Power through Participation: Impacts of Youth Involvement in Invisible Children

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Presented at the 53rd Annual International Studies Association Convention
April 1, 2012: San Diego, California, USA

Abstract
Although films have been engaging and inspiring audiences throughout their history, new information and communication technologies have opened up a whole new set of opportunities for film to serve as an agent for social change. One organization that has recently garnered attention for utilizing film as tool for social change is Invisible Children (IC). Founded in 2005, IC is both a media-based organization as well as an economic development NGO with the goal of raising awareness and meeting the needs youth affected by the ongoing war in central Africa. Although IC's development projects in Africa have been well-documented, much less is known about the organization's impact on the people who participate in their events, campaigns, and programs. How does Invisible Children develop soft power through its media and mobilization efforts? And what are the impacts of participation on people's knowledge, attitudes, and behavior? This paper presents preliminary findings from a study of Invisible Children as an agent of soft power, with a focus on the development of social capital and civic capacity in its supporters. Using survey data collected from 2,173 Invisible Children supporters, analyses reveal patterns of exposure and involvement in the organization as well as outcomes related to intrapersonal, interpersonal, and civic/political knowledge, attitudes, and actions. Results have implications, not only for other film campaigns, but for any organization trying to leverage media for social change.

Note: The analysis presented here is preliminary; a final report is expected in June 2012. Please do not cite without contact author (bkarlin@uci.edu or 949-544-1496).

Introduction

Film has been used as a tool for promoting social change throughout its history. From the birth of documentary film, it has been hypothesized that "the cinema's capacity for getting around, for observing and selecting from life itself, can be exploited in a new and vital art form" (Grierson, 1932/1996 p. 97). Documentary filmmakers from the propagandist war films of the 1940s to the historical documentaries in the 1980s have believed that film could be used to influence the ideas and actions of people in ways once reserved for church and school. However, the recent upsurge in popularity of documentaries, combined with advances in information and communication technology have opened up a whole new set of opportunities for film to serve as an agent for both individual transformation and social change.

The emergence of new forms of media and technology are changing our conceptions of both documentary film and social action. Technologies such as podcasts, video blogs, internet radio, social media and network applications, and collaborative web editing "both unsettle and extend concepts and assumptions at the heart of 'documentary' as a practice and as an idea" (Ellsworth, 2008). In the past decade, we have seen new forms of documentary creation, distribution, and marketing, ranging from file sharing platforms such as YouTube and Vimeo to collaborative filmmaking initiatives such as the recent *Life in a Day* project, in which people from all over the world uploaded 80,000 individual videos with 4500 hours of footage that was edited into a feature length video by Ridley Scott (Ngak, 2011). Likewise, film campaigns are utilizing a broad array of strategies to engage audience members, including "action kits, screening programs, educational curriculums and classes, house parties, seminars, panels" that often turn into "ongoing 'legacy' programs that are updated and revised to continue beyond the film's domestic and international theatrical, DVD and television windows" (Participant Media, 2011). These campaigns combine new technologies with traditional movement strategies such as rallies, protests, and congressional lobbying efforts, creating a new form of civic engagement and potential soft power about which little is known.

The idea that such films have impact is often discussed, but rarely studied. "It is not unreasonable to assume that such film campaigns, just like any policy or program, have the possibility to influence viewers' knowledge, attitudes, and behavior. Measuring this impact has become increasingly important, as funders of documentary and issue-based films want to understand the "return on investment" of films in terms of social impact so that they can compare them with other projects, including non-media, direct service projects. Although we "feel" like films make a difference to the individuals who also see them in the broader cultures in which they are embedded, measurement and empirical analysis of this impact are vitally important for both providing feedback to filmmakers and funders as well as informing future efforts attempting to leverage film for social change." (Karlin & Johnson, 2011).

This new breed of documentary films clearly has a role in inspiring/educating the masses about important social and environmental issues and developing civic capacity and soft power for these issues, but much is still largely unknown. Film has been studied extensively as entertainment, as narrative, and as cultural event, but the study of film as an agent of social change is still in its infancy and prime for growth. This study begins to address this need through an evaluation of the direct impacts of one such organization on its supporters and participants.

Invisible Children
One organization that has recently garnered attention for utilizing film as tool for social change is Invisible Children (IC). IC rocketed to global fame in March 2012 with the release of their "Kony 2012" video, which accrued a record hundred million views in a week as well as a great deal of both support and criticism from around the world. But this was not the first film from this group nor was it their first success in garnering media attention.

