



Conversations Across Cultures

Youth Media Visions



C O N V E R S A T I O N S A C R O S S C U L T U R E S

Youth Media Visions

Exploring the pedagogic potentialities of learning
with and from media produced by young people.

Curated by
Laia Solé and Jordi Torrent

Symposium & Workshop: April 12 - 14, 2013

Macy Art Gallery Exhibit: April 12 - 19, 2013

Organized by Teachers College-Columbia University
in partnership with United Nations Alliance of Civilizations



TEACHERS COLLEGE COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

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Youth Media Visions is intended to be a useful resource for people interested in exploring the intersection of youth media, education and creation. It presents seven experiences developed by educators and media creators, who within their organizations work with young people and media production.

The book is the result of a Conversations Across Cultures: Youth Media Visions, an international symposium that included an exhibition and workshop for educators. The symposium was co-organized by Teachers College Columbia University and the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, and was held in April 2013. Its main purpose was to explore the pedagogic potentialities of learning with and from media in formal and informal educational settings. Seven organizations representing different areas of the world were invited to participate. They develop youth media production initiatives as a way to address social issues relevant to their communities, such as diversity, migration and social inclusion. Each of the participating organizations was invited to contribute an article to this publication.

The symposium included three different components. One was the exhibition of 42 videos produced by the participating organizations; a selection of these videos can be viewed at <http://milunesco.unaoc.org/youthmediavisions>. A second were the presentations and discussions led by each organiza-

tion, and the third was a daylong workshop involving graduate students from Teachers College's Art & Art Education Program.

This publication is an attempt to document the scope of the symposium, but certainly some important aspects of that collective experience will be lost; such as the opening event of the symposium by City Kids, a New York City-based organization working with youth on art and performance.¹

One of the common threads among the organizations participating in *Youth Media Visions* is mobility. All of them share an expressed interest to reach out to communities that are far, and at risk of being excluded, from the "central areas" where educational institutions and resources are more easily available.

Mobility, for example, enables Wapikoni Mobile to reach First Nation communities in Quebec with their traveling studio. Chinh's project *Rural Media Literacy* project engages nomadic children in the Rajasthan region of India. UNICEF's One Minute Jr. initiative conducts youth media production workshops across the world. Fundación Kine brings media education to rural areas of Argentina. PLURAL+ provides a platform of distribution for youth media produced outside of the "central areas".

Cinema en Curs (Spain) and Educational Video Center (USA), the other two participating organizations, address mobility from a wider understanding: as a quality inherent to education and media production.

The capacity to mobilize, to help youth bring out their visions and opinions is at the root of the word “education”. As professor Joan Ferrés² has pointed out, in Latin *e-ducere* means to draw forth or bring out something that is potential or latent in the individual. Cinema en curs, through their work in the formal educational system in Spain, gives access to creation and culture to children and youth. Educational Video Center works in New York City with under-served youth mentoring them in the creation and dissemination of their media work.

It could be argued that what the camera has captured in the videos included in *Youth Media Visions* was already there but not yet truly visible to audiences. The work of all the participant organizations helps young people to identify, select, frame and make visible how they engage with their communities. The resulting videos manifest how young media producers position themselves in their own society.

Bringing media literacy education to contexts that are far from decision-making centers or at risk of being excluded from them, empowers young people to develop their own

cultural and media expressions as an antidote to the perceived “homogenization” possibly developed by globalization of contemporary societies. These pedagogical exercises are energizers of cultural diversity.

As participants in the “informational society”, youth are digital users, creators and consumers. The most avid media makers today are not professionals, but young people who are actively engaging with their worlds. Contemporary media offer unprecedented opportunities to generate and distribute information, motivating young people and facilitating interaction. Knowledge is not longer something that is kept and then transmitted to students, but something that can be collectively created and shared. We hope that *Youth Media Visions* contributes to the further development of youth media in formal and informal educational settings. We believe that media education and youth media production are fundamental to development of educational systems that reflect the changes in contemporary societies.

1. For more information about City Kids, visit www.citykids.com
2. Ferrés, Joan. (2008). *La educación como industria del deseo*. Barcelona: Gedisa

Hello!
When is your birthday?
What is a birthday?
When you were born?
How would I know, I wasn't born yet?
Do you have cake on your birthday?
What is cake?

This short snippet extracted from a longer conversation between an urban seven-year-old and her nomadic peer, makes us smile. That is, we smile before we realize that in this short interchange we see the roots of the most complex cultural tensions and misunderstandings that play out in today's world. Among children difference is something to be explored openly with wonder, imagination and curiosity, that is before their cultures impose upon them hierarchies of value, power and uncertainty. It is from children and youth and, if we open our hearts perhaps, that we might learn again how to look at the world and each other with care and concern, as if things might be different.

Youth Media Visions, the theme of our Conversations Across Cultures symposium of 2013, offered us hope and also insight into how underserved young people from cultures around the world explore their lives through the lenses of video cameras. These particular visions were made from the fabric of youngster's everyday worlds and captured in im-



ages made in collage, drawing, painting, clay and scrap, and music born from blowing, banging and stroking discarded objects such as plastic bottles, wood, paper and string. Inventive combinations of personal artwork and music interplayed with shots of the real world of everyday through which we, as audience, encountered how personal identities are formed, relationships established, difficulties and problems noted and either overcome or consigned to the patina of everyday actualities. As these young people peered into the lenses of their video cameras and gave each other pointers for shots and angles, they gave us visions as compelling and complex as those of Sundance and Hollywood.

While the video voices we heard and saw were those of young people, these voices had been empowered by grown-ups dedicated to the belief that contemporary media offers both makers and audiences insights they otherwise would not have. This is not the media of entertainment and superficiality but a way of looking on the world that invites us as audience to become conscious of what the daily routines of our lives too often obscure. The generous spirits of these grown-ups whose organizations and professional know-how empowered the experiences documented in these pages and gave dramatic and vivid life to our symposium, suggested the power of art-media education. Offering a minimum of instruction and then standing back to allow young videographers to work their magic, allowed for a great deal of collab-

orative experimentation and on the spot learning resulting in breathtaking, joyful and, often, heart-breaking images.

It was a great privilege to co-sponsor this important and moving event with the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations. On behalf of Teachers College and the Art and Art Education Program, I would like to thank His Excellency Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser of UNAOC and President Susan Fuhrman of TC for their support and interest in this project. To Jordi Torrent of UNAOC and Laia Sole of TC without whose hard work, collaboration and inspiration none of this would have been possible. To City Kids of New York whose imaginative performance thrilled and delighted us; we hope you will return to inspire us again. To the representatives of the cultural organizations and through them the young people of the world, your fight against prejudice and indifference inspires us to do better; thank you.

Judith M. Burton
Teachers College
April, 2014

EXHIBITION - OPENING RECEPTION



(From L to R): Meenakshi Rai, Jordi Torrent, Judith Burton, Vinay Rai, H.E. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, Mrs. Muna Rihani



Teachers College President Susan H. Fuhrman welcoming the participants at the opening ceremony.





City Kids performing at the opening ceremony.



Spice adventures
Discover the world of spices and their uses in cooking and medicine.

Samoa's Rain Forest
Explore the lush rainforests of Samoa and their diverse flora and fauna.

Spice adventures
Discover the world of spices and their uses in cooking and medicine.

Spice adventures
Discover the world of spices and their uses in cooking and medicine.

Spice adventures
Discover the world of spices and their uses in cooking and medicine.

Travelling herbs
Learn the uses of various herbs and spices in different cultures.

Spice adventures
Discover the world of spices and their uses in cooking and medicine.

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Fundación Kine is an NGO created in 2003 in Argentina to promote social, cultural and educational inclusion of youth, working with visual literacy as a means of expression. Their work is supported through projects that are developed throughout the whole country, and are coordinated and integrated into different context through local institutions and a network of teams which allow them to promote local development.

www.fundacionkine.org.ar/



Fundación Ki





QUEBEC

WAPIKONI MOBILE



Genesis (the story)

The concept of the Wapikoni mobile emerged in the Atikamekw community of Wemotaci, Quebec, in 2000, when filmmaker Manon Barbeau worked with a group of young people writing a script for a feature film. Barbeau's closest collaborator was then a girl of 20, Wapikoni Awashish, who was heavily involved in the Youth Council of Wemotaci and in several other projects for the community. While there was much distress and suicide among the youth around her, Wapikoni Awashish embodied health, strength, hope, and was a positive role model for her generation.

Tragically in July 2002, Wapikoni died on the road to Wemotaci when her car hit a logging truck. The work on the feature film was put aside, but the experience gave Barbeau the impulse to create a place where all these young people could gather and make something fun and positive. The idea of the studio on wheels was born and was named to honor Wapikoni's memory. The Wapikoni mobile was officially launched in 2004 by Barbeau and co-founded by the Atikamekw Nation Council and the First Nations Youth Council of Quebec and Labrador.

Mission and objectives (what)

The purpose of the organization is to give a voice to First Nation youth, to break their isolation, to boost their resilience and self-esteem, to develop their technical, social and artis-

tic skills, and to allow them to be heard and to shine by their works in their own communities and throughout the world. A real incubator of talent, the Wapikoni mobile supports the development of emerging Aboriginal artists and ensures the promotion and dissemination of original works, in Canada and abroad.

Here are the specific objectives, grouped in three main areas of interest: well-being, creation and promotion of First Nation art and culture, and skill training.

- Providing access to technology, means of creation and communication for Aboriginal youth living in isolated communities, to allow them to express themselves on issues, concerns and aspirations that matter to them
- Providing an alternative to idleness and isolation with attractive activities tailored to their needs and their reality
- Strengthening and stimulating self-esteem and self-confidence
- Helping prevent and reduce suicide, drug and alcohol abuse, school dropouts, unemployment and crime by providing stimulating workshops.
- Developing technical, social, professional and artistic skills
- Fighting racism by creating meeting opportunities and links between indigenous and non-indigenous people

- Educating diverse audiences (staff, students, researchers, film buffs, the general public) about the cultures and realities of First Nations and thus help to break down prejudices against Aboriginal people
- Linking First Nation youth with other indigenous communities and organizations in Canada and around the world
- Stimulating the emergence of positive leaders in the community
- Stimulating new areas of interest and opportunities for the future
- Strengthening a sense of identity and cultural pride by promoting the use of traditional languages and native cultures
- Maintaining, developing and promoting the linguistic, historical and cultural heritage of First Nations

Context (why?)

