invited to the premiere and the donors, who would like to receive the online version of the film will get the link, when 80 min version is ready. Currently, the Facebook page of the project is not updated.

## 5 CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The premiere of the film was on the 17th of June in Berlin and on 24th of June it was broadcasted on ARTE TV channel. Before, it was a long production process, which lasted almost 11 months and aligned with practical training in the company. Two main issues — financing of the film and promotion are covered in this work, supported with literature review and expert opinion. In this chapter, I would like to express my opinion on the issues and suggest some improvements.

The film was financed in the frames of German documentary film market on a pre-sale and equity basis. As it was stated in the literature review, the broadcaster is one of the major sources of film financing. In the case of the film, ARTE/rbb covered the biggest part of the budget, which was enough for 52 min version, screened on TV channel on 24th of June. At the same time, according to the guidelines of commission fund Berlin-Brandenburg, called Medienboard, the organization can extend the budget of the film, if there is an extra need for that. Medienboard increased the budget of the film and it was 35% of the whole film budget. This amount was enough to organize the premiere event and to make 80 min version.

As the film was presented on the film festival in Tessaloniki, it would be distributed to the several countries, where the commissioning editors have already revealed the interest to buy the license for the film.

Money obtained through traditional financing methods was not enough to cover the needs for promotion. That is why the producers took a decision to recall to the alternative financing methods and at the same time to promote the project through crowdfunding. Based on the previous experience, it was a good idea to involve the audience to participate in the project promotion and combine outreach and crowdfunding campaigns together. Besides that, the campaign had a meaning not only for the film, but for the company as well, because it was the first big project, which could show the abilities of the company for the future partners.

The results of the crowdfunding campaign cannot be accepted as successful, but considering human and financial resources available for the campaign, I would say it was

a good attempt. There were several factors, which brought the project to that results and in this chapter, I would like to raise them and explain what could have been improved.

According to the communication plan, compiled by Stefano Strocchi, there were three main categories of people, who supposed to be the target group of the project. Friends and family of the crew donated to the project, but they did not forward the information to their social circles. The key to the successful crowdfunding is personal communication and the directors, the producers and other team members contacted their social network to spread the information on the topic. The important note is that the majority of that people does not relate to the LGBT community and most of them are not activists, so they participated because of the personal relationship. The reason, why these people were interested in the campaign was the personal contact, but they were not being involved in the issue. If they would relate to the target group of the film or would be connected to it, the result could be much more impressive.

Another powerful tool to reach a big amount of people would be a protagonist of the film. The team did not build a strong connection between the target group and the artists, who could have an influence on them. The basis for successful crowdfunding and outreach campaign is trust-based relationship and in the case, the team did not have it. Artists were not involved into the campaign and therefore were not able to bring their target audience to participate in the crowdfunding. That is why the target group of the artists was not interested in the project, in which they have been featured. If the protagonists would have time and ability to be a part of the crowdfunding campaign and promote it in their communication circles, for example friends and family, and through social media accounts to reach their fans, the interest to the campaign and the final result could be much higher. Stefano Strocchi mentioned a filmmaker, who was working on a movie about vinyl collectors and he was closely working with them for two years and he was visible for people, he appealed to them he was launching crowdfunding campaign. As well, he sent personal e-mails to his fans two months in advance and he was able to move a big community to donate. It was a full-time work, but it had given positive results.

The next secondary target group that the team was aiming to reach, were the LGBT and human rights activists, ARTE target group and people who are not indifferent to the topic. The team planned to reach them through social media and NGOs, but unfortunately, not so many communities were willing to cooperate with us.

Even though there was a huge research list on informational partners, they were not reached in appropriate time and this mistake led to the unsatisfactory results. I contacted 83 NGOs worldwide, working on the LGBT equality and human rights protection issues. The message or e-mail had a link to the Kickstarter. Due to the fact that the campaign on the Kickstarter was created two days before the launch, the information was spread just before the start of the campaign. We did not consider the possible high workload of people, who in charge of public relations, so part of them did not have time to get acquainted with the project itself. Some of the PR managers did not find the project attractive to present it to the members or community. The most remarkable answer I have received from the PR manager of the NY community who explained me the reason of declining my request. He did not publish the information about the project in the newsletter, because the NGO already had received a big number of similar applications, who needed the media and community attention and in his opinion, it is not possible to serve all of them. Moreover, the explanation from another LGBT community was that they would like to pledge money to the project, but due to the internal rules, they are obligated to spend money only in the USA, and it is forbidden to support the projects, registered outside of the country.

As the result, the majority of NGOs and public pages on Facebook did not reply to the e-mail with the press release and the link. In the case with the e-mails, it is not possible to see if the message has been read or not, but on Facebook the majority of administrators have read the message, but have not replied back. Comparing two ways of communication, Facebook was more successful and several FB pages published the link.

