The Diversity Digital Media Project: Engaging Migrant Youth in Japan through Creative Practice

Shinsuke FUNAKI

ABSTRACT

As a result of an increase of migrants in Fukui, a rural city of Japan since the 1990s, migrant youth have increased through the settlement of permanent residents and through international marriage. However, when migrant youth attempt to use digital media to potentially foster their relationships with the local community, the ‘Japanese only’ environment can discourage them to make use of it for creating and extending their social networks in Japan.

In 2011, a two day farm-stay camp in Fukui with four migrant youth was organized as a research project. Various locals, such as media artists and migrant support professionals supported migrant youths and helped them create a digital media production. I conducted both participant observation and interviews with participants to understand the ways in which these migrants and local Japanese interact with each other through the use of digital media. This paper explores two key questions. First, I examine how digital media can be employed for community engagement between migrant youth and the local community and how it can help them achieve cultural citizenship. Second, this paper examines how local Japanese participants perceive their attitude-change process in real encounters with migrants in Fukui through the use of digital media.

KEYWORDS: Migrant youth, Digital media, Social work practice, Community engagement

JEL CLASSIFICATION: I39

1. INTRODUCTION

Despite the absence of an official immigration program, the number of migrants in Japan has rapidly increased since the 1970s. Female foreign workers from the Philippines and Thailand began working at adult entertainment businesses in the late 1970s. This was followed in the 1980s by unskilled male foreign workers including an increase in illegal workers from Asia and the Middle East in response to the labour shortages of the rapid growth ‘bubble economy’ period. To help solve the labor shortage problem, the Japanese government revised the immigration control law in 1990 to allow people of Japanese descent from Brazil, Peru and other Latin American countries to work in Japan (Takeda, 2006; Tsuda, 2009:206). In addition, the Industrial Training Program started accepting technical intern trainees in 1993 from China and other Asian countries. According to the Ministry of Justice, the registered number of foreign residents in Japan reached 2.1 million in 2007. This figure has slightly decreased in recent years partly because of the world financial crisis (Ishikawa, 2012:12).

Japan has as a consequence started to recognize the particular needs and social issues related to

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foreign residents (Ishii, 2005). The Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications for example, has recognized the need for social support and established a ‘Multicultural Co-existence Promotion Program’ to develop support programs within local governments (Ishikawa, 2012; Shiobara, 2012; Yoshitomi, 2008). However, it is thought that ethnic minorities in Japan have limited access to the virtual community constructed by the Japanese language (Takeda, 2006).

In terms of social work, an education program for multicultural social workers has been established in some prefectures such as Aichi and Gifu. Some local governments have also started hiring people from ethnic communities with social work backgrounds as ‘Multicultural social workers’. However, multicultural social work (or social work for migrants) has not yet been sufficiently established in social work training programs in Japan. Social support activities for migrants in Japan have generally been conducted not by social work professionals but by volunteers and NPOs promoting international exchanges (Ishikawa, 2009; Takeda, 2009:181; Japanese Association of Certified Social Workers, 2012:3).

