

***The Durban Micro-Film Industry: a value chain of the lower budget
film services used in Knife Edge (Sithebe, 2012)***

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ABSTRACT

A new global economy has emerged in the last two decades on a worldwide scale and it is global because the core activities of production, consumption and circulation, as well as their components (capital, labor, raw materials, management, information, technology, markets) are organized on a global scale, either directly or through a network of linkages between economic agents (Castells, 1996:66). This paper offers an overview of production, consumption and circulation, as well as the components involved in developing low budget film projects. Goldsmith and O'Regan's (2005) study provides the research with the theoretical background of the film services approach. Additionally, Goldsmith, Ward and O'Regan's (2010) study is subjected in the research in order to gain an understanding of the term "film friendliness" and to be able to map out this concept in the Durban film industry. The paper uses the movie *Knife Edge* (Sithebe, 2012) as case study to examine the friendliness of this creative industry for micro filmmakers. Therefore, the research collected data from an in-depth semi structured interview with a low budget filmmaker. From the interview, the research is also able to observe the participation of low budget filmmakers in, and their contribution towards, skills and economic development.

Key Terms: Value Chain, Film Services, Low Budget Film, Micro Filmmakers, Durban Film Industry, Creative Industries

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INTRODUCTION

Is Durban a film-friendly city? This research study aims to answer the very same question. The study is located in Durban, KwaZulu- Natal. “Titled ‘Durban as a Cinema City’, and conducted in liaison with the Durban Film Office (DFO), the initiative is part of a larger research track, “Media Cities South Africa”, an initiative to map media environments in Durban, Cape Town and Johannesburg” (Mboti 2011,1)¹. The larger research “aims to develop systematic analyses of trends and drivers of change and competitive-ness in South African ‘media cities’” (Tomaselli 2011: 1)². In 2011 students from the Centre for Communication, Media & Society (CCMS), in the University of KwaZulu-Natal conducted a Media Cities Project 2011 research that assessed Durban’s ‘film friendliness’. My study draws on their research studies, namely, Lynette Naidoo’s (2011) *A Network Analysis of the Durban Film Industry Value Chain: Attack of the Indian Werewolf*. These research studies are used as a backdrop of which my research extends from in 2012. Naidoo (2011) uses a useful model which traces the weaknesses and strengths of film services. Naidoo’s model rates the following grades on each sector of the film industry, using *Attack of an Indian Werewolf* (2010) as a case study: very strong, strong, weak or very weak.³ This model is important because my research aims to adopt it and also conduct a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis of the film services rendered in *Knife Edge* (Sithebe, 2012).

An important aspect of this project is comparing the various studies conducted in order to evaluate the friendliness of the Durban film industry. This may also lead “to the development of film-friendly policies and processes based on an understanding of film friendliness as a deliberate strategy, rather than simply a quality conferred by previous experience” (Goldsmith, Ward and O’Regan, 2010:154). Interestingly, due to the friendliness of a film environment, the industry may also be termed as a local Hollywood.

“Cinema...is an excellent means to an understanding of globalization for a number of

¹ Dr. Nyasha Mboti’s article is published in *SUBtext*, the quarterly CCMS magazine to which all UKZN students are invited to contribute. See ‘SUBtext Media Cities’ 2011

<http://ccms.ukzn.ac.za/images/Subtext/subtext%20media%20cities%202011.pdf>

² Dr. Keyan G Tomaselli delivered UNISA SACOMM Film Interest Group Public lecture titled *Media Cities South Africa: Network and Value Chain Analysis* on the 16 November 2011. See

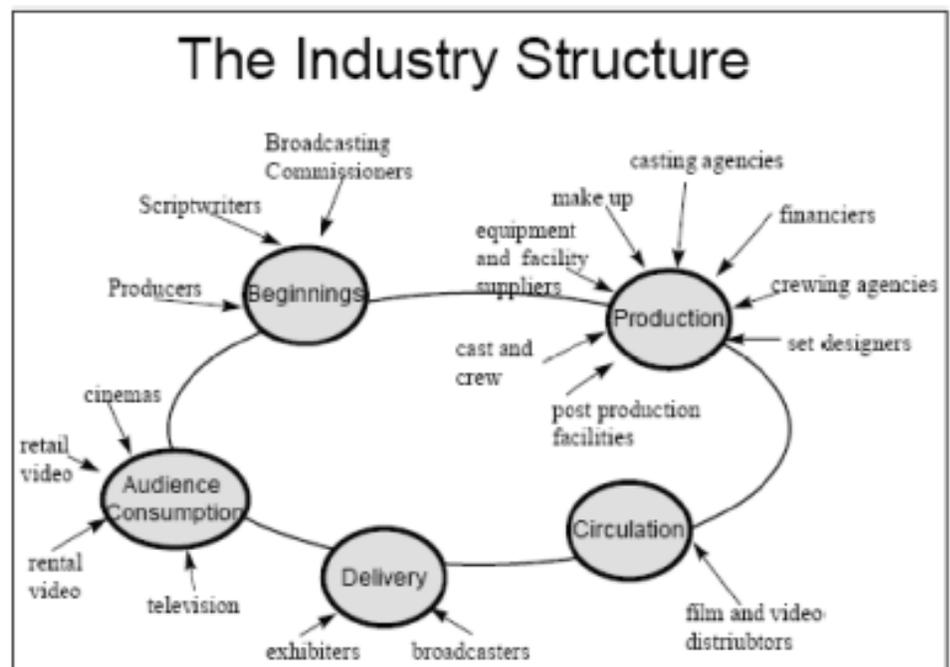
http://ccms.ukzn.ac.za/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1080&Itemid=28

³ Ibid

reasons” (Shiel, 2001: 10). This is evident firstly in the mobility of media productions in filming movies across international borders. Secondly, even though a film may be shot in a particular location, cinema acts as the projection of it to other parts of the world. Although the focus of the study is located in Durban as a film city, the study uses global theoretical frameworks such as the value chain model and the film services approach. The value chain model and the film services approach are explored in detail in the theoretical framework section of this study. The value chain model may act as a web illustration of the film services used, and thereby connected, in the film making process. Philani Sithebe’s latest movie *Knife Edge* (2012) is the subject in this study in order to examine the film services used in it. The examination of the film services used in Sithebe’s film will give an indication of the friendliness of the Durban film industry for micro filmmakers like him.