Some of the Facebook public pages administrator responded that they are not interested to publish the link to Kickstarter on the main wall, but it is possible to do that

independently. But the percent of the audience, who will notice that is very small, because it does not appear in the newsfeed of the people, who are fan of the page.

One other way to reach the secondary target audience was covered by the public relations manager from human rights NGO, which possessed the wide range of the contacts with journalists and NGOs representatives from Germany. Unfortunately, we did not succeed to reach them. The press release was forwarded to the contact list and as the result the project was highlighted in the radio show and was remained in one German media resources, related to the LGBT issues.

From the target countries, which were planned to reach, only Russian media (3) and German (2) were ready to share the information about the project. In case with the Russia, that was not expected, due to the hard situation on the topic in the country and the attitude of the majority of the society to it as well.

To analyze the failure of the communicating with media, the author contacted one Russian newspaper and received the reply from the editor-in-chief, (Kirill Artemenko) of one Russian online newspaper “Bumaga” ([paperpaper.ru](http://paperpaper.ru)). He says that media writes about the news, news is facts, but the crowdfunding project is not a fact, — it is a project. When the project collects money that becomes news. There is no way to write about possibilities all the time.

For better communication with informational partners, I think, there was a need for personal communication not only through e-mail, but the personal calls as well. The emphasis should not be on international NGOs, but on German or European organizations as well, as they can spend fund money inside Germany or European Union. The lack of interest from media, I can say, was conditioned with LGBT political situation. The most important political movement was made in Ireland on the 22nd of May and the attention of media was compelled to this topic.

As it is clear that the team wanted to attract international audience to the film and to project itself. There were two important factors that the team did not take into account. The campaign was launched before the film was released and there was no international version of the film, because they're no subtitles and voice-over in English. The campaign was launched before the premiere, because it was planned that the awards for the donors would be invitation for the premiere. If the campaign

started when the target community has seen the film already and knew that it is a strong media product, which is the basic requirement for an outreach campaign, the level of attention could be much higher. The audience would get the clear image of the film and have the certain attitude to it as to the art work, and as a result would spread the word about it. The production team created English subtitles, but in the middle of the campaign, which was a bit out of timeline. If that could be done earlier, then the film would be available for the English-speaking countries as US, Ireland, Great Britain, which are the countries, where the attitude towards LGBT community is quite tolerant. With the interest of the activists from these countries, I think the project could achieve better results.

There were some other communication channels, that were not considered in the beginning, but the team decided to build a connection with other project owners on Kickstarter, whose project are not similar, but appeal to the same target groups. Cooperation with these campaigns could become a working tool for building a connection to the community and the mutual partnership with project's owners could be effective as well. Here could be found a financial and informational help for both projects. The team tried to get in contact with two project owners, but *Because of Who I Am* did not receive positive feedback on cooperation. While searching for a solution for raising the interest to project, I found that Hogue (2015) advises to make a research on people, who has done similar projects and ask them for an advice, contacts, etc, because it helps to avoid common mistakes and the person already know how to operate with the community. That was not real to implement because of the lack of time, but could have been effective. The right way to build cooperation would be to send a brief letter, expressing the opinion about their previous work, introducing our own project and then asking for an advice, says Hogue (2015). He also advises to research past experience of successful projects which could lead the team to the clear understanding what kind of tools function for the effective communication with the target group, for example special forums, Facebook-groups, where people have mutual communication and discuss subject-related topic instead of Facebook public pages, where the communication is basically only in one way. Moreover, it might be helpful to find out what kind of websites could provide some useful information or bloggers and journalists who were able to cooperate. (Hogue, 2015)



The great example of proper and effective communication with target group was provided by the partner of *Supermarket Medien GmbH*.

He was working on a film about gay and lesbian children, growing up in religious families, as well as has done a fundraising. It would be a great example of successful crowd funding campaign related to the LGBT community problem. Karlake visited Human Rights Campaign's National Convention in October of 2006 in Washington, DC. and through knowing some board members he was able to show the reel on the conference in front of 600 000 people. As Karlake says, the response was overwhelming and a lot of people wanted to talk with him and support the movie. Later, the trailer was shown on the other national convention, where it has been seen by 200 000 people. To fundraise the project, Karlake also invited the families from the film to participate in project and he contacted from the NGO, which supported children with similar problems and with the support from different groups and partners, the fundraising successfully was finished. This example demonstrates that it is important to find an approach to the people, who could be potentially interested in the project and then spread it forward in the community that it is intended for.