In the Spring of 2003, three friends by the names of Jason Russell, Bobby Bailey, and Laren Poole traveled to Africa in search of firsthand experience of the troubles of third world countries. They captured the story of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and many individuals in Northern Uganda who had been affected by the ongoing violence there. They first screened their film in 2004 and established a non-profit organization the next year, with a dual mission to "stop the LRA violence and support the war-affected communities in East and Central Africa [and to] empower young people to 'do more than just watch,' to take steps towards ending injustice" (Invisible Children, 2012). Thus, Invisible Children is both a media/advocacy organization as well as a direct service organization. They support this mission in three ways:
1. Increase awareness of the LRA through creation and distribution of documentary films.
2. Channel energy from viewers/supporters into large-scale advocacy campaigns.
3. Operate programs in LRA-affected areas to provide protection, support, and reconstruction.

Invisible Children prides itself on creating sustainable programs for those affected by the LRA, while urging youth in the Western world to open their eyes and ears and become global citizens. IC has reported many successes in their work in Africa, including schools built, a rehabilitation center for child soldiers, and the establishment of the LRA CrisisTracker. And they have tracked the direct impacts of their media and advocacy, including screenings at thousands of schools and places of worship, nationwide protests and lobbying efforts, millions of Facebook fans, and even appearances on the Oprah Winfrey show and legislation signed by President Obama. Through a combination of biannual film "tours", fundraising drives, extensive use of social media, and traditional grassroots organizing, Invisible Children has been able to "mobilize large number of supporters in virtual and assemble large number of supporters in physical space" (Pepper, 2009).

Although Invisible Children's success in creating a social movement and subsequent social change has been well documented, much less is known about the organization's impact on the people who participate in their events, campaigns, and programs – the students, teachers, roadies, volunteers, and others who have been exposed to and/or involved in Invisible Children. This paper presents preliminary findings from a study of Invisible Children as an agent of soft power, *with a focus on the development of social capital and civic capacity in its supporters*. In this project, we are seeking to understand the unique methods Invisible Children has used to empower and engage youth as well as the impacts of their program on these youth. We seek to identify whom IC is reaching, how they are reaching them, how they become and stay involved, and how they are developing capital (intellectual, social, political, and financial) through these individuals. How does involvement with Invisible Children impact people's knowledge, attitudes, and behavior? And what are the implications of these changes for Invisible Children and potentially for other NGOs and governmental agencies? Answering these questions, with a focus on the youth participants, is the goal of this study.

Literature Review

Media Impacts
When analyzing the impacts of media, traditional metrics tend to focus on ratings and revenue, but media with a social agenda must broaden its efforts to understand and measure impact. Whiteman (2004) introduces a "coalition model" of activist media, in which stakeholders include both filmmakers and activist groups and impacts include both the individual and the policy level. Individual impacts include educating people, mobilizing members for action, and raising group status. Policy impacts include altering both agenda for and the substance of policy deliberations.

Whiteman suggests that the impact of a film is affected not only by production (e.g., content creation), but also by distribution and mobilization. Once produced, activists can use a film to create a public space within which citizens and decision makers can encounter, discuss and act on the issues raised. Impact is related to the way that groups reach audiences and who the audience encompasses: the larger and more diverse the audiences, the greater the potential impact. Beyond distribution, filmmakers vary in the extent to which they facilitate political action. Films have provided audiences with a variety of options for action: studying the issues further, writing letters to representatives, joining an activist group, or engaging in direct action. A coalition model of media impact, therefore, incorporates the distribution as well as the production process as well as the full range of potential impacts for both individuals and systems.

The Fledgling Fund (Barrett & Leddy, 2008) expand on this model, identifying five potential impacts of issue-based film: (1) Quality: How is the film received by an audience? (2) Public Awareness: Are people more aware of the issue? (3) Public Engagement: Are people taking action? (4) Social Movement: Are people engaging in collective action for a common goal? (5) Social Change: Has systemic change taken place?. These impacts move from individual viewers to groups, movements, and to what they call the "ultimate goal" of social change. However, they emphasize that not every project may result in concrete policy change or even seek to do so. "The goals of the project and our expectations will be driven by where an issue is in the public consciousness and the role a film can play, given its narrative, in the process of social change. It may be that film can play a key role in raising public awareness and educating key target audiences about a particular issue. In other cases, there is the potential for substantive policy change. The key for each project is to understand the state of the movement and how the film and outreach initiative can move it to the next level. In other words, we need to be clear as to what type of outreach is most appropriate and set reasonable expectations in terms of impact." (Barrett & Leddy, 2009, p. 7). So, although a film or media project may not represent a sole solution to a pressing social issue, it can have a strong influence as a source of mobilization. "Films should be viewed as embedded within a larger "discourse culture" surrounding an issue, influencing activist groups, stakeholders, decision makers, and journalists across stages of film production and distribution." (Nisbet, 2007, p. 4)

