



**Children in
Communication
about Migration
(CHICAM)**

Visions Across Cultures
Migrant children using visual images to communicate

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School as an Arena for Education, Integration and Socialization

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Preface

The Project in Brief.

CHICAM was an 'action research' project funded by the European Commission (Framework 5 Programme) and co-ordinated by the Centre for the Study of Children, Youth and Media at the Institute of Education, University of London.

We set up six media clubs for refugee and migrant children (ages 10-14) in six European countries. The clubs met weekly after school hours over a year with some extra full days during school holidays. The clubs made videos and exchanged them on the internet. In each participating country, researchers and media educators employed by the project collaborated with youth workers and teachers, already working with the children. The clubs became social centres as well as a place to learn about and make media. Using the internet we established a communications network to facilitate the sharing of children's media productions, in order to generate dialogues between them.

As a research project CHICAM addressed three major aspects of structural change in contemporary European society: the increase in global migration, the uses of new communication technologies, and the specific needs of children. Through the work of the clubs it focused on the social and cultural worlds of refugee and migrant children in centres across Europe; and was mainly concerned with first generation refugees or migrants, for whom the experience of re-location is relatively recent. The children came from many different countries including Iraq, Sierra Leone, Angola, Somalia, Albania, Kosovo, Columbia, Turkey.

We investigated how these children represent and express their experiences of migration into the different host countries, and how their use of new media might enable their perspectives to inform the development of European educational and cultural policies. In the process, we were seeking to identify how particular experiences of reception, educational practice, family re-unification and community involvement may more effectively promote social inclusion and economic and cultural integration.

CHICAM was a three year project running from November 2001 to October 2004. The Centre for the Study of Children Youth and Media at the Institute of Education, London University, in London was working with:

UK	WAC Performing Arts and Media College, London.
Italy	Fondazione Centro Studi Investimenti Sociali (CENSIS), Rome.
Sweden	Centre for Research in International Migration and Ethnic Relations (CEIFO), Stockholm University, Stockholm
Germany	Department of Media Education/Media Centre, University of Ludwigsburg.
Netherlands	Institute of Media and Re/presentation, University of Utrecht. Utrecht.
Greece	Greek Council for Refugees, Athens.

The Approach we Took

The research approach the partnership took could be described as ethnographically styled. This was an in depth study of small groups of children or young people, their social relationships and experiences of schools and communities, the processes of them making media and of the media productions themselves. Taking an approach based within the new Sociology of Childhood we saw the children as active participants in their communities and in the experiences of migration and not merely as outcomes of social, psychological or developmental processes.

It is important to recover children as social actors (and their activity as a source of social change)...
There must be theoretical space for both the construction of childhood as an institution and the activity of children within and upon the constraints and possibilities that the institutional level creates.

(James and Prout, 1997:27)

Thus what the children said, how they acted and how they negotiated and challenged their places with each other and within social institutions were of paramount importance. A range of different types of data was gathered during the course of the site-specific case studies. These included: detailed field notes based on participant observation of groups at work; video and audio tapes of discussions and practical activities; pre- and post-production interviews, and on-going briefing interviews, with participants; interviews with facilitators/tutors; feedback from local audiences (for example, parents and peers); and, of course, the children's productions themselves, in the form of photographs, drawings and digital video productions. The aim here was to have a detailed record of the social process that led up to the finished product: how the research themes were discussed, what the children felt could and couldn't be said, how they prioritised and negotiated, how the dynamics and power relationships operated within the group, how they brought their own personal experiences (as set out in the interviews) into the process, what they made public and what remained private in the group, how they conceptualise their audience, and so on.

Over the year of the club activity the researchers spent a considerable amount of time within the field sites, engaged in a range of informal activities as well as in the observation of specific research activities. They visited the children's families, went out and about in the cities and towns in which the children lived and sat in on lessons. 'In between' settings - that is, opportunities for observation that arise in the spaces between structured activities or institutional contexts - are, in the partners' experience, particularly fruitful when working with groups of this kind and contributed considerably to the "thick" description we have been able to develop of the lives of the children who are at the centre of this study.

James, A. and Prout, A. (1997) (eds) *Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood*, London: Falmer Press

The role of media production

This project started from the view that children are active agents in making meaning in their lives and in negotiating their identities through their social interactions, in the same way that adults do. Media are an increasingly important platform on which children (and adults) negotiate their social relationships with others and with the institutions of society. As media becomes more user friendly and accessible to children it becomes another way through which we can study their lives.

The processes of production (planning, shooting, editing, presentation) involve negotiation with others as well as making decisions about what will be represented, why and how. The final products are seen in the context of these negotiations but in many cases can also stand alone as strong statements of the children's lives and experiences. This is all rich material both for the study of their interactions with each other but also as a study of representation and identity formation of particular individuals and groups of children. This, taken alongside observations in other settings and interviews offers us extremely rich data.

Through making media themselves children also develop a greater understanding of media generally. Their perceptions of the media in their everyday lives take on a different light. What they watch, play or read is no longer distant and elevated but they develop a different sense of audience and of critique. They develop a sense that they too can participate in presenting and representing their experiences and the worlds they live in. So using media in a project of this nature was both as a tool of research but also of empowerment. This was especially important since we were working with children who risk disempowerment because of their circumstances as migrants and refugees.

The Research Reports

There are 4 research reports. They are the result of a process of individual and collaborative analyses of the data by both the researchers and the media educators in each centre, drawing on the different areas of expertise represented in the research partnership. Each report has been written by two partners. Each partner drew up a report based on their site specific case studies. These were then edited into the final reports by the lead partners for each theme. They have been written in such a way as to bring the data to the reader and therefore include extracts of raw data from interviews and field diaries. They do not aim to be objective 'scientific' reports but rather, as the result of ethnographic methods, they aim to offer detailed, in depth and nuanced accounts of the children's everyday experience of the themes central to the research; building friendships, family life, school and schooling and visual communication. Such accounts aim to facilitate both practitioners and policy makers in adapting policy and practice in ways that will best suit those who experience the results on the ground. Each report is accompanied by a CD containing a selection of the media productions that have informed the report.

Main Research Findings

1. In all the clubs the children's primary concern was with understanding and fitting into their local contexts, both within the club and, more significantly, their new national context. The social dimension of the clubs was very important for the children who experienced them as opportunities to meet and socialize with other children in a safe environment.
2. The children's **media uses** were directly related to the children's social contexts and purposes and can be placed in three different categories:
 - a. *diasporic*, where media products from the home country or region are used to maintain cultural, emotional and linguistic links with both the past and current changes occurring in countries of origin;
 - b. *national*, where the emphasis may be on using media products to facilitate integration, make friends, negotiate new identities and acquire a new language;
 - c. *global*, which was particularly important for accessing global youth culture as well as news.
3. **Music** was the most important point of initial contact between the clubs and was able to *cut across language and cultural differences*. The form appeared to be more important than the words and, in many cases, the children appreciated the performances that accompanied the music. While most of the children listened regularly to both traditional and modern music from their countries of origin, global popular music played an important role in building peer connections. Channels such as MTV and music related web sites were very popular and played a major role in children's media and social lives.
4. There was a marked difference in home computer and **internet access** across the clubs. This reflected a north /south European divide but also an *economic divide* within countries.
5. When preparing work for communication with the other clubs the children played safe. This was particularly so for more recent migrants and for those most conscious of the risks of exclusion. Concomitantly, many children needed to preserve their privacy and were therefore reluctant to engage directly with the research themes.
6. A balance of emphasis on process and product was necessary to handle the experience of media production in groups and to create presentable productions. While many of the children loved acting in front of the camera they had greater difficulties specifically with the planning and the postproduction stages. Most significantly, the children needed to *develop a sense of audience*. This could not be taken for granted.
7. Media production is an important chance to integrate verbal, emotional and non-verbal forms of communication and expression. The process of making media productions in the clubs, which were a quasi-leisure space, allowed the children to explore a more varied approach to representing their experiences of migration than is normally possible in more formal educational settings. Nevertheless, how they chose to portray their experiences of migration was subtle, often requiring reading between the lines and interpreting their productions as they drew on

experiences they were still processing and on individual, local, national and global symbol-systems that were not always immediately apparent.

8. Learning media competencies and learning intercultural competencies are not the same but they can support each other. The development of intercultural competencies is closely linked to confidence, awareness and respect for each others differences. Media production can also trigger reflection and discussion during different phases of the production process. Seeing videos from other European countries challenged stereotypes and, through their observations of the details raised discussions about the different national contexts of the clubs.
9. An emphasis on too detailed and cognitive plans for media productions seems to be problematic because the children can easily be overstrained and thus disempowered. In this context, a looser focus on technicalities can be helpful in giving control of the media production process back to the children. Animation, specifically, claymation was popular for telling simple stories. As well as allowing humour more easily this form also allowed children to address painful and/or personal aspects of their lives in a more distant manner. This can be used therapeutically with some children.
10. Communication problems were experienced because of *technical factors* such as poor access to the internet; initial complexities and the generic nature of website; as well as the fact that the orientation and expertise of some of the media educators was more towards production of videos than communication across the clubs. Also hindering communication were *motivational factors* such as the disempowering effect of having to use written language; the fact that the children's primary interest was in developing local contacts rather than new international ones and the children's reluctance to be identified exclusively as migrant or refugee.
11. This research raises important questions about how to involve children in wider political life and about what voice they want to use.

Policy Recommendations

1. Media, and above all television, play a central role in the formation of identity by young migrants and refugees. While consumption includes diasporic and global media, national media plays an important role as a currency for integration and as a means of learning about the new country. Children are capable of informed use of national media for different purposes including language acquisition. **This is particularly relevant in the process of relating to a national identity within an evolving “European” identity.**
2. Commercial media productions, as noted above, play an important role as integration currency. Stereotypes of migrants, however, are still apparent in many national European media. While children often refuse to be identified as exclusively migrant or refugee – and do not perceive themselves in these terms – they do appreciate media which provide positive representations of themselves or their situations in mainstream programming. **Youth programmes must take into account the importance of multicultural representation. In some cases, special multicultural programmes may be appropriate.**
3. Children are not necessarily aware of themselves as consumers and as an audience, both for the media they consume and for the media they produce. This is particularly important in managing the above question of identity development. **A critical sense of audience can be developed through media education.**
4. Exposure to media products from other contexts challenges stereotypes and increases awareness of European diversity. This underlines the importance of increased distribution of European media products on the one hand, and of direct exchanges between children in different national school and extra curricular systems, on the other hand. With increasing media production taking place outside formal institutions **there is an urgent need for local, national and European media dissemination platforms on which refugee and migrant children can present their media productions and receive feedback from peers.**
5. The digital divide separates countries and individuals within single countries. Yet mere access is not enough to ensure productive use of ICT resources. Interactive websites for children must be appropriate and straightforward. The current EU tendency to promote and reward internet resources (for example, through the Stockholm Challenge) developed by children themselves is supported by this observation. In funding such initiatives, it is important that they meet basic criteria: sufficient infrastructure for feedback and chat; personalisation across media formats; the possibility for meetings. This kind of social involvement is particularly important for underprivileged children. **Funding priority should be given to initiatives that explicitly involve children who are excluded from access to such social uses of advanced ICT.**
6. **Media education experts and others concerned with media literacy should be enabled to form a European network to support the creative promotion of media literacy.** This should consider:

- Ways of developing teachers' awareness of different cultural forms and genres
 - Teacher training in the structuring and organisation of the uses of technology
 - Access to technology as part of structured media literacy programmes
 - Specialist media work to promote social inclusion that has as its starting point the motivations of children and their diverse media experiences and uses rather than the demands of technology
 - The promotion of creative uses of technology within schools and educational institutions
 - The possibility for schools and other educational institutions to promote the creative use of the internet for visual exchanges that can offer new dimensions to intercultural and cross European as well as international dialogues.
7. Migrant and refugee children who participate in research may be particularly sensitive, vulnerable and at risk. Their desire to represent or not represent themselves in certain ways and to reveal or conceal aspects of their lives in their productions and communications may well stem from both physical and emotional traumas and dangers. Data which involves self-expression through media may be particularly difficult for such children to 'produce'. The children's cultural backgrounds should be included in their media productions without being exoticized. **Researchers need to remain highly attuned to the ethics of collecting data of any kind from such groups and should be both knowledgeable about the circumstances of the groups as a whole as well as those of individual children.**

1. The Children's Media Uses

Throughout the year in which the clubs were operating the researchers made enquiries to find out about the children's media biographies and current interests. This was done through interviews, home visits, group and individual discussions, making media posters and observations of their media activities during the club times.

The national reports show how central the media are in the children's lives. All the children participating in the clubs had constant exposure to media, both local and international. A majority of the children who had experienced the journey of migration not long before their participation in the club also had vivid recollections from the media in their country of origin. In all those cases, the children came to the club with a pre-formed media culture. Coming to the new country, they were exposed to different media patterns and to a different symbolic milieu. Experiences of media formed a continuity with their past lives, with their countries and cultures of origin while also introducing them to aspects of the new culture and society. There were some stark differences of access both within and across the clubs that highlighted differences in the children's economic and domestic circumstances. However, it was clear that media were central to both family life¹ and developing friendships². Access to and use of media is always mediated, negotiated and structured. They take place within a context which is important and meaningful for reasons that go beyond the media themselves.

Television was the most important medium and most of this section is taken in discussing aspects of the children's television viewing. However, their use of videos, music, mobile phones, computers and the internet are increasingly important. While it is particularly in their access to new media that we see differences both within and across the clubs, reflecting different economic and domestic factors, their uses of media other than television reflect similar issues of identity, adolescence and cultural negotiation that we see in their relationships with television.

Television viewing

Particular television programmes form an important part of the children's biographies. Most children had very strong memories of programmes they had watched with friends and/or family in their countries of origin. All the children (with the exception of those in the Italian club³) watched several hours a day. Most families had satellite and or cable channels giving them access to global programming including programmes in the family language from the countries/regions of origin. Their choices and viewing patterns reflected the ways in which television viewing was both a social and socially mediated activity. This was clear in many ways. We discuss their viewing patterns under three headings (diasporic, national and global) in order to highlight their different uses of the different television broadcasting available. Clearly these categories are not exclusive. National programming includes many global products, especially programmes originating in the US. The same goes for

¹ See CHICAM report 'Home is Where the Heart is: family relations of migrant children in media clubs in six European countries'. www.chicam.net

² See CHICAM report 'Children's Social Relations in Peer Groups: inclusion, exclusion and friendship'. www.chicam.net

³ Seven children in the Italian club lived in a convent. The Religious Sisters running the convent regulated and limited the children's viewing.

diasporic broadcasting while global broadcasting is not entirely US based but increasingly includes important Arabic and other regional strands.

The importance of **family viewing** is symbolised by the arrangement of the television/s in the family home. The Swedish report emphasises this.

The television set seems to be in the very centre of the family life. When one of the girls moved to a new apartment they bought a new television set worth 2000 Euro to be placed in the living-room. Often, children have their own set in the bedroom as well, sometimes shared with one or two siblings. Access to cable (including pay-TV) and satellite television seems to be standard. However, they do not have access to cable and satellite television in all rooms equipped with a television set. The most well equipped sets are placed in the living room.

Even where there are fewer television sets in the home or no satellite/cable access all the reports reflect the important role that television plays in family life. There were also varying levels of negotiation and control over who would watch and what was watched. One of the families in Italy had the main television and satellite links in the mother's bedroom symbolising not only the importance of satellite links for the mother, but also who was in control.