The same idea came to us as well and I have researched the LGBT, equality and human rights protection events, held in Europe in the period from January 2015 till June 2015. Participation in them with the short speech about the project and crowdfunding would definitely draw attention of the target audience. Those events were divided to the two categories - prides, which are running in the different countries and supported by the local NGOs and the conferences, where people, whose professional field relates to the topic of the film, are gathered. Relying on the experience of the partner, to achieve more progressive results, the participation at these events held in Europe could assist to draw the attention of the target group to the film. It could help us, but the team could not afford the traveling for these events due to financial and time limit reasons. At the end of the campaign, when it was decided to shut it down, one of the directors, Benjamin Cantu participated in the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum, which was held in Austria from 14th till 19th of June and where the project was presented, but not with the purpose to present crowdfunding campaign. If the campaign

was scheduled later, the conference could become a great place to promote the project and the campaign, especially if it was screened there.

In my opinion, the team did not have enough time to prepare the campaign. It regards to many aspects, which were not concerned during the development phase. The timeframe of the campaign has moved several time: the first time when we decided to implement it was in April and when we moved it to the middle of May. There was a need to do it, mostly for the company to show the pilot project and to draw the attention of the documentary filmmakers community. If the team had more time to prepare for the campaign, to build a relationship with the LGBT and human rights communities, the results could be much more impressive. The film is strong media project and it could have more impression on public with the planned outreach campaign. The lack of time regards to the people, who were working on the project: there were a lot of side projects that the team members needed to take care of and it was not possible to give more time for it. It was stated before that working on the campaign can be compared with full-time job and it is almost impossible to pay attention to other projects at the same time. I stated before that the protagonists were busy with their art as well, but their participation could be extremely effective for the image of the film and the success of the campaign.

As it was mentioned before, the budget for outreach campaign was based on the results of crowd funding campaign. At the moment, when the report will be published, it is hard to say about any visible impact on the society that film has been done. First of all, the film was released in the second half of June and after that the production company had a big load of work, concerning the other projects.

The things that have been in the outreach strategy could not be implemented in the same volume that they were planned to do so. The main occasion, connected to the film was the premiere, which was attended by people from Amnesty International and other branches of the this NGO, people from Schwules Museum, others, who are involved into the topic. The impact is possible with the distribution of the film to the different territories and participating on the festivals concerning LGBT-issues and human rights protection.

I would like to mention the interviews that I took with the producer of the film. Talking with them and extracting their opinion and experiences on the financing and promotion issues was useful, because they supplied this report with important information. When talking about the outreach campaign, Stefano said that there should be a suitable time for the release of the film and for the campaign, so it will up to date and actively discussed in the society. Despite to the fact, that the topic is currently featured in media, this attention was not enough to make the film stand out from other media products. I believe that theoretically all the advices that Stefano gave could be effectively used and the campaign would be successful, but in this case, the circumstances had more influence on the results.

I asked Strocci about his opinion on the results and factors, which did not allow us to reach the goal. He said that the campaign did not go well and the main reason for that was lack of personal contacts and lack specific community, which was not engaged. The team needed a large network and an ability to be closely connected to a NGO or an activist group, which can spread the information and appeal to join. The directors of the film are not activists themselves and they do not belong to any NGO, so that was a difficulty as well. The partners that we have worked with could use their local resources to attract attention to the protagonists, but they have not been involved as well. The social media cooperation was not enough and the campaign itself was not aimed to “finish the film”, but rather for the tour and was planned as an experiment.

The campaign and the film could achieve better results, because the project is a strong artwork and it could have more success. Basically, the team could have reached 30 000 on a Kickstarter. The topic will be relevant for a long time, because the changes in the attitude of the society are happening right now and worldwide media regularly features this topic. I suppose that the film will not lose its actuality in next several years and with the proper amount of finances, the outreach campaign could be implemented and the product will have it's own input in to the changes in the society. Besides that, the film was released in June and not all the partners had time to distribute the film already. But as it was pointed before several TV channels are interested to buy the license, so I hope, as a former team-member of the project hope that the strategy, we have planned will be released.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1 – Interview with Stefano Strocchi

(D) Can you point out some changes that you could observe for last 10 years in documentary market.

(S) I think, there has been a significant change in the last 10 years, because of the pitching forums. In the beginning, ten years ago, there was five or six crucial ones, which were organized usually by EDN, that is European Documentary Network, union association of the producers, and they were the only opportunities for producers to meet the broadcasters, they were exclusive and very few, as I said five or six. Then it has become a big trend that every festival of documentary films in the world want to organize its own pitching forum and so the last five years or maybe even six, there has been actually the opposite - too many pitching forums. Basically, there are one or two pitching forums every month all over the world, so for example one in Barcelona and at the same time in the Eastern Europe, at the same time in US or in UK. Or in one month, there are three important events, in June there is Sheffield and there is also Sunny Side of The Doc. Also, if we look around there will two or three more pitching forums.

