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Her Story: Supporting Women Visual Storytellers in Nepal
(Submitted by Surath Giri, Onion Films Nepal)

Since 2013, Onion Films Nepal, has been conducting workshops that teach young people the basics of filmmaking and visual communication. Since these workshops began, there has been a noticeable underrepresentation of women at the workshops. We as an organization see visual media as the most powerful medium of communication today, and were discouraged to see only a few women utilizing the workshops. After this realization, we began looking for ways to encourage more women to become filmmakers and give them access to the resources they need.

Fortunately, an opportunity arose in 2017 that helped us encourage women to participate in a filmmaking workshop free of charge. The U.S. Department of State, in collaboration with World Learning, awarded a small grant to Onion Films Nepal to conduct a women-only moviemaking workshop. To our surprise, we received over 150 applications for the workshop! The women were between the ages of 16 and 30 years old and came from different socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds. In the end, 22 applicants were accepted based on their demonstrated interest and the story idea they had pitched.

In May 2017, with the help of our colleagues, we organized a weeklong workshop where we taught participants all the basics of moviemaking such as script writing, cinematography, editing, direction, and production control. Then, we asked each of the participants to pitch their story idea for a short movie or documentary to the entire group. The women were then asked to select six ideas and work in groups to produce the short movies or documentaries.

The women made three short movies on menstrual taboo, prostitution, and female feticide; and three short documentaries on the forceful disappearance of people during the Nepalese Civil War, a young female politician, and a rural woman who overcame great odds to be a leader in her village. Over 400 people attended the screening of these short movies and documentaries. The audience members at the screening were so impressed that they gave a standing ovation to the young filmmakers.

The short movies and documentaries are now being used by various non-profits to promote women’s rights across Nepal. We are very happy to see the continued impact the workshop is having throughout Nepal, but what makes us happiest is seeing the flame that has been ignited in these young filmmakers. Six of them are already working on their second or third movies and I have been receiving dozens of inquiries on when the next such workshop is happening. When we see these responses, we know a movement is in the making! A movement that will give women in Nepal the agency and resources they need to tell their stories to the world.

A short documentary about the workshop with testimonials from some of the young women can be seen here: https://vimeo.com/227715736/3c9dd11962

Photo: One of the filmmakers in action. Courtesy of Onion Films Nepal.
Illustrating the Intersections of Marginalization and Oppression

How do you explain “intersectionality” and how do you tell the story of its’ impact? In a recent article in Bustle, Oxfam’s director of policy and research, Gawain Kripke, noted that “The Sustainable Development Goals set out very clearly that nobody should be left behind. I don’t think that’s feasible to do without taking an intersectional approach, because if you deal with people in blocs, as categories, I think you’ll be inherently missing the nuances and intersections of marginalization and oppression.”

We agree that understanding intersectional identities is key to designing inclusion sensitive programs. The graphic above, The Education Inequality Tree, from a 2010 UNESCO Education for All Global Monitoring Report, illustrates the impact of intersecting identities that privilege some identities (i.e., rich rural boys with an average of 10 years of education) while compounding the marginalization of others (poor, rural, Hauza girls with an average of 3 months). This disaggregated data is valuable for ensuring that program design in sensitive and responsive to differences.

Do you have data or stories to share that illustrate how an individual’s multiple identities can compound to result in more or diminished power and participation? Please let us know!

Email: TAAP@worldlearning.org.

New Smartphone App Provides Guidance on Inclusive Emergency Response

A new smartphone app, the Humanitarian Hands-on Tool (HHoT), provides practical step-by-step guidance on how to implement an inclusive emergency response. The easy to use and fully accessible application, launched by CBM, an international Christian development organization committed to improving the quality of life of people with disabilities in the poorest communities of the world, explains the basic 'how-to' details in simple language and images for all humanitarian based organizations and institutions that work towards leaving no-one behind. This web-based tool and downloadable mobile app complements CBM's core value of considering accessibility as a high priority and its mandate to achieve minimum standards and practices. This corroborates CBM's approach of “Design for All”, which aims to enable all people to have equal opportunities to participate in every aspect of society.

