



INSIGHT REPORT

PROJECT WILD THING

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	5
PLANNING AND EXECUTION	7
RESULTS	20
DISCUSSION AND LESSONS	28
APPENDIX 1	31
APPENDIX 2	32

INTRODUCTION

This Insight Report examines the *Project Wild Thing* multi-platform release strategy, awarded £32,000 by the New Models strand of the BFI's Distribution Fund for its innovative use of partnerships with third sector and other organisations in building awareness of the release and wider social issue campaign to reconnect children with the natural world.

'[No] single organisation would be able to address the overarching issue of children's growing disconnection with nature, and [...] a wider multi-partner, multi-faceted approach is needed if we are to make a real and enduring difference for current and future generations of children.'

Natural Childhood Inquiry Report, National Trust, 2012

In 2010, Green Lions, the production company behind *Project Wild Thing*, won an open call from the BRITDOC Foundation for a nature documentary with funding and marketing support from the National Trust, Arla Foods and the NHS Sustainable Development Unit. *Project Wild Thing* went into production in 2011 and a successful crowd funding campaign, launched in November 2012, raised completion finance along with an investment from Green Lions.

Although the feature length documentary has a serious intent, it uses humour and animation alongside interviews and other techniques to communicate its message as David Bond, the film's director and on-screen provocateur, takes on the role of 'Marketing Director for Nature'.

As an example of 'impact distribution', a model championed in the UK by BRITDOC Foundation, the film was intended to connect with audiences on an emotional level, leading to personal, community and wider social change. The filmmakers' creative ambition was to make an entertaining, appealing, family-friendly documentary that people would watch, and the release strategy was designed to maximise returns to the film's backers in line with conventional releases but also to provoke attitudinal and behavioural changes in target audiences.

Partnerships were key from the film's inception, both informing and helping to finance production, and extending the release campaign beyond traditional marketing and promotion channels.

A core set of partners on board at an early stage during production, including the National Trust and RSPB, eventually broadened into The Wild Network, a coalition of over 1,500 organisations committed to finding creative ways to put children back in touch with the great outdoors.

The Network has grown and evolved alongside the film's release, creating a 'virtuous circle' by raising awareness of the film, and boosting in turn the Network's own profile and that of the cause championed. *Project Wild Thing* offers a call to action and The Wild Network provides a variety of opportunities to act within a network of like-minded groups, bodies and individuals.

The prospect of the film's nationwide theatrical release, which launched on 25 October 2013, was critical to securing the project's credibility with funders and partners. In line with the impact distribution model, the theatrical release, which involved a number of event-based screenings with high profile participants and members of The Wild Network, also provided a newsworthy platform upon which to build PR around the film and wider campaign.

The project broke new ground in two important respects: by bringing together a broad-based coalition of partners with little or no prior involvement in theatrical film production and distribution; and through the widespread use of community screenings organised with local promoters to deliver the film to audiences that might otherwise miss the opportunity to see it in the cinema. In an effort to capitalise on awareness of the film, and provide the widest range of opportunities to connect with audiences, *Project Wild Thing* was released simultaneously on premium VOD and within an early window on DVD.

Drawing on box office, community screening, VOD and DVD sales data alongside the findings of an audience survey and interviews with key people involved in the release campaign, this Insight Report seeks to establish how partnership working and a multi-platform release strategy can extend a film's reach as a cost-effective alternative to more traditional approaches.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Although the impact distribution model employed by *Project Wild Thing* is not new, production company Green Lions developed an innovative approach to partnership working during production that carried through into the self-distribution campaign.
- Bringing together a coalition of local and national partners to promote a nationwide theatrical release of event-based and other screenings, day-and-date premium VOD and early release retail DVD, and a rolling programme of community screenings, the filmmakers sought to capitalise on media interest in the project and wider campaign, harness existing promotional networks to deliver the film to the widest possible range of audiences within a modestly budgeted release campaign.
- Target audiences included parents and other carers with young children, including grandparents (who are traditionally under-represented in the cinema going population); environmentally minded people; those concerned to have lost their connection with nature; and documentary-lovers in general.
- The campaign strategy entailed working with partners as promoters for the film (both locally and nationally), mobilising their marketing capacity and supporter relationships to build audiences for *Project Wild Thing* directly.
- Following the UK premiere at Sheffield Doc/Fest, where Picturehouse Cinemas booked the film, *Project Wild Thing* opened on 25 October 2013, appearing on 56 screens that weekend (including 29 event-based performances).
- To date the film has played at 113 screenings in 70 cinemas, generating 4,306 admissions in total (£22,305 box office gross). Theatrical performance is in line with Green Lions's higher forecast for the film.
- Community screenings, booked directly with Green Lions for a fee negotiated on the basis of a rate card taking account of the booking organisation's size, have proved particularly successful, generating fees totaling around £72,000 to date and admissions of 11,444 across the UK.
- Green Lions is confident that a wider theatrical release would not have benefited the film, as potentially it could have limited the number of these community screening opportunities.
- Audience survey results, although based on a relatively small number of returns, confirm the majority of cinema and community screening audience members were female and/or aged between 26 and 45. One third of respondents had young families or grandchildren.
- The film was rated highly by the majority of respondents, and word of mouth is likely to have been a strong element in audience building.
- Nearly one third (31%) of respondents heard about the film through Twitter or Facebook, endorsing the campaign's use of social media, coordinated across the network of partners.
- The day-and-date premium VOD offer and early DVD release did not dissuade Picturehouse Cinemas from booking the film, but did deter the larger commercial circuits. In the event, the number of VOD and DVD transactions has been lower than expected, although it is difficult to judge performance objectively as market benchmarks for this type of project are hard to judge. Green Lions has since sold 10,000 DVD units to the National Trust to give away to its membership.
- There is no evidence that the film's concurrent availability in the home entertainment market undermined audience demand for big screen viewing opportunities, either at the cinema or at community screenings.
- Taking account of all available evidence, *Project Wild Thing* provides proof of concept that non-theatrical bookings managed by a production company in combination with a high-profile press and PR campaign anchored around a UK theatrical release and coordinated across a network of partners has the potential to generate meaningful revenue over a long timescale; broaden the film's audience to those unable or unwilling to see the film at the cinema; and positively engage

individuals and groups in the wider social issue campaign.

- Key lessons of the release campaign include recognising the benefits of:
 - establishing partnerships with non-film organisations early on in production, which can be carried through into the release campaign;
 - using partners' existing networks and modes of engagement to increase capacity and campaign reach;
 - managing these relationships in ways that

take account of differences in institutional culture, practice and expectation;

- long-term use of social media to create an ongoing conversation around a film and wider campaign, which is engaging and interactive;
- building a multi-platform release strategy around a theatrical release (even on a relatively small number of screens), to capitalise on promotional opportunities across traditional print and broadcast media as well as online through social media; and boost partners' confidence in a project.



PLANNING AND EXECUTION

'Given the quick-shifting digital terrain, [...] documentary producers are operating in a rapid prototyping mode, experimenting with and refining a variety of distribution, outreach, and networking techniques.'

Designing for Impact, Jessica Clark and Barbara Abrash, Center for Media and Social Impact, September 2011

1.1 OVERVIEW

The use of documentary film to raise issues of pressing social concern has a long and venerable history on the big and small screen, witnessing a late flowering of global box office success with works like Michael Moore's *Bowling for Columbine* (2002) and *Fahrenheit 9/11* (2004), and Morgan Spurlock's *Super Size Me* (2004).

Since then philanthropists, charities, NGOs and other interest groups have recognised the potential of feature documentary to capture mass public attention and galvanise action around their chosen cause. The rise of online communication, and particularly social networking, was critical to this, providing new and cost-effective ways to engage with audiences about works that would previously have struggled for attention and screen space. The idea of a participatory model of

spectatorship began to develop, with audiences no longer considered as passive viewers but as potential agents of social change.