First Nations are among the most marginalized and misunderstood populations in Canada; suicide, drug and alcohol abuse, school dropouts, poverty, isolation and crime take their toll, particularly among young people. However, communities are filled with talented and creative youth; but the young people have little access to tools and resources to express themselves. The Wapikoni mobile looks to fill this gap by providing ways to create original audiovisual and musical works.

Activities (How does it work? What we do)

1. Audiovisual and music training workshops in remote First Nation communities

The Wapikoni mobile is a travelling training studio that offers audiovisual and music workshops to Aboriginal youth (ages 15-35) living in remote communities. Our two “studios on wheels” visit and provide workshops to about a dozen of First Nation communities annually. These workshops are at the heart of our activities.

Our workshops immerse participants in the real context of a production and run for a period of 4 weeks. Participants are encouraged to develop a personal project on a topic of their choice, with different approaches (animation, documentary, experimental). The work is done in teams depending on the participants’ strengths, learning ability and special interests. The participants learn about digital and communication tools and explore the various technical aspects of filmmaking (shooting, sound recording and editing, etc.). Their training and progression are closely supervised by 2 professional filmmaker mentors, 1 local filmmaker mentors assistant, 1 youth worker, and 1 local coordinator, carefully selected for their solid experience, listening capabilities and ability to pass on their know-how and expertise.

At the end of each workshop, a public screening is organized



in the community, gathering hundreds of friends, families, elders and members of the Band Council. These screenings are often very touching and allow participants to be heard by their peers. It is also an important moment of individual and collective pride. Whatever their form, the creations are original, high in quality, and reflect the reality, concerns, dreams and hopes of Aboriginal youth.

2. Dissemination and raising awareness

Another central activity is the promotion of Aboriginal talent and their works. Presented in their communities first, the best works are then screened every year in a hundred festivals and public events in Canada and around the world. Several participants also have the chance to present their work in person during prestigious festivals. Others have been able to forge links with Aboriginal artists during enriching cultural and collaborative exchanges in Mexico, Brazil, Peru, Bolivia, Chile, Uruguay, Paraguay, Ecuador, Panama, Finland and French Polynesia.

The Wapikoni mobile also raises awareness about First Nations issues and cultures by organizing workshops and thematic screenings of their short films in high schools, colleges, universities, and for various organizations.

3. Professional training and contracts

One of our goals is to enhance and develop the skills of our



advanced participants beyond the stopovers, through specialized training given in collaboration with other organizations or colleges. Each year we offer to promising and motivated young filmmakers training opportunities and internships in Canada and abroad, such as our annual editing workshop in Montreal, in collaboration with the University of Quebec in Montreal (UQAM).

In addition, several regional business and Aboriginal organizations request our services for producing corporate videos. This is a great opportunity for the Wapikoni mobile to involve young Aboriginal filmmakers in professional contracts for which they are paid and provide a real experience of working in a production team. These projects, which are done in pairings (a junior Aboriginal filmmaker and a pro-

fessional filmmaker-editor), represent a logical extension of our regular stopovers.

Impacts

The increasing number of positive testimonies and success stories confirms the relevance of our work and the project's impact on the lives of thousands of young people. Their participation in workshops restores confidence in their abilities and strengthens their self-esteem, which is the basis of all success. The workshops also foster their motivation and resilience, and help them overcome future obstacles. After participating in our workshops, some participants return to or stay in school to complete their education; others decide to pursue a career. The project also encourages the emergence of positive leaders who, in turn, will inspire the youngest to get involved in the community. They will become positive examples of success among their peers.

Participants also benefit from practical training in the production of documentary shorts and original music, including script writing and directing, as well as in the more technical aspects of filming, sound recording and editing. They learn how to work in a team, master digital communication tools, and to actively be involved in every stage of the process. In addition to cultivating new talents, the project also develops their social and employability skills, such as working with others, reading, thinking, organizing ideas, writ-

ing, document and computer use, and oral communication. Other results include the prevention and reduction of drug and alcohol abuse, suicide, criminality and school drop-outs.

Achievements, awards and recognition

Since its inception, the Wapikoni mobile has reached over 3 000 youth, 9 Nations, and 25 communities. The youth have produced 675 short films, 450 musical works and have, to date, won 80 awards and mentions in national and international festivals. The Wapikoni mobile was awarded the *Best Canadian Initiative Award* among 266 submissions, as a part of the *Ashoka Changemakers Initiative, Inspiring Approaches to First Nations, Métis and Inuit Learning*. Wapikoni mobile also received the *2011 Freedoms and Rights Prize* of the Human Rights and Youth Rights Commission of Quebec. In 2011, the Wapikoni mobile was cited in the Organization of American States publication on "Successful Practices" as part of "cultural initiatives that have influenced some aspects of development, such as reducing rates of violence, poverty and school dropout, among others, and more, have led to the construction of more just and egalitarian societies." Finally, in December 2012, Wapikoni mobile won an *Honorable Mention Award* at the *Plural+ Festival*, an event organized by the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

Website: www.wapikoni.ca



Myléne Guay, standing with Milissa Mollen Dupuis, seated, from Wapikoni.



SELECTED STILLS FROM WAPIKONI VIDEOS



CATALONIA

A BAO A QU

CINEMA EN CURS: A PEDAGOGY ABOUT CINEMA AND THROUGH CINEMA

Definition

*Cinema en curs*¹ is a pedagogical program *about* cinema and *through* cinema because it pursues two main objectives: bringing young people closer to cinema as art, creation and culture, and exploring the pedagogical power of film-making in a school context. From these two objectives derives a third: giving access to creation and culture, especially to children and young people in difficult situations - newcomers, from economically and socially depressed contexts, students with learning difficulties.

Cinema en curs is a program of A Bao A Qu, a non-profit cultural organization. It started in Catalonia (Spain) in 2005, and is currently also developed in other regions of Spain (in Galicia in collaboration with the Centro Galego de Artes da Imaxe (CGAI) and in Madrid, with the Reina Sofia Museum), Argentina and Brazil. Throughout the first eight editions of *Cinema en curs* more than 8,000 students, 270 teachers and 35 film professionals directly participated in the workshops. Moreover, we have trained more than 2,500 teachers in Spain and another 800 in other countries, such as Germany, Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Portugal.

Additionally, over 20,500 students have participated indirectly in *Cinema en curs* by working with the generated pedagogical material, carrying out some of the creative practices, etc.

Cornerstones of the program

Cinema en curs is structured around the following work areas:

1. Workshops. They take place within school hours, with students from 3 to 18 years old in public primary and secondary schools, and are held jointly by a film professional and a team of teachers, who work in tandem. They share the various areas of the workshop, each one from their knowledge and experience. The professionals participate in between 8 and 25 sessions, depending on the modality of the workshop. Therefore, the teachers also work without the film professional, developing tasks of cinematographic processes and interdisciplinary content.

2. Teacher training. This is fundamental to the program due to its exponential value in the present and future practice of the teachers. We work to provide the teachers with instrumental and methodological tools necessary for a good transmission of cinema in an educational context, as well as to promote interdisciplinary work with concrete proposals and methodologies through film-making.

We develop specific training for teachers who participate in the workshops of *Cinema en curs*, as well as other courses for teachers who then conduct their own activities without being part of the program.

¹ “En curs” is a play on words of three concepts, which are “in progress”, an “academic year” and a “course”.

3. Laboratory of Applied Research. The experiences and analysis of the workshops, and the teamwork of the film professionals and the teachers, are the base for developing and defining practices, methodologies and materials applicable to any educational context. They are shared in the training programs and through the web.

4. Diversity of participants, knowledge and sharing. One of the principles of *Cinema en curs* is the heterogeneity of the participants both in terms of their geographical and sociocultural contexts and the characteristics of the students (groups-classes, specific subjects on artistic expression, newcomers, learning disabilities, physically or mentally challenged, etc.). When selecting the school, groups with social difficulties, difficulties of self-esteem, learning or integration are particularly favored, maintaining at the same time the principle of heterogeneity with the intention of enriching all participants. We are convinced that diversity is a way to give young people with disadvantages the opportunity to be on equal terms with those who apparently have, know, and can do more.

All participants are fully aware of being part of a **common project** and share practices and viewings through the blog, and face-to-face meetings, among which the premiere of the film is especially relevant. In a public screening (in film libraries, museums, cinemas) the students present their

works and dialogue with the other groups in a highly symbolic act that reflects the diversity of the participants (their origins, contexts, experiences). The screening is also attended by external guests: film-makers, critics, people from the world of culture and education, representatives of institutions, etc.

The process of **sharing from diversity** throughout the school term promotes awareness of and respect for the environment and other realities; it allows students to explore the value of cinema as a means of knowing the world. Cinema becomes a mode of expression and dialogue through which students can show their world while learning about the world of others.

A pedagogy about cinema and through cinema: principles and methodologies

There are many ways to approach cinema in an educational environment, and there are many ways of conceiving cinema. In *Cinema en curs* we understand it as art and creation, always starting from the creative process. Therefore we base the transmission of cinema on the experience of creation: in practice and as spectators.

This is one of the fundamental pedagogical principles, but there are others. Our way of approaching cinema pedagogy is based on the idea that it is precisely the specificities of cin-

ema - or at least of one type of cinema, of a certain way of film-making - that comprise its main pedagogical power. The methodologies for each phase of the creation process start from this value and realize it.

We try to list, very briefly, the fundamentals of these specificities of cinema and their pedagogical power, i.e. the way we work. Some of them we could already apprehend when we started the project; others have been discovered and developed together with the team of teachers and film professionals from the analysis of the experiences in the laboratory of applied research.

- **Cinema is made with the world**, with places, things and people around us; the light, the colors, the movement. Making cinema requires paying special attention to our everyday environment; we look at it in a different way. Therefore, cinema is a connecting process. When a scene is shot in a certain place, when it is necessary to wait for the right light, when the students talk a lot to a person to learn about their craft and then film them, when the movement of wind or the shadows in a seemingly nondescript part of the neighborhood is observed and filmed attentively, these places and these people will never again be perceived in the same way. The students appreciate them more, they make the environment their own. This is particularly

important in disadvantaged contexts and for children and young people who are new to the country.

- **Cinema is teamwork.** We are not referring to a group that works as the sum of its parts, but as a genuine organism that requires an almost perfect understanding. The objective has to be common, truly shared, and as important as individual responsibility are collective responsibility and commitment. In a film crew each one depends on the other people involved, and one cannot take on the work of another.