Diasporic Television

Family viewing play the dual roles of maintaining continuity with the past and of keeping in contact with the present. There are several important and complex issues here. Parents influence or control their children's viewing in several ways and for several reasons. **Keeping in contact with the country of origin** takes different forms: watching news programmes, watching familiar programmes that they used to watch before they moved and maintaining the mother language.

One of the main roles that television plays for the parents is to maintain continuity with their past lives and their countries of origin, to keep both themselves and their children connected. Here the parents or community are the primary decision makers, illustrating the ways in which the children's viewing is mediated by wider social aims, stressing past attachments and affiliations.

The report from Greece stresses that it is not only parents who exert influence over television viewing but also the wider community within which the child and immediate family live.

Elcin, and to a certain extent Rengin and Semset who belonged to the same sub-group within the club due to the close relations among their parents through their affiliation to a political party, are very much exposed to media from their country of origin. As their social life revolves mainly around the party office, their viewing patterns are those of the adults there, who constantly watch news reports and discussions about events in their country. They also spent hours watching taped documentaries about the revolt of their party comrades in Turkish prisons, as well as about some of them declaring their credo before embarking on fatal food-strikes. All these contained violent scenes, as well as a lot of propaganda.

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Television for them is a source of information (and teaching) and not of entertainment. As a result, the three children often did not take part in informal discussions about popular series on Greek TV along with the other kids in the club. Elcin in particular, although he was fascinated by the technical abilities and the potential to produce the things he was interested in, was quite snobbish about entertainment TV and claimed he never watched anything other than what interested him for information reasons. His attitude was very much influenced by the adult attitudes in his social environment, and by what was deemed acceptable and 'serious enough' by them.

In other cases it is not so much connection with the country of origin itself that is important but the **continuation of activities that the family used to enjoy** before their migration. The Netherlands report refers to these nostalgic pleasures.

Satellite TV offers news programmes from the home country and some other material: melodramas and comedies (mainly watched by mothers and daughters) or family programmes watched by the whole family just as they did in their native country. Masja's Armenian family all watched a Brazilian Telenovela through a Russian satellite channel, which is dubbed in Russian.

Interestingly, watching such programmes in a third language and from a completely different region is also mentioned in the Italian report. Another family use of television – particularly satellite – is for keeping in touch with current events and changes back home. This is not entirely about nostalgia and in some cases leads to quite difficult generational discussions. The Swedish report refers particularly to an Albanian soap opera.

Several children have mentioned an Albanian program within the genre of situation comedy or soap opera, called "Familie Modern", which is very popular. On Sunday nights, families gather around the set to watch the everyday life of Familie Modern. Reported glimpses of episodes indicate that it is humorous and that it mirrors generational differences and illuminates how life used to be in Albania as compared to how it is now. Elderly people represent the olden ways and they joke about it in the series, whereas the younger family members strive towards a modern life.

Extract from interview with Hana:

Hana: It is really funny. It is about a family, who tries to be as modern as possible. And actually they have modern stuff in their house too. You know, in Albanian families, girls are not allowed to go to disco and stuff, but the girls in this series they go to disco and they are sleeping with guys. They can do anything they like. They can colour their hair everyday, and the son in the family, he brings Danish, Swedish and English girls every night. Strange! They are like a Swedish family (in an ironic tone).

Interviewer: What do your parents think about the series?

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Hana: They really think it fun. The father is working, the mother is working, and then they have a grandmother, who is not modern. She is old-fashioned, as Albanians are in reality. She says: "You cannot do that and that. And what are you doing?" (voice affected). She is saying this all the time and nobody listens to her. "Mind your own business and go to bed", they say. Then they do whatever they like, anyway.

An older sister of one of the CHICAM children spoke about the series with a smile and ironic tone commenting that this series and television in general is much better now than it used to be. Albania has opened up towards the west, with less regulations and control of the media. From the interview with Hana, it comes out that modern life in the series is more progressive or secularised than the Albanian way of upbringing in Sweden is.

For most families the issue of **language maintenance** is important. Diasporic television offers great possibilities for both adults and children to keep in touch with their mother languages and parents generally encouraged this whilst also encouraging the use of television to acquire the new language – see below.

National television

For some families television and other **media are felt to threaten their family and /or religious values** and parents wanted to protect their children. This applied mainly, but not exclusively, to the national television stations of the new countries of residence and to the global American based satellite broadcasts. There were particular examples of this in the Greek and UK clubs. The father of one child in the UK was initially not keen for his son to participate in the media club at all. He strictly limited his children's viewing at home. He was persuaded by the argument that learning the computer skills involved in editing would offer his son additional skills.

While television plays an important role in maintaining information and emotional ties with the place the children had come from it is also **important in helping children (and their families) settle in and find out about the new country**. In the UK the most popular programmes for most of the children were either the major soaps such as East Enders, situation comedies such as Friends, family based animations like The Simpsons or 'reality soaps' like Big Brother. Declared preferences were also age and gender related but even within this there was a broad consensus. This was the same in other clubs and reflects the patterns of their age group. Their choices reflected a very typical adolescent mix of adult and more childish programmes. Children talked about needing to watch certain programmes in order to keep in with their peers at school. One of the Greek case studies highlights the importance of television in finding out about the new place of residence.

Balkys, a 13-year-old girl who did not attend school, filtered most of her social activity in her neighbourhood and her community through TV. Lacking other shared ground with her peers (due to not going to school) Balkys had developed a pattern of watching TV for many hours every day. She became familiar with the plots of most series, soaps and dramas, and followed them in such detail that the people around her started recognising her as an authority on the subject. As this was a current subject in most social interactions, Balkys became popular in her circle also in relation to this, and thus used TV as a means of social acceptance and socialisation.

Several families actively encouraged their children to watch national television to assist their **acquisition of the new language**. In one example from the German report this intervention had consequences for a child's communication with his mother:

Hakan's father liked his son to watch programmes in German and not in Turkish so as not to hinder the development of his (Hakan's) competence in the German language: "I must not, like, watch Turkish programmes but always German."

On another occasion Hakan reported that when telephoning with his mother, who lives in Turkey, some Turkish words no longer occur to him:

Hakan: "I speak bit German because I have forget Turkish. I speak to my mother. I think always 'what I say, what I say?', I think German but I say to my mother German my mother say 'what is that' I think 'what is that, what is that in Turkish' like that."

Confirming other studies of youth audiences it was clear that what you say about what you watch on television **defines your identity in terms of age and gender but also in terms of ethnicity and cultural origin**. This means that there were also some programmes that you do not admit to watching. Television is used by the children both to negotiate their new identities in their new locations and to negotiate a shared space with their peers across culture. There were specific programmes (and films) that were very popular that highlighted relationships across cultural differences and distance that seemed to hold some **emotional resonance** for the children. These programmes appeared to touch a very important chord for these children. The Greek report mentions two such series.

Their favourites are two Greek series. One of these is a romantic comedy about a love affair across the continents ('You are my match'). The other is a series about the love story between a Greek woman married to a wealthy land-owner who falls in love with the Albanian worker who works in their fields ('Love came from faraway'). In both of those, there is the element of distance, physical or otherwise, which both girls found exciting as it intensified the drama. Both series were very popular during the club year, and as such, they were often the subject of conversation at school, in the neighbourhood or in the club.

Global television

News plays an important role here. This acts both as continuity and keeping in touch. Many families watch several sources of news and often the children are very well informed on world events. The news station Al Jazeera was mentioned by many, as was CNN. The feeling is that national news often gives a limited view of international events. The report from the Netherlands refers to the particular position of refugees.

In refugee families, the role of TV is different than it is in migrant families. The satellite often is the only link between asylum seekers and their home countries, where many of them left family and friends. Depending on their specific situations, some of the refugee families had no contact with their family and friends for many years. News and live reports serve as evidence of the places they left behind. During the war in Iraq, TV was very important to the children, too. The children told each other what they saw on television. Rana watched a Syrian network on satellite, and relates how the Iraqi government has been deposed. Masja adds that two palaces have been captured. All children in the club watch the Dutch Youth News. Kambooye (a refugee from Somalia) states that he watches news: 'So that you know what is happening in the world.'

In addition, many families, as we discussed above in the section on diasporic television, watch programmes, particularly soap operas originating from regions other than their own, often in a third language. What was important in these cases was the emotional connections that the families felt to the programme.

Videos

Watching films on video was very popular. Nearly all the families had a video recorder. Some had a DVD player. Going to the cinema was a social activity for the UK children but in most other clubs this was less common. Watching videos took its place. Again the children's choices reflected both their cultural origins and their need to build new peer relations and maintain their family links. The UK report refers to family viewing of Hindi films even where the family were not Hindi speaking.

Some of the girls – those with an Asian or Islamic background - watched a lot of Hindi films on video. They also mentioned the Indian movie channel B4U. I was interested in how they understood them as none of them spoke Hindi. Sahra said that she watched them dubbed into Somali. The others said that they could follow them very easily through the style, music and dancing. They also said they had learned some Hindi through watching but also that there were some crossovers between the languages. But it was the emotional resonance that appeared to be more important. Fatima expressed this by saying that 'its like a true story', unlike English films. Sahra said that they were strange because 'things happen for no reason – its funny. Its not real life but they can reflect real things like war'.

This sense of reality, along with the fact that they usually watched them with their mothers and other family members, made them a very important part of their lives. Some of the boys also said they watched for this reason. These films were clearly highly culturally symbolic. It was interesting that those girls who felt more ambivalent about living in this country (the UK) expressed a higher level of enjoyment of these films. Both Shakuntala and Sahra for instance said they watched them for social reasons but didn't enjoy them much. They could also have been saying this for my benefit because I represented the mainstream culture.

The majority of children also focussed on Hollywood blockbusters. These were very popular but often it was difficult to know if the children had actually seen the films or merely picked up information about them to use in their talk with friends. Sometimes this was because they had not come out on video yet; but often they would in fact never see the film. Again the UK report mentions this.

Haamid's poster is dominated by a large picture of The Hulk but when I asked if he had ever seen it he said he hadn't and didn't want to. Yet the whole poster related to this figure. He chose four other pictures, 3 from The Simpsons and one Lara Croft. In each of them he changed or added dialogue to relate it to the Hulk and the dialogue bubble he had made for him which said, 'I'm going to smash all these creature on earth, maybe in the sky as well'. He had competed with Claudio for the picture and won. His interest was not based on the film but on the social hype around the film.

Home videos were also an important part of several of the children's lives. Family events were shared through sending videos between family members but this was rarely mentioned as part of their media lives and appeared to form a different category, maybe of letters. Other videos were also sent to children from abroad as the Italian report points out.

A lot of them have video tapes, and several spoke repeatedly with pride of the numbers of tapes they had. Only one club member, however, spoke openly about a backwards-and-forwards movement of video tapes with his home country. Parcels containing video tapes were continually arriving from Peru. Some were in Spanish, and others were in English with Spanish subtitles. Fernando's favourites were Kung Fu and other films with a lot of fighting and martial arts. This shows once again how wrong we can be in thinking of somebody else's culture as being simple.

In sum, videos of different types either reflecting individual interest, family interests as well as global cultures were an important aspect of the children's media lives.

Music

Music was very important to all the children. Again they had eclectic tastes that included music from their countries of origin as well as global popular music. Nearly all the children had personal CD or cassette players and carried CDs and cassettes with them wherever they went. They liked watching music channels on television, checking out web sites with information about their favourite stars and talked a lot about them with their peers. In terms both of maintaining culture and of exploring new cultures music played a similar role to television. However, it was regarded as more the children's own zone, separated from adult eyes and controls; it therefore almost took on greater importance especially for the older members of the clubs. This mix of musical tastes was reflected in all the clubs. The Swedish report demonstrates how central their musical tastes were to the club work.

Listening to music was important and international music artists and their songs have passed by in various contexts during club work. They talked about mainstream music as well as rap and hip-hop. Hana, for example, always switched on my car radio when I drove her home from club. She was tuning in various radio stations until she found music she liked and then she often joined in singing as well. All children expressed liking when Eminem was played in the Italian 'hello' video. But they also seemed to have a preference for ethnic music related to their own cultural background.

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The Albanian children played Albanian music on CD in my car and Ibish had loaded his mobile with it. Hana said that she liked male Albanian singers better than female, the latter having a nasal high pitched voice, whereas male singers have a darker voice, which fits her own voice better. In the "friends video" from Sweden, Hana is singing and switches between different music styles and artists. Her repertoire covers a range of music styles, from American pop music, to Swedish lyrics over to Albanian music. Mohammed likes rap music and ethnic music as well. The girls were very much amused about the winning Turkish contribution (2003) in the Eurovision song contest. Shpresa emphasised that she liked the mixture of western style music with the Turkish style.

The report from the Netherlands focuses on the importance of rap, especially for the boys.

The different music channels, MTV, TMF and The Box, also lead to some identification. Among the boys, the Hip Hop-artists are especially popular, because they are drawn to the "tough-guy" image of these artists. Najib likes the music of the black rapper Tupac. He writes in his media collage: 'I am a rapper, too'. He goes by the name of 'Abdel' when he raps. He performs break dances and writes rap lyrics. Together with Beaugarçon, who provides the beatbox, he performs a rap on camera. Just like Najib, Beaugarçon likes the American rappers, and he flashes hand signals during the rap on camera. One of these is the 'W' for 'Westside' (thumb extended, ring- and middle finger crossed), a symbol that stands for the American West Coast. Beaugarçon: 'I learned this on television'. He is from West-Roosendaal, which is his reason for imitating this particular sign. He does not use it often; because he is afraid he might get into fights with other boys from Roosendaal who may be "supporting" other rappers. The music channels, mainly in the areas of clothing and dance, also inspire the girls.

Several reports refer to the Eurovision song contest in 2003 when the Turkish singer, Sertab, won. All the children with connections to the region, including Albanians were very excited. What appealed to them was the way in which she mixed musical styles. This was particularly important in Greece as their report explains.

The music preferences were rather mixed, including both the music from the country of origin (traditional or modern, i.e. liberation or revolutionary songs from Kurdistan, pop songs from Turkey) as well as music from Greece and the West (pop, hip-hop, rap). The Turkish winner of the Eurovision contest, Sertab, became an idol within the club, due to her successful combination of western beat and oriental influences. The children loved the song, as it was familiar to them from both sides, and in a way, managed to constitute the sounds of their own background as 'trendy'. This was true, to a large extent, also in regard to various trendy Greek songs which also combined such diverse influences, bringing together different cultural contexts and creating a sense of closeness, which seemed to occupy a symbolic space in the mind of the children.

Interestingly the children's mixed use of music reflects or maybe drives an increasing 'world music' market that is exploiting mixed musical genres.

Computers and internet

There was a striking difference between the clubs whose members had computers and access to the internet at home and those who did not. All the children in Sweden had computers at home and most had access to the internet. By contrast the children in the Italian club had very little computer experience either at school or at home.

In terms of material access to the media, we see that the group in question is markedly different from ordinary Italians of their age. The "Third Report on Communications in Italy" (CENSIS, 2003) states that 61.7% of 14 to 18 year-old Italians have internet access. Only 11.9% of them do so occasionally, whereas 35.6% connect once or twice a week. 28.2% connect three or four times a week, and the remaining 24.3% connected to the internet every day. The CHICAM children's club had no internet access, either at home or in school. Nobody connected up, even the minimum amount of times. Almost everyone had seen the internet in action, but nobody knew how to surf around it. It excites their curiosity, they "know" how it works, talk about it to their school friends, and say they would like to have internet access. However, they think of it as something remote, and compare using it to other things they know more about.

