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I Forward from the Director

Hello and welcome to the Yangon Film School's 2013 Annual Report. As ever, 2013 has been a busy and productive year for the School. We have run four courses, two of them substantial trainings lasting around two months each with residential components. The first of these was the Art of Documentary Editing, during which three international tutors and two locally trained staff supported 16 YFS filmmakers and trainee editors in the editing of nine documentaries of between 15 to 40 minutes in length. The training programme was run as a Competition with the crews of the four winning films being awarded certificates and quite substantial monetary prizes kindly donated by the Goethe Institute in Yangon (see pp.13-17). Our second big training of the year was the ‘True Fictions’ training programme where 20 participants – a mixture of older, more experienced YFS students and those from the newer intakes who were given ‘on the job’ training by their peers – learnt about the aesthetics and practicalities of fiction filmmaking with a documentary sensibility and produced two short films, Hope and To School (see pp.24-30 for details). The Art of Sound Design focused on mixing the sound for the nine Documentary Competition films (see pp. 22-24) which, along with the films being colour-graded by a YFS-trained cinematographer, brought the School closer to its aim of completing films in Myanmar. The Art of Screenwriting (pp.19-22), a joint venture between YFS, the British Council and the Myanmar Motion Picture Organisation, trained 16 writers already working in the Myanmar film and television industry in how to identify, develop, write and rewrite short screenplays reflecting some of the issues facing the country during the current period of rapid change. The collaboration between the three agencies worked well and YFS is keen to pursue similar co-operations in the future.

Overall in 2013, the School provided 108 days of training to a total of 50 people from nine different ethnicities and two religions (see Tables I and II on p.40). YFS training programmes in 2013 produced 11 films and 16 screenplays and continued the School’s ‘teach to train’ initiative with graduates from previous YFS courses training their Myanmar peers alongside the School’s team of international tutors. The School also continued to train its Management Team – which expanded again in 2013 to a total of 11, comprising six staff in the Yangon office and five in the Berlin HQ (see p.10) – in order to prepare the organisation for the proposed handover to a local management team in 2016.

The School’s production arm, Yangon Film Services, continued its work in the development sector and produced four films – Welcome to Lashio, Myanmar Midwife and two films about the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative for Pyoe Pin – developed, shot and edited by YFS students and alumni supported by international mentors (see pp.30-31 for details). YFS also collaborated with Pyoe Pin on the development of an 8 x 30 minute episode TV soap about the rule of law which is being shot in 2014 and edited by YFS editors with mentor support.

Yangon Film School films continued to do well at Myanmar and international festivals, clocking up an impressive 24 films screening at 31 film festivals around the world in countries ranging from Mexico, the USA, Germany, Italy and Portugal to Singapore, South Korea and Cambodia (see Table IV on p.41) and winning eight prizes. The clear festival favourite of 2013, securing screenings at 13 international festivals, was Burmese Butterfly, directed, produced and edited by Hnin Ei Hlaing. The School was delighted to secure premiere screenings of production fund projects Tyres, directed by Kyaw Myo Lwin, and Behind the Screen, directed and edited by Aung Nwai Htwe, at the prestigious IDFA documentary film festival in Amsterdam, and screenings for the Beginners’ course 2012 film Insein Rhythm, directed by Soe Moe Aung, at both Nyon in Switzerland and DOK Leipzig in Germany.

2013 was a precarious financial year during which the School struggled to maintain its training programmes in spite of being under-funded by 20% (having secured only 283,620 EUR of the budgeted 366,940 EUR). YFS is most grateful to Deutsche Welle for its support of the ‘True Fictions’ training programme in November and December – without which, it would not have been possible to hold this valuable course. At the end of 2013 the School heard its application for funding from the European Union had been successful. The grant of 1,000,000 EUR will help secure the School’s core activities for the next three years and allow it to offer its students a coherent three-year curriculum. However, YFS still needs to raise an additional 450,000 EUR in order to finance all its planned training programmes and other activities during the upcoming three-year period. These include the Travelling Cinema Project which will take YFS films on a tour to some of Myanmar’s most remote regions and combine film screenings with training in participatory video; the Feature Screenplay Development Programme which will train and support eight writers to develop feature-length screenplays which tackle some of the pressing issues currently facing the country; the Investigative Documentary Course and Fellowships for Advanced Students, as well as the Myanmar Cinema Heritage Project which, following the School’s successful restoration of Myanmar film classic from 1971, Ché Phawawaw Dawa Nu Nu (Tender Are The Feet), directed by Maung Wunna (see p.31 for details) and its screening as the opening film of the Forum at the 2014 Berlinale, aims to identify and restore other films from Myanmar’s rich cinematic heritage.
The School is still searching for a permanent home in Yangon. Two locations were identified by the Myanmar Motion Picture Enterprise (MMPE) in 2013 as possibilities for YFS and one of these is currently being researched in further detail with architect’s plans being prepared for a new building or conversion. However, funding for the renovation or rebuild of such a site still needs to be secured; in addition, in March 2014 we were informed that one of the sites may be the subject of an unresolved property claim. We will keep you posted about further developments via our website. The working environment in Myanmar has improved in some ways (the School no longer requires a permit from the government to implement its courses) but has become more difficult in others; prices for hotels and rental properties continue to skyrocket (YFS house rental rose by over 150% in 2013) and the School has been forced to go further afield to locate affordable training venues. YFS is still seeking a School Manager to run its Yangon office. Following previous incumbent Thet Oo Maung’s resignation in August for personal reasons, a potential candidate was identified and recruited in late 2013 who unfortunately had to step down at the last minute due to US Green Card issues. A further recruitment call went out in early 2014 and shortlisted candidates will be interviewed in May 2014.

Overall in 2013 the School achieved its targets and continued to build upon its core activities of training, supporting and encouraging the burgeoning community of young media workers in Myanmar. There is still considerable work to do, not least in the areas of management and of finding a permanent home for the School. However, I would like to congratulate all of the School’s staff, tutors and students for their hard work and dedication over the past year and the excellent results they have achieved. Here’s to an equally productive and successful 2014.

Lindsey Merrison
Yangon Film School Director, April 2014
‘We still have the shadow of the past inside us. Films enable these shadows to be brought into the light.’

YFS student
## Summary of YFS Activities in 2013

### January 2013 – July 2013

During this period YFS Director Lindsey Merrison, Project Coordinator Tina Walinda, Festival Coordinator Johanna Huth and Accountant Ulla Bruns undertook the following activities:

- Prepared financial and narrative reports for 2012 programmes
- Supervised subtitling and postproduction of YFS films made in 2012

Undertook grant writing and other fundraising activities including:

- Funding missions & visibility actions such as screenings of YFS work to potential clients, festival organisers, NGOs and donors
- Updating of YFS website and facebook pages
- Other visibility actions and PR

Undertook pre-training programme organisation including:

- Devising 2013 YFS courses with international tutors
- Posting calls for participants, tutors and staff on YFS webpages, facebook pages and in Myanmar press, on NGO and partner organisation websites, etc
- Informed the Myanmar Ministry of Information of planned YFS activities in 2013
- Prepared, together with local staff, tutors’ and trainers’ contracts
- Coordinated international tutors’ travel arrangements
- Researched and purchased equipment and teaching materials
- Finalised cash flows and fund management
- Coordinated the YFS Flying Mentorship Programme
- Submitted YFS films to festivals and funded & coordinated YFS students’ participation at international festivals and other events
- Created individual DVDs and portfolios of student work
- Continued the year-round mentoring of NGO projects as well as individual films by YFS students
- Established contacts with broadcasters, festivals and other organisations to pave the way for co-productions, training programmes and scholarships

### 17 March – 3 April 2013

YFS Director Lindsey Merrison travelled to Yangon and Phnom Penh to:

- Continue coaching the local management team during meetings with clients and partners
- Conduct evaluations of staff members with YFS Committee
- Discuss the transition process with the team and YFS Committee and develop strategies for consolidation of YFS as a permanent training centre
- Coach delegation of female YFS students prior to festival visit in Korea
- View rough cuts of films in production and evaluate progress with directors and editors
- Meet YFS filmmakers to discuss the YFS Documentary Competition proposals
- View alternative venues for training programs in 2013
- Meet with government representatives at MMPE to discuss a permanent site for the School
- Meet with MMPE and MRTV to discuss access to MRTV’s telecine archive and propose project to preserve Myanmar’s film heritage and restore a number of titles
- Attend the SEA DocNet Strategy Meeting in Phnom Penh to discuss role of documentary in television and as a lobbying tool and to establish links between Myanmar filmmakers and players in the region

### March – June 2013

Filming by YFS members of their YFS Documentary Competition entries in locations in different parts of Myanmar; transcribing and translating of dialogue in filmed material in preparation for edit

### April 2013

YFS editing tutor Regina Bärtschi travelled to Yangon for a Flying Mentorship to mentor the edit of *Myanmar Midwife*, a YFS film commissioned by MA student Carine Weiss in cooperation with Malteser International about maternal health in rural Myanmar
May/June 2013

YFS Director Lindsey Merrison travelled to Yangon to:

• Continue coaching the management team
• Research potential sources of vintage films
• Finalise YFS Documentary Competition training programme venue and pay deposit
• Finalise house rental
• View rough cuts of films in production and discuss with directors and editors
• Meet British Council and MMPO to discuss dates and arrangements for industry-wide Screenwriting training programme to be led by YFS tutor Rachel Mathews
• Move forward on consolidation strategy in consultation with local management team and YFS Committee

Year round 2013

The YFS Management Team in Yangon including School Manager Thet Oo Maung, Administrator Win Naing Khir, Production Manager Hnin Ei Hlaing, Equipment Managers Myo Min Khin and Mya Darli Aung and Accountant Aye Ni Mar:

• Met all visitors to the YFS house including donors and presented the work of YFS to them
• Managed day-to-day running of the YFS house
• Helped to plan and advertise courses to YFS members and recruit participants
• Coordinated individual film projects, budgets and crews
• Prepared all local contracts and receipts for Berlin HQ
• Made payments, purchased goods and conducted bookkeeping
• Regularly updated databases of NGOs and all partners, YFS members and alumni
• Compiled inventories of equipment, library material and DVDs
• Undertook equipment checks and organised repairs as necessary
• Researched, checked and prepared training programme venue(s), including liaising with venue management and negotiating fees
• Coordinated student trainers and translators pre training programmes where needed
• Prepared attendance sheets and collected timesheets and daily reports from trainers and tutors
• Prepared and managed training programmes including transportation of equipment and shuttle service for participants

15 July – 31 August 2013

International tutors Jessica Ehlebracht, Melanie Sandford and Tuula Mehtonen travelled to Myanmar to mentor 16 YFS student editors and filmmakers as they edited the nine YFS Documentary Competition entries during the seven-week residential Art of Documentary Editing training programme held at the Golden Rock Hotel in Kyaik Hto, Mon State, three hours north of Yangon

19 – 31 August 2013

Art of Screenwriting training programme for Myanmar industry practitioners

A two-week training programme supported by the British Council, led by YFS screenwriting tutor Rachel Mathews and co-tutored by YFS screenwriter Dr Aung Min, held at the Myanmar Motion Picture Organisation (MMPO) in central Yangon

Script Mentorships

Screenwriting tutor Rachel Mathews also met YFS screenwriters to mentor short fiction projects selected for the upcoming YFS True Fictions training programme and worked with YFS Screenwriting Competition winners to help them develop their feature film treatments

21 August – 13 September 2013

YFS Director Lindsey Merrison travelled to Yangon to:

• Oversee progress of Documentary Competition entries in postproduction during the 2013 Art of Documentary Editing training programme
• Meet clients and partners to discuss upcoming projects and Annual Screening
• Meet the MMPE to discuss specific sites for permanent school site
• Meet MRTV to receive DVCPro tape of vintage film Ché Phawa Daw Nu Nu for restoration
• Meet architects to discuss plans to convert school site(s) offered by MMPE
• Attend the Wathann Film Festival (5 – 8 September 2013)

1 – 13 October 2013

Art of Sound Design training programme
YFS sound tutor Ivan Horák supervised YFS advanced sound students in the sound mixing of the nine YFS Documentary Competition films edited at the Art of Documentary Editing training programme

Colour Grading
YFS-trained cinematographer Aung Ko Ko colour-graded the nine Documentary Competition films

28 October – 14 December 2013

True Fictions III training programme
An initial three-work residential training programme at the Pinlon Hotel on the outskirts of Yangon trained the 20 participants in the theory and practice of fiction filmmaking. The participants then formed two film crews and shot two short films from scripts developed during the 2012 Art of Screenwriting training programme: To School, shot in Apyauk, a village three hours north of Yangon and Hope, shot in the north of Yangon. The training programme was led by YFS screenwriting and directing tutor Rachel Mathews supported by YFS tutors in production (Tina Walinda), cinematography (Lars Barthel), sound (Ivan Horák), editing (Regina Bärtschi) and postproduction & distribution (Lindsey Merrison)

26 November – 11 December 2013

YFS Director Lindsey Merrison travelled to Yangon to:
• Organise the Annual Screening and Competition Awards
• Meet clients and partners including the EU and BBC Media Action
• View and discuss rough cuts of True Fictions films and commissioned works (EITI)
• Meet the outgoing Committee and oversee election of new Committee
• Meet potential management, strategy and planning consultants

Sunday 1 December 2013

YFS Annual Screening & Announcement of Documentary Competition Winners
Competition sponsor Goethe Institut Myanmar presented awards and cash prizes to the four winning films

December 2013 – January 2014

Editing of True Fictions Films
YFS editing tutor Regina Bärtschi continued to supervise YFS student editors as they worked on the two True Fictions’ films To School and Hope

December 2013 – April 2014

YFS Director Lindsey Merrison and the management teams in Berlin and Yangon planned training programmes for 2014 and oversaw the postproduction, reporting and evaluations for 2013 including:
• Supervision of online edits of student & NGO films from 2013
• Supervision of YFS DVDs inc. cover design, inlay text, etc
• Preparation of financial and narrative reports and audits
• Continued work on the YFS transition process
Yangon Film School draws upon a growing pool of international and Myanmar filmmakers to be its tutors. In 2013, training programmes were tutored by (in alphabetical order):

**Aung Min**  
*Screenwriting & Film Analysis*

Writer of short and longer stories and poetry as well as a medical doctor, Aung Min divides his time between writing, filmmaking and treating patients at his clinic in Yangon. Trained as a screenwriter by YFS, Aung Min now passes on his skills to his fellow Myanmar writers and filmmakers both in YFS training programmes and independently. His film *The Clinic* (2010), a documentary about his medical practice, has screened worldwide including at the Guggenheim in New York.