The overall focus of the study is to analyze these services in a particular film environment for local filmmakers, for example the Durban Film Industry from an economic development perspective. The film is a highly capitalized and labor-intensive product (Fitzmaurice, 2001: 19-20). Therefore it is not surprising that cinemas are situated in the cities if one acknowledges the city as a hub of industrialization and capitalism. Economic sustainability through skills development and job creation is as important locally as it is nationally. It is upon this realization that the study also wishes to understand how the micro filmmakers participate and contribute in economic development as a prerequisite for incentive support. Figure 1 is an example of the value chain model as a web illustration of the film services used, and thereby connected, in the making of a film.

Figure 1: Industry Analysis through Value Chain Approach (Cuff 2009:2b)



The research questions that will be dealt with are:

- What are the startup resources and skills needed by a filmmaker in bringing together the film services in the Durban film industry?
Sub question: As a result which film services are afforded in the making and the exhibition of the movie *Knife Edge* (Sithebe, 2012)?
- What is the role of the Durban Film Office, IDC/ Dept. Trade and Industry (DTI) and Dept. of Arts and Culture in micro (low budget) films?
Sub question: Furthermore, in understanding this relationship, how do micro filmmakers comply with economic development (i.e. job creation & skills development) as a prerequisite for capital investment?
- What value is added by each film service in the movie *Knife Edge* (Sithebe, 2012)?
Sub question: How does each film service add and/or limit value to the overall success of the *Knife Edge* (Sithebe, 2012)?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Major policy innovations for supporting creative industries have been undertaken at provincial and local level as part of wider urban economic development initiatives (Rogerson, 2006: 161-162). The realization of this potential for economic development in creative industries is the concern of this study. The study specifically looks at the film industry in the urban eThekweni Municipality, in Durban. This literature review will attempt to create a link between the film industry and the urban city with the concept of the ‘local labour market’.

The term “low budget” movie is self-explanatory. However, the study also denotes the title given to such films as a characteristic of their functioning and perhaps efficiency. Therefore, the first enquiry the review interrogates is how much is a general budget of a low budget film? Firstly, “in South Africa where production costs are not so high as in Europe and America even a low budget film costs more than R100 000 to make” (Tomaselli, 1979: 8). This amount was estimated in the 1970s but it is still the amount allocated to low budget films in the year 2012 even though they cost more (Sithebe, 2012). Secondly, the study shares the view that “although the mechanisms underlying the state subsidy system have been frequently reviewed since its inception in 1956, the validity of the system will continue to be questioned in its present form” (Tomaselli, 1979:13). State subsidies and other incentives may be seen as stimulators of

economic development in local creative industries, for example by supporting vulnerable emerging filmmakers in a film industry. However how do filmmakers in return also contribute to the economic development of local creative industries in order to main sustainability? Thus, they are also subject to inspection in this study, assessing how they function with their budgets, in an effort to sustain skills and economic development.

Furthermore, the study reviews the relationship between the city and its application of skills and economic development initiatives. “Labour [and capital investment] is increasingly ‘defensively localized’ to compete with other localities, often in the same country” (Coe, 2001: 82). The Durban film industry is not the only film industry in South Africa. Moreover, it competes with the other major film industries in media cities such as Cape Town and Johannesburg. In this sense filmmakers compete for investment “often within the same national system” (Coe, 2001: 82). In using Vancouver as an example, in cities which, in infrastructural terms, grow rapidly a whole series of service facilities and companies emerge that support location shooting (and film production more generally) (Coe, 2001: 84). This means that investment in the film industry also develops the city in which it functions and investment in the city can also develop the film industry of which it houses.

An empirical illustration of this is depicted in the City of Johannesburg’s creative industries consolidated sector support initiative which was announced by the Economic Development Unit in 2005 (City of Johannesburg, 2005a, in Rogerson, 2006: 160). The initiative goal is to support the workers and emerging companies in the creative industry, “where start-up filmmakers are provided with office space, office infrastructure and specialised equipment at subsidised rentals for approximately 18–24 months” (City of Johannesburg, 2005a, in Rogerson, 2006: 160). Although, investment in the production of a feature film is a highly risky venture (Tomaselli, 1979:9) the study observes that this form of incubation hub is also found in the eThekweni Municipality through an initiative supported by the Durban Film Office (DFO) and Smart Exchange Information and Communications Technologies hub (Sithebe, 2012). This initiative is explored in the findings section of this paper. Therefore, even though micro films are titled “low budget” films, and inherently function on a “low budget”, investment initiatives rendered by government and partnering organisations can also support filmmakers and their emerging companies with resources other than money.

“Economies throughout the world have become globally interdependent, introducing a new form of relationship between economy, state, and society, in a system of variable geometry” (Castells, 1996:1). The study observes that “where Television had the further effect of causing a reduction in the number of feature films made since the distributors were unable to guarantee the favourable distribution which they were able to offer during pre-television days” (Tomaselli, 1979: 22), channels such as MNET’S Mzantsi Magic call for script writers and filmmakers to make movies as a motive for corporate and social responsibility and a strategy to obtain content. This interdependence between the television industry and the film industry is as a result of a technological revolution which calls for continued reshaping of the creative industry.

