

ICT Update

a current awareness bulletin for ACP agriculture



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Farmers with cameras take on oil companies in the Niger Delta

A puppet goat becomes a TV superstar in Burkina Faso

Participatory video empowers people living with Aids in Malawi

Film-making farmers



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Editorial

Digital video empowers communities in the South

In the last ten years, the prices of digital video cameras have dropped almost as sharply as those of mobile phones. This, together with the advent of cheap desktop video-editing software aimed at the consumer market and rapid improvements in usability, has produced a spate of budding film directors in the North eager to broadcast on the internet. But such low prices and ease of use make amateur film-making not just a household hobby in Europe and America. The technology is now within the reach of NGOs and government development agencies – even grassroots communities themselves – in ACP countries.

As with the myriad uses to which mobile phones and GPS have been put in developing countries, so video cameras have the potential to be used in situations never envisioned by their

shared with other communities. Participatory video is especially effective as a tool for monitoring and evaluating development projects and advocacy work.

In the lead article of this issue of ICTUpdate, we see how farming and fishing communities in the Niger Delta are using participatory video – combined with mobile-to-web messaging and online video sharing – as an innovative advocacy tool to take on the oil companies that are polluting their lands and waters. In the Question & Answer section we see how video is empowering women and marginalized groups.

At the same time, there is much discussion among participatory video practitioners about 'who holds the camera' – the farmers themselves or 'professionals' whom the farmers direct. In this issue, we look at both

Video cameras are being used in situations never envisioned by their manufacturers

manufacturers. Development workers are integrating this technology into their daily community development work, with a revolutionary impact.

In particular, participatory video (PV) – an unscripted video production process directed by communities themselves – is changing the role of development workers. Rather than being the principal analysts, planners and negotiators, they are becoming *facilitators* who encourage and help communities to engage in these processes. PV allows communities to analyze, plan and negotiate among themselves, with other communities, and with development agencies and companies.

Whether from the North or South, not everyone is an expert at drafting an article, a legal brief or written description of a process. In the South this is often compounded by high levels of illiteracy. However, everyone knows how to tell a story and to show what it is they want to show.

Communities can use video to document indigenous knowledge and to record best practices that can be

sides. As with many such discussions, both positions are valid, and in the end, it depends on the purpose for which participatory video is being put to work.

Not all video making in development has to be participatory in order to be effective. In Burkina Faso, for example, a hugely popular television-based market information service for cattle and grain prices, TV Koodo, has made a celebrity out of its puppet-goat presenter and has transformed the negotiating capacity of farmers at local markets.

With what are essentially nothing more than a collection of consumer gadgets originally intended for home movies of birthday parties and holidays, communities in the South can now reach a global audience – or a very local one – telling their own stories unmediated by any external narratives.

Digital video is a liberating technology that can empower marginalized communities around the world. ■

ICT Update



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solely on the often artificial confines and unnatural groupings that can be generated by formal workshop contexts.

PV can be carried out in these informal workshop settings, and then the private can be taken into the public sphere at community screenings. Users can therefore ensure that a variety of perspectives are included, and that everyone has the chance to contribute

films, which become the starting point for discussion and group work.

- **Sharing innovations and best practices.** Group members can document, demonstrate and communicate their achievements, innovations and best practices in their own words.

- **Community-led research.**

Communities can carry out their own research using video to document local knowledge, and to generate new ideas and solutions to problems. The content of the films can be included in multimedia reports and publications.

- **Participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&E).** Rather than conducting an attitudes survey, video can be used to look at progress during research. This can put the community in control, allowing them to highlight issues and areas of interest that outsiders might not necessarily consider.

Film-making equipment was once expensive, bulky and difficult to operate, but innovations over the last decade have produced digital video equipment that is cheap, lightweight and very easy to use. Video has been taken out of the hands of professionals and put it in the hands of just about anyone who wants to use it. ■

Participatory video a revolution in communication for development

What is participatory video? Above all, it's fun.

Participatory video (PV) is an accessible, interesting, inclusive methodology that differs fundamentally from traditional filming, in which the focus is on creating a finished product. PV aims for community empowerment. Often, the process is more important than the product. PV methodology breaks with the traditional film-making hierarchical relationship between active observer and passive subject. The people concerned are in control right from the start. PV is thus a powerful means of documenting local people's experiences and aspirations from their own perspective.

The beauty of PV lies in its portability. Spontaneous workshops can be held in the spaces where people naturally congregate – in the fields, at a local café, at work or in people's yards. Neighbours can be called in and the whole family can get involved. In these private, intimate spaces people feel relaxed. There is no need to rely

their ideas, visions and innovations.