**Lars Barthel**  
*Cinematography*

Born in East Germany, Lars has worked as a cinematographer for over 25 years on both features and documentaries, shooting films in countries including Pakistan, Afghanistan, Israel, Jamaica, Germany and Myanmar. He was Professor of Cinematography at the HFF in Potsdam-Babelsberg from 1996-97 and regularly tutors at film schools and workshops across Europe. In 2006 he directed multi-award-winning documentary *My Death is Not Your Death* about his life in the GDR.

**Regina Bärtschi**  
*Editing*

Swiss editor Regina has worked since 1989 on features, documentaries and TV series including Portuguese Golden Globe nominee and Palm Springs Audience Award winner *Elles (Women, 1997)*; *Besser und Besser (Better & Better, 1997)*, awarded at Nyon, Leipzig and San Francisco; *Früher oder Später (Sooner or Later, 2003)*, nominated for the LA International Documentary Award; and *Flammend’ Herz (Blue Skin, 2004)*, recipient of the Berlinale’s Dialogue en Perspective Award. Regina teaches editing at institutes and universities in Switzerland and Germany.

**Jessica Ehlebracht**  
*Editing*

Born and raised in North Germany, Jessica was assistant editor on major feature films such as *Good Bye, Lenin!* (2003) before becoming an editor in her own right. Since then she has worked on various feature films, TV-series and, in particular, documentaries including *Jonathan* (2011) which screened at numerous festivals and won the Earth Vision Award at the Tokyo Film Festival and *Der Fährmeister (The Ferryman, 2007)* which won Silver Prize at the German Short Film Awards in 2007.

**Ivan Horák**  
*Sound Recording & Postproduction Sound Design*

Czech sound recording engineer Ivan has recorded and undertaken postproduction sound design on numerous cinema and television productions including dialogue editing on Disney animations *Aladdin* and *The Little Mermaid*, and boom operating on the Czech unit filming of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (2005). His documentary credits include the award-winning *Zeny Pro Meny (The Beauty Exchange, 2003)* and *Blues by the Beach* (2004).

**Rachel Mathews**  
*Screenwriting & Fiction Directing*

British filmmaker Rachel has directed award-winning short films including *Danny & His Amazing Teeth* (Royal Television Society Award, 2002), as well as writing plays for UK theatre, BBC Radio 4 and British TV. In 2010 she won the Wellcome Trust ‘Inspired by Science’ Award for feature script *Matrioska*. She also teaches writing and directing at universities and in workshops across the UK and in Germany.
Tuula Mehtonen

Finnish editor Tuula has worked in the industry for nearly 30 years, collaborating with almost all Finland’s directors of note and editing many award-winning documentaries including Father to Son (2004) and Daughters of Palma (2007). She was Professor of Film Editing at Helsinki’s University of Art and Design until 2007 and is guest lecturer at the Baltic and Norwegian Film Schools. She is currently writing a book about editing: Maximising the Moment – Theories for the Practice of Editing.

Lindsey Merrison


Myo Min Khin

Myo Min Khin has been a YFS member since the School’s inception in 2005 and has worked on numerous YFS productions as sound recordist and/or editor, as well as on Nargis: When Time Stopped Breathing (2010) which screened worldwide at festivals and won the FIPRESCI Prize at the 2012 Mumbai International Film Festival. One of Myanmar’s premier workflow specialists for digital editing, he is also a co-founder and organiser of Yangon’s annual Wathann Film Festival.

Melanie Sandford

Australian Melanie has edited over 40 documentaries and dramas for TV and film on subjects varying from history to health to contemporary dance. A respected member of the Australian Society of Editors, she has edited many award-winning productions, notably a profile of novelist David Malouf, An Imaginary Life (1997), and the eight-part documentary, Australians at War (2001), nominated for an Australian Film Institute Award.

Tina Walinda

German graphic designer Tina has worked at radio stations and newspapers in northern Germany and at several film festivals worldwide, mainly in the area of guest management. She has also worked on film shoots and coordinated award ceremonies and master-classes. She joined YFS in 2012 as production coordinator and also oversees the School’s communication strategy.

Stewart Young

Scottish-born Stewart’s distinguished editing career spans 40 years. Moving to Australia in his teens, he edited for ABC before moving to the independent sector where he has won numerous AFI awards and nominations including Best Editing for Nicaragua – No Pasaran, Rocking the Foundations and Year of the Dogs. Three of his films: Frontline, Chile - Hasta Cuando? and First Contact, were nominated for Academy Awards. Stewart’s many documentary credits recently include The President Versus David Hicks, about an Australian held captive at Guantanamo Bay.
Who's Who at YFS?

The Yangon Film School has offices in both Berlin and at the School's headquarters in Mayangone Township in Yangon.

In 2013, the YFS Management Team comprised:

- **Lindsey Merrison**
  Director

- **Helke Schuchhardt**
  Project Manager
  Berlin Office

- **Johanna Huth**
  Festival Coordinator
  Berlin Office

- **Tina Walinda**
  Project Coordinator/PR
  Berlin Office

- **Hnin Ei Hlaing**
  Production Manager
  Yangon Office

- **Myo Min Khin**
  Editing Equipment Manager
  Yangon Office

- **Mya Darli Aung**
  Camera & Sound Equipment Manager
  Yangon Office

- **Hnin Ei Hlaing**
  Production Manager
  Yangon Office

- **Win Naing Khir**
  Administrator
  Yangon Office

- **Johanna Huth**
  Festival Coordinator
  Berlin Office

- **Win Naing Khir**
  Administrator
  Yangon Office

- **Mya Darli Aung**
  Camera & Sound Equipment Manager
  Yangon Office

- **Win Naing Khir**
  Administrator
  Yangon Office

- **Mya Darli Aung**
  Camera & Sound Equipment Manager
  Yangon Office

- **Aye Ni Mar**
  Accountant
  Yangon Office

- **Aung Ko Ko**

- **Myo Min Khin**

- **Shin Daewe**

- **Soe Moe Aung**

- **Eh Mwee**

The Committee

The Yangon Film School Committee is a group of five students or graduates from the School elected by their peers on an annual basis to support the Management Team in an advisory capacity and to help the Director select tutors, staff and training programme participants.

In 2013 the YFS Committee comprised:
IV YFS Online Presence

Online connectivity is hugely important in Myanmar and not just in the urban centres: even smaller towns and villages now have internet cafes. The internet may be infuriatingly slow (although this has recently been improving, especially in Yangon) but censorship has become much less prevalent. The previously banned Skype and facebook are now easily accessible and, from the volume of photos, news-links and updates posted (often on a daily basis), many YFS students now appear to live online.

In acknowledgement of this, YFS has stepped up its online presence and, in 2013, overhauled its website so all the information is now in both English and Myanmar. The website contains essential information about the School including details of its programme of study and images, synopses and filmmaker details for YFS films. Thanks to the work of the School’s PR manager Tina Walinda, the website and facebook pages are kept regularly updated with news about festival screenings of YFS films and the many film-related activities of YFS members.

The YFS website and facebook pages are also a key element of the School’s recruitment of participants for new trainings. In a country were phone and postal connections are patchy, email is a preferred method of communication. Eye-catching announcements are posted on the YFS website and facebook pages (see below) whenever a new training programme is open for applicants and this is now how YFS receives most of its applications. The School is also using online communications to help with staff recruitment.

YFS homepage (www.yangonfilmschool.org)

YFS facebook (www.facebook/yangonfilmschool)
V  YFS Training Programmes in 2013

(i) THE ART OF DOCUMENTARY FILM EDITING  ___ 15 July to 31 August 2013

Tutor-Mentors

The tutor-mentors were Jessica Ehlebracht (Germany), Tuula Mehtonen (Finland) and Melanie Sandford (Australia) who were supported by YFS Manager Thet Oo Maung with technical support by YFS editor Myo Min Khin.

Participants


Nine documentaries were edited during the training programme. Gender parity was achieved with the 16 participants comprising eight women and eight men. Of the directors, four were women and five men, with four female editors and five male. The majority of films were cut by editors or editing teams working closely with the director. Two participants edited their own films.

The topics and styles varied widely – from an ethnological-type study of fisherfolk in Mon State to an experimental meditation upon the current political changes in Myanmar. Two documentaries took long-running ethnic conflicts (in Chin and Kachin States) as their subject matter. Other films explored the tradition of donating food to monks, a vivid lakeside Nat ceremony, illegal ruby mining in Upper Burma, the choices facing a female puppeteer trafficked to Malaysia and the life of an eccentric political activist-musician and his family.

The seven-week training programme was held at the Golden Rock Hotel in Kyaik Hto, three hours north of Yangon. The residential nature of the training meant students could focus fully on the task in hand and the course was remarkably productive with all the projects reaching a good stage of completion. Students and tutors returned to Yangon for one day off per week to have a chance to relax and catch up with friends and family in the city.

Aims

The main aim of the course was to encourage and inspire less experienced YFS students – chiefly those who had participated in the 2011 and 2012 Beginners’ courses – to develop their own personal documentary film ideas and to help them learn how to shape theses stories through the art of editing. Students who expressed an interest in attending were asked to assemble a crew and shoot film material independently before the training. They were also expected to have transcoded their rushes and transcribed and translated the interview footage into English before joining the course.

To sharpen the students’ focus, the training programme was run as a competition with the finished films being judged by a panel of Myanmar and international judges. The winning films were awarded cash prizes generously provided by the newly inaugurated Goethe Institut in Yangon.

Structure & Methodology

Tutor-mentors Melanie Sandford and Tuula Mehtonen opened the training programme by talking about their different approaches to editing. Mel revealed she first edits all the scenes separately and then begins to discover the film’s structure; Tuula, in contrast,
seeks a structure from the start and loosely edits scenes directly onto the timeline before fine-cutting them. Having two tutors with such different approaches demonstrated to the students that there is no ‘right’ way to edit a film. One of the main tasks for a beginner editor is to find the work-flow which best suits them.

The students were given around four weeks to put together a rough cut of the films and an additional three weeks for further development work and fine tuning. Each editing team was allotted a tutor-mentor. Due to work commitments, Jessica Ehlebracht arrived after the training programme had begun but the other two tutor-mentors oversaw her mentees during her absence.

On Monday mornings the tutor-mentors and participants met as a group to give progress reports and discuss challenges encountered during the previous week. In Week 1 everyone watched their rushes with their mentors. Many participants realised at this point that their material was actually different and not half as wonderful as they had thought. The mentors reassured them such disillusionment is a normal part of the process. Many of the students needed weekly reassurances – also totally normal!

During the rest of the week everyone was hard at work in their individual editing rooms, appearing only at mealtimes or during the daily power cuts. The mentors moved between the rooms helping and advising participants as required.

**The Art of Documentary Editing: Individual Films in Competition**

1. **A Man for All Seasons**

   Director: Soe Moe Aung  
   Editor: Myo Min Khin  
   Mentor: Jessica Ehlebracht

Portrait of a committed if eccentric democrat who wanders the countryside as a kind of troubadour, campaigning for civil rights and justice through his songs.

One of director Soe Moe Aung’s major decisions was whether or not to include the interview with his protagonist. This was rather static and he feared it might alienate the audience. Another regarded including scenes of the protagonist’s family life: the film was intended to be an account of the subject’s political activities but footage of him at home with his wife and children was funny and engaging. Mentor Jessica Ehlebracht encouraged Soe Moe Aung to rework his storyline by identifying the ‘gems’ in his material and use these to build a dramatic structure on paper. This solid preparatory work meant he and editor Myo Min Khin were able to complete a rough cut in only a few days. The charm of the protagonist’s interaction with his wife and the intimate and humorous insights into their family – which became the film’s central storyline – fascinated and entertained the other students to such an extent that the director and editor felt the film was finished after the rough cut. However, the mentor encouraged them to tighten up the film and work on moments which required more focus.

*A Man For All Seasons* won the Diamond Award (1st Prize) with the jury finding it ‘A touching, beautifully photographed portrait of a unique individual, nicely interspersed with glimpses of rural life, politics and music. The protagonist’s energy pervades the film and his positive attitude to life is utterly infectious.’

2. **Choices**

   Director: May Htoo Cho  
   Editor: Zaw Win Htwe  
   Mentor: Melanie Sandford

A film about a onetime puppeteer who escaped enslavement in Malaysia and returned to Yangon as a struggling single mother.
With a story told in retrospect and complicated by footage which did not really reflect what the protagonist spoke about in her interview, this was a difficult film to edit. Zaw Win Htwe spent several days pacing about trying to find a 'way in' and made several attempts at starting the piece before he hit upon the right tone. The protagonist, although an interesting and nice woman in real life, did not come across particularly well in her interview. The editor had to work hard to show her at her best and encourage the audience to empathise with her as she told her harrowing tale. Zaw Win Htwe is one of the more experienced editors at YFS, has edited many Myanmar features and has a lengthy list of credits to his name. But his experience so far has been lacking the type of storytelling which focuses on a film's emotional arcs. Working on this project presented a perfect opportunity for him to find ways to deal with this key aspect and he stepped up to the plate wonderfully… after a lot of pacing!

The jury found *Choices* to be 'A subtle and well-shot portrait of one woman's intriguing story. In describing the female protagonist's strength, the film allows her experiences to appear both unique and yet representative for the fate of so many women.'

3. Lady of the Lake

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<tr>
<th>Director:</th>
<th>Zaw Naing Oo</th>
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<td>Editor:</td>
<td>Zaw Naing Oo</td>
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<td>Mentor:</td>
<td>Melanie Sandford</td>
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The life of a fisherman, his wife and eight children eking out a living on the Moe Yun Gyi wetlands, now a wildlife sanctuary, and their participation in a traditional ceremony to worship the 'Nat' spirits of the lake.