(D) Does it help?

(S) Not anymore, because there is too many. The problem is that the broadcasters right now are invited to all of them and either they go only to one of them or they spread around. So, if you go to one of these events, instead of finding everybody, you just find the few. What happened then, that in last three years, it has been again another tendency, to change these pitching forums and create more theme-oriented ones. If you go to Sheffield, it is more interactive and factual, if you go to IDFA it is more factual and political, if you go Vision ..., this is more about artistic and creative documentaries. So, they are trying to make it a bit more specific. And also, I think in the last years, they reduced again the number of opportunities. There are only few ones that are really important. And then, there are different leagues. There are five

or six of those pitching forums, it is really hard to get it and present the film. It is dedicated only to big projects, that already have a consolidated budget. There is a second league, in the sense of beginners, like Tessaloniki, Barcelona, Jilyava and others. Of course, they attract less broadcasters and commissioning editors, there is no entry requirement to have 20% of the budget in place or these kind of things. So, it is aiming actually to help either smaller projects or beginner directors, beginner production companies to meet the broadcasters. In addition to this, there are four programs, which kinda are master schools, meaning they select projects and they care of projects together with experts all over the Europe or international experts. Usually, there are four sessions in one year, and then the last day session is the pitching forum. And that works better, because it helps you for one year developing a project with the help of international broadcasters, and at the end, because it has been mentored and tailored in four sessions, and for the broadcaster it is easier. If the broadcaster on the pitch are going to be interested.

(D) Film markets are not about finding the broadcaster, but also gives opportunity for co-productions.

(S) It depends. On these forums and markets, and pitching, sometimes you pitch to the broadcasters directly, sometimes you pitch to the broadcaster directly, sometimes you can pitch to the broadcaster, but you meet the producer from another country, who says "Look, I can co-produce and bring the broadcasters from my country on the project, because it is interesting, and I know them and they told me that they are interested. Many broadcasters don't like to do business directly with the producer, if he is not from their own country, because they don't know you or because they still need to spend the money in their country. So, they will ask you to have a co-producer. So, if it is a French TV-money, they will go to a French producer, that will join your production and bring the money from the French TV.

(D) What are the other pluses of having a co-production with other countries, I mean apart from money.

(S) Apart from money, it is only a trouble, honestly. It means a lot more legal contracts, it means dividing the rights from exploitation, rights during the film. It means that you have other creatives, usually intelligent ones, but also their opinions, in-

volved into the film. So, engaging co-production, you do it because of the money honestly, because it is an only way to reach really large budgets. Maybe, you get three countries, which contribute and help you to achieve larger budget. But, it is also a big problem of having to put three producers together, agree on the film, agree on the delivery day and agree on the contents. So, it is really energy consuming, to enter to the co-productions. Because then, you extend the numbers of people in the team, who can say yes or no to the things. The good aspects are of being involved in co-productions is bringing you money and bringing you more points when you do international applications for funds. It immediately shows that your film is aiming to the broader and international audience, because it is more than one territory.

(D) Which countries have the best financial opportunities?

(S) Nowadays, are Germany, France, UK if you can get a co-producer there and Scandinavian countries. All these countries have really strong system of institutional funding, like public funding, either film institutes or schtiftungs (scholarships) for example Medienboard or Institute for Cinema that is international and regional. And that can be an access to the local co-producer. The local co-producer from these countries can bring money from TV and from these institutions.

(D) If you go to the film market, you find a broadcaster, which is interested in your project. What happens next? He will send you the letter or interest?

(S) No, he will not. If you find a broadcaster, that is interested, then there starts a long work just to get this letter of interest, because broadcasters usually take care of slots, which are about three or six hours of television per day. Which mean, they probably will have on the table just for the week that you met them, 10-15 films that they taking care of. And for them, of course it is very important the next film the produce. For the producer is is THE FILM, for the broadcaster it is a one film film from five teen, that they are producing this week. So, it is good, it is big, but it is never as big as from the producer. The urgency that the producer has, that this letter can push everything forward is never even comparable with the way as the broadcaster sees the film, as one of many that they will produce, because there everyone will forget about it. And especially with public TV, they produce a lot of content and they do not



really care so much about the life of the film it as been on the TV. Generally, even to get the letter of interest, it is a lot of work, with the letter of interest, you can apply to some national funding, if there is an access. And this funding can open doors to development, to production or then go back to the same broadcaster and saying that there are these extra money, so he/she will be motivated to give you more money. And then from that, they want to see the trailer, they want to read a treatment or kind of a script, they probably will ask for modifications. They can say - now you are on the stage of committing and then they will send you, because you insist the letter of commitment, the paper that usually states already how much money the broadcaster is eager to put to the film, but also when you supposed to deliver and that is the beginning to get the contract with the broadcaster, which you usually will get, when the film probably will be already finished, so couple of years later.