The workshop is wherever the camera is, and the process can be integrated into the very fabric of the life of a community.

Uses of participatory video

- **Community to policy makers/researchers/NGOs.** Communities can use PV to express their priorities, fears and expectations to local stakeholders at the early stage of planning, before a project or programme is implemented.

- **Marginalized social group to wider community (advocacy).** Showing a video made by one group can be used as a tool to stimulate discussion among other groups in the community, or to encourage participation. The participants may want to conduct filmed interviews to gauge reactions among the audience and record feedback.

- **Community to community.** One community can show their video to others, and use it as a tool to inspire them to adopt a similar process of analysis or technique.

- **Policy makers to community.** Similar to the community-to-community video exchanges above, if projects can arrange for policy makers to visit the community, then officials and community members can share a PV documentation task, having fun together and equalizing relationships. It can also create something that policy makers can show to their colleagues and superiors.

- **Facilitating multi-stakeholder workshops using PV.** Such workshops can bring different groups together on an equal footing, empowering those who are illiterate or would feel uncomfortable in a more formal setting. Communities can present their

PV – step by step

- Participants rapidly learn how to use video equipment through games and exercises.
- Facilitators help community groups to analyze important issues and identify local solutions using participatory approaches.
- Participants direct and film their own video messages.
- Rough footage is shown to the wider community at village screenings, setting in motion a dynamic exchange of ideas and perceptions.
- Participants either learn how to edit video using simple editing software, or the video is edited by professionals, but under the direction of the participants themselves, depending on the time available, the purpose of the video and the participants' computer literacy levels.
- The completed films can be used to raise awareness and exchanges between various target groups.

For more information visit Insight: www.insightshare.org



INSIGHT

Camcorders, cass

Niger Delta farmers battle oil spills and gas flaring with participatory video, mobile-to-web messaging and online video sharing.

The Niger Delta, the eighth biggest oil producing region in the world, is a maze of waterways and mangrove swamps. Thousands of kilometers of pipelines crisscross this land that provides a living for 20 million farmers and fishers. Since the arrival of the oil companies 50 years ago, the delta has become the fifth most polluted area in the world, according to an October 2006 report from the World Wildlife Fund. This is the result of some 4000 spills that have spread crude oil throughout the swamps and over huge tracts of agricultural land, as well as illegal gas flaring that produces a cocktail of toxic gases which in turn cause acid rain that destroys crops.

For many years, communities in the delta have objected to the frequent spills, the gas flaring and the pollution of their land. Crackdowns on community protests, insufficient mitigating measures by the oil companies, theft of oil from pipelines, the influx of weapons and weak governance have pushed society in the delta to the edge. Corruption, kidnapping and killing are of the order of the day. Desperate, increasingly marginalized farming and fishing communities have begun to look for assistance from beyond the delta and Nigeria.

Just over a year ago, Friends of the Earth International (FoEI), contacted our organisation, Maweni Farms, based in Tanzania. We have more than a decade of experience in a participatory approach to making videos for development programmes. FoEI asked us to work with Environment Rights Action (ERA), its Nigerian partner organization, in producing a TV documentary about the situation in the Niger Delta for international distribution. At the same time, we were to use the production of the

documentary as a training opportunity for assisting in setting up a participatory video project with communities in the Niger Delta. These two separate projects quickly merged in an interesting way, as we decided to make the participatory video team the main characters in the TV documentary.

One objective of this project is to set up a website that villagers in the delta can use to explain how their environment is being affected by the oil industry, and to take part directly in the national and international discourse about the Niger Delta oil. Another objective is to set up a 'communications loop' between grassroots people in the delta and oil industry stakeholders throughout the world. The project would train volunteers to help community members record their own video testimonies on the impact of the oil industry on their livelihoods. One important reason for establishing such a network of volunteers was to enable journalists or others from the outside world to contact communities across the delta directly via the web or by mobile phone. Over the last twelve months, we have visited the Niger Delta on three occasions for three weeks at a time. In brief, we train the local people in participatory video (PV) techniques, help them to make film clips documenting the impact of the oil industry on their lives, edit the footage under their supervision and help them to publish the clips on the web.

Environmental Rights Action has contacts with many village communities in the delta. In the event of a new spill or fresh negotiations with an oil company that may affect their livelihoods, villagers call ERA and ask for their testimonies to be recorded on video.