This paper researches on an experimental project called the ‘Diversity Digital Media (DDM) Project’ carried out in Fukui, located in northwest Japan from 2010 to 2012. I developed the project in order to explore the extent to which information and communications technology and digital media can enable a greater variety of creative expression beyond conventional production in community engagement projects and act as a bridge between the local community and migrant youth in a creative manner. As part of the DDM project, I organized: (1) a three-day digital media workshop with four migrants from China and Sri Lanka in 2010; (2) a two-day farm-stay camp with four migrant students from China and Brazil in 2011; (3) three months’ documentary film making workshop with two migrant students from China in 2012. This paper explores two key questions based on a case study of the above-mentioned two-day farm-stay camp in 2011. First, I examine how digital media can be employed for community engagement between migrant youth and the local community, and how it can help migrant youth achieve cultural citizenship. Second, this paper examines how local Japanese participants perceive their attitude-change process in real encounters with migrants in Fukui through the use of digital media.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This exploratory research includes interviews with participants of a two-day farm-stay camp on December 2011. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to allow informants including four migrant students from China and Brazil to speak freely not only about their impression of the workshops but also their subjective values and the perceptions of community engagements between migrants and local community (see Table 1). Interviews varied from about 30 minutes to 2 hours conducted in Japanese. These students moved to Japan with their family in 2009 and entered a local high school in 2010. Two migrant high school students from China had a sufficient Japanese language level to conduct an interview in Japanese. Two Brazilian students had relatively lower Japanese conversation skills than students from China. Therefore, I asked additional questions to them through E-mail in Japanese and English after the interview. Interviews were transcribed and analyzed thematically. I also conducted participant observation as a coordinator of this camp. As well as the formal interview sessions, I kept contacts with most informants informally during this project by SNS and E-mails. This observation gave me exposure to community sentiments and informal information shared among participants and was valuable in supplementing the research. Participants were fully briefed at an information session about this project and a written consent was obtained from the migrant youth and their parents before the project commenced. This paper will not represent the perception of community engagement between migrant youth and the local community through the use of digital media in Japan. The aim of this exploratory study is to bring a new conceptual basis for social work practices with migrants through the use of digital media (Harrison, 2007:74).
3. THE DIGITAL DIVIDE FOR MIGRANTS IN A JAPANESE REGIONAL CITY

Fukui is located near the center of the Japan Sea coast, easily accessible from major urban centers. It has a clean environment, raw materials, and also advanced industry including textiles, eye-ware, machinery, traditional industrial production, as well as agricultural production such as rice. The number of migrants in Fukui has rapidly increased since the 1990s after Fukui Prefecture started accepting migrant workers and trainees into its prefectural institutions as well as its businesses. Fukui has increasingly become home to primarily Japanese Brazilian workers and also technical intern trainees from China. As a result of an increase in migrant numbers, the number of second generation migrant youth has also increased through the settlement of permanent residents and through international marriage. The number of foreign migrants in Fukui Prefecture has reached 12,070 which is 1.5% of the total population; 802,680 people in 2011 (Fukui Prefectural Government, 2011).

According to survey results about the Japanese language capabilities of foreign residents in Fukui conducted by the prefectural government in 2007, 43% of the respondents can communicate only a general greeting, and 17% of the total had little communication with local Japanese people. The main reasons for the lack of communication with local Japanese were: 1) the shortage of opportunities, 2) the lack of language ability. Also, the main ways of obtaining daily information were 1) television (56%), 2) Japanese friends, and colleagues in the workplace (47%), Internet (45%). This shows the high level of use of ICT as a basis for everyday life for migrants in Fukui. However, it is estimated that CALD (Culturally and Linguistically Diverse) persons in Fukui have difficulties not only in accessing the information but also in participating fully in the virtual Internet community constructed by the Japanese language. In my previous research, a computer study group was organized in 2009 and 2010 as a part of a community development project, the so called F-LECCS (Fukui Learning Community Consortium) for creating a multicultural learning community between local universities and ethnic communities through a local Social Networking Service. Participant observation and a questionnaire survey were conducted in the computer study group among 16 immigrants from six different language and cultural backgrounds including migrants from China, Brazil, Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, and Peru in order to analyze the process of multicultural community building and the effect of migration on the local community. This research

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**Table 1: List of Informants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Position/Nationality</th>
<th>Interview date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>10s</td>
<td>High school student (2nd)</td>
<td>Participant/ China</td>
<td>December 2011/ September 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>10s</td>
<td>High school student (2nd)</td>
<td>Participant/ China</td>
<td>December 2011/ September 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>10s</td>
<td>High school student (2nd)</td>
<td>Participant/ Brazil</td>
<td>December 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>10s</td>
<td>High school student (2nd)</td>
<td>Participant/ Brazil</td>
<td>December 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>50s</td>
<td>Former Media Artist</td>
<td>Instructor/ Japan</td>
<td>February 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>20s</td>
<td>Former Media Artist</td>
<td>Instructor/ Japan</td>
<td>February 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>20s</td>
<td>University student</td>
<td>Supporter/ Peru</td>
<td>February 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>30s</td>
<td>Eco-tourism association</td>
<td>Organizer/ Japan</td>
<td>December 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>50s</td>
<td>Farm house</td>
<td>Owner/ Japan</td>
<td>December 2011</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
revealed that especially migrant women and their children living in Fukui suffered from a lack of opportunities to develop their ICT and digital media skills both in their own language as well as in Japanese. In addition, when they attempt to use the digital media to improve their relationship with the local community, the ‘Japanese only’ environment can discourage them and prevent them from extending their social networks in Japan (Funaki, 2010a).

