

'Whispering' Fukushima
Keiko Sato

2012 IFAA Art Platform
Louvain-la-Neuve





IFAA 2012 - Communication - Exchange, Dialogue & Art

In today's society there seems to be a lack of care for one another, for society and the environment. Probable cause for this is the detachment of self and of society. There is concern about the impact this detachment from self and society has on the development of our societies and in preserving our fragile environment.

In order to examine and engage in this subject we invite artists and scholars of different disciplines. What is the state of our (western) society, our world, its challenges and what role can art play, not only as a practice / thinking process but as the nexus of communication, knowledge production, exchange and critical dialogue?

Reflection on and examination of this subject can only start from a different perspective than we are used to, we have chosen to step out of our comfort zone and begin this process from the Zulu philosophy of **Ubuntu- the essence of being human**. To have **Ubuntu** is to acknowledge the interconnectedness of all humanity and nature. Ubuntu embodies all the invaluable virtues that society strives for towards maintaining harmony and the spirit of sharing among its members.

Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu - meaning (to be human is due to other human beings), taken from Ubuntu and being the opposite of individualism means that 'the existence of one is due to the existence of all' - Sithabile Mlotshwa.

It is with the above in mind that we have chosen the theme: Communication - Exchange, Dialogue & Art. Since communication is central to the on-going processes of culture and society, how can we utilize it to address the urgency for change brought by our current climate? Can artists through their work force us to stand still and to re-examine the way we live today?

Putting in mind that one can't exist as a human being in isolation and that due to our interconnectedness and the fact that what we do affects the rest of the world, what impact can the arts as a powerful tool of communication have in re-awakening Ubuntu and our sense of collective purpose?

Questions we propose for reflection:

- **Are we conscious of the urgency to rethink humanity our role and responsibilities in relation to each other, our planet and the impact this has on future generations?**
- **What role can art play in bringing about this consciousness and a call to action?**
- **Does language in all its facets hinder or limit fruitful - communication?**
- **Since Communication is central to the on-going processes of culture and society, how does a breach in communication affect these processes?**
- **Does internet contribute to widening the gap of inequality between different parts of the world?**
- **While internet technology seems to have broken the physical borders of communication, has it at the same time become a communication barrier to those unable to access it creating a huge development backlog and vice versa?**

It is with the above in mind that we brought creators based in different parts of the globe - to Louvain-la-Neuve in order to reflect on and respond to the above mentioned questions. To us artists have the power to inspire change - it is with this conviction that our take-off point was based on sharing knowledge through cross disciplinary collaborations with the intention of fostering fruitful dialogue.

Sithabile Mlotshwa

'Whispering' Fukushima _ Keiko Sato 2



I am from Fukushima. The nuclear disaster following the earthquake on March 11, 2011 has deeply affected me. The theme of IFFA 2012, *Communication- Exchange, Dialogue and Art*, has inspired me to work on a project about my hometown.

The installation *Whispering Fukushima* is based on the book *100 people, 100 stories*, a collection of interviews with people in Fukushima. The book was written by Iwakami Katsumi, an independent journalist and the director of IWJ (Independent Web Journal). The stories show how people communicated with each other after the disaster, how the disaster triggered disturbing exchanges among family members, and how the lack of information from the government affected people in Fukushima.

I chose a huge greenhouse near Louvain-La-Neuve as the space to create my work. There are 9 planting boxes of different colours with blackboards attached, which are normally used for growing new varieties. Two units were of the same colour, so I painted one bright green. On each blackboard, I wrote up the stories I chose and edited from the interviews in the book. Each blackboard tells the story of one family. From afar, the blackboards with their texts and icons look like drawings. The greenhouse is located in a village in the French speaking area of Belgium. Given the location, some quotes from the interviews were translated into French and pasted along each blackboard.

Flowers were planted in the boxes to grow during the exhibition. We human are part of nature. As such, radiation can destroy not only plants but us as well.