The team uses digital video cameras to record these testimonies. People from the communities work out who is to make statements and chose locations that are as close as possible to the core of the story being told. This could mean a cassava field, fish pond, or a dugout in a creek. In one clip, as a farmer tells her story about an oil spill, she pulls out cassava tubers, cuts them into pieces and shows how they are rotting from the inside, toxic and unfit for consumption. In another, a military officer protecting an oil installation is interviewed by a young woman in front of a roaring gas flare. Testimonies are placed in their direct context for maximum visual impact

Film-makers always shoot much more footage than they use in the end. So far, we have collected more than 50 hours' worth of DV and HDV tapes, and there is no way we can show this material unedited. Using a portable computer and a petrol generator, we have sometimes been able to pre-edit sequences directly in the villages, but mostly we do this work in temporary offices in towns near the location of where we have been filming. We play back these rough cuts to the villagers and ask them: 'Does this video clip tell your story?' We record any necessary explanations, or improvised voice-over narrations, on such occasions. At least one community member is present throughout the editing process to make sure that the video clip becomes the testimony they wish to publish. In this way, the villagers become co-producers of their video clip.

Who holds the camera?

We often encounter the assumption that participatory video is about local people shooting their own material. But good shooting requires talent and lots of practice, and since we want these

sava and crude



PETER RODERICK

stories to reach as many people as possible, we do most of the shooting ourselves. This does not make the process any less participatory. Authorship of a video clip does not lie with who holds the camera or sits at the keyboard, but with who directs the shooting and editing process. In this ERA project, we try to work very closely with community representatives throughout the process. The community rather than the film crew is the director. Many development practitioners who experiment with participatory video do it the other way round. They give people the camera and instruct them what to shoot and how. In the end, they become the authors of the video, not the people.

When ERA has recorded a sufficient number of testimonies, the next step will be to post them on the web. In the delta very few people, if any, can watch web video because connections are very slow. Nevertheless, villagers understand immediately the power of publishing their stories on the web. With such wide distribution, they feel

the oil companies and the federal government will have no choice but to respond.

Uploading video remains problematic on slow internet connections, but the problem with hosting and buying bandwidth for distribution has in a way been solved by free video hosting and sharing websites such as YouTube.com, which we plan to use. A technology known as RSS feeds enables other websites, or any group or organization, to subscribe to these videos and combine them into programmed 'podcasts'. We will license these videos in such a way that anyone can distribute them for free.

In Nigeria, internet access is still very limited, but mobile phones are ubiquitous. With this in mind, ERA plans to integrate an SMS gateway to the internet to its website. The community representatives, producers and spokespersons of the testimonies can then continue to report on their story by sending an SMS text message to a specific phone number, for automatic and instantaneous posting to

a particular 'thread' on the website. They will also be able to attach their phone numbers to the video clip so that journalists and others – and maybe even oil company shareholders – can phone or send text messages directly to the communities to follow up on cases. In this way, ERA is not just building a static web resource of video clips, but is also creating a network of grassroots 'reporters' across these communities that can keep the wider world informed about the situation.

Friends of the Earth Netherlands (Milieudefensie) invited one of the ERA volunteers to attend the Shell AGM in The Hague in spring 2006. Bringing questions from the video clips, she tried to get answers from Shell executives. She spoke with the managing director of Shell Nigeria for six minutes while we videotaped the conversation. He made some remarkable statements which we have since played back to many different people in the delta. We recorded their responses, sometimes addressed

Related resources

Nigeria Action Health Participatory Video Project

→ Teenagers who are at the head of their class and are finishing secondary school are trained as sexual health educators who go on to communicate to peers through workshops and music videos that address family planning.
www.comminit.com/africa/experiences/pds12004/experiences-2178.html

Communication for Change

→ NY-based non-profit training organization. Communication for Change (C4C) has developed PV projects in collaboration with communities, government agencies, and grassroots organizations worldwide.
www.c4c.org/projects.html

Participatory use of video: A case study of community involvement in story construction

By Kole Ade Odutola (*Global Media Journal Volume 2, Issue 2, Spring 2003*)

→ Oxfam PV project in Nairobi, Kenya examining how participatory video works out in practice.
www.comminit.com/africa/strategicthinking/st2004/thinking-782.html

YouTube

→ Innovative website enabling users to share, comment on and view videos online. YouTube originally started as a personal video sharing service, and has grown into a global phenomenon with users watching some 70m videos on the site daily. Easy to embed video content into blogs or other websites.
www.youtube.com

Which camera? What sort of computer?

Maweni Farms uses different brands of camcorders, but all are 3CCD MiniDV models in the upper range of the consumer market. Audio quality is very critical but neglected by the manufacturers. One must-have feature is manual sound control and an external microphone attached to a boom pole. Rode Videomic is a low-cost microphone for amateur cameras that sounds surprisingly good. Another must-have is a good tripod.

