



Adobe Youth Voices: Young Artists Respond to Climate Change and Cultural Conflict



Report Prepared by TakingITGlobal for Adobe Youth Voices
Dates of Project: August 2007 – September 2008

<http://tigweb.org/contest/youthvoices/>

Executive Summary

In the fall of 2007 TakingITGlobal, with the support of Adobe Youth Voices, offered capacity-building workshops to underserved youth in 10 different countries: Argentina, Brazil, China, Canada, Kenya, Mali, Russia, Sweden, Egypt, and South Africa. These workshops aimed to familiarize the youth participants with digital image editing using Adobe Elements 6.0 software, as they created images to communicate their perspective on two key issues: Climate Change and Culture & Identity.

The themes of Climate Change and Culture & Identity were chosen because they are both global issues, relevant to youth everywhere, and also because youth involvement in the dialogue and solutions related to them is prominent. All over the world youth have adopted Climate Change as their issue to champion, as it will be younger generations most affected by the consequences. Youth are taking part in forming solutions to this problem in their local communities and they are also calling on global leaders to take action. Similarly, youth play a major role in influencing and reinforcing Culture & Identity, but also, as a generation more exposed to cultural diversity, youth today are more open, accepting and embracing of cultural differences.



33% of respondents had heard of TakingITGlobal before participating in the workshop, while for 67% of respondents the workshop was the first contact they had with TIG.

In addition to the workshops TakingITGlobal hosted a contest online in our online Global Gallery, which allowed TIG members from all over the world to submit their artwork alongside the artwork produced by youth in the workshops. The TakingITGlobal Online platform was used to leverage the Youth Voices Project and bring it to a global audience, making the final submissions representative of a truly global youth perspective on Climate Change and Culture & Identity.

The workshops began in November 2007 and finished in June 2008, while the online global contest began in the Global Gallery on January 30 2008 and closed on May 28 2008, at which point all TakingITGlobal members were eligible to vote for the winners from May 28 – June 11 2008. In total there were **145** individual submissions to the Youth Voices Contest, 72 related to Climate Change, and **73** to Culture & Identity, **53** of these submissions were produced by TIG members who did not participate directly in the workshops. A prize package was given to the top 3 winners as voted on by TakingITGlobal members in both the Climate Change and Culture & Identity category. The prize package included Adobe Elements 6.0, as well as a TakingITGlobal t-shirt and other TIG materials.



At the beginning of August 2008 a TIG Magazine publication, titled 'Culture, Identity and Climate Change', was designed and produced using the art submissions from the Youth Voices Contest, which included artwork produced by youth who participated in the workshops. It also included creative writing on the topics of Climate Change and Culture & Identity from TakingITGlobal's online magazine Panorama. 500 copies of the magazine were distributed to an international gathering of young leaders at the closing ceremony of the 4th World Youth Congress, held in Québec City on August 21st 2008. An additional 500 copies of the magazine have been printed and will be distributed in São Paulo, Brazil in May 2009 at a youth art exhibit coordinated by TakingITGlobal. Copies were also sent to all participating organizations.

Project Goals

Goal 1: To empower youth in underserved communities to create with purpose, through artistic creations including digital art, photo journalism, animations, and multimedia projects.

Related Activity: TakingITGlobal ran workshops in 7 of the 10 proposed countries, including: Argentina, China, Egypt, Kenya, Mali, South Africa, and Russia. In each of these countries Coordinators hired by TakingITGlobal focused on recruiting underserved youth to participate in workshops whose purpose was to give each participant the opportunity to create a digital image, using Adobe Elements 6.0, which communicated their perspective on the themes of Climate Change and Culture & Identity.

"I can affirm that we all learnt a great lesson, being marginalized does not mean that one cannot learn, as long as there are materials and dissemination of knowledge willingly, anyone can learn new things."

—Patricia Sudi, Youth Voices Kenya Coordinator.

Goal 2: Provide youth with the technology tools to make a positive impact in their communities and around the world.

Related Activity: Each workshop included a basic introduction to Adobe Elements 6.0 and time for participants to create digital images using the software. The majority of participants in the workshops did not have previous experience using Adobe software, yet over 80% of respondents 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that the image they created during the workshop communicated their perspective on the topic at hand. This demonstrates that despite a lack of previous experience with Adobe software, participants were able to gain new skills during the workshop which allowed them to create a digital image confidently.

Goal 3: To leverage these breakthrough learning experiences to foster cross-cultural dialogue and understanding, with a special emphasis on outreach to marginalized and underserved youth.

