



Part Five: Implementing a Community Video Initiative

Photo: Filming a role-play on harmful traditional practices (Uganda, 2009).

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This section focuses on implementing a community video project in the period following a training workshop such as the one described in the accompanying **Practical Guide to Community Video Training**. It reviews the types of programmatic and logistical support that can best help video activities promote sensitization, service access, and social change. This section also describes ethical practices for community media, and suggests ways in which the “Do No Harm” framework can be applied to participatory video. The importance of responding to emerging needs is stressed, and the benefits of integrating community video activities across different program sectors are highlighted.

Building on the training process

During the training workshop, team members will have participated in a variety of group processes, such as:

- Identifying the most prevalent forms and causes of gender-based violence in their community
- Examining the effects of gender-based violence on individuals, families, and the community
- Identifying helpful and harmful traditional practices, and strategizing on ways to promote positive customs and prevent harmful ones
- Identifying local resources, such as individuals, groups, facilities, and sites that can be engaged in production and playback activities
- Prioritizing themes for early video productions (with local advisory committees and other community members)
- Identifying “signs of change” that they would like to see resulting from the project (also with local advisory committees and other community members).

The insights gained from these processes should guide the video team’s activities. These insights provide the basis for creating relevant, resonant storylines and for strategically engaging partners in video productions. In addition, video team activities



Group processes generate important material for production activities (Uganda, 2009)

should be informed by other relevant sources such as assessments, service program data, KAP studies, or population-based surveys (such as census and Demographic Health Surveys).

Consolidating the role of the community video team

After the initial training, the new video team will be consolidating its role as a catalyst for positive action in the community. During this time, it is important that team members:

- Practice their new skills
- Share these skills with other community members
- Carry out playback discussions using videos created during the workshop
- Continue the consultation and collaboration processes that began during project planning and which shaped their first productions
- Implement the action plans that they developed at the end of the training workshop

Note that while action plans should provide a template for the first few months of activities, they

Insights gained from collaborative planning processes, training activities, community responses, program data, and relevant assessments should guide video team activities.

should remain flexible so that team can respond to emerging issues and needs within the community.

These activities will lay the groundwork for successful implementation. Responsive, pro-active teams will engage and activate community members. Project coordinators and program managers will play a vital role in creating a supportive context for the team's work.

Providing ongoing support

Program managers should support community video activities without taking a directorial role. Specifically, they can:

- Encourage group review and feedback during all activities
- Encourage team members to identify “lessons learned” after each activity—what went well, what could have gone better, and specific whys and hows— and to use these lessons to strengthen their ongoing work
- Provide team members with timely and constructive input on production plans and scenarios
- Provide assistance if a production or activity would benefit from resource personnel or supplementary information
- Provide feedback on production and playback reports, or whatever other forms of documentation and monitoring have been put into place
- Help arrange opportunities to share videos and organize exchanges-of-experience among partner organizations to foster support and collaboration
- Advocate for the work of the community video team with higher-level program managers
- Facilitate logistics, including procurement, coordination of transport and communication with local partners

Using video with other communication activities

Community video can amplify and generate other communication activities in ways that are effective



Open-air storyboards for reference by actors young and old (Thailand, 2009)

and cost-efficient. For example, drama groups can be found in many communities, and they are often very eager to take part in video projects. Including them can benefit sensitization efforts while avoiding the financial and logistic challenges involved in transporting drama troupes to different sites. Actors, musicians, storytellers, and other artists will often welcome the chance to participate and can offer ideas that will be locally appropriate.

In turn, videos can be used as the basis for other media activities. Videos can easily be adapted for local radio or television. For example, in Southern Sudan, local drama groups acted in community videos that were then adapted for regional television and radio. Videos can also be disseminated on tape or CDs for listeners at different sites.

In addition, the core themes and messages of community videos can be reinforced through simple print materials. These materials should be developed in participatory ways with local visual artists, with attention to appropriate, accessible language and balance between text and images.

Adapting key messages into multiple forms, such



Community drama on gender-based violence in Patiko camp (Uganda, 2007)

as posters, pamphlets, radio material and live dramas, can help keep them present in the minds of community members, promote discussion, and strengthen the overall impact of project activities. When other communication activities are harmonized with video themes and messages, they can help sustain progress in addressing local needs and program goals. Different ways to fuse video with other communication activities will emerge in different sites. Community video activities attract creative talent within the community. Actors, musicians, storytellers, and other artists will welcome the chance to participate, and can offer ideas that will be unique and locally appropriate.