(D) So, the money comes afterwards?

(S) That depends. It is always up on the negotiation, depending on the broadcasters, on the deal. Usually you have to shoot right now. There is a way after the letter of commitment to negotiate, to draft the contact, to sign the contract earlier, so you can get some money in advance. Again, it really depends on the broadcaster, on the film, but there are films, gotten 45% of the deal with the broadcasters before shooting. But you need to see how much time you have to lobby that the legal department send the contract and then, there is the chapter "Payment methods" and there is a line, which can be changed with the agreement of the legal department. So, if you need the money in advance, you can get it.

(D) What are alternative financial opportunities apart from the funds and broadcasters?

(S) Honestly, apart from the broadcasters and funds, there is very little left.

(D) Like crowd funding?

(S) Yes, but crowd funding is not the way to finance the film, it is a way to complete financing, which is very different thing. To build a strong budget for a film, even if

there are no big money in the end, come from institutions, either regional or national. Some international even cover documentaries, independently on nationality, but usually it is theme-based. And broadcasters - these a two are main sources of financing. Then, filmmakers or production companies can organize these crowd funding campaigns, which actually try to target existing communities of users mainly on the web to ask them contribute to the film, usually in exchange of little reward, or name in the credits or something like this. And sometimes, if you already know, because the film you organized is touching the large community, then it can be successful in times, it is a lot of work. It can bring some money, but you cannot consider that as a source of financing. It is just an extra tool to complete the financing or to do extra actions or to pay for the DVDs, or bills for the film. I would not consider that as a main resource of financing.

(D) As I have heard you had some experience with crowd funding before.

(S) I coordinated and consulted two crowd funding campaigns, which actually were very successful. And they were successful because the community, which was eager to donate was very involved into the projects. So, from the very beginning, they were very engaged with the film, because some of the protagonists were from these communities. They were large amount of fans, and they have been cultivated by the filmmaker for a long time, following the every step filmmaker took to make the film. So, when these communities were finally got by the filmmaker, saying "Hey, now I need you to donate for the next 30 days", these communities were almost kinda expecting. I did one that was about vinyl collectors, and the film maker has been not only the vinyl collector himself, but he has been gotten the support and filming in these different shops and collectors environment for two or three years. So everybody knew him, and everybody knew the film and saw him shooting. So, when he sent the emails, saying in couple months, we are going to launch this campaign, he was talking to fan-clubs and groups and used vinyl stores all over the world, huge ones. And many of these owners of stores were in the film as interviewees, or musicians. So, when it was time, really big community moved to donate. Still it was a lot of work, a lot of emailing, but they were quite successful.

(D) But it were only personal e-mails.

(S) Yes, it were only personal contacts of the director. People trust the artist as a concept, they have seen him or her working, they have met, they have seen how passionate he is about the work. Any of the film makers haven't been able to connect with those people for a long time, then he says I need a little bit of your support, they will react, but only to the personal e-mails, personal engagement. They want to be called by name - "Hey George, can you help, check my website". Big press-releases or chain e-mails, Facebook announcements, they represent 5% of all the donors of these campaigns. Why between 60-70% is presented by the people, who have been contacted personally.

(D) There are different time frames on the Kickstarter, in your opinion what is the best one for the campaign?

(S) I think, because of the large amount of work people do, the best thing for the campaign, would be 25-30 days will be a good time. The problem is that the work you need to do before, to inform these communities that there is going to be a campaign, then they need to do like a "word of mouth", "tell the friend" work to get everybody involved. What haven't work in our campaign, that we didn't have the engagement with any of the protagonists of the film, with any communities. We didn't develop any kind of personal relationship with these people, so nobody moved a finger, when it was 200 up.

(D) I want to ask you about outreach, because you have done the outreach campaigns for sure. If you have a film for example with political issue, because I know you have done one. How did you engage the audience?

