Developing Social Work Practice for People with Disability through Digital Storytelling

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Abstract
The International Federation of Social Workers adopted the new global definition of social work in 2014. Although promotion of social cohesion and respect for diversities was included in the new definition, social work practices for promoting cultural citizenship are still under development in Japan. Since 1990s, community arts organizations in Australia have developed community engagement projects for people with disability through digital media production such as digital storytelling. It is important to develop the collaboration method between social workers and artists to promote cultural citizenship for social minority groups such as people with disability.

With the aid of artists and social workers, iPad digital storytelling workshops for people with intellectual disability were organized in Fukui, Japan from 2013 to 2014. The digital media training programs for human service professionals and social work students were organized in Sydney, Australia and Japan prior to the workshops. During this research project, we conducted interviews with participants to understand the ways in which people with disability and local community interact with each other through digital storytelling. This paper explores two key questions. First, we examine how digital storytelling can be employed for community engagement between people with disability and the local community and how it can help them achieve cultural citizenship. Secondly, we investigate how we can develop social work practice for people with disability through digital storytelling.

Introduction

The new global definition of social work was adopted by the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) in 2014. IFSW is a global organization for social work professionals, which comprises 116 national associations. IFSW has been granted Special Consultative Status the United Nations[1].Although promotion of social cohesion and respect for diversities in terms of cultural citizenship was additionally included in the new definition, social work studies on practical levels in terms of cultural citizenship are still under development. Since 1990s, community arts organisations in western countries such as UK, Canada and Australia have developed community engagement projects for migrants or people with disability through digital media production. It is important to develop the collaboration method between artists and social workers to promote cultural citizenship for social minority groups.

This paper discusses a practice-based research based on community cultural development project carried out in Fukui, located in northwest Japan from 2012. I organized: 1) Research visiting to community arts organisations in Sydney, Australia 2) iPad Digital Storytelling (DST) workshop with person with autism spectrum disorder and their family in Japan. This research focuses on mainly two questions, firstly, this study would attempt to analyse the effectiveness of community arts and cultural development through digital storytelling to promote community engagement and community participation of people with disability in Japan. Secondly, this study examines how we make use of digital storytelling and its production for social work practice for people with disability and their family to enhance their cultural citizenship.

Research Method

In our research project Firstly, in 2012 and 2013 we conducted a research visiting to community arts organizations in Sydney, Australia. Funaki was a coordinator for research visiting with social workers in Fukui with the financial support from Unveil foundation in 2012, Mitsubishi foundation in 2015. Japanese social workers received DST training by community artists in Sydney. Secondly, with the aid of social workers in disability field in Japan, iPad digital storytelling workshops for a person with autism spectrum disorder were organized and two DST were created in August and October 2013. Finally, exploratory research includes interviews with participants including a person with autism spectrum and his mother conducted by a social worker. The coordinator conducted the interview with a social worker. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to allow informants to speak freely not only about their impression of the workshops but also their subjective values and the perceptions of community engagements between people with disability and local community. Interviews varied from about an hour conducted by Japanese. Interviews are filmed and edited by the coordinator

Interviews were transcribed and analyzed thematically. Participants were fully briefed at an information session about this project and were able to watch the interviews and the analysis documents by researchers before this presentation. A written consent was obtained from the participant and his mother before the project commenced. I also

conducted participant observation as a coordinator of the showcase event and interviews. This observation gave me exposure to community sentiments and informal information shared among participants and was valuable in supplementing the research.

This paper will not represent the perception of community engagement between people with disability 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 people with disability through the use of digital storytelling (Harrison, 2007, p.74).

New Global Definition of Social Work

In this new definition, you will see two major changes from previous definition. Firstly, The social work profession's core mandates deleted problem solving in human relationships, focuses on promotion of social change, social development. Therefore, the participatory and person-centered approach is reflected in commentary notes for the definition that "Engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing." In this definition, social workers promote community-based practice by working with rather than for people.

Secondly, promotion of social cohesion and respect for diversities was additionally included in the new definition in terms of cultural citizenship. Social work in western discourses respects the first and the second-generation rights including civil and political rights, socio-economic and cultural rights. Especially, the conceptualization of social justice as distributive justice focuses on unconsciously to the class division of societies (Hölscher 2012; Rawls 1971). Theories of justice for recognition criticized such a limited understanding of distributive justice (Young 1990). Frazer (2008) argued that as the aim of social justice everybody is able to participate equitably, as full partners in interaction with others and as fully recognised members of society so called participatory parity. In order to achieve participatory parity, it will be important to require a just distribution of rights, opportunities and resources, as well as equal recognition of status and just framing, that is, the fair awarding of membership and political voice (Hölscher, D. & Bozalek 2012). Internal status hierarchies among race, ethnicity, gender, disability, etc, and a theoretical element of justice for recognition for minority communities have been underestimated in the discussion of revised global definition of social work. In this sense, the promotion of cultural rights and citizenship will be a significant issue in social work studies.