As noted in **Part 4, “Implementing a Community Video Initiative,”** it is important to ensure that new audiences for communication activities and materials can access appropriate services. This is especially vital when these activities raise sensitive issues and increase awareness of/demand for services and support. Implementing organizations and partners should collaborate with service providers, community leaders, and advisory groups to ensure referral systems and service availability. If services are not available, it would be more ethical to focus on prevention issues and/or broader general messages

Social and behavior change can be supported through mutually-reinforcing communication methods and channels. When other communication activities are harmonized with video themes and messages, they help sustain progress towards local needs and program goals.

(such as gender empowerment or community support for survivors or people living with HIV/AIDS), versus specific health services or programs.

Integrating community video into overall organizational work

Integrating community video activities into the overall scope of an organization’s work brings important benefits. Video capacity can support broad organizational goals across all sectors in diverse ways; specific examples include:

- **Increasing service utilization.** Video can be used to raise awareness about available facilities and programs, provide clear information about the nature of services, and help counter myths and misperceptions.
- **Conducting monitoring and evaluation activities.** (see “Using video for monitoring and assessment” in **Part 7, “Monitoring and Evaluation”**).
- **Strengthening advocacy efforts.** Videos about community needs, including documentary material and testimonials, can be shared with policymakers and donors as well as among partner organizations and allied agencies. For example, Through Our Eyes teams gathered interviews and local footage from project sites on the vital role of gender-based violence prevention and response programs. This material was compiled into a video advocating for strengthened multi-sectoral programs in conflict-affected settings.
- **Deepening community engagement.** The collaborative processes described in **Part 4, “Planning a Community Video Project,”** can strengthen relationships with community members and groups, increase understanding of local dynamics, and create a common sense of purpose and expectations among stakeholders. In addition to using video for social change around gender-based violence and related issues, video can also be used to share information and news with community members, and to gather their feedback and ideas.
- **Training.** Video can be used to provide

standardized and high-quality training materials. For example, the Liberia Through Our Eyes team created a video for NGO staff on how to recognize, prevent, and respond to sexual abuse and exploitation. Another training video demonstrated how to plan and conduct effective playback sessions.

- Additional uses of community video are described in **Part 3, “Community Video for Social Change,”** under “Uses of community video.”

Integrating video into multiple program sectors

Once a video team has been established, productions and playbacks can support diverse sectors, including such areas as livelihoods development, maternal and child health, and camp management. Sector-specific content can be featured in individual productions; alternatively, cross-sector content can be interwoven in a single video. Several Through Our Eyes videos help depict connections—for example, between gender-based violence and HIV/AIDS, or between skills training for women and improved family welfare. Communication activities that help people understand these links are especially valuable because of the persistently “vertical” nature of many health and development programs in practice. Community videos can portray links between reproductive health, harmful practices, HIV/AIDS, family well-being and community welfare, depicting them in the undifferentiated, real-life way in which they affect peoples’ lives.

Community video can support diverse sectors. Communication activities that help people understand links between different sectors are especially valuable because of the persistently “vertical” nature of many health and development programs.

Cross-sectoral use of community video can increase as other program personnel witness its effectiveness. In Southern Sudan, participatory video was integrated into the work of behavior change communication (BCC) officers working on gender-based violence and HIV. Water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) staff quickly recognized the value



Water and sanitation team member, Charles Maiku, using video to document a health clinic visit (Southern Sudan, 2010).

of the approach. Trained BCC officers shared their skills with WASH staff, who planned to make videos on such issues as water safety, prevention of diarrheal disease, and the link between access to safe water and gender-based violence.

Integrating community video into diverse sectors and purposes can also help facilitate program sustainability by diversifying sources of fiscal support and by raising the profile of community video in the development community (see “Sustainability through integration,” in **Part 6, “Program Quality and Sustainability”**).

Ethical practices for community media activities

Ethical practice in community media includes, but goes beyond, the observance of disclosure, informed consent and permission-gathering described in **Part 4, “Planning a Community Video Project.”** Ethical considerations should inform overall planning and management, day-to-day activities and interactions.