For the editing, we use portable Apple Macintosh computers – the new Intel MacBooks are superb – and external hard drives that can be powered by the computer. This has the advantage that the editing software that comes with a Mac, iMovie, is sufficient, although we tend to use Final Cut Pro.



ELAINE GILLIGAN

directly to the general manager.

Later, we showed samples of this footage to the environment minister in Bayelsa State. He watched the villagers' material and the footage from the Shell meeting, and needed no further convincing. He is now trying to arrange meetings between Shell and the communities to resolve the specific problems documented in these cases. But the initiative could lead much further. Villagers complain that until now, dialogue between oil companies and communities has always been on the companies' terms, taking the companies' problems as the point of departure. The video testimonies, and the fact that they will be made publicly available, can perhaps change that, and set a new precedent for communities to establish dialogue on their own terms. There is an optimistic feeling that the companies will have to take them seriously, that they cannot ignore and 'greenwash' these documented, well argued complaints that anyone can follow up with the communities directly. The minister intends to set up an environmental monitoring facility at the state level that could take an inventory of the damage from oil spills and map this information, employing the same PV methodology as the project. The state government has also financed and will host a media centre where the volunteers will have access to both video production facilities and decent internet bandwidth.

Then there is the other project, the

TV documentary. While teaching the volunteers how to use these technologies to further the farmers' and fisherfolk's causes, we have followed them with 'our' camera. In this 'film-about-a-film', or 'meta-narrative', the main characters are the local volunteers who are learning to record digital testimonies.

Meanwhile, another producer has used the materials of the project to produce a short documentary for MTV, as part of a series on young human rights and environmental activists in different countries. We understand that this film will be distributed over several continents, including Africa. Such re-using, re-packaging and re-distribution of stories is encouraged. The video testimonies are offered for free, and in an increasingly commercial media environment there is something refreshing about being able to say that, and having the means to distribute them worldwide, thanks to the vast areas of the internet that are still free.

ERA is undertaking an innovative experiment combining participatory video in combination with video-sharing over the web and an SMS gateway. We hope this will provide an effective 'communication loop' that grassroots communities in developing countries can use to make their voices heard in the rest of the world. ■

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Puppet goat newsreader covers food security, grain prices

The biggest star of Burkinese television is a puppet goat that interviews agricultural experts and reads out the latest prices for cattle and grains.

On the last Friday of every month, tens of thousands of people in the villages and towns of Burkina Faso stop what they are doing to watch TV Koodo, a television programme that features the most recently available market prices for cattle and cereals, as well as interviews with prominent figures in the world of agriculture. The host of the programme, the 'Charming Chévrina' – as everyone calls her – is now one of the country's biggest stars.

This is quite an achievement for Chévrina, given that she is a goat ... a *puppet* goat to be precise.

Chévrina is ably assisted in her work by a marionette gecko named Ragui, along with a cast of other animals who appear in a variety of sketches exploring agricultural issues that are close to the lives of the programme's viewers.

Market information services

TV Koodo is the latest venture of the Institut africain de bio-économie rurale (IABER), based in Koudougou, which is working to enhance the state of agricultural market information services, as well as to boost public awareness of key agricultural issues within Burkina Faso. IABER recently launched an observatory to monitor and collect up-to-date prices for cattle and cereal crops, and wanted to disseminate this information as widely as possible. They then needed a medium through which these prices would be distributed, along with investigations into pressing agricultural issues, such as food security, grain marketing and land rights.

IABER wished to get as close as possible to its target audience – the farmers themselves and others involved in local agricultural and livestock markets – and so looked for an entirely novel means of communication. At the same time, they wanted to offer content that would be useful and interesting to the general public, as well as policy makers and donors.

For this, IABER felt that the national television network (Radio et Télévision du Burkina, RTB) would be the most effective medium, since it attracts

viewers in all areas of the country. With financial support from the International Institute for Communication and Development (IICD), IABER developed the idea of a TV show in partnership with local organizations. Among these are Manivelle Production, which handles technical production, and the Association des gens de Wisga, which developed the puppet characters and writes the scripts.

With puppets, the producers feel that they can interview guests in a more direct and popular way. The sassy Chévrina has very quickly become a superstar whose image has come to symbolize Burkinese agriculture in the minds of viewers, and in particular of children. They know precisely when the programme is on, and remind their parents it's time to watch TV Koodo.

