SEVENTH FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME
Marie Curie Actions/ International Research Staff Exchange Scheme

Global Perspectives on Learning and Development
with Digital Video-Editing Media: A Qualitative Inquiry
in Everyday Lives of Marginalized Young People:
digitmed.wordpress.com

Summary of Findings & Results

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Exploring Learning and Development with Digital Media: Global Perspectives and Qualitative Insights

What is the potential of digital filming and multimedia use for school, youth development and community life across the globe?

Trying to answer this timely question, the ‘DIGIT-M-ED’ Marie Curie People’s Program international research staff exchange scheme "Global Perspectives on Learning and Development with Digital Video-Editing Media" took a critical distance from technological determinism; through a series of workshops, small-scale research projects and training and data-analysis sessions, senior and early-career scholars from UK, Germany, Greece, Brazil, India, and Russia came together not in order to explore digital media as such, but the various and different practices that involve digital media in young people’s everyday life contexts in all those countries.

The focus of the investigation was on the digital capturing, editing and circulating of audio-visual data employed by young people. The various research teams investigated media practices such as tubing, filmmaking and gaming. Each team explored how young people, in their respective countries, employ these technologies as means for self-expression and communication with others. A specific focus concerned youth experiencing difficult situations such as: economic crisis in urban Greece, marginality in São Paulo outskirts, and disability in Moscow. Another focus concerned emerging youth protest cultures in India and Brazil. In all these practices digital technologies played a significant role in facilitating youth expression and communication.

The project’s main achievement has been the elaboration of an interdisciplinary, cross-level methodology for cross-analyzing a) psychological processes, b) the design of media interfaces and c) the on- and off-line collaboration among users while taking under consideration the broader social, cultural and historical contexts of media use.

This innovative methodology, the results of the various case studies and the implications for education and policy-making have successfully been presented and discussed in a series of workshops as well as in international conferences around the world.

The results will be materialized in an edited volume (to be printed in early 2015) as well as in further research proposals (a first draft proposal has already been edited and circulated among the partners).

The interdisciplinary international research staff exchange contributed thus to advancing the current understandings of the potential of multimedia and digital filming for teaching, learning, and youth empowerment – a topic with major implications for Europe and the whole world. Solid research synergies between German and Indian traditions of anthropological and sociological youth research, British scholarship in media analysis, Greek and Brazilian educational and youth research and Russian learning theories were established – which offer a fruitful ground for further research and long lasting collaboration between European and third country partners, in particular in view of setting-up joint research projects and research training activities.
By bringing together some of the world’s leading senior researchers with talented early career scholars from Europe, Brazil, India and Russia, DIGIT-M-ED offered advanced training in innovative approaches and research methodologies and created the much needed space for a network of early-career researchers to develop. This network is now preparing the next project: HyperConnecting Schools (see: http://digitmed.wordpress.com/hyperconnecting-schools/).

Of course a lot of work remains to be done since DIGIT-M-ED was a small-scale project (with total costs of less than 100,000 Euro). Still, the project addressed directly the following issues which are of high priority both as seen from a European perspective and on global level: 1) media and competitiveness in a knowledge society, 2) media, youth policies and social exclusion, 3) well-being of democracies and political participation, and 4) promoting sensitization to cultural diversity and social justice through media.

There are thus important implications for educational policy makers, legal institutions, non-government organisations, web-designers and teachers. Dissemination strategies have covered several levels and tools:

a) the project webpage and blog: http://digitmed.wordpress.com
b) conference papers and joint publications (see SESAM)
c) public lectures and discussion meetings for the broader interested audience (from such a meeting is the photo 1 below).
d) integration of the produced knowledge into post-graduate teaching at the Summer University of Cultural-Historical Psychology in Moscow, Russia and the London Lab at the Institute of Education in London, UK.

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