This was similar to the picture in Greece. The other clubs showed a very mixed picture. There were also marked differences within clubs. In the Netherlands and the UK, for example, again it was the refugee children who did not have computers at home, underlining their economic disadvantage and the need for support in this area. As we will see this lack of computer and internet experience had serious implications for the project.

In addition, even where they had experience they had not been encouraged to see computers as a tool that they could explore for their own creations but merely as a search tool. As the report from the Netherlands states this must reflect how the teaching of computer technologies is approached in schools, which are their main access point.

The children know computers, but the way these are used in the clubs is different from what they are used to. The interactive method of working and the digital editing of films is a completely new experience for the children.

Mobile phones

Mobile phones were a very important aspect of the children's lives, allowing them to keep in almost constant contact with friends locally. Most of the children in Italy had their own phones as was the case in the UK and Sweden. Again there were big differences between the clubs. None of the children in Greece had them while in Germany all had them. In Italy they were more important to the children than television. Having a mobile has become an important part of modern life, especially youth culture, and a very important symbol of independence and growing up. This was reflected in the fact that the older children in the clubs were more likely to have their own phones. This was especially the case in Italy, where most of the children were slightly older.

The success of the mobile phones may be due to many factors, one of which is probably its interactivity. The mobile phone as an active medium versus the TV as a passive one. But this seems an over-simplification. The mobile phone is a personal medium, the child doesn't need to ask his family for access to it, and he guards it jealously. The mobile phone is the medium used for making and keeping friendships, and its costs are always falling. It is a way of keeping in touch with your peer group. A mobile phone offers greater privacy than a fixed line, and it is more difficult for parents to control it. In this way, it can be thought of as a part of the global youth culture.

The mobile phone also played an important part in family life. In the UK one father, a refugee from Sierra Leone, explained that the mobile phone had revolutionised his ability to keep in contact with his family. Previously he could only contact family members very rarely; now it was on a weekly basis.

In summary

The children's media uses fall into different categories: maintaining contact with the past (diasporic), keeping international contacts and information about where they have come from (diasporic and global), settling into the new place (national and local) and also exploring other programmes from different regions (global). What is striking are the ways in which the children were able to negotiate these different aspects to their viewing and media uses. These different programmes formed part of the children's everyday negotiation with family and friends and their relationship with a more global media world.

They themselves did not differentiate these uses. For example using satellite and/or cable television was the norm and the children rarely differentiated between these and national broadcasting when they spoke about what they watched, except when the programmes were very specific to their language and country of origin. However, access to satellite broadcasting is still not universal and depends on economic and domestic circumstances. Our observation was that children's main viewing was oriented either towards national channels or channels that are aimed at global youth culture. Other media followed a similar pattern. This was important for building friendships and feeling that they were participating in the here and now. The importance of mobile phones was specifically related, for the children, to making and maintaining local contacts and creating a more private zone away from their parents. However, they did not lose sight of other options and the variety of their media use was important for them in negotiating their multiethnic identities. Their media uses were directly related to their social lives and reflected the patterns of peer and family relations outlined in the CHICAM reports relating to these areas⁴.

In this picture of diversity, however, it is important to stress the exclusions. The global contacts did not apply to those whose countries or regions did not have TV stations on satellite. It also did not apply to those who could not afford access here to global media and the necessary technology— often these were refugees from the poorer regions of the world and those most economically excluded. This applied across the media but especially to the internet. These could now be said to form a media underclass.

4

2. Children as Media Producers

From consumption to production

As we have shown, many of the children in our research used media of various kinds – particularly video, mobile phones and the internet – to create and communicate their own messages. However, it is one thing to use media production in the context of home and family life, and quite another to do so in a more formal, public context such as that of our CHICAM clubs. The children in our clubs were not simply ‘expressing themselves’ – at least if we take that to mean some kind of spontaneous outpouring of personal ideas and feelings. On the contrary, what they produced was determined by the social and institutional context, by the pedagogic approach of the educators, by the interpersonal relationships within the clubs, and by the forms of ‘media language’ the children had at their disposal. As we will indicate, media production in this kind of setting is a complex, multi-faceted process.

Diverse settings

As we have described in previous reports, the six CHICAM clubs took place in very different locations, and in very different institutional settings. The socio-cultural backgrounds of the participating children also varied in many respects (e.g. countries of origin, languages spoken, time period of stay in the new country, they included refugees, asylum seekers, other migrants and so on). All the clubs included boys and girls. We can characterise the clubs briefly as follows:

- The Greek club was held at the Greek Council for Refugees (GCR), an NGO dealing with the legal and social support of Asylum Seekers. The club took place on the fifth floor of the old office building in down town Athens. There were fifteen children from Iraq, Turkey, Afganistan, Congo, and Kurdistan (Syria). They met once a week and were split into two groups. They attended different schools but most knew each other before through contact with the GCR.
- The Dutch club was held in a school in a small city in the south of the Netherlands. The school is situated in a poor neighbourhood in the town. The eight club members had seven different nationalities and met weekly in the school-building. They were the youngest group in the project.
- The Italian club was based in Rome. It met in a school designated as a multicultural education centre. The children were slightly older than those in the other clubs. Many of them lived in a convent during the week as their mothers were domestic workers. Their access to media was limited.
- The German club was based in Southern Germany. All the children at that time were pupils in an introductory class to learn German before being sent to other schools in their local areas. Their countries of origin included Turkey, Cuba, the Dominican Republic. They all knew each other well.
- In Sweden most of the children were from Albanian Kosovan families, one child was Palestinian, from Jordan. They had all settled in a small town with few immigrants in southern Sweden.

- In the UK the club was based in the East End of London in a new housing area, at a new secondary school. The children came from Somalia, Colombia, Angola, Sierra Leone, Kenya and Sri Lanka.

Almost all the clubs met in the afternoon, shortly after the end of the school day. The pupils had left behind their school work and were now entering a liminal space in which they wanted the chance to enjoy themselves, and even to play. Nevertheless, many of the children were tired at the end of a stressful school day, and this meant that they were not always relaxed and ready to learn. Furthermore, the continued use of the school as a location (in nearly all cases) and the presence of the adult educators and researchers meant that the club still remained an essentially educational context for the children. The extent to which the children continued to observe the rules for behaviour at school (for example, by attempting to please the ‘teacher’) or were able to establish a new and independent relationship with the CHICAM staff depended very much on the specific media educational approach that was adopted.

The project team were very aware of the constraints and ambiguities of this situation. As one of the Greek researchers observed in her final report:

...there was often a sense that the children were primarily directing their productions to ‘us’ and to what they thought we wanted to ‘see’ or to ‘hear’, rather than telling something that they really wanted to tell. Had we trusted their abilities more and had we found ways to let them set their own structures and rules, their interactions could go beyond the classroom style and lead to a different and perhaps unexpected course of events.

The project team repeatedly emphasised the necessity of being responsive to the children’s needs and the changing group dynamics, and to work in an open and flexible manner: we sought to achieve a balance, responding to individual children’s needs while at the same time providing a clear structure and aiming for definite outcomes.

As we recognised, there was a potential conflict here between the pedagogic demands of the situation and the requirements of the research. All the clubs gave the children open-ended opportunities to make productions of their own choice, in line with their own interests and enthusiasms; but we also agreed that it would be particularly valuable in terms of our data-gathering for all the clubs to develop productions on the topics ‘school’, ‘peer group’ and ‘family’ (covered in our Deliverables 7-12). It was much easier to address some of these issues in particular media formats, although these were not necessarily the ones children found most familiar. In the Dutch club, for example, the children preferred to make fiction, although the researchers were looking for data that required documentary formats as well. It was not always easy to balance these requirements with the need to respect the internal dynamics of the groups – and, as we shall see below, with the need to generate communication *between* the groups.

Diverse approaches

In addition to these factors, it was clear from the outset that the media educators would adopt different approaches, which derived in turn from their own training, professional experiences and educational philosophies. These differences were partly to do with expressed differences in aims, and partly to do with preferred media genres, although they are hard to characterise in simple terms.

The Swedish team, for example, described their approach as ‘dialogic’ and ‘open for negotiation’ on the part of the children. The Italian educators sought to be ‘non-directional’ and ‘non-authoritarian’ and emphasised the importance of children learning ‘by trial and error’. In the UK the emphasis was on developing individual authorship (within a group context) drawing on different visual styles, experimenting with genres and utilizing sound creatively. Formal narrative was less important than mood. In Greece, the emphasis was more on outcomes relating to social education, ‘combining skills and talents’, fostering ‘creative cooperation, communication and a sense of team spirit’. By contrast, in Germany the educators used relatively clearly structured aesthetic tasks, seeking to offer ‘customized’ help and support and creative alternatives. Meanwhile, the team in the Netherlands emphasised ‘product orientation, instruction at specific stages in the process, making the children responsible for content and visual form as well as for equipment and technique, permanent coaching, [and] structured viewing and commenting’. Yet although the educators used different terms to describe their work, it would be wrong to over-emphasise the differences between these approaches, and there was considerable overlap between them.

These differences were perhaps more apparent in the genres of the finished products. In some instances, such as the Netherlands, there was a strong emphasis on dramatic narrative; others, such as Sweden and Germany, made productive use of animation; while in the UK, the media educator’s interest (as a professional video artist) in creating mood and exploring different uses of visuals and sound rather than in formal narrative is evident in the children’s productions. In practice, however, most clubs employed a range of forms and genres; although, as we shall see below, different genres provided different expressive and pedagogic possibilities.

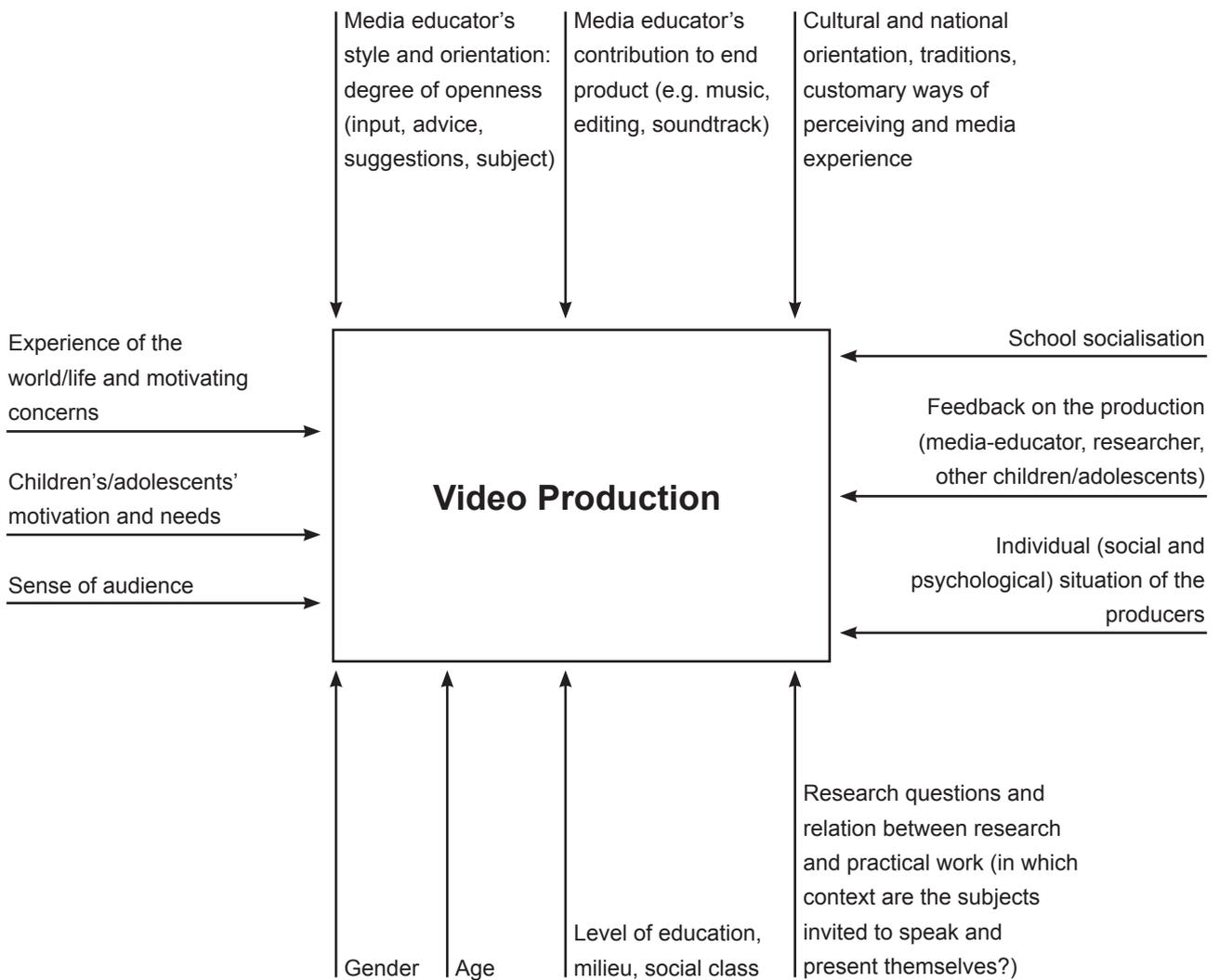
Furthermore, the media educators contributed in different ways and to differing degrees to the finished products (for example, in terms of providing music, or undertaking editing). Such intervention depended partly on the educational approach, and partly on factors such as the age, ability and motivation of the children. For example, in the Netherlands club, where the children were somewhat younger than in most of the other clubs, the media educator sometimes did the final editing and mixing (in close consultation with the children) in order to ensure an acceptable finished product; although media educators in all the clubs took a hand in editing at some stage.

To these can be added a range of other factors that potentially influence children’s media production. These would include:

- cultural and national orientations, traditions, media experiences and customary styles of perception
- levels of education

- social class, gender, age
- motivations and needs of the children
- different orientations towards schooling, and different school systems
- the individual (social and psychological) situations of the children
- their experience of the world around them and their motivating concerns
- feedback on the production (from the media educator, researcher, other children, etc.)
- their immigration status

These different influences and factors can be represented schematically in the following diagram:



To say the least, then, the data we are dealing with here are complex and multi-faceted. In this section of the report, we focus in particular detail on two key elements that are more specific to the practice of media production: the media forms and influences on which the children draw, and the children's perceptions of the audience for their productions.

Media models and influences

As we have suggested, media production cannot be seen simply as a matter of 'self-expression', in which inner thoughts and feelings find an outer form. On the contrary, producers create meanings using the conventional forms and genres of language that are available to them (and here we use the term 'language' to include the visual and audio-visual 'languages' of the modern media). These linguistic, cultural or symbolic resources are diverse and multi-faceted; and children do not simply mimic or seek to copy existing forms, but actively use and recombine them in various ways.

For the children in our project, these existing resources derived from four main sources, as we have described in the first part of this report: 1) the symbolic systems they knew from their home countries; 2) the symbolic world of their new country of residence; 3) the symbolic field of global media; and 4) hybrid 'street' cultures. Looking at the videos that were produced in the different clubs, it is possible to trace the various ways in which these different resources were appropriated and combined.

