

LINKING THE SPACES BETWEEN: AN INTERDISCIPLINARY MEDIA CONTENT PRODUCTION PROJECT FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

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Abstract

Beginning with the question “How can the process of developing, producing and disseminating community stories, interests and issues via broadcast and social sharing of digital content be used to engage and mobilise community interests in shared endeavours that will help drive social cohesion?” - research staff, production staff, students and community groups in a tertiary education institute’s urban environs are working together during 2014 to create a series of programmes for broadcast on Face TV. We are interested to assess how, in the process of creating content for wider audiences, a strategic approach to the dissemination of this content may facilitate better communication across community stakeholders and beyond.

Influenced by the view that “a strong storytelling network is essential to creating effective reach, outreach, and mobilisation of residents, community organisations and...media” (Annenberg School for Communication USC, 2013), as well as research on the uses and limitations of digital storytelling for empowerment of marginalised voices in community-based projects (Podkalicka and Campbell, 2010, Spurgeon et al., 2009), this paper explains the rationale for a multi-layered, complex methodology, the methods being used and the longer-term vision of outcomes for this type of collaboration involving a variety of shareable as well as “broadcast-able” digital content as tools in community communication strategy.

Introduction

Despite a long tradition in New Zealand of an egalitarian society, issues relating to socioeconomic disparity are increasingly being highlighted here (Collins, 2012, Perry, 2012) and are a strong focus of political debate in an election year. In the context of growth in the Auckland population as well as critical pressure on affordable housing, many communities face the challenge of culturally alienated urban space and associated problems, including – for example - disaffected youth and the proliferation

of suburban liquor outlets and shops selling legal highs. “The spaces between” is a metaphor we’ve chosen for this project to imply the relational aspect of what it means to live in a community, and what is required to facilitate social goals in communities, a dimension sometimes described as social connectedness or social cohesion. Our exploration of “the spaces between”¹ addresses a role for media content to connect people across those spaces, using latent potential within the creative, educational, altruistic and volunteer sectors for achieving shared purpose and mobilisation. What are the needs, priorities, issues and opportunities that are important to people in selected community organisations? How can connections be fostered that make it possible to mobilise, discuss and communicate these needs, priorities, issues and opportunities? What role can media (broadcast and social) play in communicating and mobilising community agendas?

The community media project we discuss in this paper takes the opportunity to bring collaborators together into dialogue, so that community stories can be created for media use and thus be more widely shared, from the perspective that “technology is part of who community groups are and what they do, so inquiry involves opening up a dialogue where we talk about the goals that they want to achieve and find ways to help them achieve these goals in a way that is sustainable” (Merkel et al., 2005, p. 168). The epistemological underpinnings of our approach locate participation at the heart of the task: in exploring co-creation as a model for driving community resilience, the community itself is the primary stakeholder. This is a perspective best described as “a communication infrastructure perspective that privileges a grassroots understanding of how people construct and re-vitalize their residential communities” (Annenberg School for Communication USC, 2013) through story. The aim of this community media project is to explore collaboration with a number of community organisations in West Auckland to create half hour magazine-style documentaries communicating a story of importance to them as part of its broader strategy of engagement with a wide audience in its mission. In an operational sense, the documentary production component is being achieved through key community members engaging with university staff and

¹ A phrase used in a 2013 Professorial Forum on social housing by Hamish Keith, a prominent NZ writer, art curator, critic and social commentator, in the context of what he called “the apparatus of communities” and “what are the bits in between... the increased numbers of houses - the social cohesion, the public good?” While the forum addressed the critical shortage of affordable housing, Keith’s interest was in what kind of community spaces facilitate social goals.

students who plan a story angle with them, and ways to capture and communicate it. At the same time we are investigating the relative usefulness of broadcast and social media for achieving the community's communication objectives.