Latent and Manifest Functions
As such, many potential impacts of film may not be direct or even immediately recognized outcomes, but rather may represent indirect or latent functions. Robert Merton (1968) introduced the distinction between manifest and latent functions of an action, policy, or program. "Manifest functions are those objective consequences contributing to the adjustment or adaptation of the

system that are intended and recognized by the participants of the system; Latent functions, correlatively, being those which are neither intended nor recognized" (p. 105). This distinguishes function from motive, emphasizing that any activity or system is likely to have multiple functions, including some that may not be explicitly stated, intended, or even recognized. For example, the manifest function of carpool programs may be to decrease freeway and parking congestion, but carpooling can enhance bonds between individuals and create an enhanced sense of self-efficacy within communities that adopt them. It is also possible that individuals who originally carpooled to save money or time grew to adopt environmental attitudes related to this behavior that then translated to other behaviors. This is not to say that this is a necessary consequence of carpool programs; only that there are many possible consequences beyond those which are traditionally intended or recognized. Latent functions may support the manifest functions, as above, but they may also be irrelevant to manifest functions or even serve to undermine them. For example, a policy of pooling tips at a restaurant may have a manifest function of promoting equality among staff but may also have a latent function of decreasing the motivation of top performing servers in the restaurant.

Merton also asserted, "just as the same item may have multiple functions, so may the same function be diversely fulfilled by alternative items." In other words, there are many different ways to fulfill any given function. As such, when considering a function such as the development and deployment of soft power, no single social practice, policy or institution is indispensable or solely responsible; it is possible to identify a range of "functional alternatives" and explore how they may also contribute to the desired function.

Recent decades have seen an increased focus on collaboration among institutions and individuals in solving our most pressing social and political issues, bringing together functional alternatives to work towards a combined goal. However, the research has largely focused on evaluating intended (manifest) outcomes rather than latent function of the collaborative process (Koontz & Thomas, 2006; Provan & Milward, 2001). Bardach (1998) suggests an alternate approach that views the structures of collaboration as "latent potentialities that operate only if they are properly actualized" (p. 49). Thus, potential impact goes beyond specific goals to the development of *collaborative capacity,* or "the potential to engage in collaborative activities rather than the activities themselves". This potential includes both objective components (e.g., documents, policies, and allocation of resources) and well as subjective components (e.g., expectations, skills, and abilities of the individuals involved). This potential, Bardach contends, is an often neglected, yet equally important function of collaborative processes.

Civic Capacity
This same concept of capacity as a resource has been applied to individual citizens and communities in the form of civic capacity, which is "the ability to build and maintain a broad social and political coalition across all sectors of the urban community in pursuit of a common goal" (Stone, Henig, Jones, & Pierannunzi, 1993). This type of capacity building has been a common theme in community development for many decades (McNeeley, 1999), but is relatively new in discussions of national or global capacity. Civic capacity does not necessarily refer to specific outcomes, but rather to "the ability to participate in public life with the result of more democratic governance at various scales" (Saegert, 2004, p. 4). Civic capacity is developed through community building efforts that increase social capital of individuals and contribute to a

shared civic agenda; over time, this civic capacity leads back to further community building activity. "Even failures to achieve particular goals may lead to important learning and new strategies that do eventually succeed, and the learning itself is part of the development of community civic capacity." (p. 38)

Youth Engagement
There has been a large focus on developing civic capacity among youth, but past decades have seen decreased engagement of today's youth to overall American public life (Carpini, 2000). One possible cause for this is a decreased sense of efficacy; youth may feel as if participation in public life is futile and/or ineffective and pick up the mentality that they alone cannot do anything about it, rendering public life involvement useless. Another potential cause is lack of opportunity; there may not be sufficient actions present in which youth can actually engage. A third consideration is that the presentation of social issues in mainstream media, which may be specifically tailored to more age mature audiences, further decreasing young audiences motivation to become involved. Caprini concludes that youth "are disengaged because they are alienated from the institutions and processes of civic life and lack the motivation, opportunity and ability to overcome this alienation" (p. 345).

A report for the Forum for Youth Investment calls for an increased focus on reversing this trend and suggests that some of this work is already taking place (Irby, Ferber, & Pittman, 2001). "The vision, simple but powerful, is youth action: young people making a difference in their communities — often in partnership with adults — to effect changes in things that are important to them and the community at large." (p. 2). They cite three trends that will advance this agenda - advances in understanding how to address the needs and desires of youth; convergence of interest between diverse groups who see youth as potential agents of change; and youth themselves stepping to the forefront to take on local and global challenges.

