

Exploring personal stories with Digital Storytelling

JUCONI, Mexico



1 <https://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=15986&LangID=E>

2 Concluding observations on the combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of Mexico, 3 July 2015, CRC/C/MEX/CO/4-5.

THE MODEL

Digital Storytelling (DST) is a participatory methodology that supports participants to develop personal narratives on a particular life experience. Stories are created with a combination of text, images, animation, audio recordings and music and result in each individual producing a short film of 2-5 minutes.

Family for Every Child has initiated two DST research projects, supporting the training of 13 member organisations in DST methodology in order to gather valuable insights into children and caregivers' perspectives on family care and care outside of families. JUCONI in Mexico was involved in the first DST project in 2014. Since then it has run 11 DST workshops with more than 50 children, integrating the technique into its therapeutic and participatory approach of working with children and families living in extreme poverty to heal the consequences of violence.

DST projects begin with a specific question. For JUCONI this might be, 'When did you feel part of a family?' Children are supported to respond to this question during an intensive group process involving facilitated reflections and discussions. Participants learn video editing skills and experiment with different artistic approaches to create the images and script for their digital story.

The process usually surfaces emotions in participants as they articulate and reinterpret their own story. As such, DST enables JUCONI to gain deep insights into children's feelings and experiences. The finished films help to facilitate communication between children and their families and can also be used as an advocacy tool to create change at different levels.

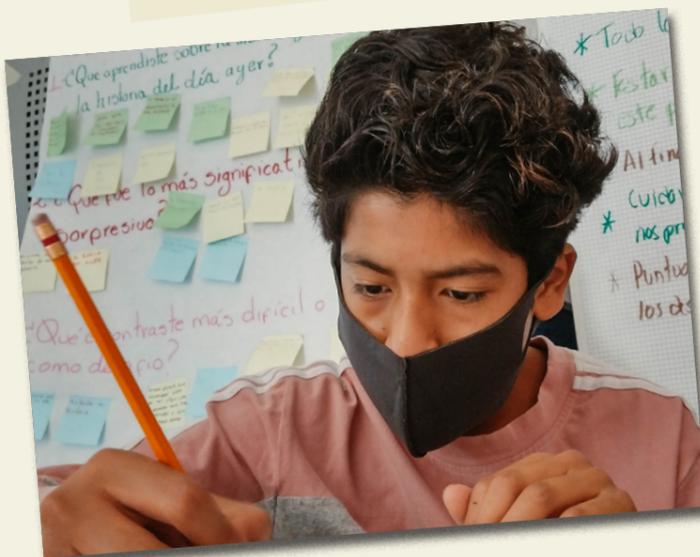
DST enables JUCONI to learn more about children's experiences and their family situations.

IMPLEMENTATION

Groups consist of up to six participants and two or three facilitators. Participants are recruited via an open call to all children that JUCONI works with. This ensures that those who take part are enthusiastic about learning new skills and sharing their personal stories. Children must have been working with JUCONI for at least eight months, as it is important that they have developed the foundations to manage their emotions. Keeping similar ages together helps to ensure that everyone is comfortable sharing in group discussions.

JUCONI's DST projects are delivered by staff who have been trained in the methodology and the ethical and safeguarding protocol. It is essential to have a specialised team to support participants with the issues that come up.

The end of each project involves a presentation of all the films to the group and JUCONI staff. Children are then free to choose if they would like to share their film with family members.



OUTCOMES

- 1 The creative process supports children to express vulnerabilities and feelings that they might not ordinarily be able to do.
- 2 DST films help to open up communications between children and their families and often relationships improve as a result.
- 3 JUCONI learns more about children's experiences and family situations, and can adapt and improve their work to better meet the individual child or family's needs.
- 4 Children realise the importance of relationships in their lives and that they can continue to shape their own narrative in the future.

CHALLENGES FACED

- 1 Some children find it difficult to complete their digital stories or require more support due to low levels of literacy.
- 2 On occasion, children desert the process when they realise they will have to share challenging experiences or memories.
- 3 Sometimes children decide not to share their finished film with family members. This usually provides JUCONI with more information about the family dynamics and alerts them to the fact that more support is needed.
- 4 The COVID-19 pandemic has proved challenging for DST projects as online sessions do not allow for sufficient emotional support or privacy for participants, as well as posing issues of digital access and technical difficulties.

LOCAL CONTEXT

The United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) recognises children's right to express their views freely and to have those views taken into account. Mexico has ratified the CRC and in 2003 established an annual Children's Parliament, bringing together 300 child legislators to generate and present proposals to government ministers on all aspects of Mexican society. The 2014 General Law on the Rights of Children and Adolescents also guarantees the participation of children in the design and implementation of public policies in Mexico which affect their rights.¹

Despite these significant initiatives, in 2015 the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child found that children's opinions are not consistently heard in judicial and administrative proceedings in Mexico and recommended that the government establish spaces 'for the permanent participation of girls and boys at the federal, state and municipal levels.'²

ABOUT JUCONI

Established in 1989 in Puebla, Mexico, JUCONI helps children and their parents to recover from the traumas caused by violence and to acquire the emotional, cognitive and social skills they need to break the intergenerational cycle of violence and poverty.

The JUCONI Institute was set up in 2001 to expand the organisation's impact and disseminate its knowledge and experience through a variety of training courses, publications and consultancy services as well as an annual International Congress.

Find out more about JUCONI: www.juconi.org.mx or contact Antonia Chávez Zamora, Therapeutic Coordinator: antonia@juconi.org.mx

FURTHER INFORMATION

Family for Every Child is a diverse membership network of civil society organisations based around the world.

How We Care is an innovative platform for those working with children and families, across the globe, to share their practice. Our vision is that through the exchange and learning facilitated by How We Care, organisations' family care practice and programming will be strengthened, with improved outcomes for the children they support.

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