Director and editor Zaw Naing Oo is an enthusiastic student and he began editing his film with relish. However, after a few days he realised he had shot what could have been two films: one about a fisherman eking out a living on a huge lake in Bago Division; the other about a religious ceremony worshipping the Nat spirit of the lake. As one of the more experienced editors in the group, Zaw Naing Oo wanted to 'go it alone' during the training programme. However, the complexity of his material meant he became rather daunted and it took many attempts to get the structure right. One version of the film did not include any of the Nat ceremony, but this excluded some of the project’s most powerful footage. Another focused solely on the ceremony, but this meant the audience lacked the context of the fisherman's daily life. Mentor Mel discussed both versions at length with Zaw Naing Oo who eventually found a way to incorporate both sets of footage in a seamless and convincing way.

*Lady of the Lake* won the Jade Award (3rd prize) ex aequo with *When the Boat Comes In*. The judges found it 'A beautifully filmed, rare, quasi-ethnographic glimpse of some of Myanmar’s powerful supernatural beliefs and their meaning for the people who practice them in this stunning lakeland area.'

4. Last Kiss

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<th>Director:</th>
<th>Seng Mai</th>
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<tr>
<td>Editors:</td>
<td>Nu Nu Hlaing</td>
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<td>Zin Mar Oo</td>
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<td>Mentor:</td>
<td>Tuula Mehtonen</td>
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Images of the fighting between Myanmar’s military and the Kachin Independence Army – and the refugee camps in Laiza engendered by the civil war – are interwoven with poems written by Ja Ing Chying; her words give an unmistakable voice to those caught up in this bitter conflict.

Director Seng Mai’s two editors, Zin Mar Oo and Nu Nu Hlaing, were quite inexperienced but Seng Mai was very patient with their slow and steady work, giving them space to experiment, make mistakes and learn. The material was an editor’s dream, visually associative and inspiring. It was shot by the director herself and sound recordist Sai Kong Kham, who is also a photographer. From the beginning, it was clear to the director that the interview with the protagonist was not particularly engaging. The idea...
developed to use her poems and only dip into the interview when necessary to deliver information. The two editors took time going through the material and noting down their thoughts and feelings. Eventually mentor Tuula Mehtonen advised them to put something on the timeline otherwise it would become harder and harder to cross the threshold into editing. Eventually the images of young girls tailoring military uniforms formed the film’s symbolic spine. The project’s aim was to give the audience a chance to feel the pain of Kachin people forced to flee their homes and the mothers who have lost their sons. The border between emotion and sentimentality was discussed often as the team explored how to reach the emotional story behind the actual events.

*The jury found Last Kiss ‘A fascinating and at times visually and emotionally powerful film that works on several levels to portray the human cost for those most affected by the conflict in Kachin.’*

### 5. Precious

**Director:** David Kyaw Thet Aung  
**Editor:** Sai Nyi Nyi  
**Mentor:** Jessica Ehlebracht

Observational documentary about those working in the often risky business of gem extraction in Mogoke.

Director David Kyaw Thet Aung and editor Sai Nyi Nyi only had four hours of rushes and it initially appeared a quick task to edit this film. However, there were great variations in the quality of the material, with beautifully framed shots of manufacturers polishing gemstones undermined by dark, wobbly footage filmed in perilous conditions in the mine itself. Some essential shots were missing which meant building an interesting storyline was a challenge, particularly for these two novice filmmakers. The first assembly came together rather haphazardly but Sai Nyi Nyi managed to create a touching montage at the end by combining shots of a miner’s young daughter washing her clothes with close ups of a ruby receiving its final polishing. This was a valuable moment and mentor Jessica Ehlebracht advised the students to build the film’s structure towards this climax. David and Sai Nyi Nyi became excited about the possibilities of manipulating material in the edit. They made a good team with Sai Nyi Nyi providing emotional understanding and David the technical know-how.

*The jury commented that Precious provides ‘A fascinating and well-crafted insight into a line of work that is almost synonymous with Myanmar. The way the film compares two of the country’s precious natural resources – rubies and children – is wonderfully philosophical.’*

### 6. Amhya – Share

**Director:** Mya Darli Aung  
**Editor:** Myo Min Khin  
**Mentor:** Melanie Sandford

A film documenting an age-old but dwindling tradition where monks cook a meal from leftovers, symbolizing the Buddhist precepts of unity and sharing.

A film with virtually no dialogue. Director Mya Darli Aung shot a lot of footage of the monks walking around the town collecting food given to them as alms by laypeople. Editor Myo Min Khin edited this material: at one point it opened the film and at another formed its final sequence. But the power of the film actually lay in the ‘leftovers’ and what happened to them and the director revealed this is what she really wanted to explore. During the rough cut screening the mentors and participants discussed whether the alms collecting should be included. Some felt international audiences would not understand where the food came from. In the end, Darli and Myo Min Khin decided to go with the strength of the material and excluded the monks’ trek through the town. The leftovers from their lunch had a very clear journey which formed the narrative spine, meaning structurally this was an easy film to ‘get’. It is a contemplative piece which relies on pacing and spacing for its poetry – and this is where the most time was spent as
director and editor worked hard on the rhythm, painstakingly going over every frame and transition. This resulted in a perfectly cooked film.

The judges found Amhya – Share ‘A beautifully balanced, artistic film with exquisite images that exude a sense of peace and simple appreciation and also provide the viewer with an insight into the largely unknown daily lives of monks and novices.’

7. Silent Talker

Juxtaposing everyday scenes in Yangon with extracts from a friend’s poems and his own ruminations, the filmmaker ponders the state of his native Myanmar and its people as they move towards democracy.

Kyaw Myo Lwin intended to make a documentary about landmines but was unable to get permission to film. He still wanted to participate in the training programme and thus developed a new idea about a poet and performance artist. Unfortunately the protagonist was uneasy in front of the camera and his musical performance was rather weak. In addition, the material suffered from many shots being too short. Kyaw Myo edited his own film and mentor Tuula Mehtonen advised him to take all the interesting events – even single images – and put them on a timeline. This helped him discover some nice moments. Kyaw Myo then wrote down his own reflections about current developments in Myanmar and used this as a voiceover. Health problems meant he had to leave the training programme early but, with continued support from the mentors, he assembled a rough cut and the other students gave their feedback. People did not fully understand the film but liked the associative images. The piece was helped a great deal by work undertaken on the soundtrack during in the YFS Sound Design course and the final result resembles an experimental film.

The jury found Silent Talker to be ‘An ambitious, essayistic film which at times succeeds in achieving a delicate balance between poetry, impressionism and emotion.’

8. Solomon

An encounter with the filmmaker’s charismatic uncle, commander of the Chin National Front Solomon Thang Ding, which also looks at the political reforms that the impoverished Chin State is currently undergoing.

Director Anna Biak Tha Mawi and editor Khin Myanmar worked together intensively, beginning by plotting the film’s structure in a paper edit. The footage was shot in the Hakha-Chin language which presented a challenge for Burmese-speaker Khin Myanmar. When they screened their rough cut, it was agreed the story lacked development and they needed to find a more engaging structure. The big challenge was: how to tell a story about the past when most of the footage is from the present? The story’s main elements were identified and their potential for development discussed with mentor Jessica Ehlebracht. A major decision was to try not to show Solomon onscreen for a while after we learn he left his family as a young man to fight the Burmese military. His mother did not see him for many years; hiding him from the story at this stage helped transmit her feelings to the audience. At fine cut stage, the mentor and team discussed the position and length of every single image and the director and editor learned the necessity of leaving the audience space for reflection.

Solomon won the Ruby Award (2nd prize) with the jury finding it ‘A wonderful film about a strong character that draws you in from beginning to end. Well shot and edited, the film succeeds in going beyond one individual’s point of view to give us the bigger picture, thereby contributing to the critical peace process in Myanmar today.’
9. When the Boat Comes In

Director: Khin Maung Kyaw
Editor: Hnin Ei Hlaing
Mentor: Tuula Mehtonen

Documentary about some of the members of a fishing community struggling to make a living along a stretch of coastline near Thanbyuzayat in Mon State in southern Myanmar.

The rushes shot by director and DOP Khin Maung Kyaw were rich with every action being beautifully covered in a classically observational way, revealing an exciting new world to the viewer. However, the material was rather ethnographic and lacking in drama. Experienced editor Hnin Ei Hlaing chose to follow the method demonstrated by mentor Tuula Mehtonen and edit scenes directly onto the timeline. Following discussions with Tuula, she and the director built the tension of the film towards the climax of an approaching storm. A challenge here was that the threatened storm never actually arrives. The editor and director also grappled with difficulties in the use of repetition and in establishing the continuity of morning and evening light. The structure kept changing right to the very end: it was a demanding process which required a lot of patience. Reaction to the rough cut screening was harsh: other students did not understand the Mon language and the English subtitles were too quick for them to read. No one had a good thing to say about the film, which prompted the tutors to talk to the whole group about giving effective feedback. Undeterred, Hnin Ei Hlaing and Khin Maung Kyaw continued to grapple with the material to ultimately good effect.

The film won the Jade Award (3rd prize) ex aequo with Lady of the Lake with the jury commenting: ‘An ambitious film peopled with fascinating characters. The verité style and almost poetic pacing enables the viewer to absorb the world of its characters and feel the burden of their daily lives.’

Challenges Faced, Problems Overcome

i) Growing Student Independence

It was gratifying to the mentors that, in comparison to previous editing training programs, quite a few of the participants this time sought more independence and wanted to be left to work on their own. This was particularly the case with more experienced editors such as Zaw Win Htwe with Choices; Myo Min Khin who edited both Amhya and A Man For All Seasons; and Kyaw Myo Lwin, director and editor of Silent Talker. This development demonstrates how YFS students are gaining in confidence and autonomy as they benefit from more training from the School. That having been said, there were still relatively new editors – such as David and Sai Nyi Nyi editing Precious – who required the mentors to be with them almost full-time in the editing suite and who needed a lot of reassurance.

ii) Giving Feedback

All three mentors noted that during the rough cut screenings the students were quite harsh in their assessment of each other’s work. Matters came to a head with When the Boat Comes In. The mentors took the students to task about their negative and – from the mentors’ point of view – unsupportive criticism of their peers. The student response was surprising: participants said that, since the recent political changes in Myanmar, they are finally allowed to speak their minds. They want to give their opinions frankly and be very clear about what they consider to be bad without feeling restricted or censored. It is one thing, however, to be direct in political discourse, another to be crushingly judgemental about an artistic work in progress. The mentors changed the way the rough cuts were screened and guided the subsequent feedback sessions so that positive and encouraging comments were able to come through alongside the (still plentiful) criticism.

iii) Documentary ‘truth’ and censorship

A related matter surfaced in the feedback session for Lady of the Lake whose rough cut screening generated heated discussion amongst the participants, particularly about the footage of the Nat worshipping ceremony. Some students believed the ceremony should be ‘softened’, especially images of a woman ‘possessed’ by a Nat spirit tearing into raw fish with her teeth and footage of children having money pinned into their bare flesh with safety pins. Others vehemently argued that filmmakers should not censor
their own work, particularly not in response to the perceived sensibilities of the audience. This opened out into an interesting debate about ‘truth’ in documentary filmmaking. Ultimately, director and editor Zaw Naing Oo decided to keep the controversial footage in his film.

Results
The edits of eight documentary films of between 10 and 40 minutes in length were completed during the seven-week training programme with the ninth – Silent Talker – being finished shortly afterwards. The nine films were then colour graded by YFS graduate Aung Ko Ko; the sound tracks were mixed during the subsequent Sound Design course with tutor Ivan Horák; and the English subtitles refined. Bringing a large number of documentaries close to completion in Yangon marks another step towards YFS’s aim to undertake the entire development, production and post-production process, from script to shoot to edit to distribution, in Myanmar.

In a feedback session at the end, the participants identified their key learning points as:
• how to structure a documentary film
• gaining wider knowledge of different storytelling styles and techniques
• improving communication with the director or editor respectively
• listening and responding to criticism, both from mentors and their peers
• understanding the importance of attention to detail and working until something is ‘right’
• developing much greater technical confidence in using Final Cut Pro editing software

Note on Gender & Ethnicity
No problems surfaced in respect to either gender or ethnicity during the training programme, with the mentors reporting that all the participants were kind and supportive of each other and demonstrated good listening and negotiating skills. There was a strong overall sense of camaraderie within the group. The only notable distinction between the sexes was that the women tended not work too late into the night whereas the men often burned the midnight oil in the editing suites.

There was a number of different languages within the group and also in the footage being edited. For example, Solomon, shot in Hakha-Chin, was edited by Burmese speaker Khin Myanmar. The Chin director Anna did a running translation for her editor while they viewed the rushes and was constantly at Khin Myanmar’s side to translate what was being said during the edit. In Last Kiss, director Seng Mai was Kachin and Christian whilst her two editors were Burmese and Buddhist. They were all very sensitive to the fact that, ethnically speaking, they represented the conflicting sides in the film: Kachin and Burmese. However, following discussions amongst themselves and with their mentor, a generally humanistic and anti-war approach was chosen by the director and her editors for the film.

Evaluation & Recommendation
Both mentors and students agreed that having a full seven weeks in which to focus on editing the films and take them through rough cut to fine cut to lock off stage was extremely beneficial. The training programme’s relatively long timeframe meant that the students could experiment and try out ideas even if they failed – a key aspect of learning during the editing process.

The decision to make the training programme a competition concentrated everyone’s minds and brought an effective degree of pride and friendly rivalry into proceedings. The mentors recommend that these types of film competitions are held periodically by YFS, perhaps every two or three years.

1) Tutors & participants share a communal meal at the training programme hotel / 2) Tutor Mel Sandford with director Mya Darli Aung & YFS editor Mya Min Khin / 3) Director David Thet Kyaw with YFS Manager Thet Oo Maung
(ii) THE ART OF SCREENWRITING
A Cooperation between Yangon Film School, the British Council Myanmar & the Myanmar Motion Picture Organisation (MMPO)

19 to 31 August 2013 with follow-up activities in November & December 2013

The training programme was taught by experienced YFS screenwriting tutor Rachel Mathews and YFS-trained screenwriter, poet, novelist and medical doctor Aung Min.

