

workshop the **one** minutes in tirana, albania

violence against children

How a workshop for 21 youngsters in Tirana begins with a hijacked Turkish airplane, a ride past some blocks of flats which look as if they were built in the Stone Age, and ends in prizes and cocktails, a couple of wonderful One Minutes and the conviction that some good work is done.

By Effi Weiss en Amir Borenstein

Arrival Tirana: message to the pope
So here we are again. At first sight, stepping through the sliding doors of Mother Theresa airport, we thought something has changed. The plateau was empty and quiet, the taxi drivers and welcoming crowd were waiting far ahead, at the end of the entry road. But soon we realized that this change of regulations was very short-term, and was imposed due to the event we've just missed: the kidnapping of a Turkish Airline airplane by a guy who had an urgent message to bring to the pope. The Albanians with whom we spoke were relieved to hear the hijacker was Turkish, an Albanian airplane hijacker is the very last thing they need. The way to the capital was as startling as always, even at 01:00 am. In addition to the countless improvised carwash posts, the sparking gas stations and the never ending

architectural variations, I remarked on the incredible amount of unfinished cement structures that already resemble ancient ruins, some serving as gigantic poles for laundry ropes. The ride was occasionally interrupted by the rear bumper of our minibus cab that refused to stay in its place, no matter how hard Kristaq, our faithful driver tried to convince it, it would always fall off again. Kristaq had to put an end to the nuisance with his trousers belt.

1st day – Exploring the kingdom

In our case, the excitement of the first day was just a preface for the excitement yet to follow. The workshop took place at the Marubi film school, some 120 meters from our hotel. Yet, Kristaq came to pick us up, so that we won't lose our way. There, to our surprise, 21 young people were waiting for us. Twenty-one. And each one of them is supposed to make their own One Minute within the next five days. After the many mutual introductions, explanations and presentations, and collective lunch in the restaurant next door, the kids, who are not really kids anymore, are sent to do some thinking while we go exploring the kingdom. And there is a lot to explore.

The Marubi school gives us all of

its space, two screening rooms, two sound proof studios, props, lights, a few classrooms... we can use what we want and we definitely will. And on top of all that they give us Bora, our translation angel.

By 21:00 around 13 scripts have been approved. The theme for this workshop, introduced by Unicef Albania, is violence against children in school. Gradually, we find out that these young people are more concerned with violence at home, and with less direct forms of violence; stress and oppression that are imposed by larger systems or modes of thinking, and with the hidden violence of indifference towards the other.

2nd day – Slapping

No time to lose so the shooting must begin. Those who still need to work on their scripts meet us between shootings and are sent to help on the set, and thus to get inspired by the activity. First film to be shot is by Merina Dervishi. The location is downtown Tirana, at one of the traffic lights where gypsy kids struggle to earn some money by cleaning car windows. Esmeralda is one of them and is talked into the role. She's to be rudely sent away by an impatient



Filming a bullying scene (Andy, Roland, Gregorio and Marsel) for Dea's film



Preparing for Roland's film about a 10 year old child, who wants to play the guitar



Shooting the final scene for Klesta's *Fade away*, in which Miljano should fall out of the frame

The very minimalistic set with Mesila directing Orsola



driver who would not pay for the cleaning, and she then haunts him back with her wiper behind the cash machine screen.

Several videos produced on that day deal with the widespread phenomenon of slapping as a mean of education; in Ilion Trebicka's movie it's a father who doesn't believe that his son found a cell phone, and suspects he has stolen it. In Roland Pjetrushaj's it's a father who wants his little son to study while the son is more drawn to his guitar. The father in Gregorio Trako's movie cannot accept that his son would have a girlfriend. And in Megi Melani's movie, which is made of one single shot and consists only of shadows, the father is drunk and slaps his daughter just because her homework making disturbs him. Slapping repeats in a few other movies in this workshop. In Andi Koçiaj's movie, which is more abstract in form and in content, slapping is a symbolic act of hurting; with each slap a candle burns out, while only the inner force of the victim prevents the darkness to take over. In Briselda's movie, shot in an Egyptian gypsy neighbourhood, the person being slapped is the mother, while disputing with the father about money issues. The revelation of this day is undoubtedly the impressive acting talent of

Back to work after a little break in the film School's yard



our famous driver Kristaq. With his Sean Connery look and his cinematic past, he becomes the most wanted cast in each production.