Community Arts and Community Cultural Development (CCD) in Australia

I have been researching on social work and community development practices with social minority communities such as migrants and refugees or people with disability in Australia since 2005. I visited many ethnic organizations and non-government organizations in NSW and Victoria, which engage in community settlements and social services for them. Since 1990s, community arts organisations in western countries such as UK, Canada and Australia have developed community cultural development projects for migrants or people with disability to promote cultural citizenship. It is important to develop the collaboration method between artists and social workers to promote cultural citizenship for social minority groups. These

projects are often called as Community arts or Community Cultural Development (CCD) . These projects are usually funded by the chief funding body, The Australia Council of the Arts. The program is currently called Community Partnerships program. Badham (2010) analysed the characteristic of Community Partnerships program as follows. She argues that CP promotes collaboration with non-arts organizations (such as health, welfare, education, housing). Community Partnerships focuses its support in a number of specific areas, which include regional Australia, disability, young people, cultural diversity, emerging communities, Indigenous people, remote Indigenous communities, and specific critical social and cultural issues requiring focused attention.

Secondly, CP recommends entrepreneurial model with self generated revenue sources. Artists in CP are expected to be at the service of a community and become a CD practitioner. Practices are more about community capacity building rather than creative outcomes (Badham 2010:93-94). This model attempts to build self-reliant and resilient communities with long-term projects.

Another trend of in Community Arts and CCD practice in Australia is using digital media. In the 1990s, notions of community arts and culture expanded to include practices that new media such as Internet. Since 2000, community arts and cultural development organizations in Australia have promoted community engagement with use of digital media such as Digital storytelling, short filmmaking, and theatre production. For example, Beyond the Square project, based in Western Sydney, NSW, organized a number of community arts and cultural development programs with digital media for people with disability from 2011 under Creative director Alison Richardson's leadership.

Beyond the Square give the chances to people with disability to create their own short movies or digital arts production not only for leaning digital literacy but for speaking up in Australian society and contributed to breaking stereo-typed image among local people. This digital media project attempted to develop new cultures and promote social changes by people with disability called Community Cultural Development. Especially digital storytelling which include the narratives of people could give opportunities to not only people with disability but to socially marginalized group such as aged people, women, indigenous people, victims and can reconstruct the community engagement with local community effectively (Hartley and McWilliam 2009) Also, several showcase events of digital media production within local community created a space for listening for mainstream Australian society.

Digital Storytelling Workshop with a Person with Autism Spectrum Disorder

What is Digital Storytelling? Digital storytelling (DST) is a two to three minute video clip, which combines photo images, sounds with a storyteller's voiceover. Typically during intensive workshop, each participant speaks freely to address their personal stories so called 'story circles' before creating DST by computer or tablet-type device like iPad. This digital media program was started in the USA in 1994. The Center for Digital Storytelling in California directed by Joe Lambert was the primary and leading organization. DST is currently practiced around the world in many different contexts, such as community cultural development with migrant youth, health research with cancer patients, including social work programs in the UK, the USA, Australia,

Canada, South Africa, India (Burgess 2006; Hartley and McWillam 2009; Lenette 2013; Ogawa and Tsuchiya 2014; Salazar 2011).

In 2013 August Digital Storytelling (DST) workshop with a person with autism spectrum disorder was organized in Fukui by Mr.Shoichi Fujita, a social worker in Fukui. Shinsuke Funaki, a researcher was a coordinator on this program. Participant's name is Ken, fictitious name, and a 19 years old person with autism spectrum disorder. He graduated from a special needs high school in Fukui in 2012. He currently uses a transition support for employment and is looking for a job in the local community. This workshop was organized August and October 2013 at his house under the facilitation of the social worker. He uses iMovie on iPad by himself with the aid of the social worker. He spent about several hours to discuss the topic he would like to create with the social worker before creating DST. Ken wrote down the script and chooses the pictures by himself with the support of the social worker. They created two digital stories with iPad. Ken told at the interview after the DST workshop that it took so long to think about creating his storytelling and choosing picture and music especially in the first DST. The title of his DST was 'My dream' (6 minutes and 30 seconds production) about his favorite things and hobbies. However, in the second time of DST making, Ken got used to the process of DST and finished earlier then the first time. His second DST was 'Fukui marathon running tournament story', which express his motivation and passion about marathon running. Showcase events were organized in his group work session among his self-help groups and careers' group in December 2013.

Positive benefits of Digital storytelling were expressed by both participants. Firstly, The process of DST promoted a self-representation for participants and created self-empowering narratives of his life.