Iwakami Katsumi wrote in the preface of the book: *People's cries and extraordinary information would certainly become news, but talking quietly like whispering and murmuring will not. Without knowing the stories that are based on everyday life of people in Fukushima, we can not understand and have close feelings to what is going on in Fukushima.*

Keiko Sato
02-01-2013



Fukushima



Risk area



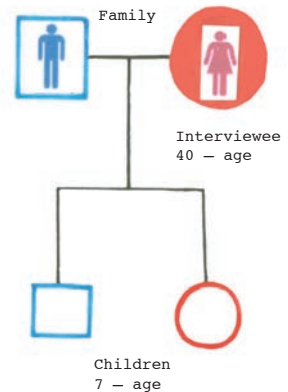
Safe area



Japanese Government



Nuclear Power Plant





'Whispering' Fukushima _ Keiko Sato 4







'Whispering' Fukushima _ Keiko Sato 6







九月 September
 福島

Government Electric Company
 TV complain but do not
 fire warning

I don't want children suffering. That is my priority. It's not only for my children, but also for others. I get really angry. You never know. There is safe later. No one can take any responsibility for the life of children.

hard to find
 sacrifice
 humanity

aged informing
 Blog
 Economy
 Radiation
 place of

You should more talking. If you really think about Fukushima, recover from...

Ce n'est pas si dangereux, N'est-ce pas ?

Les radiations sont invisibles pas conséquent, je ne peux pas empêcher mes enfants d'aller dehors.

Beaucoup de gens à Fukushima...





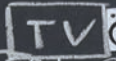
11月 August 2011 Fukushima

Government
Electric Company
Ministry of Economy
Anger (before)

NOW

I should not think myself as victim. I had never been against nuclear power plant.

Computer



TV
SAFE government

different sense of crisis

Fear

Civil service

It's not so dangerous, is it?

He is very busy to rebuild Fukushima.

I could not believe what happened in Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant, especially melting down. I was very afraid of radiation.

Easy to talk

difficult to talk



15 18
They don't want to move.
Friends

Radiation is invisible!
So I can not stop my children to go out.

Mothers Fear
School lunch

Many people in Fukushima do not want to hear the frightening stories.

made in Fukushima
Support to buy

But I can not

February 2012

I stay in Fukushima. I was so tired that I stopped to worry. No PC, no book, no talk. (NO information) I hated those who said, "This place is safe." But now I understand them.

60km from Fukushima
1st Nuclear Power Plant
福島第一原子力発電所

Less time to sleep

Et n' est pas dans n'est

Les non sont et pas et je ne empie enfant deha

Beaucoup de Fukushima veulent entendre ce qui se passe sur les

Pas de pas et pas et pas et

九月 September 2011
福島

60km from Nuclear Power Plant

Government, Electric company, Fukushima Prefecture are wrong

TV complain but do nothing!

Divorced

By the disaster more women realised that their men had no idea to protect their family.

I don't want children are suffering. That is my priority. It's not only for my children, but also for others. I got really angry some people said, "Here is safe later. No one can take any responsibility for life of children"

Please evacuate with children

Blog

argument (April May)

she did not want to leave Fukushima

End of May move to Safematsumoto with kids.

Happy children can play outside.

Radioactivity
→
surfaces
Humanity



4 in Matsumoto
2
Can I touch flower?
I don't need to wear a mask?

Blog

Radiation
Place of evacuation

Normal Life

Economy

You should move from Fukushima without talking, if you really think about Fukushima & recover from the disaster please leave. If you talk the hard situation in Fukushima, people would leave. some companies will be bankrupt

Friend He has a company. Difficult situation

did organise factory

March 2012
I stay in Fukushima. I would like to support for people in Fukushima to find the places of evacuation. It would be easier to live with my family, but I do my best here. The relation-ship with my wife is fine.

September 2011
 30km from Nuclear Power Plant

Before the disaster I supported nuclear energy, but not anymore.

Evacuated to Saitama Prefecture for one month.

TV No Problem

Evacuate to south as soon as possible! 100km from the Power Plant!

12 March melting down

53

Work at "All Electric" Need Nuclear Power Plant Many Clients

Their Families evacuated to south

Information

Tokyo (Electric Company) working in Fukushima 1st Nuclear Power Plant in Okuma Town. very rich

I have heard from one of my clients that SPEEDI was started, but the electric company suppressed the fact.

If people know the information from SPEEDI, the evacuation was not so delayed.

Warning for human-being

March 2012

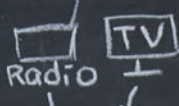
I live still in Iwaki-city with my mother. After 9.2011 I started a project together with Kyushu University to develop natural energy. Decontamination of does not progress so quickly. I accept this reality & want to take action.

