# COMBATTING CORRUPTION THROUGH PARTICIPATORY VIDEO

A guide for practitioners

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InsightShare is a community development organisation working to capture the best aspects of communications technology and participatory techniques; supporting communities to explore their issues and devise solutions to the challenges they face. The InsightShare Network is a non-profit organisation with an international and multi-disciplinary steering group comprised of community representatives, leading academics and activists.

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# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# INTRODUCTION

Participatory video is a form of community media that engages citizens in the processes of investigating and documenting their circumstances, devising solutions and advocating for change. The videos produced can be used to establish communications between citizens and decision-makers, opening up new spaces for dialogue and opportunities for increased social accountability.

The struggle to eradicate corruption and overcome its negative impacts – on people and planet – is taking place right around the world. Campaign and advocacy groups continue to expose the malign presence of corruption at all levels (such as political, administrative, legal, customary) and push for critical changes to the systems that allow, or even facilitate, corrupt practices by those entrusted with power.

By concentrating on the systemic causes of corruption, efforts to address it frequently emphasise the causes rather than the effects. The lived experiences of the women and men affected – and the impact on entire communities, cultures and ecosystems – are all-too-often absent from the anti-corruption conversation and rarely feature at the centre of actions. As a consequence perhaps, the language used by many organisations and activists tends to be overly-technical, which may alienate potential supporters and diminish the engagement of citizens.

Overcoming the apathy of citizens towards the corruption that corrodes society and thwarts development – often tolerated as intractable or accepted as inevitable – requires people everywhere to be informed and empowered to take action. While top-down campaigns and awareness-raising activities do have an important role, they are unlikely to sufficiently mobilise communities into seizing control and resisting the abuses of the powerful.

## ADDRESSING CORRUPTION THROUGH PARTICIPATORY VIDEO

In 2009 Transparency International first recognised the potential of participatory video (see text box overleaf for definition), as a way of addressing these challenges. Enlisting the expertise of InsightShare – a leading organisation in the field – it began to train and support several of its national chapters in Africa to facilitate projects within a variety of contexts.

Since then, numerous projects have been implemented with diverse groups including a community displaced by diamond-mining, young people excluded from poverty eradication strategies, widows made landless by customary leaders, and island residents threatened with forced evictions by land grabbers. Participatory video provided time and space for each group to investigate and document their issues and enabled their voices to be heard by stakeholders and decision-makers, helping to reinforce social accountability between duty-bearers and rights-holders.

## WHAT IS CORRUPTION?

Corruption can be defined as "the abuse of entrusted power for private gain". It can be classified as grand, petty and political, depending on the amounts of money lost and the sector where it occurs.

Grand corruption consists of acts committed at prominent levels of government that distort policies or the central functioning of the state, enabling leaders to benefit at the expense of the public good. Petty corruption refers to everyday abuse of entrusted power by low and mid-level public officials in their interactions with ordinary citizens, who often are trying to access basic goods or services in places like hospitals, schools, police departments and other agencies.

Political corruption is a manipulation of policies, institutions and rules of procedure in the allocation of resources and financing by political decision-makers, who abuse their position to sustain their power, status and wealth.

Source: Transparency International

# DEFINING PARTICIPATORY VIDEO

Since its emergence over 50 years ago, there has been no universally agreed upon definition of "participatory video" and the approaches of those using the term vary significantly. Within the context of this guide, participatory video is taken to mean:

A set of techniques and skills for communities to explore their issues and contribute towards achieving positive change through communicating with a specific audience. Participants join the process as representatives of their community and work together to explore, prioritise and investigate community concerns, issues and experiences. Facilitators help the group to learn simple video-making skills through games and exercises. Participants work together to devise, plan and produce their video collectively, often feeding-back to the wider community to test ideas and refine messages. The resulting video can be used to communicate between members of a community, or with a chosen outside audience, typically with the intention of promoting and supporting positive social change. Participants own the video and the content is controlled by them, allowing direct control over the representation of themselves and their experiences.

## BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATORY VIDEO

There are many reasons for using participatory video within the context of anti-corruption work (at the community level) including:

### The process promotes accountability

Communities can author videos that speak directly to individual decision-makers (for example, a government minister) or entire institutions. Using video to initiate communication – which can develop into an exchange of video messages between the parties – can help people overcome barriers that might otherwise prevent them from "speaking truth to power". The visual nature of video means that the target audience can see the community's circumstances, hear their testimonies, and receive the evidence, all without leaving the comfort of their offices or homes. Such opportunities for dialogue between duty-bearers and rights-holders can contribute towards strengthening social accountability and gradually shrinking the divide between citizens and those with entrusted power.

### The techniques make participation accessible

Using simple video technology ensures that the means of communication is accessible to anyone regardless of literacy levels or technical competency. Opening-up access, to otherwise marginalised sections of society, enables new voices to be heard and fresh perspectives to be considered.

### The content is verifiable

The videos produced remain in the language of the community that created them; enabling opportunities for audiences of peers to test the veracity of its content and contribute to its development. External audiences of allies and experts (for example, legal advisors) can provide additional support, advice, evidence, and fact-checking, through an exchange that can be informative and enriching for all parties.

### Video makes corruption relatable

Participatory videos put a "human face" to the issues surrounding corruption. Videos created by the those suffering the adverse impacts most acutely, bring the lived experience of corruption to the foreground; helping to broaden and deepen the overall conversation.

### A community-led process mobilises others

Increasing confidence and autonomy of communities to challenge corruption and hold duty-bearers to account.

### Investigations increase awareness

When researchers, journalists or documentary makers investigate an issue, the subjects are likely to hear only their own contributions. Many will never see or read the finished product, which is often produced in language or terminology that is foreign or alienating. With participatory video the subjects are the investigators and storytellers. The cumulative effect of exploring, discussing, researching, interviewing, documenting and crafting coherent video messages, helps the participants – and through them, the wider community – to understand the complex web of corruption in greater depth and from new perspectives.

### Horizontal communications build trust

In general, people tend to trust and accept the testimonies of fellow community members – or those from similar backgrounds – more readily than those from outsiders. This tendency is strengthened further when the people that recorded the footage and presented the message look and sound just like the audience. Participatory video enables the exchange of information between people "horizontally", which builds trust in the video's voracity and increases the likelihood of influencing the audience's perceptions and behaviour.

### ABOUT THE GUIDE

This guide was developed to assist participatory video practitioners to undertake corruption-focussed projects and to encourage its uptake within the anti-corruption movement worldwide.

The first chapter is devoted to the project development phase. It includes advice and guidance to anyone considering using participatory video (within the context of anti-corruption work) together with recommendations for key elements in the planning stage. Subsequent chapters explore critical techniques for facilitating corruption-focussed projects; from the workshop stages through to fieldwork and audience engagement.

A collection of detailed case studies conclude the guidebook. These describe the participatory video projects implemented by Transparency International and InsightShare, together with an extra case study from a project that addressed corruption in the school system implemented by the India-based organisation Video Volunteers.

The basic techniques and approaches of participatory video are not included in this guide. The guide does not include exercises for participants to learn technical skills, develop story structures, undertake group-based filmmaking, or ice-breakers and other complimentary workshop activities. These elements of the process are already covered in numerous guides, online resources and training courses (see Key Resources, page 33). Instead, this guide presents specific considerations for those designing corruption-focussed projects and provides a range of exercises for the facilitators.

While the focus is on addressing issues of corruption, many of the ideas and approaches will be useful to practitioners in general. The sections on Choosing Participatory Video, Participant Selection, Project Structure, and Free, Prior and Informed Consent are likely to be relevant to a wide-range of projects. The Project Development chapter should also be helpful for anyone planning to use participatory video – helping them consider whether they have the skills to facilitate the process themselves (and if necessary undertake training) or whether they should engage the services of professional facilitators.

### NOTE ABOUT LINKS

This publication includes shortened URLs to make accessing web pages easier. For example, typing this link – bit.ly/2DsOrxa – into an internet browser will automatically direct you to the full URL for Transparency International's Land Programme (https://www.transparency.org/_view/programme/7711).

# PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

This guide intends to encourage and support anyone planning to use participatory video to unearth, address and combat corruption. Participatory video can assist in the fight against corruption by strengthening the resilience of communities on the frontline; amplifying and channelling their voices, raising awareness among key constituencies, and strengthening social accountability at all levels. It can achieve these aims – and more – but only if deployed at the right time, in the right place, for the right reasons, and by sufficiently skilled practitioners. These qualifications and requirements are explored in detail below.

## CHOOSING PARTICIPATORY VIDEO

Choosing whether to use participatory video is the first – and perhaps the most important – decision to take. There are no hard and fast rules or guaranteed methods to achieve successful outcomes, but the following considerations can help when deciding whether to use participatory video or not.

## OBJECTIVES AND REQUIREMENTS

**Consider:** What are we trying to achieve? If the immediate response to this question is something along the lines of "to produce a video", then it may be time to pause. Producing videos is increasingly inexpensive and accessible. Video cameras and basic editing software platforms are widely available to many people and organisations; through cheap digital cameras, laptops and even smartphones. If producing a video is the goal, there are easier ways of achieving it than through participatory video. If the video required is intended to: "promote the organisation's work" or "demonstrate its impact" or "assist in fundraising" then it is probably time to explore other avenues, such as contacting a professional filmmaker. However, if the motivation is something along the lines of amplifying unheard voices; strengthening a group's confidence and determination to speak out; shrinking the divide between rights-holders and duty-bearers; promoting social accountability; accessing new and challenging perspectives; putting people in control of their representation and the decisions that affect their lives, then participatory video may well be the right approach.

## Skills and experience

**Consider:** Do we have the skills? Skilled facilitation is essential to a successful participatory video process. A competent facilitator needs to be able to call upon a diverse set of complementary skills in areas such as: participatory practice (for example, PLA[3]), workshop facilitation, inter-personal communication, empathic listening, storytelling, visual communications, problem-solving, issue analysis, filmmaking, video editing, data management, technical troubleshooting, security and risk assessment, advocacy, public speaking, stakeholder engagement, understanding group dynamics, conflict management and dispute resolution, etc. Some of these skills can be covered by colleagues and support staff; however, it is often the case that facilitators need to draw upon many of the skills listed above, to varying degrees, during a single project.

A range of training manuals in participatory video are available (see Key Resources on page 33) and InsightShare run regular facilitator training courses, details are available at insightshare.org/courses

## Funding

**Consider:** Do we have the funds? Participatory video does not need to be expensive, but there are costs associated with the process which need to be carefully factored-in from the outset. Project costs are likely to include:

- **Workshops** (venue, transport, food, refreshments, accommodation, etc.)

- **Fieldwork** (transport, food, refreshments, accommodation, screening costs, community meetings, etc.)

- **Professional fees and expenses** (facilitators, support staff, translators, etc.)

- **Equipment** (video production, post-production, screening, etc.)

- **Dissemination** (online/offline video sharing and promotion, stakeholder engagements, community screenings and dialogues, etc.)

Ultimately, the decision to use participatory video should be determined according to its appropriateness to the project including the people, circumstances, objectives and intended outcomes. As with all approaches to community engagement and development, it is well suited to some conditions and less so to others. As such, it is helpful to consider participatory video as one "tool" among many in the toolbox of community engagement methods. To avoid falling into the cognitive bias described by Abraham Maslow when he said: "I suppose it is tempting, if the only tool you have is a hammer, to treat everything as if it were a nail"[1], it's helpful to test plans for using participatory video using the following simple exercise.

## IS THIS A NAIL?

At the point where an issue, location, group, and objectives are identified – and participatory video is under consideration – this exercise can test the project hypothesis and develop robust plans for implementation. Discuss each of the questions below to help understand whether, or not, participatory video is the right "tool" for the task at hand. This exercise is usually carried out with community representatives but can also include colleagues, outside experts, other stakeholders, etc. A diverse group of concerned individuals working together can be ideal, so long as care is taken to facilitate an equitable group process.

Use the scale below to answer each of the questions:



| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| No | Unlikely | Maybe | Probably | Yes |

1. Do we have sufficient, reliable evidence that the issue identified (for example, sexual extortion) does affect the community we intend to engage?

2. Do we have trusted and well-established relationships with the target community?

3. Is it possible for participants to document the issue adequately through video? For example, are you able to directly address the giving/receiving of bribes by officials even if indirectly through role play etc?

4. Is it appropriate – culturally, ethically, politically – to openly address this issue, in this way, at this time?

5. Do we have access to networks – offering support and expertise – that can assist the participants to reach their objectives?

6. If the participants decide to target messages at specific audiences (for example, government officials), are we able to facilitate such dialogue?

7. Is it safe for everyone – participants, staff, wider community – involved in the proposed project?

8. Do we have the resources, capacity, resolve and institutional backing to support the participants in achieving their intended outcomes, long after the video production activities finish?

9. Are we the right people – with the necessary skills, knowledge and support – to be engaging in this process?

10. Are we prepared to support participants to express their own experiences, perspectives, beliefs and opinions, even if these directly contradict our own or offend our sensibilities?

**Note:** The questions can be adapted or replaced according to the focus and intentions of the project being planned, perhaps placing a greater emphasis on the potential role of the process (and the video produced) to contribute towards anti-corruption efforts.

At the end of the process, you should have answered each question with a number. Add the numbers together and consider whether the total represents a high score (indicating participatory video might be a reasonable avenue to pursue) or a low score (suggesting reasons to doubt its appropriateness in this context). The lowest score possible is 10, the highest is 50.

## DEVELOPING A PROJECT HYPOTHESIS

Most participatory video projects start out with a clear understanding that a defined issue affects a specific set of people in a particular way. The underlying causes and effects may already be understood, at least in part, as may the likely avenues for bringing about positive change, all of which are typically based on existing research and analysis of the situation. When developing a project, it is essential to articulate an underlying hypothesis that outlines the rationale for introducing this form of community media and its anticipated role in bringing about the desired change. Taking time to create one helps to highlight critical assumptions and refine the project planning as a step towards developing a project-specific "Theory of Change"[1], where required.

### COMPONENTS OF A PARTICIPATORY VIDEO HYPOTHESIS:

1. The circumstances, issues, consequences, and people impacted (the status quo) that the project seeks to address.

2. The target participants and those they will be representing.

3. The anticipated focus of the video and the likely intentions of participants.

4. The unique/rare/radically different opportunity for communication between participants and audience (those in a position to assist/affect change) provided by the project.

