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UCD4D DIVO Project – Dialogue for Development

DIVO - Digital Interactive Video Online is an exciting and innovative interaction concept, incorporating creativity and technology to generate participant-centred digital video dialogue(s) which promote inter-cultural understanding and peer-led learning between groups who would otherwise never be able to meet.

DIVO is related to the themes of the UCD4D workshop in the following ways:

Theme 1: Experiences of interaction design in developing countries or with traditionally underserved populations in developed countries

The DIVO Project was piloted in 2004 between two groups from vastly different contexts: young women from the socially and economically marginalised Muslim community of Nima in Accra, Ghana and a multi-cultural group of schoolgirls from Elizabeth Garrett Anderson School for Girls in Kings Cross, London.

Ghana is a devout country where the majority of population are Christian. Muslims are a minority group and widely considered underclass, Nima is a predominantly Muslim slum area and the largest informal settlement in Ghana. The British group comprised of Black & Minority Ethnic girls, ie, no white girls.

Young womens' voices in both contexts are underrepresented in mainstream media and society in general. The DIVO project relocates remote and marginalised groups to the centre of the communication process and gives their voices a global platform.

Theme 2: Uses and adaptations of participatory methods in economic and community development projects

DIVO relies on the creative application of technology along with peer-led, participant (or user)-centred techniques. As a dialogue is generative, participation is integral to the project.

All project activities value and promote collaborative contribution, both within local workshops and via video exchange with partner group. Filmmaking and supporting activities such as creating concepts, negotiation, reflection, planning and filming require active involvement by all participants – as individuals, pairs, small and large groups and rely on democratic, collective decision making processes. Evaluation techniques were chosen which also emphasised participation such as video diaries, 1-1 interviews, mapping, image theatre, matrices and ranking activities.

Participants fully owned the project process via the use and handling of technology and DV cameras, decision-making and the opportunity to create and present their views to peers and their wider audiences.

Participants benefit from the process by learning both practical and personal/social skills. The creative, technical process of filming requires teamwork, articulation, focus and critical reflection. Viewing films created by peers about common issues and hearing their unfiltered voices promotes greater understanding and tests pre-conceived

notions about others. Participants increase their confidence in, and experience of, online communications while deepening their appreciation of global issues and diversity.

While economic and community development were not primary goalsⁱ of the project, participants were inspired to initiate community-led projects as a result of taking part in DIVO, and parents reported a greatly increased interest in educational achievement. Technological skills gained through the project enhance participants' future.

Theme 4: Innovative techniques for engaging users in developing world contexts

Groups of young people conceive, record and exchange short digital films based on common themes which are shared via a website. The films are viewed and the issues contained are discussed and explored on and off-line and new films are created and shared in response. In this way, a digital video dialogue emerges which contains a genuine sense of mutual sharing and exchange, free from typical online communication measurements such as sophisticated use of written (English) language or individuals technological know-how.

The power of DIVO comes from the combination of the creative application of technology with peer-led, user-centred techniques. As emphasis is jointly placed on the process of generating media clips, as on the media clips themselves, DIVO offers a rich multi-strand communication opportunity. DIVO also offers flexibility to audiences and freedom of timing.

The activity that goes into creating a media product for an audience of peers is both an opportunity and motivation for learning. In order to participate, groups need to digest what they have viewed and examine this against their existing knowledge before proceeding to generate more media and develop their response. Because media generated is personally relevant and specifically created, it is more compelling for participants to engage with and reflect on.

Mass media often promotes images and messages which are at odds with the environment and unrelated to the audience. The DIVO project puts media creation firmly in the hands of participants, offering them the opportunity to experiment in a playful and powerful way with a media force they are only likely to have experienced as consumers.

The Pilot phase was funded by the British Council, the British High Commission and the Guardian Newspaper Ltd. A full evaluative report, a 10 and a 20-min project documentary are available. The project documentary has been recognised by selection in a number of international human rights film festivals and screens regularly on the Community Channel in the UK and makes an excellent starting point for discussion.

www.divoproject.org

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ⁱ The goals of the DIVO Project Pilot phase were: 1) To increase participants cross-cultural awareness; 2) To improve participants IT skills; 3) To increase the ability of young women to make informed choices about gender and sexual health.