In *Cinema en curs* we foster the importance of the collective. In the script, in the process of planning and locating, in the global conception of the film, the creation is carried out by the group, the decisions are collective and taken by consensus. We do not vote; the group learns to reach shared decisions; ideas emerge from joint work through dialogue, listening and argumentation.

When filming, tasks are rotated so that all students can carry them out: direction, script, camera operator, sound engineer, etc. It is about finding the balance: that each one, individually, can make decisions when directing the shooting of a scene (also those who find it difficult to decide will feel compelled to take on that responsibility); and at the same time, these decisions form part of a collective project so that everyone can feel part of it. Editing is done in small groups that shift consecutively to edit the different sequences. The final editing is done in the whole group. These processes and methodologies motivate all team members to recognize that they all are crucial, thus facilitating group cohesion. Expectations are generated and the individual and group self-esteem improve, all students feel they are an essential part of a shared project.

- **Cinema requires very different skills**, some of which differ from those needed in school subjects. This en-

ables all students to find their place and be important to the group. It is, therefore, a unique opportunity to strengthen the self-esteem of those who do not excel in any other school setting, to transform group relations, to give new opportunities to those who usually have few. An opportunity for all students to feel and be aware that they can do important works, that they have special abilities. And also an opportunity to receive recognition from others (students, teachers, family).

- **Cinema requires students to be attentive, time sensitive and rigorous.** During the viewing and in practice, we dedicate a lot of attention and give great importance to each shot; to every decision of framing, light, movement; each sound take; each editing choice. This introduces an attitude and a way of working that is much more attentive, sensitive and rigorous than is common at school. And full of meaning; students are aware (often for the first time) of the value of effort. Rigor and effort are not imposed from the outside, but are the expectations of the students themselves who push this work and make it possible. The students know why they work that way; they are the masters of their own learning process. One 16-year-old student made us aware of this. At the end of the workshop she said *“for the first time in school I knew why and what I was working for.”*

- **Cinema requires decision making, choosing, thinking, talking.** When we shoot a scene we have to decide many things: how to develop the action, where to place the camera, the light, focus, sound ... There are endless possibilities, always to be invented, and each one must find its form. It is not about knowing or giving the right answer, but about deciding, to feel the desire to shoot a scene in a certain way. But for some students, deciding is the hardest; unfortunately school rarely puts them in such a situation. Therefore we must seize the opportunity that cinema forces upon them as it does so by appealing to the individual and unique sensitivity of each student. At the same time, as it is a shared process, this involves delving into others' ideas, discussing and reaching consensus.
- **Cinema expresses emotions and is exceptional in generating empathy.** It allows the students to express their own experiences and emotional issues, and at the same time, through the identification of the spectator with the stories, makes them put themselves in others shoes. This aspect is particularly relevant in *Cinema en curs*. In their script, the students work from emotions they know, their own everyday, but important, emotions. It is the building of the character and its emotions which structure the script; the plot and the dialogue are secondary. The challenge is to express emotions with the

expressive resources of cinema, with cinematographic decisions the students have discovered by watching films of great film-makers. .

- **Cinema allows students to conduct the curricular contents and competences in an interdisciplinary way** at all levels and in different contexts, since it puts in play diverse areas of knowledge and skills. It is able to generate motivation for writing, dialogue, research, gives meaning to work, and is a vehicle for learning.

Transformations

We have talked, above all, of the transformations of the students: how new horizons and possibilities open up for them; of how they rediscover and begin to trust themselves; how they weave new affective bonds with their environment and with their peers; how - by making and watching cinema - they become attentive, rigorous, demanding; how they value the dedication and support of their teachers; how they discover art and creation as something that concerns them, that speaks to them, and where they have a place.

But the list would be too long if we were to list all the transformations of all other agents that are involved and participate in the project. Undoubtedly, the film professionals are also enriched enormously; they raise new questions about film-making, how to transmit it, and also, outside of

the workshop, about the way they see it, how they make it. In *Cinema en curs* we are all always in learning situations: learning cinema, learning modes of transmission, learning to learn.

This change of perspective is especially important for teachers, who have to share the class with somebody else; to teach while learning, to express in front of their students all they do not know or doubt; they establish a relationship with students that is different from in academic subjects; they discover talents and abilities that until that moment had been unable to emerge.

In the schools, a project like '*Cinema en curs*' - with its rhythms, its requirements, its methodologies - inevitably clashes with the "system," altering it and, therefore, sometimes bothering it. But also, and precisely insofar as it questions, it introduces the possibility to transmit and to learn in a different way; it gives a central place to creation and art in the learning processes; it makes the students protagonists of their own process, and connects the school with the outside. Cinema opens the doors and windows of the school: the school goes outside (to document, locate, film) and the outside enters the school.

Especially in disadvantaged environments the project provides a significant opportunity for families to visit the school:

for some, the screening of the film made by the students will be the motivation to go there for the first time. Families, neighbors and even institutions will discover and value the work of the teachers as they have never before done.

Cinema and art -when it is explored in all its dimensions- is not content but an experience. It transforms the vision, the way to know and to know each other. Therefore, throughout the course there are many transformations and many areas in which these transformations can occur. This is without doubt one of the greatest powers of cinema in schools, and one of the most valuable aspects of the project: its ability to transform.

Website and blog:

www.cinemaencurs.org/en - bloc.cinemaencurs.org/en

2012-2013 Fiction films (with English subtitles):

www.cinemaencurs.org/en/filmsigalerias/films-finals-2012-2013/

2012-2013 Documentary films:

www.cinemaencurs.org/en/filmsigalerias/films-documentals/

2012-2013 Little Cinema en curs:

bloc.cinemaencurs.org/en/petit-cinema-en-curs

SELECTED STILLS FROM A BAO A QU VIDEOS







UNICEF

THE ONEMINUTESJR.

YOUTH VIDEO FOR CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING, ADVOCACY AND EMPOWERMENT

The OneMinutesJr. is an international, arts-based initiative led by UNICEF and the One Minutes Foundation. It gives to 12-20 year-olds, especially those who are underprivileged or marginalised, the opportunity to have their voices heard and to share their ideas, dreams, fascinations, anxieties and viewpoints on the world.

The OneMinutesJr. works around the world, organizing 5-day workshops where the youth are taught basic camera and directing skills, story-telling, teamwork and how to think creatively about issues and representation. Each participant develops his/her own story based on the workshop theme and produces a 60 second video that is screened at the conclusion of the workshop.

History

The project began in 2002, when the Central and Eastern European UNICEF office was looking for partners and ideas for a media project it could implement in its region. The One Minutes Foundation was already running an adult artist OneMinutes project, out of its base at the Sandberg Art Institute in Amsterdam, Netherlands. Together, UNICEF, the One Minutes Foundation and a third convening partner, the European Cultural Foundation (ECF), took the OneMinutes concept, but developed it into a “workshop” model that would work with a youth network. Thus, the OneMinutesJr. was born. The project operated mainly in Western

and Eastern Europe until 2007, when it expanded globally (better representing UNICEF’s reach). In 2010, ECF left the project and UNICEF and the One Minutes Foundation have continued the project together. More than 3150 youngsters from 97 countries have taken part in the OneMinutesJr. since its inception.

Objectives

A project like the OneMinutesJr. serves many purposes. On one hand, it’s a participation project that seeks to empower young people to express themselves and share their viewpoints with the world. Through the workshops, they learn basic communication skills, a basic introduction to media literacy, and creative thinking approaches. They have the opportunity to collaborate with their peers, learning teamwork and developing self-esteem. In the end, they have a video that *they’ve* made that is shared with the world on multiple media platforms.

On the other hand, UNICEF is able to collect viewpoints of youth around the world, gathering real insight into what kids in various countries are thinking. The videos are useful advocacy tools, especially around important issues such as disabilities, juvenile justice, gender equality, education and children’s rights. The videos supplement reports, websites, campaigns and public forums and give a place to youth voices in the conversations.

Since it is art-based initiative, some people ask about art versus content and why not include journalism? Why not use the model to teach kids how to report on their surroundings? The OneMinutesJr. believes that there is strong power in learning to tell stories in different, creative ways. It's easy to make a reportage, and a lot of times it's what people expect to see. Take an issue such as lack of water. It's easy to make a short film about a young boy having to walk far to fetch water for his family. We've seen those images before. But the message is far more powerful when you see a close-up shot of a boy filling a jerrycan from a water tank, only to have the camera pull back slowly to reveal a very long line of children waiting for water ("On the Last Drop," Tajikistan, 2008). No words, but the message still gets across. People are often jaded from seeing the same stories about children's rights, so if we can teach young people how to approach these stories with creativity, they're more likely to have an impact on viewers.

Basic workshop model

The workshops typically run 5 full days, with a screening at the end of the final day. Each workshop is led by 1-3 experienced video artists (usually associated with the Sandberg Art Institute) and a UNICEF coordinator. The workshops have some type of theme that the stories are based upon, either general, like "Daily Life and Dreams" or "Who am I?" or more targeted, as in "Juvenile Justice" or "Peace in my World." Each workshop involves 15-20 young people, ages 12-20.



The equipment used for a workshop is simple and portable, all provided by the One Minutes Foundation. The general equipment kit contains 2 laptops with Final Cut Pro, 4-5 small, consumer model HD camcorders and 2 tripods. Small, unassuming cameras have advantages, especially now that they produce a high-quality picture. With small cameras, it is easier to look like tourists or just personal filmmakers when filming in public and it also allows for the possibility of kids taking the cameras home to film without worrying about expensive equipment getting stolen.

Day one: introductions, getting to know one another, basic camera instruction, teaching shots, storytelling and storyboarding skills and discussion of the theme. Sometimes storyboarding or camera exercises get kids more familiar with how to create stories and moving images. Then the kids go off on their own to start to work on their ideas. After some time, the video artists meet with each youth participant, one or two-on-one to hear their ideas and brainstorm together to achieve a filmable idea.

Day two: Usually more story development needs to happen. Plans start to be made for filming (locations, props, actors, permissions) and by the afternoon filming begins. Each youth participant is the director for his or her own film, and each gets the opportunity to be the camera person on someone else's film.

Day three and four: Filming continues, and in some cases, editing begins. Each youth participant has a period of edit time one-on-one with the video artist who guided them during the filming, and getting an understanding of how editing works and helping the video artist to put together the one minute.

Day five: Final editing happens, with the youth participants working on their titles and soundtracks, recording local sounds or music if necessary. The participants work on vari-

ous tasks to get ready for the screening. In the end, the participants gather with friends and family, local press and interested viewers to screen the premiere of videos they produced during the week.