5. The expected impact of the process and the resulting video, including the responses and actions anticipated from the audience.

For example, the hypothesis behind a recent participatory video project in north Ghana (see Gendered Corruption in Customary Practices on page 37) was as follows:

## Background:

Widows in the Upper East Region of Ghana are frequently denied access to their land and property by their husbands' family, leaving them – and their dependants – landless and destitute. Increasing pressure on all resources, and the effect of investors offering cash payments for communally owned land, means that the role of customary leaders is being corrupted and the system of fair land distribution is being compromised. Corruption – in the form of bribery and the abuse of power – has become rife within land allocation at the community level, resulting in a situation where those offering the most valuable "tips" to the land administrators gain control over the land.

In rural communities, across the Upper East, widows are widely marginalised and discriminated against; frequently accused of witchcraft and systematically humiliated by traditional widowhood rites. They are often ostracised from community life and are therefore unable to speak out against the corruption that allows their land to be taken with impunity. There are few, if any, opportunities afforded to widows to address their immediate communities and customary leaders, and advocate for changes that would decrease the vulnerability of all married women in society.

## Hypothesis:

Enabling a group of women – representing the common experience of widows in the region – to explore their circumstances and investigate the causes and effects of corruption in land allocation, through participatory video, will result in a production that honestly and accurately portrays the realities for tens of thousands of widows left landless and destitute. By watching the video, key decision-makers will have a unique opportunity to witness the impact of land corruption on women. They will be encouraged, through carefully facilitated discussions, to combat corruption and address how land is systematically taken from the most vulnerable members of society. Screenings of the video in the participants' immediate community will help their fellow community members to understand and empathise with the situation facing widows in general – and the participants in particular – contributing towards a reduction in discrimination and abuse. Nationwide screenings (including, potentially, television broadcasts) together with ongoing advocacy directed towards the public, will assist in raising awareness of the impacts of corruption in general.

The hypothesis can be shared and discussed with participants – either before or at the beginning of the project – to test the underlying assumptions and, where necessary, adjust the approach accordingly. If the hypothesis is sufficiently grounded and realistic in its anticipated outcomes, such a discussion with participants may also help to manage their expectations of what the project can (and cannot) reasonably aim to achieve. It can also actively contribute towards forming the basis for participants' informed consent (see Free Prior and Informed Consent, page 18).

## RISK ASSESSMENT

The practice of undertaking risk assessments is well established within civil society organisations, and each will have its approach to developing a nuanced understanding of risks and how to reduce or mitigate them entirely. While techniques for conducting risk assessments do not need to be outlined in this guide, the following specific considerations may be useful when developing a risk assessment before delivering an anti-corruption participatory video initiative.

### Attitudes towards the media

Consider: How is the media (as an industry) viewed, both within the immediate community and the region/country in general? Is there an enabling environment to produce videos – in particular, those that explore issues relating to national/local/customary governance – or is this likely to provoke hostility from authorities, stakeholders, community leaders, etc.? Is the project taking place in a country that is considered safe for journalists[2]? If not, do the same threats apply to community media projects? Are there examples of mainstream media (for example, television news or documentaries) covering similar issues safely that might inform your decision-making and, if so, how have these productions been received?

### Attitudes towards cameras

Consider: Are cameras welcomed by the community, or are they viewed with suspicion or hostility? In general, do cameras represent: a ubiquitous object carried in everyone's pocket, an exciting technology presenting new opportunities, an intrusive instrument wielded by tourists, a surveillance device used by police to threaten and intimidate? Such attitudes – positive or negative – may have been shaped by prior experiences of filmmaking activities (such as documentary production, news broadcasts, visits from tourists, community media projects, etc.), which should be considered and understood to assess the possible reception the arrival of cameras might provoke.

### Identification and association

Consider: What risks might association with the project – its activities and the videos produced – present for participants, facilitators and organisers? Are the risks increased for individuals identified as either the producers (filmmakers) or contributors (interviewees/subjects)? If necessary, can the identities of individuals/groups/communities be made anonymous (see Anonymity, page 21) and can that information be protected?

### Cultural norms

Consider: Is the introduction of video cameras, and the participation of selected groups or individuals in the planned activities, likely to come into conflict with local attitudes and cultural norms? For example, would a group of women and men working closely together (including travel, shared accommodation, group activities, etc) be considered culturally appropriate and acceptable? Might transgressing such normative behaviours generate resentment or hostility towards the project and its participants?

### Legal restrictions

Consider: Are there national laws that restrict video production (or by-laws relating to specific locations) that could affect the project? Many countries require anyone undertaking video productions to apply for various permits in advance, though rarely for amateur/personal videos. Governments around the world are widely adopting restrictions on drone-based video cameras, particularly in sensitive areas such as near military compounds or disputed territories. While project organisers may rightly consider a participatory video project to be first and foremost a community engagement process (rather than media/video production), those in positions of authority may use a lack of official permits/permissions as an opportunity to disrupt the project. Informing the local authorities in advance of a project is usually sufficient to avoid problems.

### Gendered risks

Consider: Does participation in the project present different or increased risks for women and men? Are the risks that women are disproportionately exposed to – sexual harassment and abuse, social ostracization, domestic violence, etc. – given sufficient consideration and are mitigation measures in place?

Note: The risk assessment process will usually continue throughout the project. This should include the participants in regular discussions about the potential risks associated with their activities – which they may be uniquely positioned to identify and anticipate – and how to minimise them.

## PROJECT STRUCTURE

Many factors influence the overall structure of participatory video projects including the issue, intentions and desired outcomes; funding available; location and accessibility of the process, project participants and facilitators, and the availability of everyone involved. Three of the corruption-focussed projects included as case studies (Gendered Corruption in Customary Practices on page 37, Untangling Decades of Confusion on page 42, The Road to Resettlement: A Community Searches for Truth on page 46) adopted InsightShare's multiple-stage structure described below.

### Three-stage project

This project structure is divided into three distinct stages, which are typically delivered over the course of three to six months. The format involves two stages of facilitated workshops and field-based activities punctuated by a period of autonomous – participant-led and non-facilitated – investigation and video production. Crucially, the group is provided with video equipment during this period, enabling participants to continue documenting the issue and key events. The three-stages are structured as follows:

## 01

**Duration**          Approximately 14 days

**Activities**

**Workshop.** Facilitated workshop for participants to get to know one another, share their experiences, determine the focus of their video, learn necessary video skills, identify audience, give consent to be videoed, practice storytelling techniques, and plan fieldwork and narrative for the video. (Approximately five days)

**Fieldwork.** Video production is undertaken by participants – typically working in two small groups – in their community or places associated with the issue. Participants may record their own stories and those of others, record testimonies from witnesses, conduct interviews with stakeholders, etc. Unedited footage is reviewed by participants each evening and with the wider community at key stages, helping to guide the production process, increase engagement, and adjust focus/approach where necessary. (Approximately three days)

**Post-production.** Participant-led video editing to produce rough-cut of video using footage produced during fieldwork. Where possible, participants should undertake the editing themselves. Depending on project circumstances, may also include translation of footage into a shared language. (Approximately three days)

**Screening and discussion events.** One or more screening events for the chosen audience to view and discuss the rough-cut produced using footage from fieldwork. The event may be open to the public or for a selected audience depending on the objectives and sensitivity of the content. Screenings should be organised in advance (allowing time for the audience to plan attendance) and carefully arranged. (Approximately one day)

**Action-planning.** Facilitated workshop for participants to plan the next steps in their video production, integrating feedback from the screening and discussion events. The action planning should include roles and responsibilities for all participants during the Stage Two activities. (Approximately one day)

## 02

**Duration**     5 – 20 days

**Activities**

**Fieldwork.** Additional video production is undertaken autonomously by participants, using the equipment provided. Including this stage offers a valuable opportunity for the group to practice using the equipment, gather additional footage (testimonies, interviews, cut-aways, etc.) and document key events/incidents over an extended period.

Stage Two activities are typically spread over two to four months, depending on the participants' plans, and other considerations such as weather (for example, a monsoon period) or important activities (for example, harvesting crops).

Participants may require financial support to cover costs (travel, equipment charging, refreshments, communications, etc.) during this stage in the fieldwork.

## 03

**Duration**     Approximately 7 days

**Activities**

**Workshop.** A second facilitated workshop for participants to review the footage collected during the previous stage; analyse information gathered, plan any additional fieldwork, edit finished version of video, agree next steps (for example, video dissemination), and grant final consent. (Approximately three days)

**Fieldwork.** Any additional video production (field or workshop-based) by participants, as determined by review of footage collected and on-going editing process. (Approximately two days)

**Screening and discussion events.** Screening events for target audiences (for example, local decision-makers) combined with discussions and interactions. Such activities may involve travelling to the offices, buildings, community centres or other places where target audiences can be reached. Screenings should be organised well in advance, carefully arranged, and closely facilitated. (Approximately two days)

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The structure described above ensures participants have sufficient opportunities to:

- explore and prioritise their issues
- undertake in-depth analysis of the issue (including its causes and effects)
- investigate the role of corruption
- plan messages targeted at the selected audience
- learn necessary video production skills and filmmaking techniques
- record testimonies and document their circumstances, over an extended period
- edit a finished video
- host screening and discussion events to engage the audience directly

## PARTICIPANT SELECTION

Participatory video provides opportunities for people with direct experience – for example, those denied access to essential public services by corrupt officials – to share their unique perspectives and advocate for change on their terms. It follows, therefore, that the principal consideration when selecting participants ought to be their prior knowledge and experience of the subject matter. Identifying and recruiting the most appropriate participants is, however, an inexact science at best. Nevertheless, the following guidelines can assist when forming a participant group.

### Prospective participants should be:

**Experienced.** In most circumstances, participants should have direct personal experience of the issue being explored. Those with first-hand knowledge will often be best placed to explore the complexities, communicate the realities, and develop appropriate responses to the challenges they face. Bringing people together with a range of experiences, opinions, and perspectives is also hugely valuable; it helps to build a complex picture of the issue and how it affects people in different ways.

**Representative.** The participant group should reflect the community it seeks to represent. In the case of a geographic community (for example, a village), the aim might be to convene a group that is representative regarding gender, age, ethnicity, ability, socio-economic circumstances, etc. Taking care to ensure that participants are from a variety of different families and locations in the community. For groups representing a community of experience (for example, women affected by sexual extortion), other considerations may be necessary to convene a group that is representative. You could take into account for instance: community, background, personal circumstances, age, ethnicity, etc.

In the context of this guide, "community" may refer to a geographical community or people linked by a common practice, interest, identity, experience, faith, ethnicity, etc.

**Unheard.** Many people are not given opportunities to speak out within their communities, let alone represent their community to outside audiences. Depending on the circumstances, those typically marginalised may include: women and girls, ethnic/religious minorities, the LGBT community, youth, disabled people, the extremely poor, people with mental health conditions, those with learning difficulties, etc. In communities where such barriers to participation are not present, it is nevertheless the case that many people do not put themselves forward to engage in community activities. Without active and deliberate efforts to engage those excluded (or self-excluding) groups, projects aiming to engage and mobilise communities will frequently involve the same people – often representing a single demographic – who regularly participate in community activities. For many organisations (NGOs, CBOs, etc.), these are often the most accessible people to recruit into project activities and can quickly become the go-to-participants. For processes such as participatory video, however, it is vital to also reach out beyond the usual participants and to bring otherwise unheard voices into the conversations and actions that affect entire communities.

### Other factors to consider when selecting participants include:

**Willingness to share.** Participants should be prepared to share their experiences (of the issue) with the group, within the safe space of the workshop. Individually, they can determine what is shared beyond the confines of the workshop, but a culture of sharing within the group should be encouraged from the outset.

**Tolerance and inclusivity.** Participants need to be willing and able to work with and listen to, those who may have very different experiences and perspectives to their own.

**Interest or influence.** It is essential to ensure participants do not have a conflict of interest, putting them at odds with the aims of the group/project, nor that they participate under the influence of those that would wish to undermine these objectives.

**Commitment.** Prospective participants need to be willing and able to attend the entire participatory video process, which can often take several weeks (or longer) to complete.

**Capable of consent.** Anyone taking part in the process will need to determine and manage their consent to participate. For more information on this, see the Free, Prior and Informed Consent section on page 18. In most countries, minors (typically, those under the age of 18) are not legally able to grant consent, requiring the consent process to be undertaken by a parent or legal guardian. Those under the influence of alcohol or drugs would normally be considered incapable of granting informed consent, as would someone with a learning impairment or mental health condition that might limit their capacity to fully understand the meaning and implication of granting consent.

**Age.** There is no need for an upper age limit to be applied to prospective participants, unless targeting specific age-groups. It is sometimes assumed that older people would struggle to participate while the youth would flourish, perhaps because it involves technology. Experience of countless projects has, however, consistently proven this to be a fallacy; people of all ages are equally capable of participating fully and effectively.

**Gender.** Women and men should be invited to participate in equal numbers, except in projects targeting specifically gendered groups.

**Literacy level and educational achievement.** Participatory video is based on experiential and non-didactic learning – skills are developed through experimentation (and play) without the need for lessons, written resources or note-taking – enabling anyone to participate, regardless of literacy levels or educational achievements.

**Technical experience.** Participants with prior experience of video/filmmaking are unlikely to be an advantage. The participants will learn to use video in a uniquely participatory and egalitarian way. While this may seem slow or cumbersome to participants with experience in filmmaking, it creates an environment for learning and participation during the production process.

## BUILDING A NETWORK OF ALLIES

In projects that focus on corruption, it is likely that participants will want to influence decision-makers, among others, at various levels and use video as an advocacy tool. Building a network of project allies can be essential when developing the core messages, presenting arguments, seeking access to the target audience and engaging them in positive dialogue. While every aspect of the video will come from the participants themselves, the role of outside experts and supporters – in guiding and strengthening the investigation and conclusions – should not be underestimated.

Project allies might include:

- subject experts (for example, legal advisors)
- activists and campaigners
- NGO/CBO staff
- elected/unelected officials
- customary leaders (for example, village chiefs)
- faith leaders
- academics and researchers
- journalists and media executives
- online communities (for example, social media groups)

Developing a diverse network of project allies can begin as early in the project development as when the underlying hypothesis has been created (see Project Hypothesis on page 12). Sharing the hypothesis with the network will provide additional opportunities to test assumptions and strengthen the planning.

