



First Steps in Film-Making

'Participatory arts for health improvement in North East India: Documentary enquiry by Naga youth into the role of civil society organisations' is a Changing the story ECR grant funded project that aims to document the innovative practices of civil society organisations (CSO) for youth engagement and health improvement in post-conflict Nagaland. Here, Benrilo Shitiri from the Kohima Institute tell us about their work in Nagaland as part of the Changing the Story team.



The Changing the Story team, TKI staff and workshop participants.

On 15th April, 2019, The Kohima Institute (TKI), in Kohima Village, Nagaland, was abuzz with excitement because this was the day of our very first 'Changing the Story' (CTS) workshop. The preparation period had been hectic and full of anticipation. There had been lots to do: invitations to send out, phone calls to make, programmes to print, delegate packs to assemble, equipment to test, chairs to arrange and much more, but now the day had arrived.

The theme of the workshop was "Health and Youth in Post-Conflict Nagaland". You'll know about the CTS initiative and how it is reaching out to young people in conflict areas, but I guess the particular projects in different parts of the world each have their own take on it. At TKI, we are trying to understand how Civil Service Organization's (CSOs), Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and policymakers use the arts to influence (interact with) young people in Nagaland who may be directly or indirectly affected by conflict. We will express our findings in the form of three documentary films.

It is impossible to do justice to the event without first introducing the workshop leaders: Principal Investigator Dr Amrit Virk of the University of Leeds University, TKI director Dr. Michael Heneise, Mr. Piyush Roy, a renowned film-maker, critic, author, editor, curator and scholar from Jain University, Mr. Tiakumzuk Aier, Director of film-company Dreams Unlimited, and Ms. Merenzungla, Assistant and Script Writer at Dreams Unlimited. This talented line-up made the workshop interesting and accessible to all participants. They guided and taught us and made the impossible possible. I believe that, like me, all the staff at TKI and especially the three members of



the CTS team, were thanking their good fortune for an opportunity to meet and be guided by such eminent people.

Health and Youth in Post-Conflict Nagaland workshop with Dr. Amrit Virk, Dr. Piyush Roy, Dreams Unlimited Tiakumzuk Aier and Meren, TKI HR Ruokuonuo Yhome, Director Michael Heneise and CTS team- Achabu, Keduo and Benrilo.

At the workshop different approaches to documentary-making were discussed, captivating films were screened and an extensive discussion on the project took place. The three CTS team members each selected a topic for their documentary: Substance Abuse, Mental Health and Unemployment, topics among the most serious social issues faced by young people in Nagaland today. In addition to this, we were given practical lessons on videography, lighting and interviewing by Dreams Unlimited and at the end of the programme we made a short video with their assistance. To be able to learn so much in such a short space of time would have been impossible without their excellent guidance.

It would be wrong for me to end this without mentioning the highly informative seminar which took place on the second day of the workshop. On this occasion, we were introduced to many distinguished organizations who were actively working with the youth of Nagaland and through them, we gained an insight into many pressing social issues. Space does not permit a detailed description of all the work they are doing but examples included: an organization working to inculcate the Morung education system with modern education and tradition such as songs and basket making to help young people connect with their roots, as well as organizations working with sex workers, around substance misuse, and with young people that are HIV positive, to provide them with an economic livelihood so that they can live with new found courage. It was humbling to hear what was being achieved by such dedicated people working in challenging and cash-strapped circumstances and I know that, like me, everyone in the room was deeply inspired by their stories and experiences.



Lesson on videomaking with Dreams Unlimited and the CTS team.

Everyone agreed that the event had been a huge success. Creativity had been unleashed and important connections made. Special thanks are reserved for our Director, Dr Michael Heneise, Dr Amrit Virk, Piyush Roy, Dreams Unlimited and the CSO Nagaland. For me well, words cannot describe how incredible it was to be part of such an exciting programme.