Importantly, the city of Durban also hosts the Durban International Film Festival (DIFF). “The Durban International Film Festival is the largest film festival in Southern Africa attracting a growing audience” (Cuff, 2009: 14b). On the contrary, a different view perceives that “the business of the festival is primarily that of spectacularizing those cities, identifying them as prestigious cultural centers, promoting them as glamorous tourist destinations, flagging them as potential sites for investment and development, and only secondarily of encouraging local or national film production” (Fitzmaurice, 2001:24). As a result the review critically questions if “the social importance of having a film industry might induce the state to provide the necessary capital to establish and develop an indigenous film industry (Tomaselli, 1979: 12). Although, this study does not disregard the fact that DIFF is an essential platform which attracts an international appeal which for local filmmakers is a market to tap into.

In conclusion the literature reviewed in this paper shows the role of investment in creative industries such as the film industry. Investment in low budget films can be seen as part of wider urban economic development initiative. As a result, investment in creative industries is also motivated by a need to build a local labour market within the industry, one that can sustain itself. Even in the face of a technological revolution, interdependence between the television industry and the film industry reshapes the creative industry to create a sustainable connection. The study interrogates the practicality of investment in the film industry and the interdependence between creative industries so that it does not remain ignorant to their challenges. The review also acknowledges the contribution of local films to tourism, an perhaps economic development in that sense, however it also interrogates what contribution it is making skills development.

THEORETICAL/CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework in my study examines the film services used, and which add value, in the making of the film *Knife Edge* (Sithebe, 2012). Thus the model of the value chain approach is subjected in this study. A film industry' services range from scriptwriting, to casting agencies and to audience consumption in cinemas or DVD retail stores. Each service adds value to the following sectors of a film: Development, Production, Facilities, Distribution, and Exhibition (Tomaselli, 2011). Thus, the overall focus of the study is to analyze these services in a particular film environment for local filmmakers, for example the Durban Film Industry.

Film Service Approach

In the film service approach, emphasis is placed not on the film product but on the variety of intermediate inputs, organizational arrangements, and expertise associated with the processes involved in developing film projects (Goldsmith and O'Regan, 2005: 55). This approach examines the functioning of each film service in a local film in order to evaluate, not only the positive value added by it, but also the challenges which filmmakers encounter in acquiring the services. Furthermore, "film service networks have provided useful recognition of the creativity and innovation of diverse production inputs that would otherwise go without acknowledgement were the focus to be on the individual production and consequently on its content, director, writer, producer and actors" (Goldsmith, and O'Regan, 2005: 56). As a result, the review wishes to focus on the sustainability, creativity and skills development potential of each input into production.

Film Friendliness and the DFO

Being film friendly has become a condition places around the world assert or aspire to as they seek to stake a claim for a piece of the lucrative business of migrating media production (Goldsmith, Ward and O'Regan, 2010: 155). Thus, the international mobility of media productions also plays a critical role in the development of the film industry in the global world. An important aspect of this mobility is also witnessed in the establishment of the Durban Film Office in South Africa, also known as the DFO.

The Durban Film Office's approach to this mandate has been to create a One-Stop-Shop for the industry, and production companies are encouraged to always contact the Durban Film Office. However, simply having this mandate and the One-Stop-Shop does not mean that the Film Office has been capacitated sufficiently (Cuff, 2009:2a)

“As the key organization in coordinating and managing a local film-friendly strategy, film commissions aspire to be single points of entry, or one-stop shops for incoming productions” (Goldsmith, Ward and O’Regan, 2010: 158). As important as this role is in the economic development of the industry and its location, the DFO report also acknowledges the challenges existing in the local industry. The most significant is the funding challenge. “The Durban Film Office (and the future KZN Film Commission) are both placed under tremendous pressure due to requests for funding from the emerging and aspirant film sector” (Cuff, 2009:10a). The funding challenge is significant in the review because it impacts on job creation and skills development. Local film industries, as are industrial cities, are important hubs of skills development and job creation. “Many economic impact studies conducted around the world that highlight the ways film production can stimulate employment and bring high-paying (if often short-term) jobs...have helped give political and economic weight to the work of film commissions and to the film-friendly push for coordinated responses to production” (Goldsmith, Ward and O’Regan, 2010: 159).

As a result, in a semi structured interview with Tony Monti, the DFO CEO, the concept of providing comprehensive reports on economic activity of Durban local productions to the Department of Trade and Industry surfaced. “Film commissions are now expected to provide comprehensive reports on economic activity arising from inbound production, and to quantify the impacts in terms of local jobs created, expenditure on local services, and other legacies of production (Goldsmith and O’Regan:159). The Foreign Film and Television Production is an incentive provided by the South African government under the auspices of the Department of Trade and Industry (hereafter referred to as the DTI).⁴ Importantly, the objective of the incentive is to encourage and attract large-budget films and television productions that will contribute

⁴ See http://www.dti.gov.za/financial_assistance/financial_incentive.jsp?id=7&subthemeid=26

towards South African’s economic development and international profile, and increase.⁵ However access to this incentive is an investigation the study also wishes to explore.

In conclusion, this study includes to the roles of the DFO, DTI and Department of Arts and Culture (DAC) as part of film services in the development of the local Durban film industry. As it is earlier mentioned, the film service approach examines the film not as a product but as an organizational arrangement of inputs. Therefore, their roles will be reviewed against the framework of their documented mandates to analyze the support and value they may add in the development and exhibition of local films. Due to the fact that this research study falls under a larger project titled “Durban as a Cinema City”, the evaluation and findings of the value added by the film services may indicate the film friendliness of the Durban film industry in South Africa.

METHODOLOGY

The case study research design constructs cases from a single unit while remaining attentive to inferences that span similar units outside the formal scope of investigation (Gerring 2004:353). As a result, although this research study uses a single low budget film as a case study, it will map the network and value chain analysis of *Knife Edge* (2012) to give an indication of the film-friendliness of the Durban film industry towards micro filmmakers. The case study design is selected in order to obtain the evidence needed to answer the research questions.

Furthermore, the research study pairs each research question to its own appropriate data collection method, its source of data, the rationale of each question and its data analysis method. The research study finds this method of collection of data constructive and essential in ensuring that the research objectives are achieved.