Social research in community settings has shown that collaboratively planned initiatives that seek to build a community's capacity to be resilient on its own terms, and that extend participants' social experiences of community, can trigger a momentum of engagement, mobilisation, self-determination and increased social cohesion² (Williams, 2010). Features noted in one urban community suggesting improved social cohesion included volunteerism, collective mobilisation through taking action on a plan, and leader figures taking responsible roles (Williams, 2009, p. 237-238). In order to frame our research and be equipped to investigate social dynamics of this kind, we begin with what we understand by 'community'. While community is now embedded in a complex array of networks rather than in localised groups since the widespread expansion of online social networking, and thus community is broadly understood "functionally as networks of social relationships rather than spatially as localities" (Wellman, 2001), in the present study, community is understood to be primarily a locality for the purposes of what we aim to achieve here. Casswell (2001) distinguishes what constitutes community in the NZ social policy setting as a feeling of connectedness:

The word community conveys a sense of connectedness between people and their organisations. In relation to community initiatives funded from outside, this usually relates to geographical locality and, often in New Zealand, also recognises ethnic communities within a geographical area. The community is a social space, a sector made up of informal and relatively unmanaged associations. (Casswell, 2001, p. 25)

In the present study we understand community to be the network of relationships linking people in the location where their community organisation is based, a network that may include neighbourhood, community hub, family, friendship, organisational and other relationships. Thus the community is a group of people who have some connection to a geographical locality and who define themselves as part of a community, a symbolic

² Friedkin (2004). observes that social cohesion is defined either through individual level behaviours and attitudes such as volunteerism and participation, or through group level "conditions" and outcomes such as evidence of supportive networks and of social solidarity.

construct that is an outcome of what those people do together. The series of seven community organisations involved in the digital media content creation component of the project become the unit of analysis as data begin to be collated.

Of the variety of ways communities may be strengthened, collaborative approaches in which community, government and other stakeholder interests work together to achieve sustainable outcomes have been promoted in public policy (Ministry of Economic Development, 2008) and research for some time. Yet where the impetus for change originates is critical: for example, in the context of initiatives to foster community ties through Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) it is thought “grassroots initiatives... may offer a more sustainable model” (Gaved and Anderson, 2006, p. 12) in preference to control and ownership being exerted by an external or top-down body. In their meta-analysis of community ICT projects worldwide Gaved et al recommend “grassroots actions ...via social enterprises” and conclude “collaborations between grassroots initiatives should be encouraged and actions (such as financial support) to help exchange of knowledge and experience through ... collaborative groups should be taken” (p. 28).

Community engagement comes from people having an authentic stake in a process they value, leading to outcomes they have planned and worked for, as respected partners and owners, while “research that is empowering [is based on] relationships of shared control and reciprocity” (Milne and Usmar, 2011, p. 4). At the core of transformative frameworks, therefore, power is potentially an issue:

The participatory research model is, at its core, concerned with equipping marginalised or 'excluded' groups in our communities with research capabilities and understandings that they can use to transform their own lives (Hurtig, 2008). Its philosophical stand is that social transformation at the community level comes about as local people get involved in participatory education and thereby learn new critical practices that help them organise for change and achieve the power to take control of their everyday situations (Craig and Williams, 2011, 'Participatory research and community action' section)

What makes a difference is *how* people “get involved” (ibid.) in participatory and collaborative social action – how this process begins, is facilitated, to what extent

participants need or want to learn critical practices (ibid.), to own and tell their own story. Craig et al argue it “likely that if ownership of community storytelling can be truly in the hands of ...participants themselves through creating and publishing their own stories digitally, then sustainability of [community] outcomes will be even more enduring” (Craig and Williams, 2011, 'Participatory research and community action' section). Again, *how* and to what extent storytelling is put in the hands of participants are important considerations, and the purposes to which the content is to be put. Also as Spurgeon, Burgess, Klaebe et al (2009) state in their reflections on co-creative media, broader social shifts in media consumption and production within which digital storytelling has developed mean that “participatory media, as exemplified by highly popular platforms like YouTube, expand the opportunities for direct rather than indirect representation” (Spurgeon et al., 2009, p. 276).