This prompted interest in how to measure and maximise the wider impact of feature documentary. A body of research emerged in the US, led by academic institutions often working with charitable foundations (e.g. the Center for Media and Social Impact), laying the groundwork for the 'impact distribution' model developed in the UK by Channel 4's BRITDOC Foundation.

The model was used to impressive effect with BRITDOC's campaigning documentary *The End of the Line* (2009) but it remains relatively uncommon in the UK, and subject to ongoing experimentation.

The case of *Project Wild Thing* should be seen in this context, as an ambitious variant of impact distribution founded on the principles of wide scale partnership working and community engagement.

Building on Green Lions's experience of DIY distribution with their previous feature documentary *Erasing David* (2010), *Project Wild Thing* planned to harness existing networks to build audiences around a newsworthy nationwide theatrical release, with additional viewing opportunities afforded by simultaneous VOD release, non-theatrical community screenings and an early window DVD release.

ABOUT IMPACT DISTRIBUTION

In contrast with conventional, window-based approaches, 'impact distribution' is the term applied to a model of film releasing that harnesses the power of online communication tools, including web sites and social media, along with multi-platform release strategies.

Beyond this general characterisation, the model is not tied to any specific form of release or platform. Its defining feature is the desire to bring about social and political transformation by changing individuals' attitudes and behaviour.

The film release is commonly one part of a wider campaign, a tool to secure audience participation in the cause. Social networking performs alongside more traditional media outlets to maximise the campaign footprint around a release, and the logic underpinning this model can be expressed as follows:

Quality film release >> increased public awareness >> increased public engagement >> stronger social movement >> social change

(based on Fledgling Fund's *Assessing Creative Media's Social Impact*, 2008)

As a report into the impact of *The End of the Line* (2009) put it,

'Public awareness is raised by a core group— people who have seen the film and who talk about it to others. People who have not seen the film become aware of the issue through the press, from word of mouth or an associated campaign.' (*The End of the Line: A Social Impact Evaluation*, BRITDOC Foundation, 2011).

A deceptively simple idea, yet impact distribution poses a number of challenges for anyone wishing to measure the success of individual release campaigns. The Fledgling Fund, an early exponent of the model in the US, reported 'surprising difficulty' in making 'a firm connection between the power of a film or other media and social change.' (Assessing Creative Media's Social Impact, Diana Barrett and Sheila Leddy, December 2008).

'Nevertheless,' the report continues, 'we believe that films can and do have social impact, and obviously would not be funding in this area if we thought otherwise. However, we also believe that the social impact of media, particularly documentary films, needs to be better understood and documented.'

Any adequately informed commentary on *Project Wild Thing's* contribution to changing attitudes and behaviour around childhood and nature goes beyond the scope of this Insight Report, requiring dedicated fieldwork over a longer time frame. Nonetheless, this report explains how widely the film was viewed in the first six months of release as a pre-cursor to a more thoroughgoing assessment of its wider impact.

1.2 THE FILM, ITS PARTNERS AND WIDER CAMPAIGN

Project Wild Thing follows father-of-two David Bond (the film's director) in a bid to address children's ever-narrowing contact with the natural world and outdoor activity.

With the help of branding and outdoor experts, the self-appointed 'Marketing Director for Nature' launches a nationwide marketing campaign to get youngsters outside. In addition to David's own family members, on screen contributors include naturalist Chris Packham, writer and environmentalist George Monbiot, writer Jay Griffiths and a number of expert witnesses from the natural sciences and advertising.

As a campaign platform, the filmmakers and their institutional partners wanted people to come away with the following messages after watching the film:

- Children spend less time in nature than any previous generation
- Contact with nature contributes to physical health and mental health
- Barriers between kids and nature seem overwhelming but we all have the power to break them down
- Parents, grandparents and children must spend more time outdoors

The initial idea for the project came about in 2010, when Green Lions won an open call from the BRITDOC Foundation for a nature documentary with funding and marketing support from the National Trust, Arla Foods and the NHS Sustainable Development Unit. *Project Wild Thing* went into production in 2011, and the film's narrative evolved with input from a variety of sources (see Figure 1 for timeline):

- The National Trust's Outdoor Nation

campaign sparks collaboration with BRITDOC Foundation, leading to the open call won by Green Lions.

- In 2012 Green Lions created the nature marketing programme that David Bond follows in the film, with the help of Good for Nothing (a collaboration of creative thinkers backed by Nesta), supported by contributions from the Do Lectures, TYF Adventures, Eden Project and Al Kennedy.
- Around this time the National Trust published its Natural Childhood report, helping to frame *Project Wild Thing's* storyline development.
- Later that year, the Natural Childhood Summit brought together hundreds of organisations to explore the challenges and issues more widely and collaboratively, and which featured in the film.
- In November 2012 a Kickstarter crowdfunding campaign raised an additional £32,715 to complete the film.

This intentionally open-ended and opportunistic approach established a number of key relationships over the course of the production, paving the way for the release campaign that followed. In other words, the films' distribution was not a standalone stage, but was born out of the relationships established right from the project's outset, and which dictated the campaign strategy.

The film is the focal point of a wider campaign led by The Wild Network (see below), which evolved in parallel with the project. Creatively, though, the film remained independent of any single organisation or established lobbying interests:

'The film has been a ground breaker: an independent product which is

not owned by anybody, accessible to everybody, which clearly, humorously, and also emotionally engages people with that subject.’

**Andy Simpson,
RSPB and The Wild Network**

In fact partner organisations involved during the production phase had no creative control over the project, a deliberate policy to avoid undue institutional influence. This was itself a novel approach, requiring a leap of faith by larger organisations unused to ceding control in this way:

‘If we did have some control over it, it would end up being some anodyne piece of bureaucratic propaganda and it wouldn’t work. I’m saying that because it is absolutely critical that this film was an act of faith from a lot of people and really broke the mould of how these organisations communicate.’

**Andy Simpson,
RSPB and The Wild Network**

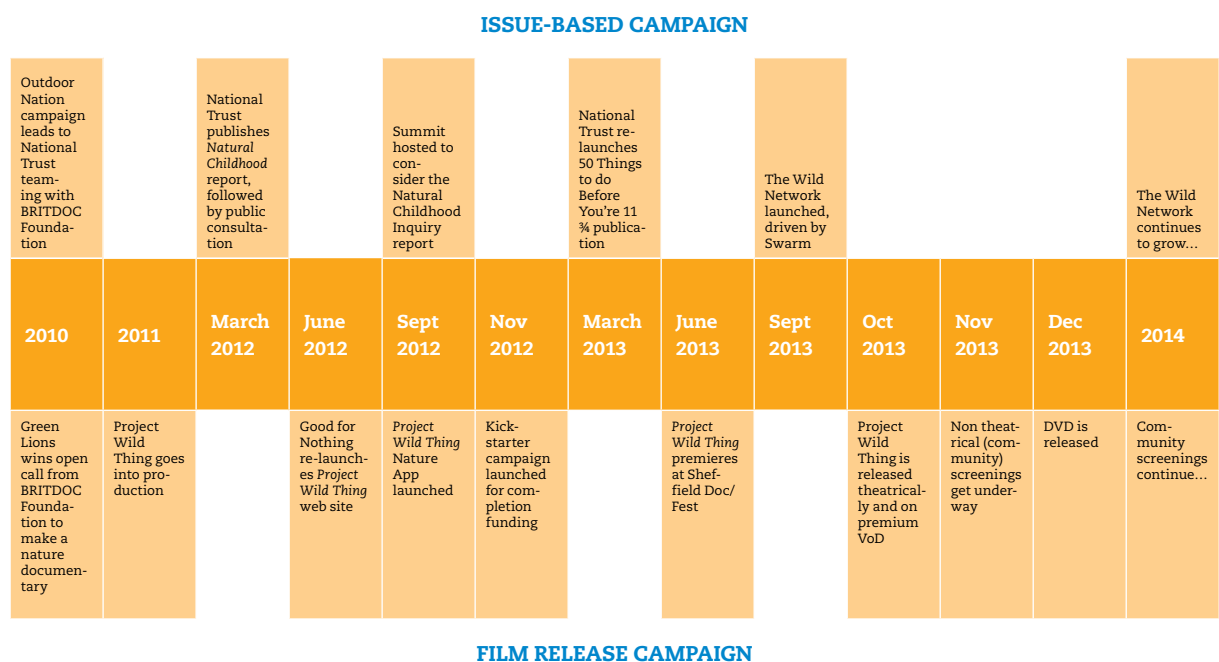
ABOUT THE WILD NETWORK ([HTTP://PROJECTWILDTHING.COM/THEWILDNETWORK](http://projectwildthing.com/thewildnetwork))

The Wild Network is a coalition of over 1,500 local and national organisations, whose membership continues to grow.