The screening is a unique experience, where the kids are seeing what they worked on all week, their personal expression, on a big screen, in the company of people important to them.

Methodology

Teaching a OneMinutesJr. workshop involves a non-formal approach, one with a high level of improvisation and flexibility. Since the facilitation team is not always involved in setting up the local logistics, often things need to be modified at the last minute to accommodate less than ideal situations. Workshops are intensive, with severe time limitations combined with the desire to give each youth participant an equal amount of attention and time. When lunch is late or not enough transportation is available to take kids to a filming location, schedules have to be adapted. That flexibility also applies to filming subjects. If a participant really wants to make a film about being a flight attendant, there is little chance that getting on an airplane is going to be possible. So creative ways of filming have to be conceived.

The most important thing about the concept of the OneMinutesJr. is the relationship between the artist facilitator and

the youth participant. What an empowering experience for a young person, to be *listened to*, by an adult (most times a *foreign* adult). To be asked: “What do YOU want to tell or show the world about YOUR life?” To know that the team is there, in your country, to help you make a video about your perspective. Sometimes it’s the first time that a young person is asked to express himself. Or the first time that his opinion means something. A lot of times, in the countries where workshops are held, there is not a strong participation rate for children and youth, and they grow up with the expectation of not being heard.

What’s also special about the relationship between facilitator and participant is that it’s a collaborative one. The youth presents his or her idea and brainstorms with the artist to come up with the best outcome. Maybe the idea is generic and the facilitator works to dig a bit deeper to reach a more personal story. Or maybe the idea is one that has been seen a lot before and they work together to come up with a creative way of filming the story so that it feels fresh. But the process happens together, so that the youth feels ownership of the idea but also is given the benefit of professional expertise to make it even stronger.

As for the theme itself, it can be approached in many different ways. Workshops can be targeted for a specific community (Ex.: Palestinian refugees in a camp in Jordan) or a

general group of young people. How the children are chosen differs from country to country. Sometimes it involves a partnership with another local organizations (Ex.: For a recent workshop in Cambodia we worked with Save the Children to choose participants and conduct the workshop in a small village) and other times a call for applications is put out to schools and organizations so children can apply if they are interested. Specific communities are often recruited when there is a targeted focus to the theme. For instance, a series of workshops was recently conducted in several Eastern European countries that focused on Juvenile Justice. The OneMinutesJr. team went to institutions to work with young people who were in trouble with the law. Another example is UNICEF hosting several workshops for children with disabilities, in conjunction with the publication of its annual State of the World’s Children (SOWC), the theme of which was “Children with Disabilities.”

Sometimes themes can be a way to take the pulse of a country. In 2013, a workshop was held in Libya that brought together youth from across Libya, representing different cultures, tribes and religions, asking them to respond to the theme “Our Now, Our Future” in light of a new chapter for the country.

If working with a very specific theme, it is usually better to involve young people who have a *relation* to the theme, in-



stead of asking general kids to make films about a specific subject they may not have any personal connection to. It lends a far more heightened level of authenticity to the films.

Workshop experiences

Kids around the world are very different but also have many similarities. Working with young people in a variety of countries, one can see how age brings very different experiences. There's a common interest in friendship and entertainment but often different expectations of maturity and involvement. In each country, different issues seem to stand out. For instance, in Uganda and India, education was a big issue that children wanted to make films about, whereas in the Caribbean Islands and Mexico youth were struggling with facing difficult decisions, whether it was involvement with drugs or their future careers. In Jordan, many stories were of neglect by parents, while in Bangladesh and the Philippines, children's rights, such as child labor, were a focus.

To create sustainability for the project, the OneMinutesJr. sometimes hosts local training-for-trainers in conjunction with its workshops. The trainings are designed to teach the methodology to local artists and coordinators, who can then carry on workshops without needing the international team. These trainings are set up when there is a partnering organization that can take on the local management of the project and ensure the consistency of the goals.

Distribution and Usage

The OneMinutesJr. website (www.theoneminutesjr.org) is the heart of the network, where all the videos produced can be viewed. Besides hosting the entire archive of one-minute videos produced, the website offers information on workshops, festivals, comments and advice for young moviemakers. Individuals are also welcome to upload one-minute videos to the site – it is not exclusive to videos created in sponsored workshops.

Young people want and need to show and exhibit their new skills and their creative work as one form of recognition of what they have accomplished. It is also important for the audience to see the work of these youth and realise that young people are capable of addressing important matters whether social or political in a very personal way. The OneMinutesJr. Videos are promoted and distributed on a local, national and international level through broadcasting partnerships and social media platforms.

Local and national broadcasters have aired series of the films, organized either by workshop or by theme. Select films have screened in movie theatres before feature films and at film festivals. In addition to the official website, there is a UNICEF OneMinutesJr. YouTube channel and Facebook and Twitter pages. There is also a weekly rollout via UNICEF's Facebook and Twitter accounts, as well as UNI-

CEF's Voices of Youth website and social media platforms. Additionally, videos are used in UNICEF campaigns and conferences according to their themes. For example, videos from the afore-mentioned Juvenile Justice workshops were screened at an EU high-level meeting on juvenile justice covering Eastern European countries. Videos from the children with disabilities workshops were used extensively in the launch of the SOWC publication and continued advocacy around this issue.

Work is also currently underway for educational components using the OneMinutesJr. Videos. Educational partners have expressed the unique benefit the videos provide for engaging youth in conversation. Young people are far more likely to respond to other young people's perspectives than to adults instructing them on how things are in the world.

What's so nice to see is that, due to the intensity of the experience, many youth stay in touch long after the workshops are over, both with each other and with the facilitators. One artist is still receiving poetry from a young woman who participated in a 2007 workshop in the DR Congo. Another receives letters from a young woman from a 2010 workshop in Uganda. Facebook has afforded the opportunity of keeping in touch with participants from past workshops. When the first uprising and protests in Egypt were happening in 2011, UNICEF was in touch with 2008 Cairo workshop par-

ticipants, who sent photos and on-the-ground video footage. Many participants have gone on to pursue media-related careers. One participant from the first workshop in Armenia has become a filmmaker and now is himself a local OneMinuteJr. facilitator.

The OneMinutesJr. provides a unique window on small worlds all around the globe. The model is so empowering to young people in giving them a voice, and the video results capture true viewpoints of those young people, which can be shared with the world. It is a valuable tool in both youth participation and cultural understanding.

www.theoneminutesjr.org

www.youtube.com/UNICEFoneminutesjr

www.facebook.com/oneminutesjr

www.twitter.com/theoneminutesjr



SELECTED STILLS FROM ONEMINUTEJRS VIDEOS



INDIA

CHINH

“GROWING UP” WITH MEDIA LITERACY



CHINH is an important media literacy initiative in Asia by award-winning film & culture activist duo Meenakshi Vinay Rai, from India. Winner of the Digital Inclusion Award for the best ICT project in Education, CHINH is successfully working with schools and organizations promoting media literacy to ensure that educators, parents and students within the school education framework get familiar with the digital movement of Information and Media Literacy and the importance of acquiring these skills in the context of life-long learning.

CHINH Media Literacy initiative offers:

- a. An opportunity for children and young people to manage media content meant for them by way of an internet channel – CHINH Early Education Web Channel www.chinh.in through International CHINH INDIA KIDS FILM FESTIVAL where only children and young people engage in meaningful discourse of being jury members who choose content for the different age groups.
- b. Empowerment and engagement to children and young people in creating media content on their own via a guided media literacy project titled “Growing Up,” with the input from experts invited from across the world to expose kids to varied media art forms.
- c. Potential research avenues to assess and measure the

impact of media literacy in terms of an important intervention in conflict resolution, peace building, inculcating appreciation for diversity, enhanced understanding of issues close to young people, therapy for differently abled young people and most important of all – the potential of Media Literacy as a tool for healing.

One of the core principles that is followed in educating young children through CHINH media literacy sessions is anything that young people learn while they are happy is the only thing they will never unlearn. The outcomes from such workshops open doors in the world of young children which in this digital era are sealed in passwords. CHINH Media Literacy Project – “Growing UP” caters to urban as well as rural kids in different settings, and social environments. The objective of keeping the open framework is to accommodate varied experiences of young people in terms of emotional, physical, psychological and social contexts.

Media Literacy— from Complexity to Simplicity

The young children feel relaxed and happy when they find the freedom to explore anything they want to through their films. It creates happiness, which is essential to create films “straight from the heart,” –films that are not aimed to impress, but to express.

The media expressions or films help educators and parents

to know young minds from a different perspective, the kids' perspectives. This offers crucial insights for re-assessing re-examining and re-designing, the communication tools and strategies used effectively to reach out to young people. In a way, the media literacy project has the potential to be a peace builder between young and adults.

Strength of youth media production is the simplicity they bring to the complex issues and problems. One film that changed the way the issue of child marriage is looked at is *Maina, the little bride*. 13-years-old's Kids Teacher Ms. Shruti with a group of Muslim girls and boys from a village, Kotkamariya (Uttar Pradesh, India) at the Indo-Nepal border made the animated film, which stems from the real life experience of young participants. The film traces the future-life of the girl Dilkash who created the main character, and was going to get married soon. The content is woven in the form of a simple folk song written by them in their own dialect, Bhojpuri. The film comes across as young participant's take on the issue. Innocently revealing their experiences of watching child brides in their villages through drawings and cartoon characters, the film describes the life of their friend Dilkash as a grown-up woman, once she is married at the age of 12. The film unfolds the brutal realities of the issue in a very simple lyrical manner easy for young people to understand who might be living in settings different from those who made the film. The film not only went on to become a

great teaching tool for educators to use in classroom situations for class IV- class IX where this issue was studied in different contexts, but also became a wonderful tool to sensitize the local villagers as animation offered an entertainment value while the message conveyed was powerful enough for the parents of the child bride to rethink their decision. The film also gave a lot of confidence to Dilkash who is now advocating against the child marriage through an NGO in the village. Web Link of the film: www.chinh.in/2012%20CIKFF/Maina%202012/Maina.html

Addressing Sexuality Issues of Young Children

Another example that paved its way into classroom situations for its sheer acceptability among young people about body issues is the film "Rohan's Moustache." Made by a group of school going boys and girls in Lucknow, India, the film opened up possibilities for educators to discuss sexuality issues which are always tricky to handle in Asian contexts. The film is one of the fine examples of media literacy where a boy shares his journey of coming to terms with his moustache, beard and his grown-up look that gave him lot of discomfort in the beginning and made him a subject of ridicule among peers. But past that film, everyone looks up to him for his brave act of sharing his reflections in this journey of boyhood which every boy goes through while growing up. Web Link of the film www.chinh.in/cikff2009%20films%20for%20web%20cast/Rohan's%20Moustache.html



The response to the film was great in all age groups and educators felt confident to use it in classroom situations to break the ice before discussions on sexuality issues.