Where appropriate – and with the agreement of participants – project allies may be invited to attend and contribute to critical stages of the process. For example, local/customary leaders may be asked to join a preliminary workshop session to learn more about the process and objectives. Subject experts and activists could add significant value to workshop sessions to determine the audience, messages, and advocacy/dissemination strategy.

When bringing allies into the process, it is important to emphasise how such interactions represent a meeting of experts: participants are experts too, with deep understanding and knowledge founded on lived experience. Allies should be encouraged to join without undermining community members' role as primary experts in the process.

# PROTECTING PARTICIPANTS

Combatting corruption inevitably involves challenging those in power – at the level of government, community, or family – and threatening the control they exert (and the advantages accrued) through corrupt practices.

Speaking out against corruption, therefore, exposes those involved (directly and indirectly) to a variety of risks. Potential risks should be carefully identified, understood, considered, and mitigated as far as possible before a corruption-focussed participatory video process begins. While each situation and project is unique, the following actions and approaches may help project organisers to minimise the risks for everyone involved.

## FREE, PRIOR AND INFORMED CONSENT

Participatory video puts the subjects of the video in direct control of how to present their issues and experiences; enabling greater control over how they – as individuals, groups, or entire communities – are seen by the outside world. Unlike mainstream factual filmmaking such as documentary or television news, participatory video allows those who appear on-screen to control which footage to use – and in what context – through a multiple-stage consent process.

The multiple-stage consent processes described below helps to ensure participation in the project – and the resulting video productions – is based on "Free, Prior and Informed Consent". Doing so allows people to take an active role in determining their representation and what messages are conveyed through their contributions and the production overall. A layered consent process – extending beyond the initial act of recording through to video editing and beyond – is required to ensure those involved retain this high level of control.

Those people that need to give their consent, in a typical participatory video process, can be grouped as follows:

## Participants

Participants are those people taking part in the entire process: workshop, fieldwork, editing, dissemination, etc. They are the people who are exploring the issues, learning to make videos collaboratively, framing the messages, and undertaking the production of the finished video. Typically, this is a small group of between 6–12 people working together over an extended period, with support from facilitators. Participants are very often the principle "subjects" of their videos and are, therefore, the most likely to appear on-screen either as interviewers, interviewees, storytellers, presenters, performers, etc.

## Contributors

A contributor is anyone included in the video from outside of the participant group, see above. This includes those interviewed on-camera (for example, community members, local leaders, expert witnesses, etc.), speaking directly on-camera, or those performing (singing, dancing, acting, etc.). Those appearing incidentally – for instance, those appearing in the background – but not speaking/contributing directly to the video are not considered to be "contributors" and therefore should not need to grant consent. The general principle is that, so long as the recording is undertaken openly – with video cameras easily visible and avoidable – anyone appearing on-camera has had sufficient opportunity to decide whether to be filmed or not.

The process of obtaining and maintaining multiple-stage consent will differ according to each person's role in the project. The following describes two different multiple-consent processes for participants and other contributors.

## Multiple-consent process: participants

The process of managing consent for participants is one that usually evolves and deepens over the course of a project. As authors and owners of the video footage created, participants have countless opportunities to determine the limitations of their consent and manage their self-representation in dialogue with their co-authors. Nevertheless, there are points in the participatory video process where facilitators can actively encourage participants to consider the question of consent and promote each person's sense of control and agency in the decision-making.

**Step 1.** Potential participants should be provided with detailed information about the project before being invited to express an interest in taking part (in some cases, when appropriate, they might be asked to fill in an application form). Anyone selected to participate in the project should do so on the basis that they have fully understood the details provided, and consent to take part on that basis. Those undertaking the selection process will need to take time and care to ensure all participants fully understand all aspects of the project.

**Step 2.** The first day of a participatory video workshop should include a detailed discussion about the project including its focus, assumptions, approach, and objectives. It should be carefully explained that all video footage recorded belongs to them (the participants) and, as such, they will be in complete control of it: they decide what to keep private, what to delete, what to share with selected people, and what (if anything) to make public. Participants should be given opportunities to ask questions, explore and modify the project's assumptions and intentions, discuss any potential risks, and proactively decide whether to continue participating in the project or not.

**Step 3.** Every time that video is recorded (including during workshop activities as well as field-based production), participants should be encouraged to review the footage and discuss their feelings about what they said and how they appear. They should constantly be reminded that the footage belongs to them, and anything they are uncomfortable with – now or later – can and will be removed.

**Step 4.** Once all the footage has been recorded the group should be encouraged to undertake a "Paper Edit" of their video production, during which participants can again determine which footage they consent to being used and for what purpose. For a detailed explanation

of the "Paper Edit" process, see *A Rights-Based Approach to Participatory Video*[3] by InsightShare. Where possible, participants should be supported to undertake the video editing themselves; thereby giving them ultimate control over the use of their footage. If this is not possible, those responsible for the editing (typically the facilitators) should refer to, and be bound by, the decisions made by participants and contributors including during the video production and "Paper Edit" processes.

**Step 5.** Once a finished video has been created, the participants should be invited to review the overall production and their individual on-screen contributions carefully. Participants should be invited to withdraw their consent for any footage included or propose changes to how it is included. Only when everyone has confirmed they are content with how their footage has been used within the final version of their video, can the process move to obtaining video (or written) confirmation of the consent granted. A detailed explanation of video-based consent processes can be found on page 20.

## Multiple-consent process: contributors

Obtaining consent from contributors ((who are not part of the local team directly involved in the wider participatory planning and filming process)) requires a more structured and deliberate approach to gathering, documenting, managing, and storing the consent granted. The following key steps are recommended to obtain genuinely Free, Prior and Informed Consent from contributors.

**Step 1.** Consent is sought and obtained from a contributor before any recording takes place, ideally following the video-based consent model described below. This consent stage requires a careful and detailed explanation of the project and the aims of the video being produced.

**Step 2.** Footage is screened back to the contributor immediately after recording and consent is reaffirmed (or withdrawn) by the contributor. Details of next steps (for example, editing and screenings) are explained and contact details are shared (for facilitators, project staff, contributor etc.) so that contributors can share any concerns they may have subsequently or any changes in consent decisions.

**Step 3.** Contributors are invited to watch an edited version of the video, before public screenings, and invited to affirm or withdraw their consent finally.

## RECORDING VIDEO-BASED CONSENT

Video-based consent avoids the use of formal written release forms – requiring contributors to read and sign a formal agreement – which can be intimidating, misleading or otherwise inappropriate in many circumstances. By contrast, video consent flows naturally as part of the participatory video process and retains much of the informal, personal, and human aspects that typify the wider process. Crucially the video-based consent process creates opportunities to gauge a contributor's level of understanding; to clarify any misunderstandings, relay additional information, and provides space for participants to take account of each contributor's personal preferences and requirements. This is a time-consuming process, but one that represents best practice in the field of participatory community media.

Video-based consent can be undertaken at various stages in the process, depending on the involvement of the person giving consent: participant or contributor. The steps below describe gaining consent from contributors (typically during Step 1, see above); however, they are much the same for participants just without the need for detailed explanations of the project, people, process, etc.

**Step 1.** The project is explained to the contributor in detail, usually by the participants. Vital information to cover includes an overview of the project, the purpose of the video, people involved, target audience, non-commercial purposes, consent process (including how to withdraw consent), etc. The potential risks of being recorded and associated with the video are discussed. The question of whether the contributor needs to remain anonymous is also explored.

**Step 2.** Video recording starts, and the contributor is asked to begin by explaining what they understand about the project/video/process they are taking part in, and to describe the basis upon which they grant consent; including any limitations or stipulations. Unless anonymity is required, the contributor states their name, age, location and other relevant details. The contributor is asked to confirm they are granting consent freely and without coercion.

**Step 3.** Misunderstandings or errors are addressed and corrected by participants or facilitators, and discussion continues until all parties are satisfied that the basis for consent is sufficiently informed. The recording of the interview, statement, discussion, etc. continues.

## SAFE SPACES

Establishing a "safe space" for participants is crucial. This is particularly true when exploring a sensitive issue like corruption, which may present significant risks to those directly participating or even associated with its activities. However, safe spaces are not just about the physical security of the participants, but also the need to create a welcoming and supportive culture within which participants can feel able to express, learn, and discover. In this context, the term "safe space" is used to describe a project environment in which:

- the physical and emotional wellbeing of participants and facilitators is paramount always

- the experiences, stories, opinions, and ideas shared are private and confidential unless explicitly agreed to be otherwise by the group

- everyone's contributions are equally valued and recognised

- the workshop stages are conducted at sufficient distance from the participants' homes and immediate community that activities can take place without being observed or interrupted

- people can participate anonymously, if necessary

- once the group has been established, and the activities have begun, participation in the workshop activities is usually closed to newcomers

- wisitors and observers are not allowed to enter the workshop space unless specifically invited in advance and with the explicit consent of the whole group. This includes during periods of inactivity (for example, evenings), as potentially sensitive materials (drawings, maps, plans, ideas, etc.) may be stuck on walls

- anyone can participate and speak freely without fear. As a recent report by Save the Children[4] puts it: "A safe space is a place where anyone can relax and be able to fully express themselves, without feeling uncomfortable, unwelcome, or unsafe because of gender, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, cultural background, religious affiliation, age, physical or mental ability."

**Note:** The creation of safe spaces can also incorporate the specific needs and ideas of participants themselves, through the development of a Group Agreement[5].

## ANONYMITY

Participatory video projects usually take place openly and without secrecy. Workshops are usually known about in the wider community (though normally closed to observers) and much of the video production takes place in public places; making the process highly visible, accessible, and understandable to everyone, including authorities.

Conducting the process overtly – rather than covertly – can offer a high level of security and protection. Being open with information about the project (its activities, participants and objectives) may help fellow community members to feel involved; as stakeholders and potential beneficiaries of its success. This may, in turn, encourage their support and protection for the activities and those involved. Likewise, a transparent approach may help reassure those in authority that the project does not present a threat to their interests.

In some projects, however, the identities of participants and contributors may need to be kept anonymous. Anti-corruption projects are likely to involve challenging the unlawful and unethical practices of authorities and influential individuals. This potential threat – to power, influence and wealth – means anti-corruption projects are more likely than most to need a higher level of protection for those participating.

### Anonymous participation

It is incredibly challenging, though not impossible, for individuals (or entire groups) to participate in a project anonymously. All project activities (workshop, production and post-production) would need to take place at sufficient distance from the participants' homes/communities, in a location where they are unlikely to be recognised. Given that projects typically take place over the course of several weeks, a "cover story" may have to be constructed, which accounts for their lengthy absence.

### Concealing identities on-screen

Protecting the identity of on-screen contributors (for example, interviewees) can be achieved through a variety of simple techniques, either during production or at the editing stage. A range of methods for obscuring the identity of contributors (during/after production), can be found in the excellent *Concealing Identities tip sheet*[6] and *Concealing Identity Techniques video*[7] both published by WITNESS.

Deciding whether to obscure identities during recording or during editing, will normally be determined by the potential for (and the risks associated with) raw footage being taken/accessed by third parties.

Hiding identities during the edit allows for greater flexibility, both in-terms of the visual effects available and in-terms of being able to change decisions later if required. Voices can also be effectively disguised during the post-production process. However, there is increasing concern about techniques which can now reverse pixilation and other effects, which could lead to identities being revealed.

Footage recorded with the identities obscured is generally more secure – physically covering someone's face, for example, cannot be reversed using technology – and the contributor's identity is disguised in all versions of the footage. However, the decision once taken cannot be reversed, and the results can vary in visual effectiveness

In situations where participation presents a significant risk and that those involved can only do so anonymously and where it can be reasonably assumed that their role will need to remain anonymous even after the project's completion, the decision to use participatory video should be carefully analysed and other avenues explored.

### Alternative avenues

In 2016, Transparency International and InsightShare considered a proposal to use participatory video as a means of exploring and documenting the impact of land corruption on women in Zimbabwe. Given the highly oppressive nature of the governing regime in Zimbabwe (at that time), the risks (to participants and contributors) of association with such a project were considered too high, and the chances of successfully concealing the identities of participants too low. Funding was instead provided to Transparency International Zimbabwe to engage a documentary filmmaker to carefully document the issue, resulting in the production of a powerful short (non-participatory) video[8]..

## ATTEMPTING AN ANONYMOUS WORKSHOP PROCESS

In early 2015, six land rights activists from the Maasai community in Loliondo (Tanzania) joined a participatory video process to challenge the unlawful and corruption-fuelled occupation of 1,500 square kilometres of community land, by a hunting company owned by the Saudi Royal Family[9].

As high-profile activists – with personal experience of being the targets of violence, intimidation, harassment, and unlawful arrests – they were easily recognisable within their communities and their activities monitored by the authorities.

The project took place during one (among several) periods of heightened tension, and those involved decided that the initial week-long workshop needed to take place outside of the Loliondo region and in secrecy. A quiet, well-secured hotel on the outskirts of Arusha (the nearest city) was chosen as a safe and sufficiently discrete setting for the workshop. Participants were asked not to disclose their involvement with the project or the location of their time away from home.

By day three of the workshop a former activist who had become a fierce advocate for the hunting company's right to occupy village land – a transformation it is alleged took place following a bribe of €20,000 – located the workshop and began a relentless campaign of intimidation and harassment against the group. The threats against the facilitators and harassment of participants increased and intensified over the next two days, resulting in a hasty late-night relocation to a quiet guesthouse on a remote hillside.

The fieldwork stage (recording on location in Loliondo) was also affected by the threat of further harassment and the fear it engendered. It was decided that the presence of the lead facilitator (from the UK) would risk drawing unwanted attention to the group and could result in attacks[10], arrests[11], and deportation[12], all of which have affected foreign journalists and campaigners working on land disputes in Loliondo. The participants were left to undertake their fieldwork without support or guidance from the facilitator, who remained at the remote guesthouse. The group managed to avoid trouble by constantly moving throughout remote areas – covering numerous locations and communities – and relayed their footage back to the facilitators on SD cards hidden in packages, carried to and fro by unsuspecting local bus drivers.

Their video *Olosho* has been screened to audiences across the region and internationally. It is widely considered to have made an important contribution to shifting attitudes of government officials towards the dispute and in their perception of the Maasai of Loliondo. It is also thought to have played an instrumental role in the potentially significant changes in policy and action which marked the last months of 2017, which included the arrests and investigations of investors and officials on charges of corruption[13].