August 2011 - 25km from [Sun icon]

ICRP (International)

1msv/year
↓ changed
20msv/year (Japan)

11th ~ 14th March
No electric water
→ Busy



Not harmful for human health.

↑ danger

I don't want to leave Fukushima

I worry about my family & friends in Fukushima. They have many problems. This can not be adequately conveyed to outside of Fukushima.

On 15th March I have heard about the 3 explosions of Nuclear Power Plant



Office workers
5 more (blood nose high fever)

18 March Evacuated to Kanagawa Prefecture

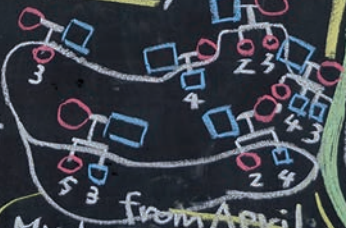
Begin April Fukushima

(Radiation level: 0.05 μSv/hour)

Not play outside
Not open window
wear a mask
only weekend go to play outside (radiation)

Moved to Kanagawa in August 2011. Safe

If I think back now, our government did not give us the right information.




but I feel guilty and want to go back to Fukushima someday

from April
My daughter's kindergarten blood nose 4 ~ 5 times / Month



I'm living in Kanagawa with my daughter. Her body condition is much better than before. My husband and I meet once for 2 months. Our relationship is now not working well. March 2012

September 2011

Though I lived in Fukushima, I did not know how many  were built, how dangerous Mixed Oxide fuel was.

I can't believe what they say and feel strange

no problem! Safe No Panic!


60km from 
International Commission 
Imsv/y Prof. Yamashita (Fukushima University Hospital)

The level of radiation is safe till 100msv/year. And if you smile, radiation does not affect you.

social worker in a hospital

arguments nurse

If we are careful to radiation, we can stay here.

I feel guilty for my children that they are exposed to radiation 

15 9

I'm also very worried, but I like my job here very much.

They evacuated to Yamagata, but came back


I don't want to leave. If only my children evacuated, it will not be good.

I feel pressure that I can not say, "radioactivity is dangerous." Blood & regional relationships are more important here than a big city like Tokyo.

my boss in the hospital.

If you worry about radiation, what can you do? They will become patients. You need them to feel better.



 House 0.5usv/hour (inside)
Park 1.3~1.5 usv/h
School ground 10usv/h
Decontamination 5usv/h
before the disaster 0.05 usv/h

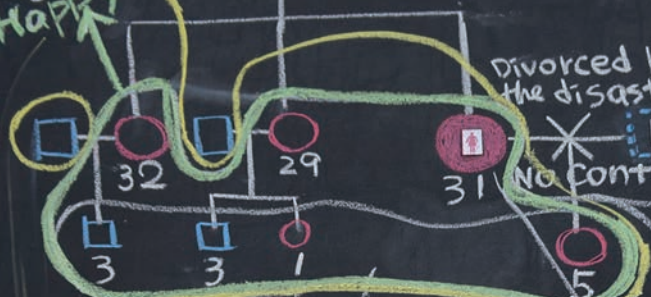
January 2012
I am thinking seriously to leave Fukushima. But I can not get yet agreement from my family.

August 2011 60km from ☀

Moved to Nigata. HAPPY

You abandon your parents!
first

looked at internet
It's better you to evacuate.



Divorced before the disaster

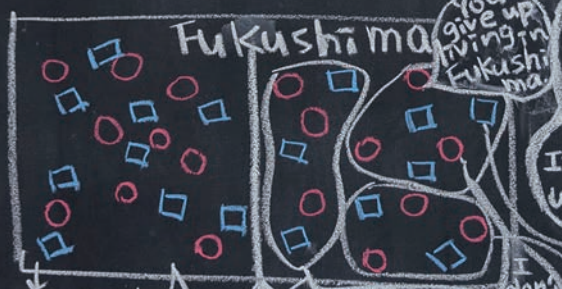
No Contact

later

For 2 months after the disaster I stayed in Fukushima but I never thought to evacuate.

As soon as I looked at internet & went lecture, I became afraid of radiation.