“Media Literacy – a catalyst for “Kids to Kids Learning”
 “Kids to Kids learning” is a strong thread in all media literacy projects of CHINH. Young children who are active learners from day one are the perfect choices for kids teachers and act as assistant work-shoppers to other kids in help-



ing them pick up skills of film-making and animation. While kids teachers learn from the workshop guide while they are on the job, they practice their acquired learning by helping other kids. Very often, this chain reaction generates a lot of enthusiasm in the workshops leading to quality output and a participatory tone. This serves as a great relief to those children who are otherwise hesitant to go to the workshop guide for little queries for fear of being judged or labeled as back-benchers/slow learners/non-attentive/careless etc... etc...



Media Literacy as a therapy and for healing

The experience of workshopppers at CHINH strongly indicates that animation has emerged as the favorite medium of expression for young children who otherwise are hesitant to open up in physical space or are not very vocal, articulate and extrovert. They identify with animated characters and are at their best in giving colorful and vibrant touches to their frames/visuals. It is also important to mention that media expressions and voices by such young people not only help them to open up but also serve as a crucial vent for their hidden, pent-up emotions. We have had case studies where students who always seemed very vulnerable took a long time to voice themselves through media expressions. But once they did, the impact was felt by everyone, the subject teachers, parents, and peers. This impact was in seen in a change of behavior, which demonstrated more command over the vulnerability that earlier defined the personality of the kids.

“My little Sister Sona” is one such example, where a young girl Yukti was nursing emotional setbacks and a series of unanswered questions about the death of one of her twins’ sisters when she was born. This pent-up emotional baggage defined her personality, she always looked detached and aloof no matter what was done to engage her or to seek her attention in the classroom or workshop. Finally a kids’ teacher who happened to be her friends was engaged to pass on the

skills to her. She was then asked to create whatever she wanted. The kids' teacher Aparna and Yukti worked together in their free time for 8 months and a resulting beautiful film gave way to all her anxieties, fears, questions. She came to terms with many emotions that were discussed among peers during interactive discussions after the screening of the film. The film helped everyone to connect with Yukti in a new light and those who considered her a snob, aloof, and arrogant suddenly were taken by surprise when the real Yukti, who felt the pain, expressed her innermost thoughts fearlessly.

Web link of the film: www.chinh.in/2012%20CIKFF/SVISC%202012/My%20Little%20Sister%20Sona.html

The film became a great tool for her to be sorted. This in turn not only changed her attitude towards life, friends, teachers and studies but she was also able to change their attitude towards her.

Media Literacy is a way to delve into important global issues

That water could be the reason for the next big war has already predicted by the global strategists. Every country is aware that they could end up facing a crisis in terms of not having access to portable water. So there are attempts at various levels to keep people informed, aware and sensi-

tized on the use of clean drinking water. Many times such messages become predictable PSAs that talk down to us and thereby fail to achieve the very purpose of engaging and inspiring us to contribute. But when children are given the task of creating awareness of global issues, they bring a twist to the issue, as their imaginations know no bounds and carry an interesting dimension that is difficult to achieve by adult minds geared towards structured thinking. It is only young people who can examine the global issues at length and breadth and would find a space to amuse, entertain, inspire and enthuse.

One such film on the water crisis is "Water Please." The film paints a future for humankind without water and contains satire, humor and questions for the viewer. The innovative method used by young people in creating and designing the sound track with available materials and means is a strong element of this film. The film talks about the grim reality in a funny manner that makes the viewer smile and take note at the same time. Such profound impact is evoked by of a media voice that only young people can articulate with finesse.

Web link of the film: www.chinh.in/water%20please/1.html

Why must one prefer to encourage young people to design and evolve their own sound track rather than using available wave files?

Sound is an important element in animation films and for children participating in the workshops. We realized that they most enjoy recording dialogues, sounds, music effects and sometimes a music track, too. And music exercises help to explore inherent creativity among children. These exercises instill confidence among the children so that they are excited about the rest of the workshop

Realizing this we initiated a music workshop in the context of enabling children to express their issues (fears, anxieties, pain) using music as a therapy/healer. Children were trained to voice their issues using music as a form of activism.

Children innovatively explored many objects to create sounds for the production of the film “Water please.” Water bottles, stones, papers, plastic bags, pencils, and tables were used to generate all the sounds required for the film. In Udaipur (Rajasthan) children composed and created a full audio track for the film Golu ki pounch: Golu’s tail – a film dealing with a boy who was fond of eating junk food.

Rural Media Literacy

A workshop with 80 nomadic children in a nomadic hamlet gave an entirely new dimension to the Media Literacy project. We were teaching these nomadic children about media forms (camera both still and video, web camera) and at the same time learning a lot from their art form.

The graphic images they drew for animation film were extremely refreshing.



The use of bold, vivid and vibrant colours reflected their intimate relationship with nature. At the same time their discussion with our daughter Shruti who was 6 years old at that time was worth documenting. A film “Children of Nomads” grew out of their discussion and laid the foundation for Rural Media Literacy. This gave us insight into how to use documentaries on young children in rural India for reverse learning in urban India. Such experiences were transformation experiences for young children who participated in the process. The young kids entered into the process thinking that they knew more, being from an urban context, and ended up getting enriched by the skills demonstrated by rural kids. The acceptance of diversity, contrast and respect for their friends living in challenged situations became an

integral part of the rural media literacy project. It not only changed the way the rural young children were perceived by young people in urban India but also created a bond of mutual respect and understanding between the two groups.

By rural media literacy we mean the

- Media literacy among rural children and masses regarding media representation
- Knowledge about projection of rural lives in a dignified way respecting their challenged situations and culture
- Training to showcase and present their own stories from personal perspectives
- Building livelihood generation skills by enabling them to use media effectively (Rural web journalists assisted Panchayats in the documentation of village development projects; The camera and editing skills empowered rural youth to take it up as a livelihood option e.g. running studios, video booths, computer literacy shops, DTP booths etc.)

Why Rural Media Literacy

For a long time there have been inappropriate representations of the remote cultures and realities of life in rural India. How do rural children interpret their lives, contexts and the issues interlaced in their lives on day-to-day basis? How do

they want to tell their stories? What do they want the world to know about their lives? How can we safeguard their dignity from unnecessary media intrusion? How can we examine the rural perspectives without demeaning the rural participants in the process? These are the questions that CHINH's rural media literacy initiatives try to answer.

Also media literate rural children are successfully linked to livelihood initiatives in the process of video documentation by local Panchayats, regional NGOs and video booths; some initiate independent ventures in different aspects of media for home/local coverage and news.

How do we achieve Rural Media Literacy?

- Talent identification from rural areas with the supporting NGO network listed with international and national agencies
- Training of rural children in digital media forms by organizing media orientation and skill imparting workshops with national and international experts (some of the workshop documents attached for reference)
- Dissemination of workshop outcomes in terms of short films done by rural children and their facilitators at the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Door-darshan, IGNOU, international film festivals, training institutes, such as NIPCED, govt. training colleges, etc.

Conclusion:

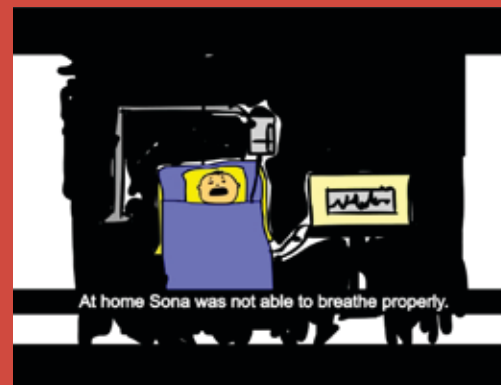
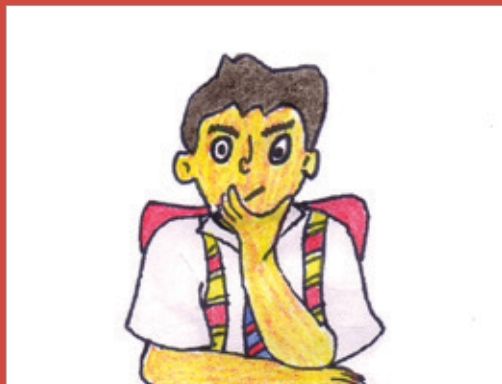
Media Literacy: Inventing new diplomacy tools

The core learning that CHINH offers to media experts and educators over the years of its media literacy project is let the young people explore, create and celebrate their media expressions and a new language of “kids and young people diplomacy” will be invented and the world will no longer be able to negate the youth perspectives. This “young perspective” would show new hope, new roads and new means to achieving peace, harmony and communion among races and nations.

Website: www.chinh.in



Meenakshi and Vinay Rai



SELECTED STILLs FROM CHINH VIDEOS

GOURMET
DELI

NEW YORK

THE EDUCATIONAL VIDEO CENTER



“I wouldn’t be in college right now if it wasn’t for EVC. I’m the first one in my family to go to college and EVC was the thing that made me fight for my dreams.”

- Angelica Perez, EVC Alumna

“There is nothing more dangerous than an educated black man.’ And I’m pretty damn dangerous now.”

- Steven Martinez, EVC Alumnus

For nearly 30 years, the Educational Video Center (EVC) has been a leader in media-arts education for underserved New York City youth. EVC’s core activities provide exemplary arts-education programs to help youth develop their creative selves, digital media-arts and technology skills, and college and career readiness while engaging them as civic agents to address issues affecting their communities. EVC began with a simple idea: put video cameras in the hands of under-served teenagers, and teach them to go out into the city and craft stories about the world as they see it—with all its problems and possibilities—and watch a new generation of young artists enrich the possibilities of their art form, expand the critical debates about their neighborhoods, transform their communities, and expand their futures. Since then, the video medium has become even more omnipresent and influential in young people’s lives, and the technology to create and disseminate video has become more accessible. Moreover, the skill set EVC championed—often described

now as 21st century literacy—has become central to the definition of a high-quality education, career readiness and active citizenship.