The project was facilitated by InsightShare and its local partner NGO-NET, with funding and support from the United Nations Association of Finland. *Olosho* can be watched online here: bit.ly/2FZp1pq

# MINI CASE STUDY: EXPLORATION & COMMUNICATION

Participatory video provides unique opportunities for people to explore their circumstances and investigate the issues they experience.

Identifying the role of corruption – and its impact on the lives of people and communities – takes time and in-depth exploration. While useful in a variety of different project contexts, the suggestions and techniques included here are particularly appropriate for projects that focus on corruption.

## MAKING TIME AND SPACE

The circumstances in which corruption takes place are often highly complex and difficult to fully understand. Investigating the often opaque relationships between people, interests, power, traditional customs and practices, money, influence, etc. is likely to be time-consuming and challenging to obtain reliable information. Time is the main requirement for participants to adequately investigate and document the effects of corruption on their communities. The three-stage project structure described earlier (see page 14) is designed to create the necessary time and space for participants to investigate the issue fully.

In some cases, even three stages conducted over many months has proved insufficient time for participants to understand and document the complex picture that emerges adequately. For example, the project described in the case study Untangling Decades of Confusion was structured as a three-stage process. However, once the three stages were complete, it was clear that significant confusion remained around the timeline, key events, and legal decisions affecting the land dispute. The messages and statements included in the video were sometimes contradictory and at other times proven to be inaccurate. Rather than leave the participants and wider community with a video that remained incomplete and unresolved – which may have been harmful to their cause – the project partners designed a further stage for additional discussion, exploration, and video production to be undertaken. The additional stage also provided an opportunity to provide participants with more training in video production and post-production, allowing them to use the equipment provided to the community to document the situation long into the future. For more information, see page 46.

## ITERATIVE INVESTIGATION

The overall approach to using participatory video for anti-corruption projects encourages and supports an iterative investigation process. Information is gathered, recorded (video testimonies/stories/interviews/evidence), layered, tested, and responded to; over time and through various phases.

### PHASE 1:  INITIAL EXPLORATION

Early in the workshop process, participants begin to explore their knowledge and experiences through a range of exercises, including:

**Community mapping.** Simple hand-drawn maps created by participants to document relevant places, resources, infrastructure, power (councils, forums, decision-makers), etc. Once recorded, the relationships and associations – with one another and with the issue at hand – can be visualised by participants, helping to build a diagram of the issue and stakeholders. The maps produced can be useful beyond the initial exploration process itself; providing visual aids for dialogues between communities and decision-makers[14]. For a step-by-step guide to facilitating a community asset-mapping exercise, see the *Assets in your Community guide*[15] produced by Friends of the Earth.

**Timelines.** Visual representations of events over time, created by participants using drawings, objects, marks on the ground, photographs or text. Timelines can be useful for recording changes in the community and the issue over a period, including key events, milestones and trends (for example, fluctuations in the value of bribes demanded). Numerous versions – recording different types of information – can be created and explored in parallel; helping participants to map patterns and identify possible links between occurrences that might otherwise appear unconnected. For examples of various timelines (events, trends, activities, seasonal, etc.), see *Introduction to PRA Visualisation Methods*[16] by Andrea Cornwall.

**Problem tree.** A simple drawing of a tree is used to chart patterns of cause and effect. The various tree parts are used as metaphors for different aspects: roots (causes), branches (effects), fruits (impacts). The exercise can be a useful way for participants to appreciate the wide-ranging negative impacts of corruption and trace its causes. For a step-by-step guide to facilitating a problem tree exercise, see *A Rights-Based Approach to Participatory Video toolkit*[17] produced by InsightShare.

**Margolis wheel.** A dynamic group problem-solving exercise for participants to discuss issues and devise solutions, which can be useful during early stages in the process. The structure and flow of the exercise encourages all participants to share issues and offer responses equally. For a simple explanation of the process, see *The Margolis Wheel*[18] by Alan Margolis.

## PHASE 2: SHARING EXPERIENCES

The focus of video-making exercises can gradually shift towards the issue at hand, as participants become familiar with the technology. The exercises listed below are particularly useful for supporting participants to share their individual experiences.

**Story circle.** A story circle is a facilitated exercise during which participants are encouraged to tell their stories (in narrative form) and listen to those of others. It provides a supportive environment for participants to tell their stories for the first time, without interruption or questioning. Repeating the story circle helps participants to deepen their stories (retelling) or choose new, possibly more relevant or personal, stories to share. The exercise is usually facilitated without using video cameras; the presence of which may increase participants' anxiety or adversely affect the honesty of the stories shared. For a detailed guide to facilitating story circles, see *Story Circle Methodology*[19] by Roadside Theatre.

**Storytelling.** Working together in small groups to record one another's stories on video. This exercise will usually follow a story circle, or similar exercise, for participants to begin telling their stories to the group. Typically, each storyteller sits in front of the camera and takes as long as necessary to relay their story; speaking directly to the camera or a fellow participant. Repeating the exercise – ideally over several days – enables participants to practice and refine the telling of their stories.

**My story.** An exercise in empathic listening to explore participants' experiences in-depth, and in a supportive environment.

- **Step 1**. The group is divided into pairs. The facilitator explains that each person will have an opportunity to describe their experiences of corruption and to share how they have been affected.

- **Step 2.** Participants take turns (two minutes each) to share their stories with their partner. The person listening is asked to do so attentively and without making any sounds. The roles are reversed after two minutes and the listener becomes the storyteller. The facilitator times the exercise and prompts each pair to reverse roles after two minutes have elapsed.

- **Step 3.** A pen and paper are provided to each participant. The participants are asked to tell their story again while their partner draws a visual representation of the story. This time, the listener may ask questions to clarify elements of the story or to draw-out essential details. The facilitator encourages the participants to capture how they were personally affected, who else was involved, and what/who enabled the situation.

For a detailed explanation of how to facilitate story circles and various storytelling techniques, see *Participatory Video for Most Significant Change*[20] published by InsightShare.

**River of life.** An exercise for participants to describe their lives (or specific periods) using drawing/painting/collage to create a visual representation (as a river) that includes key events, challenges, achievements, periods of turbulence or serenity, etc. As with the timelines exercise (see above), charting the story – in this case, of individuals rather than groups/issues – over time provides a new perspective on patterns, trends and common contributing factors. For a step-by-step guide to facilitating this exercise, see *Rivers of Life*[21] published by IIED.

**Role-playing.** Simple techniques to dramatize stories – those of individuals or creating a synthesis of several – and reconstruct events. For many people and groups, role-playing can be the most comfortable and natural way of expressing ideas and experiences; to one another and outside audiences. For a wide range of role-playing techniques, see *Enacting Participatory Development*[22] by Julie McCarthy.

**With and without.** A role-playing exercise for participants to discuss how corruption presents itself in their community, and develop recommendations for how systems, services, and behaviours should change in response.

- **Step 1.** The scene for a simple drama – place, people, actions – is agreed by participants (for example, registering land at government office), usually based on the outcomes of previous exercises and discussions. The participants are divided into two groups. One team is asked to devise and record (on video) a short drama in which corruption is present. The other team are asked to do the same but without corruption.

- **Step 2.** The groups are given a large sheet of paper and instructed to create a storyboard[23] to plan drama in a maximum of six scenes. For each scene, participants are asked to consider: shot type (frame/angle), visible elements (people/props/background), content (narrative), and production roles (camera/sound/director).

- **Step 3.** Each group records their drama, ideally away from one another to avoid disturbance and cross-pollination/contamination of ideas. The facilitator supports both groups and encourages the participants to record according to their storyboard plans and keep scenes short; avoiding lengthy and unfocussed dramas. Step 4. The dramas are screened back to all participants. Participants are encouraged to discuss the content of the dramas and provide feedback on what was presented in (and what they understood from) the other group's drama. The screening is an opportunity to explore which aspects of the situation presented allow corruption to take place and what is required to prevent it happening in the future.

## PHASE 3: FIELDWORK

Most projects will eventually move from the workshop stage – where participants explore the issue and learn video-making techniques – to making the final video, which is usually recorded in the participants' community. This "fieldwork" stage provides valuable opportunities to investigate the issue, and its impacts, in greater depth than may be possible within the confines of the workshop setting.

## Recording stories

Travelling to the homes of storytellers (participants) or the locations of key events, allows the group to document the situation in greater detail and gain new insights into the issues explored. Participants are likely to be stimulated by recording stories – even those that have been told and retold during the workshop – on location; encouraging deeper exploration through new questions, following leads, talking to others, etc.

## Gathering testimonies

Conducting fieldwork gives participants the chance to interview a range of contributors from outside the group. While the participants should themselves represent a wide range of perspectives and experiences (see Participant Selection on page 16), the investigation and planning during the workshop may have identified gaps in information and stories that are required for the planned video. Participants may, therefore, want to take interviews and testimonies from a range of contributors, such as neighbours, elders, community leaders, witnesses, subject experts, etc.

## Collecting evidence

Undertaking fieldwork often provides opportunities to gather crucial evidence – documents, letters, photographs, audio-visual recordings, etc. – that can deepen participants' understanding of incidents of corruption or on-going corrupt practices.

While participants are uniquely positioned to undertake much of the investigation and groundwork, project allies (see page 17) are also likely to be crucial during these stages. Allies can assist to interpret legal jargon, source official documents, identify similar/associations cases, uncover relationships, test hypotheses, advise on the legality of statements, etc.

## Discovering new perspectives

Most people rarely (if ever) have a chance to step back from their daily lives and take a hard look at their circumstances. Participatory video projects can create unique opportunities for people to take weeks away from everyday pressures and preoccupations to focus on just one pressing issue. Similarly, viewing familiar people and places through the lens of a video camera frequently gives participants a useful feeling of detachment, which can enable new ways of seeing and thinking about the situation. Often participants report seeing their environment in an entirely new way; often remarking

## PARTICIPANTS OR CONTRIBUTORS?

It is important to consider who should share experiences, opinions, information and key messages on the video produced: participants or other contributors? While people from outside of the participant group may have valuable contributions to make, there are several reasons why participants should be the primary (perhaps only) on-screen contributors to the video. Unlike contributors, participants will have:

- Detailed understanding of the issue, developed during the workshop.
- Determined the messages, target audience, and intentions of the video.
- Practiced telling their stories and learned to focus on key aspects.
- Gained confidence speaking on camera and controlling their self-representation.
- Built trust in their fellow participants, the facilitators, and the project overall.
- Understood the ownership and control they have over the video produced.
- Considered consent, and its implications, over the course of various stages in the process.

Non-participants can make vital contributions to a video, but the decision to include them should be balanced against the potential advantages of limiting the process to participants only.

on how beautiful their landscape is, for example. The cumulative effect of thinking deeply about an issue (during the workshop) and carefully exploring it "on the ground", can lead groups to fresh realisations and radically new perspectives.

The three-stage project structure (see page 14) allows space for long periods of fieldwork, over several months, which significantly increases the opportunity for participants to gather important evidence, record vital testimonies, and gain new insights into their circumstances.

## PHASE 4: TESTING AND GROUNDING

Video provides an ideal medium for reflection and discussion, which forms an integral element of the iterative investigation process. Stories and messages can be recorded, screened and discussed at every stage; providing a vital testing ground for ideas. A pattern of on-going action-reflection-action is established from the very first workshop exercise and continues throughout the process. The following techniques and exercises are particularly useful for testing ideas and information within the context of corruption-focussed projects.

**Video Statements.** An exercise for participants to record one another making statements directly to the camera, which is typically used to practice relaying specific messages to the audience. Statements recorded can be screened and discussed within the group, with project allies and with the wider community; helping to develop and refine clear and accurate messages.

**Devil's Advocate.** An exercise for participants to challenge their opinions by attempting to understand and articulate the position of their adversaries. Two groups make statements relating to the issue, adopting opposite positions. The exercise encourages the group to consider the arguments of others, helping to refine messages by predicting and countering contrary positions. Similar in format to Video Statements (see above) and often forming the next step in the message-development process. For a description of both the Video Statements and Devil's Advocate exercises, see *A Rights-Based Approach to Participatory Video toolkit*[24] produced by InsightShare.

### Screenings

There is no better opportunity to test the video messages that are being developed than screening rough edits to an audience. Whether it is watching the raw footage within the group, screening to an audience of community members, or as a means of introducing project allies to the content produced. Screenings are particularly useful for:

**Validation.** Screening to community members and allies can help to test the accuracy of the statements made. Some audiences may need to be invited and encouraged to offer their honest feedback (for example breaking up into smaller discussion groups), while others will naturally voice concerns and challenge the information presented. This is an important chance to learn more about the issue and improve the accuracy of the video content.

**Awareness-raising.** For even the highest-profile projects, there will be many people who know little or nothing about the project. Screenings help to bring more people into contact with the project and increase their exposure to the issues raised.

**Engagement.** Attending a screening may motivate people to volunteer their time to be interviewed or record a statement (as a contributor), provide additional information or evidence, offer their time/money/resources to the process, or merely become a project ally and help support its objectives.

**Changing perceptions.** Sometimes awareness may already be strong but so too may be misconceptions and suspicion about the project activities and intentions. An early screening can be an important opportunity for participants to explain what they are doing and why. Key points that are likely to need clarification include:

- why the project is taking place in/around this community and what it is focussing on

- how and why these participants were selected to represent the wider community

- who are the people facilitating and supporting the project, and where they come from

- what those involved (participants/facilitators) are gaining from their involvement (for example, salary or per-diems)

- how the video will be used and how it will not (for example, for commercial purposes)

- what risks to the wider community does the project present, if any, and how those are being managed

- how others can get involved and how they can (confidentially) contact the project facilitators to share any concerns or issues in future

- what the next steps will be

# INCREASING SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Participatory video is often used as a means of relaying messages between groups and individuals that might otherwise never meet.

Citizens – particularly those from marginalised communities – are unlikely to be granted opportunities to meet elected officials, business leaders, members of the judiciary, foreign investors, senior police, etc. On the rare occasions that citizens do meet with the powerful elite, such interactions are often heavily mediated and are unlikely to happen in the places – or under the circumstances – that adequately convey the issues at hand. This is where video becomes a powerful ally to communities seeking to engage and influence distant duty-bearers.

A video can transport its audience into the authors' lives. Simple filmmaking techniques can give viewers a powerful sense of a community; their homes and neighbourhoods, forests and fields, streets and high-rises, workplaces and sacred sites. It can bring to life the real experiences of people; the dependants they care for, their lack of money, the discrimination they face, the filth in the water, the resources they have lost. People who might never summon the courage to "speak truth to power" under other circumstances can be supported to give their testimony on video. Those who would never have a seat in the room – let alone an invitation to speak – can find a platform for their voices to be heard. All this can be brought into the meeting rooms, offices and corridors of power.