In Fukushima the children had blood nose, fever and mouth inflammation



you give up living in Fukushima

I'll evacuate with my child

support radiation is dangerous. It's better to evacuate.

radiation is no problem

I don't want to hear

Please not talk about it

It can't be helped

2 different reactions

March 2012

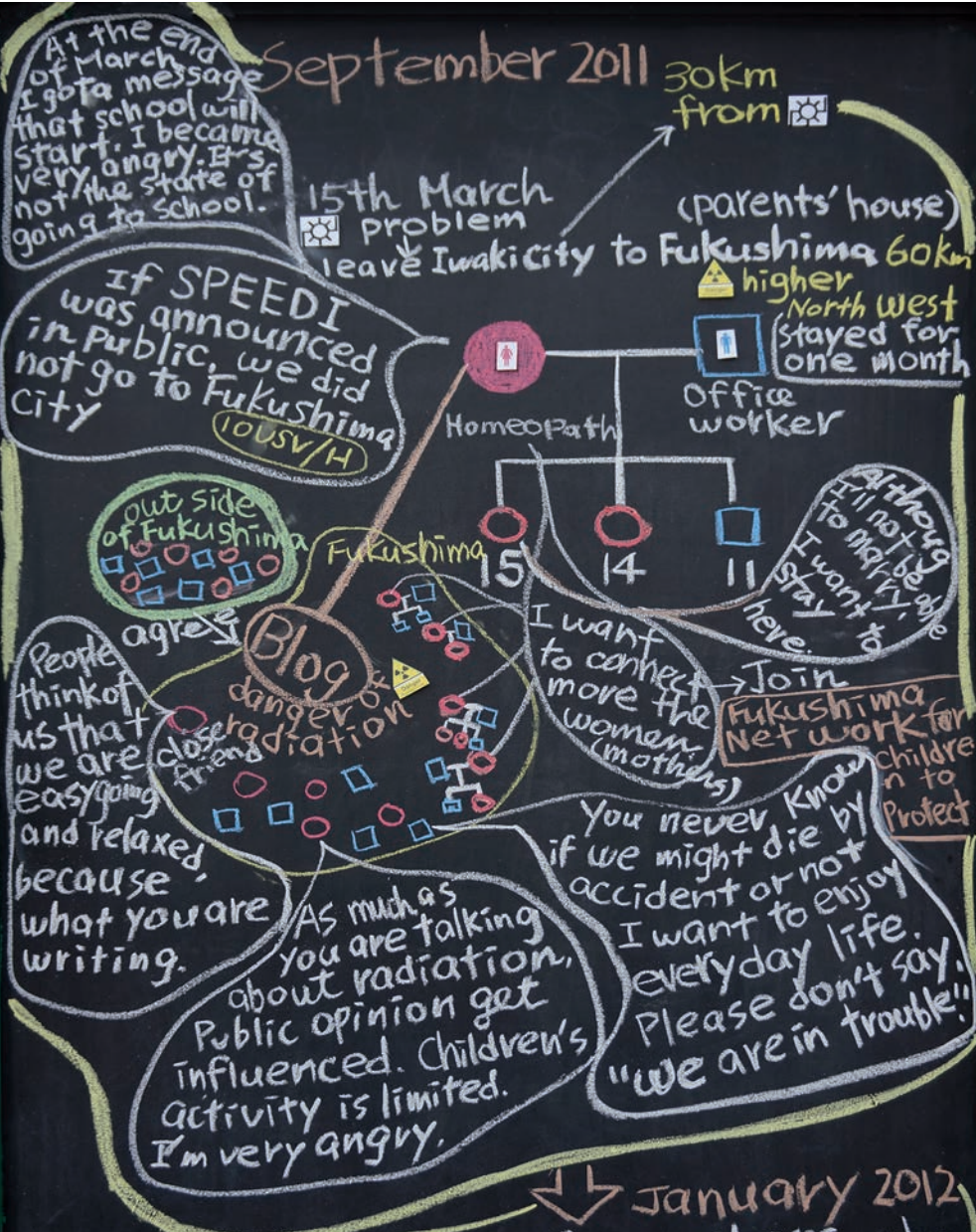
I started working in Nigata. I want to go back to my hometown (Fukushima). But I'm relieved to have life here. During the New Years holiday, I went back to Fukushima-city with my daughter. We got tired and headache. Later I knew the level of radiation suddenly higher at that time. ☠

Vous ab...
vos par...
C'est m...
vous d'

Vous n...
à vive...