Thus, some of the videos contained clear references to culturally specific aspects from the children's countries of origin, such as playing the saz, (Song '*Tragoudi*' - Greece) or merengue dancing (in the German *Hello* video). While some of these were immediately recognisable and appealing to the other children, some were not. For example, *St. Nikolaas*, a narrative production from the Netherlands, drew on a particular Christmas story that was not immediately shared by the children in the other clubs. Other productions incorporated forms that drew upon global (primarily US) media culture, such as the use of rap in videos from the UK and the Netherlands. While these forms were more readily recognised by the children, they did not necessarily provide equal common ground for dialogue, as we shall see in more detail below (section 3).

Other productions used forms that are probably to be found – albeit in different variations - in many cultures: for example, some films contained conventional symbols, such as the heart as a symbol of love in the German film *Dog*. While some films contained verbal language, some also had English subtitles. Others worked without linguistic codes, but with non-verbal forms like body-language, facial expressions, music, sound and objects. More broadly, most of the films derived from established media genres: the police/crime series (*Bank*, Germany); the news report (*Report from Iraq*, Greece; *Germany Positive/Negative*, Germany); the MTV-style video clip (the Italian *Hello* video); the celebrity interview (*Leyla's Crib*, UK); and, perhaps above all, the short narrative film (*St Nikolaas*, Netherlands; *Friendship*, Italy; *Ali and Vladimir*, Greece; *The Teddy that Disappeared*, Sweden).

In order to offer a variety of forms for expression in the clubs, different media formats or media models were introduced by the media educators. One basic distinction here was between fictional and factual productions:

(see next page for table)

Fictional productions	Factual productions
short narrative films	documentaries (e.g. interviewing people on the street)
short animated narratives (with clay figures or paper figures)	'video diaries' or compilations of family photographs
video-clips (e.g. rap videos)	photography (digital or disposable cameras)
experimental clips with visual effects	

However, here too it is hard to make strict categories as several of the productions included elements of both fact and fiction and often played with the formats thus challenging such easy categorisation.

In terms of the *process* of production, there are some important differences between these formats. Some require post-production (e.g. narrative films, and particularly documentaries), while some can be considered to be finished products once they are shot (e.g. animation). Some formats can be easily done in a group situation, while some can be handled better by children working alone or in pairs. For some formats, a very clear plan and structure is needed from the outset (generally with advice from the media educator), as in the case of animation. Others can be undertaken by the children on their own with much less adult help or intervention: for example, several clubs gave children the opportunity to take the video camera home or put one camera aside in a private space so that anyone could do whatever they wanted in front of it. These pedagogic differences will be explored in more detail in part 4 of this report.

However, in several instances, the children took the opportunity simply to play with the camera (and, in some cases, the editing technology) without a specific aim in view. In the Dutch club, for example, a boy filmed himself wrapped in a blanket posing privately for the camera. In Sweden, two girls used the opportunity of being able to take the camera to 'confess' about arguments they had with each other and how they could find a solution. In London and Germany, boys played with toy cars and other objects in front of the camera. These instances suggested the potential for a more unstructured form of play that is often precluded by a strong focus on creating finished productions.

The advantage of offering a variety of formats is that it is likely that different needs and expectations are met and that each child can find an entry point. For some children, standing behind the camera and filming was their preferred entry point, while for others it was acting in front of the camera or the use of sound. For one boy in the UK club, editing was particularly important: this was partly because of his language difficulties, but also because his father strongly supported the acquisition of computer skills.

However, it is important to remember that the clubs also served a social function, and that for several children, this was much more important than the possibilities of learning and working with media. In the German club, Taskania (a girl from the Dominican Republic) decorated the classroom for the final CHICAM party together with a friend and showed a very high degree of motivation – much higher than we had ever observed when she was filming or editing. Likewise, Renato in Italy told us:

Giuseppe: What about you? What'd you learn? Why did you take part?
 Renato: To enjoy myself, and because I'm on my own at home.

Media therefore provided a practical focus, but for many children it was the opportunity to socialise with others in a less formal situation that was key to their continuing motivation. As we noted in a previous CHICAM report⁴, there are several reasons why such experiences may be relatively rare for many migrant children.

Possibilities and limitations of media forms and genres

Different media forms or genres have different possibilities and limitations, for example in terms of the immediacy of the process, the pedagogic demands, the capacity to deal with particular topics or issues, and so on. In the following chart, we summarise our findings on these kinds of issues in relation to the four key video genres that were used (animation, live-action drama, music video and documentary) and comment briefly on the possibilities we discovered for using still photography (both in digital and non-digital formats).

Form / Genre	Opportunities and possible limitations
Animation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • good results can be achieved in a short time: does not entail post-production • interim results (looking at animated objects) can be motivating • small scale: much can be achieved with a few elements and figures • can be used to convey aspects of formal aesthetics (e.g. changing perspectives) • stimulates visual thinking, fantasy and play: imaginary or impossible things can be made real (e.g. monsters) • permits discussion of personal experiences without being too confrontational • working procedures and techniques are easy to understand • clay animation films are effective despite faults (e.g. staccato movements, hands visible in frame) and do not depend so much on skilled craftsmanship • requires a high level of support and assistance, especially in developing feasible short storylines • no opportunities for the children to appear in person • patience and discipline are needed to model the figures/objects • only appropriate for small groups
Narrative / drama	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • immediacy: possible to play back results instantly • easy to understand how to construct logical narratives, even during editing • stories related to the living environment are possible • flexibility: possible to be inspired by the location or ideas that occur, rather than strictly following the script • can address the children's feelings of fantasy • sometimes difficult for the children to relate directly to their personal experiences • editing requires patience and tolerance • only short films can be made, although children may think in terms of longer narratives • interest and competence in acting required • requires support and assistance, particularly in development of storylines

⁴ Children's Social Relations in Peer Groups: inclusion, exclusion and friendship. This report is available to download on www.chicam.net

Form / Genre	Opportunities and possible limitations
Music video (video clip)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • directly related to the children's media experiences and preferences (via music television) • offers space for dance and physical movement, a favourite form of expression among many of the children • promotes an experimental, playful and above all physically oriented use of the camera • can permit a very spontaneous approach to shooting • editing is crucial: putting fragmentary pictures together in an associative but coherent way requires considerable patience and determination • in contrast to narrative films the sequence of images does not arise from a chronologically organised story line
Documentary / interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provides opportunities to develop language competencies • on occasions, interviews could take place in the children's native language • camera can boost courage and build confidence, not least in dealing with adults and with majority population, and in taking charge of physical spaces • children become acquainted with the role of interviewer, which is advantageous if they are subsequently interviewed themselves • filming can prompt discussion and reflection • post-production is relatively uncomplicated as the criteria for selecting the video material are clear • challenging: requires children to overcome shyness and potentially intimidating situations, particularly in spontaneous interviewing • shows up children's language limitations • can be frustrating, for example when people refuse to enter into conversation
Digital photography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • motivating: a 'new', unfamiliar medium • picture can be viewed immediately (no developing necessary) • but a limited number of cameras can lead to negotiation difficulties
Disposable cameras	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gives children a high degree of control of time and space (when to take pictures and what to take pictures of) • closeness to their social and cultural contexts and experiences
Using family photos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • possible to work with personal material (reflection of the history behind the pictures is important (see Workpackage 5) • but potentially more intrusive on private experiences

The sense of audience

The awareness of audience is a key dimension in any form of communication. One of the aims of the CHICAM project was to encourage the participants to develop a sense of audience for their productions by enabling them to distribute and exchange their work. Nevertheless, building a meaningful sense of the audience was a slow process, which developed gradually over the course of the year; and (as we shall see in section 3), our attempts to develop intercultural communication *between* the clubs were only partially successful.

We can usefully differentiate between five potential 'audiences' in this respect:

1) The producer him/herself as audience

Through discussions with the media educator or the researcher, the young people can be encouraged to become critical viewers of their own work.

In the London club Clara could not understand why she should not film a drama sequence continuously and why different types of shots might be needed. The media educator had to explain that she needed these different shots and that she needed to condense the action in order to make the final edited story. It was through these discussions and the first hand experience of editing her own filming that she came to understand that the filming was a different experience from being the audience of the same action through film. For the first time she was able to distance herself from the action, position herself as an audience member and thus go on to become an actively critical viewer of her own work.

2) The adults involved in the club

The media educator, researcher, technical assistants and other adults involved in the club could serve as an initial ‘testing ground’ for responses to the students’ work.

In the Swedish club the children were editing a whole day’s outing into a finished film of 10 minutes. The media educator prompted them on several occasions to think from the point of view of an audience who had not been on the outing. He encouraged them to use a shot of a boat before the shots on the boat itself in order to help the audience to place the action. Again he suggested a shot of the whole castle before the shots of details within the castle. In this way the children were guided by the media educator to think of the unknown audience of their film at the same time as they compiled their own personal experiences of the outing.

3) Other club members (especially in the context of collaborative productions)

The dialogue that occurs during the process of production can often alert children to potential audience interpretations – or misinterpretations. For example, in the Dutch Club Jamal invented a story for an animation about a boy who sucks up his mother’s wet laundry with a vacuum cleaner. Another boy, Elias, helped him with the drawings. In this process a reflection about possible audience understandings took place:

Jamal is shocked when he sees how Elias has drawn the vacuum cleaner. Elias has drawn a Chinese vacuum, with lots of little stripes. Jamal points out to Elias that children from other countries will not recognise it as a vacuum cleaner. The object does not fit into the world Jamal envisions.

In some cases, for example in Holland, group viewing and discussion of work at the end of the session was specifically used to encourage this kind of shared reflection.

4) Family and friends from outside the club

Visits to the club from outsiders, and screenings of material to families in the wider community, often generated reflection about the productions. In some instances, it was possible to incorporate these ideas during the production process itself. For instance, in the Greek club the brother of one of the children could not understand the story of a film, and this helped the producers to reflect on it from the point of view of an audience:

This became clear from as early as the pilot, when one of the participants brought along his younger brothers (who later joined the club) in order to show them the animation that they had completed during that week. When the younger boys could not understand and follow the plot, it immediately became clear to the producers that they would have to be very careful about conveying a meaning with precision and clarity.

5) The children in the other CHICAM clubs

In a variety of contexts, at different times, the club members were made aware of the fact that their media work ran parallel to other projects being carried out in other countries and that film productions and thoughts and ideas could be exchanged. This was partly achieved through the use of the project website, but it was also emphasised through the exchange of small gifts, bilateral visits from the researchers and/or media-educators, and the display of world maps and group photographs of partner clubs. This intercultural communication between the clubs was one of the main ambitions of the project, and will be considered in more detail in Section 3 of this report. However, the degree of audience awareness among the children was sometimes quite variable as the following examples from the UK and Italy illustrate.

The making of the 'Hello' video from London shows that the producers had an audience in mind and tried to take account of this by using comprehensible symbols, or symbols that were safe and did not expose them.

This was the first production made specifically to put on the intranet, therefore with a specific (although unknown) audience in mind. The aim was to introduce themselves to the other clubs. The issue of language was very much part of the discussion about how we should go about this. They clearly had an idea of the other clubs being in different countries, speaking different languages, coming from different countries and living in different contexts. The girls were keen to include some mime and all of them felt they needed the prop of the map. When discussing what things to illustrate that they lived in London they, like the other clubs, fell back on cliches. They wanted a red letter box, a red double decker bus, signposts in English. There was a sense that they knew how to look at the place with the foreigners eyes but also that they needed to play safe. This was also reflected in the choices they made when editing their sections. Any amusing or slightly unconventional shots were excluded.

Likewise, the video about friendship from Rome shows that there was an awareness of the needs of an audience. The producers decided to make their story clearer by adding a voiceover explaining what happens and by choosing music to support the atmosphere.

After they saw the edited film, the children chose to dub in a narrator's voice. They realised the audience might not understand the story. Alongside the voice, they chose some songs by Ska-P, a Spanish ska group with quite a strong political profile. There were three fans of this group in the Club, the greatest being Antonio.

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He played an important role during this stage of production. It should be pointed out that the children in this case took great care when selecting music, music that suggested emotions whereas in the “Hello” video the choice of music was purely a question of taste. This great leap forward, in my opinion, came about after they watched and commented upon “Interview with the Vampire.” Giuseppe [media educator] said the music was important and we watched a scene both with and without the background music. However, I have noticed that this aspect struck them most when they watched the film.

Nevertheless, despite the decision to include an explanatory voice-over, it seemed that the children did not have a non-Italian-speaking audience in mind, since they did not even think of having the voice dubbed into other languages for the benefit of the children in the other clubs.

Reflecting experiences of migration

Many of the observations we have made above would obviously apply to all children, whether or not they are migrants. However, there are certain aspects that need to be taken into account when considering the specific experiences of the participants in the CHICAM project. We take up several of these points in more detail below, and in Deliverable 13, but a few general observations should be made at this point.

To some extent, the children’s position as migrants offered them a wider diversity of cultural experiences and forms on which to draw. The children in our study were, to a greater or lesser extent, ‘global’ media consumers, who were familiar with a broad range of local media cultures. This may have made them more willing to experiment and to play with media, and to use different forms and symbols.

The symbols employed by the children in the process of production were determined by their own cultural backgrounds, their values, beliefs, attitudes and experiences including those of migration itself and the negotiations of inclusion and exclusion in their new countries of residence. The production process required a negotiation between the children and the media educators and researchers. Within this context, the ‘texts’ that were produced were multi-layered and ‘open’ to many readings, possibly telling different things to different audiences. Clearly their particular experiences affected both how they chose to represent their lives and how they perceived things. The clubs offered opportunities for them to share particular experiences and perceptions. We needed to be aware of the different meanings that actions, images and processes might have.

In several of the clubs as part of the discussions of the themes there were opportunities to draw. These drawings were often very revealing of the children’s migration experiences. In the Netherlands, children who had lived in refugee reception centres did drawings and talked about the difficulties and emotional upsets of this experience. In Greece, making family trees and doing drawings related to family in preparation for the media productions were an opportunity for different formations of family to be discussed. Again in the Greek club children initiated a session in which they drew their experiences of war. In the UK, children drew their previous schools and talked about their experiences of moving schools. In these cases drawing also played a therapeutic role, allowing the

children to speak of memories and experiences at a distance. Talking about these drawings with each other was often the starting point for the video productions.

Interpreting images is culturally specific but it is also very personal. Several of the clubs looked at photographs taken by professional photographers that touched on aspects of the migration experience. The ways in which the children talked about these photographs revealed different levels of understanding and an emotional resonance that is also found in many of their video productions.

The videos they made can be interpreted on different levels. In some cases the children have set out to express their positions as migrants very forcefully (Song '*Tragoudi*') in others they have selected themes that express their everyday negotiations of inclusion and exclusion. The children in the Dutch club wanted to make a film about St Nikolaas because this was being celebrated in their school. This was a new festival for many and therefore strange. Making the video explored this theme for them. The children in Greece made an animation very early on that featured 'begging' as part of the narrative. This was at a time when so-called 'economic' migrants were being accused of street begging in many major Western European cities. A child in the UK made a video about objects that she had at home that were important to her, many of which connected in different ways with her country of origin. Others depicted almost poetically, a sense of travel, of loss of wandering as is the case in a video made by a boy in Greece

In other cases they set out to avoid depicting the migrant experience. However, this can tell its own story of exclusion or attempted inclusion. As educators, we needed to understand and respect this diversity, and be wary of offering the children a single media format as though it were an unquestioned norm.