## AUDIENCE IDENTIFICATION AND ANALYSIS

Identifying the audience is a crucial early step in a participatory video process, however, as the group's understanding of the issue deepens – and their messages sharpen – the target audience is likely to shift or narrow. The following are some exercises and considerations when working to define the primary audience.

**Focus on change.** Understanding the changes participants seek to bring about is essential when identifying the audience for their video. Encouraging participants to articulate the change needed – in as few words as possible – will be the first step towards identifying who holds the power to make that change happen. Documenting the resulting "change statements" on video is an accessible way of recording ideas for future reference and contributes towards the development of key messages at later stages.

**Power-mapping.** Identifying where and with whom the power to effect change lies is an essential step when identifying the audience. Exercises such as Venn/Chapatti Diagrams[25] and other power-mapping tools are excellent ways for participants to begin to identify power-brokers and reveal their proximity and influence (or lack thereof) over their decision-making. For a comprehensive guide to understanding power and its role in change processes – including several tools for analysing power at various levels – see *Power: Elite Capture and Hidden Influence*[26] published by ActionAid.

### Power talk

This role-playing game pits actors (for example, people's movements, NGOs, councillors, ministers, businesses etc.) for and against each other around a controversial Campaign Demand. The different actors struggle to push their own interests, to either win or defeat the demand, but the game challenges them to look for creative win-win solutions. The game role-plays social change issues and struggles, encouraging players to be curious and creative, to think out of the box. PowerTalk can be played to have fun (serious fun!), for learning and for developing real campaign strategies in an organisation, movement or a group of citizens.

PowerTalk[27] was created by Jenni Kauppila.

### Audience types

The audience for a video is likely to be the individuals, groups or institutions that participants want to reach with their messages and prompt into action. For projects exploring issues relating to corruption, the audiences can be broadly grouped as follows:

**Immediate community.** In circumstances where corruption has been identified as taking place – or where redress can be sought – at the community level, the audience may be participants' fellow community members. Participatory video is a powerful medium for people to address one another – within a community – and mobilise for action and change. The participants are likely to be well-positioned to craft messages and

design approaches for addressing such audiences, using their direct experience and in-depth knowledge of their community.

**Local decision-makers.** A vital audience for many corruption-focussed projects will be local/regional decision-makers and duty-bearers including elected representatives, customary leaders, official service providers, business owners, faith leaders, healthcare workers, head teachers, etc. Participants should be well-placed to create targeted messages for this audience, though local allies can assist in shaping and refining these. Participants are likely to need some support and assistance in meeting and engaging this audience in meaningful dialogue.

**National/International decision-makers.** The causes of the corruption affecting the participants, and their wider community, may stem from the decisions and policies of national governments, transnational or international bodies. In which case, the audience may be government ministers, business leaders/industry bodies, political parties, international investors, donors, media companies, embassies, commissions, civil society organisations, intergovernmental organisations, etc. The participants are likely to need significant support to reach and engage these types of audiences. This is another key stage in the process where having a strong network of project allies is essential, see page 17.

**National/International community.** The public may be unaware of the impact that corruption has on the lives and well-being of communities around the world. Participatory video can help give a "human face" to the otherwise often abstract issue of corruption. Groups are often quick to identify "everyone" as a key target audience for their video. As unrealistic as reaching everyone might be, this intention can lead to the group developing messages that do speak to a wider audience of fellow citizens (nationally and internationally) and can contribute towards shifting public opinion and creating momentum for change.

**Activists and campaigners.** There are likely to be campaigners and activist groups working to address the same (or an associated) issue as the project participants. Targeting this audience may help increase the uptake and dissemination of the video by key allies, contributing towards broader-based change processes. Participants may already have close links with campaign groups or may need to rely on project facilitators and allies to help target and reach this audience.

**Note:** the video can target multiple audiences with specific messages. In such cases, a prioritisation exercise is important to avoid a "scattergun approach" that does not hit, or adequately impact, any of its targets. Where two or more audiences are considered to be equally important but require radically different messages, consider creating bespoke versions of the video for each audience.

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## Mapping decision-makers' opinions

On a flip chart, write down the key opinions that the main decision-makers have about your issue. Different decision-makers may have different positions. Their responses can usually be put into the following six categories:

1. **Not a problem** – there is no problem.

2. **Inappropriate** – it is not appropriate for us to act on it – someone else (for example, national government or donor) should act, or it is a "family or personal" matter.

3. **Unsolvable** – nothing can be done about it – any solutions proposed will not work.

4. **Low priority** – there are too many other important issues and we do not have enough resources to address this one.

5. **Against self-interests** – I would not gain anything from acting on this – it might even damage my interests or lose me support.

6. **Agreement** – yes I agree with you.

Once you know what you are up against then you will be in a much better position to argue back once you start working on your messages. It may help to consider:

- How polarised is the debate?
- How flexible are people in their opinions?
- Where is our position on the current spectrum?
- Are there influential actors who can move the centre of the debate towards our position?
- Can we re-frame the debate to move away from deadlock?

Source: Womankind Worldwide[28]

## CRAFTING MESSAGES

Once the audience has been established, participants will need to begin shaping the messages they wish to convey. The following questions are useful when brainstorming the key messages:

- what does the audience need to know?

- what evidence does the audience need to see?

- why does this issue concern this audience?

- what motivates the audience to act?

- why should the audience listen to us?

- what is the "call to action"?

The exercises listed below are helpful when creating target messages for the chosen audience. Step-by-step facilitator guides for each can be found in the *Rights-Based Approach to Participatory Video*[29] published by InsightShare.

**Video letters.** This exercise has been developed to help groups experience and practice creating video messages – targeted at specific audiences – that invite direct responses.

**Audience pathways.** An exercise for groups to plan the "journey" they intend to take their audience on, and the key messages (points of interest) along the way.

**Telegrams.** A paper-based exercise to assist participants to share and discuss their personal perspectives on the issue, by means of anonymous written messages.

## DEALING WITH DECISION-MAKERS

Participatory video is often used as an advocacy tool to assist marginalised groups to have a say in decisions affecting their lives. Part of our work as participatory video facilitators is to coach participants in communication skills so that they get their messages heard. This means basic presentation skills, an ability to make a concise point, clarity of speech, the importance and power of communicating visually with images and more. Try persuading colleagues, friends or family members that they are wrong by blaming them. We are sure you will fail to get anywhere. People who are being blamed for something tend to get defensive and either walk away or blame back. Whatever the reaction, you are very unlikely to feel heard! And yet working with people who have long experience of being marginalised, of feeling powerless and oppressed, will possibly mean being faced with raw emotions and expressions of anger, pain, frustration and hopelessness.

Participatory video should be a safe and effective way to vent these feelings collectively. But as we playback footage in the final stages of a project we discuss the way arguments and issues come across with the community or group. In this way, watching the footage is like raising a mirror to our eyes. We suggest ways that the same messages can be expressed without attaching blame. Often, changing the way a problem is talked about, by altering the tense from past to future - so that a complaint about a past injustice or act of corruption changes to a collective expression or vision for a better future - can help enormously. It is more than a way of speaking, it is developing a way of seeing beyond the way things have been to the way we want them to be. Many decision-makers will feel inspired watching people finding their own solutions to local problems, exchanging ideas and articulating exciting futures.

Source: Insights into Participatory Video: a handbook for the field[30]

## STAKEHOLDER SCREENINGS

The importance of screenings within the participatory video process could not be easily understated. This is where the video is likely to create its most significant impact, beyond the effects of participation that may be experienced by the individuals involved.

### Setting objectives

Participants should be supported to create a list (written or drawn) of their aims and objectives for the screening. Developing a clear list is sometimes tricky for groups, in which case facilitating a visioning exercise[31] might help including questions such as "what would success look like?" to assist participants to imagine their ideal outcome.

### Organising screenings

Effective screening events take time to plan and organise. Getting the format, timing and logistics right – and ensuring the target audience attends – is crucial to achieving the maximum impact. Stakeholder screenings should be:

- **Targeted.** Each screening should deliberately target the specified audience through carefully managed invitations, promotion and communication. The number of people attending is irrelevant if the target audience is not present.

- **Participant-led.** Screening events should be conceived, organised, hosted and facilitated by the participants themselves, wherever possible. Ensuring the activities are community-led will help to reinforce the participatory nature of the process behind the screening.

- **Tailored.** The organisation should suit the needs of the audience in terms of time of day, date, duration, and crucially the screening location. Take the screening to the audience and make it as easy as possible for them to attend.

- **Structured.** Playing the video should ideally be one activity among many, including an introduction to the participants, an overview of the project, description of the participatory video process, feedback and discussion of the video, brainstorming the issue and possible actions, etc. Every step in the event should be carefully planned with roles and responsibilities understood by everyone involved.

- **Arranged in advance.** Give as much notice as possible and follow-up on invitations to ensure attendance.

- **Funded.** Costs for a screening might include hiring a venue, renting technical equipment (for example, PA system), travel, promotion, resources, etc. In addition, some audiences – including officials, customary leaders and journalists – might expect transport and food/refreshments to be provided as a prerequisite to attending an event.

- **Safe.** Screenings should take place at time and locations that will be safe for people to attend. In some circumstances, it may be necessary to inform local authorities about the event and take other actions to ensure the safety of all involved.

- **Technically flawless.** Video screening equipment should be thoroughly tested (and re-tested) in advance of the event, and again during set-up, to ensure the screening take place without technical interruptions.

- **Documented.** Various format (notes, photographs, audio, video, etc.) can be used to document the event, in particular, discussions and feedback.

For more information on screening preparations, technical and logistical considerations, see the *Community Screenings for Participatory Video guide*[32] published by InsightShare.

### Remember

Some videos can be alienating for powerbrokers. The language you decide to use, the stridency with which you make your point, or the spokespeople or music you select can all limit the audiences that will be receptive to your production, and therefore may limit the usefulness of a video. Sometimes, you must make choices about your audience, knowing what the casualties will be.

Source: WITNESS[33]

## Facilitating the event

Screening events with groups of stakeholders usually require careful facilitation and management. Project facilitators or allies may be best placed to facilitate discussions, as participants themselves may be too close to the issue to maintain balanced dialogue. The following are some facilitation tips for screening events:

- Immediately after the video has been played, encouraging the audience to reflect on what they have seen and heard can help focus attention on overall impressions and messages received; rather than areas of agreement/disagreement. For example, asking a volunteer to recap what they saw and heard in the video, another to explain what the main messages were, and another to share how the video made them feel.

- Focus feedback on the content and issues explored in the video. Audiences will often want to comment on the technical quality of the video or ask questions about the production, which will distract attention from the central issue.

- Manage discussions and contributors to ensure equal opportunities for everyone to speak. Addressing questions directly to those that haven't spoken, repeating questions to different people, and politely asking dominant characters to allow others space to speak, are all helpful for opening discussion. If necessary, consider using a "talking stick" to help regulate the discussion.

- Avoid giving lectures on the issue. Let the video present the issue and use the remaining time to listen and discuss with those attending.

## Encouraging dialogue

Screenings provide excellent opportunities to engage stakeholders in dialogue on the issues presented. The feedback and discussions that often follow the screening of a video can be valuable, however, organising structured dialogues (often in smaller groups) is likely to promote deeper discussion and interactions between different groups.

The following are useful activities to encourage dialogue and engagement with stakeholders:

- Post-screening discussions. Facilitated discussion on the issues and messages presented.

- Break-out groups. Small working groups exploring key aspects, brainstorming actions, preparing responses.

- Feedback and discussion. Working groups feedback their findings followed by discussion among the plenary.

- Commitments and recommendations. Audience members are invited to make recommendations for the project/participants and commit to actions they will perform.

# KEY RESOURCES

**Insights Into Participatory Video**—Nick Lunch and Chris Lunch (InsightShare, 2006)
bit.ly/2mZ98q9

**Participatory Video: A Practical Guide To Using Video Creatively In Group Development Work**—Jackie Shaw and Clive Robertson (Routledge, 1997)
bit.ly/2F3iRDq

**Handbook Of Participatory Video**—E-J Milne, Claudia Mitchell, Naydene De Lange (AltaMira Press, 2012)
bit.ly/2DyfdVF

**A Rights-Based Approach To Participatory Video**—Gareth Benest (InsightShare, 2011)
bit.ly/2Duqcyu

**Community Screenings For Participatory Video**—Gareth Benest (InsightShare, 2014)
bit.ly/2G7hIMk

**Video For Change: A Guide For Advocacy And Activism**—Sam Gregory, Gillian Caldwell, Ronit Avni, Thomas Harding (WITNESS, 2005)
bit.ly/2F2Cb3o

**Involving The Community: A Guide To Participatory Development Communication**—Guy Bessette (Southbound/IDRC 2004)
bit.ly/2DAlWfN

**Power: Elite Capture And Hidden Influence**—International Governance Team (ActionAid, 2012)
bit.ly/2DY9k12

**Women's Rights Advocacy Toolkit**—Jessica Woodroffe (Womankind Worldwide, 2011)
bit.ly/2DsJlbx

**Anti-Corruption Kit: 15 Ideas For Young Activists**—(Transparency International, 2014)
bit.ly/2n5o4TF

**The Anti-Corruption Plain Language Guide**—Transparency International, 2009
bit.ly/2rtezke

**Women, Land And Corruption: Resources For Practitioners And Policy-Makers**—(Transparency International, 2018)
bit.ly/2tRbRsC

**Investigating Land And Corruption In Africa - A Training Manual For Journalists**—(Transparency International, 2017)
bit.ly/IJManual

# ENDNOTES

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2   The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) regularly publishes research on obstructions to a free press worldwide, including reports on journalists imprisoned and killed in countries around the world. Visit cpj.org for more information.

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6   "Conducting Interviews: Concealing Identity V1.0", WITNESS (web). bit.ly/2DisnSl

7   "Concealing Identity Techniques", WITNESS (video), 2011. bit.ly/2DSslwo

8   "Women, Land and Corruption", Transparency International Zimbabwe (video), 2016. bit.ly/2FUh58Q

9   "OBC - Hunters from Dubai and the Threat against 1,500 km2 of Maasai Land in Loliondo", View from the Termite Mound (web), 2015. bit.ly/2EVlUxd

10   The killing of photojournalist Trent Keegan – who was reporting on another land dispute in Loliondo, before fleeing to Kenya following multiple threats – in Nairobi, is widely believed to be connected with his work in Tanzania. For more information, see the report from the Committee to Protect Journalists bit.ly/2rnuOBQ.