Thanks to TV Koodo, both producers and buyers (consumers, middlemen, etc.) now have access to information about which local markets are offering the best prices. Farmers can negotiate better prices for their produce, enabling them to make better decisions, and to seize new business opportunities. In one example, the programme was particularly effective in improving understanding of the best use of phytosanitary products, permitting a considerable reduction in accidents on the part of the producers. Better still, now that both sellers and buyers are more aware of the prices of produce on local market, they have begun to lose some of their traditional mutual suspicion and antagonism.

Problems of success

In response to popular demand, the national TV service often repeats the programmes. However, the programmes were never intended to be broadcast more than once, so that while the agricultural sketches may remain topical, the market prices of cattle and cereals are no longer correct. To solve this problem, the programme's producers are coordinating with RTB to ensure that the repeat broadcasts contain current market prices.

The producers have also realized that



IICD

there is a demand for market prices to be broadcast more often than just once a month. Thus, in the future, TV Koodo will be split into two separate programmes. One will be devoted to various agricultural themes, and will continue to be shown once a month, while the other will be broadcast at a shorter interval, and will offer only prices.

TV Koodo only recently celebrated its first anniversary, yet the show has already won the Galian Prize, a Burkinese award for excellence in communications, as the best television information magazine of 2005. The country's Minister of Information himself presented the award to TV Koodo.

All in all, not a bad effort from a superstar goat that doesn't mince – or graze – her words. ■

Chloé Aicha Boro (boro_aicha2000@yahoo.fr) is IABER's director of communications, Koudougou, Burkina Faso.

Related resources

Televisión Serrana → Televisión Serrana is a community video and television project in the small coffee-growing community of San Pablo de Yao, Cuba. A small team of videomakers with low-cost equipment runs the project, a process of education for communication which promotes the social and educational use of video. www.comminit.com/strategiethinking/pdsmakingwaves/sld-1884.html



'Everyone's a teacher, everyone's a student'

While HIV/Aids continues to imperil the agricultural workforce across Africa, an Aids support group in Malawi is using participatory video to boost their self-esteem and to encourage others to get tested.

Via participatory video, the Tichezerane Aids support group in M'deka, Malawi, is encouraging people to get tested, promoting healthy ways of living with Aids, and rebuilding self-esteem. It is also helping to build group solidarity by enabling members to tell their own stories and to film themselves engaging in different agricultural activities. Communication and awareness raising are among the most effective weapons in the fight against this disease, and participatory video is a powerful technology of communication indeed.

HIV/Aids is having a devastating effect on countries in Southern Africa, and remains one of the greatest obstacles to development efforts. The condition has a ruinous impact on agriculture; some 80% of populations in the most adversely affected countries depend upon agriculture for

subsistence. As Aids often claims the lives of people in their most productive years, it is depriving many developing countries of their farmers. In Malawi, one of the nine African countries worst hit by the pandemic, Aids is projected to reduce the agricultural workforce by 14% over the period 1985-2020.

Six months after its formation in June 2005, the Tichezerane Aids support group was asked by its donors if they would like to have a go at making their own film. This self-help community group, whose members are all HIV positive, had been set up with the assistance of GOAL, an Irish NGO, but had become self-sufficient through income-generating farming activities. To introduce participatory video to the group, GOAL provided two facilitators, Dominic Elliot of Insight, a group specializing in participatory video, and trainee assistant Basiménye

Mwalwanda of Nanzikambe, a local theatre-for-development NGO.

Handing over the camera

The training took place over the course of three sessions. The group of 12 members gathered in the shade outside the local health clinic in M'deka and needed no persuasion to try out the first few PV exercises. At this early stage in the process, it is important to hand the camera over to the group as soon as possible, to demystify the technology and to avoid making technical presentations about how it functions. Thus, in the first session, we started with the 'name game', in which the group members form a circle and introduce themselves by making a simple statement to the camera. The first person was shown how to hold the camera and press 'record' to film the person opposite them in the circle.

They then passed on the camera to the next person in the circle and told them what they had just learned. Everyone films, everyone is filmed, everyone is a student and everyone is a teacher. We finished with the 'disappearing game', in which the members of the group disappear, one by one, as the 'record' button is turned on and off. The screening session afterwards was the first time any of them had seen themselves on a video screen. There was much amusement and everyone was keen to continue with the process.

The second session was designed to further familiarise the group with the camera, but also to build confidence in directing and planning sequences of shots. Each scene was built up from one camera angle, and the overall piece had to contain a variety of close-ups and long shots. Two people were in charge of each shot, but all had to plan and agree on the story. Using marker pens, they drew the sequences on large sheets of paper and assigned responsibility for each of them.