Vital elements of ethical media practice include



In Yei County, production equipment is stored at ARC offices, where video team members gather prior to visiting different sites for filming. Playback equipment is stored at a resource center within the community, under the purview of the community development officer. Other safe storage options include schools, health facilities, churches, and partner organizations. (Southern Sudan, 2009)

voluntary participation, inclusion and non-discrimination, access and, above all, safety.

Voluntary participation

Any person who takes part in a community media activity should do so freely and voluntarily. Incentives should never be provided. No one should ever be pressured to take part. If a person does not wish to be involved, or changes their mind at any point, their wishes must be respected.

Inclusion and non-discrimination

The principles of inclusion and non-discrimination are as essential in participatory work as they are for delivery of medical care and other services. Community video activities should represent diverse ethnic, linguistic, gender and age groups and abilities. Cultural/ethnic inclusiveness is especially important when conflict has been rooted in tensions between different groups. Participatory activities and media-based collaboration can help create greater understanding between groups, as in the example of Search for Common Ground and Internews radio projects developed in former Yugoslavia, post-genocide Rwanda, and elsewhere in East Africa.

Inclusion and non-discrimination should be observed in terms of language access as well. Videotapes should be produced in diverse languages to reflect and address the needs of minority groups, and should be culturally-specific in their depictions. If a playback session will include audience members who speak different languages, interpreters should be present to help ensure that all can take part in the discussion. Materials such as statements of project goals, community entry guidelines and permission/consent forms should always be available in appropriate local languages.

Access

Access is closely linked with issues of inclusion and non-discrimination. Access to the tools and skills that enable participatory communication should not be provided to one particular group to the exclusion of others.

Access is also tied to issues of control and ownership. For example, implementing organizations will have understandable concerns about the secure storage of equipment, and may be inclined to keep it in a secure space far from the center of activities. Although equipment safety is a significant consideration, it should not create a barrier to activities: video equipment should be accessible to the primary participants, i.e. the community-based team. It may be vital to engage local partners and logistics teams in achieving a balance between

Vital elements of ethical media practice include voluntary participation, inclusion and non-discrimination, access and, above all, safety.

security and access. This issue may take time to resolve effectively; it may also evolve as the local situation changes. In particular, *implementing organizations should ensure that community video equipment stays within the community*, especially if the role of that organization will phase out over time. In this case, access and control should shift to local partners. Providing people with access to new tools and capabilities and then removing those tools is very disempowering, and counter to participatory ethics. Ensuring ongoing access contributes to local empowerment, capacity, and sustainability. (See “**Project Handover**,” in **Part 6, “Program Quality and Sustainability.”**)

Safety

The safety and well-being of community members and participants must be the primary consideration in every facet of community video work. Personal security must never be risked or compromised. Safety is a particular concern when working with vulnerable individuals, including children, survivors of gender-based violence, people living in actively threatening situations, and people living with HIV/AIDS, especially in settings where those with, or are suspected of) being HIV

positive, are at risk of violence.

When planning community entry, the local advisory committee should be consulted on identifying risks to actors and other participants as well as ways to reduce them. In the case of Rwanda, for example, early female actors experienced threats of violence from their partners as a result of their participation in video production. One way to engage the partners of “early adopters” and prevent this risk would be to meet with them as a group, discuss how videos activities could benefit the community, any concerns that may emerge as a result of their partners’ participation, and strategize on how to deal with these concerns.

Fundamental measures for promoting safety include never pressuring anyone to take part if they do not wish to, ensuring full understanding of all potential uses of the videotapes, and re-confirming permission and informed consent for all participants at various stages of work. *However, community video teams working in humanitarian and crisis-affected settings have an obligation above and beyond these measures to help avoid potential risk to any individual.* (See “**Do No Harm’ principles in community media work**,” below.)

Putting the wishes of the survivor first

During the first “Through Our Eyes” training in Guinea, a participant was preparing to do her first video interview in the Lainé refugee community. A survivor of gender-based violence had agreed to talk with her on camera. When the video team arrived, however, the survivor changed her mind and decided she did not want to be interviewed. The workshop participant respected the woman’s decision and arranged to do another interview instead.

Later in the workshop, when the teams were preparing their first productions, a young Liberian refugee woman expressed her interest in telling her story. The team described to her the goals of the project and explained the anticipated uses of the video for awareness-raising and advocacy. She still wished to take part, and so the team filmed the video “The Plight of Kumba Fomba,” her account of forced early marriage and its consequences on her life (described under “**Documentary and direct testimonials**” in **Part 3, “Community Video for Social Change”**).