Research Data Collection Methods

Figure 2: The research study uses the following structure of methods to collect data⁶

Question	Data Collection	Data Source	Purpose/Rationale	Data analysis
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⁵ Ibid

⁶ Linking research questions to data collection techniques (see Maree and Van der Westhuizen 2009:26-27; Thomas and Hodges 2010:27-35.)

Question one	Semis structured and in depth interviews	Philani Sithebe, Durban based, script writer, director, and producer, Durban Motion Pictures.	To find out which services were used in the making of the movie <i>Knife Edge</i> (Sithebe, 2012) and the quality of these services for a low budget film	Drawing up an illustration of the film services used in the film <i>Knife Edge</i> (2012)
Question two	Informal interview and Semi structured interviews Field work through observation (taking field notes) Document and content analysis	Tony Monti, the CEO of the Durban Film Office (DFO) eThekweni Filmmakers Association (EFA) of the low-budget/emerging filmmaking scene in Durban DFO Reports, IDC/ Dept. Trade and Industry (DTI) Reports, Dept. Arts and Culture (DAC)	To gain a general understanding of the environment of the film industry in Durban. To find out how Durban filmmakers qualify for support services facilitated by the DFO. To meet filmmakers, and be informed about the formal setting up the EFA structure which represents the filmmakers in Durban. To analyze the mandate of the DFO, DTI etc. in assisting the micro filmmakers in Durban	Contemplation and interpretation of field observations and interviews as factors influencing the Durban film industry Qualitative analysis and interpretation of textual material
Question three	Semi structured interviews	Philani Sithebe, Durban based, script writer, director, and producer, Durban Motion Pictures.	To map out the value chain of each service used in <i>Knife Edge</i> (2012)	Drawing up an analysis of the value added by each film service used in <i>Knife Edge</i> (2012)

FINDINGS: *KNIFE EDGE (2012)*

DEVELOPMENT PHASE

Philani Sithebe starts the interview by explaining that these movies that they, with his wife Bonnie Sithebe, do are actually ultra-low budget films because they do almost everything by themselves. They are both the producers and own the company Durban Motion Pictures (hereafter referred to as the DMP), a company that was established in 2006. “Starting with the script; I’m a script writer. I find the ideas to shoot a low budget film. I also have to make sure that I get few locations and actors but with the main focus on the story line because the story line has to make sense” (Sithebe, 2012). This planning phase involves screenwriting, film financing, finding the location, planning and scheduling the shoots, budgeting and employing casting and crewing agents (Cuff, 2009b: 2). However, financing the film is the first crucial step in the phase before acquiring the location, employing casting and crewing agents. Consequently, DMP had to pitch their story to MNET, Mzantsi Magic, in order to obtain funding. “They (MNET) commissioned the movie for R100 000” (Sithebe, 2012).

A film services approach encourages the identification of identifiably different market segments and roles in order to focus attention where gaps exist (Goldsmith and O’Regan, 2005:55). This notion is identified by Sithebe as significant in his filmmaking process. Sithebe explains; “basically we do everything not that id focus on one thing, for example on location only. Wherever there is a gap I will just fill it because we are aware that there is no money” to afford some services (Sithebe, 2012).

Furthermore, being money conscience echoes throughout the interview with Sithebe. Film services approaches helps local actors to identify key strengths and weaknesses in their capabilities to pitch for and supply plug-in film services (Goldsmith and O’Regan, 2005:55). It appears that the R100 000 incentive allocated to DMP can pose both as a strength and as a weakness in the production phases of a low budget film. In each phase Sithebe links the incentive to the application and efficiency of each film service. These links will be explored and depicted in the production phase. However, at this stage what strikes one as an observer of the Durban film industry is the observation that the support local filmmakers are awarded, using Sithebe as an example, and the contribution they add to skills development in Durban is not up to par. As the study will attempt to show in the production phase Sithebe often attributes their inability to caste more people and thereby creating more jobs to the amount of the incentive.

“Correspondingly, the city is constructed as much by images and representations as by the built environment, demographic shifts, land speculation, and patterns of capital flight and investment” (Fitzmaurice, 2001:20). The role of investment in building sustainable cities can also promote development of globally competitive creative businesses. This realization can be observed from the role of DFO and Smart Exchange⁷ in the eThekweni Municipality. According to Sithebe as a filmmaker you can have someone else invest in your movie, in addition to the R100 000 incentive that is provided by MNET, however, that person/ organization will not be credited. “But if you get services from Smart Exchange they (MNET) don’t have a problem if we credit them. We are part of what we call the incubation hub that is sponsored by DFO and Smart Exchange. So they offer us computers that have professional software for filmmakers to use”, Sithebe explains. Smart Exchange supports Sithebe with business and creative skills in the expectation that he will be a commercially competitive entrepreneur after the three year period of the contract ends. Therefore, it appears that the DFO and Smart Exchange both play critical roles in the development of creative businesses in the city of Durban.

PRODUCTION PHASE

“The next stage was the production itself. In our production we had a very small crew, like I am the director; Steve* is the DOP he does lights and the camera but sometimes we’d swop and Id handle the camera” (Sithebe, 2012). According to Sithebe, Steve only worked for three days because he is a professional director of photography (DOP), therefore expensive to hire, so when the budget was reviewed Sithebe took the decision to carry on by himself. “So I have experience in using the camera as well as the lights. So then I had to be the DOP, the camera man and the director”, Sithebe validates his reason. “Production is the actual action of filming, where the disparate parts are brought together and elements are manufactured” (Cuff, 2009b:2). These parts are disparate because they perform different roles in the filmmaking process, for example the DOP and the director perform different tasks on a shoot even though they both work together

⁷ Based in Durban, South Africa, SmartXchange is a not-for-profit Information and Communications Technologies hub established to promote and support the region’s vision to be the technology hub of Africa. SmartXchange runs a structured Entrepreneur Support Programme (ESP). See <http://www.smartxchange.co.za/>

* Names changed because the people were not available to participate in the research

towards “manufacturing” the movie. In this case one finds that the disparate parts, which the study also perceives as film services, often overlap where one person takes on the tasks of three or more crew agents.