(S) You engage the audience because you use already what is happening. It is really difficult to engage the audience on the issue, which is not longer on the map. So, from the marketing point of view, if you are ready to make a film about something, nobody talks about, then you should first try to put the topic on the map, in some way. Then show a film in a way, so which is a very difficult task to do, because small documentary production companies. You know how many film are about the media products out there, actually to create attention on the topic of the film, in the news-

papers or TV. And then, pull out your documentary is really difficult thing to do, but there are some really good marketing strategies, that did that before, in Denmark for example. First, creating a case, let's say they engaged the group of veterans from war to protest in front of the parliament, because there was a need of the parliament to legalize some aspects from post-traumatic disorders for veterans, which are back from the war. When the film was released, couple of weeks later, so because of this veterans protest, the discussion on post-traumatic disorder on was veterans was in newspapers and actually the film was about that. It was a brilliant way to do, but again, it is because they had really strong good connections with the communities, which were the part of the film. Veterans, that suffered from post-traumatic disorder. There are ways, in the case with my film about politics, it was during the election period and then election debates, so the attention on Italian politics was extremely high. It was extremely high for 4 years, because of the tragic choice of Italian citizens to elect Berlusconi. So, it was a hot topic and when it is a hot topic, of course it is easier if you have right protagonist to create an interest. In case of my film, it portrayed very well known politicians in Italy: gay, catholic, communist, so the interest was quite immediate in the moment, that you could get to follow him behind the scenes for a long period of time.

(D) What you would recommend to the production companies, that do not have a big budget, if you want to raise the topic and engage the audience, but you do not have a budget for this.

(S) I think the best tools to promote and to create interest to your film are the protagonists and the community, which is around them. It is all in the relationship that you have built with them and with the people around them to start thinking "Hey, the film is coming out it two weeks, lets do something together to promote it". The other way is to focus on the topic, if you are making a film about deforestation, then you know local, organizations, which are fighting in the area, where the film is taking place. It is very very difficult to engage communities, in Berlin, while there is something happening in Africa, unless you find some common grounds. And then, if the film about deforestation in Africa, and here there is a community, fighting with it in the city, it is already difficult. You can say "Look, there is another city, suffering from this problem, who don't we show the film together and then we discuss about your

problem in this city". So this is always about what the topic is connected in your own place and try in a way align the communities, which are already there, because then you already have the audience there, that is interested, care about the topic and how other people see it. So, there is already a natural speaker for it.

(D) Because the documentaries are not often in the cinema theaters, do you think there is a way to engage people to go the theater or it is possible only with screenings and discussions.

(S) To have a documentary in the cinema like a normal film, is extremely hard and it can work only for a big productions, that have won the Oscar or have been in the news, because they were in Cannes, achieved certain amount of fame within the printed press. I don't think in places like Berlin or other big cities, where they show art-house films, the offer is so wide, so just put the film to the cinema is not going to do anything. The best way is to organize specific screenings, with the help of communities or organizations, which are in the some way connected to the topic and if they are really engaged, they will help to bring the people to see the film and this will generate a bit "the word of mouth" situation, as a domino-effect. If you create this kind of expectation, then you can bring film back to the cinema and then see if it works another time and so on. But this should be very community-based, meaning in this case I am talking not about social media communities, but real people communities as villages, towns, parts of towns, where you show it together with community groups. And this is also a lot of work. And it is always hard to see how much if this work is going to be paid back by tickets. If the film is good, the chance to create larger domino effect, after you have done the small tour of the film, it's noticed and other communities will be interested in that as well. And then you create another live opportunity for the film. But for documentary film it is very hard and it has to be done only if the film has the attention from the very beginning for the cinema. Otherwise, it will be the same film that people could watch on TV and they will not understand, why they could not watch it sitting on the sofa.

(D) I wanted to ask you about the Creative Europe. Can you compare them?

(S) They are almost the same, new has a little bit smaller budget, but it is not noticeable. The budget was a little bit larger, but it is very good that it is extended. They

have changed as well the requirements for some applications, and they reduced funds for development. In MEDIA you could assess more money for the single project development. If you had specific request for money, you could apply for up to 60 000 or 80 000. Now you can apply only to 25000 max, independently to the single project or to the Slate, which is the cluster of projects. Other big change, the point system, now Eastern European countries are more appreciated, to sponsor and push for democratic media system, penalized a lot producers from other Europe, because we almost get 10 points in the system less, if we apply as German, Italian, Scandinavian in comparison if the project applies from Czech Republic or Bulgaria.

(D) But that can be compensated if you do a co-production with them.

(S) It is not really, the project needs to have a co-producer in one of these countries, means in some way the project is about those countries. It limits projects that you can have. For fiction it is different, because in fiction it is not like this, because in Eastern European countries production houses are cheaper, you can use the resources from there.

(D) How big are chances for unknown film makers to be funded by Creative Europe?

(S) The requirements for Creative Europe, you need to have one film broadcasted on TV in the past five years. These funds target to the small, medium and large production companies, not beginners. The only way for beginners is to find a production company, picks the project and thinks it's worth to bring it to EU and make an application. Creative Europe is aimed to develop companies, not the single artists.

(D) What are the options for beginners?