Digital Media
There has also been a recent emphasis on the potential of new technology to change how people, and especially youth, interact with information (Flanagin & Metzger, 2008). The amount of time youth spend exposed to media is unprecedented. Roberts (2000) found that American youth (aged 8-18) devote more time to media than to any other waking activity; up to 8 hours a day. New media forms provide opportunities for learning, social connection and interaction. Digital media also allows for an unprecedented amount of flexibility, allowing the general public to participate publicly in conversations that may have previously been reserved for journalists and politicians. This is demonstrated in platforms such as blogs and Wikipedia, where any person can contribute content. These new functions and abilities of media have not only changed participation, but also changed our perspective of the social consumer. A "network society" had been created through the proliferation of internet-based social mediums, which allow two-way communication between the individual and the media source (Valtysson, 2010). This network society had altered our conception of consumers and producers, enabling nearly any individual to serve as both consumer and producer of both virtual and physical capital. Social media continue to grow in number and serve to both collect and disseminate data to an increasing number of individuals. Organizations that are able to leverage these abilities will be able to increasingly garner public attention and engagement to spread their message, providing the potential for a new form of social capital that can be leveraged widely as a form of soft power.

Methods

Research Design
Data for this project was collected from August-December 2011. A survey was constructed by researchers at UC Irvine and distributed with the assistance of Invisible Children. The survey consisted of both close-ended and open-ended questions. The open-ended survey questions provided participants the opportunity to share personal stories and testimonials about their experience with Invisible Children. The closed-ended questions measured exposure, participation, involvement, and outcomes of participants.

Procedures
Data was collected through the following four channels:

1. Fall 2011 Frontline Tour Interns and Roadies
The survey was pilot tested by the Fall 2011 Frontline Tour interns and roadies during their training in August 2011. 62 individuals completed the survey and provided feedback, which was also used to revise the instrument.

2. Fourth Estate Participants
In August 2011, Invisible Children hosted a youth leadership summit called the Fourth Estate, which was attended by 650 youth supporters. The Fourth Estate is an educational conference designed by the Invisible Children organization to provoke thought and conversation among the youth of this United States regarding global citizenship, activism, international justice, and individual responsibility (Invisible Children, retrieved 10/25/11). An email link to the survey was sent to Fourth Estate participants five weeks after the event. 177 of the 650 Fourth Estate Participants (27%) completed the survey.

3. Tour Email Lists
The following campaigns and events were chosen for sample groups because tour email lists were available to collect surveys:
• Spring 2009: Rescue Tour (filled out web form; approx 25% of viewers)
• Fall 2009: Rescue + Recovery Tour (filled out card on seat; approx 75% of viewers)
• Spring 2011: Congo Tour
   o Registered for 25 but did not fundraiser (approx 10k)
   o Registered and fundraised for 25 (approx 25k)
Email invitations were sent to a random sample of 4,000 individual from each of these lists.

4. Internet and Social Media Links
Invisible Children posted survey links on the following web and social media channels:
• Twitter (48,021 followers); posted November 3 and November 18, 2011
• Facebook (428,716 likes); November 3 and November 17, 2011
• Tumblr (1,100 subscribers); posted October 24 and November 17, 2011
• Blog (500 views per day); posted October 24 and November 17, 2011

Measures

Survey respondents were asked questions about exposure, participation, beliefs, outcomes and demographics. These questions were designed to inquire about the youth participants' outcomes as a result of their levels of involvement with Invisible Children. Thus there are two general topics of interest: when and how did they get involved (which level of involvement are they a part of) and what are the outcomes that correlate with that level, such as changes in knowledge and/or behavior.

Exposure. Participants were asked about previous knowledge of LRA issues before exposure as well as how they found out about Invisible Children (from a screening, a person/club/group, from news/internet/media, or from an event/activity). They were asked to expand on their answers by providing specifics (from whom, from where, or at which event specifically).

Participation. A series of questions were asked to determine the level of participation of survey respondents. Questions asked about the following: films they had seen; use of various IC website and social media sites; donation and purchasing behavior; involvement with friends, family, and organized groups; tour and event participation; long-term volunteering and employment; and current involvement.

Beliefs. Adapted scales were used to measure several hypothesized attitudinal outcomes, including: self-efficacy (Chen et al., 2001), civic efficacy (Gough, 1952), civic norms (general service and civic participation), connectedness (Karher et al. 2002), global identity, and social capital (Putnam, 2002).

Outcomes. Participants were asked open-ended questions about outcomes related to the following categories: academic/career goals, leadership skills, values/beliefs, and relationships with others; a set of closed-ended questions about these outcomes was also included (Hansen & Larson, 2005). Participants were also asked to describe what Invisible Children is and what they have accomplished in their own words. Finally, a series of closed-ended questions related to civic outcomes asked about civic knowledge (Pew, 2011), civic attention (Steel and Lovrich, 2001), civic interest (Lough, Mcbride, & Sherraden, 2008), civic ability (Reeb et al., 2010), and civic behavior (General Social Survey; Roper Survey).