The person with autism spectrum, Ken, said;
I was very happy to express my favorite things in this movie. Very good expression. This is a cool movie like a movie preview. I would like to create this kind of movie again!.

His mother, Mariko, said;
I was very surprised to know his Motivation and expression to enjoy his life for the first time though DST.

According to his mother's interview, his motivations to practice running became much stronger after deciding to participate in DST workshop.

Secondly, The participant became positive and active to self-representation especially to family and friends, after experiencing a showcase event.

Ken said;
I was a little embarrassed when I heard friends' laughing during my showcase. It made me very happy because I was a comedian. I would like to show this movie to other friends and friends' family.'

At a showcase event among friends and self-help group, He was so confident on his DST and friends and their parents looked so proud of his achievements.

Mariko, his mother said;
He was very happy not only to show this production among friends but also to feel positive responses from friends. I believe it brought him a confidence on his life. After participating in DST, I realized he changed his attitudes in his self-help group meetings. He tries to express his own feelings and opinions very positively and actively now.

She additionally said;
His digital stories are just like a small documentary. This documentary is very small and armature, not like a professional TV one, but I believe it has a powerful possibility to empower other people with disability through digital media production.

Thirdly, what was the effectiveness of community arts and cultural development through digital storytelling to promote community engagement and community participation of people with disability from social work perspective.

Shoichi, Social Worker said;
After facilitating DST with Ken, I felt our relationship has changed positively. For example, when Ken is participating in group work meetings for social skill training by my facilitation every month, it is becoming easier for both of us to communicate with. Moreover, after he finished a showcase event among other young persons with disability. He was able to enhance his self-expression and narratives not only to me but also other friends with disability. Additionally, Ken's self-expression in this showcase event influenced on attitudes of other people with disability. Other participants in group work felt confidence on expressing their feelings and ideas as well.

Shoichi recognized the effectiveness of DST as self-expression not only in the process of group work settings, but also in his daily life. Ken started Facebook with the aid of his sister after creating his DST and updated his own hobbies such as paintings or family events. He makes use of Facebook as an engagement tool with friends and community.

Mariko, His mother said;
I feel like making my DST as well after seeing my son's DST. I would like to give my advice and ideas for raising a child with disability to the parent who are worrying about babyhood parenting of a young child with disability through my DST. I have discussed babyhood parenting with childcare professionals and felt a kind of achievement for it. I want to create my DST with messages to other parents who have a child with disability.

Her words led to a new project of iPad DST workshop for helping professionals and carers in October 2014. Mariko created her own DST and also learned how to facilitate DST workshop. Our project also shows that showcase events among friends became an opportunity to celebrate on the success of a person with disability. However, in the case study of DDM project, it is fair to say that the effectiveness of community engagements between people with disability and the local community was very limited because of ethical concern in the local society.

Shoichi, Social Worker, said;
DST would be a great tool for promoting self-expression and narratives for people with disability in the society. However, it will be more important to have a space to accept thoughts and sense of values among participants in a tolerant atmosphere, rather than making DST by people with disability.

Ochiai (2012) analysed the three stage of intercultural literacy through a case study of a digital media project with young migrants in Kobe, and argues that new young migrants need a comfortable place (call Ibasho in Japanese) outside school settings to be accepted as new comer foreign children by dialogue with those who understand them, and to express their message to the host society in the first stage. It would be important to find out how to create a comfortable space called Ibasho for participants in the local society of Japan in order to seek out the alternative model of digital storytelling to fit the Japanese culture and society.

In Japan one of the leading research project is called 'Media Conte'organized by professor Ogawa Akiko, Yuko Tsuchiya (Ogawa and Tsuchiya 2014). Media Conte is a collaborative workshop of digital storytelling, particularly targeting marginal voices. However, in their workshops vulnerable participants such as people with disability seemed unable to voice what they desired to say in individual situations and were not conscious about their own stories. They argued that in the Western model of DST little attention has been given to the story-generating process to create their own stories.

Conclusion and Future Issues

In social work field, Lenette (2013) discussed the benefit of DST for supports to women from refugee background in Australia and argues that the self-representation through DST has a potential to produce counter-narratives, both at the individual and broader community levels. She also discussed ethical concerns and limitations to the use of DST. Practitioners need to carefully consider the full realm of implications in terms of privacy and respectful use of recorded narratives. As Lenette pointed out ethical concern, other studies in Japan in the case of social minority issues such as migrants or people with disability showed that there are some risks for showing personal stories among local audiences who express conflicting views or are not interested in digital media production (Funaki 2014). Dreher, an Australia scholar in media studies addresses that a politics of speaking and representation is necessary but limited framework for strategy in multicultural media. She also argues that politics of listening across the cultural difference is important (Dreher 2008). We have to concern whether showcase events create a safer space for community engagement process between people with disability and local community in order to promote cultural citizenship for people with disability in the community. [1]

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