3rd day – A baby grows a moustache

Although very happy with our last day's crop, we're still far from our 21 One-Minutes goal. As our young filmmakers get more and more involved in their friends' productions, it's getting logistically more difficult to organize the day. Still, some productions are simple and powerful, like Merin Marika's. His movie *Little Man* speaks about the oppression of renouncing one's childhood, a product of the communist regime, where children are supposed to be serious and purposeful, and no mistakes or foolishness are accepted. His movie is made in an old silent movie style. The same scene, of a mother with a baggie repeats itself with variations. The situations are comical, but not for the baby in question, who already wears a tie and grows a moustache... Others require more pre-production, but now that the kids are into it, nothing stands in their way. They find their own props, they find their own locations, get permissions and even sponsorships... Like Marsel

Malvina directing bora and ilion for the outdoor scene in her All in order



Rupi, who, to our clear amazement, convinced a shopkeeper to lend him an elegant suite, while promising his boutique will appear in his movie. His One Minute is of a poor guy (played by himself) facing continuous bad luck, demonstrating the vicious circle of poverty. On this day we have even more outdoor locations. Taulant takes us to shoot in an orphanage, Malvina needs to have a scene shot in the mountains, Limonera shoots a powerful child abuse scene (based on a real event) in her aunt's house, and we're lucky to have Borin, a film student, around to help, and to do such a good job with the studio lights.

4th day – Exclamation mark

Now that the initial shooting of 21 One Minutes is done, we open up the editing suite and dive into our screens. For the kids, it doesn't mean a day off, they still have a lot of work to do. There are still shootings to complete, sounds to record, music to bring, titles to think about and some translations to get done. But things are looking great. First results are taking shape and it seems like the distance between them and the original vision is not so big. Chris is taking advantage of the fact that everybody's around, to make his quick and brilliant one-shot One Minute,



Malvina filming her outdoor scene for All in order



In Gregorio's set. Kristaq, a driver and a superstar



Amir is preparing for his communist teacher role in Malvina's One Minute

Chain Reaction, a big exclamation mark for these past four days. At 23:00 we realize we're in a pretty good pace, and we tell Kujtim, the film school's director, that he can schedule the screening for tomorrow at 16:00. We hope we can keep our word. We continue editing until 4:00.

5th day – Big smile

Seven more videos to go. Then some final touches, some fine tuning, some last minute problems, and we already hear in the corridors our



Five minutes until the screening. Chris is signing the certificates

young One Minute-makers, in their best outfits, with friends and family members who are all excited. Only twenty minutes late, the screening begins. In a real and full cinema hall, with a curtain and a big screen. Each One Minute gets the applause it deserves, some tears are shed, some proud parents are spotted with big smiles on their faces. Certificates are handed by Chris to each participant, speeches, cocktails, hugs and handshakes.

And then we hurry back to the hotel



The crowded screening room

to carefully wrap these precious tapes, that some 21 young Albanians worked so enthusiastically and devotedly to make.

OneMinutesJr workshop Tirana data

04/10/2006 till 08/10/2006 **Location** Tirana, Marubi school for film <http://www.marubifilm-school.com> **Participants** 21, from Tirana, Dures and Fier **Age** 14 to 19, average age: 16/17 **Facilitators** Effi Weiss, Amir Borenstein, Chris Schuepp **Organization** Unicef Albania, The One Minutes Foundation.



Filling out the One Minutes forms