Digital media can play a valuable role as a tool to help migrants and their children adjust to new environments and cultural citizenship. The practice of citizenship has conventionally been based on a traditional view of the public sphere that focuses on political/civic rights and social rights (Marshall, 1987). In the multicultural context of contemporary societies, the concept of cultural citizenship for migrants and refugees has become more important in terms of identity and culture. It is possible to see a shift in emphasis away from a concern with equality to recognition of difference (Delanty, 2007). Cultural citizenship is the right to speak one’s opinions as well as access the media and culture and know the necessary information to secure the right of recognition. The use of ICT and new media (digital media) in the everyday life of citizens enables unconventional expressions of participatory culture and promote cultural citizenship in globalized society (Burgess, J. et al 2006; Mouri, 2011).

My previous research in the computer study group with Chinese migrant youth showed that digital media is the most interesting media for migrant youth not only in terms of consumption but also in expressing their identity and culture through SNS in their own language. Furthermore, digital media could enhance communication between the second-generation migrant youth and local Japanese in despite limited Japanese language abilities. According to survey results, migrant parents in a city in Fukui prefecture conducted by a city government in 2008. 42% of respondents felt there was a communication gap with their children because of the Japanese language gap between parents and children. In addition to language problems, recognition of cultural identities especially among the migrant youth largely influenced their relationship with their parents and the engagement with local community. First generation migrant parents faced difficulties in transferring their cultural and social capital due to the language gap (Funaki, 2011).

Lack of opportunities for ICT skills and digital media is not the only difficulty regarding community engagement for migrants in Fukui. Conflicts between local Japanese and migrants such as several suspected arsons targeting foreign residents have been widely reported in the media. The arsonist was a migrant so that this incident had fostered negative images of migrants among the local community in Fukui in 2010.1 Following these problems, most migrant communities have kept silent or are unaware of Japanese media coverage because of the language barrier. Additionally, in 2010, the Fukui city government started restricting the residency rules for ‘foreign residents who cannot speak Japanese’ in Fukui city public housings. NGOs and local media criticized the discriminatory rule for migrants. However, the city Mayor rejected the criticisms and justified the policy with reference to the troubles between migrant residents and local Japanese residents. However, there were only three incidents among foreign residents such as the method of disposing the refuse, recyclable items in Fukui city public housings from 2008 to 2010.2 A government funded NPO, Fukui International Association (FIA) has been a leading organization for promoting inter-cultural exchanges between ethnic communities and local Japanese and supporting the daily life of migrants in Fukui. For example, the organization supported volunteer Japanese teachers for adult migrants and school teachers for immigrant youth, along with cross-cultural parents and playgroups.3 However, the need for ICT and digital media literacy for ethnic communities in Fukui has not been investigated.

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1 Fukui Shinbun (Newspaper). 21 October 2010.
4. DIGITAL MEDIA FOR CONSTRUCTING A MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY IN AUSTRALIA

This community engagement project with digital media in Japan was inspired by the insights of case studies in Australian multicultural society. The research in cultural studies and multicultural studies in Australia has already focused on the use of ICT and digital media production for community building among ethnic communities (Dreher, 2008; Ho, 2012). Migrants in Australia have formed ethnic community organizations not only to provide social welfare services within the ethnic community such as schools and play groups, but also to create a virtual ethnic community based on the common cultural and linguistic identity for exchanging information and mutual support (Funaki, 2010b; Hamano, 2009). In my previous research in Australia, governments and NPOs engaged ethnic communities and frequently promoted community building and inclusion in the mainstream society through Community Cultural Development (CCD) programs as well as use of digital media (Burgess et al, 2006; Funaki, 2011; Lee-Shoy and Dreher, 2009; Podkalicka and Staley, 2009).