11   "Last Days of the Masai?", Condé Nast Traveller, 2010. bit.ly/2DuPNHH

12   "Brief Report about How I Was Arrested in Loliondo", View from the Termite Mound. bit.ly/2DB0Wah

13   "Tanzania ends hunting deal with Dubai royal family", The East African, 12 November 2017. bit.ly/2DSuKfK

14   "Participatory Mapping", Rainforest Foundation UK (web). bit.ly/2EWYqYG

15   "Assets in your Community: Mapping Exercise", Friends of the Earth (web). bit.ly/2mU1NsP

16   "Introduction to PRA Visualisation Methods", Andrea Cornwall (web), 1999. bit.ly/2FVwE01

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21   Ziad Moussa, *Rivers of Life*, Participatory Learning and Action 60 (London: IIED, 2009). bit.ly/2DlYQaz

22   Julie McCarthy, *Enacting Participatory Development: Theatre-based Techniques* (London: Earthscan, 2004)

23   InsightShare, 2011 (page 95-96).

24   InsightShare, 2011 (page 71-74).

25   InsightShare, 2011 (page 100-101).

26   "Power: Elite Capture and Hidden Influence", ActionAid (web), 2012. bit.ly/2DY9k12

27   Printed copies of PowerTalk are available upon request (email: jenni.kauppila [at] ykliitto.fi) and an online version is planned for 2018.

28   "Women's Rights Advocacy Toolkit", Womankind Worldwide (web), 2011. bit.ly/2DsJlbx

29   InsightShare, 2011 (pages 76-77, 85-86, 89-90,).

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# CASE STUDIES

# GENDERED CORRUPTION IN CUSTOMARY PRACTICES

By Gareth Benest

# GENDERED CORRUPTION IN CUSTOMARY PRACTICES

In the small village of Kulbia, in the Upper East region of Ghana, ten widows joined a participatory video project to explore land issues affecting bereaved women in the community. The group documented the customary practices which were creating fertile ground for corruption in land allocation and management; highlighting the impact of landlessness on widows, their dependents and the community as a whole.

## Widowhood in the Upper East

There are an estimated 50,000[1] widows in the Upper East region of Ghana. Traditional beliefs and customary practices situate bereaved women as among the most marginalised and discriminated-against members of society. Widowed women are subjected to humiliating and abusive widowhood rites[2] conducted by fellow women and traditional leaders. Over many days, widows endure being: isolated from the community, refused attendance at their husband's funeral, shaved by fellow women, publicly stripped and washed in the refuse dump, bound with ropes, forced to drink dangerous concoctions[3]; and numerous other rites that are common across the region[4].

After the rites are complete widows are generally approached by their husband's relatives and told to remarry within the family[5], typically with a brother-in-law or other relative. Those who refuse are, more often than not, forced off the land they had owned, occupied and farmed with their husbands, by the family. They may also confiscate the house, livestock, possessions, and even male children. In this way, widows are left impoverished and highly vulnerable to exploitation and corruption. Any land they do manage to retain is often the least productive[6] and in many cases, gradually encroached upon by neighbours, or sold to property developers by unscrupulous customary leaders. The protection and support that chiefs, and other traditional leaders, are meant to provide is rarely forthcoming for bereaved women.

Widows are also subjected to physical and verbal abuse by community members; frequently labelled "witches" and accused of killing their husbands[7]. They are widely ostracised by the community and excluded from communal activities. The loss of land and livelihood leaves widows and their dependents destitute; often leading to perilous migration in search of manual labour.

## Land corruption affecting widows

Corruption is known locally as "moogre". When a woman is widowed, customary practice dictates she should retain sufficient farmland and property to support herself and her dependants. However, bribes are often paid by the husband's relatives, fellow community members, or property developers, to ensure the land is taken away and reallocated to them. Bribes – euphemistically referred to as "tips" – are paid to the traditional land custodian (known as "Tindaana"), responsible for allocating land to community members[8] and resolving land disputes, to influence his decisions. The traditional offerings of kola nuts and tobacco are made alongside valuable quantities of guinea fowl and alcohol, and sometimes envelopes of cash[9].

> " The land I farmed with my husband has been reduced to the size of a room…and this is because my single-room house was standing there! Otherwise, my entire land would have been taken away. "
>
> Abontisom Agana, participant

## Participatory video project development

The land corruption affecting widows in the Upper East was first proposed as the basis for a participatory video process by Transparency International's national chapter – Ghana Integrity Initiative (GII) – during an advocacy workshop in November 2015. The circumstances and challenges facing widows were presented and the potential for participatory video – as an opportunity for widows to speak-out against corruption – was agreed by the project partners. The project was carefully designed by InsightShare and GII, over the subsequent eight months, with guidance and funding support from the Transparency International Secretariat.

## Locating the project in Kulbia village

The small village of Kulbia, on the outskirts of Bolgatanga, was selected as the location for the participatory video process. Kulbia forms part of the larger Sumburungu village, which is notable as the location of the Bolgatanga Polytechnic. It is predominantly a subsistence farming community, but it is also known for the weaving of colourful "Bolga baskets". Kulbia was selected for various reasons, including:

1. GII's long-standing and trusted relationship with its local partner organisation – Widows and Orphans Movement (WOM) – which delivers a range of projects across the region, including several with widows in the villages surrounding Kulbia.

2. The noted prevalence of corrupt practice affecting widows, according to GII and WOM's well-developed understanding of the issues affecting communities in the region.

3. Recent research[10] into the gendered nature of land corruption within similar villages in the Bolgatanga Municipal District, undertaken in collaboration with GII and WOM.

4. The willingness of the village chief to accept and welcome the project taking place within the community.

## Documenting the widow's cry

The three-stage project[11] took nearly four months (July-October 2016) to complete, including three weeks of workshops/fieldwork facilitated by InsightShare during two trips from the UK.

Ten widows from Kulbia were recruited as participants, following a careful selection process by GII and WOM. The group represented a broad age group (29-59 years),

diverse backgrounds, and a range of experiences and outcomes following the deaths of their husbands. All of the women joining the project were functionally illiterate, and six participants claimed to have never held a pen before the workshop. All face intense pressure on their time and energy – from subsistence farming, income generating activities, childcare, and other factors – however, the project achieved a remarkable 100 per cent attendance, across all stages, which gives some indication of the enjoyment and value the participants derived from joining the process.

During intensive workshop sessions, the participants explored how corruption affects widows in their community and results in many being left landless and destitute. Many hours were spent telling and retelling personal stories – within the safe space of the workshop – to build a picture of the different experiences in the group. The participants worked together to determine the focus and content of their video; planning sequences to show the challenges they face and, crucially, demonstrate their awareness of corruption and its role in their landlessness. Power-mapping exercises helped the women determine who is responsible, who contributes, and who could assist them in combatting corruption. The participants then carefully planned specific messages to reach their target audiences.

"
**Participatory video will yield more results than legislative reform when it comes to addressing harmful traditional practices and engaging local leaders and communities to achieve behavioural change.** "

Okai Michael Henchard
Ghana Integrity Initiative

The fieldwork was conducted over three stages: initial video production was undertaken during stage one (two weeks), followed by a fortnight of autonomous (unfacilitated) production during stage two (two months), with final footage collected during stage three (one week). The participants worked in small groups (using two sets of production equipment), travelling to various locations – including their homes and farmlands – to record their personal stories. They recorded discussions with several women from the community and interviewed many customary leaders (including Chiefs and Tindaanas) and local elected officials.

## Screenings and stakeholder engagement

Draft edits of the video were screened and discussed locally, which not only helped to guide and inform the group's investigation of the issue but also raised awareness of the project and the profiles of the participants within their community. The resulting video titled "Pakorpa Susangho" (Widow's Cry) was created during a final workshop incorporating footage from across all stages.

On the final day of the project, a day-long event[12] was organised in Bolgatanga to premiere the video and to engage key stakeholders in a discussion. It was attended by representatives from the House of Chiefs, local government, civil society organisations, local customary leaders (including chiefs and tindaanas from Sumburungu), journalists, and community members. The video was presented by participants, who also described their personal experiences as widows and the impact on their lives. The screening was followed by discussions (in the plenary), group-work and presentations (in break-outs), Q&A sessions, etc. The participants helped to facilitate the process and used the video cameras to document everything, including the many pledges of support made by various officials.

> " We have interviewed the tindaanas, chiefs and elders about the theft of our land. Now they have seen the impact on widows, and they want to work with the wider community to find a resolution. Decision-makers have been engaged and sensitised to these issues through our video. "
>
> Asaah Grace
> Participant

## Impact and outcomes

Since the video was launched in Bolgatanga, numerous screenings and discussions have taken place within the community and across the country; helping to raise awareness of the issues and contributing towards broader anti-corruption advocacy campaigns. The commitments that have been made, by various officials and customary leaders, are being tracked by GII and those who have pledged support are being pressed to realise the changes they agreed. GII has trained two community members as paralegals – to support women in retaining control over their land – and further training for more women is planned in the near future.

> " I was very unhappy. My husband and children are all dead. I was accused of being a witch…of having killed them all. So I stayed in my house. I have only left once in seven years, when my eyes became infected from crying. When I did come out, people pointed at me and called me a witch. Everything has changed since I joined the video project. Now people accept me as a widow and not a killer. I am back in my community. "
>
> Akayetibah Apakliyah.
> Participant

The participants themselves have continued to lobby their traditional leaders to forego the practice of widowhood rites, and are actively supporting women recently widowed to refuse to undergo the degrading rituals. Married women (non-widows), have also been sensitised to the issues – through screenings and informal discussions – and many have asked to be involved in future dialogue around the issues. The women of Kulbia have reported some successes, including several women who have avoided the practice altogether, and a significant improvement in their relations with fellow community members and overall standing within the community.

The video has been screened internationally, including at the UN-Habitat III conference in Ecuador, the International Anti-Corruption Conference (IACC) in Panama, and the World Bank Land and Poverty Conference in the United States."Pakorpa Susangho" (Widow's Cry) is available to watch online: bit.ly/2n8jHbk

For more information about Ghana Integrity Initiative (GII) visit tighana.org

For more information about Widows and Orphans Movement (WOM) visit womghana.org

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# OUR TIME TO BE HEARD: YOUTH, POVERTY FORUMS AND PARTICIPATORY VIDEO

By Anderson D. Miamen and Annette Jaitner

# OUR TIME TO BE HEARD: YOUTH, POVERTY FORUMS AND PARTICIPATORY VIDEO

Since the end of its devastating thirteen-year civil war in 2003, Liberia has been focused on rebuilding and establishing institutions with increased transparency and accountability as important targets for reform. The current president George Weah campaigned on an anti-corruption platform.. The public, however, remains skeptical about the commitment of other high level officials.

In this article we highlight how the Center for Transparency and Accountability in Liberia (CENTAL), a local non-governmental organisation and Transparency International's national chapter in Liberia, is supporting youth to demand accountability from government and service providers in local planning, budgeting and service delivery. We show how participatory processes like participatory video (PV) and dialogue forums can support youth to build skills required to voice and amplify their concerns. New sentence: This can lead to improvements in the country's development and in the daily lives of the poor.

## When the elephants dance the grass suffers

Liberia's Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) *Lift Liberia* aims to improve the overall living standard of the country's citizens. As part of this strategy, the Liberian government allocates at least US$200,000 every year to implement development programmes in each county. County Development Funds (CDFs) are used for activities such as renovating and building schools and hospitals and improving roads. Planning and budgeting is supposed to be done in partnership with civil society. However, some people – including the very poor and youth – remain excluded. Many are highly critical of the PRS, identifying the exclusion of its main targets from its design and implementation as one of the key reasons for its limited effectiveness. Corruption is also cited as one major challenge and is compelling communities to stand up and demand inclusion.

CENTAL's Poverty and Corruption in Liberia project (PCL) aims to empower citizens through awareness-raising and the use of participatory approaches like PV. It seeks to engage citizens with local government and service providers to ensure the needs of poor citizens are addressed in local planning, budgeting and service delivery. The project is being delivered through CENTAL's network of local groups called "iClubs" (Integrity Clubs) which consist mainly of young community representatives.

## Creating space for dialogue between citizens and government

Through the PCL, iClub members have helped to build Poverty Watch Councils (PWCs). Members are community-mandated representatives from various marginalised social groups, including youth, women, the unemployed and the physically challenged. PWCs also include teachers and journalists. iClubs and PWCs facilitate "poverty forums" – regular meetings at which youth and other citizens can engage in constructive dialogue with local government to ensure that district development plans and activities respond to their needs.

Poverty forums are structured so that all participants can freely express themselves in a responsible and constructive way. Detailed presentations are given by the authorities responsible for basic services such as health, water and education. These presentations focus on activities they have carried out and those they plan to implement. There are no predetermined groups or individuals to speak on behalf of citizens. Anyone is allowed to voice their ideas and concerns. Once you signal your intention to speak by raising your hand before others, you are given the opportunity to voice your concerns. After a poverty forum, iClubs and PWCs verify information provided at the gathering and follow up on the commitments made.

## Youth take the lead through participatory video

Gbanchu is one community where citizens are beginning to make demands on government. Gbanchu is a rural community with a youthful population located on the outskirts of Gbarnga, the capital city of Bong County. As Gbanchu has no school, students have to walk many miles to other communities, crossing a highly frequented tar road.

CENTAL supported youth in Gbanchu to use participatory video to make their voices heard by local officials. Participatory video is an intensive and iterative process owned by the community. Knowledge acquired during training is used instantaneously to produce a film that can then serve as an advocacy tool.

To encourage the participation of everyone in the participatory video process, an all-community meeting involving men, women and youth was convened. Using participatory tools like "problem trees" and participatory ranking, community members identified and prioritised the community's problems. Many of the illustrations produced were of school-related materials like pens and pencils, copybooks and chalkboards. It was clear that the absence of a school was the priority. Having decided to focus on this issue, the community resolved to give the youth a leading role in the participatory video process.

During discussions, the community in Gbanchu agreed to take action to begin to address the problem of the lack of a school. Community leaders allocated land and youth manufactured bricks. The community filmed this process both as a way of collecting evidence and to advocate for change. Should the school be built, the film will also offer a useful record of the history of their advocacy campaign. The community also felt that the film could be used as a motivation for others.

