



My #QuarantineLife, Free Press Unlimited, Netherlands

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Slogan: 'You're isolated but not alone. There are millions like you. Stay at home, travel with your stories' Launch date: 17 March 2020

“Today hundreds of millions of young people worldwide are living isolated from public life at their homes or other places because of the COVID-19 pandemic. They have many experiences and stories to tell. Who are they, where are they, with whom are they and what do they have to show or tell to each other, to the world? What can the world learn from them? But news media hardly showed interest. On 17 March, at the beginning of the wave of countries going into lockdown, we decided to create a bilingual (English, Spanish) YouTube channel exclusively for their news, opinions, stories and ideas. Since it became impossible for reporters/makers to meet the young people in quarantine, we asked the young people directly to make their own videos or together with family members. And we wanted also that their videos would be seen and heard by adults too. We created the title ‘My #QuarantineLife’. A title that can be identified because of its uniqueness by the position of the hashtag inside the title. By using the trending hashtag QuarantineLife the videos would automatically mingle on YouTube and in social media with stories from adults. To generate videos and audience for the YouTube channel, a cross platform social media strategy was developed, using facebook, twitter for communication with adults and Instagram, tiktok for young people.

First and foremost the facebook page became the heartbeat of the crossmedia strategy. By mobilizing international media professionals from our private networks to that space, we could develop daily communication and engagement with them. Because they are the key intermediates for us to get in touch with local children, youth and families. From this group of international media professionals a dozen already became ‘satellites’ of the project in their home country and are searching for videos. In México even a local project was developed in Spanish (#MiVidaEnCuarentena) and the videos became part of a national TV program besides being uploaded to the YouTube channel. We created a simple but effective format so the videos would be more than the ultra short videos that young people already share among each other in social media. That’s why we ask 3 things in advance:

1. introduce yourself and where you are in quarantine,
2. The video has to be 60-90 seconds,
3. Say what you have to say, do what you want to do.

What we couldn’t imagine in advance was how much this would become a media literacy project. By getting directly in touch with them we can support online in developing an idea or how to film. Or giving technical support. And in many of the cases we do the editing or the final editing and of course the subtitling.

It can happen that in one morning we're talking to a mother in Iran, a child in Italy and a father in Argentina. This is also how we hear every time how proud they are to be able to tell their story the way they want and to be really part of an international channel. In the first 7 weeks the YouTube channel already uploaded more than 50 videos from 15 countries: Argentina, Cuba, Colombia, Germany, Iran, Italy, Kosovo, México, Netherlands, Nepal, Perú, Tunisia, Ukraine, USA, Zambia. The channel already has over 12.000 views and a reach of 70.000 people. That's very remarkable for such a special project with many different languages, the bandwidth of the ages of the children and youth, the subtitles in English or Spanish. In social media the facebook page is joined by over 500 int. media professionals and reached over 20.000 people already. And now it also got news media interested. The project and young people's videos were already picked up by for instance national newspaper La Nacion in Argentina, TV Malisheva in Kosovo, RTL Koffietijd in the Netherlands.

We're planning to continue this project at least as long as there will be millions of young people worldwide in quarantine. Which will be until July or August as we can see it now."

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