For example, ICE (Information and Cultural Exchange) projects have promoted pioneering digital media programs with the largest migrant, refugee, and urban Indigenous populations in western Sydney, Australia’s most culturally diverse region. The programs deploy screen, music, radio, sound, online, and new digital media production. ICE projects creatively engage ethnic communities and artists not only to help improve ICT skills and improve job opportunities but also to build cultural and community capacity and infrastructure and encourage intercultural dialogue. Projects at the intersection of arts, culture, technology, and community include digital storytelling, short film-making, theatre production, and facilitator workshops in CCD. These ICT and digital media skills create chances for ethnic minority youth in Australia to speak up and break stereotyped images. The showcasing of the digital media productions also creates a space for mainstream Australian society to listen to these minority voices (ICE, 2008). Another example is digital media projects by CuriousWorks in Sydney, which have attempted to focus on not only ethnic minorities, but on diverse minority communities including Indigenous people, people with disability and disadvantaged young people. CuriousWorks’ mission is to enable communities to tell their own stories powerfully and sustainably and reshape the systems of cultural production in Australia by innovating at the intersection of art, education, and technology. More importantly, CuriousWorks tried to establish long-term, multi-faceted partnerships with communities rather than short-term, ad hoc relationships (Funaki, 2011). These case studies showed that ICT and the use of digital media have great potential to empower social minorities and promote the community engagement process between ethnic minorities and majorities. These insights finally inspired me to consider the ways in which both social minorities and majorities are able to grow interactions through the use of digital media.

In Japan, there are some digital media projects to facilitate community engagement between migrants and the local community in Hyogo, Shizuoka, and Kanagawa prefectures (Shiobara, 2011; Yoshitomi, 2008). Some digital media projects using digital storytelling have also started for migrant youth in Mie and Gifu prefectures (Ogawa et al, 2009). However, these digital media projects have not been implemented as a social work practice4.

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4 International Federation of Social Workers defines ‘Social Work’ as ‘The social work profession promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being. Utilizing theories of human behavior and social systems, social work intervenes at the points where people interact with their environments. Principles of human rights and social justice are fundamental to social work.’: http://ifsw.org/policies/definition-of-social-work/
5. DIGITAL MEDIA PROJECT FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT WITH MIGRANTS IN JAPAN

The DDM project started in 2009 with the aim of analyzing the possibilities for using digital media in social work practice with migrant youth in Fukui, Japan. For the second DDM project in 2011, I organized a two day farm-stay camp in a regional area of Fukui with four migrant high school students from China and Brazil. Various locals such as media artists, migrant support professionals, university students and a local eco-tourism association helped create digital media productions such as a short documentary (see the program Table 2). I conducted both participant observation and interviews with participants to understand the ways in which these migrants and local Japanese interact with each other through the use of digital media. The project attempted to engage migrant youth, artists, and migrant support professionals not only to help migrants to learn digital media skills for educational and job opportunities but also to build their cultural and community capacity, encouraging intercultural dialogue and creative engagement between people. Several showcase events of the digital media productions within the local community created a space for mainstream Japanese society to listen to minority voices.

Table2: Digital Media Camp 2011 Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day 1</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10:30~12:30</td>
<td>Guide tour to the farm and local community by farm owner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Organic vegetable farms, Shrine, Temple, house gardens)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13:30~14:30</td>
<td>Lecture about video camera shooting techniques by local artists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14:30~16:30</td>
<td>Shooting at vegetable farms, Shrine, Temple, house gardens, traditional Japanese noodle making by video camera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20:30~23:30</td>
<td>Editing digital media production by migrant youth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day 2</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:00~12:00</td>
<td>Editing digital media production by migrant youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(5 to 10 minutes digital media production by each participant)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Title of the production

1. Kamisama and Ningen (God and Human being): A short fiction story about the relationship between God at a shrine and people in the community
2. Seimeiryoku (Life power): A short documentary on interviews with local people and nature views in relation to life power
3. Interview in English: A short documentary on interviews with participants and local artists in English
4. Dance: A short dance and music clip with a dance performance in the local community by a migrant youth

15:00~16:30 Showcase event at farm house for participants, local artists, farm house family members, local people including eco-tourism association

Firstly, a two day digital media camp truly helped to build a space for community engagement between migrant youth and the local community. Actually, the two Brazilian participants had very limited Japanese language ability and had very few opportunities to meet local Japanese people in their daily life. Students felt very nervous about meeting local people and staying at a local’s house.
even though it was in the same area of the city\textsuperscript{5}.