Swarm (the consulting partnership behind Good for Nothing) facilitated the Network in early 2013 with financial support from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, working alongside Green Lions and other *Project Wild Thing* partners. Founding members of the Network included the National Trust, RSPB, NHS Sustainable Development Unit, Play England, Play Wales, Play Scotland, PlayBoard Northern Ireland, AMV BBDO, Green Lions and the BRITDOC Foundation. At the time of writing the Network also has around 5,700 individual supporters, who have pledged 5,596 hours to WildTime activity.

According to its manifesto, The Wild Network champions and supports connection with nature and wildness in children and young people. It’s mission involves supporting children, parents and guardians of children ‘to roam free, play wild and connect with nature’ through a variety of initiatives, the provision of practical advice and guidance, and high level advocacy.

Figure 1: Project Wild Thing milestones



1.3 PRE-RELEASE SCREENING ACTIVITY

Project Wild Thing premiered at Sheffield Doc/Fest in June 2013 where Picturehouse Cinemas agreed to book the film having shown interest in the project at an earlier stage.

‘The main thing I really liked was what it was trying to say. I just thought it came from a good place, I could see it being something that would appeal to our audiences.’

**Chris Harris,
Picturehouse Cinemas**

The extensive nature of the partnerships behind the film helped secure Picturehouse’s interest:

‘They clearly had a lot of different people behind them and that also made it very attractive.’

**Chris Harris,
Picturehouse Cinemas**

In turn, theatrical bookings proved highly significant as the prospect of a nationwide release, coupled with the BFI’s endorsement in the form of the Distribution Fund: New Models award, helped cement confidence in the project among partner organisations:

‘What the theatrical release gave was the affirmation of how good this actually is. Without that, and without the BFI, there would have been a lot of questions asked and we wouldn’t have had the immediacy of saying, ‘Look if Picturehouse thinks this is good enough to show in their cinemas, if the BFI thinks it’s good enough to back it, then there really is the absolute, unimpeachable evidence that you’re looking for’.

**Andy Simpson,
RSPB and The Wild Network**

In addition to Doc/Fest, *Project Wild Thing* screened at 11 other previews and festivals prior to release, often in collaboration with partner organisations. In total these pre-release screenings attracted around 1,000 admissions (Table 1), generating a reassuring sense of momentum for partners ahead of theatrical release, as well as opportunities for media exposure. This activity continued after theatrical release, with additional festival and corporate screening events around the UK and internationally.

Table 1: Pre-release previews and festivals

Date	Organisation/ event	Admissions
6 June 2013	Friends and family screening, Charlotte St Hotel	80
12 June 2013	Sheffield Doc/Fest	230
13 June 2013	Sheffield Doc/Fest	56
15 June 2013	Sheffield Doc/Fest	70
9 July 2013	Wild Eagle screening, Somerset House	75
10 July 2013	Good for Nothing screening, Somerset House	55
27 July 2013	Trill Farm Festival, Musbury, Devon	50
9 August 2013	Wilderness Festival, Conbury Park, Oxfordshire	30
14 September 2013	Peckham and Nunhead Free Film Festival	20
21 September 2013	Cambridge Film Festival	50
4 October 2013	Telegraph Hill Station cafe	80
5 October 2013	Cinemagic Festival	120
17 October 2013	Press screening, Bristol Zoo	107
18 October 2013	National press screening, Soho House, London	3
TOTAL		1,026

Source: Green Lions



1.4 CAMPAIGN STRATEGY

The Wild Network's extensive reach and highly developed links to individual supporters formed the principal asset of the *Project Wild Thing* release campaign. To put this in context, just two of the largest institutional partners, the National Trust and RSPB, had over 6 million members and supporters and around 86,000 volunteers in 2012/13. The same year, National Trust properties attracted over 19 million visitors and the RSPB web site saw 16 million page visits.

The main task of the release campaign, and the focus of planning, was therefore to ensure this resource was effectively harnessed and that partners worked in a coordinated manner.

The campaign strategy entailed using the broad-based coalition of partners as promoters for the film (both locally and nationally), mobilising their marketing capacity and supporter relationships to build audiences for *Project Wild Thing* directly.

Green Lions and BRITDOC Foundation identified a number of target audience groups, which determined the choice of release platforms and windows. These included parents and other carers of young children (including grandparents); environmentally minded people; those concerned to have lost their connection with nature; and documentary-lovers in general.

As at least two of these target groups- caregivers with young children and grandparents- are less frequent cinemagoers than the general population, Green Lions and BRITDOC Foundation considered it necessary to provide an array of viewing opportunities across different platforms. The grassroots nature of the wider campaign also lent itself to community-based promotional and screening activity, representing a close fit between the film's guiding ethos and the opportunities afforded by new distribution models.

The result was a multi-platform release involving day and date premium VOD, early window DVD retail and non-theatrical community screenings, designed to maximise reach while capitalising on the buzz and profile generated around the film's theatrical run.

'It didn't really make much sense for this film to be distributed in a standard model because of the way it had been set up and because we had so much fantastic access to networks and impact distribution levers. So we were always interested in doing something a bit different and breaking the mould.'

**Sandra Whipham,
BRITDOC Foundation**

1.5 EXPECTATIONS

As much of the release campaign broke new ground, or at least ventured in areas where there are few (if any) benchmarks, accurate forecasting was even more of a challenge than usual. Nonetheless, the theatrical release could safely be measured against other recent documentaries:

Table 2: Comparable documentary releases

Title	Opening weekend			Total box office
	Screens	Box office	Screen average	
<i>The End of the Line</i> (2009)	5	£32,896	£6,579	£54,718
<i>Ping Pong</i> (2012)	3	£1,995	£665	£23,544
<i>InRealLife</i> (2013)	30	£11,335	£378	£18,047

Source: Rentrak EDI

Using these and other similar projects as a guide, Table 3 gives the lower and upper targets for theatrical admissions. Community screening admissions and VOD/DVD unit sale forecasts were necessarily more speculative in the absence of reliable comparators.

Table 3: Project Wild Thing projections

	High	Medium	Low
Admissions	4,500	2,250	1,800
(Box office gross)*	(£28,665)	(£14,332)	(£11,466)
Community screening, preview and festival admissions**	20,000	16,000	6,000
TOTAL ADMISSIONS	24,500	18,250	7,800
VOD units	1,000	500	200
DVD units	10,000	5,000	2,000

Source: Green Lions

*Calculated using UK average ticket price of £6.37

**Based on 1,000 (high), 800 (medium) and 300 (low) screenings attracting an average of 20 admissions each

1.6 EXECUTION

Project Wild Thing was originally planned for release in summer 2013, to coincide with the school holidays and to take advantage of promotional opportunities in partners' seasonal publications (for example, the summer edition of the National Trust magazine is distributed in late May each year).