(S) There are some funds for the beginning filmmakers, on the national level. Every country has its own national fund for cinema, the arts and usually there is one which dedicated to beginners. So, I think, where the opportunities are more - they are more structural, they tend to develop the industry and not the single beginners. There are many schools in Europe, on the last year they give you some fund or they can access a specific fund to finance final project and this is a way to get track in order to apply for a bigger grant. The good way is subscribe to the development programs as Documentary Campus, where they develop films. Sometimes they are open for the films

without producer and they help you to develop the film, find a producer and then to find the money. It is intelligent way, it puts the film maker in the community of professionals.

(D) Would you recommend for beginners to go to IDFA or Tesseloniki?

(S) The only way to get known there is to be the part of the community that they want to enter, so IDFA is one the biggest specialized markets and it is very expensive to access there. But Docs Barcelona, Docs Tesseloniki, Co-pro Tel Aviv, screenings in Palermo, Doc Leipzig - are smaller events and access is open to audience. And maybe within listening to the projects, that are pitched, also can compare with their ideas, if there are producers that are interested in that. The important step is to meet producers and tell that you have a project. The good things is to go to smaller events, meet people and ask questions, see what are opportunities. Then it is possible to go the bigger markets, as IDFA, Sheffield, Hot Docs, but those are much more exclusive.

14.09.2015

(D) Could you please share you opinion on the results of the campaign?

(S) The campaign did not go well. It was lack of personal contacts, lack of a specific community also to get engaged. For these campaigns you need a large network like a large NGO or a large activist group to not only participate but spread the news and ask more people to join and we did not get that.

The communities that were supposed to "help" send one or two generic emails and that was it. Since the beginning we were not able to engage actively a large group of activists that felt that this was also "their" project.

This is in part due tot he fact that the directors themselves are not activists or militant people, and are not part of some of these NGOS but also that from the beginning the communities were not involve din the making of the film. For example: Amnesty was not really "used" to localize protagonists or stories, was involved after, so they did not feel it was " their film". Yes, they " supported" but not as much as we hoped, and unfortunately social media is not enough. We did not have enough media exposure also.

In addition we started the campaign when the film was finished to ask to bring it in tour. Usually people like to give to “finish a film” . It was an experiment and it did not work.

## **APPENDIX 2 – Interview with Nils Bökamp**

(D)I have read some information and data about German film market development and I would like to ask you, how do you see the tendency in the documentary film production? Does the market grow? How would you imagine it in the next few years?

(N)The market has changed mainly in the last 5 - 10 years where a lot of documentaries for cinema have been successful. Micheal Moore was a big influencer on that. The most successful ones are social and political issues. People care for a certain topic and that is why they go and watch the films.

That is why the new trend of impact producing started in the US and is coming to Europe right now. Also the idea to come up with Supermarket last year as we think every doc needs an impact strategy to find its viewers but also to bring change and matter.

(D) Do you think that Germany (as a government) gives a lot of opportunities for the documentary film production? I have read a lot about FFA and Medien board and the possibilities that they give to the production companies, but I would like to know your opinion on this question.

(N) There are good opportunities but honestly film making is a hard business and you will not become rich if you do documentaries. They are still a niche and competition is hard. You have to have luck but also work very hard and believe in what you are doing. Private life is difficult with this. You have to make your private life to your professional one.

(D) What are the main struggles in getting financed from Germany?



(N) If you have found one partner than the other will follow. You have to find your market for the „product“ which can be difficult. I think key is knowledge of the market you are working for and the people working there. You need to find „your“ partner that trust you and that support you if needed.

(D) Could you please tell about your experience visiting documentary film festivals and pitching your project there?

(N) It is mainly there to be visible and to make contacts and to meet the old ones. It is a bit like family meetings where you see what the others are doing and you tell them what you are working on right now. It is very much needed to do that as it is peoples business and you need to have a network of people that you can rely on and that are thinking as you are ...

(D) Do you find Berlin a suitable part of Germany for the film production? (and financing) Where do you think, is the best place to make films in Germany? I know that the Supermarket was placed in Dusseldorf partially because of financing opportunities of region.

(N) Berlin is great for creatives and talent. It is also a very nice place to live. Money is rare and the competition is very high. It is easier going to Düsseldorf or Munich. The scene is much smaller and they also have more money to spend. We mostly finance our projects with partners that are NOT from Berlin.

Düsseldorf was an idea because i lived there before and they know me there and have always been very supportive for new talent - something i never experienced here also i was here at film school.

(D) What do you think is easier to produce in Germany - fiction or documentaries, as you have made both?

(N) It is the same more or less. The indie scene for fiction is very hard as well. There are some big productions but you can not compare their reality with ours. The only thing - it is a complete different network of people so it is difficult to switch or doing

both. I am lucky as i have good friends in fiction but honestly i know little people in financing. I would always work with befriended producers that are into fiction.