In the film the group members re-enact their main activities – visiting the sick, helping them with household chores, and trying to persuade them to get themselves tested. They sing as they walk to a sick woman's house, holding utensils on their heads in expectation of helping her with chores. When they arrive they say a prayer and listen to the sick woman tell of her fears and her intention to visit the local witchdoctor for advice. The group dissuades her from doing this, and instead encourages her to get tested at the local clinic.

Personal stories

The third and final session was to cover planning. However, by the time the facilitators had arrived, the group had already discussed and worked out what they wanted to film. Thus the initial planning meeting was more about assigning responsibility for filming each scene, ensuring that everyone participated, and making the best use of the time available. The group began with a prayer and a song. One member gave a brief history of how the group was formed, and some others recounted their own personal stories directly to the camera. The group then filmed themselves performing their regular activities – making compost, growing vegetables and raising blue gum tree seedlings to share or to sell at the local market, and harvesting maize in the field they are

able to rent using the income from the vegetable garden. In each scene, as the members prepare compost or hoe their fields, for example, one of them presents an audio commentary in the foreground. Throughout the film, the members urge the viewers not to be frightened of being tested, and reassure them that there is life with HIV, and that it can be led with joy and dignity.

The finished film has been shown to the local community, and has helped the group to grow to 46 people. The members have also extended some of their activities, in particular their vegetable garden and group therapy sessions.

So far, the group has sold 17 copies of their film to other NGOs working with HIV/Aids in Malawi, and the members are using the proceeds to support their other activities. GOAL is currently translating the film into Portuguese for use in Mozambique. The film has been well received by members of the development community and has been screened to staff at UNDP and DFID.

This and other films like it are important tools for sharing experiences and raising awareness, but also for inspiring and empowering people living with HIV/Aids. 'Right now, many of those who hide their status are envious of us because we've had a really good time,' said one participant.

Gaining such confidence and spirit in the face of HIV/Aids is no minor victory, by any measure. ■

Dominic Elliot
(delliot@insightshare.org) works with Insight, a UK/France based organization specializing in the use of participatory video. For more information on Insight or to obtain a copy of the film, email the author.



Related resources

Book: Insights into Participatory Video: a handbook for the field

by *Insight directors; Nick and Chris Lurch.*
→ 125-page practical guide to setting up and running PV projects. A selection of video films made by local people and a training film are included in the accompanying CD-ROM.
www.insightshare.org/training_book.html

A bridge between communities: Video-making using principles of community-based participatory research

by *Vivian Chávez, DrPH, MPH, et al*
→ How-to guide for making videos using community-based participatory research principles for health educators and public health professionals.
<http://hpp.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/5/4/395>

Participatory video in geographic research: a feminist practice of looking?
by *Sara Kindon*

→ Paper exploring how participatory video can challenge hierarchical power relations. Based on experiences from PV geography project with members of a Maaori tribe in Aotearoa New Zealand.
www.blackwell-synergy.com/links/doi/10.1111/1475-4762.00236

Developing sustainable agricultural technologies with rural women in Jamaica: A participatory media approach
by *Maria Protz*

→ Exploration of communication approaches aimed at reaching rural women. Project a sub-component of a larger programme to improve the effective use of a variety of soil nutrients in Jamaica.
www.fao.org/sd/CDdirect/CDan0020.htm



ROBEL BURCHER

In Ghana, cocoa is cultivated mainly on small family-owned farms where pests and diseases are a great hindrance to farmers improving their yields and boosting their income. Research conducted on similar cocoa farming areas in Cameroon shows that if left untreated, black pod disease can result in crop losses of up to 90%.

For Ghanaian cocoa farmers to increase productivity, reduce their dependence on costly agrochemicals and improve the quality of cocoa, they require tailor-made information on cocoa production. In order for them to feel a sense of ownership of this learning, the farmer field school (FFS), a farmer-centered participatory method of training, is used. As part of this strategy, FFS farmers themselves are being trained in the production of video films that communicate the principles of improved cocoa cultivation to other farmers.

story planning, camera use and video editing. The farmers then made short practice films about simple topics, such as interviews with their neighbours. Even at this early stage, the farmers were already presenting and discussing their ideas on topics they wanted to communicate to other farmers.

After the training, the farmers directed a 12-minute digital video about pruning old cocoa trees as a way to improve yields. The farmers 'test-drove' a rough version of the film for comprehensibility, cultural appropriateness, and relevance of information content in a review process in their home village. Cocoa researchers and FFS programme advisers also checked the video.