Related Activity: Each workshop included time for discussion of the theme, and how it is relevant to the local community in which the workshop took place, as well as how it is relevant on a global scale. Approximately **80%** of respondents ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ that the workshop had given them the opportunity for cultural exchange with the other participants. Beyond the workshops, the online global contest and the distribution of the TIG Magazine to an international audience at the 4th World Youth Congress in August 2008, took this exchange beyond just the workshop participants and allowed for the potential exposure of all TakingITGlobal members and all attendees of the World Youth Congress to the creative dialogue on these issues.



Discussion during the Youth Voices workshop in Cairo, Egypt.

Workshop coordinators made special efforts to reach out to underserved youths in the communities in which they work, in South Africa a group of 10 – 13 year old children from the infamous area of Soweto were recruited and proved very enthusiastic participants, wanting to spend more time ‘perfecting’ their knowledge of the software before moving on to creating their images. In Nairobi, Kenya the majority of workshop participants hailed from the Huruma area, which was badly affected by the post-election violence, and listed among their reasons for attending familiarizing themselves with Adobe software and networking with other participants.



Tsunami, Tatiana, Moscow



Element de culture, Mahamadou, Bamako



Climate Change, Riham, Cairo

“During the discussion of culture, conflict and unity, there was a special focus in this workshop, because there were participants from Sudan, Iraq and different places in Egypt, so there were many cultures, every one of the participants was very interested to know about the others’ cultures.”

–Waleed Sorour, Youth Voices Egypt Coordinator.

Project Activities

Activity #1: Produce and Distribute Workshop materials Development and distribution of the materials took place from September 2007 – November 2007.

The Youth Voices Coordinator compiled and distributed the necessary workshop materials to all Youth Voices Country Coordinators, with members of TakingITGlobal's Multilingual Team providing translation for the workshops run in French, Arabic, Russian, Spanish and Portuguese.



1. Adobe Youth Voices Workshop – Facilitators Guide

The Facilitators Guide provided an overview of the Adobe Youth Voices Initiative, as well as the role of TakingITGlobal within the Youth Voices Project and the ideal role of partner organizations, to aid the Coordinators in choosing host organizations that would most benefit the project. There was also a checklist of various materials and documents Facilitators would need for running the workshops. The Guide provided a basic framework for running the workshops, including suggested Discussion Questions to get participants thinking about the topics of Climate Change and Culture & Identity, and follow-up questions to help participants reflect on the workshops and the art they created.

2. Adobe Youth Voices Power Point Presentation

The PowerPoint Presentation introduced participants to the Adobe Youth Voices initiative, TakingITGlobal, the Global Gallery, and the purpose of the workshop, as well as a discussion on the power of art and why it is a useful way to communicate with others.

3. Adobe Youth Voices Feedback Form

The feedback forms were voluntarily completed by workshop participants at the end of each workshop. It included questions regarding the workshop experience as a whole, as well as focusing on specific project goals, such as whether the workshops were an opportunity to improve on computer skills and participate in cross-cultural exchange with other youth.

4. Adobe Elements 6.0 Guide

A basic overview of the software was created for Facilitators to guide participants through the functionality and specific tools which would be most useful to them during the creation of their digital image.

Challenges:

The coordinator developing the workshop materials did not have previous experience with Adobe Elements 6.0, but through experience with Photoshop and helpful Adobe online tutorials, was able to put together a basic overview of the software.

Outcomes:

All materials were ready for Country Coordinators by the end of September, allowing them to focus on establishing partner and host organizations for their workshops and recruiting appropriate participants.

“The images created by the participants looked at the elements that safeguard and better our natural and man-made environment, as well as the elements that bring about the destruction of the natural environment. They wanted to bring out the sadness and beauty of the subject matter in the composition of the image.” –Marie-Espérance Cerda, Youth Voices Mali Coordinator

Activity #2: Workshops on Climate Change and Culture & Identity
November 2007 – June 2008.

Through partnerships formed with organizations in each community TakingITGlobal ran workshops in 7 countries, including: Argentina, China, Egypt, Kenya, Mali, South Africa, and Russia. Where possible the workshops included guest facilitator with significant experience in graphic design to aid participants in using the software to create their images.



In each workshop participants:

1. Learned about the Adobe Youth Voices initiative, TakingITGlobal and the Global Gallery, and were given an overview of what the Youth Voices Project aimed to achieve.
2. Discussed the two themes of Climate Change and Culture & Identity – both in a local and global context.
3. Were given a basic training on Adobe Elements 6.0 software
4. Created digital images that communicated their perspective on the two workshop themes.
5. Created a TakingITGlobal profile and submitted their finished image to the online Youth Voices Contest.