(D) If I am a young film producer in Berlin (dreams might come true) and I gave an idea for the documentary film, how I can finance it? As I know, there are governmental film funds as Medienboard, MEDIA Europe and FFA, to which of them is better to apply? I assume it should differ from the project to project, so which of them will be more willingly funded by FFA and Medien Board, and which of them will be easier accepted by Media Europe?

(N) it is really difficult. You need a film school to start with or a company or network that is helping you to get to know the right people that is key.

If you are lucky and very clever you can produce a film with nearly no money to get attention and start from there - some people i know have done it like this.

There is no rule. I think key is to know what you want and to find the people that are doing this professional. If you are authentic and willing to work very hard you will make it!

(D) Also, if I have an idea for the documentary film, which film festivals will you recommend?

(N) You have to differentiate between markets and festivals. Brit Doc is more a program for professionals to develop. Something i would always recommend. You get to learn new people and expand your network. People like to share at these programs and everyone is in the same situation.

Festivals - IDFA and Leipzig are the best for docs for the german market. Sundance and Hot docs is important for the US market. Berlinale and Cannes are the most prestigious.

I was lucky starting at Berlinale that is the reason we could start the company.

I as a part of the production company bring it to the film festival. What kind of opportunities do I have there? So, for example it will be screened there, is there any other option that I can make any kind of profit from being there? (I guess it's the meeting with distributors/TV sales).

(N) People, People, People ... that is it. New Opportunities. You always have your new film in the bag and start speaking about it and finance it.

(D) Does the award on the film festival increase your chances to get more funding for the next projects?

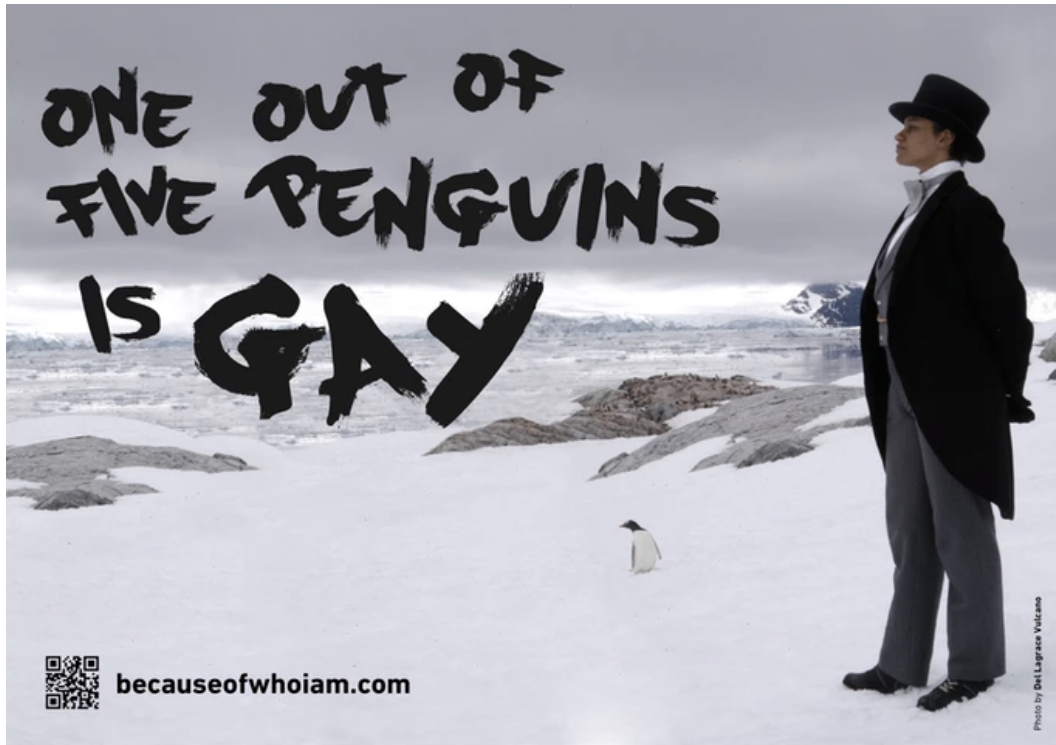
(N) Absolutely. The more you are seen the better it is to get money. People need to want work with you that is essential.

(D) What do you think about the success of German documentary films in cinema? How do you find it popular in Germany? How to attract audience to watch documentary more frequently?

(N) There is no way to compare it with fiction and it will always be a niche of special interest but there are a lot of ways to get to the people that want to see your film. You need to think of that from the first minute on. Who is your audience? Why am I making that? For whom? What is my target - money or spreading the word for an issue?

### APPENDIX 3 – Visual materials on the campaign

Photo: Del Lagrace Volcano



Design: Christian Kriegsheim



Photo: Benjamin Reich

