

amusement tax, only a minimal municipal tax. In Japan, Brunei, and Australia, there is no amusement tax at all. Therefore, in the Philippines, the burden is imposed on the moviegoing public through high-priced admission ticket, talents who are subjected to withholding taxes, and producers who cover the cost of production. Much of the revenue on the film industry goes to the national and local governments, but not enough is ploughed back to improve the industry.

Compared to 188 other countries, the Philippines ranks 126th in the ease of paying taxes with a total tax rate (percentage of profit) of 42.9 percent. Moreover, there is an additional local tax collected from the proprietors, lessees, or operators of theaters, cinemas, concert halls, and other places of amusement or entertainment at a rate of not more than 10 percent of the gross receipts from admission fees (World Bank Group 2016).

Fortunately, the Film Development Council of the Philippines (FDCP) continues to offer tax incentives through its rating system. Films that are graded “A” or “B” by its Cinema Evaluation Board, pursuant to sections 11 and 12 of Republic Act 9167, are entitled to the amusement tax reward: for graded “A” films, 100 percent rebate of the amusement tax; for graded “B” films, 65 percent rebate of the amusement tax collected on such films. The remaining 35 percent of the amusement tax for graded “B” films goes to FDCP funds.

With the fast dwindling numbers of Filipino moviegoers, rampant piracy of movies, and the widespread entertainment substitutes provided by modern technology, it is high time that the government should lift the heavy taxes on the film industry and instead provide substantial support and assistance to ensure its continued growth and development. For their part, those in the film and movie industry must actively participate in pushing for genuine tax reform. ☀

Sources: Salumbides 1952; World Bank Group 2016.



German filmmaker Christoph Janetzko conducting a film workshop at the Mowelfund Film Institute, ca 1990 (MFI Collection)

TRAINING AND EDUCATION FOR FILM

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Film training is the acquisition of skills in filmmaking from apprenticeship in commercial filmmaking or hands-on participation in workshops. **Film education** refers to the pursuit of a degree in film in academic institutions. The subject of film training is generally regarded in the Philippines as something practical; film studies, on the other hand, involves the theoretical, although it may include production courses. It is said that one has to go to the film industry for the former and to academe to learn the latter. Many Filipino filmmakers are largely self-taught. No diploma is required of applicants in the film industry except, perhaps, a high-school certificate and a desire to learn and practice an aspect of moviemaking, such as directing, editing, or cinematography. Most movie production studios provide a kind of informal training in the work required of a talent. In mainstream cinema, the important considerations are the person’s track record, experience, and exposure to the craft. Outstanding Filipino directors learned filmmaking as the protégés of their predecessors: Ishmael Bernal from Lamberto V. Avellana, Eddie Romero from Gerardo de Leon, and Lino Brocka from Eddie Romero.

Although a formal **film course** does not guarantee automatic admission into the industry, film courses have been quite popular in colleges and universities since the late 1960s. The movement called the New Wave or Nouvelle Vague was sweeping across France at this time. It would in time reach other countries where it would provide the impetus to make film not only as a commercial but also as an artistic undertaking. When the University of the Philippines Film Center (UPFC) was established in 1976, it became a haven for young filmmakers who wished to learn the mechanics of film through ways other than those already available in mainstream cinema. In the late 1970s, UPFC workshops fostered the use of film for individual expression. The “Cinema-as-Art Workshop” was conducted in Diliman, Quezon City. “Cinema Direct on Ethnic Film” went on location to the various regions of the country; in 1985 the workshop was conducted in UP Baguio by the Paris Varan director and anthropologist Alain Martenot. At another time it was held in Los Baños, Laguna. The “Experimental Film Workshops” was

conducted by the Germans Ingo Petzke and Christoph Janetzko. After the UP Film Center was merged with the Film and Audio-Visual Communication Department to form the UP Film Institute (UPFI) in 2003, workshops on major aspects of filmmaking were offered every year on a regular basis.

A number of institutions from both government and the private sector have served to bridge the gap between film studies in academe and film training in mainstream cinema through the holding of lectures, workshops, film festivals, and film competitions. The Annual Short Film Festival sponsored by the Experimental Cinema of the Philippines (ECP) boosted independent filmmaking. Though short-lived, the ECP (1982-85) served its purpose of developing new and gifted filmmakers in the Philippines. The ECP Short Film Festival competitions stimulated great interest in short filmmaking, mainly by offering cash prizes and trophies to winners in four categories: experimental, short feature, documentary, and animation. ECP's annual competitions and the offering of film courses in colleges and universities, such as Ateneo de Manila University, De La Salle University, and the University of the Philippines, infused new vigor into independent cinema in the 1980s.

When the ECP was closed down in the wake of the 1986 EDSA Revolt, the Cultural Center of the Philippines stepped in to fill the void with the establishment of the Coordinating Center for Film. The center organized annual independent cinema and video competitions, publications on film, and tributary award-giving programs.

The Mowelfund Film Institute (MFI) constitutes one of the 14 guilds of the Film Academy of the Philippines (FAP) and is at least five years older than the FAP, which was established only in 1981. Since the late 1970s, MFI has been espousing the cause of film education and training, sponsoring seminars and workshops, and at one time sending film scholars abroad with subsidies for travel, tuition, and other expenses.

In 1984, the first academic degree program in film and audiovisual communication in the country opened at the UP College of Mass Communication, offering courses in film production and film studies. In 2003, the UP Film Institute was established through a merger between the UP Film Center and the Film and Audiovisual Communication Department of the UP College of Mass Communication. Housed in the College

of Mass Communication, the UPFI aims to contribute to Philippine cinema by equipping its students with a well-rounded education that focuses on the liberal arts and an astute sense of social responsibility, aside from the acquisition of the technical skills of filmmaking. The UPFI offers a Bachelor of Arts in Film program and a Master of Arts in Media Studies in Film program. It is the first film school in the country to offer both undergraduate and graduate degrees in the study of film. In 2007, the De La Salle College of Saint Benilde's School of Design and Arts began to offer two undergraduate programs—Bachelor of Arts in Digital Filmmaking (ABDFILM) and Bachelor of Arts in Animation (ABANI)—that both promote and perform film pedagogy with the right equipment. Both programs offer innovative techniques that involve the latest technology “to create the cinema of the future.” Another school that offers a degree in animation is the Ateneo de Naga University through its program Bachelor of Science in Digital Illustration and Animation. Highly aware of the current film landscape's immersion in the most advanced technology, the program focuses on how digital technology can hone future filmmakers with the desire to present their film narratives through illustration and animation. Established in 2004, the International Academy of Film and Television (IAFT) in Cebu City offers certificate and diploma courses in filmmaking, performing arts, acting, and 3D animation. They also frequently hold workshops for aspiring students.

In 2001, the Asia Pacific Film Institute was founded by producer/director Ben Yalung. In 2015, the Cinemalaya Institute also opened at the De La Salle College of Saint Benilde, offering a three-semester program that offers courses that cater to filmmaking aspects, such as directing, producing, screenwriting, musical scoring, and acting. The Independent Filmmakers Collective (formerly Independent Filmmakers Cooperative) is composed of professional filmmakers who provide workshops to aspiring filmmakers. Mostly catering to independent films, the cooperative also offers services that involve the production, promotion, and distribution of films and film equipment. ✨

Opposite: Lino Brocka directing Hilda Koronel and Bembol Roco, while Tikoy Aguiluz shoots stills, in *Cinema Artists Philippines' Maynila: Sa mga Kuko ng Liwanag*, 1975 (Lino Brocka/CCP Collection)