Various related industries are dependent on the production sector to varying degrees. “These include supply industries (such as casting agencies, insurance companies and equipment suppliers) and support industries (such as training, transport and the hospitality industry)” (Cuff, 2009b:2). The study wishes to begin first with the supply industries. Sithebe explains that DMP has its own equipment, such as the lights and the camera although some of the equipment he acquired is from an associate in Johannesburg, such as the sound kit. One could assume that over the 10 years working in the film industry Sithebe has acquired an operational relationship with a network of individual persons who also have experience in the industry. When asked if these individuals whom he mentions by personal names worked for DMP or were outsourced by the company this was his response;

Well Cindy*, [incharge of the continuity, wardrobe and props] used to work for DMP soon as we finished the movie she disappeared; we don’t know what happened to her. She just went away, but I think she was not happy with her payment. When you have R100 000, it limits you when you have to pay for everyone including actors etc. Brian* was also part of DMP but on part-time basis. We requested him for that period and he is not a production manager per se that is Vivian’s strength but we said this is your job and this is what you are going to do. We didn’t only get professional people. Mandla Mkhize* was the sound man, but it’s a temporary based job. Mary* and Mdu*, who is attending at a college, were also part-time assistants. Within the company it’s only me, Bonnie and Vivian (Sithebe, 2012).⁸

Consequently, the ‘supply’ film services used in *Knife Edge* (Sithebe, 2012) were not necessarily obtained from supply industries, but from a network of people who have as much experience as some supply industries may have.

Secondly, with regards to casting actors, DMP recruits its actors from its training programme which is headed by Vivian Moodley, a veteran actor, writer and director

⁸ *Names changed because the people were not available to participate in the research

(<http://www.artsmart.co.za/drama/2560.html>). Moodley has a background in theatre and entertainment scenes such as *Generations*. In the DMP company he plays numerous roles which fall under both supply and support industries. “For example Vivian is a great cook, so he was cooking and catering for the crew, can you imagine you have to direct but in the mornings you have to cook as well? So we just kept it together. You have to review your budget, with catering as well”, Sithebe explains Moodley’s role as a director and caterer. In the production phase of a low budget movie it is apparent that the related industries that are dependent on this sector are employed by the use of individuals whom also overlap the distinctions between the two. Although Moodley offers a service found in the support industry by training the actors, the DFO and Smart Exchange are also the support industries which Sithebe uses in the making of his low budget movies.

Additionally, the study also perceives government organizations such as the Department of Trade and Industry and the Depart of Arts and Culture as support industries considering the skills and/or monetary services they may contribute in the film industry. However the study observes that their mandates can be contradicted. According to the DTI “the South African government offers a package of incentives to promote its film production industry. The incentives consist of the *Foreign Film and Television Production* incentive to attract foreign-based film productions to shoot on location in South Africa and the *South African Film and Television Production and Co-production* incentive, which aims to assist local film producers in the production of local content⁹. This is an example of how the South African government supports the local film industry and contributes towards employment opportunities. However the study will not comment on its functioning since Sithebe states that he had not established a relationship with the department, because he had not applied for this incentive. On the other hand Sithebe recalls that his experience with the Department of Arts and Culture was unpleasant;

Unfortunately the people from Arts and Culture, I don’t know, I had a meeting with them last year, before uMzantsi came in. I sent an e-mail asking for funding for this movie and they told me to can contact them after March. In March I did and they had forgotten about it. But eventually I had a meeting with them after

⁹ See (http://www.dti.gov.za/financial_assistance/financial_incentive.jsp?id=7&subthemeid=26)

reminding them. When we had the meeting they seemed impressed with the work that we are doing as low budget filmmakers but that was it. (Sithebe,2012)

The Department of Arts and Culture never came back to Sithebe. Perhaps a number of reasons could be attributed to this matter. One of them could be that Sithebe did not qualify for their incentive. Interestingly, Tourism and Industry KZN saw an article about Bonnie Sithebe in the Daily News newspaper about being a female producer. Bonnie Sithebe was sponsored to attend the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry Frames conference and Animation convention conference, a Bollywood film conference that was held in India. Furthermore, DMP was also invited to a workshop on film funding and how to get funding from the IDC. “There were also filmmakers from Johannesburg that were there and we mingled with the top filmmakers and producers of movies that have won awards, like Yesterday (2004)”, Sithebe explains the newly established liaison with Tourism and Industry KZN. Also, the DFO organizes workshops for filmmakers such as Sithebe which someone from a company trains them lights or to be a gaffer, how to make financial plans and director treatments (Sithebe, 2012). “Importantly, the film services approach is concerned with the capabilities- skills, infrastructures, and networks- that underwrite the capacity of a film industry in a region to create and innovate” (Goldsmith and O’Regan, 2005:55). The contribution of support industries such as the DFO, Smart Exchange and Tourism and Industry KZN add value in the skills, infrastructures, and networks for Sithebe and his production company.

Lastly, the study finds that the incentive of a low budget film influences the potential to develop skills in the creative industry. How do low budget filmmakers contribute to the skills development in the creative industry? This question is broad so the study attempts to use the context of the Durban film industry as an empirical case study. Firstly, DMP’s initiative to offer training to local aspiring actors is one way the company attempts to develop skills in the creative industry. Sithebe explains that the main objective of the training is to start a casting agency so that filmmakers won’t go to Johannesburg to look for trained actors (Sithebe,2012). Secondly, when asked if he used film students as assistants in his film Sithebe emphasized the need to minimize his crew due to his budget. He states, “the advantage that we had, is that I have been exposed to the industry for some time, so most of the things I know. So in low budget movies you need to be careful about how you spend , so if you are a director you don’t have to have an assistant director, if you a camera person you don’t need a camera assistance” (Sithebe, 2012).