Demographics. Demographic variables were included in the survey to characterize the general sample and to compare the demographics of all youth participants in different stages on the pathway of involvement. The survey gathered general demographic information such as location, age, race/ethnicity, occupation, religious affiliation, highest level of education, political affiliation, and parents' or guardian's highest level of education. Other questions include asked respondents to describe their upbringing in terms of income.

Results

Participants

2,173 Invisible Children participants completed the survey. A majority of survey participants were female (82.6%), under 26 years old (88.2%), caucasian (79.4%), and from a middle-upper class background (75.1%). Although not representative of the US general population, this profile is consistent with previous research on adolescent volunteers. Rosenthal, Feiring, and Lewis (1998) found that women volunteered more than men, whites more than minorities and those with higher incomes than lower incomes. And the National Study of Youth and Religion found that teens who attend church weekly were more likely to volunteer frequently and at least occasionally throughout the year (Gibson, 2008).

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

Gender	Female	82.6%
	Male	17.4%
Age	12-17 years	23.1%
	18-25 years	65.1%
	26+ years	11.8%
Race	Caucasian	79.4%
	Hispanic	6.7%
	Asian	5.4%
	African-American	2.0%
	Multiple race	5.3%
	Other	1.2%
Socio-economic status	Low-income	5.2%
	Low-middle income	19.7%
	Middle income	40.8%
	Upper-middle income	30.0%
	Upper income	4.3%
Religious Affiliation	Christian	53.0%
	Jewish	2.7%
	Muslim	0.6%
	Agnostic	8.2%
	Atheist	4.0%
	Other	2.9%
	Decline to state	28.6%
Political Affiliation	Conservative	5.6%
	Moderate conservative	7.6%
	Middle of the road	21.4%
	Moderate liberal	14.7%
	Liberal	22.8%
	Unsure	27.8%

Exposure

Through bi-annual tours, an extensive website and significant social media presence, partnering with popular musical artists, national events, appearances on national television shows, and other media sources (e.g., books, newspapers), Invisible Children conducts a wide array of outreach. Preliminary data suggest that individuals are becoming exposed broadly across these channels. Survey responses to the question, "How did you find out about Invisible Children?" included screenings at schools and places of worship, concerts, television shows, music videos and concerts, internet sources (e.g., Twitter, Youtube, Facebook), and school assignments. Secondary analysis of these responses identified three primary categories of exposure:

1. Organizational influences (e.g., school curriculum, screenings & events)
2. Interpersonal influences (e.g., friends, family)
3. Media influences (e.g., television, bands, internet sources)

Schools and places of worship represented the largest exposure source for Invisible Children. In addition to screenings from Invisible Children tours, many reported Invisible Children videos and content being integrated into course curriculum:

- *"We studied the invisible children organization and the implications on society etc in my 7th form sociology class at school for one our assessments."*
- *"It's a part of my school's curriculum for the Current Issues class"*
- *"In my HS, there is a class called African American and Latin America history. where we learn current events from this parts of the world, which are not taught in any other class."*
- *Church youth groups and special events were also cited as sources of exposure.*

Echoing past research that found peer influence and friend endorsement as predictive of youth extra-curricular involvement (Brown et al., 1986; Clasen & Brown, 1985), many participants also reported finding out about Invisible Children from friends, family members, and acquaintances. Some even cited seeing other people wearing Invisible Children t-shirts as their initial exposure to the organization.

- *"A girl in one of my classes was really involved in Invisible Children and would show me stuff and tell me about it."*
- *"fellow volunteer on a completely unrelated charitable effort"*
- *"student at a local university saw the film and emailed teachers in the local area letting them know about it"*

A third theme related to media exposure, through celebrity and television endorsement as well as social media channels. Many participants provided specific media influences, including television shows (e.g., Oprah, Veronica Mars, Dancing with the Stars) as well as music bands (e.g., Fall Out Boy, Thrice, Brett Dennen):

- *"A photograph of Kristen Bell wearing an IC shirt on Google"*
- *"Fall Out Boy's music video I'm Like a Lawyer"*
- *"Received a copy of Rough Cut at a Third Day concert in New York City"*

Internet media exposure was also reported by a variety of participants; the most frequent internet sources were Facebook, Google, and YouTube.

Involvement
Questions regarding specific forms of involvement were analyzed to identify patterns of participation. Behaviors listed included viewing films, visiting internet and social media sites, purchases and donations, and participation in clubs and events.

Table 2. Participant Involvement[1]

Seen IC Film	93.4%	
Visited IC on internet/social media	96.4%	
Posted/shared involvement	92.3%	
Talk to friends/family		90.7%
Posted on Facebook		77.8%
Tweeted		33.5%
Shared on blog or website		32.9%
Purchased an IC item	78.8%	
Donated to IC	75.7%	
Involved with others		
Family		20.5%
Friends		60.3%
School		49.3%
Place of worship		9.4%
Not involved with others		18.1%
Member of IC club or group	42.3%	
Participated in IC event	37.1%	
Lobbied to congress	5.7%	

The high level of social involvement among survey respondents is of special interest, especially in light of the rapid dissemination of the Kony2012 video[2]. Over 90% reported speaking with others or posting about IC. In addition to the options provided, several gave additional examples of how they had shared their involvement with others. A few key themes emerged.