Of the total of 16 participants, half were members of the film producers’ association the Myanmar Motion Picture Organisation (MMPO). The other eight were independent Myanmar writers who applied to the training programme following publicity and a call on the YFS website and Facebook pages and via the British Council Myanmar. Over 40 writers applied in total. They were shortlisted and interviewed by co-tutor Dr Aung Min and Myanmar screenwriter Su Su Hlaing with guidance from YFS, MMPO and the British Council. The participants were selected on the strength of their idea for a screenplay, their track record and their commitment to the training programme.

The participants ranged from Kyaw Rose, an established film director in the Myanmar industry, to disabled writer Aung Kaung Myat whose use of a wheelchair meant he was normally restricted to writing on his computer at home. Successful novelists Min Han and Mal Khaing had had work adapted into screenplays by other writers but now wanted to learn screenwriting for themselves. Three participants, Thha Soe, Han Thu Thaw and Ju Naing, were already working as screenwriters; Eve Eve Kyaw and Cham Myaye were writing factual commentaries (for documentaries and radio programmes respectively) and wanted to move into fiction writing. Writer/director Htoo Paing had made successful short films; Soe Lu Zaw was working as a producer for MRTV4. Jerry Lin Six was a journalist and Lynn Satt Nwe a medical doctor who writes in her spare time. Newer writers Soe Win Aung, San Win Htut and Hla Phone Aung, impressed the selection panel with their script ideas.

Aims
To teach 16 writers with some screenwriting experience to:
• use real-life inspiration to identify a good idea for a short (10-20 minute) screenplay
• develop this initial idea into a satisfying film story using the essential building blocks of character, structure and visual storytelling
• create interesting characters who an audience can relate to and care about
• tell a story primarily through images
• understand that conflict is at the heart of every drama
• write compelling dialogue and learn when pictures are more powerful than words
• give and receive feedback on work in progress
• learn the importance of redrafting – ‘writing is rewriting’

Structure & Methodology
The training programme ran for two six-day weeks from 9.30am to 5.30pm in the teaching room at the MMPO in central Yangon. The tone was set during the first two days when the group watched and analysed feature films Bicycle Thieves (Vittorio De Sica, Italy, 1948) and Where Is the Friend’s Home? (Abbas Kiarostami, Iran, 1987). Both films take their inspiration from real life and are
grounded in the time and society in which they were made, using lay actors performing roles similar to their everyday lives in real locations (as opposed to film sets). Both films were shot on a low budget. The participants were asked to focus on this type of cinema verité during the training programme for both practical and aesthetic reasons: on a practical level, Myanmar films – particularly shorts – must be made on a low budget; aesthetically, identifying stories from contemporary life in Myanmar fits with the strong documentary ethos of YFS and was intended to create film scripts which have something important and interesting to say to local audiences and international cineastes on the worldwide film festival circuit.

Additional screenings – of both shorts and features films – and post-screening discussions continued throughout the training programme. In Week One, short films were used to illustrate particular teaching points such as character development, story structure, visual storytelling and use of dialogue. In Week Two, the participants got down to the serious task of writing – and rewriting – their scripts. Here, screenings were interspersed with feedback sessions. In this way, the training programme took a highly interactive and supportive approach as each writer worked towards the goal of completing their first draft script.

The final two days were reserved for table readings of all 16 scripts. Writers cast their work using their fellow participants as actors and had the opportunity of hearing their first drafts read out loud. Each script was then discussed at length by the group and tutors and the writers received feedback to help them continue to develop their piece once the training programme was over. At the end of the training programme, all the participants voted for their favourite four scripts. These pieces were then given a public reading at the Screenwriting Showcase (see below).

Follow-Up Activities, September-December 2013
Two weeks is a tight timeframe in which to create a script, even for a short film. Hence, the training programme was followed by activities designed to help the writers develop their first draft scripts further.

i) A Screenwriting Showcase & Script Auction, 3 September 2013
The four screenplays voted for by all 16 participants at the end of the training programme were given a rehearsed reading in front of an invited audience of 150 people at the MMPO on 3 September 2013. To ensure all 16 participants were involved in the showcase, the writers were cast in the four scripts and everyone appeared on stage at least once to ‘perform’. Script-readings are common in the international film and television industry and give producers, directors, writers and actors the chance to hear how a script is developing. However, this was the first time a script-reading had been held in Myanmar. Once the audience understood what was happening, they became very involved in the process (with non-Myanmar speakers following the scripts via hand-outs). At the end of the readings the MMPO held a script auction where producers were invited to bid for their favourite script and pay 50,000 Kyats (50 USD) for an ‘option’ on the material so they could raise production money and eventually make the script into a short film. The showcased scripts were:

Noodle by Min Han
Maung Yoe earns a living hand-to-mouth as a trishaw taxi driver. When his beloved mother falls ill, he promises to buy her some of the chicken noodles she loves. We follow the determined driver as he picks up passengers good and bad, almost makes enough money to buy the noodles but then sees them slipping out of his grasp. Eventually Maung Yoe succeeds in keeping his promise in a surprising way. Min Han’s day-in-the-life story of a dutiful son uses an engaging mix of humour and drama to give us insight into the lives of ordinary people in Myanmar as Maung Yoe struggles to achieve his simple but pressing goal. The option to the script was bought by experienced MMPO producer U Win Kyi.
Gold by Mal Khaing
When rice-farmer Thi Ha’s crops fail, a friend persuades him to journey into the mountains to work in an illegal gold mine. Mistreated by the mine’s greedy owner and under pressure from his family to send money back home, Thi Ha sneaks into the mine at night to steal some gold. But a flash flood makes the unsafe shaft even more deadly and Thi Ha is caught in a mudslide. Mal Khaing uses her personal knowledge of illegal mining in Upper Burma to bring authenticity and tension to her dramatic and visually striking script. The option to the script was bought by MMPO Chairman and producer Lu Min.

Roof by Thiha Soe
Labourer Naing Oo has a secret: he reveres books and has assembled a small library in his humble hut. But when the roof starts leaking, he struggles with a combination of poverty and bad luck to protect his library. Local cafe owner Ma Cho likes Naing Oo and wants to help. Will Naing Oo be able to swallow his pride and accept her assistance before it is too late to save his precious books? Experienced screenwriter Thiha Soe’s script has an attractively wry humour and vivid characterisation as he tells a simple but engaging story about life in contemporary Yangon. The option to the script was bought by YFS Director Lindsey Merrison.

Hand Phone by Kyaw Rose
Yangon taxi-driver U Htoo is jealous that everyone has a snazzy mobile phone. When a female passenger accidentally leaves hers behind in his taxi, his wishes appear to have come true. But the phone brings only trouble and strife to U Htoo and his long-suffering wife. When its rightful owner demands he returns it, he is only too happy to oblige. Film director Kyaw Rose’s screenplay is an entertaining farce about Yangon’s current mobile obsession and the dangers of getting what you wish for. The option to the script was bought by Myanmar actress and producer Grace Swe Zin Htaik.

The evening ended with a networking session where all 16 training programme participants could meet and discuss their projects with Myanmar producers, directors, YFS students, representatives from various NGOs and other interested parties over food and drinks provided by the British Council.

Following the script auction, it transpired further consultation was required to ensure the rights of the four writers whose scripts had been optioned were taken into proper consideration and that the three organising bodies supporting the training programme – MMPO, Yangon Film School and British Council Yangon – were fully consulted about future plans for the auctioned scripts. The knowledge gap was addressed at an IP and Copyright meeting held at MMPO on 25 October 2013. Myanmar filmmaker and lawyer U Aung Soe explained the present, rapidly changing copyright situation in Myanmar where new rules governing intellectual property are being discussed at a governmental level. Actress, producer and MMPO executive Grace Swe Zin Htaik gave information about rights, options, script payments and other current practices in both Myanmar and internationally with particular reference to film festivals. Training programme leader Rachel Mathews explained the IP and copyright situation in Europe and the USA. Co-tutor Dr Aung Min discussed copyright and payments to writers drawing on his experience as an independent writer and filmmaker living and working in Yangon. The writers then had the opportunity to ask questions and discuss their own experiences with the speakers and the rest of the group.

iii) Feedback & One-to-One Script Meetings, October & November 2013
The 16 participants received written feedback from lead tutor Rachel Mathews on their first draft scripts at the end of the training programme. They then had a one-to-one meeting with Rachel and co-tutor Dr Aung Min. The meetings were designed primarily to discuss the feedback and ideas for redrafting. They also presented the chance to analyse the writer’s general progress and career plans.

iv) Meeting with Magalie Rouschmeyer, British Council Consultant, 29 November 2013
The one-to-one script meetings coincided with a fact finding trip to Yangon by British Council Cultural Skills External Research Consultant Magalie Rouschmeyer. On 29 November 2013, five participants from the Art of Screenwriting training programme met with Magalie at the Yangon Film School along with students from the School. Screenwriters and students gave Magalie comprehensive feedback on the current state of the media industries in Myanmar and the perceived skills gaps. They also made suggestions for future developments. A report of this fact-finding trip will be made available to British Council Yangon, YFS and MMPO in 2014.

Recommendations for Future Activities
During the one-to-one script meetings the tutors asked the participants to state what they would consider to be the most valuable next-steps in their development as writers. The three most common requests were:

1. A filmmaking training programme to train participants in the technical skills – camera, sound, directing, producing, editing – required to make a short film
Comment: YFS could run a short fiction filmmaking training programme with the Art of Screenwriting participants. However, there is the question of how this training programme would be funded.

2. Further input from the tutors on the scripts developed during the course in order to bring them to the point where they are ready to be sold to a producer.
   Comment: both the lead and co-tutor have continued giving feedback and encouragement to any of the participants who have requested it following the end of the training.

3. A longer-term screenwriting training programme to give participants the opportunity to write and develop a full-length feature film script of 90-120 minutes in length.
   Comment: this would appear to be the most cost-effective proposal which could bring about a step-change in the quality of screenplays available to the Myanmar film industry.

Having considered the work and outcomes of the Art of Screenwriting training programme and discussed the needs of the Myanmar film industry with programme partners Grace Swe Zin Htaik (MMPO), Lindsey Merrison (Yangon Film School) and Kyi Kyi Pyone (British Council Yangon), tutors Rachel Mathews and Dr Aung Min believe a longer-term training programme focusing on the writing of feature length screenplays would be of very real benefit for a selected number of the writers trained by YFS during 2013. Hence, YFS is currently developing and exploring funding models for a Feature Screenplay Development Programme.

(iii) THE ART OF ADVANCED SOUND DESIGN  1 to 13 October 2013

Tutor
The tutor was experienced Czech sound recordist and sound designer Ivan Horák.

Participants
Ten students participated in the training programme. These included advanced students who had taken previous YFS sound trainings – Ye Hnaung, Sai Kham Leik, Ko Ko Lwin, Kyaw Ko Ko, Slyne and Sai Nyi Nyi – as well as two new students, Eaidddhi and Phoe Moe, and two observers, Kyaw Swar and Seng Mai. The participants came from diverse backgrounds. Some are already professional sound designers with, for example, Sai Nyi Nyi and Ko Ko Lwin working at the government-owned Myanmar Motion Picture Enterprise (MMPE). Ye Hnaung is a composer whilst Sai Kham Leik and musician Slyne, work in radio or TV and were seeking training in the Pro Tools system for their jobs. Eaidddhi and Phoe Moe came from a company focusing on live sound but were both very interested in audio/visual art and sound design. Last but not least, Kyaw Ko Ko, the oldest and most experienced student, joined the very first edition of the YFS sound design training programme in 2008 and has attended ever since. Selected for their interest and commitment to sound design, the participants were aware that skills gained during their professional experience in Myanmar were lacking from an international point of view. Hence they were eager to learn about the ‘foreign approach’ to this key aspect of postproduction.

Aims
As in previous years, the training programme aimed to disseminate both aesthetic and practical knowledge about sound design. The famous American producer, director and filmmaking visionary George Lucas once said: ‘Sound is 50% of the movie-going experience.’ While most respected filmmakers around the world would agree and approach filmmaking in accordance with this...
statement, this has not always been the case in Myanmar. However, after four editions of the Sound Design training programme, a minor sound design revolution is underway. As one of the most emotional aspects of a film, sound can considerably increase its overall quality and impact. In the past, Myanmar producers have often refused to invest sufficient time and money in high-quality sync sound recording and sound postproduction. Today, however, young producers, filmmakers and even actors are taking an interest in the possibilities of sound design. This training programme intended to progress this growing interest and the skills necessary to undertake successful sound design.

**Structure & Methodology**

This training programme was for advanced students and hence assumed prior knowledge of both the concepts and practicalities of sound design. After briefly revising material, the students moved on to new subjects and covered both the theory and hands-on practice with the tools and options for finalising sound using professional audio workstation software Pro Tools and Nuendo and focusing on the creativity required to undertake successful sound design. In keeping with the YFS’s documentary tradition, tutor Ivan Horák focused mostly on aspects of sound design for documentary filmmaking. However, he also touched upon techniques such as foley sound effects and the possibilities of ADR (Automated Dialogue Replacement) with actors and, especially, non-actors – both important elements in fiction films.

The 2013 training programme was unique for the quality and number of films completed by the students during the two-week period. The nine films from the summer’s Documentary Filmmaking Competition plus two other YFS projects, Tyres directed by Kyaw Myo Lwin, and the portmanteau film Yangon by Night, all required sound design. Postproduction sound for these films was completed by the students during the training programme under the tutor’s supervision, ideally with input from the films’ directors. Not all the directors could be present during the sound editing process but they were all able to screen their films to the students in order to share their vision, ideas and sound preferences. The participants were finally dealing with real film projects and each was able to complete one film in collaboration with a colleague during the training programme.