EVC’s History and Methodology:

The Educational Video Center’s mission is to teach documentary video as a means to develop the artistic, critical literacy, and career skills of young people, while nurturing their idealism and commitment to social change.

Reading Dewey’s *Democracy and Education* and Paulo Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* had a profound impact on us, and helped ground our practice in a broader educational and political theory of praxis. We began to understand how students were using cameras to pose problems, and “read the world” around them. They were engaging in what Dewey called “continuous inquiry” and community dialogue in the search for solutions. Through this experience they were developing more of a critical consciousness about their lived experiences and the world of media. They were developing a critical media literacy necessary for authentic democratic participation.

Over time, we codified our practices with a curriculum and daily lesson plans for teachers. We mapped out how to use the media making process to weave together social emotional learning and youth development practices that place

students' experiences, questions, and culture at the center of their learning along with critical media literacy and the exploration of community and social justice issues. We developed structures to support a more intentional and reflective practice including study groups, and a rigorous portfolio process of assessment to show evidence of student learning.

Historical/Social Context

The 1990s was a time of a confluence of movements—small schools and education equity organizing, the growth of media literacy, a youth media movement, youth led organizing, community access and rapid integration of media and technology in schools, and the emergence of digital media. Then of course the political winds shifted. No Child Left Behind and then Race to the Top, the growing militarization of schools and the great recession of 2008 all combined to create a culture of scarcity in public schools and in the non-profit arts and youth media sector. And a culture of metrics, where high stakes testing, and testing of all kinds pushed us to account for ourselves in increasingly narrow ways, marginalized what we see as the larger public purposes of education for greater democratic participation, equity and social justice. The idea of developing student agency became overshadowed by the push for more, and more comprehensive testing in the name of accountability.

We know, in spite of these trends, that our accountability

is to the students and their community. Our obligation is to them. Teaching for social justice is more important than ever, in the face of attacks on teachers, on unions, on women, on the undocumented. One group of EVC Youth Producers began exploring the NYPD's Stop and Frisk Policy, Raelene Holmes was one of the youth in that semester's cohort. Growing up in Harlem, Raelene comes from an African American family and community. She says, "I'm happy to have learned about the ongoing police tactics [stop and frisk policy] that affects my peers, or anyone for that matter, in the black communities, I've been educating everyone in my community ever since. It's so important." Through documentary film, Raelene learned the shot compositions and editing techniques used to tell this important story in a compelling way. The media literacy skills combined with the civic engagement and social emotional development all united to help Raelene and her crew document their world.

EVC's Programs

EVC supports youth media artists, teachers and community leaders through three core programs:

Youth Documentary Workshop

EVC's signature media-arts program annually serves 60 students through five intensive hands-on courses offered after school during the fall and spring semesters and all day during the summer session. Designed as small-group, personal-



ized arts apprenticeship environments, youth learn by doing: collaboratively planning, shooting, and editing a short documentary (about 20 minutes) on an issue relevant to them and their community. All EVC youth producers present their final documentaries at public screenings followed by audience Q & A sessions. Youth also receive academic credit for their work in basic and advanced level workshops by presenting evidence of their learning and samples of their works-in-progress at EVC-sponsored end-of-year portfolio round-tables.

Professional Development Program (PDP)

EVC's Professional Development Program significantly expands the breadth and impact of the EVC mission, providing K-12 public-school teachers with intensive summer-institute training and semester, and year-long in-class coaching to develop sustained documentary media-arts programs for their in-school and afterschool expanded day programs. This program brings our promising practices to scale, enabling EVC to reach 1,500 students in 15 schools. Using EVC's *Youth Powered Video: Hands-on Curriculum for Teaching Documentary* as a guide, EVC staff members train teachers to bring their students the EVC media-arts production experience: real-world hands-on media-arts projects, researching and responding to relevant issues in their communities, and acquiring 21st century arts and technology skills.

Community Engagement and Dissemination

EVC's media are seen by an estimated 5 million viewers annually. Finding broad, diverse, and meaningfully engaged audiences for EVC's youth-produced media is a crucial piece of our programming. Connecting youth artists to audiences builds confidence and leadership in the artists, enriches relevant community debates by adding youth perspectives, and strengthens the field of youth media in general by fostering viewers. EVC uses four key strategies in this effort: 1) presenting our 30th-anniversary retrospective at the Film So-

ciety of Lincoln Center; 2) hosting our own screenings and festivals, and participation in others, 3) on-line streaming and cablecasts, 4) and cultivating partnerships with community and commercial distributors.

EVC Alumni and Community Support

EVC works with a range of community partners to mentor our Youth Documentary Workshop media artists in the creation and dissemination of their works. This is a critical strategy for community engagement. For example, the New York Civil Liberties Union and the Fortune Society have used our stop-and-frisk documentary in their education and advocacy work. Our current projects on childhood lead poisoning in low-income housing and on alcohol advertising in minority neighborhoods will be disseminated by the Partnership for a Healthier New York City and the West Harlem Environmental Action, respectively. In addition, EVC partners with commercial distributors including Amazon.com, Tribeca Film Institute, and Insight Film Studios to market our youth-produced films. Thirty thousand college students in the United States and Canada will view clips of EVC documentaries included in W.W. Norton & Co. DVD and textbook *Sociology in Practice: Thinking About the Family*, in addition to the dozens of professors who routinely use EVC videos in their courses.

The post-high school accomplishments of our Youth Docu-

mentary Workshop graduates give more evidence of EVC's lasting impact on the youth we serve. We are proud that ninety percent of last year's Doc Workshop youth producers graduated high school and are attending college or are working.

We continue to be moved and inspired by the stories our graduates tell us; stories of struggle and resilience in overcoming adversity. *Angelica Perez* told us if it wasn't for EVC she would never have been able to afford college. Her EVC video project won her a scholarship to study art at Queensborough Community College. The first in her family ever to attend college, this past semester she was on the Dean's list and her art was chosen to be in the 2012 student exhibition. *Steven Martinez* dropped out of two high schools where he faced anti-gay harassment, but after two semesters in EVC's Doc Workshop and an EVC-sponsored tour up to Hampshire College, he won a full scholarship there through the *James Baldwin Scholars Program*. Last year, he was a White House intern at the Office of Public Engagement and now he is in a master's program at Columbia University's Teachers College.

With a cultivated awareness of local power and politics, EVC works very closely with the communities it serves to ensure an authentic and enriching educational experience for its participants.



Professional Development Programs

EVC significantly scales our model and increases impact by developing the capacity of schools to integrate our media arts methodology into their curriculum. We do this through five key components:

- 1) Intensive Summer “Youth Powered Video” Teachers Institute where EVC guides teachers through the process of creating their own collaborative documentary project while learning the digital media arts tools and teaching strategies.
- 2) In-Class Professional Development Coaching where EVC provides coaching to integrate media arts across the curriculum content areas so that students learn video production and 21st century skills.
- 3) Professional Development Workshops where EVC’s Media and Instructional Coaches and teachers facilitate professional development workshops for the full school faculty during an after-school Professional Development session, further magnifying the impact of EVC’s learning model.
- 5) College and Career Readiness Skills where teachers use the real-world documentary production process to improve their students’ college readiness skills by building students’ creative and critical skills to plan their own projects, solve problems, and work well both independently and in groups.

Engaging community audiences and disseminating the documentaries produced by EVC’s emerging media artists is critical to completing their circle of learning as they see their ideas and creativity affect discourse and inform debates. It is important for audiences, too, to gain a better understanding of youth views and perspectives.

Each May, EVC hosts its “Annual Youth Powered Video Film Festival,” which showcases student works created in PDP partner schools for audiences of youth, educators and parents. Beyond audiences at premieres and festivals, EVC’s student productions reached audiences of over 5 million annual viewers locally, nationally and internationally. EVC’s website, Vimeo, iTunes U, Snag Films, are regularly broadcast on Manhattan Neighborhood Network’s Youth Channel reaching an estimated 45,000 individuals with each of 121 cablecasts, and on Brooklyn Cable Access Television reaching 500,000 homes with over 96 cablecasts.

Jasmin Tate is an alumnus of our Youth Documentary Workshop Program and a member of our Youth Speakers Bureau, where a group of alumni screen and lead discussions on the films created by EVC youth producers. They hold screenings for youth throughout the city of a film she co-produced, *Under 21: Why We Drink*. During the production of this film, Jasmin, a NYC Transfer School Student, knew alcohol was a problem but always thought it was an individual problem

as opposed to a communal issue. Growing up, she observed that certain types of people would have more of an issue with alcohol than others, and thought it was bad decision making on their end. But during the production of this film, Jasmin and her crew began mapping New York City neighborhoods and seeing first-hand the over-saturation and targeting of alcohol advertising, as well as the accessibility of alcohol. Her views began to shift and she became an activist around community transformation. This student vignette is reflective of most student experiences at EVC and the power of social issue documentary filmmaking.

Raelene Holmes participated in a Harlem silent march against stop and frisk, and also presented her video at various community forums. She expressed a change of attitude, a shift in consciousness. As education philosopher Maxine Greene writes, *it is the ability to see the world as if it could be otherwise*. We try to create experiences that open up new possibilities, that can help youth rewrite their own life narrative for themselves. When students can critically examine the unhealthy and damaging conditions in their lives and with the help of teachers and activists, are able to take action, the results can be life changing. Students not only develop a critical media literacy but also a sense of moral agency and belief that sharing their stories and experiences and voices is for the greater good and well-being of their community.



We are mindful of and inspired by our students --- the Jasmin's and Raelene's, whose everyday struggles in school and at home are matched by their resilience and everyday courage. As critical teachers in action, agents of change in solidarity with our students, their families and community, we are teaching the next generation to renew and revitalize our participatory democracy, making it a more just and equitable place for us all.