This is the lesson which Sithebe learns in making low budget movies. As a result fewer people are involved in the production sector. In retrospect the study finds that the Durban film industry is still a long way from developing this creative industry, especially in the production sector. That is why the study argues that the support local filmmakers are awarded, using Sithebe as an example, and the contribution they add to skills development in Durban is not up to par.

POSTPRODUCTION PHASE

Post-production refers to the editing process where the production is edited, and special effects and sound are added (Cuff, 2009b:2). Sithebe warns that whoever wants to do these kinds of (low budget) movies needs to be careful when it comes to postproduction. Sithebe shot all his scenes in the day even though in the final product there are night scenes. Sithebe is also the editor of his movie *Knife Edge* (2012) and says he is “a jack of all trades but master of nothing” as he chuckles at his depiction. The interview took place in the center of the “Smart Exchange incubation hub”, as Sithebe often calls it. The computer facilities which Sithebe points out to me are the very same computers he claims he spent a lot of time on editing his latest movie. Sithebe boasts about the advanced software in the computers he used to edit his movie. He explains that he had to do a “day and night switch” using the editing computer because he shot all his scenes in the day. However, he also came to the conclusion that, “it takes a lot of time so I learnt that next time if we need a night scene we’ll shoot at night” (Sithebe, 2012). Sithebe acknowledges the importance of the role of the Smart Exchange facilities in reducing his expenditure. He states that editing with those computer software programs alone would have cost the company close to R90 000 had he outsourced this film service (Sithebe, 2012). With help from the Smart Exchange facilities Sithebe was able to cut costs in the editing process, therefore they added measurable value in *Knife Edge* (2012).

Furthermore, if the film has been shot on film it may be transferred to video at this stage (Cuff, 2009b:2). The irony and an obstacle for filmmakers, in using sophisticated software in the editing process which Sithebe employed, is that the quality of the final product may be lost in the video transferring stage. The broadcaster, MNET, wanted DMP to supply them with a tape of their movie, which Sithebe refers to as a “picture camtape”. According to him MNET does not take a DVD because tape is still good quality to broadcast (Sithebe, 2012). One advantage of the latest software is that one can compress the entire movie into 1GB and it remains in high quality, “whereas with the Kodak it will take about 16 GB for an entire movie” (Sithebe, 2012). Sithebe

explains that the challenge was when he took his 1GB memory stick to a video transferring company named DT. “We relied on the company to transfer the movie into picture camtape. Now when we look at the movie on MNET the quality is down because I think the equipment that DT has is a bit outdated”, Sithebe explained his predicament. The study observes that even though the DT company offered a film service to Sithebe it did not necessarily add the intended value during the video transferring stage.

DISTRIBUTION PHASE

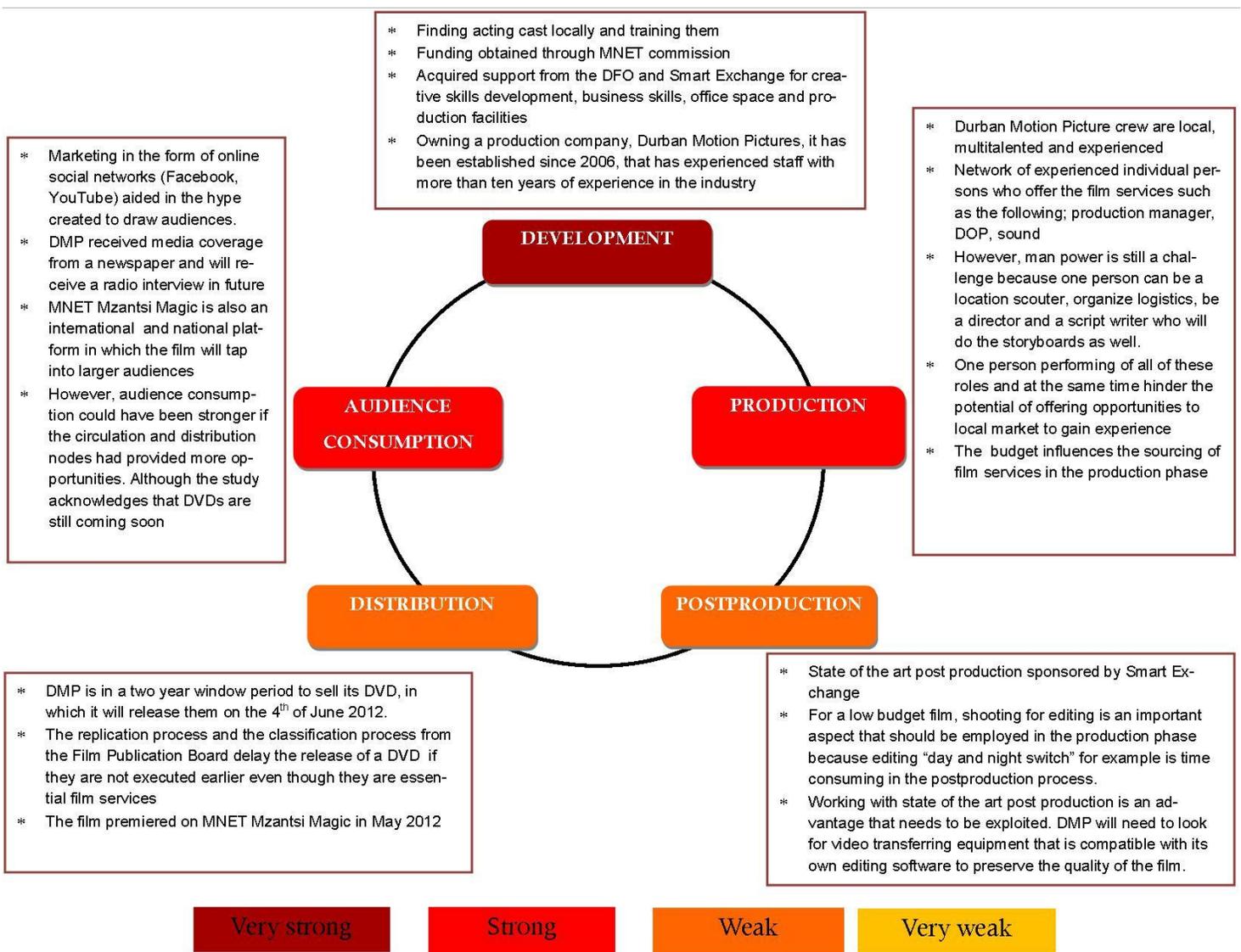
As it is mentioned earlier MNET commissioned *Knife Edge* (2012) but as Sithebe explains that there are rules. “They give us a period of two years to sell the movie on DVD. After the two years they have the rights, so it’s like a window period” (Sithebe, 2012). Even though the movie is completed and has premiered on MNET, the DVDs for *Knife Edge* (2012) had not been released due to some financial difficulties. Sithebe states that MNET delayed the process of replication because DMP did not receive an expected payout in time to start the process (Sithebe, 2012). However, as soon as the matter was resolved the replication stage was still on hold. According to Sithebe, before they replicate the movie and market the DVD they sent it to the Film Publication Board for classification and he asserts that it usually takes a course of two weeks. “We planned to do DVD replication, once you do DVD replication you also market aggressively to tell people that the DVDs are out. We have set the date for the 4th of June 2012” (Sithebe, 2012). *Knife Edge’s* (2012) film services employed for marketing include a newspaper article, an expected radio station interview and social media. Sithebe asserts that the DMP has established a liaison with *iGagasi FM* and *Isolezwe Newspaper*. “An article was published before we finished postproduction. Bonnie is still going to have an interview from iGagasi”, Sithebe elaborates. A trailer of the movie is available on YouTube. From the Facebook reviews Sithebe shares that he learnt that viewers enjoy cheerful and funny stories because they often question why he made a movie about a depressed women.