S'il vou...
ne parle...
des radi...

Je ne vou...
l'entend...



January 2012
 I meter radiation for mothers who can not talk their uneasiness. It's quite tiring to say something again. nuclear in the strong atmosphere of recovery from the disaster.

via
 page
 que
 et
 anti

Même si
 pour les
 marches
 contre-

de la
 c'est
 car la

Je voulais
 se parler
 l'ennemi
 des ent

Vous ne
 jamaise
 mourez
 Je veux
 la vie de

S'il y
 re dice
 "nous
 probab

and all your
 inva
 in the nation
 in motion.



September 2011 60km from

How we can
evacuate
so many
people
Prf. Yamashita
Lecture

Why do you
think
govern-
ment let
people in
Fukushima
to evacuate?

I think he is
not a doctor,
but a politician.
If I were
him, I
would have
distributed
iodine to
people

Government
did not give
the order to
distribute
iodine.

A rule of doctor is
to protect the health
of people.

My children got blood nose
after the disaster, but
they had before, too.
So it's hard to judge,
because of radiation
or not.

Doctor
46
14 11 4
Evacuated
to Niigata
but they
came back.

Don't
go to Park!
not touch
grasses.

I want to go
back to Fukushima
to join the entrance
ceremony.

Germany decided to stop
within 10 years.

I feel
guilty.
.....

I agree! Why Japan
cannot make the decision like
Germany.

February 2012

My wife and children decided to move
to Kanazawa (Ishikawa)
I will work in a new hospital in Sukagawa
(Fukushima), which will accept some
evacuees from the area close to
I'd like to talk about the risk of radiation
though many doctors don't want to talk.

April 2012 60km from ☀

In Fukushima the problem became more serious and complicated. What government and electric companies did by distributing compensation public help and naming us, divided victims.

I have heard the blame to those who left Fukushima from those who stayed. I felt struggle & sadness of people who stayed. This divided situation shows the similarities what had happened in Hiroshima, Nagasaki and Minamata.



41

~3.12

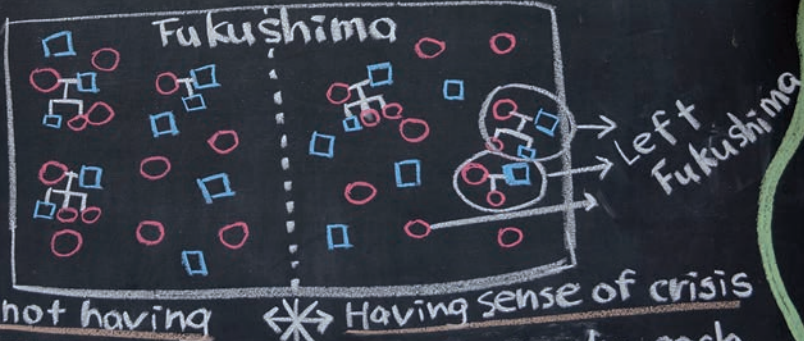
10 hours after the disaster we left Fukushima to Fukuoka (kyusyu).



worked at Fukushima University

Fight against the policy of university

not protect the students and staffs who live in the situation of contamination.



The practical can not communicate each other situations of each mother-child evacuation are very different, but in common after 11.3 these women studied very hard, thought very deeply and felt seriously about their situation, convinced their partners, children, and parents, and decided to evacuate. They chose the different way, which country and regional society suggested.

Bibliography

Iwakami Katsumi, *100 people 100 stories*, (Tokyo, 31-Shobou, 2012)
Arnie Gundersen, *Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant, Truth, and Future*,
(Tokyo, Shūei-sha, 2012)

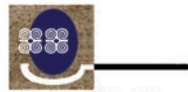
Colophon

Art work **Keiko Sato** www.keikosato.nl
Text **Sithabile Mlotshwa**, **Keiko Sato**
Editing **Keiko Yoshioka**
Graphic Design **Montse Hernández i Sala** www.montse-hs.nl
Published by **Keiko Sato**
Financial Support **The Netherlands Mondriaan Foundation**
Printed by **Drukkerij Gianotten**, Tilburg

M

mondriaan
fonds

Many thanks to
Sithabile Mlotshwa
and Jeanne-Marie Tosolini



Thamgidi Studio Foundation