Website: www.evc.org



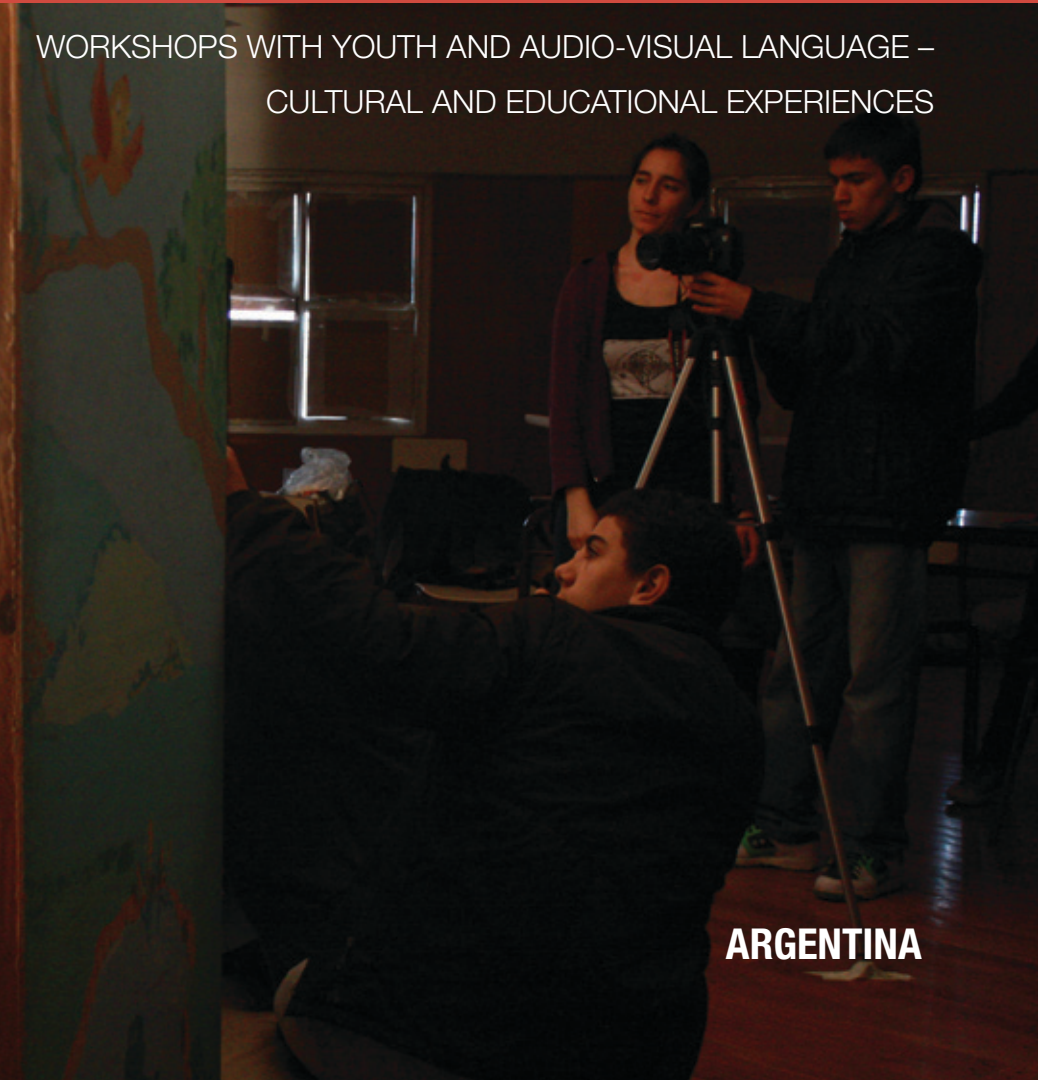
SELECTED STILLS FROM EVC VIDEOS



Kate Rubenstein (left) and former EVC student, Leo Carram

FUNDACION KINE

WORKSHOPS WITH YOUTH AND AUDIO-VISUAL LANGUAGE –
CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES



ARGENTINA

This text aims to share experiences, thoughts and discussions that came out of our work throughout 2012. It reflects the opinions of all members of the team; I am but the writer of a collective process, identifying questions that emerged from our daily tasks.

We have been working with audio-visual communication for almost ten years, and we have not yet found conclusive answers as to what the purpose of this new language is or why we decided to work with film, in the first place. Is it appealing to the younger generations? Is it a response to socio-cultural movements and the new ways of learning that they demand? Is it necessary to awaken other sensibilities to access it? Is it complementary to other discussions? What happens when we talk about education from the present point of view, as we look towards the future? I will write here from the experience and perspective of a small project, about a few situations and questions that demanded our enthusiastic engagement. We will not present answers, but we hope that these practices can be adapted to the reader's individual situation.

“Diversity in Short Films, Audio-Visuals Created by Youth for Inter-Cultural Dialogue,” is a project designed to develop spaces for learning and producing audio-visual communications by youth, from four different communities. Geographically distant from each other, as well as culturally diverse, we tried to facilitate an exchange, a dialogue, among these

communities. They began by producing media representations of themselves, identified how their own cultural backgrounds were depicted within these representations, and finally, how these compared with how other communities chose to portray them.

.....

Scene 1 . Tucuman Province, Neighborhood Los Gonzalez
WS (Wide Shot) Rural landscape. The fields, sunny, dry.
CU (Close Up) Bread and Chocolate
LS (Long Shot) Children running on the hills.

This description comes from the field notes of a workshop participant. Even though some of the participants did not know much about filmmaking, when we arrived in this community we were able to draft a script, as mental images are very similar to films. Though audio-visual language education may include elements of cinema, the two are quite different.

We were in a community, that specialized in the production of bricks, and that allowed us to use the communal kitchen —“La morenita”—as the space for the workshop. Food was prepared here for all, but then taken home, to be eaten with the family. The workshop was developed in a small province of Argentina, known as the *Garden of the Republic* because of its sugar cane fields. For the community to participate in

the workshop was something special for various reasons: it was a novelty for them to see and work with cameras, to organize themselves in production “roles” in order to produce an audio-visual product, and to participate in something that gave them a “voice” and an “image”, where they became the protagonists.

Introducing film-making in this neighborhood resulted in several “first experiences,” which were coordinated by the workshop leader. It forced participants, for example, to go to the movies in San Miguel de Tucuman, the city closest to them; a city full of Argentinean history, monuments and asphalt. What to others is daily life, like buying a ticket, standing in line, choosing a seat, wearing 3-D glasses, was, for this community, a discovery. That “first experience” is reminiscent of *The Arrival of the Train to the Station*, one of the first films in history that frightened and made first-time moviegoers jump from their seats; the same audience that would soon develop a spectator’s eye. Similarly, participants in our workshop developed their own sense and understanding of film through the stimulus and illusion of 3D-cinema.

In the next exercise we proposed that they introduce themselves using cameras and then share the resulting video with the other communities, with people who were also participating in the project, and who they didn’t know. They chose to represent themselves through a short, visual story of a

demonstration, cutting a traffic on a road.



Still from *Ángel's Adventures*.

Later in the workshop they participated in exchange activities hosted by the “Network of Youth Communicators” from a nearby neighborhood in the Tucuman hills. They also travelled to Buenos Aires to meet youth from other workshops and to show their video, “Angel’s Adventures”, in a theater. This experience allowed them to spend time in another city; one full of film and TV production companies they could visit. In addition, they were able to explain to the audience in-person why they had produced their video.

To make a film was not and is not the most important thing.

To be a protagonist does not mean to be in all the scenes of a film, but to discover one's own vision, one's own way of communicating, and the opportunities that emerge from discovering other languages and other forms of communication.

...

In the depths of Buenos Aires' suburbia, in General Rodriguez, a socially diverse town, live the children of Bolivian migrants. They work on industrial collectives for fruit farming. The workshop was held at "El Museo", which holds a collection of artifacts relevant to local history. In the midst of masks, sables, and chairs that no one uses any longer, migrant youth and second-generation migrant youth reflected on their cultural identities; a life which encompassed cell phones, soap operas, harvests, religion, and popular feasts brought from their home country. Most of them were timid and silent, speaking in low voices with their eyes on the ground; when asked to invent stories most of them made mention of knives, traitors, brothers and complicated love affairs. The museum, the TV, and their life, all connecting somehow.

We faced two main challenges. The first one was to present the communicative power of audio-visual language in a balanced way, creating the opportunity for these youth to take away what they thought would be useful to them. And



the second: to question if these melodramatic and violent narratives were so similar to their own lives that they saw themselves reflected in it, questioning if there were other ways to depict themselves. These two challenges represented a major theme. After all, audio-visual communication has its own resources, grammar, etc.; but learning the creative process of a type of communication that awakens sensibilities, must be carefully planned. Even though we know that this is never an exact recipe, we also know that audio-visual language gives adolescents an opportunity for reflection and to choose their own attitudes and discourses.

We proposed that youth work on voice and personal expression through group vocal exercises and later, through acting exercises in pairs or small groups. Throughout this process many youth participated actively, speaking and sharing their thoughts with wide eyes and assured voices. It was exciting but never vertiginous to the level of questioning our own actions. The workshop was not only about individual self-consciousness, but also about asking ourselves if the forms of expression contributed to keeping cultural traits alive, or if instead, they contributed to “naturalizing” a way of looking at the “other.” Their audio-visual narratives included questions about first steps for those holding a camera for the first time: how does one explain the context, what is known or unknown about the topics, or how to narrate according to cultural biases of particular historical moment. In one way

or another, one’s story needs room in order to develop and eventually reflect one’s intentions.

For us it is important to lead exercises that facilitate looking at and reflecting upon what one is transmitting, much more than to tell a “great” story. In other words, to keep insisting that they focus, from the script writing through production, taping and visualization, on what it is that they want to communicate, why, and for what reason. We insisted that they analyze the image and the sound of their discourse.

What emerged was that the youth were not closely connected to the initial narratives, but that they felt much more comfortable exploring their own creativity, informing their own style. In the search for and identification of their own vision, they decided what to keep and what to leave behind. This critical reading started with materials produced by others, little by little acknowledging how one deals with one’s emotions vis-à-vis the audiovisual message: analyzing the work itself, the narrative structure and its formal resources as well as its creation and the context in which it was viewed. Evidently, it is a process that demands much more than a workshop or a classroom experience. To de-naturalize stereotypes in narratives and in personal interactions is not the exclusive task of the audiovisual workshops and education. But we must recognize that all this facilitates a widening of the perceptions surrounding diversity and to be able

to transport it into daily activities makes this world a better place to live.



Still from *Santusa*.

Perhaps the last scene of “Santusa” will help us to recognize the recipe of the Bolivian Laguna, and revise our own cultural heritage in the midst of diversity and the complexities that we all carry within ourselves.

...

On the outskirts of Ciudad de Rosario, near a train track built to unite the cities but which divides this one into two, perhaps more, we find the neighborhood of Travesia. There, in a precarious situation, segregated and culturally isolated,

lives a community that migrated from the Province of Chaco to Santa Fe due to constant and grave water inundations. The descendents of this community only find out about the extreme heat of their home town, Toba, when a relative comes to visit them.