Product placement. Several mentioned wearing IC apparel, buttons, stickers, etc. as a way to spread the message to others.
• *"Customers ask about my IC shirts at work so I let them know a bit about the organization"*
• *"At work I wear my Invisible children pin proudly and bracelets and explain to everyone"*
• *"I have a tattoo on my wrist that people frequently ask me about.*

Public speaking/writing. Many mentioned writing/talking about IC in a class or for publication.
• *"Video announcements at school for Invisible Children, wrote an article for the Denver Post"*
• *"For a web design class, I redesigned the website and spoke about it with the class"*
• *"I gave a speech on it in my Leadership class. All we were told was that we had to make our audience connect with the material like Martin Luther King, so IC was the best choice for me."*

Fundraising. Many reported using fundraising activities to raise both money and awareness.
• *"Did a fundraiser and spoke to those who bought something about what Invisible Children is about"*
• *"Frontline Fundraiser sent out e-mails to inform/beg and plead:)"*
• *"I have created service projects through my community service organization in order to help Invisible Children with their screenings and book drives.*

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[1] Respondents were able to select more than one option.
[2] Findings were collected 3-6 months prior to the release of the Kony2012 video.

Outcomes of Involvement
Survey participants were asked a series of open- and closed-ended questions about outcomes of
their involvement with Invisible Children. Findings are grouped in the following four categories:
1. Academic/Career
2. Leadership
3. Values
4. Social

Summary statistics for all closed-ended responses and a brief summary of open-ended responses[3]
for each category follows.

Academic/Career
Over half of respondents reported that involvement with IC had increased their motivation to do
well in school, opened up job or career opportunities, and helped them prepare for college; over
three fourths reported that they started thinking more about their future (see Table 3).

Table 3. Academic/Career Outcomes

Based on your involvement with Invisible Children, please rate to what extend you have had the following experiences:		
Increased my motivation to do well in school	Not at all	19%
	A little	17%
	Somewhat	28%
	Very much	36%
Improved my grades in schools	Not at all	41%
	A little	17%
	Somewhat	24%
	Very much	18%
Started thinking more about my future	Not at all	6%
	A little	10%
	Somewhat	30%
	Very much	54%
Opened up job or career opportunities for me	Not at all	23%
	A little	16%
	Somewhat	26%
	Very much	34%
Helped prepare me for college	Not at all	27%
	A little	19%
	Somewhat	27%
	Very much	28%
Academic and/or career goals have changed	Not at all	27%
	A little	19%
	Somewhat	27%
	Very much	26%

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[3] Codes and themes of open-ended data are not mutually exclusive.

For the last question (academic and/or career goals), participants were given the opportunity to share open-ended responses. 1128 respondents provided answers to this question; analysis of responses revealed four primary themes.

Social Welfare and Justice. Participants reported wanting to work with NGO or community service organizations (145) and thinking more about making the world better (192).

- *"I never thought of doing anything charity related with my life until I found out about Invisible Children. I have realized that I want to use my abilities and privileges for the good of others- I want to help people less fortunate than me be able to live a better, fuller life."*
- *"Because of Invisible Children, I have found a passion for social justice issues… After getting involved with Invisible Children, I realized that I want to spend my life serving others. Currently I am majoring in social work. I have decided that I want to work at a non-profit that works with inner city kids and/or work with an organization that benefits the lives of children and the people of Africa."*
- *"Invisible Children has convinced me that I want to make the world a better place with what I do. Because of IC, I've realized my dream to join the Peace Corps after I am done with school."*

Educational aspirations. Participants reported changing educational goals (208), increased performance/motivation in school (58), and wanting to share knowledge with others (79).

- *"I now want to go into architectural or civil engineering so I can join a program like Engineers Without Borders so I can travel around the world and help people in need."*
- *"I started out my senior year of high school sure I was going to go onto art school for fashion design. I saw the rough cut that November before graduation. I'm now a senior in college getting ready to graduate with a psych degree, and having gone to Uganda 3 times, am trying to figure out how to use my degree to best serve that country."*
- *"IC is why I received my M.Ed in Curriculum & Instruction."*

Global/foreign affairs. Participants reported experience/motivation to study or travel abroad (108), increased global awareness (144), and increased interest in global/foreign affairs (124).

