

Report from Exchanges in Mostar, Novi Sad and Ljubljana

"DIVIDED GOD" INTERNATIONAL VIDEO WORKSHOP - brief report on activities realized by mid November

The project has been realized according to its scheduled plan and scope of activities:

1. The first phase was consultation phase in which the activation of web portal www.pozitiv.si/dividedgod has been accomplished. During this phase, e-communication between project team and participants, addressing the conceptual and theoretical issues of the project was very active, via forum of the portal (194 registered users). Additional co-partner organizations from all 5 countries were selected in January 2007, and the final pool of project participants (producers and workshop students and associates) consists of:

- Slovenia – KUD Pozitiv, DIC and DZMP, Krsko
- Serbia – Terra film and Playground produkcija & Centar za nove medije Kuda.org, Akademija umetnosti u Novom Sadu
- Bosnia and Herzegovina – Mladi most & Film klub, Mostar
- Germany – FilmArche Selborganisierte Filmschule Europas, Berlin and Mladi most, Berlin
- Turkey – Istanbul Bilgi University, Cultural Studies Program & Toplum Gonullureli Community Volunteers Foundation.

A preliminary meeting 1 to start off the project was held in Istanbul in February, attended by main mentor of the project Želimir Žilnik, mentor Kevin Robins, project manager Drago Pintari, his assistant Bojan Matjašević and representatives of partner groups from Istanbul Bilgi University and TGC. Preparatory meeting 2 was held in Berlin on 27 – 28th February, hosted by FilmArche, followed by meeting 3 - held in Ljubljana on 18 and 19th April, attended by leaders of all partner groups, accompanied by one member of each participating exchange group. In May, intermediate meeting 4, lasting 4 days was held in Bosnia and in Serbia, with participants traveling between the locations in Mostar and Novi Sad to determine the logistical arrangements of the Exchange to be held in July. Representatives of each group (apart from Turkish partner) took part in this final round of preparations. Preparatory meeting for the session in Berlin, was held from 8th - 11th September – two representatives of each group met there to choose the filming locations and arrange the interviews to be filmed during the exchange, as well as to set all the logistics (equipment rental, accommodation services, etc.). Notes on the agendas, discussion points and conclusions (with theoretical guidelines and summarized instructions for practical experience of field-research and the exchange itself) of all those preparatory meetings are available at the website of the project, within Bulletin Board section.

In this phase, all promotional materials were also prepared, designed and printed: booklets, posters, folders, t-shirts and caps – all with project insignia. The support of all the donors has been appropriately mentioned with official logos in the project printed materials, and on our website, in Funders&Donors section.

2. Second phase was the series of video workshops held in 4 different locations:

- Mostar (Bosnia and Herzegovina) workshop, held from 11th to 17th July
- Novi Sad (Serbia) workshop, held from 17th to 23rd July
- Ljubljana (Slovenia) workshop, held from 23rd July to 5th August
- Berlin (Germany) workshop, held from 26th October to 4th November.

Work in Mostar was concentrated on experiences of living in still divided (ethnically and religiously) city. Basic issues that were debated and set up as a platform for 4 documentaries were: how the citizens communicate among each other, what the young generation is doing to set up normality, how the political elites are still generating tensions? Participants attended lectures by journalists and historians Drago Pilsel (Croatia) and Husein Orucevic (Bosnia). Everyday courses were held in basic editing and filming, by mentor Želimir Žilnik. Public presentation was held in KUD Abrasevic.

In Novi Sad, participants continued with filming and started editing of documentaries. Lectures and discussions with new associates (Mirko Djordjevic, Zorica Kuburic and Tomislav Zigmanov, all from Serbia) were held, as well as daily courses in documentary film.

In Ljubljana, focus of work was on continued filming of video projects and editing of material – archive with 90 hours duration! Additionally to standard lectures in filmmaking, extra workshop on photography was held, resulting with exhibition of participants' work, on the final public presentation of the workshop results.

In Berlin, crews were engaged in filming several new projects as well. Public event (film screenings from the Divided God project and lectures followed by panel discussion) was held in Munzalon, co-organized by Balkan Black Box. Detailed report on Berlin part of exchange is available in Project News section of the website.

Efficiency of the group work was excellent. Group communication was additionally stimulating for experience exchange among young students, who supported each other. Cameramen, editors, sound designers, graphic designers, translators and directors, all took part in each other's projects. All videos were analyzed and discussed during the editing and test projections, resulting in further improvement of edited material. After six weeks of workshops, 16 documentaries are finished, with 140 minutes duration, which is an extraordinary result (in comparison to standard performance in similar scope projects).

3. During the project period, experts who were lecturers and mentors of the workshop, worked independently on writing series of theoretical contributions for the publication that will be printed at the end of the project. Up to now, 90% of essays is finished, and translation into English is also provided (for example: "Towards positive acceptance of religious differences" by T. Zigmanov, "Role of religion in contemporary world" by Z. Kuburic, "Political theology – Theology on national anti-myth" by D. Pilsel, "Too real to be true" by Zoran Terzic etc.). The remaining 10 % of the written material will be contributions by mentor of the project and external evaluation report – to be compiled immediately upon the finalization of the remaining phase of the project. All the mentioned essays, as well as other theoretical contributions by project associates, are available for download on project web portal, in Articles&Texts section.