CONCLUSION

When asked how long it took to complete his movie Sithebe replied by saying; “we started shooting the movie in December 2011 and I’d say it got finished in April 2012. It was supposed to take two months actually but it took long because I had to do a lot of things in postproduction,

such making the colour correction” (Sithebe, 2012). His advice for making a low budget film is that one needs to shoot for editing; otherwise one will spend a lot of time in editing the movie. The study concluded by making an in-depth SWOT analysis of the production phases of *Knife Edge* (Sithebe, 2012). The observations of these strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and treats are used as a basis methodology in which the diagram below summarizes by illustrating the value chain model:

Figure 3: a value chain model of the film services used in Knife Edge (Sithebe, 2012)



In conclusion the study finds that Durban can be film-friendly city. Durban is as a hub of industrialisation and capitalism. The potential for economic growth is there. However, it is needed that both the benefactors and beneficiaries work towards economic and skills sustainability so that the Durban film industry can have a space for creative talent in its labour market for the industry to show growth.

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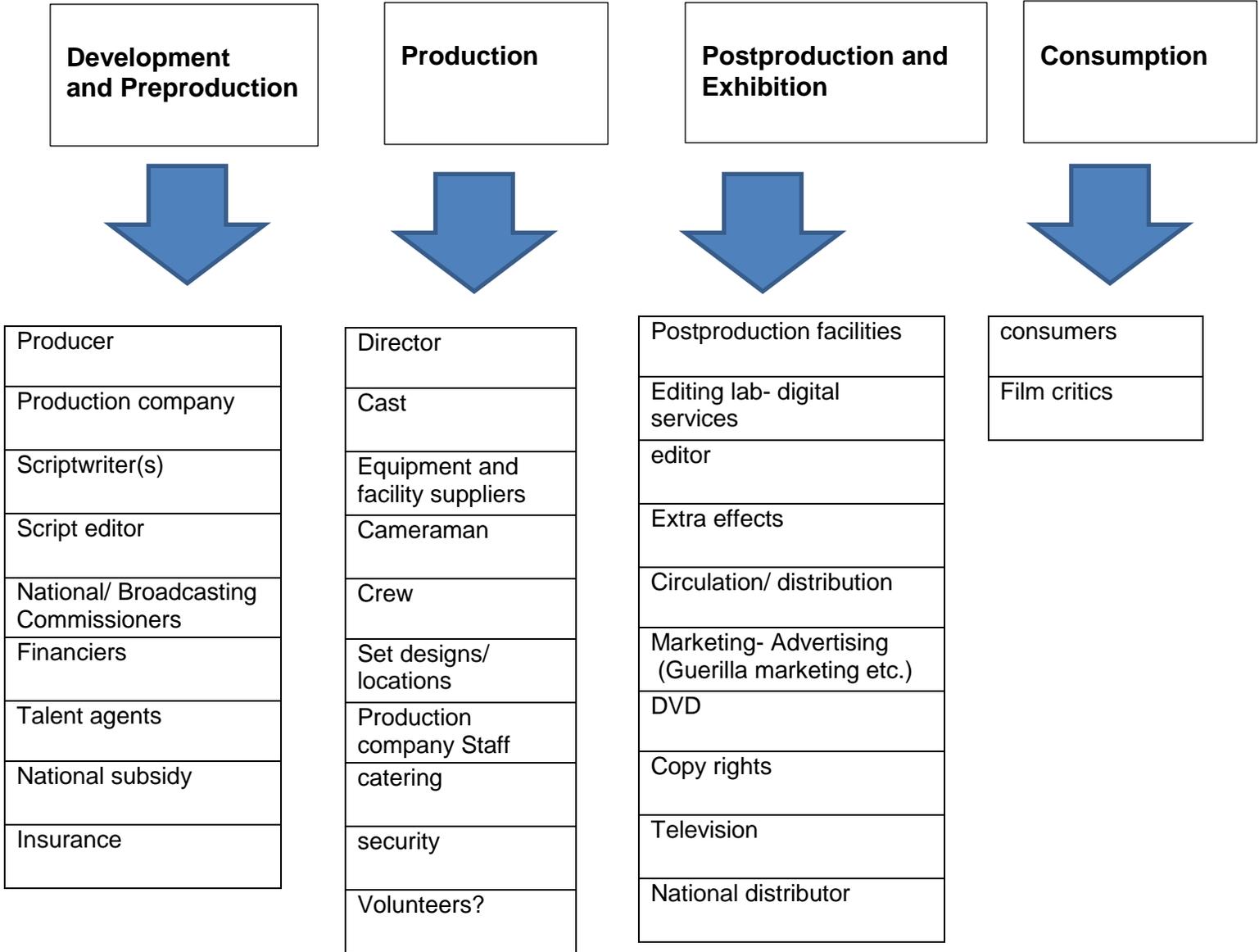
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APPENDIX ONE