- *"I don't want to be just a social worker any more, I want to be a humanitarian. I want to travel the world, and help those in need first hand, not just though donations and second hand support"*
- *"I want to go to medical school and become a doctor and if that happens I would like to be a part of Doctors without Borders and work anywhere/everywhere in Africa. If I don't get accepted into school, I would like to become part of a non-profit organization that helps with issues in African countries."*
- *"After viewing the first screening in High School I have volunteered in East Africa over the past three years, in China, and am going on to volunteer in India and Thailand. Now I know what I want to do with my life and have a PASSION for volunteering and making a difference!"*

Invisible Children. Finally, many participants reported goals related specifically to IC, such as becoming a roadie/staff member (97) or simply getting more involved in the organization (101).

- *"I now want to study foreign relations. I now aspire to be a roadie and/or intern at some point. I also now know that for me to be happy in life, I have to have a career that helps people around the world.*
- *"I want to be more involved with Invisible Children and expand the program in my school."*
- *"I hope to persue a major in justice studies and hope to get more and more involved as i can with Invisible Children."*

Leadership

Over three fourths of **participants reported** that their ability to apply knowledge and skills to help solve problems or make meaningful contributions to the world had changed as a result of their participation in Invisible Children; over half reported that they had gained self confidence or developed and/or improved leadership skills (see Table 4).

Table 4. Leadership Outcomes

How much has your participation in Invisible Children affected the following:		
Your ability to apply your knowledge and skills to help solve 'real-life' problems	Not at all	7%
	A little	13%
	Somewhat	27%
	Very much	53%
Your ability to make meaningful contributions to the world	Not at all	5%
	A little	10%
	Somewhat	23%
	Very much	62%
Based on your involvement with Invisible Children, please rate to what extend you have had the following experiences:		
Gained self confidence	Not at all	14%
	A little	17%
	Somewhat	26%
	Very much	43%
Developed and/or improved your leadership skills	Not at all	27%
	A little	20%
	Somewhat	21%
	Very much	32%

For the last question (developed and/or improved leadership skills), participants were given the opportunity to share open-ended responses. 936 respondents provided answers to this question; analysis of responses revealed three primary themes.

Communication skills. Participants reported an increased ability to communicate both informally with peers (310) and in more formal settings, (e.g., public speaking, 290) as well as increased skills in listening/working with others (168) and fostering community (110).
- *"I have begun to speak in public, something I couldn't do before."*
- *"Much more confident in my individual strengths and ability to work with others as a cohesive and motivated team; Much more willing to be outspoken and expressive, and discuss/speak publically."*

Organizational skills. Participants reported specific organization skills, such as event planning (200), fundraising, problem-solving (264), and general organizational (243).
- *"I believe that I've become 1 bit more comfortable with fundraising, and this has helped me be a more confident person when I'm thrust into leadership positions."*
- *"Through fundraising in high school I learn effective planning and taking initiative. And obviously being an intern taught me so much."*

Leadership skills. Participants reported general leadership skills, including in taking initiative (155), general self-confidence (105), and standing up for what they believe in (204).
- *"It made me my own person, and gave me confidence to believe I can change things in this world"*
- *"Improved my ability to take initiative, voice what I believe in, confront people about social issues, and speak for those who don't have a voice.*

Values

Over three fourths of participants reported gaining an appreciation for their own life, increased attention to world affairs, or a desire to promote social justice in society; two thirds reported that personal values or priorities had changed as a result of their involvement with IC. (see Table 5).

Table 5. Values Outcomes

How much has your participation in Invisible Children affected the following:		
Your desire to help promoting social justice in society	Not at all	5%
	A little	8%
	Somewhat	19%
	Very much	68%
How much you pay attention to world affairs	Not at all	4%
	A little	15%
	Somewhat	30%
	Very much	51%
Based on your involvement with Invisible Children, please rate to what extend you have had the following experiences:		
Gained an appreciation for my own life	Not at all	2%
	A little	4%
	Somewhat	13%
	Very much	81%
Personal values or priorities have changed	Not at all	14%
	A little	20%
	Somewhat	31%
	Very much	35%

For the last question (personal values or priorities changed), participants were given the opportunity to share open-ended responses. 1039 respondents provided answers to this question. Themes identified during analysis include the following:

Empowerment. Participants reported realizing the importance of individual actions (103) and increased motivation to contribute to social issues (136) and become more politically active (40).
- *"I now believe that no task is too big. After participating in fundraisers for IC I think that even just one person can make a difference."*
- *"Your movies have touched my soul in a way that I had forgotten. You have reminded me that one voice can echo across the world if only amplified."*

Global Awareness/Connectedness. Participants reported an increased sense of global awareness (160) and connectedness (94).
- *"Before IC, I didn't care what was going on in Africa ... It showed me how ignorant and selfish I was, as well as showed me how to get involved in something much bigger thank myself."*
- *"Noticed how much suffering is going on in the world; that it's possible to create peace. made me grateful for everything i have"*

Appreciation. Participants reported an increased appreciation for one's own life (95) and a decreased focus on material things (42).
- *"Has made me look at how fortunate I am and how other people don't have that, and it has made me more compassionate toward those less fortunate."*
- *"I am now trying even harder than before not to take things for granted."*

<u>Social</u>
Over two thirds of participants reported an increased ability to interact with others in meaningful ways; over half reported getting to know or feeling more supported by communities (Table 6).