The students set up four improvised studios in the YFS House, equipped with high-quality professional equipment: Avid’s widely used Pro Tools software. One small studio was equipped with Steinberg’s Nuendo system – which is frequently used across Myanmar. However, due to international compatibility, most students logically preferred to use Pro Tools. Two films – Yangon by Night and Tyres – were finalised after the training programme ended at a professional sound studio in Berlin using Dolby Surround 5.1.

Giving each participant the opportunity to finish the sound design on an actual film meant the learning process was particularly effective. Working on the films from the Documentary Competition provided excellent practice: real work is much better than ‘just’ exercises. Ivan Horák could focus intensively and individually with each student on the process of the sound design from the very beginning to the end. As with other aspects of filmmaking, practice in sound design is key. The students learned a lot by watching the tutor correcting their mistakes and mixing the films, which they could not yet do for themselves.

**Sound design on the following films was completed during the training programme:**

- **A Man For All Seasons** – directed by Soe Moe Aung, sound design by Kyaw Ko Ko
- **Amhya – Share** – directed by Mya Darli Aung, sound design by Ye Hnaung
- **Lady of the Lake** – directed by Zaw Naing Oo, sound design by Phoe Moe
- **Last Kiss** – directed by Seng Mai, sound design by Kyaw Ko Ko
- **Precious** – directed by David Kyaw Thet Aung, sound design by Sai Nyi Nyi
- **Silent Talker** – directed by Kyaw Myo Lwin, sound design by Sai Kham Lei
- **Solomon** – directed by Anna Biak Tha Mawi, sound design by Eaidhdi
- **When the Boat Comes In** – directed by Khin Maung Kyaw, sound design by Ko Ko Lwin
- **Yangon by Night** – directed by a group of YFS filmmakers, sound design by Slyne
Evaluation & Recommendations
The students were enthusiastic and worked hard. There were some issues with attendance, which can be a problem when a training programme takes place in Yangon on a daily (rather than residential) basis and participants have work and family commitments. However, this did not occur too often.

Since these advanced students have now received quite a lot of training in sound design, it would be good in a future training programme to set them independent projects to undertake before the arrival of the international tutor who could then come in to check their work. This would give the participants a greater sense of responsibility and autonomy and would also be a more effective use of both the tutor’s and participants’ time.

Another possibility would be to select one or two candidates and give them a scholarship to become a trainee in a professional sound studio abroad, for example, at Basis Studio in Berlin which has worked with the Yangon Film School right from the start in 2005.

(iv) TRUE FICTIONS III ___ 28 October to 14 December 2013

Tutors
The first three, residential weeks of the True Fictions III training programme were tutored by screenwriting and fiction directing tutor Rachel Mathews and production tutor Tina Walinda. During the film shoots they were joined by camera tutor Lars Barthel, sound tutor Ivan Horák and editing tutor Regina Bärtschi. Regina stayed in Yangon to oversee the editing period alongside Lindsey Merrison who provided input on postproduction, marketing and distribution. YFS sound recordist and editor Myo Min Khin led a session in the training programme on sound and editing.

Participants
A total of 20 students participated, 11 women and 9 men. A key aim of True Fictions III was to bring together more experienced students – capable of taking heads of department roles in the crews – with less experienced students who could fill trainee roles and benefit from ‘on the job’ training from their peers. Two short films were shot during the training programme, Hope (working title) and To School. Under the guidance of the two producers, the students divided themselves into two crews as follows:

Hope crew: Hnin Ei Hlaing (producer), Khin Myanmar (director), Tin Win Naing (DOP), Kyaw Ko Ko (sound), Cho Wutyi Lwin (screenwriter & 1st AD), Kyaw Swar (production manager), Lynn Hnin Aye (camera assistant), Pan Thakhin (production assistant), Sai Nyi Nyi (boom op), Zin Mar Oo (editor), Mai Htoo Cho (editor).

To School crew: Shin Daewe (producer), Soe Moe Aung (director), Khin Maung Kyaw (DOP), Mya Darli Aung (sound), Su Su Hlaing (screenwriter & 1st AD), Su San Zaw Win (production manager), Htet Aung San (camera assistant), Slynne (boom op), Zaw Naing Oo (editor)

Aims
1. To produce two short films dealing in an engaging way with the problems and challenges facing Myanmar during its current period of rapid and unprecedented change
2. To give YFS students from different ethnic, social and religious backgrounds the opportunity to work together towards a common goal, overcoming barriers and gaining a practical understanding of the value of collaboration
3. To give more experienced YFS students the chance to become heads of department on a fiction shoot and take on greater responsibility and autonomy
4. To give newer students who had not yet made a fiction film the opportunity to work with their more experienced Myanmar peers and gain ‘on the job’ training
5. To give both experienced and newer students the opportunity to work with a group of international tutors to profit from their knowledge and learn strategies for working with different nationalities and in different languages
6. To bring the issues tackled in the films to a wider general public both at home and abroad
7. To support and promote the talents of YFS filmmakers
8. To promote an increasing professionalization and enrich the Myanmar media industry

Structure & Methodology
The True Fictions III training programme ran six days a week for seven weeks from 28 October to 14 December. The first three weeks comprised a residential training at Pinlon Village Hotel on the outskirts of Yangon. This meant the two tutors and 20 participants were onsite 24/7 with one day off per week and could become fully immersed in the theoretical teaching and hands-on practical exercises.

WEEK 1 opened with the screening of an ‘exemplary’ film to establish the training program’s aesthetic and practical goals: Children of Heaven (Majid Majidi, Iran, 1997). This Oscar-nominated feature tells the story of two young siblings growing up in poverty in Tehran. Since both Hope and To School featured child protagonists, Children of Heaven provided a useful demonstration of how to direct young cast members as well as fulfilling the ‘true fictions’ criteria of having a strong documentary ethos and being shot on a low-budget with non-actors working in real locations. Following the screening, the film was analysed by the two international tutors alongside YFS-trained trainers Myo Min Khin (production and post-production sound), Mya Darli Aung (camera) and Hnin Ei Hlaing (editing).

WEEK 1 focused on theoretical issues essential to film production including:
• Crew roles, responsibilities and legalities – hiring & firing, contracts, ‘deferred’ payments
• Script breakdown, continuity and shot-listing
• Scheduling and call sheets
• Locations – recces, aesthetics and practicalities, permission forms
• Casting – including a ‘working with non-actors’ workshop
• Budgeting – including a session led by experienced YFS producer Shin Daewe to discuss the budget of True Fictions II film The Bamboo Grove.

WEEK 2 was all about transforming Week 1’s theory into hands-on practice as the participants prepared, shot and edited two short film exercises. Without the source material being revealed to them, the participants received scripts of two scenes taken from The Sheep Thief, an award-winning student film by Asif Kapadia (India/UK, 1997). Shot in Rajasthan, the film used non-actors and real locations giving it a documentary, ‘true fictions’ feel. After the two crews had shot, edited and analysed their scenes, the actual film was screened. This gave everyone the opportunity to compare and contrast their own filmmaking decisions with those of Kapadia.

WEEK 3 comprised pre-production for Hope and To School. The crews were allotted a production office on the Pinlon site and worked independently to finalise preparations for their films. Some pre-production (including budgeting, preliminary casting and locations) had been undertaken before the training programme but participants now had the opportunity to screen their casting sessions and location recces to the tutors and discuss key decisions. The tutors gave feedback on the budgets and schedules and went through the script breakdowns and shot-lists with the directors, 1st ADs and DOPs. By the end of the week the films were ready for production. The residential part of the training programme ended on Saturday 16 November with the tutors and participants leaving Pinlon and returning to Yangon.

During WEEKS 4 and 5 the True Fictions III films were shot. Hope, produced by experienced YFS filmmaker Hnin Ei Hlaing, directed by novice director Khin Myanmar and shot by veteran DOP Tin Win Naing, was largely filmed in an old wooden house in north
Yangon with an additional scene shot at the Kabar Aye Pagoda. The prison scene was filmed on a set in the Myanmar Motion Picture Enterprise’s lot since political prisoners are still detained in the script’s actual location of Insein Prison. The film faced a major challenge in the crew’s decision to cast a five year old girl as protagonist. This resulted in a greatly truncated working day. However, the director and her crew were ultimately able to coax a strong and affecting performance from the little girl.

After much discussion, To School – produced by long-standing YFS filmmaker Shin Daewe, directed by up-and-coming director Soe Moe Aung and shot by experienced DOP Khin Maung Kyaw – was filmed in Apyauk, a village 80 miles north of Yangon. This was the location where screenwriter Su Su Hlaing had set her story but the tutors had reservations about the three hour journey time. However, the crew screened convincing location footage and it was agreed filming could go ahead provided tutors could visit the location (and collect the rushes) every 2-3 days. Although extra permissions were required from the local authorities to allow foreigners access to Apyauk, the location turned out to be ideal. As with Hope, the main challenge in To School was the child protagonist (in this case an 11 year old boy) and the director had his work cut out securing a credible performance from his lead (non) actor.

In line with industry practice, the editing of both films began during the shoots. This meant the student editors could give feedback to their crews and make suggestions for pick-up shots. Rushes screenings were held every second day for Hope with the tutors discussing the footage with the director and her crew.

The To School team – who were staying at the location during the shoot – received feedback from their editor by phone and from the tutors during location visits. Both crews also benefited from support on location during the filming from various tutors e.g. to help shoot particularly challenging scenes.

During the shoots, the student producers met regularly with production tutor Tina Walinda to deliver intermediary financial reports and collect their next sums of production money. The financial controls worked well with both productions remaining on budget. Principal photography on To School and Hope was completed by Friday 29 November after which the crews and tutors enjoyed a wrap party at the YFS House. The majority of international tutors left Myanmar that weekend but editing tutor Regina Bärtschi remained in Yangon to oversee the ongoing edits of the films.

During WEEKS 6 and 7 the editors were joined by their directors and continued working on the edits with Regina whilst Lindsey Merrison gave input on the entire postproduction workflow. She also discussed distribution – including submitting films to festivals and TV stations – with the producers, directors and any other interested students.
Report on Editing by Mentor Regina Bärtschi

After the films had been shot, the goal was to create a rough cut as quickly as possible so the editors could then work with the directors and Regina on a fine cut. The editors on Hope, Zin Mar Oo and Mai Htoo Cho, worked hard and managed to assemble a rough cut by 4 December when a screening was held for the entire crew. Director Khin Myanmar was very relieved to see they had enough good material to tell the story and that the film could work. As they progressed onto the fine cut, the director and editors found it hard to let go of redundant scenes. The process of ‘killing your darlings’ i.e. cutting shots and even entire scenes which – although they may look good and were tricky to film – serve neither the film’s story nor the emotional arc, is a key part of editing which even experienced editors and directors find hard to do. However, after another week of work, they managed to cut 15 minutes of unnecessary material and also added English subtitles. On 10 December the crew had the exciting opportunity of screening the fine cut to Mary Sweeney, long-term editor for David Lynch (Twin Peaks, Mulholland Drive, The Straight Story) who was in Yangon leading a training programme at the US Embassy. Mary was very taken by the film and made a couple of useful suggestions about moving around scenes.

Both Hope and To School centre around quite long montage sequences which show the passage of time. Montage is something YFS filmmakers have not had to contend with in their documentaries and the editors and directors on both projects found these sequences hard to handle. When Regina left Yangon at the end of December, the Hope team were still working on the montage. Producer Hnin Ei Hlaing hired renowned Myanmar composer Diramore to write some music for this key sequence.

The editor of To School, Zaw Naing Oo, was often ill during December which delayed the editing of this film. By the time Regina had to leave, the rough-cut was only two thirds complete and the montage sequence was missing. Zaw Naing Oo has cut Myanmar feature films and edits very quickly. However, this means he may not give himself enough time to think through what he is doing. There was also an aesthetic conflict between the director and editor: director Soe Moe Aung intended To School to have a slow rhythm and composed the shots accordingly. Zaw Naing Oo, in contrast, was cutting everything quite choppy and fast. He was not happy with the material and criticised it heavily. Watching what he had shot, Soe Moe Aung realised he and his crew had spent a lot of time and energy on less important details which meant they did not leave themselves enough time to capture the key moments of a scene. By the time they got round to shooting these moments the young (non)actors were tired and no longer able to concentrate. The director admitted he was learning a lot by looking at his rushes and the rough cut as it came together and he would do things differently next time. Although this is excellent to hear – the entire point of YFS training programmes is for students to learn! – it does mean To School is a particularly difficult project to cut. Zaw Naing Oo cannot edit in the style he is used to and this is a big challenge for him. The issues with the material and the conflicting outlooks of editor and director meant that unfortunately, by the time Regina had to leave Yangon in December, the rough-cut for this film was not complete.

It was always going to be a tall order to complete the films after only a month’s editing. The editors, directors and producers continued working independently once Regina had left. The editing mentor returned to Yangon in February 2014 to oversee the finalisation of both films.

Evaluation
Two short fiction films were produced:

Hope (working title), based on the personal experiences of screenwriter Cho Wutyi Lwin, depicts events in a Yangon family when the father is sent to prison for his political beliefs. This project is one of the first Myanmar fiction films to deal with the wrongs of the military dictatorship and depicts how the actions of the previous government affected not only the victims but also their families. It is a bold step in storytelling in the new Myanmar where until very recently films were not only censored by the authorities but also self-censored by writers and filmmakers themselves.
To School provides a documentary-style depiction of life in an isolated rural village. Its cast is a real family who – like their film counterparts – exist in poverty where one set-back can herald disaster. The protagonist’s longing to go to school demonstrates the important role education can play in improving opportunities for the next generation in Myanmar. The boy ultimately fails in his dream – but enables his younger brother to go in his place – revealing the sacrifices youngsters like him often have to make.

Both films look beautiful and feature strong performances from their child protagonists. They demonstrate YFS students’ keen documentary eye and give new insight into the lives of people in Myanmar. At the time of writing (April 2014) the films are in the final stages of postproduction. Once completed, they will be distributed by the producers with support from YFS. It is hoped both films will do well on the festival circuit and will also be screened on TV in Myanmar and abroad.