(For additional information sources on media ethics, see the list of “**Resources on Ethical Media Practices**” in **Annex B, “Resources on Participatory and Community Based Video.”**)

In some video projects, individuals who wish to speak out yet maintain their anonymity are filmed in such a way that their faces are not seen. They may be filmed from behind, for example, or in silhouette. Alternatively, peoples’ faces may be blurred or their voices altered during the editing process. However, in congested settings such as refugee camps, it may be difficult for a participant to remain anonymous especially if they share information about their personal experiences. For this reason and related considerations of safety and ethics, filming of anonymous personal accounts has not been a practice in the Through Our Eyes project. Further, as described in

Table 3. “Do No Harm” principles applied to various stages of community video activities

Stage	Avoiding harm	Providing positive support
During planning/ preparation stages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be sensitive to cultural norms when developing roles/depicting different people • Be sensitive to ethnic/cultural sensitivities or tensions when developing stories • Avoid scenarios that blame or vilify particular groups or types of people • Ensure informed consent from all who participate in productions • Obtain parental/guardian consent for children’s participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold community discussions among diverse groups to share program goals, approaches, and key information • Invite participation by diverse groups and individuals, including minorities, under-represented and marginalized people • Enable different types of involvement, on- and off-camera • Invite different peoples’ suggestions on uses of the video
During production filming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-confirm permission/informed consent from all who participate in productions • Honor decisions not to participate • Ensure that information presented in videos is accurate • Avoiding showing scenes of violence or victimization • Avoid depicting men as always abusive or insensitive • Be attentive to psychosocial support needs for among participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include diverse voices and faces in the community • Present positive models/examples (e.g., alternatives to violence, appropriate response, preventive actions) • Depict people as able to learn and change
During playback discussions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not conduct playback discussion in only one language if speakers of other languages are present • Do not insist on active participation of those who prefer to listen • Be attentive to the psychosocial support needs of playback participants • Show videos to age-appropriate audiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide translation to ensure participation across language groups • Help quiet voices be heard (ensure that playbacks are not dominated by loud voices/influentials) • Provide information about available services • Make appropriate referrals • Invite different peoples’ suggestions on uses of the video • Invite suggestions/ideas from audience members
After community playbacks/ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep all personal information confidential • Do not make productions that reflect the views or needs of certain groups only • Do not always work with the same few individuals or groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow up on suggestions/ideas provided by audience members • Invite participation by new groups and individuals • Help ensure that PV tools and skills are accessible to community members on an ongoing basis • Be as responsive as possible to needs that emerge from the community

Table elements based on sessions from the *Through Our Eyes Global workshop, July 2009* and comments and suggestions compiled during the course of other project activities.

Part 3, “Community Video for Social Change,” the vast majority of project videos are dramas or “docu-dramas” rather than personal testimonials or documentaries. Dramatization creates distance between story-telling and personal experience and enables all participants—including survivors—to play whatever part they wish to.

(For additional information sources on media ethics, see the list of “**Resources on Ethical Media Practices**” in Annex B, “**Resources on Participatory and Community Based Video.**”)

“Do No Harm” principles in community media work

The “Do No Harm” (DNH) framework helps agencies working in conflict-affected areas ensure

that their interventions contribute to peace building and do not cause harm in direct or indirect ways (Collaborative for Development Action, 2004). This analysis tool can help agencies examine assumptions about men’s and women’s roles and avoid program decisions that may reinforce divisions.

Table 3 show how “Do No Harm” principles can be applied to community video activities at various stages.

In some settings, particularly those with highly traditional or patriarchal dynamics, it may be especially advisable to carry out focused sensitization activities among male authority figures. These may include local leaders, clan or *quartier* heads, chiefs, religious leaders, elders, and husbands/male heads of households. Involving these individuals in

The Through Our Eyes production “checklist”

Does this videotape...