However, there were also many constraints and difficulties in this process of offering choice. One of the main aims of the work was to enable the children to explore and represent their own experiences. But many of the children in our study had good reason to want to preserve their own privacy, and that of their families. Some of these were perhaps typical of children of their age; others were quite specifically to do with their status as refugees or migrants. Several of the children's families had left their country of origin under threat of violence, and their permission to remain in the host country had only been granted temporarily or was still being granted. This precarious status made them – and their families – justifiably suspicious of public visibility. This was a particularly important concern when it came to 'publishing' the children's productions on the internet (see below). On the one hand, we wanted to make the children's productions available to a wider audience; and we also wanted the children themselves to enjoy the self-esteem that this could provide. But we did not wish to do so at the cost of undermining or jeopardising their safety and their right to privacy.

More generally, the children's position as migrants – as members of minority groups who were often stigmatised or abused by members of the host society – created a more general form of insecurity. From what position was it possible for them to speak? The constitution of our clubs – which were generally only open to those who were defined as 'migrants' – in some ways compounded this marginal position; and, of course, part of our interest as researchers was precisely in encouraging the children to offer us perspectives and representations that were specific to their position as

migrants. In a sense, we could not avoid constructing the children as representatives of the broader category of 'migrant' – even though this was only one facet of their identities. The danger here was of 'othering' – and in the process of 'exoticising' or merely patronising – some essentialised 'migrant' experience.

However, the children did not necessarily want to be seen primarily as migrants, or to speak from that position – and some attempted quite strongly to disavow it. The Italian club spoke of those poor refugees in other clubs, clearly dissociating themselves from such a label. A boy in the UK club suddenly decided to leave because it was 'for refugees' although he himself was a refugee and he had been aware from the start what the aims and membership criteria of the club were (see section 3). It was clear that some at least had internalised the generally pejorative view of migrants (and more specifically of asylum seekers) that was prevalent within the wider society. 'Speaking as a migrant' was therefore the very last thing many of them would have wanted to do. For these reasons, our aim of enabling the children to represent and express perspectives that were specific to the migrant experience was, to say the least, quite problematic.

3. Intercultural Communication between the Children

One of the main aims of the CHICAM project was to foster and examine intercultural communications between the children, both within the clubs and, indeed primarily, *between* the clubs. There were several reasons why we wanted to foster such communication. The overall aim of the CHICAM project was to explore ways in which new media could enable children to participate in a wider public political arena and influence policy decisions that affect them. Given that we were working with refugee and migrant children, we also wanted to find ways in which their experiences could be more widely heard in policy-making and also among their own age group and by those professionals working with them in different settings. Our aim here was both to promote intercultural understanding and empathy and to enable children to enter new worlds. In a globalising, yet divided world new media can offer a route to promote personal connections across space and culture, the first step towards cultural understanding. We wanted to examine ways of promoting the latter. As media educators and researchers we were also interested in exploring how communication with particular audiences could change and enhance processes of production.

In this section we want to focus on the exchanges between the children and to track the types of intercultural communications that took place between the clubs using the project intranet. There were several factors that influenced these communications. Firstly, quite apart from the influences of the media educators themselves (see section 2), each group had its own distinctive context, social make-up and history. The clubs themselves had varied access to the internet and the children individually had different experiences of using internet communications.

We will first outline some of the social and learning contexts within which the exchanges took place. We will then track 3 types of exchanges that relate to specific genres and to different stages in the work of the clubs: firstly the initial 'hello' introductory videos which were types of documentaries; secondly a series of raps and other music related exchanges and, thirdly, animations. We then look at some general points that relate to identity play and motivational factors that are common to several types of video exchanges. We then look at some of the technical and motivational issues that the exchanges raise and at ways in which such exchanges can be improved and promoted. Finally we point to ways in which the exchanges were seen by the children to develop a greater media awareness.

Communication within the clubs

Building friendships and negotiating peer relations is discussed at length in a previous report⁵. However, in relation to the concerns of this report there are several points worth noting about communication within the clubs. Local social relations were of primary importance. In some clubs (Greece, Italy, Sweden, Germany) the children already knew each other well and they were used to communicating with each other even where they were from very diverse backgrounds. In others, they were usually meeting each other for the first time. For example, the UK club was very mixed. The children all came from different parts of the world and although they all attended the same

⁵ CHICAM report Children's Social Relations in Peer Groups: inclusion, exclusion and friendship. www.chicam.net

school they did not know each other. The UK report emphasises that it was rare for the children in the UK knowingly to communicate information about their pasts or places of origin. This was considered private information.

Communications between the children within the UK club took place in different ways and about different things:

- The processes of the club– snack time and group discussions, negotiating arrivals and departures, organising trips etc
- ongoing interactions/communication about non media issues: comments on appearance, reactions to the events of the school day, conflict and play conflict between girls and boys or between particular personalities, sorting out social hierarchies. These involved different languages, cultural expectations etc
- Communication about the media work: about technical matters as well as content.

Since the club was very mixed the communications listed above involved intercultural communication in the sense that each child came with a different cultural background. However, the communication was not about communicating these differences or understanding each other's cultures or interpreting what each meant by a certain action in relation to their original cultures. It was primarily aimed at negotiating the here and now. It was about interpreting the mainstream culture that they now lived in. It was about building their identities and the places of belonging in relation to the mainstream culture as represented by the school and communities and media they now lived with. Since this was partially a multicultural environment this included parts of their culture. However they needed to discover which parts were acceptable and which parts they needed to keep hidden.

Importantly, in contrast with the Swedish club, the mainstream culture that they encountered in the East End of London was itself heterogeneous. It was not English in the traditional sense but a changing mix of migrant cultures, reflecting a changing national identity still not accepted outside urban conurbations. The school made great efforts to acknowledge its mixed intake. The communities in which they lived were in some cases composed primarily of immigrants. At the same time images from the media might contradict this. Certainly the wider public debate about immigration and in particular asylum seekers reflected in the press and on the news made them outsiders. However, in their daily lives they were adjusting to living not in relation to a singular mainstream culture but to a very mixed collection of cultures and histories.

In Sweden the situation was different. The children were nearly all Kosovan Albanian and were living in an area of Sweden with very few immigrants. They knew each other well. They shared a joint history and were engaged in a much more direct negotiation with a mainstream culture that was much more homogeneous. Their communication within the club was therefore necessarily very different. When they spoke to the other clubs they spoke either as Kosovans or as Swedes or, indeed, as 'youth'. In the UK these speaking positions were more complex.

In many clubs the children who shared the same language would break into this on occasion but this was generally to exclude others, particularly adults. Performing for themselves and among

themselves was a large part of every club. The children often sought their own, adult-free places to film. Several of the national reports note that the children wanted local peers to become members of the clubs and enjoyed making local presentations of their work. Most communication within the clubs was done in the new national language and language acquisition was an important outcome of club membership for many of the children (see section 4).

For the project, this focus on local relations presented a challenge. All the children were aware from the start that they would be contacting other clubs in different countries and were excited by this aspect of the project. Yet it was difficult for them to envision what such contact would mean, especially as it was to take place through the use of visual communications on the internet – a new area for most of them. Issues of self-representation were key. The Italian report raises important points here, illustrating how easy it is to stereotype and the ways in which the children, through their mastery of the media, were able to develop more nuanced and sophisticated portrayals. The clubs enabled them to work on their identities in relation to the society they were now living in, an important stage in developing communication beyond their local situations.

I should like all the same to stress how important media education is in terms of teaching multi-culture, and what innovations it can make. To do this, we can compare two videos made by the club: in the first one, “something from my country,” the children act a stereotype of themselves. What they had to do was to bring something from home that reminded them of their lives in their country of origin. They brought souvenirs or some other tacky item. This takes place during the first month of Club activities, and the children respond by meeting what they imagine to be my and their media educator’s expectations. Shots are static, from the waist up, the setting is unimportant, as is lighting, and the interviews are extremely schematic and tautological.

In the second video, “PiazzaVittorio,” in an area with high immigration, the children ask some people to define their identities. Many definitions emerge from this context: from very close ties with the country of origin to a vaster cultural identity (being African) or a mixture (being half and half). The video was shot during the final stages of work at the Club and, in spite of there being several formal errors, its quality is decidedly better. From this quick overview, it is easy to see how the media can be used in multi-cultural education, getting out of school, looking at reality, and taking it back via the video camera. Getting over such an approach whereby an immigrant pupil is merely the bearer of some national culture.

But I’d like to stress another aspect, concerning the use the children made of the video camera when they were not consciously making a film, but in the gaps between activities. The children always had video cameras to hand during meetings. If you look at these films again, you can see how interested they are in details. They are not only interested in the physical details of their friends, but rather their symbols. With the video camera, the body becomes central and it becomes the means whereby people can talk about their identities. And so you see close-ups of singers’ T-shirts, peace headbands, chains with peace symbols, marijuana-shaped charms, the Jamaican flag, Tao symbols, Crosses, skulls, and much more besides. Via the media, your identity is not just what you say in words: it is also – and especially – a question of expressing a style or music in videos, or the body language you use. I’m almost certain that if I’d asked them to make a video about their symbols, the outcome would not have been as immediate as what emerges from their spontaneous shots. The question of identity is an elusive one for anyone, and it is all the more so for special ages like infancy and adolescence.

In summary the communication between the children in the individual clubs was already one of intercultural communication both in the sense that the individuals within the clubs came from diverse backgrounds but also because the everyday lives of the children were in relation to the mainstream culture/s that they were encountering for the first time as a result of migration.

Communication between the clubs

The 'hello' videos – the first exchange

All the clubs began by learning how to use the equipment and by making some initial productions together, with the assistance of the media educator. These productions were mainly group efforts. Once the children had learned the basic skills we began to think about introducing the clubs to each other. Each club made a 'hello' video introducing themselves to the other clubs. These were to focus on location, club members and countries of origin. They were placed on the intranet. This acted as a trial of the communication process and several interesting issues arose. For the first time the clubs were making productions for a specific, if unknown, audience.

Even though these were group productions there was some reticence and natural nervousness. The children were often nervous and reluctant to expose themselves. They focused on where they came from, using a map, rather than giving any details about the present environment. The Swedish club was very keen to present a good looking image and also tried to adapt to what they knew about the audience, presenting themselves in different languages.

The girls started to choose pictures, they liked themselves. They had very firm conceptions of pictures they liked. If they, themselves, were not good-looking, they rejected the pictures. They immediately loaded the films, chose the pictures and cut them into the new version. They also went out in the corridor and shot new pictures. Without us knowing about it, they presented themselves in English. Out in the corridor they found Avdo, who had dropped in a couple of minutes but then left. The girls had convinced him to participate. He introduced himself in German. They also found Mohammed, who also introduced himself in English.

In most clubs the videos were downloaded from the intranet and viewed as a group on a larger screen. Initial reactions were mixed. They noticed details about the children: age differences, who was good looking, who they thought they might like to be friends with. For some clubs the videos did present important challenges to stereotypes. The Swedish club remarked on the dark skin of one of the UK girls. In Italy they thought that the German film came from Morocco because the girls were wearing the hijab (head scarf). The Dutch club asked where the mountains and snow were in the Swedish film. Comments about locations were also important. They compared the fabric of their respective school buildings, the Swedish and UK schools comparing favourably against the Greek and Italian. The rural location of the Swedish club surprised the UK. Other clubs noted the stereotypical red bus in the UK video.

There was then some exchange of questions and answers between the clubs checking ages, who had done what in making the films, etc. However, these initiatives were largely adult led. The children were unsure what to do about these videos. On the whole they ignored the content and were only

interested either in what others in their own local groups were saying or noticing or they remarked on the details as listed above. A level of competition crept in: which production looked more professional, which had used the best music, which children were better looking. The Italian report points to a certain alienation, as this extract from their field diary shows.

The films take a long time to download, and all the children become increasingly impatient. They don't seem interested in seeing or contacting the other Clubs. We need to inject some enthusiasm into them.

They're wary about making comments, and I have to be a bit heavy-handed. They don't even seem interested in what children from the other Clubs might be saying about THEIR films. There was a lot of whispering, but nobody would speak out. For example, they were saying that Sweden is a beautiful country, but Italy is even more so. Greece looks like Italy, with all those graffiti. In terms of the German film, "I'm happy, I'm having fun," they said, "Why do the Brits get something to eat and we don't?" "Why do they have a football pitch, and we don't?" "Their school is bigger and better."

(extract from field diary)

As the researcher there points out there was no feeling that the other children were "people like us".

Nevertheless this first exchange started the ball rolling. We needed to find ways of developing these initial contacts and building some more meaningful dialogues. These contacts also raised some important motivational issues and logistical problems that we will elaborate below.

Rapping and music exchanges

In Section 1 we referred to the importance of music in the children's lives. This became one of the shared platforms that encouraged the children to communicate with each other. The Greek report highlights this.

The main element that caught the attention and the interest of the children when viewing the other club productions was music. While they remained overall uninterested and kept expressing their lack of interest in negative and dismissive terms, when the Italian production started with images of Rome and the soundtrack of Eminem, the children started slowly moving to the beat. They all recognised it, and although they were not sure about the song title or the singer's name, they found in it an element of familiarity: one had the CD, somebody else had heard it somewhere, etc. Although the lyrics were in English and they did not really understand them, the music as a symbol of an international youth culture was powerful and persistent. As a result, the way of accessing the broader international community (of migrant children) that we were trying to create, was primarily through the recognition of potent mainstream symbols.

We would like to highlight two sets of exchanges. The first tracks the exchanges that centred around a rap, *The Place to Be*, made in the UK, by David, on the theme of the importance of school. The second centres on a video made in the Greek club, made by Elcin and Rengin, using more traditional music: *Tragoudi*.

The Place to Be

David's hero was the US rapper Tupac. As well as making the rap he wanted to have a discussion with other project members about whether Tupac was still alive or dead. The Place to Be was put on the web in early April 2003. Around the same time David placed a question on the General Discussion Room about Tupac,

Author	Comment
kduck United Kingdom 08/04/03	on tupac yo man iam k duck as in kilo duck so what yous lot thing of pac is he alive or dead thing

The Swedish report highlights the exchange that resulted from the rap.

When "The Place to Be", dated to April 1, 2003, was put up on the web site, it immediately was followed by responses from most countries. The children really appreciated both performance and music style. There were comments such as "Hi, as you know I love your video and its really good" (Germany), "Fuck world: Your rap is very beautiful, but we don't like the music" (Italy), "Your video is more than beautiful, because is still rap and I like rap very much" (Italy) or "We were surprised that you can jump backwards off the ground on the table. Did you do that with the computer? We liked the way you walked around in the school and that you were allowed to stand on the tables." (The Netherlands).

Boys in both the Dutch and Swedish clubs made their own "rap versions". It was the fact that the clubs were now seen to be encouraging subjective performances and the acceptance of young people's own culture, which had an empowering effect on some children in the clubs. Two boys in the Swedish club started immediately after they had watched the U.K. production. They grabbed a camera and went outside and started their improvisations. Mohammed was the performer, the artist, the dancer and Ibish was filming and making the pep talk. Mohammed's rap initially followed a global format but ends with an euphoric improvisation taking a personal style with influences from both Arabic and Albanian culture. In this single performance we can see how various cultural influences are melted together to a hybrid embodied culture.