Background to the study

In an increasingly commercial and fragmented media environment, reaching a target audience is challenging and potentially expensive as the long arm of marketing reaches into online spaces, and content created to serve minority and alternative interests has been elbowed out of traditional mass media channels in New Zealand (2014). The gradual disappearance of public service content from the mainstream and its retreat to niche television channels such as TVNZ 6 and TVNZ 7 that were ultimately canned in 2012, now leaves few openings for niche programming that nourishes diversity and community voice in the traditional broadcast setting. Reliable internet access and speed potentially make YouTube, Vimeo and other free platforms valuable alternative channels for online content sharing. While the current National government’s Ultra-Fast Broadband (UFB) and Rural Broadband Initiative (RBI) appear to be aimed mostly at economic objectives through faster ubiquitous internet (Ministry of Economic Development, 2012) there is also a great deal of opportunity for these to serve social policy goals as well, such as making public service media freely accessible online if the political will existed. In the present conditions while we await full implementation of UFB and the RBI, non-commercial interests have to learn to be nimble and creative with their media strategy. Yet access to the resources and skills to develop media content for strategic communication purposes may be limited in some not-for-profit

community contexts, and capacity to pay for it to be created are likely to be minimal.

These are important concerns in terms of creating a socially inclusive, democratic society, a commitment that the NZ government continues to explicitly uphold. The Department of Internal Affairs website presents an introductory statement highlighting the importance of social cohesion in the context of “significant economic, social, environmental and cultural changes in New Zealand’s urban areas...[and] issues such as affordable housing, increased fuel prices, congestion, pollution, social disadvantage, climate change, population growth, rapid technological change and changing demographics” (Department of Internal Affairs, 2014). Because of these issues, the DIA states, we need to reassess what is needed to enhance cities and meet major social, environmental, economic and cultural challenges. To this end, a definition of Sustainable Urban Development is provided:

Sustainable urban development is about improving the quality of life in a city, including social, economic, environmental and cultural components, without leaving a burden on future generations...towns and cities [that] are liveable, environmentally responsible and competitive, thriving, creative and innovative. These towns and cities also offer opportunities for all, and have a distinctive identity, a shared vision and good governance. (Department of Internal Affairs, 2014)

While there is still plenty of room for progress in making internet access available – since there is still a Digital Divide in NZ - and faster as one component of creating social connectedness, for those who have the tools and resources there is a great deal of opportunity for co-created, on-demand and shared online content. Indeed “the nature of social networking is encouraging sharing of content ... [and] a measure of success in the post-Web 2.0 world is the ‘spreadability’ of media content” (Ellingsen, 2014, p. 109). Niche interests and voices can thus also consider ways to increase their reach beyond the single broadcast message by experimenting with tactics to achieve social media virality. Ellingsen (ibid.) considers a useful definition of “spreadability” as “the potential – both technical and cultural – for audiences to share content for their own purposes, sometimes with the permission of the rights holders, sometimes against their wishes” (Ellingsen, 2014, p. 109, citing Jenkins et al, 2013, p. 3).

Late in 2013 the opportunity arose for a coalition of interests including researcher/educators, students, community groups and a broadcast media channel, to experiment with what can be achieved for community voice. In the course of doing so, a variety of potential benefits were identified: visibility for community causes at little cost; investigation in real community case studies of the power and value of digital storytelling; a model or series of models for community communication strategy; supervised professional experience for students engaging with community stakeholders; interdisciplinary collaboration in a live project. We believe these are benefits well worth investing our time and resources into.

Research design

This project aims to achieve a number of outcomes; here we explain what these are in relation to the overall design and summarise them in Table 1 below. At the basis of it, Level 1, we are engaged in seeing through the production of several documentaries involving community organisations. At Level 2 is engagement by the research team with those groups about what they are aiming to achieve with their documentary. At Level 3, the more conventional research level, is an investigation of the value of a collaborative approach in developing communications media strategy to help drive community aspirations.