Location	Coordinator	Host Organization	Workshop Dates	Collections
Lomas de Zamora, Argentina	Damian Profeta	La Casita de los niños	April 19 & 20, April 27 & May 3 2008	http://www.tigurl.org/ayv-arg http://www.tigurl.org/ayv-arg2
Beijing, China	Wu Yang	Beijing Jiaotong University	March 4 & 15 2008	http://www.tigurl.org/ayv-ch
Cairo, Egypt	Waleed Sorour	Human Development Foundation	January 31 & February 7 2008	http://www.tigurl.org/ayv-egy http://www.tigurl.org/ayv-egy2
Nairobi, Kenya	Patricia Sudi	Slumcode	August 30, September 7 2007, & February 8 2008	http://www.tigurl.org/ayv-ken
Moscow, Russia	Tatiana Parfyonova	The International College of Economics and Finance, Moscow	November 23 & 30 2007	http://www.tigurl.org/ayv-rus http://www.tigurl.org/ayv-rus2
Johannesberg, South Africa	Joe Cressy	Civics House	December 8 & 9 2007	http://www.tigurl.org/ayv-sa http://www.tigurl.org/ayv-sa2
Bamako, Mali	Marie-Esperance Cerda	Soleil d’Afrique	June 28 & 29 2008	http://www.tigurl.org/ayv-ma http://www.tigurl.org/ayv-ma2

Challenges:

- Locating host organizations with the necessary computer/internet facilities and availability was difficult in certain communities
- Not all the Country Coordinators had previous experience with Adobe software making it more challenging for them to guide workshop participants
- Recruiting participants with the basic computer literacy required was sometimes difficult in certain communities

"It was clear that despite limited previous exposure to computers the kids were able to use the software at a basic level to express themselves."

-Joe Cressy, Youth Voices
South Africa Coordinator

Outcomes:

- A total of **107** youth were able to directly participate in the workshops
- **43%** of respondents 'Strongly Agreed' with the statement that "Through my participation and contribution to this workshop I feel that I have the ability to effect change in my community." and 32% of respondents 'Agreed'
- **52%** of respondents 'Agreed' that the workshop had made them feel more confident about their computer skills and 32% 'Strongly Agreed'
- **66%** of respondents 'Agreed' with the statement that "Using Photoshop Elements software throughout the workshop has improved my technical capabilities."



Activity #3: Youth Voices Contest in the Global Gallery

January 30 2008 – May 28 2008

Two separate contest collections were created within TakingITGlobal's online Global Gallery, one for the theme of Climate Change and one for the theme of Culture & Identity. The contest was promoted through a Spotlight on TakingITGlobal's homepage that received 1,989 hits, the TakingITGlobal monthly Dispatch which is sent to approximately 200,000 youth worldwide in 7 different languages, and in an e-mail to TakingITGlobal's 'Inspire Group', a group of TIG members interested in creative opportunities which has 1,592 members.



A Youth Voices project page was specially designed and built by TakingITGlobal's in-house tech team: <http://takingitglobal.org/contest/youthvoices/> Traffic from the Spotlight on TakingITGlobal's main page was directed to this special project page. 145 accepted submissions were received for the contest in total.

Challenges:

Delays with several workshops meant that the contest deadline had to be pushed back several times in order to allow workshop participants to have their images included in the contest.

Outcomes:

We received a large response to the online contest, with 145 submissions being approved and added to the contest collection. 4 winners were chosen through voting by TIG members from submissions to the Climate Change collection, 3 youth from Russia and 1 from Egypt, and 3 winners were chosen from the Culture & Identity collection, 1 from Pakistan, 1 from Egypt and 1 from Morocco.

Activity #4: TIG Magazine 'Culture, Identity and Climate Change'

August 2008



In August 2008 the TIG Magazine 'Culture, Identity & Climate Change' was designed and put together at the TakingITGlobal office in Toronto, then printed and distributed to approximately 500 youth delegates in Québec City at the closing ceremonies of the 4th World Youth Congress on August 21 2008. The magazine included the best selections from the various workshops as well as the submissions from TakingITGlobal members who participated solely through the online contest. Youth writing on Climate Change and Culture & Identity in English, Portuguese, Arabic, French, and Spanish was identified by TakingITGlobal Editors in each language, and were included to complement the images produced for the project.

Obstacles:

Delays with both the workshops, and the deadline for the online contest, also pushed back the production of the TIG Magazine.

Outcomes:

The TIG Magazine 'Culture, Identity & Climate Change' was distributed to all Country Coordinators, to be shared with organizations that hosted the workshops, as well as participants in the workshops themselves. Distribution at the WYC ensures that these examples of creative youth expression on Climate Change and Culture & Identity will also be shared with youth leaders and activists worldwide. The availability of the magazine as a free download on the TakingITGlobal online community means it is available to an even wider audience of youth, organizations and educators who frequent the TakingITGlobal Online Community.

