

MARIE GILLESPIE:

The original plan was that Smart phones would play a central role in the filmmaking process. So how did that take place?

DAISY SQUIRES:

So, originally, we thought it would be a really great idea to hand out smart phones as a form of video technology.

If there were places we really couldn't go to, we could still get amazing access. And also, use it as a form of empowerment to the refugees themselves, as an inclusive part of the process.

It was a bit of a struggle at first, trying to work out which phones to get, and all the SIMs that would work all over the different countries... And it took us a while to keep up to date with all the possibilities and options that we had. And then we finally kind of found a system that worked. And it worked as a really... I think it did really work as an inclusive form of filmmaking.

In order to keep up-to-date with collecting information, we obviously had to keep meeting up with our contributors, and it was a really nice way of keeping our relationship going. A form of exchange, in a way... It meant we got a lot of footage, and we had some special unknown moments through their phones.

MARIE GILLESPIE:

Could you give us some examples of how you were able to reach the parts that you might not otherwise have reached?

DAISY SQUIRES:

You have the obvious big moments of people in the back of a lorry. Or... someone flushing their passport down a toilet whilst flying. Or like, in an airport, or watching smugglers putting people in cars.

But then you also have the kind of lighter and more intimate moments of families discussing and talking around dinner about funny things. Or kids running around, being silly into the phone, and just using it as a tool for playing.

Yes – so you had a nice balance between the kind of really hard-hitting, kind of shocking access moments, but also the lightness of day-to-day life.

MARIE GILLESPIE:

Were there any moments during the journeys where the phone made the difference between life and death?

DAISY SQUIRES:

Definitely, 100%. There's been a few.. One of the experiences that we had, where it was 6 o'clock on a Thursday evening, where we were all just about to leave the office, and then we had a phone call from one of the contributors crying down the phone in Arabic, and we had one of our Arabic translators in at the time... Saying his wife was on a boat, he was in Denmark, but his wife was on a boat between Turkey and Greece, and it was sinking. He was calling up incredibly distressed – Saying “can you help? What do I do? What do I do?”

And because we had very good contacts with MSF, we then managed to call our friend at MSF, who then called their colleague in Greece, who then sent out a 'search & rescue' boat – and managed to save the boat.

This all happened in a very short period of time. We were receiving Whatsapp locations from the people in the boat, who were sending it to us, and then we were sending it to MSF... and then we spoke to the driver of the boat on the phone.

He was telling us how many people were on board, how many women were on board – and in the space of 20 minutes, MSF were already in the water looking for this boat. And they made it!

MARIE GILLESPIE:

So, MSF, Médecins Sans Frontières, Doctors Without Borders, made good use of your communications with them about the refugees...

DAISY SQUIRES:

Yes, so it was kind of this triangle of communications. All facilitated through Whatsapp locations.