Components of the project at three levels	Research methods	Intended outcomes
3 'Community communications media infrastructure' research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review of data across the seven organisations - Informal consultations - Literature review 	Model for education and community sector co-creation/collaboration in content production and communication strategy
2 Activity on each community organisations' communication strategy and evaluation of outcomes of the documentary project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interviews with key stakeholders in each community organisation - Focus groups post-documentary broadcast exploring perceptions of it - Potentially, media monitoring to gauge online engagement if social media is a component of the communication strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overview for each community of the present communication infrastructure to inform the following - Next steps in community action and future communication strategy
1 Co-creation of documentaries telling a community organisation's story, for the purposes of a series for broadcast.	No data collection; however standard Informed Consent and the research institute's protocol for gaining	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Digital content for broadcast and other media purposes that increases 'reach' and visibility

	<p>permission to use videoed material are being actioned, especially in two cases where minors may be involved. Each documentary will use a mix of location footage, interviews, studio discussion or other material planned in conjunction with the organisation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participation by community - Social constructionist process -> learning for participants (students and community members) - Events such as community 'launch'/celebration of their documentary and/or other components of communication strategy.
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Table 1: Levels of the project, methods and intended outcomes

Component 1 in the table above involves seven existing community research projects that are the basis for documentaries in the process of being co-created for screening on a public service television channel during the latter months of 2014. The short documentaries, being made as a collaboration between community members and research staff and students from our institute, will involve a mix of interviews with key community members, presentation of current and past activity according to the situation such as location shots with voiceover, studio discussion, or other modes of telling the story on film. In each case the angle, story, participants and script are being planned in conjunction with organisational members, with a Production Manager and supervised students involved to the extent this is appropriate in each case. A mix of Communication and Screen students are being guided in researching, scripting, interviewing and filming at the production stage, while auditions will be held to select students for presenting roles for the final cut and broadcast.

Data gathered across the seven community projects (Level 2, see above) in the course of talking with key stakeholders about their aspirations for communication strategy will bring to light aspects of communication infrastructure (Annenberg School for Communication USC, 2013) in each locality and as a group. As the Annenberg team and their prolific research over many years in Los Angeles have shown, examining a community's communication infrastructure centres on "the neighborhood storytelling network [which] involves residents, community organisations, and ...media in a dynamic communication process whereby they stimulate each other to focus upon and talk about neighborhood events, issues, threats, and opportunities. As such, this network is hard to see without in-depth and grounded research" (ibid.). Thus among the intended outcomes of this work is a researched and recorded snapshot that can inform community action. In the process of collaborating with each community

organisation over a documentary production and its place within a broader media strategy, we will create an overview through story, video, interviews, media monitoring, observation and focus groups, of the present communication infrastructure which will point the way ahead for deepening the value of story in communication for community purposes.

Also at Level 2, findings in terms of what these not-for-profit community organisations already have in place as communication strategy, what their mission and goals are, who is their desired audience and what they aspire to achieve by creating digital media content will inform a model for the education and community sectors as co-creators. Focus groups including participants from the target audience/s, organised in conjunction with the community organisation and held at the time of their programme being broadcast will deliver information valuable for all stakeholders on how effective the content creation has been in reaching intended audiences – as a process of collaboration, and as a digital media artefact that has value that can be brought to bear in other ways.

Other aspirations for this study that takes a long-term view of partnership with these communities, include engagement in education in a social constructivist sense, on the assumption that knowledge is constructed not only on the basis of what people already know (rather than what they are merely told) but also in collaboration with those we know in social settings. Furthermore “we do not construct our interpretations in isolation but against a backdrop of shared understandings, practices...[and] language” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000, p. 197), and constructivist inquiry “seeks to understand contextualised meaning” (ibid., p. 986). Students working on the documentary project aiming to create an artifact alongside youngsters from schools, for example (see items 4 and 5 in the list of community organisations below), can open up avenues for exchange of ideas in media production, for learning together, for taking a step into tertiary education. In this sense the project is also about the institute making a commitment to its constituency, as well as welcoming the creativity of Gen Y as problem solvers. Ideally there will be further phases of this ‘community communications media infrastructure’ partnership in years to come.