- ✓ Clearly address the project themes of gender-based violence prevention, helpful or harmful practices, HIV/AIDS, or a related issue?
- ✓ Present a strong, clear message about taking positive action to prevent violence, discrimination, or stigma?
- ✓ Suggest the negative effects of gender violence without showing actual scenes of physical or sexual violence?
- ✓ Clearly show alternatives to violence?
- ✓ Show the main characters as people who are able to think about their actions and make positive decisions?
- ✓ Show women as active and involved in making decisions about their wellbeing and their family’s welfare?
- ✓ Show men as able to become caring and supportive partners?
- ✓ Provide clear information about available services or resources in the community?
- ✓ Follow the guiding principles of safety, confidentiality, respect, and non-discrimination?
- ✓ Help create an empowering experience for everyone involved in the video?

discussions on how program activities can support the family and community well-being can help ensure their understanding and support. Early and targeted sensitization efforts for men can also help avoid negative responses or potential backlash by those who may object to women’s participation in activities, or feel threatened by activities that deal with gender issues and relationships.

Other support materials for responsible practice in participatory video

Simple tools and materials can help team members and program personnel observe appropriate media ethics, provide support, and promote positive change at each of these stages. As an example, a production “checklist” (above) was developed for use by all of the Through Our Eyes teams. It serves as a reference against which teams can review productions at different phases to ensure their adherence to program goals.

Responding to emerging needs and issues

Participatory communication stimulates dialogue and response. Community video teams, program managers, implementing organizations, and their partners should be sensitive to community needs that emerge during project activities. They should also be prepared to support suggestions from community members, especially since one of the goals of the project is to stimulate community-owned responses to the problem of gender-based violence, HIV/AIDS, and harmful practices.

Response and referrals

As noted in **Part 4, “Implementing a Community Video Initiative,”** any programs related to gender-based violence prevention, response, and intersecting concerns should observe the Guidelines for Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Emergencies established by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (2005). Helping to ensure access to appropriate programs and services is an essential component of these Guidelines.

During any stage of community video activities, individuals may come forward with specific needs for information or services. This happens most often during or after community playback sessions. An audience member may reveal that s/he is a survivor of sexual assault and wishes to access medical services, or may want to find out about voluntary counseling and testing for HIV. In this case, team members or field staff should provide appropriate information or referrals for that person. If the team member does not have the necessary information, s/he should direct the person to someone who can help. In all cases, information and referrals must be provided in confidentiality.

“I am someone who faced the problem seen in the film, I had nowhere to get help. But now I have heard enough from you, and the ideas from people can now make me stay strong.”

Community audience member,
Southern Sudan

“The community...was participating, they were asking questions, and there were so many responses from them; they were actually eager...they found that some of these issues can be solved, and it’s not a matter of fighting...and it also created a lot of awareness. They are very keen on this project.”

Stella Oryang, HIV Counselor/video team member, Uganda

Community-generated ideas for team activities

Some needs raised by community members can be addressed effectively through the direct work of the video team. One way to do so could include incorporating suggested issues in video productions.

In Liberia, the women from one village asked the team to make a video about the exploitation and abuse of students, especially young girls, by a respected religious teacher. The team responded to the women’s request and created a drama based on the real-life situation. The resulting tape, “Don’t Abuse Us in the Name of Karmun,” amplified the voices of those who objected to the teacher’s behavior—including several local men—and helped to trigger dialogue about the abuse of power.

Other needs articulated by the community can be addressed in collaboration with local partners. Screenings of “If I Had Known,” a video on HIV infection, prompted audience members to request condom distribution. Team members contacted a partner organization that focuses on AIDS awareness and prevention to help them make condoms available.

In some cases, suggestions or needs that emerge from community discussions will require responses beyond the immediate scope of video team members. Some will involve action at the wider community, programmatic, or organizational level.

Possible responses may include advocacy (including the use of video for advocacy purposes as shown in the work of Witness, which is referenced in **Annex B, Community Video Resources**) and facilitating communication and partnerships with other relevant organizations and individuals.

A final note: Lack of responsiveness to locally-articulated needs is counter-effective to program aims. Further, it can break the cycle of engagement, reflection and action that fuels participatory communication. As with any program, perceived non-responsiveness on the part of implementing agencies can result in local disengagement and reduced impact of activities. Implementing agencies and partners should strive to address emerging concerns promptly. Challenges or differences in perceived needs are best addressed through dialogue and negotiation (see “**Troubleshooting community video challenges,**” in **Part 6, “Program Quality and Sustainability**”). In settings where non-governmental organizations have taken on much of the role of government in terms of responding to community needs, community expectations may be impossibly high, and it may be important to work toward shared understanding of the implementing organization’s limitations.



Members of a young mothers’ group at Nyabiheke refugee camp discussing a video on the importance of reporting rape cases within 72 hours (Rwanda, 2011)

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