Students Working Together

In keeping with all YFS trainings, the 20 True Fictions III participants came from a diverse range of backgrounds with ethnicities including Burmese, Chin, Shan, Myanmar-Chinese, Mon and Rakhine. The majority of participants worked well together and supported each other in what were two challenging film shoots. Problems did arise, however, between some of the more experienced students and newer crew members. Matters came to a head when one of the novice students asked to leave the training. The tutors transferred this student to the other crew which worked well with the second crew being very welcoming and supportive but the episode lead to a period of soul-searching amongst some of the more experienced students. The incident demonstrates in microcosm the work to be undertaken throughout Myanmar during the country’s period of transition as monolithic, top-down structures of organisation give way to the formation of more democratic, inclusive working relationships.

Experienced Students Delivering ‘on the job’ Training

This aspect was particularly successful with producers Hnin Ei Hlaing and Shin Daewe. Both filmmakers had participated in True Fictions II. They now had the chance to take on the all-important role of producer with responsibility not only for the selection and leadership of their crews but also every other aspect of their short films from script development to location recces to casting and the shoots themselves. Perhaps most challenging for Myanmar filmmakers (where financial matters often lack clarity and transparency), the producers were required to devise a functioning budget and to keep their films within the projected costs. Both producers generously trained up their less seasoned production managers and assistants, sharing their knowledge and experience. Amongst other roles, veteran YFS cinematographer Tin Win Naing trained up his novice camera assistant, Lin Hnin Aye. Similar ‘on the job training’ occurred within the sound teams of both crews. Such training is a successful model which benefits both the more experienced students – who can consolidate their knowledge and realise just how much they know about their given area of expertise – and the trainees and is something YFS is committed to pursuing in future trainings.

Myanmar Students Working with International Tutors

The first three weeks of the training immersed the two international tutors and 20 participants in close proximity in a fully residential setting. This meant teaching not only occurred at a formal classroom level but also informally during mealtimes (which tutors and students ate together) and in the evenings when the tutors ran a series of film screenings and led discussions. Participants were rather quiet at the start of Week 1 but quickly became more vocal when speaking to the tutors and within the group as the training programme progressed.

Training was carried out in English with YFS interpreter Aung Myin Tun on hand at the start to translate for both tutors and students. As the training progressed, his services were called upon less frequently as students grew more confident about speaking English in front of their peers. In weeks 3 to 7 the training proceeded in English without a translator. The overall level of English competency amongst the YFS student body has grown year upon year and most participants now understand English even if they are shy of speaking it.
In Weeks 4 to 7 four more international tutors joined the training which meant the 20 participants had the chance to interact with German, Swiss, Czech and English nationals. An informal but important aspect of any YFS training is the possibility it affords participants to learn about a diverse range of countries and question the tutors not only about the film industry but also daily life in their countries. Considering the closed nature of Myanmar society before the recent political changes, YFS students are gaining a real advantage in beginning to understand life outside of Myanmar and hence becoming more open and better informed if/when they work with some of the many foreign nationals currently entering the country to pursue opportunities presented by the new Myanmar.

True Fictions III – a ‘baptism by fire’?
The True Fictions III training programme demanded a great deal from its participants. The two chosen scripts were ambitious and challenging: for short films they are quite long (both films will run at around 20 minutes) and both feature children as their protagonists. To School was shot in an isolated rural area; Hope dealt with a highly emotive subject matter. These were not easy films to make.

However, each crew member rose to the challenge and learnt from the training, broadening their knowledge both in their own specialist area and in the general requirements of making a short fiction film, accruing vital experience which should stand them in good stead when they seek and undertake further work in the media.

True Fictions III has not only increased the participants’ aptitude for fiction filmmaking. It has also augmented the ‘soft’ skills which are so essential for anyone wishing to work in the media industry. These include:

- people management and how to get the best out of colleagues
- the importance of good interpersonal relationships
- scheduling, timekeeping and the role preparation plays in the successful completion of a task
- the importance of teamwork and a willingness to train colleagues less experienced than oneself

Strengthening the Profile of YFS
The recent political changes in Myanmar mean many international media groups are now coming into the country eager to offer their services and train the next generation of writers and filmmakers. However, these training courses tend to be short-term and give more of a ‘taste’ of what can be accomplished via the media rather than offering in-depth training. True Fictions III worked with participants who already had a solid media grounding and were keen to broaden their skillset and gain a more profound understanding of how real-life stories from Myanmar can be shaped and produced into satisfying fiction films. The relatively long length of the training – 7 weeks for most participants with the editors, directors and producers involved in the projects for at least 3 months – and its residential nature meant participants became fully immersed and could learn more both in terms of quantity and quality.

The School’s policy of working with students over a longer time period and offering not just one but an entire portfolio of trainings means YFS is increasingly being recognised as a key player in the training of media professionals in Myanmar. With their projected festival and television screenings, Hope and To School will bring further attention to YFS and help secure its reputation as the go-to place for media training in the country.

Recommendations
Although one of the successful components of the course was encouraging more experienced students to share their knowledge and expertise with their less experienced peers, Hope and To School are ambitious short film projects. It would be useful to offer future YFS students without previous fiction filmmaking experience something less challenging. Such a course could largely be
run by the more experienced YFS students (building upon the School’s ‘Training of the Trainers’ programme) with oversight by international tutors. It would also be valuable to build upon the experience of those students who have now accrued quite a large amount of short fiction filmmaking expertise in order to develop and produce a longer piece of work, namely, a feature film. YFS has already taken steps to move into feature-length filmmaking with its 2013 Screenwriting Competition (see update on p.32). Hence two key training proposals:

- **The Art of Short Fiction Filmmaking** – an entry-level training with shorter scripts (e.g. 5 minutes) focusing in particular on how to cover a scene and the strategies required for working with non-actors. This training could last for four weeks.

- **The Art of Feature Filmmaking** – this would involve the mentoring of the development, production and postproduction of a full-length feature film made from one of the YFS Screenwriting Competition scripts. The training would last around a year and a half.

## VI NGO Commissions, Cooperation with International Media & Independent Productions in 2013

The Yangon Film School’s production arm, Yangon Film Services, was pleased to accept and successfully deliver four film commissions from development organisations in 2013; in addition YFS provided gainful employment (almost 15,000 EUR was earned in 2013) for around 28 students working as trainers, fixers and crew members for a number of international organisations and broadcasters including the BBC, NHK, the Asia-Europe Foundation, the World Bank, the Sustainable Business Initiative and various embassies among others. The School’s film commissions in 2013 were:

### i) Welcome To Lashio
Commissioned by International Rescue Committee, 8 min

The International Rescue Committee (IRC) has been active in Myanmar since 2008 and works with local communities to implement programmes addressing health, water and sanitation, livelihoods and social development needs. *Welcome To Lashio* describes some of the achievements of the IRC’s local NGO and community-based partners in the Lashio area of Shan State in northern Myanmar.

This short film was directed by Shin Daewe and shot by David Kyaw Thet Aung with sound by Han Lin Twin. Khin Myanmar was both assistant director and editor. The film was mentored by editing tutor Regina Bärtschi.

### ii) & iii) Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative
Two films commissioned by Pyoe Pin NGO, 8 min & 20 min

Pyoe Pin commissioned YFS to edit and post-produce a documentary about a five-day conference held in Yangon in October 2013 highlighting the aims of the Civil Society Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) in Myanmar. Mentored by YFS editing tutor Stewart Young, YFS-trained editor Myo Min Khin cut two versions of the material:

- **a SHORT film** featuring conference highlights and ‘sound bites’ from interviews with speakers and various ethnic stakeholders to be used as an advocacy tool to make the Myanmar government aware of the concerns and expectations of Myanmar’s diverse ethnicities regarding transparency in the extractive industries

- **a LONGER documentary** focusing on each topic discussed at the conference in more depth
iv) Myanmar Midwife
Commissioned by Carine Weiss, 42 min
Approximately 1 million women give birth annually in Myanmar; around 2,400 of these women die from pregnancy related causes; around 33,000 newborns die within the first month of their life. Most of these mother and child deaths are preventable. Swiss national Carine Weiss commissioned YFS to make a film in the Ayeyarwaddy delta following a midwife on her rounds in this poverty-stricken and remote region. The film, part of Carine’s graduation thesis, was directed by trained nurse and YFS filmmaker Khin Myo Myat and shot by DOPs Tin Win Naing and Soe Kyaw Tin Tun. Sound was recorded by Nu Nu Hlaing and Sai Nyi Nyi and the film was edited by Thet Hsu Hlaing and Regina Bärtschi.

In 2014, YFS will help disseminate the DVD across Myanmar via its Travelling Cinema Project. Building upon the film’s success, YFS has already been asked to follow a 10-year project designed to improve primary healthcare in Myanmar by training and supporting GPs.

Alongside the nine documentaries made for the Art of Documentary Editing training programme and two True Fictions III films, YFS filmmakers also completed three independent projects in 2013:

v) The Potter’s Song
YFS filmmaker and Production Manager of Yangon Film Services, Hnin Ei Hlaing, took time out of her busy schedule to complete a personal project, The Potter’s Song. This beautifully shot and edited half hour documentary – filmed by Soe Kyaw Tin Tun, produced, directed and edited by Hnin Ei Hlaing herself with support from YFS editing mentors Tuula Mehtonen and Regina Bärtschi – captures the lives and work of a community in Twante, a village across the river from Yangon where deposits of a special type of clay have attracted generations of potters whose way of life is now rapidly disappearing. The film was made possible by the YFS Production Fund and premiered at Yangon’s Wathann Film Festival in September 2013. It is now being distributed to international film festivals.

vi) Yangon by Night
YFS is delighted that this project – a true labour of love for a group of YFS filmmakers – was finally completed in 2013. Shot in 2007 by seven separate film crews over a single night during the dark days of the dictatorship, just one month after the ‘Saffron Revolution’ was crushed by the military, the material languished for five years whilst the filmmakers discussed what to do with it. Finally, in 2012, international editing tutor Melanie Sandford hit upon the idea of using the footage as an editing exercise during the Beginners’ Editing Training programme. The results were so good that, with the help of YFS-trained editor Myo Min Khin, the separately edited scenes were put together to form this 42 minute film. Worked on by a total of 21 YFS filmmakers, the project forms a fascinating document of Yangon’s recent past, mixing darkness with light as a variety of the city’s inhabitants struggle with their circumstances but nevertheless reveal a place full of variation and spirit.

vii) Tyres
Another independent project that has been a long time in gestation but worth the wait is Kyaw Myo Lwin’s portrait of a community of tyre recyclers in Yangon’s South Okkalappa district. Thanks to the sumptuous black-and-white photography from YFS graduate cinematographer Aung Ko Ko, the nicely paced editing, and the sound design – created initially by students during YFS tutor Ivan Horák’s 2013 training programme and completed at Basis Studio in Berlin – the film offers an almost mesmerizingly lyrical look at these creative and hardworking people as they create with their super-sharp blades, careful eyes and skilful strokes, buckets, brushes and slippers from discarded rubber tyres. YFS was delighted when the film was selected to premiere at the prestigious IDFA documentary film festival in Amsterdam in November 2013 which, it is to be hoped, will be the first of many festival and TV screenings for this project.

viii) Restoration of Ché Phawa Daw Nu Nu (Tender Are The Feet)
After seeing feature film Ché Phawa Daw Nu Nu (Tender Are The Feet) in the ‘Memory’ section of Yangon’s Wathann Film Festival, YFS Director Lindsey Merrison believed this 1972 milestone in Myanmar cinema deserved to be brought to a wider, international

Actors Zaw Win & San San Aye in the classic 1972 Myanmar feature Ché Phawa Daw Nu Nu restored by YFS in 2013

Towards the end of 2012, an international jury read the feature film ideas submitted to the YFS’s first Screenwriting Competition and chose two projects – Splash by Su Su Hlaing and Parcel by Anna Biak Tha Mawi – as winners of the preliminary round. YFS’s screenwriting tutor Rachel Mathews worked with the writers throughout 2013 via e-tuition and face-to-face meetings to help them develop their ideas into film treatments of around 15 pages in length. The two treatments went back to the same jury at the end of 2013 to select the project they most wanted to see as a feature film. The panel of eight Myanmar and international judges found both stories equally good. As jury member Ed Wethered, Head of Development at BBC film, wrote: ‘We think both submissions are strong and present modern Burma in surprising and involving ways’. His view was shared by his co-juror, renowned Sino-Burmese writer Wendy Law-Yone, who found the judging ‘A very tough choice, since each is so compelling in its own way.’ There was a dead heat with four judges voting for Splash and four for Parcel. YFS has therefore decided to continue developing both projects. The two writers will receive further funding and support from Rachel in 2014 to write their full-length screenplays.

Splash by Su Su Hlaing (above left)

Writer and radio journalist Su Su Hlaing’s story is about Wa Toke, a young boy in Yangon who makes a living collecting rubbish for recycling. When Wa Toke is bitten by a dog, a stranger gets him hooked on sniffing glue. Although the story deals with the serious subject matters of addiction and the exploitation of children by adults, it is full of vibrant, intriguing characters and reads like something Charles Dickens might have written in Oliver Twist.

Parcel by Anna Biak Tha Mawi (left)

Chin filmmaker and artist Anna Biak Tha Mawi’s story is set in the beautiful, mountainous landscape of her homeland. Sui Sui, a young Chin woman from a poor family, is in love with rich boy Thang Thang. But disaster strikes when her brother is killed in an accident whilst working illegally in Malaysia. Sui Sui is pressured into becoming a ‘Parcel Bride’ and going abroad to marry a stranger in order to bring money to her family.

VII YFS Screenwriting Competition

The YFS Annual Screening took place on Saturday 7 December 2013 in the grounds of the Institut Francais in central Yangon and was bigger and more successful than ever. A large screen was specially constructed for the audience of almost 300 people which included YFS students, staff, friends and supporters alongside diplomats and members of the international development community as well as capacity building and civil society organisations and NGOs, journalists, media workers, filmmakers, artists and writers. The local press and media were there in force with Ayeyarwaddy Magazine, MNTV, MRTV-4, Kamaryut Media Press, The Voice Weekly Journal, The Flower News Journal, The Pyay Myanmar Journal, The Street View, Daily Eleven Newspaper, The Popular Journal, The Yangon Times Journal, 7 Days Journal, Mi-Channel, Up-To-Date Channel conducting interviews with several YFS filmmakers. The evening began with US Ambassador Derek Mitchell presenting director Zaw Naing Oo with the 2013 Palm Springs Film Festival’s Best Student Documentary for his film about Chin migration, Empty Nest.

