

Child and youth video training workshops: Art and storytelling for social change

Since 2002, *The One Minutes Jr.* (TOMjr) Foundation has organized innovative workshops giving children and young people the empowering opportunity to make their voices heard and promote social change. Through creation of 60-second videos in a collaborative environment, young people share their ideas, dreams, anxieties and perspectives on their future. This unique arts-based initiative has trained over 4,000 youngsters from more than 100 countries, working with partners ranging from UNICEF and the European Cultural Foundation to schools and refugee organizations.

The One Minutes Foundation is based in Amsterdam. It is a non-profit associated with a post-graduate arts school. Rain Barrel Communications, a New York City-based international consulting firm, is partnering with the TOMjr Foundation to offer this successful workshop model to new partners and clients.

A typical *The One Minutes Jr.* workshop brings together 15-20 young people ranging from 12 to 20 years old for five days. Participants work with 2-3 experienced video artists and facilitators for the full period. TOMjr supplies all video cameras and editing equipment.

See www.theoneminutesjr.org for exciting examples of videos produced in the workshops.

Participants are taught basic camera and directing skills, storytelling, teamwork and how to frame and think creatively about issues and visual representation. Each participant develops and produces his/her own story based on the workshop theme, which has been identified by the client that commissions the workshop. Clients also select the participants from among their own youth networks.

Issues tackled in past workshops have included health, education, violence, juvenile justice, refugees, natural disasters, HIV/AIDS, children with disabilities, climate change, water/hygiene/sanitation, children in detention and institutional care, among others. Workshop topics are tailored to the thematic priorities of sponsoring institutions, while allowing broad freedom of expression to the young filmmakers.

At the end of the workshop, each participant has produced a *One Minutes Jr.* video that is screened for all participants. Clients sponsoring the workshop receive a complete package of 15-20 videos providing an authentic overview of the problems and challenges young people are facing today, their dreams, ambitions and aspirations. Although the young filmmakers retain copyright, sponsors may request – and normally obtain – their permission to broadcast or otherwise disseminate the videos for non-commercial purposes.

The workshop closes with the premiere of the produced films at a public screening and reception. The quality of the results, in creative terms, is generally quite high. In addition, having to work closely and intensively together creates special bonds among participants, who often come from diverse ethnic, socio-economic backgrounds and include young people with disabilities.

The TOMjr model emphasizes ownership and self-esteem. The young participants visibly mature during the workshop, learning to express themselves, help one another, ask for help and focus on an angle of the issue being addressed that is most important to them. They gain a better understanding of themselves and each other, boost their self-confidence and become advocates for young people, the arts and the burning issues of the day. Many stay in touch afterwards through the TOMjr online network. Some go on to become filmmakers, artists and activists.

This growth experience, together with the technical aspects of producing thought-provoking and artistically interesting videos, is at the heart of The TOMjr model.

Depending on the thematic focus of the workshop, technical experts from the Rain Barrel Communications network provide remote or on-site technical assistance (see: www.rainbarrelcommunications.com/our-associates).

Want to sponsor a workshop or series of workshops?

We invite you to sponsor one or more workshops on themes of your choosing. We will work closely with you to tailor the workshop to meet your requirements, identify participants, obtain parental permissions, select the venue and accommodations and so forth. We will support you to leverage the resulting video package to benefit your company or organization and help you achieve your goals.

For larger organizations working in multiple cities or countries, we are especially interested in discussing sponsorship of multiple workshops over several years, aligned with your program cycles and advocacy strategies.

Cost: Clients cover all costs associated with the workshops, which are free to the young filmmakers. The cost per workshop for Rain Barrel/TOMjr averages US\$ 20,000, which includes travel, accommodations and fees for our trainers, rental of equipment, post-production and compilation of B-rolls and related expenses. In addition, sponsors are responsible for the cost of youth participants' travel and hotel accommodations, as needed.

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