However, while David was pleased with the flattering responses, it is interesting to see that the other clubs' attempts at being cool and enthusiastic were misread by him. When he opened the Italian replies (19.5.03) he was shocked at the title (Fuck World) and refused to reply to any of them. We tried to explain that they had not understood how rude such an expression might be and so any rudeness was not intentional; that they were trying to be cool but had got it wrong but he wouldn't have it. He felt that the response from the Netherlands about walking on the table (1.6.03) was also inappropriate and countered the spoken message of the rap which was a plea for young people to get an education and go to school. Despite the fact that the other messages were all positive he refused to reply to most of them. This was compounded by the lack of response to his query about Tupac. In effect the other clubs had failed the test! They had latched onto the form but ignored the message.

The report from the Netherlands also mentions the rap exchange:

The children watched the rap video from the UK about school life. They had great difficulties in understanding what it is exactly about (because of the language), they did however follow the movements. Beaugarçon translated the title of the rap into Dutch and wanted to know where this is. They noticed the visual tricks (and assumed the computer makes that happen). They were sure a rap can be about any topic. Their observations were put on the intranet. Also the UK rap video stimulated the boys to make a film with Najib's rap (he did one on the video diary tape) and to put this one on the net.

David did reply to the Dutch rap, making sure that he retained his expert status, and making the most of the subcultural capital he had demonstrated. Interestingly he used a false name but one related to the Place to Be clearly indicating who he was and establishing his credentials to comment and give advice.

Author	Comment
Dan (rapper from UK) United Kingdom 10/06/03	Rapping Were you speaking Dutch? I thought it was ok your rapping. it was a little too fast. Your friend should stop moving his head around! Overall 5/10 kilo duck

Another member of the UK club also responded but more negatively.

Author	Comment
Mohammed United Kingdom 10/06/03	Not Rap! Hello! I am not impressed with your rapping. It is more like talking. David in our club is a better rapper. Hope to hear from you soon Mohammed

This was not helpful to the Dutch boys who did not reply. As the Dutch report notes, a strong element of competition had entered the exchange.

Song (Tragoudi)

Another production that captured attention in terms of triggering communication, was Elcin's, in the Greek club, rendering of a Turkish poem by Nazim Hikmet in Greek. Elcin plays a traditional musical instrument, the saz, while Rengin sings. Elcin had set up the situation, auditioned the girls to choose the strongest singer and set up the camera using the LCD screen (see project report - Picture Me In). The two are sitting facing the camera.

"Tragoudi" was watched enthusiastically in the German club. It was ranked first in the club's film jury's evaluation. The following table contains the comments the children/adolescents made in their

jury papers and shows how positively the film was judged by club members from Turkish/Kurdish migration backgrounds:

Name	Tragoudi
Hakan (Turkey)	IYI Good
Taskania (Dom. Republic)	A bit boring A bit good
Susan (USA)	Boring
Fatma (Turkey)	Really beatitufuuuuul. seninle gurur duyuyoruz Ali Super, super, super, super > Best Musiiiiic beatutifuuuuul
Meral (Turkey, Kurdish)	Idea: very good Camera: very good Music: very good Super: very good
Serife (Turkey, Kurdish)	SUPER Best
Dilan (Turkey) (Friend of Serife, who attended this club meeting as a guest)	Music: very good Story: normal Camera: good Idea: good Very good

There are several factors here. First the instrument and the style were familiar to most of these children even if the language (Greek) was not. This created a shared platform incorporating both music (see section 1) and ethnic identity which also allowed them to communicate in their own language, Turkish, and take control of the communication.

Author	Comment
meral Germany 20/06/03 	merhaba merhaba sesgin ve boran nasilsiniz sesinizi cok begendim ikinizdeharika soyluyorsunu ben de kurdum ama sizin dilinizi anlamiyorum ikinizde cok tatli buldum hayatinizda basarilar dilerim kendinize iyi bakin herkese selam optum gulegule.ben meral ⁶ .
	<i>No replies for this topic!</i>

Unfortunately, Elcin did not have the same confidence in written Turkish and was reticent about replying. The German report also hypothesises on the importance of the non verbal style of the piece.

⁶ Hallo Elcin and B. How are you? I liked your voices a lot. You both sing very well. I am Kurdish, too, but I don't understand your language. I think you're both really cute. Wish you a lot of success in life. Take care. Love to everyone. Kisses. Bye. I am meral.

Besides this cultural proximity, a, so to speak, non-verbal aspect may also have had a part to play in the young people's enthusiastic reactions. As the lyrics were in Greek they could not have been understood by any of the children/adolescents, yet the film was understood on an aesthetic level without the children demanding that they should comprehend it on the level of text or content. Possibly this type of appropriation through non-cognitive understanding is similar to the way in which music and music videos are received in everyday life. Understanding the text or content is not primarily important but rather the aesthetic experience.

However this was one of the aspects about the rap that annoyed David who felt that none of the clubs had taken on board the message he was sending about the importance of getting an education. For him rap was about meaning not just form.

The Swedish report sums up the importance of different types of music in creating a suitable footing for intercultural communication to take place between the children.

We found that the children appreciated films that were more open-ended, such as a performance of some kind, which did not require following a story line. In addition to the rap videos already mentioned, for example, the production "Tragoudi" from Greece. The children admired the performer, the boy playing an instrument, in such a straightforward way. The clever use of Eminem in the Italian club led to vibrations and sharpened senses in all of the other clubs. The tune "We are the champions..." , also from Italy, led to a response in the Swedish club, the tune was picked up and transcended into a Swedish lyric over to Albanian music, once again a hybridised performance. Global tunes created the contact that was needed and made the CHICAM project more attractive. Suddenly, the children realised that CHICAM was about our lives, our culture, rather than just being a school project. The very politically correct productions that initially were released for exchange in the project, portraying clever students interviewing each other or their teachers in the school environments, did not create very much excitement and curiosity. There is a dominant narrative paradigm, a closed narrative, and perhaps also an idea within the educational system, with certain expectations of what children should do, such as school reportages of the type "my school" with interviews of teachers, students e t c.

Animations and 'story' narratives

Several clubs explored the use of animations, particularly claymations, to tell simple stories. This was a popular genre in their television viewing (e.g. The Simpsons), associated both with humour and social comment, an ideal combination for this age group. It is also a highly visual form, reducing the need for verbal communication. Importantly it offers the possibility of telling personal stories at a distance, with less danger of exposure for the children. There were several other drama narratives acted out and filmed in the clubs. However, these were harder for the children to follow, both because they involved greater use of verbal language which was hard to understand and also because they were seen by the children to compare unfavourably with more professional productions they were familiar with on television. Although these productions were put on the intranet they did not provoke much exchange. For that reason we are focusing here on the claymations. These were initiated by Sweden who made a series of short pieces. The Dutch report refers to one of these:

The children watched the Swedish animation about the little man and his trousers (tearing apart) and about football ('Yes, that is Beckham!'). The general response was: 'They are the best, they are masters in filming.' They liked especially the funny stories and the creative way the stories were visualised. They easily got the point.

The use of two universal platforms, football and humour were appreciated in all the clubs and encouraged the children to make similar productions. The Greek report highlights that these videos encouraged their club to explore this new form. This was one of the aims of the exchanges; that the children should gain ideas from each other. However, the children here used this to impress a local audience rather than to promote further exchanges

One thing that captivated and mobilized the interest of the children was novelty. When viewing the other clubs productions, they were fascinated by what looked unfamiliar, and to a certain extent, unfeasible, to them. The Swedish clay animations were very popular in our club. They were eager to be able to do something similar themselves. They did so in the end of the CHICAM year with the 'Pepe and the monster' production. This did not only reflect their interest on the new things that the other clubs introduced, but also the effect that they would have and the impression that they would make on their own peers here in Greece, were they in a position through the club to do something similar.

The German club also made a series of claymations which were appreciated by the other children. There was an exchange between the Dutch and German clubs. What fascinated the Dutch children were the details and the 'tricks'.

'At the beach' was fascinating: the beach looked real because of the use of pictures. Some of the kids would like to know how the boy did it. Only Beaugarçon thinks this is a stupid question: 'They will not tell, because we will then copy the trick'.

The discussion on the intranet was full of questions.

Author	Comment
<p>Worldkids Netherlands 13/06/03</p> 	<p>About the animation</p> <p>The animation was very good. We liked the use of clay. We liked the sounds. Because of the pictures the beach looked like a real beach.</p> <p>Here are some questions about your animation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How much time did you spend to prepare and to make the animation? - Whom does the pictures belong to? - Who made the shooting? - How have you create the sand?

Author	Comment
MUSTAFA Germany 14/06/03	HALLO ALSO ICH HAB drei schtunden von dem film gebraucht das war lange zeit. die foto geheuren mir das habe ich in TUNISIEN gemacht. der film habe ich selber gemacht. der sand habe ich von TUNISIEN GEBRACGT
MUSTAFA (translation) Germany 14/06/03	HALLO Hallo Well it took me tree hours to make the film It was a long time The pictures are mine I took them in TUNISIA I made the film myself I brought the sand from TUNISIA MUSTAFA

The German report notes several interesting aspects to this exchange.

What is noticeable in this short exchange between the CHICAM club in Holland and Mustafa is that concrete questions are asked which are answered in an equally concrete way. Presumably such definite and concrete questions made it easier for Mustafa to reply. He did not need to think up points of contact for his answer. Possibly feedback containing more general statements and less explicit recognition is less likely to encourage a response from the producers.

What is most interesting here is how Mustafa invokes Tunisia and identifies totally with it. He was a boy who found concentration difficult. The recognition of his efforts by the Dutch club was clearly important. Because of the success of his production he could publicly identify with his origins. This form, more generally associated with youth and humour, allowed a more personal exchange. He succeeded in relating something about his origins and migration and was able to acknowledge it publicly because of the Dutch questions and positive response. By allowing him distance the form also allowed him to risk exposure. Telling stories through a 'third person' such as puppets, cut out animations or, as in this case claymations, is a method increasingly used in therapeutic work to help come to terms with and to represent traumatic experiences or experiences that are highly personal. In this case it works well to promote an important exchange about origins and personal history.

The German report elaborates:

The way in which pride and identification are expressed in Mustafa's response is also particularly noticeable. Mustafa emphasized the fact that he has made the film himself. It is striking how many words he uses which refer to himself, though this is partially determined by the questions („Well, I did...“, „the photos belong to **me** I took them in Tunisia“ “I did that **myself** ,” “I did....”).

Continued over the page...

Mustafa's pride – which comes clearly to the fore in his response – was already to be felt after he had finished making the animation film. It is noticeable, too, that he highlights Tunisia as the place from which the photos and the sand come and emphasizes this twice by using capitals (“TUNISIA”). Although the sand was created with the help of a beige-coloured bath towel, Mustafa assigns to it a Tunisian and hence ‘authentic’ origin: “I brought the sand from TUNISIA”. It seems as though he was so proud of the reality effect he had produced in his audience (“Because of the pictures the beach looked like a real beach”) that he did not want to admit to using a trick. He was prepared to use false information in his reply to maintain the impression he had created.

Identity play

There were several types of exchanges that cut across genres. These reflected a more general use of the project for forms of identity play and finding shared platforms for exploring different aspects of identity in adolescence. We have already mentioned that the initial exchanges were mainly about noticing details and asking specific questions. These were aimed at trying to find similarities. Children noticed games that other children were playing in the videos and wanted to share these, like music, utilising global culture to make contacts. They discussed footballers and exchanged information about players. The Greek report highlights this.

Football was also central in terms of finding a common interest, a common place as a platform of communication, and at the same time in terms of emphasizing their integration to the new, local society as well as a wider international culture, in terms of keeping up with their times etc - choice of big European teams that they knew from Champions League (i.e. Real Madrid and Manchester United instead of the less well-known teams that they supported in the country of residence). Awareness of possible common elements along their age lines etc.

They noticed others they were attracted to and wanted to initiate boyfriend/girlfriend contacts with. One boy in particular, from the German club, asked several girls but others also commented about the attractiveness of other club members and wanted more individual contact.

These extracts are from the intranet discussion lines

Author	Comment
<p>Hakan Germany 28/05/03</p> 	<p>Hallo Marcela hallo Marcela wie gehst dir habt ihr neues film gedreht die geschichte ist sehr schön musik ist auch schön ihre film ist gefällt mir wieso schreibst du nicht zu mir ++++ ++++ WILLST DU MIT MIR GEHEN++++</p>

Author	Comment
Hakan Germany 28/05/03	RE: Hallo Marcela Hello Marcela hello Marcela how are you you have made a new film the story is very nice music is also nice I like your film why don't you write me ++++ ++++Do you want to be with me++++

Author	Comment
HAKAN Germany 29/05/03 	HALLO HALLO ich heiße hakan und möchte wissen wer das hübsche mädchen mit den langen haaren und der schwarzen hose und dem hellen t-shirt ist?TSCHÜSS
Hakan translation Germany 28/05/03	Hello hello my name is hakan and i want to know who is the pretty girl with the long hair and the black trousers and the bright t-shirt bye.

Wanting to communicate with others who were speakers of the same language was an important motivator for many children. As we saw above there were some communications in Turkish. There were also some initiatives in Spanish.

Author	Comment
Maria United Kingdom 04/03/03	RE: hola! hola! Hola mi nombre es Maria yo bengo de colombia y yo estoy en londres por 1ano y me gusta mucho su video porque me gusta la musica y tambien todo lo que ustedes ponen en el video !felicitaciones! nos vemos despues.
Maria United Kingdom 04/03/03	RE: hola! hola nos llamamos luis y jhonnatan somos del rico Peru.Mandanos una foto para conocerte mejor.Mandanos tu numero de telefono para poder conversar mejor.Nuestro numero es XXXXXXXXX.
Taskania Germany 22/05/03	RE: hola! Holla mi nombre es Taskania yo bengo de la Replica Dominicana yo tabien espero verlos A los Dos .Disculpame porque Yo no lepuedo mandarla Foto que ustede me pidieron pero despue Yo sela mando,Mi numero de telefono es xxxxxxxx y Mi numero de Handi es xxxxxxx OK. Yo quiro que Ustede memande una Foto de Ustede Dos pero no los Dos Juntos cada uno una, Porfabo claro si Ustede pueden Taskania.

Most of these more personal and playful elements were not related to any particular video. They were scattered among other discussion lines related specifically to video productions. It was difficult for the children, with the current design of the discussion lines on the intranet, to find a suitable place for them and to be able to follow them up. The children felt a little at a loss as to how their desire for more personal contacts fitted into the plan of the project and the research themes. They requested more concrete contacts and so the clubs began to exchange hard copies of photos of club members and locations, bags of sweets and football posters. In some clubs these gifts were a success in others the contact still felt too dislocated. For the Swedish club this was a success:

The exchanging of gifts had a positive impact on the children's interest in other clubs. The gifts were a signal of that the other clubs were real, not just imaginations floating around in cyberspace:

Greece had sent a CD they had called "Candies", which we watched in the computer. It turned out to be the candies we had sent some time before. A kind of visual thanks. Very nice! The atmosphere was good. Hana found it amusing to recognize the candies she had selected herself. We also sat for quite a while to look at the poster of Ajax a gift from the Netherlands, and admired the Swedish player Zlatan, who was placed in the centre of it.

The feelings of distance between the clubs discussed above brings us to some of the problems that the project experienced in relation to promoting the exchanges. Despite the difficulties, however, the general feeling from all the national reports was that if the clubs had developed further and had had more time these initial ventures into more personal contacts could have been fostered and would have grown in the directions indicated above: shared language and country/region of origin, attraction relationships, special interest groups.