However, Picturehouse Cinemas preferred instead to open the film in late October, giving partners a longer lead-time to coordinate marketing and PR activity and organise events around key screening slots.

'A summer release would have been ideal but at the time it was all coming together, there wasn't enough time to do it justice. I think with so many different interested parties involved to pull all of that together in five weeks seemed like a bit of a tall order. I think the results show that worked.'

Chris Harris,
Picturehouse Cinemas

Alongside the nationwide theatrical release, a day and date premium VOD launch was arranged on three online platforms (BFI Player, Curzon Home Cinema and Vimeo), followed by DVD retail release through Verve Pictures within 6 weeks of theatrical debut in the run up to Christmas and the school holidays.

Additionally, Green Lions initiated a rolling programme of non-theatrical, community screenings, enabling groups to stage their own screening events. Green Lions also began discussions with broadcasters about possible television transmission (these discussions are ongoing).

Green Lions led the self-distribution campaign's logistical administration, managing both cinema and community screening bookings. Having secured commitment from Picturehouse Cinemas, the production company approached other exhibitors (independent and major circuits) directly, and non-theatrical community bookings were managed in-house.

'A team of four of us was able to divide the country up into sections using the ICO's independent cinema list. We contacted every independent cinema in the UK and every chain as well.'

David Bond, Green Lions

Having participated during the film's production, advertising giants JCDecaux and AMVBBDO originally offered the release campaign an in kind contribution of outdoor and online advertising, valued at over £100,000. In the event this was not forthcoming and promotional activity centered instead on:

- traditional press and PR, delivered by Beady Eyed Films working with a senior National Trust press officer;
- the use of social media (principally Twitter and Facebook);

- editorial features and other content in The Wild Network members' publications and marketing communications.

'Our task was basically to coordinate with each other on the bigger features running, especially in the national broadsheets for example, and on broadcast and online presence as well.'

Elizabeth Benjamin, Beady Eyed Films, discussing working with Mike Collins of the National Trust

Press and PR around the film and the wider campaign was particularly successful, garnering extensive coverage in national and local press, influential online sites and broadcast news items.

- Between the beginning of July 2013 and 31 October 2013 (the end of the film's opening week) a total of 34 items ran across 23 media titles (9 online, 12 print and 2 broadcast), generating 131,881,141 Opportunities To See (OTS).
- This coverage was estimated to have an Advertising Value Equivalent (AVE) of £575,705.
- David Bond, as the film's director and main protagonist, featured prominently in coverage, and contributed over 50 blog posts across various outlets in the latter half of 2013.

Online communication, via partner web sites, blog posts and social media including Twitter and Facebook, began well in advance of the release, forming an essential part of the film's development process while building awareness of the social issue campaign and the documentary in production.

Project Wild Thing branded platforms developed in time, including a web site, Facebook page and twitter account, complementing the online presence of partner organisations.

- As at 19 May 2014, the *Project Wild Thing* Facebook page had 9,156 Likes, while the associated Twitter account had over 10,500 followers. These numbers compare favourably with other recent documentary projects:

Table 5: Social media comparisons

Film	Twitter followers	Facebook Likes
<i>The End of the Line</i> (2009)	7,291	30,977
<i>Ping Pong</i> (2012)	768	2,782
<i>InRealLife</i> (2013)	828	1,038
<i>Erasing David</i> (2010)	416	890

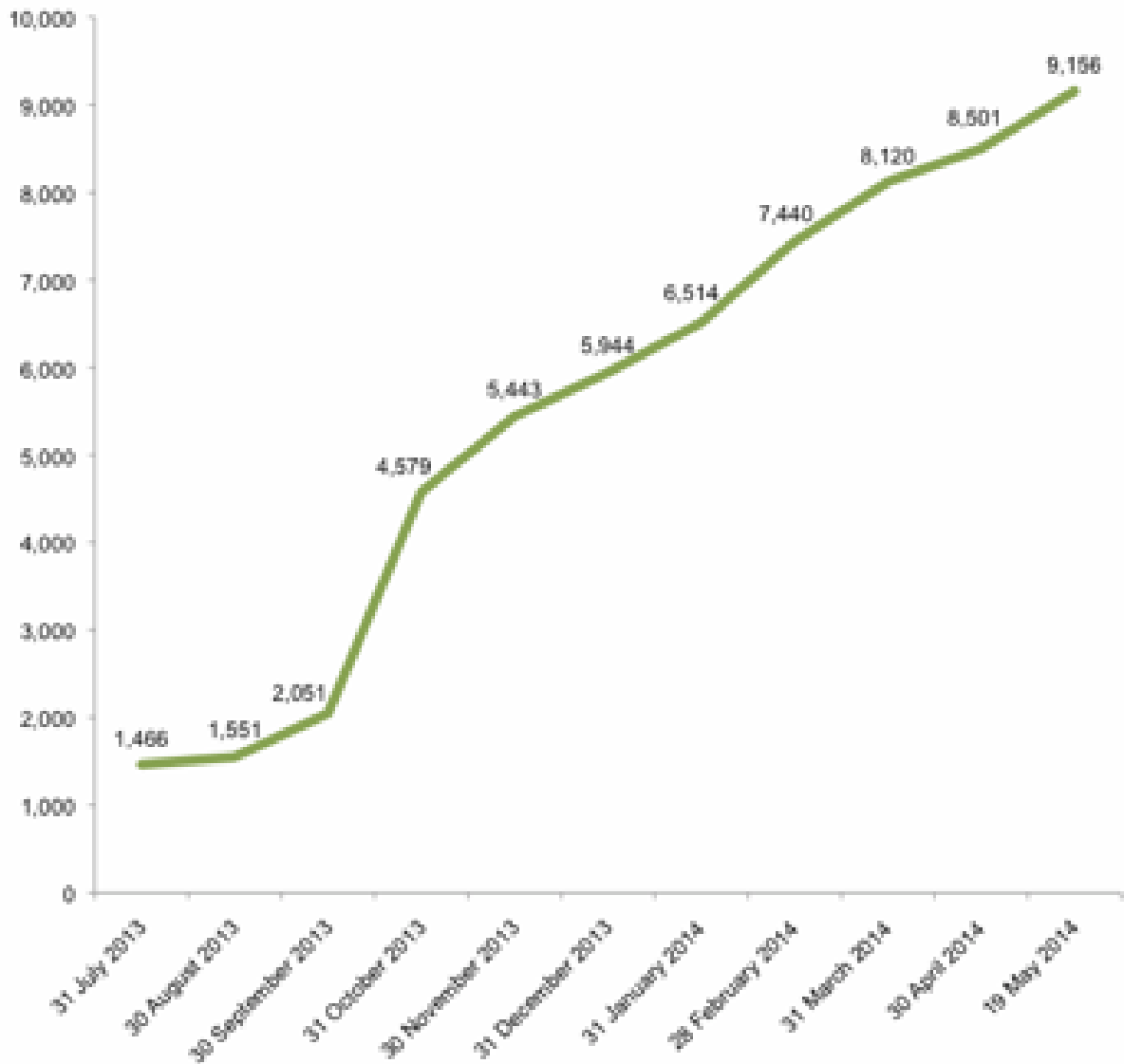
- Facebook Likes have continued to grow throughout the release period, presently standing at double the level recorded at the time of the film’s theatrical debut in late October 2013 (Table 6 and Figure 2).