Still from *Crespin's story*.

“Crespin’s Story,” the animated short video that they produced in our workshop, is the story of the parents and grandparents of these youth. It is also a metaphor of their desire to be integrated into the new city and of their melancholy for not having found their roots.

By revising the creative process of this short video we can address other aspects of the relationship between process and

result. For example, this workshop's participants' actions also became a part of the story. "Crespin's Story" begs an open-ended question: how was it that Crespin "finally made friends and was able to find a place in the city?" As the story was developing, during the scriptwriting, the question arose, but no answers were arrived upon. During the production, when the animation already had scenes completed, the media makers found an answer for how Crespin was able to "get friends and a place in the city." But they decided not to include these answers in the story and not to modify the script.

If we think in terms of reflecting the narratives of a community (migration, new city, difficulties), and concretely if we think that by making this short film, workshop participants found their own answers on migration issues, we could argue that new horizons have been opened to these young people. But then our own questions emerge: can an educator formulate the question?; how much can he influence the life and the creative process of youth?; if the video had included the answers what would have changed?; is the short video a good reflection of the workshop? It is as spectators and participants in the creation of the short film that we comprehend the double longing for both regions (El Chaco and Santa Fe), the constant feeling of landlessness, and that we expect to have planted a seed just by asking the question. Because to make cinema is not to create a different world, but to make it possible, by imagining other realities.

...

At the Argentinean Language of Signs (ALS), in the midst of great silences, we developed a workshop at a school for the deaf. One of the main themes that these adolescents brought up had to do with communication, for various reasons: their struggle in a world with sound and people who do not know sign language, as well as their own relationships at home where many family members do not know ALS, and the importance that the school has in their lives because it is the place where these adolescents can communicate. Indeed, the teens loved the school, but they were also bringing emotionally-charged personal experiences to the workshop.



Still from *Travelling hands*.

The first video produced in this workshop was about the exchange between a “deaf hand” and a “hard hand” (what they call the people who can hear and for whom it is difficult to learn ALS) about how to share their world. Quite possibly the message it is not completely clear during the first viewing of the short film, and the poetic presentation opens up different interpretations and complexities. But this is how these young people wanted to communicate. If it was so clear that this was their intention, should we have helped them in creating a more explicit message? And if so, could they have done it with as much poetic sensibility?

Conclusions

Many questions surface, many with relevance to other educational frameworks. This **proposed curriculum** is indeed complex because the first thing that we need to overcome while working with short videos is translating content to an audiovisual message, including addressing the challenge of the creative process, and staying away from formal manuals and discourses.

Our questions also acknowledge that the results do not always showcase the learning process involved. Perhaps we cannot ask for a short video to represent the inner journey of an individual’s development; or for an exam to properly indicate an individual’s knowledge of the contents of a particular subject matter.

At the same time, as we are here using words to communicate memories of experiences that ended with audiovisual messages, we could also ask ourselves when these platforms (*text or film*) will continue contributing to communication; or perhaps that the speed of newer technologies will develop other forms of communication and new methods that might cast aside the ones we work with now.

Website: www.fundacionkine.org.ar

PLURAL+

A PLATFORM FOR YOUTH MEDIA



**UNITED NATIONS ALLIANCE OF CIVILIZATION and
THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION**

Youth-produced media is a main component of today's society. Young people are constantly producing and sharing media; in a way it is their main mode of self-expression, of reassuring themselves that they are in the world, that they are alive. But creating and sharing media per se—as important as it is—it is not truly as essential as that young people producing media become aware (*ethically aware*) of the role and significance that media has in our communities. This awareness is the terrain of Media and Information Literacy.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child recognizes the importance of the media in children's and young people's development. The media is seen as playing a crucial role in shaping societal attitudes towards children's rights, equipping children with information central to their well-being in a child-friendly environment, and soliciting youth's views on matters that affect them. However, through the production of their own media, youth can be empowered to tell stories about the issues that they see as most important, and to share these with the world. Producing media is a way for youth to creatively engage with their society, their family, their friends, themselves. It allows them to create their own media representations, and to become aware of the ethical responsibilities of their media messages.

PLURAL+ is a platform developed for the distribution of youth-produced media that creatively addresses issues rel-



evant to multiculturalism and shared societies. PLURAL+ is a youth video festival focusing on the themes of migration, diversity and social inclusion; it was created in 2009 as a joint initiative of the UNITED NATIONS ALLIANCE OF CIVILIZATIONS (UNAOC) and the INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION (IOM) and has the support of over fifty partners from around the world. PLURAL+ recognizes youth as powerful agents of social change in a world often characterized by intolerance, and cultural and religious divisions, inviting youth to address—both at local and global levels—key challenges related to migrant integration, inclusiveness, identity, diversity, human rights and social cohesiveness. PLURAL+ aims at supporting dialogue between young people from different cultures as well

as increasing awareness and respect for diversity and shared societies. Each year young people up to 25 years old are invited to submit short videos of five minutes maximum in length addressing the topics on which PLURAL+ focuses. Selected videos are then distributed on multiple platforms around the world. The initiative invites young people to creatively reflect on the world that surrounds them, to propose ideas, to point out social injustices, to identify cultural stereotypes. I keep mentioning “creatively” at the risk of sounding flat by bouncing around nice sounding words but lacking depth. Creativity is perhaps what we are at risk of losing in our current educational systems. We are encouraging reading, writing, numeracy, and the technical how-to; but not reflection and critical thinking. We are becoming less and less interested in humanistic education and more and more in the pragmatism of technology education. By doing so we are facilitating the development of a society lacking a better understanding of history (local and global) and of the “cultural literacy” that can help humanity to become less polarized (and ultimately less violent and more welcoming of differences). PLURAL+ is a platform for the distribution of youth-produced media that has something *to say*, not only something to *show off* (a media skill) through pure “entertainment” (how funny this video is, how outrageous it is, how well produced it is). PLURAL+ empowers youth by multiplying their voices through a network of global distribution facilitated and supported by its partners. It is

a common effort towards mainstreaming youth voices and their presence in the media. We believe that it is through this empowerment of young people’s voices that ultimately change will come about, that less “culturally biased” conflicts will emerge throughout the world. Media and Information Literacy is the larger framework where this effervescent creativity develops. At the UNAOC we support all efforts aiming and including Media and Information Literacy within the core educational curricula, from Kindergarten to college education. Youth media is the creative aspect of it.

PLURAL+: <http://pluralplus.unaoc.org>

UNAOC’s Media and Information Literacy Program:
<http://milunesco.unaoc.org>



SELECTED STILLS FROM PLURAL+ VIDEOS

THE WORKSHOP







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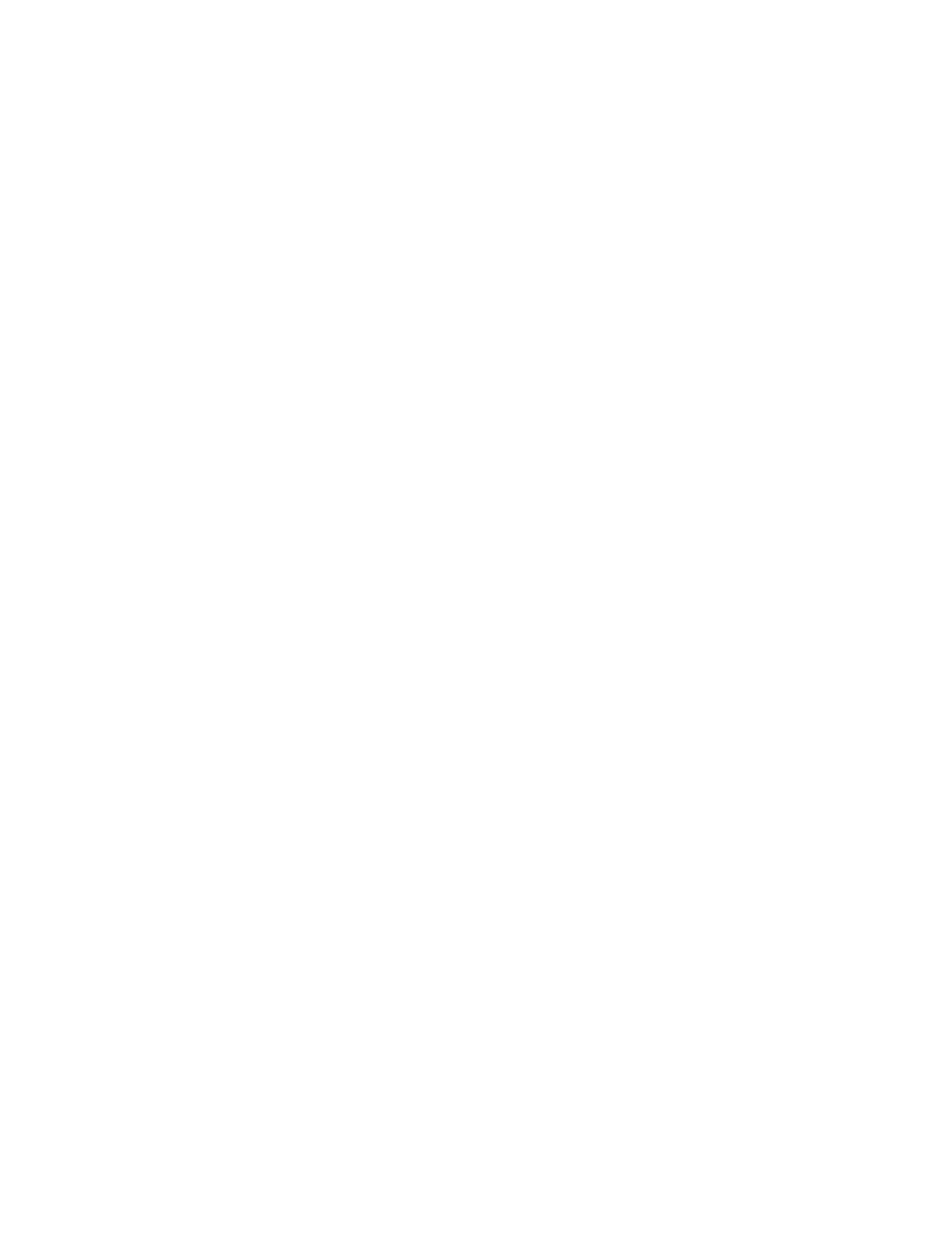
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Conversations Across Cultures

Youth Media Visions



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