A community screening of the film was held and local officials were invited. The County Education Officer (CEO) of Bong County visited Gbanchu for the first time in three years. For most of the community members, this was their first opportunity to meet and interact with local officials. This created a sense of purpose and relevance. For the local officials, it was an opportunity to develop a better understanding of how development projects were sometimes being awarded to communities – i.e. often selectively and uninformed. After seeing the film and discussing with the community, the CEO was so moved that he committed to ensuring the construction of a local school in Gbanchu.

## Achievements and challenges in bringing citizens and government together

The most significant achievement recognised by communities is that the poverty forums and participatory video processes have enabled youth – a constituency neglected for many years – to bring their concerns to the attention of local officials and access information.

Through participatory video youth and their communities have learnt how to use different participatory tools to identify collective problems and work together to solve these problems. Relationships within the community have also been strengthened. As part of the process, and for the first time in several years, the entire community assembled to discuss their concerns. Youth in Gbanchu have

organised themselves and set up a leadership structure to collaborate with elders in advocating for better access to education and engage in local governance.

While they are separate activities, both the poverty forums and participatory video projects feed into one another. Poverty forums are ideal venues to screen participatory videos to a wide audience, as community representatives, other stakeholders and citizens' groups are present at the gatherings. In addition, poverty forums can be used to highlight issues that communities want to present to policy-makers, which can then be used in future participatory video projects.

The greatest challenge has been, and remains, following up on the commitments made by local officials. Officials at times make promises that don't come to pass or take a very long time to be fulfilled. iClubs and PWCs are meant to empower citizens so that they feel capable of following up on government commitments. Overall, we have learnt that participatory processes require long-term, continuous and iterative support to create an environment in which marginalised citizens and youth build trust and confidence to demand and claim more space in governance processes.

## Time to learn: lessons from piloting poverty forums and participatory video

CENTAL has learnt a great deal about what is useful and necessary for youth and the wider community to amplify their voices and demand a response from government and service providers through participatory processes.

- Access to information is extremely essential. In some of the poverty forums, basic information on health and education services was made public to citizens for the very first time. This information is allowing communities to monitor and track government activities. Therefore, some local officials have become more mindful of their actions.

- Organisations supporting initiatives like poverty forums and participatory video projects with communities must establish close ties with government and service providers. Good relations between CENTAL's local chapter, the Bong Integrity Club, and local authorities meant officials stayed as late as 8pm in Gbanchu during the participatory video screening process. At the national level, CENTAL's relationship with key officials, such as staff of the Ministry of Education, helped to get the film screened and ensure follow-up action.

- Processes like participatory video and poverty forums build capacity. Participatory video in particular is an ideal tool for making young voices heard. Young people were very welcoming and receptive to this new approach. The marginalised Gbanchu community made their difficulties known to service providers and government instead of expecting others to plead on their behalf. The predominately youthful population of Gbanchu was resilient in their advocacy for a school and for inclusion in national decision-making processes.

- A monitoring strategy needs to be in place to follow up on commitments made by government. This can perhaps happen through continued engagement in poverty forums. Participatory video can also be used as a method to monitor the fulfilment – or not – of promises. Participatory video films can be used as powerful evidence triggering further dialogue and response to concerns raised in poverty forums.

## Conclusion

Local authorities and other public service providers are more likely to feel the need to be transparent and accountable to citizens when citizens have full knowledge of available resources for local development, and have the skills and confidence to make demands. Citizens also need the opportunity to engage and make these demands. Poverty forums and participatory video have provided platforms for youth and other community members to access information, build confidence and participate in decision-making. Poverty forums in particular are spaces of information exchange and constructive dialogue. From our experiences it seems that when youth and other community members are able to occupy and enlarge spaces for citizen participation in decision-making it improves governance and contributes to positive changes in community development and the livelihoods of the poor.

**Note:** This is an abridged version of an article in *Participatory Learning and Action 64* published by The International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED).

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# UNTANGLING DECADES OF CONFUSION

By Gareth Benest

# UNTANGLING DECADES OF CONFUSION

On the island of Wasini, off the southern coast of Kenya, an acrimonious dispute pits an entire community against a wealthy family in a struggle for control over half of the tiny island. Three decades of negligence by land officials, dubious decisions from courts and government ministries, and alleged corruption at all levels have resulted in residents of a unique island community being threatened by mass evictions.

Through a multiple-stage participatory video process facilitated by InsightShare, a group of island residents investigated the long history of the dispute; gathering evidence, recording testimonies from key informants, and documenting their experiences. The result is a compelling documentary that appeals to decision-makers in local and national government for a fair and just resolution to the dispute.

## About Wasini

Wasini is a small island[1] in the Indian Ocean, just two miles off the coast of Kenya, in Pongwe-Kikoneni ward of Kwale County. It is home to around 1,700 residents[2] living in two villages: Mkwiro and Wasini. The people are of the Vumba ethnic community, and the predominant religion is Islam.

The residents of Wasini Island have been neglected by local, regional and national government for generations. In spite of thriving tourism[3] to Kisite Mpunguti – a national marine park within the archipelago (which alienated the community from its most valuable fishery) – and the revenues it generates, residents continue to endure a total absence of basic infrastructure[4]. There is no fresh water on Wasini. The government has failed to provide a pipeline from the mainland, so residents must catch rainwater or purchase bottled water from the mainland when tanks run dry. There is no electricity supply. Solar power is limited to a few buildings and two lampposts: one in each village. The island has no roads or vehicles; no hospital or secondary school; no waste facility or sanitation.

Everything must be caught, grown, or brought on boats from the mainland and transported by hand across the rugged terrain. The only jetty belongs to the Kenyan navy, which maintains a constant force of two men in a small hut without a boat. The navy jealously guards their jetty and refuses to allow the people access. At election time, candidates make rare visits to the island to pledge roads, standpipes, power-cables, schools, and a jetty. Such promises quickly evaporate once the votes are cast.

## The land dispute

The following is a condensed history of the ongoing land dispute – from the perspective of the community members – that emerged through the participatory video process undertaken in 2016.

At either end of Wasini Island lie the settlements of Mkwiro and Wasini. Separating the two is a large area of uninhabited land that was designated as a "communal reserve" by the British, during colonial rule. A conflict between the two communities over the land – known locally as the "Puma" – prompted community leaders to record a land title for the Puma, in the name of one resident. The title was recorded during an open court in 1969. The reason for establishing the title – the only one on Wasini at the time – was to protect against land grabbing of the communally-owned farmland, which accounts for approximately 60% of the total landmass. It was agreed that the deed-holder would act as a "trustee" who would return the land into community ownership at a later date. The agreement was verbal, and no record was taken.

Wasini Island was surveyed in 1978 as part of widespread moves across Kenya to survey land and allocate title deeds. Plots were allocated to residents based on the land they cultivated or occupied. However, corruption pervaded the survey from the outset and numerous government officials (including the surveyors) allegedly granted themselves title deeds[5]. The title to the Puma had, by this time, been inherited by the island's school teacher, Abdul Saggaf Alawy. Saggaf refused to take part in the survey; claiming the land belonged to him and disputing the community's assertion that the title was granted as a temporary (trusteeship) arrangement.

Decades of legal battles followed. In the late 1970s, Saggaf filed a series of 16 lawsuits, against community members, contesting title deeds granted during the government survey. He lost each of the cases. Saggaf then filed another lawsuit against two residents and the Attorney General of Kenya on behalf of the Ministry of Lands and Settlements, the highest government office responsible for land matters. After 12 years, the High Court found in favour of Saggaf. The ministry duly admitted liability and instructed the Attorney General to "file in the High Court for the cancellation of the erroneous exercise [the government survey] and the resulting titles be declared as nullified"[6].

While the lawsuit referred to just one plot, the decision to nullify the entire survey immediately resulted in titles held by a further 87 residents being revoked. Nobody on the island was informed when a gazette notice was published. By the time the residents realised, they were too late to mount a legal challenge[7]. The ownership status of land on Wasini has been mired in confusion ever since, with residents left in a state of limbo; unable to settle families, build houses, develop farmlands, and establish businesses, without secure title to the land.

Today, Saggaf lives in Mombasa with his family. He is said to be around 100 years old and suffering from dementia. Over recent years, his son Maula has escalated the dispute by pursuing increasingly aggressive tactics to secure the land. Numerous residents have been arrested for "trespassing" on their land, while some have had their properties destroyed and many more have been scared and intimidated. Maula is currently threatening residents with mass eviction (see below) if they continue to occupy land claimed by the family.

## Participatory video project development

Transparency International Kenya became aware of the Wasini land dispute while tackling a parallel land corruption case, in which land officials had conspired with a Swiss investor to assert ownership of the Kisite Mpunguti marine park[8]. Residents suspected corrupt practices were being used by the Saggaf family – in obtaining favourable court judgements and manipulating police actions – and so approached TI Kenya staff for advice and support. The situation in Wasini was proposed as the basis for a participatory video process in November 2015. The project that followed was developed by TI Kenya and InsightShare with guidance and funding support from the Transparency International Secretariat.

## Unpacking the land dispute

Fourteen residents from Wasini Island joined the participatory video project that took place over the course of seven months (April-October) in 2016. The participants were selected to represent both of the villages on the island (10 from Wasini and four from Mkwiro), a range of ages (28 - 80 years), a gender balance (six women and eight men), and a diversity of experiences in relation to the land dispute.

The first stage of the project took place in early April 2016. The participants explored and investigated the beguiling land dispute that affects all residents in Wasini village, through a range of exercises and discussions at regular intervals throughout the initial two weeks.

During this time, the participants also learned to operate professional video cameras and iPads, which were used as additional video cameras. Each participant's experiences, perspectives, and struggles were recorded – most on several occasions – helping them to practice the delivery and presentation of their stories.

The land dispute on Wasini is long-running, complex, and acrimonious. A litany of undocumented decisions, claims and counter-claims, legal challenges, opaque court judgements, and a complete lack of genuine community dialogue, had resulted in a toxic climate of rumour, speculation, misinformation, and confusion. Before the project, much of the critical information and history of the dispute remained undocumented; the knowledge was residing with a dwindling number of elders who were present during key events. Those who were alive were in their senior years and increasingly losing their ability to recall details accurately.

Working in two small groups, the participants walked back and forth across the island to interview key witnesses, including the only surviving elder to have been present during a critical meeting, and others affected by the intimidation and harassment that has escalated over recent years. The group even circumnavigated the island by boat to record the shoreline and convey the scale of the disputed territory. The participants also worked closely with a staff member from TI Kenya, who was well-known to the community through his work on previous issues, to understand their legal circumstances and to plan simple video messages in response.

A rough draft of the video had been produced and screened several times to (almost all) community members in the village centre, by the end of the first stage. The video included statements from participants and other contributors that reflected the anger and frustration of the people. They expressed how they felt besieged by Maula (and before him Saggaf), abandoned by their elected officials, and beaten by an incomprehensible and prohibitively expensive legal system. They directly accused Saggaf of corrupt practices (including bribing various officials) and of abusing his position as a trusted community member. Given the nature of the accusations, it was agreed that the video would not be screened again or distributed until the family had been given an opportunity to respond.

At the close of the first stage, a full set of video equipment was given to the participants for use throughout the project and for others in the community to utilise after that. The group was also given a small budget to cover expenses during the next phase of autonomous (participant-led and un-facilitated) activities. Plans for this phase were established including roles and responsibilities for each member of the group.

## Continued exploration and engagement

In the four-month period that followed, the participants maintained the momentum and generated several hours of footage covering various aspects of the issue. A small group even travelled to Tanzania to interview key informants, including a former resident of Wasini with in-depth knowledge of the dispute and important documents on the associated court cases. Other interviewees included elders and former community leaders, now living in mainland Kenya.

In July 2016, representatives from TI Kenya and Kenya National Commission on Human Rights met with Saggaf's family at their home in Mombasa. The project was explained, and the community's accusations were detailed during a lengthy but cordial dialogue.

During the discussions, Maula suggested the land dispute could be easily resolved if only the community would recognise his family's ownership of the land. He stated that – if his property were respected – he would grant land to the "squatters" (as he referred to the community) based on his calculations. Of course, this offer was utterly unacceptable to island residents who have lived, worked, and built their community on Wasini for generations.

The meeting was recorded on video by a production team hired by the family. In the recording, Maula contrasts his offer to resolve the dispute peacefully with an unambiguous threat of violent retaliation if rejected. He describes an arrangement with a senior officer at the General Service Unit – Kenya's paramilitary police force, tasked with maintaining internal security – who had offered a platoon of combat police to evict residents. "Will using force be effective?" asks Maula on the recording, "because I was offered 200 police to evict the squatters". Perhaps inspired by the community's own use of video, copies of the recording were sent to various people in Wasini causing widespread upset and confusion.
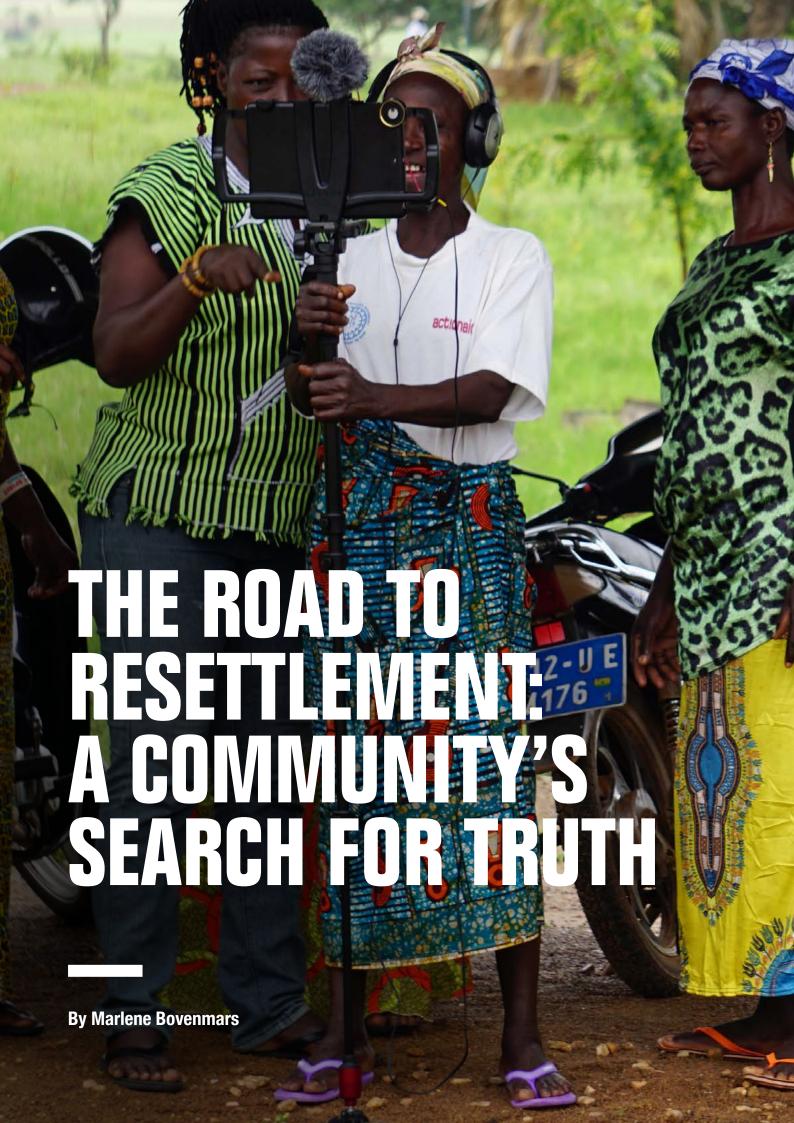
## Slow steps towards a conclusion

In late 2016, the facilitators returned to Wasini to continue working with the group and to finalise their video including the footage recorded during the previous months. The video produced by the group was titled "Kilio", meaning "outcry". It is a detailed and powerful documentary on the land dispute from the perspective of the community. It incorporates footage from the meeting with Saggaf's family, so as to present their side of the story and their perspective on the dispute. It also makes public the threats against the community. Since the footage was not the property of the villagers, the facilitators insisted that permission for use should be sought from the family. Consent was initially granted (by instant message) but later withdrawn when signed authorisation was requested.