Table 6: Total Facebook Likes

Month	Lifetime total Likes
31 July 2013	1,466
30 August 2013	1,551
30 September 2013	2,051
31 October 2013	4,579
30 November 2013	5,443
31 December 2013	5,944
31 January 2014	6,514
28 February 2014	7,440
31 March 2014	8,120
30 April 2014	8,501
19 May 2014	9,156

Source: Facebook
Theatrical release month in blue box

Figure 2: Growth of Facebook Likes over life of the campaign, 31 July 2013 to 19 May 2014



Source: Facebook

- The Twitter account is managed by a number of people from Green Lions, Swarm and the National Trust. Every Wednesday there is an hour long Tweetathon (called ‘Wild Wednesdays’) led by Tom Seaward of the National Trust.
- From the immediate pre-release period to six months after the film’s theatrical debut, social media activity peaked around the date of the cinema release, with the number of new Likes and tweets spiking at this time (see Table 7 and Figure 3).

Table 7: Facebook analytics

Month	Average daily new Likes	Average daily total reach
July 2013	3	339
August 2013	3	187
September 2013	20	1,677
October 2013	86	9,146
November 2013	33	2,239
December 2013	19	3,987
January 2014	21	1,062
February	37	1,897
March	25	955
April	15	1,218
May (to 19.05.14)	37	1,541

Source: Facebook
 Theatrical release month in blue box

Figure 3: Twitter analytics



Source: Twitter

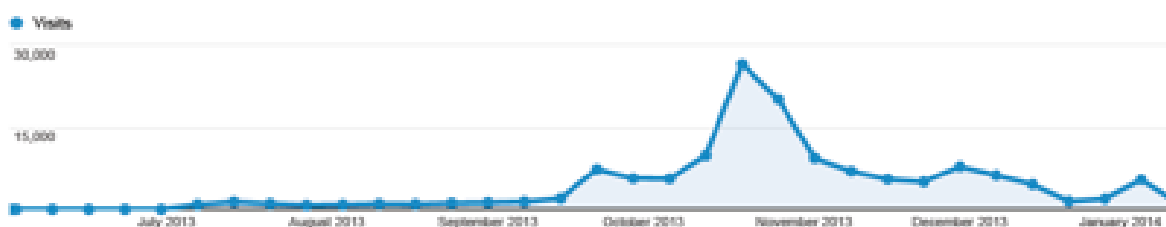
- Twitter proved particularly successful at securing celebrity endorsements. A host of high profile individuals retweeted or mentioned the film and wider campaign, including Lisa Bonnin, Louise Gray (*Daily Telegraph* Environment Correspondent until December 2013), Bear Grylls, Ian Wright, Ben Fogle, Lauren Laverne, Jon Snow, and TV naturalist Nick Baker.

'I remember seeing this conversation on Twitter where someone in the community was tweeting Lauren Laverne on 6 Music saying, 'You need to look at this film, you'll like this'. A day later Lauren Laverne was talking about it to her listeners and tweeting about it, and then she got David in. I think that was a really interesting example of the community doing some of the work. It shows you if issue-based films are good, a community can gather around that and become partners to the promotion of that film. That community online is so lively, very authentic, it's constantly pushing the film on.'

Dan Burgess, Good for Nothing and Swarm

- The *Project Wild Thing* web site had received 213,715 visits by 17 May 2014, from 144,835 unique visitors. Again, activity on the site peaked around the theatrical release, as shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Projectwildthing.com visits, July 2013 to January 2014



Source: Google

The final component of the release campaign involved an audience survey distributed at theatrical and community screenings for completion on site or online. It was designed to generate consumer insight for fine-tuning marketing messages, build a contacts database of audience members and to gauge the film's impact on audience attitudes and behaviour.

1.7 CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS AND COSTS

Taken together, the value of partners' contributions more than matched the shortfall from JCDecaux and AMVBBDO. Total in-kind contributions to the campaign, which took the following forms, are estimated to be around £262,000 (not including Green Lions's own contribution):

- Advocacy, both within larger organisations to win senior executive support for the project, and among existing networks of contacts;
- Branding (design and execution);
- Press and marketing support, pushing content to media contacts and facilitating promotional opportunities;
- Online and social media activity, including web site design, blogging, using Facebook, Twitter and other channels to engage followers;
- Event management (organising special screenings, conferences and other presentations);
- Use of office space and meeting rooms, and other overhead expenditure;
- Assorted material production costs including content generation, printing etc.

Table 8: Partner contributions to the release campaign

Partner	Contribution to distribution campaign	Estimated value of contribution
National Trust	Press and marketing strategies; communications support, social media and content generation; managing partner relations; exit poll survey design; event management; advocacy; use of facilities; travel expenses; printing costs	£78,000
Play England	Social media; event management; press support; use of facilities; 50 x community screening licenses; design/production of cinema screening packs and discussion guides	£67,000
Swarm	Branding; website design and hosting; app development; supporting The Wild Network; event management	£50,000
RSPB	Marketing and communications; advocacy; press & publicity support; social media; scientific advice; event management; use of facilities; printing and materials	£41,000
Others*	Planning; promotional support; advocacy; The Wild Network	£26,000
TOTAL		£262,000

Source: Green Lions

* includes BRITDOC Foundation, The Wild Network, Woodland Trust, Wildlife Trusts, freelancers and other individual consultants

Table 9 summarises the campaign expenditure across major categories, although it does not include the above in-kind contributions. Also omitted are Green Lions staff costs for filmmakers David Bond, Ashley Jones and Lorraine O'Donovan who ran the theatrical distribution of the film full-time for a period of three months from mid August through to mid November 2013 (estimated at £65,282).

Table 9: Project Wild Thing campaign expenditure

	Cost	%
Media (includes print, outdoor and online advertising)	£4,066	6%
Publicity (includes PR fees and expenses, press screenings, promotions)	£40,125	59%
Production (includes poster, trailer and leaflets & flyers, web site)	£13,985	21%
Digital and other (includes virtual print fees, Digital copies, access, Insight reporting and education resources)	£9,904	14%
TOTAL	£68,080	100%



RESULTS

2.1 THEATRICAL BOX OFFICE

Project Wild Thing was released on Friday 25 October during the half term holidays, capitalising on the fact that families had both the opportunity to visit the cinema and would most likely be receptive to the outdoor activity ideas proposed by the film and wider campaign.

The film appeared on 56 screens during the opening weekend, playing at 44 venues. Total opening weekend admissions were 2,776 (£14,022 box office gross), a figure equivalent to the medium-level performance forecast made for the release as a whole.

The centerpiece of the theatrical launch was a series of 29 event screenings up and down the country on Sunday 27 October (18 of which were hosted at Picturehouse venues), involving Q&As, panel discussions, talks, presentations and other themed activities.

These event screenings alone generated 1,626 admissions (£8,960 box office gross). They proved popular draws, boosting average attendances: screenings with events attracted an average audience of 60 compared with 31 for non-event screenings.

'I think for particular films, event screenings work in a number of ways. For one thing you're tapping into that organisation's membership, they're marketing it to a captive audience,

there's a good chance that they're already going to be interested in the subject of the film. Then in terms of marketing to our own audience, and spreading the word further afield in general, I think any screening that allows some sort of audience engagement works well.'

**Chris Harris,
Picturehouse Cinemas**

To date (May 2014) the film has played at 113 screenings in 70 cinemas, generating 4,306 admissions in total. The opening weekend accounted for 64% of these total admissions, demonstrating the significance of the event-based screenings hosted on 27 October.

Venues programmed by Picturehouse Cinemas accounted for 41% of total theatrical admissions to date (1,761 admissions), underlining the importance of their support for the film. In fact, cinema-based advertising and promotional activity was cited by one in ten (11%) audience survey respondents as a source of information about the film.

Table 10: Theatrical performance, October 2013 to May 2014

	Box office gross	Admissions
Opening weekend	£14,022	2,776
Sunday 27.10.13 event screenings	£8,960	1,626
Picturehouse venues total to date	£10,473	1,761
THEATRICAL TOTAL TO DATE	£22,305	4,306

Source: Green Lions

Theatrical performance is in line with Green Lions's higher forecast for the film (4,500 for theatrical admissions), and project partners have been pleased with this success.