Table 6. Social Outcomes

How much has your participation in Invisible Children affected the following:		
Your ability to interact with others in ways that are meaningful and effective.	Not at all	7%
	A little	11%
	Somewhat	25%
	Very much	57%
Based on your involvement with Invisible Children, please rate to what extend you have had the following experiences:		
Improved my relationship with my parents/guardians	Not at all	36%
	A little	19%
	Somewhat	24%
	Very much	21%
Got to know people in the community	Not at all	18%
	A little	20%
	Somewhat	29%
	Very much	33%
Came to feel more supported by the community	Not at all	24%
	A little	22%
	Somewhat	27%
	Very much	28%
Relationships with others have changed	Not at all	34%
	A little	22%
	Somewhat	27%
	Very much	17%

For the last question (relationships with others changed), participants were given the opportunity to share open-ended responses. 740 respondents provided answers to this question; analysis of responses revealed two primary themes.

Existing Relationships. Participants reported improved or strengthened existing relationships with current friends (187), family (43), and community (70).
*   *"I've grown to appreciate the people in my life."*
*   *"I spoke with people in the church I wouldn't have because I feel like the young people in my church need to see your movie and decide if they want to participate."*

IC-related Relationships. Participants reported new relationships forged at school and church (127) and within their wider community (156) through their involvement with Invisible Children.
*   *"Through IC I have had to get along with and work alongside a variety of people. Cliche high school cliques melt away as we all work towards a common goal."*
*   *"I've found that it's actually pretty easy to find commonalities with most people, even if what you have in common is humanity. Realizing that has changed my relationships with others."*

Enhanced Social Capacity. Participants reported the ability to forge new relationships (42) or viewing people in general differently (34) as a result of their participation in Invisible Children.
*   *"I'm connecting with more people than I'm used to connecting with. Also, I've never been much of a socialite and I've been making new friends and meeting new people constantly since getting involved"*
*   *"I no longer judge peoples situations. You never know what they have gone through."*

Discussion

Our findings suggest that participation in Invisible Children has been successful in creating a potential new form of soft power in the form of enhanced social capital and civic capacity of its youth supporters. Participants reported increased motivation to engage in social justice, enhanced leadership and organizational skills, and improved relationships within and beyond their communities. In addition, the various forms in which participants were exposed to and participated in Invisible Children suggest that this capacity is being at least partially channeled back into the organization through fundraising and high levels of social diffusion of their message. These findings may assist in our understanding of the recent viral spread of the Kony2012 video. Prior to releasing this video, Invisible Children had spent nearly a decade building a network of empowered, engaged, and connected individuals, comprised mainly of youth, and then deployed these individuals with a specific and simple task – make Kony famous.

Whether this strategy was the "right" one to take in terms of foreign policy is up for debate, but is not the focus of this study. However, the current investigation is not without its limitations. The data presented is from an opt-in internet survey distributed through Invisible Children's existing social media platforms and mailing lists; it is likely that there is a self-selection bias towards only the most dedicated and positive from among the 500,000+ supporters identified as the target population. Additional data collected from Fall 2011 school screenings controls for this self-selection bias and will be included in a later report. In addition, there are limitations inherent with self-report data on outcomes; reports of improved grades, for example, may be exaggerated. However, since our focus is on the development of civic capacity in participants, which is a subjective quality, we feel the use of subjective data gathering is justifiable (though additional data to triangulate findings would be beneficial).

Further research may also investigate additional potential impacts of this enhanced civic capacity for local communities and schools as well as the broader climate of youth engagement in America. It is possible (and current findings suggest) that the civic engagement promoted by Invisible Children and programs like it may have an impact on not only the issue to which it is engaged, but to a revitalized engagement of youth to public life. Participants reported and directly attributed to their participation in Invisible Children increases in self-efficacy and the belief that one person can make a difference. The organization provided to youth a wide variety of specific actions in which they could effectively engage. And they presented their message in a way that appealed specifically to a youth audience, using strategies such as apparel and celebrity opinion leaders that are often reserved for product marketing.

It is still unclear whether media and advocacy work, such as that which is conducted by Invisible Children, can exert as much or even more impact as money spent on direct service or other forms of political action. However, it is vital to measure and better understand these impacts, so that organizations and potential donors have the information with which to decide whether to focus resources on this new form of activism and advocacy.

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