This is therefore a layered project, and there are challenges every step of the way in regard to participation. The purpose of digital storytelling is “to facilitate social participation in the process of building community-based capacity for end-user engagement in digital media production” (Spurgeon et al., 2009, p. 276). However “the complexities inherent in cultural production” (Podkalicka and Campbell, 2010) require unpacking, for the process of digital storytelling can never be neutral, and creative processes are “inherently relational, collaborative and structured” (ibid.). The various subjectivities need to be kept at the forefront of all that we do in this project. At one level the production of digital content involves teams of some diversity for each documentary: representatives of community organisations working with staff (academic and production) and supervised students, to develop and script a story that the organisation wants to tell, plan an agreed methodology, and film, edit and produce the programming towards its own goals. While this could be a description of a regular media production arrangement where production services are negotiated with a supplier and paid for, we are embedding student learning and a research agenda into the supply of services which are largely being resourced by the institute. We intend the overarching investigation to help refine a model of research and pedagogy that deepens relationships between an educational institute and its community stakeholders. The early stages of the project are revealing that this is no mean feat.

The community stories

Participation to the extent it can realistically – and ethically - be achieved is a central methodological challenge in the study, and we recognise that “participation is not the same as equality” (Spurgeon et al., 2009, p. 276). As we will show, across the spectrum of seven documentaries to be created in collaboration with community organisations at the basis of the project, participation in the process is viewed and valued differently and those nuances will have a variety of implications for the outcomes. A brief overview of the seven community stories is as follows:

1. THE AVONDALE COMMUNITY ACTION PROJECT

ACAP is a 'place building' project undertaken in partnership with the institute and funded by Auckland Council. From a detailed community consultation and research process emerged Creative Spaces, a community hub in Avondale hosting weekly exhibitions of local artists, writers and designers.

2. **CUE HAVEN: A MODEL FOR ECO-SUSTAINABILITY**

Cue Haven is a former dairy farm being allowed to revert to native forest. As it requires a sustainable business model, exploratory and field research is completing graphic research into way-finding and a visual identity for Cue Haven, applied architectural research critically examining alternative design ideas for a proposed retreat/visitor/education space for the forest restoration project, how to leverage scale and scope with other tourist destinations in the Kaipara region, and more.

3. **PARTICIPATORY VIDEO: VISUAL DIALOGUES SUPPORTING "THE PACIFICA MAMAS" VOICE**

A research team teaching the skills of Participatory Video (PV) has been engaging with The Pacifica Mamas, a Pacific culture and arts group founded in West Auckland over 20 years ago. In addition to making various arts and crafts, the Mamas also run workshops for Auckland schools and provide Pacific event management services. Working with staff from our institute, the Mamas quickly picked up the PV method. The documentary to be made about them is likely to involve them telling (filming?) their own story.

4. **"TE PUNANGA HAUMARU" BANISHING BULLYING TOGETHER (BBT)**

Under the auspices of Violence Free Waitakere, BBT is a community resilience programme focussed on the Henderson South community. The aim of the project is to coordinate a number of community initiatives run by Violence Free Waitakere, and a number of collaborators around anti-bullying and community capacity building. Key components include holiday programmes, work with parents, community mapping, an anti-bully/pro-community themed dance/drama/music event, and a youth-led anti-cyber bullying initiative. The documentary will follow the story of a young man at the heart of an anti-bullying drama workshop series to be taken to local high schools.

5. **HIGH TECH YOUTH NETWORK (HTYN)**

Also based in the McLaren Park/Henderson South Community Hub (same as BBT, above) is the High Tech Youth Network, a digital media learning centre for local

youth aged 10 – 18 that gives them access after school to a wide range of computer software and hardware. HTYN is part of the global Computer Clubhouse network supported by Adobe and Intel. Short film production and computer game construction are two key activities involving the development of complex computer, planning, communication and collaboration skills that are central to the organisation's aims.

6. THE ROSEBANK ARTWALK

An arts event, collaboration, research process and installation for the 2013 Auckland Arts Festival, the Rosebank Artwalk was a platform for designers and artists who had explored, researched and made artwork at Rosebank Peninsula, collaborating with community groups, to respond to what they found in the place, and to show work at the place. Rosebank is an industrial precinct built over an estuarine peninsula of significant ecological worth and geological interest. The public and Arts Festival audience were invited to visit these projects and experience the results in situ.