'I think the full impact in terms of number of people is quite high and higher than we could have hoped for a standard theatrical release. Certainly in terms of documentary.'

**Sandra Whipham,
BRITDOC Foundation**

Importantly for the innovative approach taken by the release campaign, Picturehouse Cinemas is in no doubt that involvement of the wider network of partners was crucial to the film's theatrical success:

'I don't think we'd be looking at anywhere near those figures without partners' involvement. I think you can probably halve those numbers without the involvement of other organisations.'

**Chris Harris,
Picturehouse Cinemas**

2.2 COMMUNITY SCREENINGS

'The strategy was always to get the community screenings. In a sense that's where a lot of the work will be done: in real communities with real people watching the film and trying to work out what it means for them.'

Dan Burgess, Good for Nothing and Swarm

As the quote above from Dan Burgess indicates, the rationale behind non-theatrical, community screenings was twofold: as another means of getting the film in front of audiences around the country; but just as importantly, community interest groups were considered most likely to heed the call to action and further the aims of the wider campaign spearheaded by The Wild Network.

Green Lions managed the process of booking community screenings in-house. Booking enquiries came through various channels, including social media, via email and the web site, as well as direct contact made at screening events.

Following an initial booking enquiry, Green Lions provided promoters with a copy of the DVD, a film postcard and other promotional materials (including a downloadable poster, discussion guide and press pack).

Screening fees were negotiated on an individual basis, guided by a rate card taking into account the booking organisation's size, as follows:

Table 11: Typical booking fees for community screenings

Type of promoter	Indicative fee
Small community groups	£100
Schools & charities	£150
Small not-for-profit organisations	£200
Small for-profit organisations or festivals	£250
Large for-profit organisations	£250 - £500
Large corporations	£500+

Source: Green Lions

One challenge of such direct negotiations was in managing the expectation of some promoters that screenings could be booked for free or at very low cost:

'Community groups get in touch to say they want to put the film on, but some struggle with the higher fee. We don't want the cost of a screening to be an issue, so where we can, we try to accommodate. There have been occasions where we've operated a 'Radiohead' model, saying our minimum cost for a screening fee is £50 to cover basic costs, but our suggested screening fee is, for example, £150, and we encourage people to pay more if they can.'

**Ashley Jones,
Green Lions**

A discount was also available for multiple screenings. For example, a school putting on two performances would pay £250 rather than £300. Larger discounts were negotiable for promoters planning ten or more screenings (in one example, Cambridgeshire County Council arranged 100 school screenings charged at £47 per event).

Where relevant, speaking fees were subject to separate negotiation. David Bond addressed many smaller events for free, only requiring a donation to The Wild Network for engagements arranged by larger organisations.

Despite the administrative burden of the booking system on Green Lions, direct contact with promoters had the added benefit of recruiting new members to The Wild Network and engaging them in a conversation about the film and campaign objectives:

‘We’ve gone down a much more labour intensive method where we talk to everybody who asks for a community screening personally. It has really boosted The Wild Network membership, because people ask for community screenings and we ask them to become members of The Wild Network (which is free so it’s not a hard ask). But it also means that we can have a conversation with them and find out why they are interested in the network and the film.’

David Bond, Green Lions

Most commonly, community screenings were organised by small organisations working in the nature and environmental field, open to a public audience. Another common type was a school screening organised by teachers or parents for a private audience. In addition to the example of Cambridgeshire County Council given above, the Youth Hostel Association and The Wildlife Trust are examples of larger organisations that hosted a programme of screenings in multiple locations.

Green Lions had a high target of 1,000 community screenings, reaching 20,000 people across the UK, over the lifetime of the release. In just the first six months following theatrical debut, 274 community screenings had taken place in the UK, generating 11,444 admissions (with an average attendance of 42), a further 36 events were hosted overseas, and bookings at home and overseas continue to come in (Table 12 and Figure 5).

To date Green Lions has issued invoices for community screenings to the value of £72,000 (putting the average booking charge at around £250), nearly three times the film’s theatrical box office gross.

Table 12: Community screenings delivered to 14 May 2014

Country	Number of community screenings	Admissions
UK- England	189	7,412
UK- Northern Ireland	0	0
UK- Scotland	16	1,272
UK- Wales	67	2,710
UK- Islands	1 (Isle of Man)	120
UK sub-total	274	11,514 (to 14.05.14)
Argentina	3	150
Australia	14	825
Austria	1	50
Canada	7	980
Hungary	1	95
Italy	1	150
Republic of Ireland	4	155
US	5	949
Worldwide total	309	14,868 (to 14.05.14)

Source: Green Lions

Figure 5: Map of UK community screening organisers, to May 2014



In light of this experience, Green Lions is confident that a wider theatrical release would not have benefited the film, as potentially it could have limited the number of community screening opportunities:

‘If we’d have booked more theatrical venues, we’d have got fewer community screenings. An average cinema pays us probably £100 for an average individual screen, and that’s pretty much what we get from a basic community screening. But a Director’s

Q&A might bring £600 revenue and if we’d done more cinemas we wouldn’t be having so many community screening and Q&A requests. So I’m in no doubt that we’ve gone down something very close to the right path for this film.’

**David Bond,
Green Lions**



2.3 AUDIENCES

Theatrical and community screening audiences were polled about their viewing experience and their attitudes to the issues raised by the wider campaign. The survey, based on an industry-standard exit poll format and administered by volunteers at screening events and online version, provides valuable insights into the release campaign and its effectiveness, as well as shedding light on the film’s connection with audiences.

A total of 133 completed and useable surveys have been analysed for this report. Given the relatively small, self-selected nature of the sample it is not advisable to generalise the findings to the audience as a whole. However, the results tell an instructive story about the demographic profile of respondents (Table 13), confirming a number of assumptions made prior to release about the film’s likely audience appeal:

- Over two thirds (69%) of respondents were female, and a similar proportion (67%) were aged between 26 and 45.
- The majority (94%) lived in England, and over half of these (57%) were London residents, reflecting the concentration of screening activity in the capital.
- One third (34%) of the 61 respondents who completed the survey at a venue had children or grandchildren (the question was posed differently in the online survey).

Table 13: Demographic profile of survey respondents

	%
Female	69%
Male	31%
Under 18	8%
18-25	10%
26-35	31%
36-45	36%
46-55	12%
56+	3%
England	94%
London	57%
South	11%
East	10%
East Midlands	6%
South West	6%
Yorkshire & Humberside	5%
North West	3%
West Midlands	1%
Channel Islands	2%
Scotland	2%
Wales	2%
Northern Ireland	1%

Source: Green Lions

The film was rated very favourably by the majority of respondents, and word of mouth is likely to have been a strong element in audience building:

- *Project Wild Thing* was rated higher among respondents than the UK industry norm. 59% rated it as 'excellent' (norm = 30%) and 35% rated it 'very good' (norm = 30%).
- Consistent with this highly favourable rating, the majority of respondents (85%) said they would 'definitely' recommend the film to friends (norm = 50%), and a further 14% 'probably' would.
- This is supported by the finding that 'friends or family' was the most cited source of information about *Project Wild Thing* (Table 14).
- Given the finding that nearly one third (31%) of respondents heard about the film through Twitter or Facebook, led by the *Project Wild Thing* team and complemented by partner activity, we can conclude that social media proved a highly influential element of the promotional campaign.
- Despite the very visible nature of coverage at the time of the film's theatrical release, the audience survey found only a minority of respondents heard about the film through traditional print and broadcast media. We can assume, therefore, the value of this coverage lay more in raising awareness of The Wild Network and the wider campaign rather than converting readers into film audiences. This possibly reflects the fact that feature articles were more likely to appear in society and lifestyle pages rather than arts and film sections, based on editorial judgments made by the media.

Table 14: How did you hear about *Project Wild Thing*?