They then held their own 'gala premiere' of sorts, but without tuxedos or red carpet, in the local church. The projector was powered by a generator owned by a local entrepreneur who uses it to power movie nights in villages in the area. Using the local people's responses as a guide, the team then produced the final version of their first-ever video.

In the last step, the group produced a second, two-part, 20-minute video about control of black pod disease and ways to control it. Both videos were edited in a commercial studio, but under the direction of the farmer video team with facilitation by the media trainer. At the end of 2005, the group completed the videos and delivered copies to various local participating and other organizations to be used in farmer education.

The initial response of the farmers who took part in the review of the rough versions of the videos in their home village has provided an exciting foretaste of the attention the videos may eventually attract.

Already, there are plans to extend the video series to include other aspects of cocoa cultivation. These will include selecting the best planting materials, cocoa nursery practices, mirid (capsid) pest recognition and control, and post-harvest operations such as breaking, fermenting and drying the pods.

When the videos are shown to other and larger audiences, we hope the videos will really strike home and benefit viewers from this collective sharing of knowledge. ■

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Ghanaian cocoa farmer videos tackle pod pest

Ghanaian cocoa farmers are being trained in the production of videos that teach improved cocoa cultivation principles to their fellow farmers.

Related resources

ENRAP (Knowledge Networking for Rural Development in Asia/Pacific Region), Digital video: Sharing lessons for poverty reduction

by Shalini Kala and Rana Ghose

→ aper exploring lessons on PV for poverty reduction strategies from ENRAP PV projects in Asia-Pacific region from 2004-06.

www.enrap.org/index.php?module=pnKnwMang&func=displayResource&tid=406&cid=91

Paper supplemented by a series of streamable or downloadable (WMP) films. Also available on a video CD. To request copies of these, contact Apoorva Mishra at amishra@idrc.org.in

www.enrap.org/index.php?module=My_eGallery&POSTNUKESID=e7b0ab4ccda321fbac6344008ec41a32

Video training

The farmers are involved in all stages of the production of the videos.

Graduates from the farmer field schools themselves act in, edit, pre-test and refine video episodes about their own learning process with assistance from local communication professionals and specialists from the Cocoa Research Institute Ghana, the Sustainable Tree Crops Programme (STCP) farmer field schools, and CABI, an international agricultural research group.

The training was divided into five steps. First, the partners organized a short workshop, including a meeting with some 130 cocoa farmers in the village of Gyeninso. Four STCP field farmer schools had been held here in 2003, so there were many graduates who could participate in the video project. The community picked six people – three men and three women – to be trained in video production.

In the next step, a local media trainer from Stratcomm Africa Ltd organized a two-week course covering

What you need to start a participatory video project

An equipment list and budget for setting up a participatory video project.

Even just a few years ago, video production costs were prohibitive for those in developing countries. The revolution in video consumer electronics has lowered these barriers. Here is what you need to get started with your own participatory video project.

Equipment inventory

Mini digital video camera

The camera should have digital video in/output, microphone input, and a large flip-out screen. Panasonic and Sony are recommended. It is better to buy two mid-range cameras rather than one top of the range.

Second digital video

A second camera provides a means of documenting the process of filming, or allows you to work with two groups simultaneously.

Speakers to plug into video camera

Speakers must have their own power

source. Therefore batteries are needed (those without batteries do not actually amplify the sound and will not be loud enough).

Spare video batteries

Batteries are expensive, but spares are essential for work in remote rural areas. Buy batteries specific to your camera make and model, and the biggest available (5 hours).

Microphones

Sound quality can make or break a film. A camera's in-built microphones are not good enough. Two types are needed – a hand-held microphone, and a zoom microphone (with a long lead and mini tripod). Zoom microphones are costly: Hama or Sennheiser are the best.

Camera tripod

Use a tripod that is sturdy enough to support the video camera, and not be easily knocked over. Ensure it has a spirit level. Manfrotto is the top brand.



TV

For showing footage to the community (a projector is great if your budget allows).

VCR

A recorder is required for basic editing and making copies of rough footage for participants, as well as final films for wider distribution.

Consumables

- 4–6 blank MiniDV cassettes for the video camera for a 3-day PV project;
- blank VHS tapes to make copies of the film;
- CD-Roms for disseminating copies of films;
- batteries for the microphones/speakers etc.

PC or laptop computer for editing

Approximately €1500 will buy a great PC (€2700 for a laptop). Otherwise it is possible to upgrade an existing computer (sometimes this will involve buying an IEEE 1394 [Firewire] card and extra hard drive storage).