Communication problems

Although a certain number of exchanges took place between the groups, the communication processes, as regards the amount, the intensity, frequency, continuity and reciprocity, did not come up to the project partners' expectations. Nevertheless, worthwhile discoveries were made along the way which could be important for future projects involving intranet communication and exchanging media. Different structural, technical and motivational factors inhibited the exchange of media and communication between groups

Technical factors

Internet access

All the clubs had internet access in theory, but in practice this was not always straightforward. This was a major and unexpected issue and took several forms. There was an enormous difference in the type of internet access the clubs had. Several clubs did not have access to the internet in their club locations and when they did it was not broadband. This meant that videos had to be downloaded and shown off the website or that the children had to visit a different location, thus separating the processes of viewing and responding, the processes of production with distribution

and response. This also caused logistical problems. The Italian club, for example, had to go to an internet café which proved difficult with the whole group. The Greek club had internet access but not broadband. The UK club worked in a very well computer equipped school while the Dutch club only had occasional access in the headmaster's office. Our experience suggests a need for caution in interpreting official statistics in relation to both educational and domestic internet access. For these reasons the experience of using the site was often problematic, as this extract from the Dutch report suggests.

After a slow start in terms of exchange, we took the opportunity to visit the CHICAM website on an afternoon once there were only three kids left somewhere in the second module (March 2003). We first had a look ourselves to be sure there was anything on. We could use the connection in the headmaster's room occasionally. However the connection was very slow and it took a long time to load the movies. The children got very bored. Still this was a start. The three kids were mainly interested in seeing the productions, not very much in responding through the website. This was the one and only time we actually visited the CHICAM website. From then on, watching productions from other clubs meant for the media educator to download the productions at home so we could play them in the club and watch them on the monitor (a big screen). We always watched with the whole group, collected responses that the researchers put on the net. Also we collected reactions to their productions, printed them for the children with the space to respond again.

Clearly this changed the whole experience and took the control away from the children thus lowering motivation. The lack of immediacy and connection affected the communication. This problem also relates to other factors to do with the design and functions of the website which are discussed below. However, in light of the rhetoric about access to the internet, especially in schools, this problem illustrates graphically what some of the actual issues are on the ground and the need to determine what access really means. But this has another dimension which involves how media and new media are perceived and what expertise is available.

Expertise and orientation

A major issue here is the orientation of the club work and the experience of the media educators, the researchers and the children with using the internet. As we outlined in section one many of the children had very little experience of the internet. This was seen by some clubs as a problem because the children were reticent and needed a lot of help. In others they had heard about the internet and its possibilities and they wanted more immediate chat possibilities than were available in the project. Italy reports some disappointment here.

They didn't know the ins and outs of the internet, but they knew what it was capable of in terms of contacts. This turned them off our web site. They thought they could make just-in-time contacts, get immediate replies, know other groups quickly, and download videos fast. They thought it would be more of a game.

And again from Italy

The films take a long time to download, and all the children become increasingly impatient. They don't seem interested in seeing or contacting the other Clubs. We need to inject some enthusiasm into them.

On the other hand, there was also some reluctance on the part of the adults to focus on the internet and the emphasis remained on production. The Greek report describes this as a problem of orientation on the part of the adults.

Our inflexibility to shift from the productions to the communication side and to invest the time that would be needed in terms of turning the children towards the idea of a broader community with which they would have the opportunity to communicate. Our inability to create a sense of a wider 'imagined' community and to present the club as a tool and as an opportunity in a convincing way and to inspire the children to turn to other children abroad and to imagine them as an audience instead of limiting them to whatever they saw as an audience within our club.

The Dutch report sees the issue as more to do with the media.

Structural problems relate to the fact that making movies and Intranet communication are two very different things. However, watching productions from other clubs brings these together and we have experienced that this can work! Besides, producing is much more fun and they came to have fun.

This issue of the potentials and connections of the old and the new media was wider than individual clubs. The ambitions of the project were perhaps too great here and it was difficult to balance production with communication and for all involved to fully explore both production and ways in which new audiences and communications can be developed and be fun in the time and with the facilities available. This was a central issue that perhaps the project did not address at the set up stage.

Website design and control

The website was designed by one of the partners in the project and offered the possibility of viewing the videos and writing comments starting discussions about the productions. It was accessed via a project code and the videos were uploaded centrally in order for the site to be monitored properly. Some of these mechanisms caused some frustration. There was a feeling that the site was not flexible enough and that the central control caused delays and that the design was not playful enough to engage the children. It was difficult to balance the need to monitor the site and protect the children with the need for more immediacy. This was compounded by the fact that, on several occasions, videos were sent in the wrong format; clubs also had different meeting times, different holidays and differing levels of attendance. Some of the frustration caused is evident in the national reports.

The candies, the CD and the poster created an interest in other clubs among the children and were perhaps more appreciated in clubs where feedback on the intranet was lacking. Most of the Swedish productions were put up on the web site, when clubs had closed in the other partner countries. There were other technical obstacles as well, some productions had poor quality and the Internet connection was sometimes poor or non-existent. These obstacles were mostly out of our control.

Technical limitation of the web

One disappointing fact about the web is that moving image is still only possible in a very small window. This was another reason why some of the clubs chose to download the productions and show them on a bigger screen. This is an example of our expectations and ideas being some way ahead of technological development. For the children this meant that the videos were less impressive and often difficult to watch. They lost detail and the sound quality was often not as good as it should have been, hindering understanding. Some formats worked better than others and this is an area that needs exploration.

These technical points are very important and point clearly to ways in which future projects could be improved. However, in the context of working with potentially excluded young people such as refugee and migrant children it is the motivational factors that are sometimes glossed over and that need serious consideration.

Motivational factors

Language

In fact it is difficult to separate the structural, technical and motivational factors as they all affect each other in practice. For example the fact that the communication through the website required written exchanges was a major issue for many children. In addition their exchanges then had to be translated into English requiring the adults to mediate the communications. Again this meant that the children were dependent on the adults and also inhibited in their expressions. Sweden elaborates:

Language was a continuous problem to handle. Some children were quite good at expressing themselves in English, but they had poor spelling, which made it very difficult trying to communicate on the intranet. So, after getting into the intranet, which often took some time, they had little patience left and could just produce one or two lines of writing.

We talked about how to communicate with the other clubs. Hana said: "Can't we chat?" I explained that in order to chat on the intranet, there has to be a forum there. But as we did not have a connection for the moment, we started to write a letter on Fredrik's computer. Hana had poor spelling and I had to help her with almost every word, but she knew exactly what she wanted to say. She asked for a pen friend. And she had already selected her pen friend from the Hello videos. Now, she did not really remember who it was.

Continued over the page...

Which country? She thought. At first she mentioned U.K. but then she decided on Greece. While Hana and I were struggling with the English, Fredrik and Rigmor succeeded in wiring up. Then both Hana and Mohammed wrote their own little letters to thank Holland and Greece for candies, CD and the Ajax poster. Mohammed stayed at the computer and I assisted him. He was good in spelling and writing. Rigmor took over to help Hana with her letter. We did not have so much more time for other things.

And from Italy:

None of them was any great shakes in the use of internet. They were all completely dependent upon the media educator and myself, and they also depended upon us for language questions. After the first buzz of excitement, the children quickly became bored. They became distracted and used the computers to do other things, such as video games or Microsoft paint.

To have been able to have a direct chat room would have helped here but with the clubs meeting at different times and the difficulties with the internet access this would have been impossible.

The burden of representation

We discussed earlier the question of the children's identities and the ways in which these were being negotiated with the mainstream culture and the other children in the clubs. Here the issue is slightly different. We found a strong feeling in several of the clubs that the children did not want to be speaking as refugees and/or migrants. They did not want to focus on their immigration 'status' and how they might be perceived as 'other'. Rather their interest in communicating with the other clubs was to find similarities in the here and now. This conflicted in many ways with the research themes and our interest in the children making videos representing their experiences as refugees and discussing these with other refugees in the other clubs. This dilemma is picked up in several of the national reports. The Greek report expressed it as follows:

There was a lack of interest on behalf of the children to engage in endless discussions about the experience of migration and to create more and more representations of themselves as migrants or refugees.

The Dutch report also reflects this dilemma:

At particular moments, the common ground of the clubs became more important. Rana wanted to ask the children from the Swedish club which country they are from, and Elias responded surprised: 'From Sweden, of course!'

This was a strong theme that was discussed in the report about the children's peer relations⁷. The overriding concern was to make friends in the place they were now living in. This meant both with children in their own diasporic community but also with those from other, including majority communities. Thus, making contact with children in other countries was initially interesting and had a high curiosity value but seemed remote from their everyday 'real' lives. They were not interested in investing in these virtual connections in the longer term.

Solutions

There are four main areas in which, in hindsight, we feel we would have approached the communication between the clubs differently.

The project was very ambitious in its aim of combining both the production of videos and the internet exchange. This meant that in some clubs the emphasis was more on production than on communication. We needed to change this emphasis and **focus more on communication**. There are ways in which we could have staged and modified this emphasis. Initially the communication could have been with simpler visuals using digital still cameras for instance.

Several of the partners felt that the project **website needed to be more child-oriented**. We could have included a website design phase in which the children experimented with their own designs and these could have been incorporated into the final version. Children could have had their own pages and there could have been some more playful elements to the main pages.

In order to address the issue of needing **more direct communication** we could have experimented with audio messaging using voice and music and organising direct time chat rooms that some of the clubs could use. This could have overcome some of the problems of having to write but it would not have addressed all the language issues.

Wider local participation in the clubs could have addressed some of the concerns of the children about being labelled as well as their need to build local friendships. This would have been difficult within the terms of the project design. However, incorporating different forms of local participation might also have added useful dimensions to the inter club communications and offered a more differentiated view on the processes of integration and cross cultural communication.

Communicating into the policy debate

Finally, one of the main aims of the CHICAM project was to find ways of using the communication between the clubs to 'put the children's voice' into policymaking decisions through the use of new media. Essentially this is a discussion about refugee and migrant children's participation in the wider public debate and their role as citizens. This has several problematic elements. The communication here is essentially unequal but also unclear. It is self evidently important for children to be able to represent what happens in their lives and for them to voice how they feel about these experiences.

⁷ CHICAM report Children's Social Relations in Peer Groups: inclusion, exclusion and friendship. www.chicam.net

However, one of the problems we encountered was one of voice. Which voice did they choose to speak with? The project asked them to speak as migrants and refugees and in addition as children, to address their lives in categories that are determined by adults. From their responses it is clear that they often resisted this positioning. They also resisted seeing their lives either in the categories that the research questions created or in terms of the differences and inequality implied by those questions. They resisted being 'representatives' but rather spoke from their individual lives in their present circumstances. But even then they avoided making public experiences that were either emotionally painful or intellectually difficult. In many cases we are required to interpret, to read between the lines, utilising their media productions along with other data to create a voice that will address policy concerns

These are questions of power. What experience do children - especially these children - have, of their opinions being listened to? In what ways can they conceive of a project of this nature making a difference to their lives beyond the immediate and the personal? Such questions pose another set of questions that concern how policy makers listen to children and how children can be encouraged to participate intellectually in public debate. Media can be the vehicle but there need to be ongoing opportunities and education, platforms through which they are heard and the results that they see. As part of this process the project is planning to take some of the results and recommendations made in the research reports back to the children to discuss and prioritise. These discussions will form part of the final project report.

4. Media Education Issues

CHICAM was an ‘action research’ project: it involved setting up and undertaking a challenging series of media education activities that would in turn become the focus and the vehicle for research. Our findings and recommendations on the media education dimensions of the project can partly be found in the accompanying Deliverable 13, which is written primarily for fellow educators. In the final section of this report, we provide a more research-based account of the educational issues that were raised.

As we outlined in section 2 above, the educational approaches and philosophies of the CHICAM clubs were somewhat diverse, as were the media forms and models that were employed. As we noted, all the clubs met weekly after school hours - most of them in the school building – with some extra full days at the weekend or during school holidays. As we pointed out in Deliverables 9 and 10, some schools still seem to have a restraining effect on creativity for children. In this situation it is not easy to offer and develop forms of media education that foster more creative, free and playful ways of learning. The clubs represented a ‘liminal’ or ‘transitional’ space between school and leisure time, but it remained a challenge to develop new forms of media education that did not simply continue ‘regular’ school work.

This was a complex task. We needed to balance out the needs and interests of the children, the media educators and the researchers – and also to respect and cope with the influences of other people such as teachers, parents, siblings or friends. We sought to be responsive to the children’s needs and to the changing group constellations in an open and flexible manner, to pay close attention to individual children and to develop a balance between the need for structure and the opportunities for self-expression. At the same time, it was clear that our interests as researchers – not least in terms of our key themes of school, peer group and family – were bound to determine the kinds of production work that we promoted and encouraged. Looking back, it is evident that the influence of both media educators and researchers was an important factor, not just in terms of the internal dynamics of the clubs, but also in terms of the kinds of productions that emerged. While it might have been more reasonable to reduce the complexity of the project dimensions, and to open up more space for the internal dynamics of the groups, we did not wish to sacrifice our dual focus on practice and research.

Children’s existing needs, strengths and abilities

Media work that aims to reach children in their everyday life should orientate itself towards their needs, experiences and situations. What are the vital needs of the children? Which existing capabilities and skills do they contribute to the club work? How can their individual strengths be identified and encouraged? We have addressed some of these issues in the previous sections of this report. The following points are highlighted:

Differences between the children

Children are likely to approach media work with different kinds of expressiveness and motivation. In Germany, for example, it could be observed that the children’s ability to express themselves physically

was developed to varying degrees. Taskania (from the Dominican Republic) was extremely good at a number of Latin-American dances, which she taught her friend as well. Hakan (from Turkey) had a remarkable ability to express himself physically (through gestures and facial expression). Fernando (from Cuba), on the other hand, appeared to be less emotional and rather introverted ('cool, calm and collected'). His skills and interests lay, though not solely, in the world of computer games. Serife's (from Turkey) interest in the project was motivated by a specific personal goal: she intended to extend her competence in using the computer (word processing).

By contrast, in Sweden all the children had used cameras and computers before they joined the CHICAM club and had acquired basic technical knowledge in handling the equipment. However, there were noticeable differences between the children in terms of their expressive modes. One child hardly participated in the production process at all over the whole period. At most he participated as an actor or ran around with a camera, shooting randomly. Nevertheless, some children were very interested in camera work: they explored the camera's potentials and were eager to learn all technical details. Others were interested in both performing as actors and in camera work. One girl was very eager and spontaneous: she had lots of ideas and did not hesitate to realise them, and was always in the lead during the production process.

Other examples from other clubs could be added. The overall point, though, is that there are bound to be significant differences between children in terms of skills, orientations and motivations. This reinforces the necessity to pay attention to individual needs, capabilities and strengths in media educational activities and to ensure an individual as well as a group-oriented approach.

Orientation towards media models

As we demonstrated in section one of this report, the children had diverse experiences of media and (to some extent) of media production that they incorporated into the work within the CHICAM clubs. In general, the children's main frames of reference, their sources of inspiration and their knowledge about the media, came almost completely from mainstream entertainment television: talk shows, reality TV, music shows. It is completely normal that children should pick mass media role models to express their own themes. Especially at the beginning of creative work, imitation seems to be an important way of identifying shared points of reference and achieving some confidence in handling new means of expression.