Source	%
From a friend or family	44%
Twitter or Facebook	31%
Other (Kickstarter)	14% (5%)
Cinema newsletter/ advertising/ posters	11%
Newspaper or magazine adverts/articles/ reviews	8%
Trailer	8%
Online ad	7%
TV news/talk shows/interviews/reviews	5%
Poster/ banner	3%
Radio news/talk shows/interviews/ reviews	2%
Outdoor poster	2%

% sums more than 100% because respondents could select more than one option

The survey also sheds light on *Project Wild Thing's* impact on attitudes to the issues explored in the film. Encouragingly for partners invested in the wider campaign, over three quarters of respondents (78%) said having seen the film they were 'much more likely' to discuss the issues it raised with friends or family, while 97% agreed that 'watching *Project Wild Thing* makes me want to find ways to make it easier for children in my family and community to enjoy more time outdoors'. Further research is necessary to establish what, if any, lasting effect the film had on reconnecting children with nature.

2.4 VOD AND DVD

By making the film available on premium VOD at the time of the theatrical release, and on DVD within a shortened window, the filmmakers hoped to capitalise on media coverage around the cinema release and provide additional viewing opportunities.

Green Lions decided to launch the premium VOD offer on three film-oriented platforms: Curzon Home Cinema, BFI Player and Vimeo. Links to these platforms were provided on the *Project Wild Thing* web site, in hope of channeling traffic and transactions. Green Lions wanted web traffic to pass through its own site rather than make the film widely available elsewhere online, to minimise competition from other platforms for Google rankings around 'Project Wild Thing' search terms.

Launch on iTunes was timed to coincide with the later DVD release, in part because there was insufficient time to prepare the work for an earlier launch (content aggregation takes longer for iTunes). Green Lions also wanted to avoid undermining DVD market potential which might have resulted from an early iTunes debut.

Although the day and date premium VOD debut and early window DVD release did not deter Picturehouse Cinemas from booking *Project Wild Thing*, it was an issue for the larger circuits, who wanted more conventional ancillary windows:

'[It] would have been more of a concern a few years ago but it's becoming quite a common thing. I think for some of these films, particularly some of these niche independent films, it works quite well because the more opportunities people have to see the film, the more coverage you can get.'

Chris Harris, Picturehouse Cinemas

'[A]t one point Odeon, Showcase, Empire and Regal all offered us screens which would have increased our screens by 200+ in one hit. But that would have meant holding back on our

VOD, DVD and community screenings, which wasn't in the spirit of what we were doing with this film.'

Ashley Jones, Green Lions

As of May 2014, the number of VOD transactions on platforms that released the title at the time of the theatrical release has been lower than expected, although it is difficult to judge performance objectively as market benchmarks for this type of project are hard to judge.

Curzon Home Cinema charged £10 on VOD debut, dropping the price to £4 when the DVD was released in early December. The platform reports a total of 120 transactions to 7 May 2014, generating gross takings of £691.25.

Vimeo charged \$15 initially, eventually reducing this to \$8. It has recorded 148 On Demand plays and 145 purchases, generating \$1,362.47 in gross revenue.

BFI Player charged £10 per play until February 2014, reducing the price to £4.50 in March 2014. To date they have recorded 59 VOD purchases with gross revenue of £517.83.

Sales on iTunes and Amazon Instant Video, which carried the title from late December onwards, have not added significantly to total transactions.

The DVD release, within six weeks of theatrical debut, was considered an important channel for reaching the film's core audience of parents aged 35-45 with young children who might not be able to attend screenings or take up VOD opportunities due to lack of broadband connectivity.

The decision to release the DVD direct to retail via Verve and through Green Lions within a reduced theatrical window was taken to ensure it was available in the run up to Christmas.

In the event, there was limited media attention around the DVD release due to its proximity to the theatrical release: the story was no longer considered newsworthy enough to merit additional coverage. Press contacts, in particular, were reluctant to run new features and reviews within a relatively short timeframe of their initial coverage.



'I've just finished a DVD campaign for [Green Lions] which did less well and I think that's to do with timing of the DVD release. It was so close to the theatrical that people had already covered it so they weren't that keen on covering it again.'

**Elizabeth Benjamin,
Beady Eyed Films**

However, partners continued to promote the film through social media and other networks at the time of the DVD release, which provided another hook for online communication and marketing. A number of partners even ran competitions and giveaways around the release.

Partners have played other roles: for example, the RSPB bought around 200 DVD units, from distributor Verve, to sell in their gift shops and via their website. Bulks sales have also been made to Fields in Trust, Wildlife Trusts, Woodcraft Folk and The Caravan Club. These orders are ongoing, as stocks deplete.

Most significantly, the National Trust bought 10,000 units (at £5 a unit) to give away free to its members. An insert with details about how to claim the DVD was distributed in May 2014 with the organisation's Summer magazine.

The majority of DVD retail sales have been via Amazon, for which Green Lions gets the lowest income share. According to distributor Verve, total online and retail sales across all distribution channels stood at 1,663 at 14 May 2014.

In summary it is fair to conclude that home entertainment transactions to date have been lower than anticipated. This fact coupled with the prominence of event-based screenings during the film's opening weekend suggests the premium VOD offer is unlikely to have had any material impact on *Project Wild Thing's* theatrical performance or subsequent community screening bookings. And although uptake has not been on the scale hoped, the film's availability on VOD and DVD has at least made *Project Wild Thing* accessible to those unable, or unwilling, to attend cinema and community screenings.

DISCUSSION AND LESSONS

The BFI usually requires an Insight Report to be prepared within three months of a film's theatrical release, but in *Project Wild Thing's* case the research window was extended to six months. The multi-platform approach taken by Green Lions and partners was always intended to unfold over a longer period than more conventional campaigns, and any shorter evaluation timeframe would have risked drawing premature conclusions.

This judgment proved sound as matters turned out. A three-month period of observation would have captured sufficient evidence to detail the film's theatrical performance, while limiting our assessment of the campaign within the context of the other significant strands of activity, notably the rolling programme of community screenings.

Looking at each element in turn, *Project Wild Thing* performed broadly in line with expectation at cinemas, confirming the importance of event-based performances for this kind of film to find and connect with audiences.

VOD and DVD retail transactions, leaving aside the bulk DVD purchase by the National Trust, fell short of original sales targets, and the release campaign has little new to tell us about the impact of day-and-date premium VOD and early DVD release on audience uptake. The best we can say is there is no evidence the film's concurrent availability in the home entertainment market undermined audience demand for big screen viewing opportunities, either at the cinema or at community screenings.

Where the experience of *Project Wild Thing* provides fresh and revealing insight is in the potential of these latter screenings to extend a title's reach well beyond the scope of a standard theatrical model for low budget, issue-based documentary features.

Project Wild Thing provides proof of concept that non-theatrical bookings managed by a production company in combination with a high-profile press and PR campaign anchored to a UK theatrical release and coordinated across a network of partners has the potential to:

- generate meaningful revenue in the long term;
- broaden the film's audience to those unable

or unwilling to see the film at the cinema;

- and positively engage individuals and groups in the wider social issue campaign.

In conclusion, and taking all the available evidence into account, we can draw the following lessons:

1. While not the first to do so, *Project Wild Thing* demonstrates that, for certain types of project, self-distribution is a viable alternative to traditional release strategies although it is, undeniably, a labour intensive enterprise.

'The lesson that you learn every time you release a film is that when you've finished making your film that's when the hard work really begins. And that truth stands for when you release your film in the cinemas, it's not the end of it it's the beginning of it.'

**Ashley Jones,
Green Lions**

2. Working with a clear division of labour across multiple partners can help to share this burden, increasing operational capacity and reach, as well as expanding a project's ambition:

'Working with partners has allowed us ambition. If it had been just the four of us working on the release we may have limited the number of cinema screens we could physically handle - there is only so much one can do with limited resource. But with the might of the partners behind us - their support for the film and for us as filmmakers - we were able to scale up our ambition. It really felt like anything was possible.'