<http://www.tigweb.org/express/magazine/>

Results

Quantitative:

- **107** youth participants in workshops
- **7** partnerships formed with local organizations for the project
- **145** submissions were made to the online Youth Voices Contest
- **7,112** approximate number of youth directly reached [Including youth who submitted to the contest, participated in the workshops, received a copy of the magazine, or clicked to learn more about the project]
- **4,729** approximate number of individual visitors to Youth Voices online project and collection pages

Qualitative:

- Youth participants were eager to learn new skills and contribute to the Youth Voices Project - Approximately **90%** of respondents 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that the workshops were a positive experience
- Youth participants in 7 different countries were able to discuss and recognize the importance of Climate Change and Culture & Identity in their local communities – **90%** of respondents 'agreed' or 'strongly' agreed that they had learned something new about one of the themes by participating in the workshops.
- New submissions to the Global Gallery on relevant global issues were generated through the workshops and contest
- The final products, including the Contest Collections and TIG Magazine, illustrate the similarities and differences in youth perspectives on the topics of Climate Change and Culture & Identity

“During the workshop we focused on the problems of intercultural communication, and thought of stereotypes that people of other cultures have towards Russians, as well as discussing symbols that can be attributed to Russian culture.” –Tatiana Parfyonova, Youth Voices Russia Coordinator.



Reflections and Lessons Learned

- Many participants mentioned the length of time for the workshop as a difficulty in their feedback forms. The minimum amount of time suggested per workshop was 3 hours, and all workshops took the minimum amount of time or more, depending on the availability of computers and participants. However since the majority of workshop participants had no previous experience with Adobe software, they not only needed more time to familiarize themselves to the point that they could create an image, but they wanted to spend more time perfecting their skills with the program.
 - In the future it would be beneficial to target organizations who have workshop space available for longer periods of time – perhaps a week – to give participants the maximum amount of time with the software.
- While each of the coordinators had experience with technology and youth development, not all coordinators had a high level of proficiency in the Adobe software utilized for the project. This led to coordinators bringing in additional external expertise through a co-facilitator or trainer. This however, was not always possible or feasible and in some cases, resulted in less in-depth knowledge on the tools being explored during the workshops.
 - As a recommendation for the future, it is recommended to ensure that an expert on the software tools is identified locally, or a pre-training can take place with workshop coordinators.
- Running workshops in ten different countries presented a whole host of logistical problems, ranging from language barriers to lack of infrastructure necessary to run the workshops, as well as unforeseen problems like the post-election violence in Kenya and an internet outage in Egypt.
 - For future projects, it would be beneficial to have a series of workshops within the same country in order to provide a more in-depth experience and greater outreach within identified communities, leveraging the up-front investment of the software donation and coordinator preparation. This would also allow coordination efforts to focus more on the workshops themselves and less time sorting out logistical hurdles.
- While the project was meant to focus primarily on underserved youth, in order to participate youth needed to have a basic understanding of computers and familiarity with the internet, and many truly underserved youth would not have even this most fundamental experience.
 - The project did reach youth in what can be referred to as underserved communities, but working with digital image manipulation is a fairly complex project for truly marginalized youth.



Conclusions and Next Steps

TakingITGlobal would like to sincerely thank the team at Adobe Youth Voices for their support of this creative digital media and learning initiative that has helped to strengthen and showcase youth voices from around the world. The project allowed a core group of youth leaders to both develop and extend their knowledge and skills through organizing local training sessions and utilizing Adobe software. The peer-to-peer training approach was the foundation for the project and allowed for a diverse implementation across regions, generating new ideas and creations.



This project helped to catalyze reflection and expression on critical issues affecting youth and the culmination of images reflected in the Global Gallery provides an incredible glimpse into the hopes and concerns of youth from around the world. Having an opportunity to produce and distribute a printed TIG Magazine publication at the 4th World Youth Congress was a highlight of the project as it extended the audience and interest in both the process along with sparking further interest in the issues and the program. Moving into 2009, we are very interested in the possibility of implementing an adapted version of the program based on lessons learned.

One of the unexpected outcomes from the project was the range of new insights generated that have influenced the development of a redesigned and upgraded version of TakingITGlobal's online Global Gallery, which is scheduled to launch in early 2009! Moving forward, TakingITGlobal hopes to continue to collaborate with Adobe Youth Voices on future programs and initiatives, and possibly as a partner in the new Global Gallery, an online exhibition space with over 17,000 creative expressions!

Special Thanks to our Project Team at TakingITGlobal

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