Then came the eagerly anticipated announcement of the winners of the YFS Goethe-Institut Myanmar Yangon Film School Documentary Awards. The prize money was generously donated by the Goethe Institut Yangon and the prizes were presented by the Institut’s Daphne Wolf to the following winners:
A Man for All Seasons
Diamond Award (1st Prize) of 1,000 Euros
Directed by Soe Moe Aung, edited by Myo Min Khin

Solomon
Ruby Award (2nd Prize) of 750 Euros
Directed by Anna Biak Tha Mawi, edited by Khin Myanmar

Lady of the Lake
Joint Jade Award (3rd Prize) of 250 Euros
Directed and edited by Zaw Naing Oo

When the Boat Comes In
Joint Jade Award (3rd Prize) of 250 Euros
Directed by Khin Maung Kyaw, edited by Hnin Ei Hlaing

IX YFS Films at National & International Festivals

2013 was another successful year for the dissemination of YFS films with a record 23 different films screening at 31 festivals or other events around the world. The full list of films and festivals can be found in Table IV of the Appendix on page 41 but here are some of the year’s highlights:

The year got off to an excellent start in January when YFS editing and film analysis tutor Tuula Mehtonen (below left) was honoured with the Apollo Award at the DOCPOINT Helsinki Documentary Film Festival. Tuula was given a ‘Carte Blanche Programme’ where she could screen a number of films in which she had been involved. The School was honoured that among her choices Tuula selected YFS films Like Father, Like Son (Pe Maung Same, 2006), An Untitled Life (Shin Daewe, 2008), Unreported Story (Lay Thida, 2011) and Burmese Butterfly (Hnin Ei Hlaing, 2011).

Speaking of which, Burmese Butterfly, Hnin Ei Hlaing’s (bottom left) sensitive portrait of 21-year-old hairdresser Phyo Lay and his brave decision to come out and live as a woman in Yangon, was definitely the YFS festival favourite of 2013, clocking up screenings at an impressive 13 festivals around the world including in Los Angeles, Bangkok, Hanoi, Bologna and Mexico City.

In May, Hnin Ei Hlaing was part of a delegation of YFS women directors with Khin Myo Myat, Khin Myanmar, Thet Su Hlaing, Cho Pyone and War War Hlaing invited to the International Women’s Film Festival in Seoul to present their films and participate in panels and Q&A sessions on the topics of women in film in Myanmar, documentary filmmaking in Myanmar and the role of YFS in supporting a diverse media culture. The filmmakers presented Koran and Karate by War War Hlaing, Unreported Story by Lay Thida, Hey Girl! by Khin Myo Myat, Burmese Butterfly by Hnin Ei Hlaing, The Bag by Thet Su Hlaing and No. 62 Pansodan Street by Cho Pyone.

In April, short documentary Insein Rhythm, directed by Soe Moe Aung as part of the 2012 Beginners’ course, was selected for the prestigious Visions du Réel International Film Festival in Nyon, Switzerland. The film, which provides a witty take on the comings and goings at Yangon’s railway station in Insein and displays an innovative editing style by YFS editor Kyaw Myo Lwin, received its world premiere at the festival. Thanks to support from the Euro-Burma Office, Soe Moe Aung was able to travel from Yangon to Switzerland to present his film and participate in post-screening Q&As. In November, Insein Rhythm was selected for the International Programme of the Leipzig International Festival for Documentary and Animation, the world’s oldest documentary film festival, and also featured in the International Short Film Competition at the Exground Film Festival in Wiesbaden, Germany.
In May, YFS director Lindsey Merrison and documentary filmmaking tutor Ulrike Schaz presented a selection of films made by YFS students at the 22nd Fernsehworkshop Entwicklungs politik in Frankfurt. This biennial symposium is for organisations involved in development cooperation and intercultural education in the field of film and television which looks at North-South issues and their current media coverage. The audience of international broadcasters, filmmakers and development workers were able to see the breadth of films produced by YFS and its students and alumni including a trailer for Nargis: When Time Stopped Breathing, the feature length documentary made by YFS-trained filmmakers in the aftermath of the catastrophic cyclone Nargis in 2008 which killed nearly 140,000 people. In 2013 Nargis: When Time Stopped Breathing also screened at TheatreWorks in Singapore in January, at Meta-House in Phnom Penh, Cambodia in March and at the International Environmental Film Festival at Nusa Tenggara Timur in Indonesia in September.

In June Empty Nest directed by Zaw Naing Oo – a moving depiction of a Chin couple living in Yangon who are deeply missing their children, four of whom have moved abroad in search of a better future, screened at the Palm Springs International Film Festival in the USA where it won the prize for Best Student Documentary Short. Unfortunately Zaw Naing Oo was unable to travel to the festival with his film. However, he was presented with his award by the US Ambassador to Myanmar at the YFS Annual Screening in December 2013 (see photo on p.33 above).

YFS films also won prizes in July at the inaugural Myanmar-Singapore Film Festival where YFS managed a clean sweep with 1st Prize going to The Bamboo Grove (Khin Khin Hsu, 2011), 2nd Prize to My Grandfather’s House (Shunn Lei Swe Yee, 2012), 3rd Prize to Bungkus (Lay Thida, 2011), 4th Prize to Burmese Butterfly (Hnin Ei Hlaing, 2011) and 5th Prize to The Old Photographer (Thet Oo Maung, 2012). The Bamboo Grove directed by Khin Khin Hsu as part of the 2010 True Fictions II Training programme, is already a festival favourite and tells a story based on the real-life experiences of scriptwriter Dr Aung Min as a naive young city doctor travels to the delta for his first assignment and is confronted by Kayin patients, in particular a determined old man, who question the efficacy of western medicine.

September saw the successful 3rd edition of the Wathann Film Festival in Yangon. Set up in 2011 by Myanmar filmmakers including YFS-trained Thu Thu Shein, Thaiddhi, Myo Min Khin and Aung Ko Ko as a showcase for home-grown documentaries and fiction films, the festival took place in 2013 in Waziyar Cinema in downtown Yangon, a venerable old movie house from the golden days of Myanmar film. As in previous years, there was a good showing of YFS films in the festival’s Competition including 2012 Beginners’ course films My Grandfather’s House by Shunn Lei Swe Yee, No. 62 Pansodan Street by Cho Pyone and Insein Rhythm by Soe Moe Aung. A Grandmother by Han Linn Aung, Tyres by Kyo Myo Lwin and The Potter’s Song by Hnin Ei Hlaing also screened in...
Competition. YFS is delighted that the international jury selected as its Best Documentary *Take Me Home*, Shin Daewe’s film about civilians in Kachin State displaced by the long-running conflict who dream of returning home. The New Vision Award went to *The River – Our Ayeyarwaddy*, directed and shot by YFS-trained filmmakers Pe Maung Same and Tay Zar, a poetic account of a trip made by a group of Myanmar photographers, journalists, poets and writers who went upstream on the Ayeyarwaddy at the time when the river was being threatened by a huge hydroelectric power project from China. YFS filmmaker and Committee Member Soe Moe Aung won the Best Short Fiction Film Award for *Next Month*, a story about a family who are split when poverty forces the mother into prostitution. Congratulations to Shin Daewe, Pe Maung Same, Tay Zar and Soe Moe Aung!

In October, YFS caught up with an old friend at the Myanmar Film Festival in Los Angeles when Lay Thida, director of successful YFS films including *Just A Boy* (2006), *The Change Maker* (2008), *Listen to Us* (2009) and *Unreported Story* (2011), who is currently studying in the USA on a Fulbright Scholarship, screened YFS ‘true fictions’ film *Bungkus* (2011) which she produced and directed. The film, written by YFS screenwriter Anna Biak Tha Mawi was the first fiction film ever to be made in the Hakha-Chin language and tells the story of a ‘parcel bride’, a young Chin woman sent abroad to marry a man she has never met to raise money for her family. Anna is now writing a feature length script about this, see pp.32 above. The audience in Los Angeles included Chin exiles who were fascinated to see a story they know all too well brought to the screen.

Also in October, Cho Pyone was delighted to win the Tareque Masud Award for Best Debut Film for *No. 62 Pansodan Street* at the FSA Festival of South Asian Documentaries in Kathmandu, Nepal. The film, which Cho Pyone directed during the 2012 Beginners’ course, takes us behind the crumbling façade of one of Yangon’s grand old colonial edifices – known to many as the ‘Lokonat gallery building’ on account of the famous art gallery on the first floor – to meet some of the people who call this place home. Cho Pyone and Thet Oo Maung, whose 2012 Beginners’ documentary, *The Old Photographer* was also selected by FSA, both travelled to Kathmandu to present their films.

The year ended on a high note when International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam (IDFA), the world’s largest and most significant documentary festival, hosted a special programme, Emerging Voices From Southeast Asia. YFS was extremely proud to have two films selected: *Behind the Screen*, directed by Aung Nwai Htway and *Tyres*, directed by Kyaw Myo Lwin. *Behind the Screen*, in which the director uses clips from classic Myanmar films to revisit his famous film-star parents’ marriage and painful divorce, won Best Documentary at the Wathann Film Festival in 2012. In *Tyres*, Kyaw Myo Lwin explores in sumptuous black-and-white film – beautifully shot by YFS-trained cameraman Aung Ko Ko – the world of a group of tyre recyclers in Yangon’s South Okkalapa district. YFS arranged for Aung Nwai Htway and Myo Min Khin, editor of *Tyres*, to travel to Amsterdam to present their films and participate in Q&As.
X Direct Results of YFS Trainings & Other Activities in 2013

1. Visible Outcomes

In 2013, YFS participants took part in:

1. Two residential training programmes for a total of 36 people
2. Two non-residential training programmes for a total of 27 people
3. Three editing mentorships with international editing tutors
4. 60+ students working in media and/or media capacity in development organisations
5. Four alumni studying at film schools in Czech Republic and Germany
6. One alumni studying in the US as a Fulbright scholar

In 2013 YFS students produced a total of 18 films, namely:

7. Ten documentaries of between 10 – 40 minutes in length, nine for the YFS Documentary Competition and the tenth the completion of long-term project Yangon By Night
8. Two short docu-fiction films of c. 20 minutes in length for the True Fictions III training programme
9. Two YFS Production Fund films: The Potters’ Song by Hnin Ei Hlaing and Tyres by Kyaw Myo Lwin
10. Four NGO documentary commissions: Welcome to Lashio, Myanmar Midwife and a short and longer documentary for Pyoe Pin about the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative
11. 16 short fiction scripts inspired by documentary reality in Myanmar during the Art of Screenwriting training programme
12. Two YFS screenwriters continued to develop two feature-length screenplays for the YFS Screenwriting Competition

All the training programme films, as well as a film about the 2013 YFS trainings – including comments from both participants and tutors – will be available on the Yangon Film School DVDs: Hunters and Gatherers: the 2013 Yangon Film School Art of Documentary Editing Training Programme and True Fictions 2013 – two short docu-fiction films made by the students of the Yangon Film School, to be released in June/July 2014. Other films from 2013 will be released on single DVDs.

2. Benefits for Target Group

- Participants acquire media skills that are becoming increasingly valuable in a changing political environment and growing marketplace
- Students work with peers from different ethnic groups and social and economic backgrounds and learn to overcome prejudice
- Members of marginalised ethnic and religious groups are involved in a creative activity that delivers solid skills and helps them gain confidence
- Management staff receive training in specific skills needed to work as a team to manage a film school and production outfit and are exposed to good business and management practices in preparation for handover of YFS to local Myanmar nationals
- Students are exposed to a variety of cinematic styles and are able to develop their own individual identities as filmmakers
- Students are given the unique opportunity to live and work alongside industry professionals from all over the world in a relaxed but structured atmosphere in which cultural barriers melt
- Positive psychological effects are achieved as participants take pride in their abilities, assume responsibility and acquire a deeper understanding of themselves, their immediate environment and the world at large

1) Several members of the To School crew, just six of the total of 50 people trained on four YFS training programmes in 2013
2) A still from Yangon by Night, one of the 18 YFS films completed during 2013
XI Conclusions & the Next Step

As the Yangon Film School enters its tenth year of activity, demand for a broad range of filmmaking skills on the part of the School’s current and new students from diverse ethnic groups continues to grow – partly as a result of the country’s rapid reforms and the need to develop media skills, but also on account of the School’s growing reputation within the mainstream film industry and the country as a whole. Not only did YFS courses in 2013 meet the needs of its own students’ through its intensive trainings in editing and fictional filmmaking, the School also responded to the mainstream industry’s demand for training by providing an introductory screenwriting course.

In 2013, the number of YFS students and alumni working in the media and/or development following its courses is at an impressive 70% as opportunities for filmmakers continue to open up in transitional Myanmar and YFS graduates find themselves in a position to fill the gap in expertise. (For an overview of alumni destinations see Table III on p.41 below).

Almost 100 YFS students and alumni are primed to deliver quality content for a growing deregulated broadcasting sector; 11 students have found permanent jobs in television and/or radio as programme makers and/or commissioning editors. This figure will continue to swell as broadcasters discover the value of cooperating with a cadre of talented filmmakers able to make films of quality for increasingly discerning local audiences. YFS is at the forefront of promoting best practice in such cooperation.

Setting up a workable infrastructure and management team with sufficient capacity to further the School’s vision continues to be one of the most challenging aspects of YFS’s development. In 2014 work has begun on creating this sustainable infrastructure as well as developing a strategic vision for the School that will meet the demands of Myanmar’s rapidly changing media environment.