Specifications

- Minimum: 1.2GHz processing speed (preferably more)
- 512 RAM (more is better)
- C drive of at least 40Gb. You will need to install a second hard drive of at least 80Gb, or an external IEEE 1394 hard drive (80Gb)
- A IEEE 1394 card is needed for capturing video footage onto the computer
- 2 x 14 pin to 6 pin IEEE 1394 cable and 1 x 6pin to 6pin IEEE 1394 cable
- 64MB or 128MB video card.

Electric power

Electricity is an important consideration when conducting PV projects in remote areas. Every night, camera batteries will need to be charged ready for the next day's filming. ■

Budget

Basic equipment (average cost)	Euro
Mini digital video camera	1000
Second digital video or stills camera (optional)	300
Speakers to plug into video camera	70
Spare video batteries	50
Microphones:	
• hand-held	75
• zoom	300
Camera tripod	250
TV or projector	100
VCR	150
• second hard drive or external IEEE 1394 hard drive (80Gb)	80
• An IEEE 1394 card	70
• 2x14 pin to 6 pin IEEE 1394 cable; 1x 6pin to 6pin IEEE 1394 cable	50
• 64MB or 128MB video card	55
Total cost basic equipment	2500
Consumables for one participatory video project	
• 6 blank MiniDV cassettes for video camera (less than €10 each)	50
• blank VHS tapes to make copies of the film (less than €1 each)	10
• CD-Roms for disseminating copies of films (less than €1 each)	50
• batteries for the microphones/speakers etc.	10
Total cost consumables for one participatory video project	120



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to lead, to take over more of the technology and the production process. The community, including the men, will then come to watch the video out of curiosity to see what they've produced, but then they tend to listen more to the points the

you're trying to produce a video that has to communicate not just from the point of view of the people who are producing it, but also to other farmers elsewhere, then you need to make sure that it's really clear. In that case, 'professionals' may need to be

Gender and participatory video in agriculture and development

How can women in particular benefit from participatory video?

→ Participatory video (PV) is especially useful in helping to protect women's indigenous knowledge. In one project I was working on, in St Ann, Jamaica, PV helped to unearth and document a lot of indigenous women's knowledge of techniques for improving soil fertility. One of the women in the project had found that the leaves of a particular bush were rich in nitrogen and she regularly used them as mulch. A scientific investigation confirmed her claims, and her 'discovery' was documented on video.

When women farmers see other women farmers promoting a particular technique, they can benefit from this peer-to-peer knowledge sharing. For example, we worked with a woman farmer in one part of Jamaica where women elsewhere on the island would rarely have an opportunity to go, even though it's not far away. So by allowing that woman farmer to talk on camera about how she's improved production on her farm, there is woman-to-woman peer influence and exchange of information.

Finally, video helps to make women a little more visible, and to raise their status within their community. When you're using video, initially you often have to work with some male leaders, and often male youth, to garner their support. They often lose interest subsequently. But as long as they are involved from the beginning, then they are less likely to sabotage the process later on. As the process becomes more involved, they don't have a problem allowing women

women are making. Participatory video can help women tell their story, or raise an issue and give it a little more visibility in their own community.

What are some of the problems you've encountered with the use of PV?

→ In my first experience with PV, in St Lucia, the process of making a video actually ended up creating a lot of local tension. One local leader was a sort of star spokesperson whenever donors or anyone else came to visit the community. However, she had been away during the video project. When she came back, she was really disruptive and tried to prevent the video being shown. Every time we set a date, she would always find some reason why we couldn't show it. Sometimes, PV can actually reveal more social tensions than it resolves. In India, there have been reports of cases where men have beaten their wives because they were part of a video production. In these cases, it is the process that is important, and not the video, so it may be necessary to halt the production until these other issues are resolved.

There is some debate over the question of 'who holds the camera'. What is your view on this?

→ Some people feel that it's critical for grassroots communities or individuals to be behind the camera at all stages. I think it is indeed essential when people are telling personal stories, or are involved in making a video for advocacy purposes. But when the subject of the film is technical, such as an agricultural process, exactly who is holding the camera is less important. If

more involved in the process.

Involving people in video can be a really powerful, but also time-consuming. There may be one or two women who are really keen to be behind the camera, and to be fully involved, but that could also mean taking time away from other responsibilities, so it's a trade off. Involving women may require additional types of support – such as day care, flex hours, and other assistance. In some cases, I think it's fine to let other people take on the task of completing the video. The main thing is that they have the final say in decision making, and that they are the ones who decide. That's where the control is – not necessarily with who holds the camera and or is at the keyboard during editing.

What is important is that the final product gives an accurate account of what they want to say. ■