Japanese Brazilian researcher Hatano (2006) argues that most of Brazilian communities in Japan are isolated from mainstream Japanese society and don’t even have enough power to organize a formal association for engaging with local Japanese because of the working conditions, lack of language education, and differing lifestyles including religious activities. Therefore, even before the workshop, Japanese staff of a migrant support organization in the local area and the Japanese owner of the farm house were also worried about the overnight stay of migrant youth\textsuperscript{6}.

However, during the camp all students became very interested in local culture and lifestyles and actively participated in very new experiences for them such as Japanese traditional noodle making, the experience of public bath. They also tried to engage in filming with local people at the farm, local artists when they created their own digital media production. Creating digital media in a physical community through the camp-based process enabled direct public participation and created a space for community engagements with local community (Burgess, 2006). In addition, the experience of creating digital media gave migrant youth the chance to speak up in Japanese society whilst learning digital media and ICT skills promote effectively achieving greater cultural citizenship.

Iwabuchi argues that the micro public sphere of an ethnic minority possibly creates a closed public sphere both in the ethnic community and in mainstream society (Iwabuchi, 2011). However, creating digital media productions in this camp led to the creation of a more open public sphere and was likely to help them achieve cultural citizenship not only in Fukui but also in the global area (Mills 2011). After the camp, two Chinese students decided to create a short movie for an international peace film contest in Japan with the support of university students and local artists. They decided to conduct interviews about the war and disaster experiences with elderly Japanese people and started thinking about their situation and expressing their social and cultural identities through this filmmaking activity\textsuperscript{7}.

Secondly, the local Japanese participants showed their attitude-change process in the encounters with the migrant youth\textsuperscript{9}. Although the encounter with migrant youth was ad hoc in this project, it has been argued elsewhere that the ‘vernacular creativity’ of digital media production likely will become a trigger for an attitude-change process among local people (Burgess, 2006)\textsuperscript{10}. Burgess used this concept of ‘vernacular creativity’ to capture everyday creative practices like storytelling – being ordinary and identified on the basis of its commonness. She argues vernacular creativity is remediated in digital contexts. In this project, a staff member of an eco-tourism organization said\textsuperscript{11}:

Actually, I was very surprised to know that sensitivity and creativity of youth had nothing to do with difference of culture and countries, as their digital media productions included beautiful local landscapes where I am living now. I used to think the sense of art and culture for migrant students is different from us because they are not Japanese.

\textsuperscript{5} Interview with C,D. Examples of worries for Brazilian students include a public bath without swimming pants, a temple and shrine visit, communication with local elderly Japanese.
\textsuperscript{6} Interview with I. The owner worried about the menu for lunch and dinner, Japanese style beddings, communication by non-Japanese language.
\textsuperscript{7} Interview with C. It was first time for the student to create a short movie including his own personal life by digital camera.
\textsuperscript{8} Interview with A, B.
\textsuperscript{9} A digital media activity for migrant children in Kobe, Japan also showed a similar effect for the mainstream Japanese participants. (Yoshitomi, 2008).
\textsuperscript{10} In an interview, Burgess also defines vernacular creativity as “Everyday creative practices like storytelling, family photographing, scrapbooking, journaling pre-exist the digital age and yet are co-evolving with digital technologies and networks in really interesting ways.” (Jenkins, 2007).
\textsuperscript{11} Interview with H.
On the other hand, a farm owner who hosted some of the migrant youth in this project gave the following observations:

I was a little worried about accepting foreign youth from Brazil when I had an offer of this farm stay because I had a little strange image about Brazilian people living in this city. However, I felt very happy to watch our local village and farms represented in such a beautiful way. I was very surprised to see the creativity in their digital media productions.