INTERVIEW QUESTION STRUCTURE

Part1: An enquiry into who did the film services in the following stages



Part 2: A SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis of in the film services in order to determine the challenges and successes in the film making

	Development	Production	Post Production	Exhibition
Strengths				
Weaknesses				
Opportunities				
Threats				

APPENDIX TWO

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

You are invited to take part in this research study. This form tells you why this research study is being done, what will happen in the research study, possible risks and benefits to you, your choices, and other important information. If there is anything that you do not understand, please ask questions. Then you can decide if you want to join this study or not.

Title of Project: *The Durban Micro-Film Industry: a value chain of the lower budget film services used in Knife Edge (Sithebe, 2012)*

Research Candidate: Sandisa Nyokana

Department: Culture, Communication and Media Studies

Institution: University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard College

DO I HAVE TO BE IN THIS STUDY?

You can decide whether to take part in this study or not. You are free to say yes or no. Even if you join this study, you do not have to stay in it. You may stop at any time.

WHY IS THIS RESEARCH STUDY BEING DONE?

In this study we want to find out

1. The film services employed in the making and the exhibition of the movie *Knife Edge* (Sithebe, 2012).
2. The role of the Durban Film Office, IDC/ Dept. Trade and Industry (DTI) and Dept. of Arts and Culture in micro (low budget) films
3. The value added by each film service in the movie *Knife Edge* (Sithebe, 2012)

The only way to find this out is to interview the person(s) involved in the making of the film.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF I TAKE PART IN THE STUDY?

1. You are free to quit the study at any time. If you are thinking about quitting, please tell the study.
2. This research study is conducted for about two months but an interview depends on the availability of your time.
3. This study may or may not help you, but we hope the information from this study will help us develop a better understanding of the Durban film industry.
4. There is no payment for being in this study.
5. You may use your name or remain anonymous in the study.

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY

By signing my name below, I confirm the following:

By signing my name below, I confirm the following:	Yes	No
<p>I have read (or had read to me) this entire consent document.</p> <p>All of my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.</p> <p>The study's purpose, procedures and possible benefits have been explained to me.</p> <p>I agree to let the study team use and share the information gathered for this study.</p> <p>I voluntarily agree to participate in this research study. I have been told that I can stop at any time.</p> <p>I agree to allow audio recording in this research study</p> <p>I agree to let my name to be used in the study</p> <p>I agree to remain anonymous in the study</p>		

IMPORTANT: You will receive a signed and dated copy of this Consent Form. Please keep it where you can find it easily. It will help you remember what we discussed today.

Subject's Name	Subject's Signature	Date
Name of Witness	Signature of Witness	Date

* Name of researcher	Signature of researcher	Date

Name of Supervisor	Signature of Supervisor	Date

APPENDIX THREE

SWOT ANALYSIS of Knife Edge (Sithebe, 2012) as explained by Philani Sithebe.

	Development	Production	Post Production	Exhibition
Strengths	I can do the roles myself because I have an experience. I also have qualified people do the jobs in the company as well and then we get people to assist us and pay them	Looking at the budget you can plan ahead and take over the roles you cannot afford to continue during the filmmaking process. We have a caterer who is also a director	Our advantage is that we are part of Smart Exchange so we were able to use their computers for editing	We got a relationship with iGagasi FM and Isolezwe, and MNET Mzantsi Magic
Weakness	But as much as it is a strength it is also a challenge because the money is not enough to pay everyone well	Another challenge is that working with a small crew you end up being very tired by the end of the day and compromise shoots. You tell yourself after all this is a low budget movie and what can you do with R100 000. Then when you editing you look back and think you should have done this and that. And when it comes to actors as well is that	We rely on the company to transfer the movie into picture cam tape We have to look around in Durban otherwise we will have to go to Johannesburg	But we don't have DVDs out yet because we had some financial problems. MNET promised us some money but it did not come through. DELAY

		they don't read their lines.		
Opportunities	The strength is that it's a low budget movie and I have a budget to work with.	Vivian training people who have no experience in acting	. Within the computers there are expensive features that you can't get just anywhere for example Mojo	Bonnie is still going to have an interview An article was published before we finished postproduction. the movie premiered on MNET
Threats	Man power You need a location scout; you need a director and a script writer who will do the storyboards as well. I was performing of all of these roles and at the same time I was organizing the logistics. If I had the means I would get people to do some of these roles such as a story board artist	The challenge is that when you are a small crew you tend to fight a lot. Me and Bonnie entered into a lot of disagreements, sparks were flying. So you tramp on other people's feet because you find that Bonnie and I are both qualified to be directors even though she is the producer in the movie	. The challenge that he had is to transfer the Kodak mp4 to what we call the quick time. Now when we look at the movie on MNET the quality is down because I think the equipment that DT has is a bit outdated	. Now we just got paid from MNET so we going to replicate them DVDs are coming soon, and we have set the date for the 4 th of June 2012