7. MORE THAN A WAR: REMEMBERING 1914-1918

An oral history project that aims to generate a series of oral narratives recording experiences, reflections and remembrances of WW1 for a digital archive of stories and accompanying memorabilia; and searchable, interactive online content.

In consideration of “Level 1” in the larger project – the co-creation and production of the seven documentaries - a variety of negotiated participatory relationships is being established, some with more questions of power and ‘voice’ than others. In project 4 (above) involving education aiming to reduce bullying and build a more positive community climate, participants may be vulnerable minors who don't feel comfortable making their story public. In this instance we are working our way through a process that addresses ethical implications: the organisation (Violence Free Waitakere) is conducting and taking responsibility for its own rigorous process of Informed Consent. Story 5 also involves youth, and a similar process will be required; for the other stories that involve adults rather than minors, we are working via the organisation concerned to ensure people are informed of the documentary and research project. If they are invited to be interviewed for the documentary or be on film in other ways, a standard “Talent Release” consent will be completed.

Across the series, however, dilemmas arise relating to the values of media content ownership and distribution, of community participation in media production, of consent by community organisations and members for their participation in and footage (including image and voice) and informed consent to participate in research. In essence all of these values relate to ownership of content, story and voice. In opting into a complex media ecosystem seeking exposure for their voice and story, working with a digital content production provider – whether commercial or in this case an educational / community collaboration – at some level involves the group in compromising on ownership and distribution rights. The alternatives are of course sharing of various forms of user-generated content.

We are endeavouring to honour a participation culture (Spurgeon et al, 2009) with the aim of authenticity to the greatest extent possible, even while there are limitations on what we can assure. To a degree the need to provide well produced and edited digital content that will make up a satisfying half-hour's viewing is arguably a constraint on participation; there are others, such as time and resources. We hope to be able to resolve the apparent tension between distribution rights and the need for circulation by also advising on ways shorter extracts of the content can be shared online. As Ellingsen points out, the idea of spreadable media “thus works as a metaphor for that significant shift from ‘distribution’ (meaning access is controlled and limited in a top-down flow from the rights-holder) to a more open and audience-driven ‘circulation’ of content” (Ellingsen, 2014, p. 109). Can we, in the course of this project, achieve a useful mix of both as an outcome of the research component Level 3 (see Table 1)? According to Ellingsen's distinction, the digital content being co-created in the present study is owned by the funding institute, but the plan is also to employ as much sharing as possible because we have a commitment not only to the organisations we are working with but also to media students.

Storytelling and participation

As noted in the introduction to this paper, we acknowledge inherent pitfalls and dilemmas in a scenario where resourced practitioners identify community deficits from an outsider perspective and set about trying to ameliorate them (Tuck, 2009, Milne and Usmar, 2011). Yet we sense opportunities for empowerment and exploration of ways

to resolve tensions over who tells the story, in facilitating connections between a community group and the tools for media production. Here are two examples from our planned series, one in which the adult participants are already equipped with participatory video experience, and the other where we need to resolve sensitive issues of content, voice and consent.

The Pacifica Mamas is a collective of Pacific Island artists based at the Pacifica Arts Centre in West Auckland (Waitakere Pacific Arts Cultural Centre, 2014). The group's founding members immigrated to New Zealand with the dream of a better life, bringing skills, talents and a passion for the arts and culture of their Pacific homelands. The Mamas collective relies on its physical presence at local events and community activities plus its website to promote its purpose. We anticipate that working with the group to share specific aspects of its "reason for being" with other audiences outside of its normal domain will enhance its current exposure to Pacific communities and beyond.