The digital media produced by the migrant youth featuring mountains, garden views, and local people are perhaps not ordinarily considered as creative (in a professional sense). However, everyday creative practices, ‘vernacular creativity’, in digital context with direct physical encounters in the camp was a powerful tool in constructing a different image of migrant youth among local Japanese people (Burgess, 2006). Meeting in a digital media workshop gave them a chance to reconstruct stereotyped images of immigrants in Fukui and promote a community engagement process between immigrants and local Japanese. A local media artist said:

I was able to feel strong and direct messages from short movies of migrant students through their creativity even though they could not talk with me a lot in Japanese. They were also able to reflect their powerful creativity of local people including organic farming, Japanese gardening, local food making on the short movies as well. I felt a possibility of the identity expression to the local society by migrant students and a community engagement with the local society through digital media production.

Thirdly, the use of digital media showed its powerful ability to promote community engagements between migrant youth and local Japanese. Dreher describes the right of communication and a politics of speaking and representation is a necessary but limited framework for strategy in multicultural media. In the recent media and communication studies, she argues the emphasis has largely been on questions of speaking that means giving “voice to the voiceless” through community media. Instead, a listening process from marginalized voices promotes responsibility (of majority groups) for change to the conventions, institutions and privileges, which shape who and what can be heard in media. The politics of listening across the cultural difference are of more importance for community engagements between migrants and mainstream society (Dreher, 2008). For example, a migrant support professional organized a show case event for the high school teachers of migrant youth participants after finishing the camp. She was a little worried about whether teachers understood the meaning of the digital media productions produced by migrant students because their productions were not professionally done. Therefore, she was surprised and happy to see that all teachers were eager to listen to the digital story and showed a positive and emotional reaction towards the digital media production work by migrant students. It is fair to say that showcase events in local areas of Japan became opportunities to celebrate the success of migrant youth production and for allowing migrant youth to express their feeling, transcending language barriers. These opportunities created a safer space for listening across the difference and promoted the engagement process between migrant youth and family, migrant youth and local community (Funaki, 2011).

However, not all audiences at the showcase event knew the personal backgrounds of the migrant youth in the community. In these circumstances, some people might experience some difficulties in understanding the meaning of digital media production for community engagement. For example, a Japanese member of the audience commented that the showcase event was meaningless as he was not accustomed to hearing personal stories of the minority community and it was his first time to see digital media clips of this nature. It is also important to look into how to mitigate safety risks that may arise in showcase events with Japanese audiences who express conflicting views or are not interested in digital media production.

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12 Interview with I. The owner did not have any experience to talk with Brazilian people, but often looked at groups with different language and behavior in a local supermarket. He also realized that he had stereotyped images including negative images among foreign residents in his local city.

13 Interview with E.
6. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE ISSUES

The digital media project in Fukui attempted to understand the difficulties for migrants of digital media use in everyday life and create a community engagement process between migrant youth and local community through use of digital media production. The research showed that digital media could be one of the important resources used to facilitate community engagement between migrants and local Japanese people and reduce the stereotyped images of migrant youth among Japanese. It will be also important to examine how local Japanese participants of the digital media project and Japanese audiences in the showcase events continue their attitude-change process in real encounters with migrants in Fukui through the use of digital media in future research.

However, some migrant youth participants still expressed nervousness or hesitation in using Japanese to communicate with local participants in the virtual community as well as in direct encounters and in using Japanese computers after participating in the camp. These factors will be the main obstacles in accessing the virtual community and to participation in a community engagement process through digital media production. I recently found that tablet-type devices such as iPads and iPad minis are more user-friendly, especially for people who have language barriers. The DDM project team has started creating a new training program using iPad digital media skills for social work and other helping professions working with migrants in Fukui. It will contribute not only to reducing the obstacles to accessing digital media for migrants but also to developing new multicultural social work practices with digital media in Japan14.

7. REFERENCES


14 An earlier version of this article was presented at The 2nd Indonesia International Conference on Communication (IICC), Jarkarta, Indonesia, 7th December 2012.