Accomplishments:

The project met almost all of the priorities set in the beginning, as the following accomplishments were made:

- younger, less experienced workshop participants successfully went through the complete process of documentary filmmaking, researching quite demanding and complicated issues;
- more experienced workshop participants fulfilled highly professional tasks of finalizing videos, web portal and publications of the project;
- all participants broadened their knowledge on the role of religion in different societies, on understanding Balkan recent history and post-Yugoslav societies present problems;
- participants from five countries made friendships which will be base for their future professional collaborations (with few of the participants already arranged further exchange visits – between Slovenian and Turkish group members)..

We firmly believe that all those accomplishments of the workshop will contribute to the formation of adequate approaches and methods for intercultural communication and cooperation that would be of practical use in everyday learning situations of each participant.

Access of the public:

During the exchange part of the project we organized several public presentations, discussions and other events that also raised questions and responses from the side of wider population and media. In Mostar, public debate was publicized in local paper, and the media coverage of the event was quite satisfactory (both radio and television reports were broadcast). In Novi Sad, there were several public events (public debate, public screening of documentaries, hip-hop concert by Roma artist Muhamed Eljsani and promotion of regional youth magazine "Rez" all advertised in local newspapers "Dnevnik" and "Gradjanski list", regional agency SEECult.org and on local radio station "Radio 021", as well as via Kuda.org electronic mailing list. After the final public discussion on the theme of religion and the situation of religious institutions in Serbia, held in Crna ku a (CK13) youth cultural center in Novi Sad, series of articles was published by local and national mainstream media (including Beta news agency, RTV B92, Deutsche Welle, Gradjanski list, etc.). The comments (as reactions on the report about the project) posted by readers of B92 web site, outnumbered all other news comments published on that day! In attached press-clipping selection, we enclose also those commentaries. Two local televisions made reports on the projects and broadcast them. In Ljubljana, there were 2 public events, both announced in local newspaper. Additionally, a feature report on the project was broadcast on national television RTV Slovenia, as well as in widely read Sunday edition of main newspaper in Slovenia – "Delo".

Selection of press coverage of the project can also be downloaded from the portal, in "Media Feedback" section.

Professional benefits / lessons learnt:

First and foremost, 50 film students who took part in this project will benefit professionally from this project: for majority of them, this was the unique experience and the first chance to work together with their peers, fellow students from different countries. The experience they acquired by being involved in the project will contribute to their own formation of adequate approaches and methods for intercultural communication and cooperation that would, crucially, be of practical use in everyday learning situations.

Groups consisted of young people with different levels of professional experience. To illustrate this, we describe two cases: Mostar group incorporated 6 boys and girls who just finished high school, getting prepared to start film studies. For them, the workshop sessions were the initial working experience – they attended all instruction lectures in editing and filming, and in-the-field tasks they were given during the filming. Also, group from Turkey consisted mostly of students of cultural studies and history: for them those workshops were first direct encounter with the process of articulating video projects.

About the lessons learned, there will be an evaluation report made after all phases of the project are over. After 3 workshops, all participants filled out questionnaires in which they evaluated organization, lectures and lecturers, team spirit, communication in the group, etc. All the reports summaries are publicly available on-line at project's portal.

Next steps / prospect for the project (dissemination, diffusion, etc):

Immediate task is to continue with preparation for remaining workshop session in Istanbul, Turkey.

For the 2008, which is the Year of Intercultural Dialog, we have planned series of project results promotions: in Novi Sad and in Ljubljana – where final theoretical symposium will be held in end of Jun (to coincide with Slovenian presidency over EU Council).

Focus of both public events will primarily be on screening of all documentaries made throughout the workshop exchange in 5 cities (with approximately 20 videos).

By the final presentation (Jun), a booklet documenting the whole process - accompanied by essays written by experts involved in the process - will be finalized and printed, followed by wide distribution in all the countries of project participants (circulation of 1.500 copies will be shared between project partners from Slovenia, Serbia, Bosnia, Turkey and Germany). Documentary film in which the independent crew followed the whole one-year-long project (“Making-off DIVIDED GOD”), will be finished by the final public presentation. It will be a bonus file in DVD collection of project videos, planned to be published by February 1st 2008.

Further distribution and diffusion of booklets and dvds will be major task for all the project partners and associates, throughout 2008.

Additionally, we are proud to announce that “Divided God” project partners are invited to contribute in consultation process of making “Rainbow Paper” – report on intercultural dialogue that is being produced within “Civil-Society Platform for Intercultural Dialogue” initiative of the European Forum for the Arts and Heritage (EFAH) and the European Cultural Foundation (ECF), supported by the Network of European Foundations.