1. Assessments and Suggestions

- In order to disseminate YFS films to audiences in rural Myanmar and increase the diversity of the School’s intake, a Travelling Cinema Project is planned. Its aim is to inform and engage rural audiences and recruit students from remote areas through cinema screenings and introductory grass-roots training programmes in video production.
- YFS will continue to approach the government – in 2014 the Ministries of Culture and Education will also be approached with support from the Ministry of Information – in order to seek support for its vision of a permanent school.
- The School will work with a consultant to review governance structures, logistics and internal systems and identify the best way to register the School.
- YFS will also explore certification of its courses, possibly via credit sharing with an established international or national institution.
- YFS is no longer required to submit an application for permission to hold its trainings; however, individual filming licences must be renewed, as must the production arm’s company registration.
- YFS will continue to cooperate with the government to locate, save and restore examples of Myanmar’s cinema heritage and bring the country’s archive holdings into the public domain.
- Wider channels of distribution in Myanmar and beyond will continue to be sought for YFS films through broadcast TV, cinema, DVD distribution, social media and VOD.
- Cross-media partnerships will continue to be sought with local NGOs as well as other players in the development, cultural, educational and arts sectors.
- A number of English language scholarships in partnership with the British Council / British Embassy Rangoon will be sought for students and management team members.
- YFS-trained filmmakers will continue to work as trainers for other organisations (BBC, Deutsche Welle, IMS, etc).
- Cooperation with other film schools such as FAMU and the Film Academy Ludwigsburg and study trips abroad for outstanding students will be continued, as will participation at local and international film festivals and conferences.
- Project Pitching and seminar presentation skills will continue to be taught.
- Cooperation with SEA partners (such as the Goethe Institut’s EU-funded SEA DocNet, of which YFS is a partner) will continue to be sought throughout the ASEAN region, in order to promote exchange between Myanmar filmmakers and their colleagues in the region.
- As of 2014, YFS will resume its policy of biennial rather than an annual intake of beginners. This will allow Second Year students to develop their skills by creating individual projects and taking part in other training programmes specialising in other genres and certain aspects of filmmaking.
- New courses will be devised for Third and Fourth Year students such as ‘Investigative Documentary’ and HD camera workflow and lighting.
- In 2014, on-site and e-training Management Training that also includes proposal writing will continue the process of transition to a local-run entity.
- Individual students of production will be mentored as they develop contractual, grant-writing and production management skills and also learn to deal with local and foreign clients.
2. Training Programmes and Other Activities in 2014
The School plans to implement the following training programmes in 2014.
Courses marked with an * are not yet funded.

The Art of Documentary Filmmaking – Beginners’ Training Programme
The School’s flagship course is a six-week residential training programme targeting six male and six female participants aged between 22 and 40. Prior media experience is beneficial but not a requirement. The training includes an introduction to the documentary genre, specialised sessions and practical exercises in cinematography, sound recording, interview technique, research and treatment writing, culminating in the production – in three-person crews – of four films on the topic of change entitled Grassroots stories in New Myanmar. The course will be co-taught by experienced international tutors and experienced student trainers.

* Observational Camera Course: All in a Day’s Work
An eleven-day residential training module geared towards participants of the Art of Documentary Filmmaking course co-tutored by local trainers and international tutors in cinematography and sound. Students will be asked to identify and capture – either as sound recordists or cinematographers – the atmosphere of a particular working environment. The aim of the exercise is to help participants practice their ability to comprehend and observe all aspects of a particular real-life situation and to sharpen their sensitivity towards human interaction at the workplace.

Introduction to Editing
A four-week residential training co-taught by local student trainers and an international tutor, aimed at the new intake of 12 who may have little or no editing experience. Participants will receive an introduction to digital editing suites and practice editing a range of short exercises.

* The Investigative Documentary
A two-week training programme open to a maximum of 10 experienced YFS students (3rd and 4th years) on how to develop feature-length films on more complex socio-political topics requiring journalistic research. Students must submit a project idea to apply for a place. Classroom-based with a mix of screenings and discussions, the course will be led by an experienced international journalist/broadcaster or researcher/filmmaker who will help participants elaborate the exposition of their stories and begin creating a treatment. At the end of the training, the tutor will recommend two projects which will receive a YFS Fellowship to enable directors to develop their film during a mentorship programme.

Sound Design
During this non-residential two-week course an international tutor from the well-known Berlin Sound Design Studio Basis will work with graduates of previous courses and introduce new students to equipment and software (Digital Audio Workstations, ProTools), but also the artistic aspects of sound post-production and design. At the end of the course, the tutor will offer two outstanding students scholarships for one year’s training in Sound Design at Basis Studio in Berlin.

Other Ways of Seeing: A History of Film Form
This two-week non-residential course has been developed with practicing filmmakers in mind. It proceeds from the practicalities of camera, composition, editing, sound etc. rather than illustrating film history in a slavishly chronological way. Film clips illustrating the topics, film form and style will be screened as appropriate during the course and students will learn to analyse both the clips and stills. This course is taught in a classroom by an international tutor with a student trainer assisting.

How Films Work: Film Analysis Course
The aim of this two-week course is to give emerging filmmakers the ability to distinguish between different editing methods in either documentary or fiction film and to understand how editing can be used to build a film’s intensity. In this editing analysis, three feature-length films will be deconstructed according to their cinematic elements in order to acquire a deeper understanding of how the art of editing relates to classical storytelling and/or more complex storytelling in contemporary cinema.

Post Production
This two-week course aims to instil greater professionalism at the closing stages of the edit. The course will discuss topics and include exercises to improve capacity in: locking the cut, working with directors and producers, subtitling, the role of the online editor, media management and exporting for online; colour grading, the art and science of colour correction and organising tracks for the mix. Classroom based, the course will be taught by an international tutor with a student trainer assisting.
Management Training
Ongoing, on site, on-the-job training and e-mentorship including coaching the YFS management team in grant-writing, fund and project management, contracts, acquisition and communications.

Travelling Cinema Project North II (Kachin) or West (Chin, Rakhine)
An outreach programme of film screenings and discussions at three different sites in regional and/or remote rural areas, including two-week participatory video trainings for communities, filming of video testimonials of the rural poor, and recruitment of participants for YFS trainings. The programme will be implemented and managed entirely by YFS students and local management in consultation and/or cooperation with civil society actors, NGO and government partners. The project will be preceded by a two-week training programme on participatory video* for the travelling cinema teams, led by an international tutor.

* Feature Screenplay Development Programme
Co-taught by an international tutor and YFS-trained local screenwriter, this one-year programme aims to support up to ten writers in the development, writing and rewriting of an 80-120 minute screenplay. During this time, the writers will benefit from three face-to-face workshop in Yangon with the tutor and co-tutor combined with e-tuition and online support.

Needs Assessment for the Myanmar Cinema Heritage Project
YFS will identify a local researcher interested in Myanmar cinema history to begin identifying and locating copies or film prints of some of Myanmar’s vintage works and putting together a needs assessment for improved archive storage and digitalising and/or restoration of individual titles.
### TABLE 1 – Breakdown of YFS Participants in 2013 by Gender, Ethnicity & Religion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Joined YFS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Art of Documentary Editing</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8 F (female)</td>
<td>13 Buddhist</td>
<td>1 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 July to 31 August (42 days)</td>
<td></td>
<td>8 M (male)</td>
<td>3 Christian</td>
<td>1 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11 Myanmar</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 Kachin</td>
<td></td>
<td>2 2009</td>
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<td>1 Chin</td>
<td></td>
<td>5 2011</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 Rakhine</td>
<td></td>
<td>4 2012</td>
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<td>1 Mon</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 Lisu</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BC/YFS/MMPO Art of Screenwriting</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5 F</td>
<td>16 Buddhist</td>
<td>1 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 – 31 August (12 days)</td>
<td></td>
<td>11 M</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>14 Myanmar</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>1 Kachin</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 Rakhine</td>
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<tr>
<td>Advanced Sound Design</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1 F</td>
<td>8 Buddhist</td>
<td>1 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 – 13 October (12 days)</td>
<td></td>
<td>10 M</td>
<td>3 Christian</td>
<td>2 2011</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6 Myanmar</td>
<td></td>
<td>6 2012</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2 Chin</td>
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<td>2 2013</td>
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<td>1 Kachin</td>
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<td>1 Shan</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 Mon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>True Fictions III</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11 F</td>
<td>19 Buddhist</td>
<td>1 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 October – 14 December (42 days)</td>
<td></td>
<td>9 M</td>
<td>1 Christian</td>
<td>2 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15 Myanmar</td>
<td></td>
<td>2 2007</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1 Myanmar-Chinese</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 2009</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1 Rakhine</td>
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<td>1 2010</td>
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<td>1 Kayin</td>
<td></td>
<td>4 2011</td>
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<td>1 Chin</td>
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<td>8 2012</td>
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<td>1 Mon</td>
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<td>1 2013</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 Myanmar-Chinese</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Appendix II

### TABLE 2 – Summary of Figures for 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Training Days</th>
<th>Total No. of People Trained</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Joined YFS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Appendix III

TABLE 3 – YFS Alumni Destinations

Results from 97 YFS Alumni questioned at end of 2013 about their current work status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specialism</th>
<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freelance Media-Related</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV or Radio Station</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government MMPO &amp; MMPE</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO Media-Related</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organising Film Festival</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living/Studying Abroad</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO Non Media-Related</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Non Media-Related</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Working in Media</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Working in Media</td>
<td>70 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix IV

TABLE 4 – Screenings of YFS Films at Festivals in 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>FESTIVAL</th>
<th>FILM TITLE (S)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22 – 27 Jan</td>
<td>Doc Point, Helsinki International Documentary Film Festival</td>
<td>Burmese Butterfly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Like Father, Like Son</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Unreported Story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>An Untitled Life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 – 31 Jan</td>
<td>Freedom Film Festival, Yangon, Myanmar</td>
<td>A Bright Future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Best Documentary Award</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 Jan – 10 Feb</td>
<td>Reelout Queer Film &amp; Video Festival, Kingston, California, USA</td>
<td>Burmese Butterfly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 February</td>
<td>Café Jam, Bangkok, Thailand</td>
<td>Burmese Butterfly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A Million Threads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sweetie Pie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Unreported Story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date(s)</td>
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<td>22 – 24 March</td>
<td>Mini Doc Fest, Hanoi Goethe Institute,</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 – 7 April</td>
<td>Salaya Documentary Film Festival,</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
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<td>10 – 11 April</td>
<td>Princess Maha Chakri Anthropology</td>
<td>Bangkok, Thailand</td>
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<td>Centre, Bangkok, Thailand</td>
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<td>19 – 26 April</td>
<td>Nyon Vision du Reel Film Festival,</td>
<td>Switzerland</td>
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<td>20 – 21 April</td>
<td>Ethnographic Film Festival, Koblenz</td>
<td>University, Germany</td>
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<td>2 – 5 May</td>
<td>Divergenti International Transgender</td>
<td>Bologna, Italy</td>
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<td>Film Festival, Bologna, Italy</td>
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<td>2 – 12 May</td>
<td>Asian Pacific Film Festival, Los</td>
<td>USA</td>
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<td>Angeles, USA</td>
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<td>8 – 12 May</td>
<td>TranScreen Film Festival, Amsterdam,</td>
<td>The Netherlands</td>
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<tr>
<td>24 – 30 May</td>
<td>15th International Women’s Film</td>
<td>Seoul, South Korea</td>
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<td>Festival, Seoul, South Korea</td>
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<td>30 May</td>
<td>MIX Mexico Film Festival, Mexico City</td>
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<tr>
<td>14 – 16 June</td>
<td>Travelling ChopShots Film Festival,</td>
<td>Cambodia</td>
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<td>Phnom Penh, Cambodia</td>
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<tr>
<td>18 – 25 June</td>
<td>Palm Springs International Short Film</td>
<td>USA</td>
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<td>Festival, USA</td>
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<td>24 June</td>
<td>Queer Film International Shorts, New</td>
<td>Connecticut, USA</td>
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<td>London, Connecticut, USA</td>
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<td>7 – 10 July</td>
<td>Myanmar Film Festival, Singapore</td>
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<td>23 July</td>
<td>San Giò Video Festival, Verona, Italy</td>
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<td>4 – 8 Sept</td>
<td>Wathann Film Festival, Yangon, Myanmar</td>
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<td>6 – 8 Sept</td>
<td>Indie Doc Film Festival, Singapore</td>
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<td>21 Sept</td>
<td>Yxine Online Film Festival</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 Oct – 10 Nov</td>
<td>South East Asian Arts Festival, London,</td>
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<td>London, UK</td>
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<td>3 October</td>
<td>Myanmar Film Festival, Los Angeles, USA</td>
<td>Bungkus</td>
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<td>Koran &amp; Karate</td>
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<td>My Grandfather’s House</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 October</td>
<td>Burmese Youth Association, San Francisco, USA</td>
<td>Bungkus</td>
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<td>My Grandfather’s House</td>
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<td>3 – 6 October</td>
<td>FSA Festival of Southasian Documentaries, Kathmandu, Nepal</td>
<td>No. 62, Pansodan Street</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Tareque Masud Award for Best Debut Film</td>
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<td>The Old Photographer</td>
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<td>21 Oct – 2 Nov</td>
<td>Art &amp; Tur Festival, Barcelos, Portugal</td>
<td>Insein Rhythm</td>
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<td>28 Oct – 2 Nov</td>
<td>DoK Leipzig, Germany</td>
<td>Insein Rhythm</td>
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<td>12 – 17 Nov</td>
<td>Interfilm Berlin, Germany</td>
<td>Empty Nest</td>
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<td>15 – 24 Nov</td>
<td>Exground, Wiesbaden, Germany</td>
<td>Insein Rhythm</td>
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<td>20 Nov – 1 Dec</td>
<td>IDFA, Amsterdam, The Netherlands</td>
<td>Behind The Screen</td>
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<td>Tyres</td>
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**FESTIVAL SUMMARY FOR 2013**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Count</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Festivals / Events Screening YFS Films</td>
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<td>Total Number of YFS Films Screened</td>
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<td>Prizes Won</td>
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</table>
The Yangon Film School’s Partners in 2013

- vikes
- Sida
- GOETHE INSTITUT
- OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATIONS
- Ministry of Roma Affairs of the Czech Republic
- European Burma Office
- Akademie