**Ashley Jones,
Green Lions**

3. Partnerships need time to establish and come into their own, especially where they involve companies, groups and organisations from different sectors and of varying sizes and

outlooks. *Project Wild Thing* benefitted from establishing a set of core relationships early on in the production phase, which matured in beneficial directions and carried through into the release campaign.

4. Nonetheless, examples given in interview by those involved in the release campaign illustrate the point that managing partnerships with non-film organisations is not always straightforward, and success depends on taking account of differences in institutional culture, practice and expectation.

'I think the challenge is in the different dynamics involved when you have filmmakers who are very passionate, very self-starting, used to just making things happen and being quite dynamic, and very large organisations that work in an extremely different way. Bridging those two cultures is a really big challenge for this kind of work.'

Sandra Whipham, BRITDOC Foundation

One concrete example of this occurred around the decision by Picturehouse Cinemas to push the theatrical opening from the school summer holiday period to the autumn half-term week. Uncertainty around the release date and the long lead time of partner organisations' publication schedules meant that plans for promotional activity timed to coincide with a summer release had to change at short notice.

'I think the interesting thing for myself having not worked with film makers or cinema releases before is the timescales and actually how the timescale of the cinema is very different if you've got magazines or other considerations.'

Mike Collins, National Trust

5. It's a commonplace observation that self-distribution has the virtue of putting producers in direct contact with the marketplace. This was confirmed in the case of *Project Wild Thing*, as contact with exhibitors and promoters enabled a more direct sales pitch and established a useful

dialogue about the film's potential.

'We approached all the cinemas ourselves, and the learning we got is important to note. Bookings were secured purely by us hitting the phones, giving a sales pitch, sending confirmation emails, giving a link to preview the film, and badgering cinemas to make a decision. That experience was invaluable as a filmmaker - direct contact with the people who are making the decisions and hopefully exhibiting your work. It was a real insight into how our film, and documentary film in general, fits in to the current cinema landscape.'

Ashley Jones, Green Lions

6. Another truism is that the choice of release platforms and windows should be driven by likely audience demand. For *Project Wild Thing*, the uptake of VOD and DVD retail opportunities has been relatively weak in commercial terms, but weighed against this is the principle that harder-to-reach target audiences should have as many means to see the film in whatever format is most convenient, as this can benefit the wider social issue campaign.

This is an area where the impact distribution model, primarily concerned with changing hearts and minds, takes precedence over strict commercial imperative, which is appropriate provided it is not detrimental to the financial interests of a film's backers.

7. For issue-based films supported by multiple partners, a nationwide theatrical release, even on a relatively small number of screens, can bring additional benefits beyond box office takings:

- A nationwide theatrical release presents greater promotional opportunities across traditional print and broadcast media as well as online through social media;
- Partners without film experience are more likely to buy into the project if it has a theatrical release:

'I think that was a nice added bonus, certainly in terms of explaining

Project Wild Thing to the organisations involved, for their internal communications. It was nice for those organisations to be involved with a feature-length documentary film which was going to be shown in cinemas, something for staff and volunteers to be proud of their organisation's involvement.'

**Mike Collins,
National Trust**

9. In practical terms, press and PR involving multiple partners needs to be effectively coordinated and managed, ideally by a small, dedicated team.

'It was certainly beneficial liaising with one major partner [the National Trust] who would then help feed any questions or any other info to other partners rather than me having to liaise with 10 different partners at a time.'

**Elizabeth Benjamin,
Beady Eyed Films**

10. The arts press, which can normally be counted on to cover new film releases with a good story hook, was less interested in *Project Wild Thing* because the film's subject matter and approach were perceived as better suited to social affairs coverage. This should be borne in mind when considering target audiences and how best to reach them through different media channels.

'One thing I would say with this film, is that it was less successful in the traditional arts and film outlets. I think this is because (a) it's a documentary as opposed to a mainstream fiction film and (b) it's clearly a campaign film and is therefore liable to fall somewhere in between the environmental/social/political sections and the arts/film sections.'

**Elizabeth Benjamin,
Beady Eyed Films**

11. Social media proved highly effective in raising awareness of the film release and building an extended community of interest around the social issue campaign. As a means of communication and engagement this promotional channel appears particularly well suited to grassroots campaigns distributed across various partner organisations, facilitating opportunistic (as well as pre-planned) and rapid response conversations in an idiom and tone appropriate to the moment.

12. Ultimately, the extent to which *Project Wild Thing* has succeeded in changing public attitudes to contemporary childhood and its relationship with the outdoors remains to be seen. There is certainly a growing body of anecdotal evidence to this effect, alongside more tangible indicators of people's changing behaviour as recorded in their social media interactions with *Project Wild Thing* and partners, and The Wild Network's ever-increasing membership.

The present Insight Report is in no position to vouch for the film's wider transformative impact, but it is clear that partners value highly *Project Wild Thing's* tactical and strategic role, accepting that film can be a very potent element of a social issue campaign:

'I think film has an extraordinary ability to open up people to issues that exist all around us that you just don't see. If you're motivated by policy change, which we are, then we see film as an absolutely fundamental part of the mix because we live in a very visual culture now that often you need emotive ways for people to become interested in stuff, and actually to notice things.'

**Dan Burgess,
Good for Nothing and Swarm**

APPENDIX 1

RESEARCH METHODS

Three strands of evidence gathering and analysis were employed in researching this Insight Report:

1. Market data analysis

- Site-by-site box office gross figures, supplied by Green Lions, were collated and analysed for the period from opening weekend onwards. Data was generated describing the film's opening weekend and total grosses. The numbers were analysed to determine overall performance of the film against forecasts, and to explore differences in performance between key sites, in particular where special events were delivered.
- Transaction data for VOD and DVD retail was collated and compared against projections agreed with the client.
- Community screenings were measured using bookings data supplied by Green Lions, including their geographical location and admissions.

2. Telephone interviews

Qualitative insights into the campaign's effectiveness were derived from detailed consultation with key participants involved in different aspects of the release strategy.

Face-to-face and telephone interviews with the following contacts took place between November 2013 and January 2014:

- Ashley Jones and David Bond (Green Lions);
- Sandra Whipham (BRITDOC Foundation);
- Andy Simpson (The Wild Network and formerly RSPB);
- Dan Burgess (Swarm and Good for Nothing);
- Elizabeth Benjamin (Beady Eyed Films);
- Mike Collins (National Trust);
- Chris Harris (Picturehouse Cinemas).

Interviews were designed to capture participants' views of the release campaign while they were still fresh and at a point where they could reflect on the film's initial performance in the market.

3. Desk research

Green Lions supplied:

- web site and social media analytics to demonstrate the campaign's reach and effectiveness in engaging online audiences;
- audience survey results;
- and press pack and press campaign valuation data.

Evidence of the scale and composition of The Wild Network was derived from online searches and annual reports.



APPENDIX 2

DATABANK

Table 15: Performance summary, up to May 2014

	Box office gross/ revenue	Admissions/ unit sales
Previews, festivals and corporate screenings	£2,000	1,805
Theatrical release	£22,305	4,306
Community screenings	£71,682	11,514 (UK admissions only)
VOD		
Curzon Home Cinema	£691.25 (gross)	120
BFI Player	£517.83 (gross)	59
Vimeo (On demand plays and purchases)	\$1,362.47 (gross)	293
DVD	£16,630* (excludes National Trust bulk purchase)	1,663 (+ 10,000 National Trust giveaways)
TOTALS		17,555 UK admissions 2,135 DVD/VoD unit sales (excluding giveaways)

Source: Green Lions

*Estimated





bfi.org.uk