“This comes at a pivotal time in our history as the world is witnessing an incessant series of natural disasters. Often, in emergency situations, people with disabilities tend to be among those who are worst affected because of pre-existing poverty; inaccessibility of early warning messages, search and rescue plans, evacuation plans and emergency shelters; loss and damage of assistive devices; disruption of support networks; etc. Unfortunately, people with disabilities and their representative organizations are rarely consulted at any stage of the emergency cycle, from Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) through preparedness to emergency response, recovery and building back better. It is hard to see full and sustainable recovery and inclusion without the input of people with disability.”

CBM emphasizes in its approach and philosophy that accessibility should be achieved through a Design for All process and, where appropriate and necessary, disability-specific measures. It sees inclusion in the context of disability and development and recognizes that “inclusion” equals
“accessibility” and applies to social, cultural, intellectual and environmental conditions. CBM encourages its partner organizations and other cooperating stakeholders to adopt and adhere to the Design for All approach in their respective efforts. We applaud CBM’s continued commitment to disability inclusive development!


Moving Beyond LGBTQI Identity Frameworks
(Submitted by Aydan Greattrick, CTDC)

Since 2013, the Centre for Transnational Development and Collaboration (CTDC) has been conducting research into sexuality and gender in the Middle East and North Africa. This research, which was compiled into a report titled “Conceptualizing Sexuality in the MENA Region: Breaking LGBTQI Categories”, documents how LGBTQI mainstreaming in development and humanitarian work may be limiting the potential for more collaborative, nuanced advocacy work. This is because many peoples who face sexual and gender related discrimination may not feel comfortable with or do not recognize LGBTQI categories as a true articulation of their experiences or identities. Like LGBTQI people, these non-normative groups are discriminated against because they break gender and sexual norms, yet are often excluded from well-intentioned efforts to advocate for their rights.
As such, and in collaboration with our regional partners, CTDC has instead pioneered a Sexual Practice and Gender Performance (SPGP) framework which aims to advocate for sexual and gender rights in a way that does not rely on the narrow categories of LGBTQI identities. This framework conceptualizes sexual practice, rather than sexual identity, as a more inclusive way of advocating for sexual and gender rights whilst also creating the space for activists and groups from the region to seek support regardless of whether or not they identify as LGBTQI. For example, a woman who has sex outside of marriage can often be persecuted on the same grounds as an individual who engages in same-sex relations. Focusing on this will encourage practitioners to identify commonalities in experiences of persecution which are often excluded by a pure focus on identities, creating a more collaborative environment between rights groups and activists.

“Approaching sexual rights through identities alone can narrow the scope and impact of work in the Middle East and North Africa. This is because, while identities or performance remain an important factor in determining access, agency and discrimination experienced by individuals, sexual practice is also significant, shaping the opportunities open to a person whether or not they identify as LGBTQI. The SPGP framework is therefore designed to ensure that work with sexual minorities can reach out to marginalized communities confronting persecution because of their non-normative sexual practices, but who do not identify as LGBTQI. This also creates new opportunities for agency and community engagement, creating spaces for more particular expressions of sexual identity than that offered by Western LGBTQI frameworks alone.”

Photo: A sign that reads “Homosexuality exists, get used to it” at the 2013 Pride march in Istanbul, Turkey. Courtesy of the Centre for Transnational Development and Collaboration.

This Week’s TAAP Staff Picks:
1. Check out MTV’s Look Different campaign which “helps you to contextualize the current threats to equality, empower you to rebel against injustice, and show you how to protect yourself from hate.” The site aims to give youth the tools and the forum to discuss hidden racial, gender and LGBT inequality in society.

2. Basila and the Street Crew: A new comic book series in Pakistan is working to destigmatize the transgender community. “Basila and the Street Crew” focuses on a young woman who is raised by a transgender woman. The creators recognize that "[c]hange in society can't come from just one side. Also, we can't change the mindset of the adults now, they're settled in their ways. But we can pave the way for the children and the youth that are in schools and institutes."

3. Celebrating International Week of the Deaf (IDW): In honor of IDW, World Learning’s LEAD-Mongolia Fellows posted a series of videos on Facebook and Youtube. Check it out!


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Got Inclusion?

We want to hear from you! Please share your inclusion activities, success stories, upcoming events, and intriguing resources. Send to TAAP@worldlearning.org.

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