



Case Study ‘The Happiness project: Reflecting on my journey’



By Benrilo Shitiri, Changing the Story filmmaker, Nagaland.

It's been one year after joining The Kohima Institute. To talk of my experience during this short span of time I think I am facing one of the most difficult tasks since it's quite impossible to phrase or put in a word. I am afraid pages will not permit me nor the time because it's a year of memories, a place where I learned the best and no matter what words I use I know it will still be unjustifiable. I will try my best to share my experience which I name my happiness project because it was truly one of the happiest project's I have worked on. It transformed me beyond what I anticipated. Looking back I am proud to say that I have come a long way in every field possible. I have gained new skills, infinite learning and personal development, which I feel immense pride to share with you.

During my initial period I was in dilemma that I would not be able to handle the work. I was a novice when I started my work. I have no experience in the world of filming but it was something I found fascinating something which I admired but never thought I would be doing one day. Then it all changed and my entire world shifted. I was so engrossed by it thanks to the excellent guidance I received from the Director of The Kohima Institute, Dr Michael Heneise, Principal Investigator of Changing the Story, Dr Amrit Virk, film-maker, critic,

author, editor, curator and scholar from Jain University, Dr Piyush Roy, local film production Dreams Unlimited, our professional trainer, Mr. Richa from Richa Production and all the staff members, team members and others who took part directly or indirectly on my journey, whom made the impossible possible.

Besides learning many new things which are immeasurable I also met many wonderful individuals who played a huge part in my life. Traveling around the whole of Kohima and Dimapur to find organizations and subject's to film was the most exciting. The topic I settled on was substance abuse. The reason behind (my choice) was my curiosity to understand the reason why and how people become a victim of addiction and the role of CSOs in tackling this issue. To understand this I studied and met many interesting individuals who shared their life stories of how they became a victim of addiction. It's a huge privilege to hear and witness their stories. One of the most challenging tasks I encountered during filming was for them (interviewees) to open up (to me) but after gaining their trust I was able to, which for me was my most successful achievement. There were some struggles and challenges here and there but the fruit of it was worth so much that it feels unworthy to mention here.

Other interesting events and occasions include the (filmmaking) workshop and the film screening. I have written a lengthy detail on the (filmmaking) workshop so [here](#) I will only give a brief glimpse of our film screening day. It took place in the month of December all the participants, CSOs and other influential person attended on this day. The event was a huge success. We got plenty of feedback and suggestions which provided us with insights on where we are lacking. The suggestions and input helped us a lot and gave us an idea of where to go in the future. If I have to sum up the overall event (I would) say that it was very memorable, very insightful, very well organized and planned, very engaging and there was so much to take in. Very interestingly, I found that many of the audience failed to grasp our main priority which is the use of Art by CSO's. All their feedback was out of context when it comes to Art. This made me realized that Art is foreign to us and it will be very interesting to look upon in the future.

Even though the Changing the Story project was completely new and challenging the learning I received is immense. The connection I made along my journey most memorable and joyous. Looking back I am happy to conquer so much in one year, a milestone which will guide me for the days to come.

Watch 'My Story on Addiction on Addiction and Recovery' below:

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