Yet it is vital that children should slowly move beyond stereotypes and established forms, and become more confident and independent in their approach. This requires a concept of media education that is based on recursive, sustained experiences of production, rather than a succession of short-term activities and projects. Over the course of one year, the CHICAM clubs offered at least some indication of the possibilities in this respect.

The club as a space for play and spontaneous activity

In almost all clubs it became clear that several children had seen the project as an opportunity to try out something new, to discover a free space and to use it for themselves. The overall impression was that children attended the clubs with an expectation of expressing their feelings and thoughts more spontaneously than is normally permitted. Especially in those clubs that were less structured,

the children often had immediate ideas about what they wanted to express and were keen to move ahead with them. Yet the children's ideas and expectations about working with media were sometimes different from what adults were looking to achieve. Rather than aiming to make finished products in a closed form, the children's expectations were more open-ended and they took the opportunity to play around with the computer or the cameras, experimenting with perspectives and exploring the technical possibilities.

As we have noted above, some of the most interesting productions had play as the central theme – playing with the camera and with editing, and in some cases with sound and music also. In some respects, these productions seemed to draw most from fantasy; but they could also be seen to reflect different experiences of migration and disruption, both directly and indirectly. Such productions could be facilitated by the media educator being sensitive to the children's strengths and interests and not setting the path of the narrative too firmly in advance.

While most of the children loved acting in front of the camera and working behind the scenes and were motivated to create short, straightforward productions, they had greater difficulties with the planning (for example, storyboarding) and the post-production of the films. This was evident in almost all the clubs. The following section will therefore describe some of the advice and support the children needed from the media educators.

Input and support on the part of the media educators

Planning

While children might well possess a spontaneous desire to tell a story, or to communicate a particular message, it is generally down to adults to point out that the story has to be planned. In media production, planning often takes the form of written storyboarding. Yet teachers and researchers have often observed that children are reluctant to use storyboards, because the task becomes more like a school task, where children are supposed to work with pen and paper. Likewise, some children in our CHICAM clubs expressed unwillingness to use pencil and paper per se. When the children were planning a narrative story (fiction) they had no previous experience of working with storyboards and seemed to show no explicit awareness of how stories are built up using various dramaturgical devices.

Ultimately, the emphasis on detailed storyboards places a considerable – and perhaps unnecessary – pressure on children. The familiar sequence of activities – abstract, script, storyboard, shooting schedule, shooting, editing – calls for a high degree of planning, verbalisation and reflection on the part of the video-makers. The time it takes to produce the film often goes beyond what is acceptable – or even bearable. Between the shooting and the final product, days and often weeks can pass. For a lot of the children, feedback on their product and recognition from their potential audiences came too late: their motivation and interest had already dwindled or disappeared completely. This type of systematic procedure, centred mainly on narrative principles, seems to be more suitable for target groups that already possess considerable experience in dealing with media and with (verbal) language.

Clearly, it is important to develop a formative idea and to explain a topic, particularly with regard to the audience to which the production should be presented. But the children are likely to become alienated if they are not able to proceed quickly, clearly and practically. They need to start by discovering the possibilities of expression in their chosen medium and by being offered more open-ended ways of exploring their own ideas and fantasies.

Entry points

It was important, particularly in the early stages, for the club activities to be quite highly structured. In the initial stages of the German club, for instance, the children were fairly willing to co-operate in games, drama activities intended to encourage physical awareness (e.g. making faces, mime) and other, non-verbal activities (drumming sessions, Escrima). This was important in that it developed group identity and common working ground. At the same time the media educator generally offered a clear overview of different media models (see part 2 of this report) and linked this, in the course of the meetings, with formal exercises. Independent activity, learning through play, emphasising visual-symbolic expression and non-linear ways of working – these were the principal elements of the approach. By seeking to overcome a one-sided, verbal, reflexive approach, the media educators gave the children the opportunity to handle authentic material in a playful, creative way right from the start. Over time, some of the children began to develop their own ideas and subjects individually.

As this implies, it was important to find a good balance between specific stimuli and concrete activities, on the one hand, and enough free space for the children for testing and experimenting, on the other hand. We would argue that concrete and clear-cut input is required from the media educator: providing media skills and matching the teaching with the experiment and the experiment with the result, in order to get the children interested and involved in doing their own projects. The children also needed to be motivated at several stages during the production process, as they wanted regular changes of activities. For example, in the German club, it became slightly easier to encourage the children to respond to each other's productions when cards were used which asked the children to pay attention to particular elements (e.g. sound quality, lighting). Such structured approaches to viewing, using a video projector and cards to be filled out, went some way to making club situations more motivating for the children.

Structure and openness

Having said this, the educators in the clubs undoubtedly structured the activities in different ways. This partly depended on the age of the children. For example in the Netherlands, where the children were younger than in most of the other clubs, the media educator 'gave clear technical and aesthetic instructions at different stages during the project. This helped to make the children feel confident enough to begin and continue. The instructions provided a permanent hold, a necessary basis for exploring certain themes and for the development of creativity. Also the media educator gave clear instructions as to what was expected from the children in terms of specific tasks: e.g. collecting pictures from home, selecting these, making a text, dubbing the text. The media educator was like a steady but flexible rock for the children; they could always come for help, for support. They accepted his guidance and his role in structuring the whole process. The children very seldom took the initiative in terms of themes and specific content, apart from the video diaries.'

By comparison with this relatively structured, product-oriented approach, other clubs (working mostly with older children) took a more open, process-oriented approach. From this perspective, the activity of filming - being with others, doing something new with them, making mistakes and blunders - was far more interesting than the final product. In Sweden, for example, the media educator described the approach in an interview as follows:

We knew we had to produce stuff, but we were open to their feedback. It was an exchange of ideas, not a rigid lecture. It was a process that we were as much involved in as them. The “rules” came out of their own accord. We weren’t expecting it. Actually, we were expecting something completely different, and this was one of the most fabulous things that could’ve happened. Alright, we had a basic plan. But things change. Our method certainly has limits, but it also has good points. As a method it involves dialogue rather than structure. If you structure something you CAN get results: perhaps we got fewer results, but this was a choice.

A balance of process and product orientation seems to be necessary to handle experiences with media in groups and to create presentable productions. If the process orientation becomes one-sided, one runs the risk of generating nothing at all – which can prove demoralising. In the Greek club, for example, film language and technique were not explicitly taught. The process was seen as more important than the product, and the making of different genres as well as the group work were the club priorities. In retrospect, the Greek researcher argued that the children would have come up with more original, diverse results, had they first mastered the basic media skills sufficiently and then embarked on materialising their ideas and producing them.

Perhaps the most effective approach would have been to begin with relatively structured formal tasks, encouraging the children to search for their own media styles, whilst resulting in small-scale, finished products within a short space of time. This would have allowed the media educators to gauge the competencies the producers already possessed; and they could then have moved on to provide more ‘customized’ help and support and creative alternatives. Striking a balance between structured and planned procedures and associative-intuitive methods in this way is only possible, however, when the media educators have a wide range of aesthetic, technical, social, intercultural and methodological knowledge at their command, and when they can bring their knowledge to bear on the learning process in a flexible way.

Support for post-production

In all clubs it became clear that the children needed support from the media educator in order to learn about editing – not merely in order to help them master the technology, but also to help them conceptualise the production from the point of view of an audience. While some of this learning took place through trial-and-error, in several cases it was necessary for the media educator to give instruction on the spot (when needed), and to start loading, editing and mixing as soon as the children had finished the shooting and wanted to see and process the results.

During digital post production and editing, it was occasionally difficult to keep several children occupied at the same time. The person using the mouse was often most involved in the task, while

the other children soon lost interest and turned their attention to other things. In many cases, the post production could only be made with one to three children at a time, and required a media educator to be fully focused on this task.

Group work and individual work

Throughout the production process, it was part of the media educator's task to take account of the needs of individual children and of different groupings. There were many advantages to working as a group, not only in terms of media production and learning the different processes involved but also on the level of social communication. For example, during the pilot phase of the London club, a small group worked on making photo essays with commentary based on family photos. The group was made up of three girls from different countries of origin: Russia, Pakistan and Somalia. Making these productions was an opportunity for them to discuss their different pasts and cultures and experiences of migration. At the end of the process one child remarked on their different circumstances. Within the group this was a clear example of collaboration through media to build intercultural communication.

Various efforts to combine working individually and working as a group were also made in other clubs. For example in Sweden, when all 8-9 children attended it was sometimes difficult to pursue certain projects, whereas when the team had 4-5 children they could divide into two small groups. The children were often in need of tutoring on an individual basis. In Italy, the group was seen as more important than the individual. One tacit rule was that everyone had to be able to do anything, and this was the case especially during the first months of work in the club. Later on, reluctance and preferences for certain activities rather than others were more easily accepted. By contrast, in the Greek CHICAM club, the group was quite large, and time and resources were quite limited; and so despite the efforts of the media educator, there was an unequal development of skills, with few children mastering the more complex media skills and the majority learning less than expected.

In this situation, it was important for the media educator to work closely with the researcher and with other adults who were available. In the Dutch club, for example, there were weekly discussions about developments in the CHICAM club with the media educator and the community worker. As a result the project group adjusted tasks, decided to pay more attention to some individual children, to group dynamics, or to focus more on specific skills and subjects. Likewise, in the German club a regular, weekly meeting between the media educator and the researcher took place to exchange observations. In several instances, the German club took advantage of wider meetings with the whole project group and with external experts in order to reflect upon difficult group dynamics and behaviour problems in the clubs. Each club had different numbers and combinations of staff available at different times; but it was clear that, given the technical and social requirements of the club work, there was a need for a comparatively generous ratio of staff to children.

Development and learning

The project assumed that the children would already know a certain amount about media, but that they would need to develop new competencies in order to make the media productions and to enable exchanges via the internet. These learning processes can be broken down into three stages: learning to use the equipment, taking control of the process, and learning from each other. These

did not run consecutively but played different roles at different times. They included both technical know-how and narrative content and needed to be revisited several times in different ways.

Firstly, **learning to use the equipment** - in terms of both safety and technical skills - was an area that most of the media educators were continuously returning to. In the UK club, the team introduced the cameras by playing passing games involving eye contact when passing the camera from one pair of hands to another. Handling the equipment with care and respect was a fundamental starting point and had its parallels in other areas of the work. The 'passing game' moved on to discussing different ways of greeting each other in different cultures. The emphasis on caring for the equipment was part of the discussion about respecting each other and the differences in the club. It was often necessary to return to these basic points about camera use, mutual respect and working together.

The media educator encouraged the children to **take control** of the process in different ways. Sometimes this involved limiting the options, thus opening up other possibilities. Sometimes it meant thinking of the steps needed to reach a larger goal. The London club members – like those elsewhere - had very different experiences of the media and of media production. Most had taken still photos at home and one or two had used a video camera. However, when the club started, they all said that they had never done this kind of work before. This could well have been because they were separating informal family-based media production from what was now presented to them in a more formal setting with more professional equipment. By the end of the year all except one said that they now felt confident to show others how to film and three said they were confident with editing.

Likewise, the German researchers found that the children worked most independently and achieved best results in situations in which the tasks had been explained in a few short sentences and could be completed within one session (about 2 hours). The participants were strongly motivated, for example, when creating a collage with polaroid photos and pictures from teenage, television and music magazines: they enjoyed working with the latest posters and the instant aesthetic feedback.

It was particularly important to *minimise the experience of frustration and maximise the experience of success*. Successful strategies included: putting sequences of video material on the computer before the children started to edit, so that they would not have to wait for it to be loaded; cutting a small clip from the children's video material in order to show the possibilities and to motivate them by giving them a feeling of what their material could look like; and giving them a video-camera with a special effect (such as a wipe) to enable them to experience unusual shot transitions. It was also important for the educator's input to be as visual as possible, for example in the form of handouts with illustrations, or by visualising framing using a large cardboard frame.

The research suggests that the experience of production had significant consequences in terms of the children's subsequent experiences as media consumers. Making and then viewing and discussing short productions clearly enhanced the children's awareness of aesthetic and formal aspects of media. They discovered that the media, especially television, do have a creative potential; and their experience of working with a range of different formats clearly deepened their understanding. Gabriela, a girl from the CHICAM club in Rome talked about the media knowledge she gained by learning editing as follows: 'You know, after all that editing, when I watch the TV or an advertisement, I go "Ooh! Here's how they did that bit... and that bit..." Now I know all about it! I can't just "sit back and watch" any more.'

Social competencies and personal empowerment

Learning from (and with) each other was also a key aspect of the CHICAM experience. As we have seen, social and intercultural learning were important aims in themselves for most of the media educators, and for the project as a whole. Although digital technology can make it possible for individuals to act alone, media work generally requires co-operation to get a production finished. To some extent, it necessitates a division of labour in which children can develop specialised skills. For example, several of the children in the UK club had quite particular areas of interest in media making. David was keen on performance. He was prepared to edit material but only when it involved putting his own performances into a final form (see *The Place to Be*). He did not want to be the cameraman. Haamid quickly became the club editor. In his case his poor English language skills as well as his natural reticence meant he was not keen to be in front of the camera or to be directing others. His ability to edit, however, meant he played an important role in the club and this boosted both his confidence and his language skills. People came to him for advice and help and he was able to give it.

This collaborative work led to various friendships being formed between club members, as the children learned to co-operate, to show consideration for each other, to listen, and to pay attention to each other. Each child had his or her own personal motivation to join the club and to stay. In the case of the Dutch club, for example, CHICAM offered children a space where they could feel accepted, much more than in class. In addition to interpersonal experiences, making movies about authentic and personal experiences was of great importance for the children in terms of personal empowerment. The children were processing two fundamental things: firstly, their own past experiences (including the experience of migration) and secondly, the new cultures they were now meeting and learning to live with. Their productions therefore depicted both these elements in different ways and were often very personal.

Experiences in the German club showed that production could also help with the development of linguistic competencies, even though this was not the explicit intention. All the club members were able to make considerable progress with regard to their language skills. They were all able to formulate short written texts in their native language (by hand or using the computer keyboard). When interviewing people in the street, the children only needed support from the media educator until they had overcome their initial fears and had successfully approached strangers the first few times. For example, Susan, a 13-year old girl from the USA, and Taskania, a 14-year old girl from the Dominican Republic, discovered that they were less timid doing such interviews the second time around. They could approach strangers in a more daring and self-confident way: 'Before, right, like I was, I was more scared then'.

Teachers in the German school evaluated CHICAM very positively, partly for this reason:

The whole thing was a stimulus for the class, also for the group and had great influence in the class. It was something very unusual which will not reoccur that easily again... It helped the children to experience something with you in the group and to gain linguistic value, linguistic quality... Because the CHICAM club consists of different nationalities they have to speak German, so this happens automatically.

Summary

As in several of the other areas addressed in this report, much of what the children learnt from their experience of the CHICAM clubs was indirect rather than as a result of deliberate instruction. The club was, after all, primarily defined as a context for leisure rather than for learning. Yet, as we have shown, the learning potential of media production and of learning to communicate through the use of new media is multi-dimensional: in making short audio-visual texts, children are certainly acquiring technical skills, but they are also beginning to master important forms of communication and cultural expression, coming to terms with complex and sometimes difficult elements of their own experience, and learning to respect each other and to work together across their many differences. If handled well, each of these forms of learning can and should support each other.