A key issue for the Mamas is sustainability. In order to function on an ongoing basis the organisation needs to justify its existence to funders and other financial stakeholders in the face of fierce competition. The global market for cultural products thrives on competitive advantage achieved through cost effectiveness, high responsiveness and premium quality that are achieved by superior management systems and sophisticated commercial infrastructures. So how can The Mamas, micro-entrepreneurs and producers of traditional arts and crafts, compete in this environment? Can they embrace digital technologies to communicate their efforts to preserve their cultural heritage with outsiders, insiders, others? Who can and/or should create and communicate the unique Mamas' stories? We aim to explore with them innovative ways to respond to these challenges, adding value to the abundance of cultural capital they possess.

One methodology that has become increasingly popular with Pacific communities is Participatory Video (PV), an approach developed from Participatory Action Research (Hurtig, 2008, Lyons and Chipperfield, 2000). Participatory Video utilises digital media to empower communities through story telling. Rather than making a video about the community, the community is taught how to make the video themselves and in

collaboration with the research team to tell their own story. In 2013, The Pacifica Mamas explored the technique with researchers from our institute who aimed to assess how PV can be transferred to Pacific community groups and become an effective dialogic tool for their use, to co-create and self-produce their own stories for wider dissemination, and as a tool of reflection on their own experiences as a group and Pacific migrants. Prior to the PV project, The Mamas were involved in a range of activities such as exhibitions, small-scale educational endeavours and other community participation. Keen micro-entrepreneurs, they wanted to build on existing capabilities and explore new ways to grow their customer base. Hence the aim of the research was to test the PV model and its effectiveness in communicating The Mamas voice.

A key finding of the study was that The Pacific Mamas adapted readily to the PV model; the incorporation of this approach into The Mamas' existing practices of video, pre and post-production was effective immediately. This has added value to their aim of improving their online presence with their own digital content as well as reinvigorating the promotion and marketing of The Mamas' cultural products and organisational services. Our next step is building a story with them for the documentary project, and in the process bringing together The Mamas, staff and students to plan and create the content.

“Te Punanga Haumarū” – Banishing Bullying Together

Banishing Bullying Together (BBT), a drama group within a broader community-focused set of cultural change initiatives under the auspices of Violence Free Waitakere (Violence Free Waitakere, 2014) in West Auckland, a not-for-profit organisation which is described broadly as a “community resilience programme” by its CEO, Elaine Dyer (Personal communication, 29 April 2014). VFW is “using a youth collaborative Performance Arts competition/event as a medium for anti-bullying solution based storytelling that will also include aspects of cyber bullying prevention” (Violence Free Waitakere, 2014). The documentary project is very much desired by VFW as a potentially powerful tool in its mission to increase community awareness of bullying as an issue and to mobilise – through young people and their families – commitment to change. Filming has required a mix of organisational consent, family consent, and

participants' agreement for digital content they may appear in to be used by the educational institute's staff and students to edit and produce the programme.

The documentary project crew is joining the youth performance arts group as they audition, create anti-bullying scenarios, build the narratives, map out roles and dialogues, workshop, and finally perform the scenarios at the local school during assembly or at a Parent-Teacher evening. Filming may involve volunteer participants in briefly talking about how they feel it is going, how they feel about performing, what they are getting out of it, and will almost certainly centre on the experience of one of the drama tutors who has come through adversity to find his own voice and story. His performance mentoring work involves helping others to find theirs.

Conclusion

We are keenly aware that we have stepped into a complex series of opportunities in this layered participatory production and research project that require us to understand and respond to participation culture as it plays out in research and practice in quite different ways. In each story for seven community projects we need to customise an appropriate approach where the ideal is to hand over the tools entirely but the constraints of resources, programme / media format and the needs of different stakeholders including minors, students and not-for-profit organisational agendas mean that participation and voice will need to be negotiated constructs. To “the spaces between” – our metaphor for the relational aspect of what is required to facilitate social goals in communities – we bring a range of skills in communication, content production, facilitation of voice and story, networks of community stakeholders, research, and the energies and creative impulses of students. In bringing diversity of perspective and knowledge to the task, this project aims to give form and substance to those spaces through a deeper understanding of communication infrastructure and how media may be harnessed to create a richer community storytelling network.

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