The facilitators and participants were very reluctant to remove this powerful content from the video, so a long and tedious process of consultation with lawyers (organised by TI Kenya) followed to establish the legality of using the third-party footage in this way. Meanwhile, various documents were discovered which cast doubt upon the accuracy of some of the villager's statements included in the video, reflecting the backdrop of rumour and confusion that has accompanied the dispute for over fifty years. An additional one-week workshop with the participants took place in 2017, which provided an opportunity for further reflection and planning; alongside training for participants in video editing and archiving to equip them to continue documenting issues long into the future.

In response to the new information and legal opinions, a final version of the video was produced in early 2018 and to watch online go to bit.ly/2GMxLyd. TI Kenya will now begin sharing the video with key stakeholders, locally and nationally, as part of its ongoing advocacy for just settlement to the land dispute on Wasini Island.

# ENDNOTES

1   Wasini Island measures approximately five square kilometres.

2   Demographic information for Wasini/Mkwiro (Kenya Census 2009)

3   "Shimone/Wasini Island Community Profile", Sustainable Poverty Alleviation from Coastal Ecosystem Services (SPACES). bit.ly/2EivGdV

4   "Coastal island frozen in time warp cries for civilisation", Standard Media, 15 July 2012. bit.ly/2DTovL7

5   "Wasini residents meet team over grabbed land", The Star, 12 May 2015. bit.ly/2EidKQx

6   Letter from Ministry of Lands and Housing to the Attorney General, 3 December 1993.

7   Under Kenya's Limitation of Actions Act 2010, challenges to the judgement can only be brought within 12 years from the date on which the judgment was delivered.

8   "Bid to sell disputed islands 'irregular'", Daily Nation, 28 April 2013. bit.ly/2nhyD6V

# THE ROAD TO RESETTLEMENT: A COMMUNITY'S SEARCH FOR TRUTH

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By Marlene Bovenmars

# THE ROAD TO RESETTLEMENT:
# A COMMUNITY'S SEARCH FOR TRUTH

On the outskirts of Koidu, in the Kono district of eastern Sierra Leone, a diamond mine has gradually encroached upon surrounding communities. In the past 85 years, a total of eight communities have been forced to leave their land by the expansion of mining activities.

Since diamonds were first discovered here in the 1930s, the mine in Koidu has changed its ownership and name several times. The mine was initially developed as a state-owned operation, which local communities hoped would bring employment and prosperity to the region. However, instead it brought numerous social and environmental challenges[1] for local people, while the vast profits disappeared to enrich investors and its products lined the shelves of jewellery shops around the world[2], including the US-based Tiffany & Co[3].

Today, the diamond mine operates under the name Koidu Holdings Limited, a company founded by Jan Joubert from South Africa at the end of the protracted civil war that devastated Sierra Leone. Joubert is a former mercenary – with the notorious Executive Outcomes private military company – who fought in many of Africa's bloodiest conflicts[4]. Koidu Limited was registered in the British Virgin Islands by Mossack Fonseca[5], the Panamanian law firm at the centre of the Panama Papers scandal. It is owned by holding company OCTÉA Ltd, chaired by Joubert.

In 2016, the High Court ruled[6] that, despite being the largest diamond mining company in the country, OCTÉA is not required to pay tax because its parent company – the Beny Steinmetz Group Resources (BSGR) – is not registered for business in Sierra Leone. Koidu Limited was also ruled to be exempt from paying taxes to the local community, for the same reason.

The billionaire owner of Guernsey-registered BSGR, Beny Steinmetz, was arrested and detained in 2017[7] by Israeli police investigating allegations of fraud, forgery and money laundering in relation to a giant iron ore project in Guinea. He has been under investigation in the UK, US and Switzerland[8] for the involvement of his company in alleged corruption associated with the project.

## An opportunity for community investigation

In the autumn of 2017, Transparency International Sierra Leone and InsightShare organised a participatory video project for the people of two chiefdoms in Koidu

(Gbese and Tankoro). The process was designed to enable the participants to explore the role of corruption in the mismanagement of their land and to document its impact on their communities.

Many of those in the frontline communities have heard rumours about the mining company's complex ownership structures[9] and its ongoing legal battles. However, awareness of the role played by corruption – in determining decisions relating to the mine and its surrounding communities – remains low among most people. Within this context, the participatory video project provided a unique opportunity for a group of community representatives to collectively investigate the issues and piece together a complete picture.

## Identifying the pieces

Central to the group process of exploration and discovery was a series of participatory exercises that enabled participants to pool their knowledge, share their experiences, and strategically communicate with others in the affected communities. The initial stakeholder analysis exercise enabled participants to begin identifying and mapping the key people and institutions involved. The stakeholders were grouped into different categories, including those affected by corruption, those suspected to be guilty of corrupt practices, those contributing to or benefitting from its presence, and those who could help the communities to combat corruption in all its forms. The findings created a useful guide which the group used as a reference throughout the process, ensuring they continued to target the key stakeholders identified.

Similarly, a "Relationship Map" generated during a subsequent exercise helped the group develop a fuller picture of the direct and indirect impacts of the mining operations and resettlements. The participants were delighted with the clarity they gained; having never before considered the complete cause and effect picture of their experiences. The same information was later used to identify affected sub-groups within the communities, and those best placed to share their experiences and the challenges they face.

## Collecting the pieces

The fieldwork that followed was based on the findings of these, and other, participatory workshop exercises undertaken by the group. Participants travelled across the large resettlement area to interview numerous people, including those who have resisted threats and intimidation and remain in their homes and on their land. They recorded the testimonies of women struggling to feed their families, young men without work or opportunities, families excluded from resettlement agreements as a result of having fled to refugee camps during the civil war, a "Mammy Queen" who lost her role as custodian of the land, and many more.

Several community members were brave enough to name and shame chiefs that were corrupted by pressure from the company and who agreed to unfavourable deals. As one participant said, "The company and the chiefs met together and made an agreement against us, the poor people. They gave the company the go-ahead to start the work. The agreement was broken because the chiefs trampled on it." During interviews with local chiefs, the participants posed direct and challenging questions that – without the project or the camera – they would not have the courage or the mandate to ask.

## Piecing the story together

The interviews resulted in an overwhelming number of (highly emotional) statements describing the wide-ranging economic, social, cultural and environmental challenges facing the community. As the scale of the story became apparent – geographically and historically – two different exercises helped the group make sense of the information they had gathered.

Undertaking a "Community Mapping" exercise enabled participants to gain a clearer understanding of the physical impact of the mine's gradual expansion. While people living locally can easily navigate their way around the vast resettlement areas, most had never viewed the scale, scope and layout from an aerial perspective. The map – informed and guided by two activists in the group – revealed how much community land had become part of the mining operation, and how much further from the town (and its amenities) the new settlements had been located.

For historical sense-making, a "Timeline" exercise enabled the participants to piece the different part of the story together in one coherent storyline, which in turn informed the structure of their video. The timeline incorporated information from previous exercises and insights gathered from the interviews. Key events and milestones were plotted, including changes in mine ownership and name,

assessments by various companies, resettlements of different groups, the building of houses and provision of services in the resettlement areas, and the point at which the communities came together to fight for their rights.

> " I did not understand much about the corruption issues involved in the mining and the land disputes, but through this training I have understood everything. "
>
> Femusu Nyandebo
> Participant

## Targeting key audiences

Once the video had been finalised, the participants set about developing a dissemination and advocacy plan. The plan includes organising further screenings across the vast resettlement area as a means of raising awareness among the wider community members – of the issues, history, and causes – and with the hope of increasing their resilience to withstand future challenges. Based on everything they had learnt throughout the workshop and from the interviews during fieldwork, the participants developed recommendations for an "ideal" 6-step community consultation and engagement process. They recorded an example of how this new "ideal" process should work, using short role played scenes with voiceovers.

The participants also plan to share their video with communities currently awaiting resettlement and those likely to be resettled in future. They hope the lessons, insights, recommendations and messages contained in their films may help these vulnerable groups negotiate better compensation agreements and demand a fairer consultation process.

Finally, the group intends for their video to be screened to local and national authorities; to remind local chiefs (as the traditional land custodians) and government officials (as elected representatives) of their duty to protect communities from exploitation by unscrupulous companies. Through screening events the participants hope to expose the corrupt practices they identified and encourage official duty-bearers to ensure the companies operating in Koidu; a) engage in fair and transparent community consultations; b) provide adequate compensation for communities affected; c) act in accordance with the agreements made; and d) pay taxes (locally and nationally) and support local communities impacted by their operations.

"The Road to Resettlement" is available to watch online on InsightShare's youtube channel: bit.ly/2GsK0AV. For more information about Transparency International Sierra Leone visit tisierraleone.org

# ENDNOTES

1 "Diamond Mine with Offshore Ties Leaves Trail of Complaints", The International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (web), 25 July 2016. bit.ly/2EaSwUu

2 "Sierra Leone diamond firm: from war booty to IPO", Reuters, 4 April 2014. reut.rs/2BxRC1G

3 "Kono descendants' global protest against Octea mining in Sierra Leone", The Sierra Leone Telegraph, 20 April 2016. bit.ly/2EgXpxO

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# TACKLING CORRUPTION THROUGH COMMUNITY MEDIA

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**By Crystal Williams**

# TACKLING CORRUPTION THROUGH COMMUNITY MEDIA

Due to corruption and mismanagement, children at Kanpur Primary School in the western state of Gujarat, India, were not receiving the mid-day meals mandated by a government programme[1]. The Government of India's "Mid-Day Meal Scheme"[2] is meant to ensure all children receive a cooked meal every day, however, just 15 to 20 of the nearly 200 pupils attending this school were receiving their meals. The money and rations were being taken by the scheme's organisers until a local community correspondent from Video Volunteers took up the case.

## Empowering marginalised citizens

Unfortunately, this form of petty corruption[3] is commonplace in India and the people who suffer the most are poor and marginalised communities.

For wealthy citizens, corruption may be seen as a necessary means of ensuring swift delivery of services. While corruption might be an inconvenience for middle-class citizens, it nevertheless confers a level of privilege and access to services "under the table" for a relatively small fee. However, corruption hits hard for the poorest citizens of India, who are frequently required to pay for services that should be freely available.

## The problem

India ranks 81st on Transparency International's Corruptions Perceptions Index 2017[4] with a score of 40. This score puts India on the lower end of the scale. Among the key characteristics of the higher-ranked countries is the presence of: "higher degrees of press freedom, access to information about public expenditure, stronger standards of integrity for public officials, and independent judicial systems[5]", and India falls short on these markers.

Many citizens in rural villages are not aware that they can monitor government schemes, while those that are aware may not have a means to monitor outcomes; when communities are empowered and made aware of their rights, this can lead to positive and sustainable change.

Video Volunteers puts power in the hands of poor and marginalised citizens, empowering them to hold the government accountable in the face of corruption. This transfer of power is achieved by recruiting, training and compensating community citizens as reporters to cover stories of injustice and corruption, which raises awareness, creates positive impacts for the communities served and elicits responses from government.

## Addressing corruption in government schools through community media

This story is just one of the hundreds of Video Volunteers' productions from all over India. The government's Mid-Day Meal (MDM) scheme is meant to address widespread malnutrition and to encourage higher attendance in schools through the provision of one cooked meal every day. When it became apparent that children were being denied access to the scheme at a local primary school, Neeru Rathod, a "community correspondent" working for Video Volunteers in Kanpur, Gujarat, took action. She used her skills as a community media journalist to ensure that children in the village were given the nutritious food they are entitled to receive.

## Building platforms for marginalised communities to voice perspectives

Video Volunteers recruits people from marginalised communities to join a network of community media change-makers. Neeru Rathod is the daughter (among 11 other siblings) of a construction worker from the Dalit community in Surendranagar district, Gujarat, one of the most feudal and caste-divided regions of India. In 2006, Neeru was selected by Video Volunteers and the NGO Navsarjan to be part of a community video unit. Here Neeru found her vocation and passion.

Neeru is among over 250 individuals trained in video reporting and data-gathering, now earning a livelihood as community correspondents. Video Volunteers provides training to ensure that community correspondents are aware of basic journalism techniques, including how to use a camera and how to tell a story. Campaigns are also utilised to raise awareness among community correspondents and the community at large.

In 2013, when Neeru began filming at Kanpur Primary School, Video Volunteers also simultaneously launched the Right to Education campaign[6]. Neeru used this as an opportunity to talk to school staff and guardians about the campaign, and they unanimously agreed that the irregularities in the implementation of the MDM scheme at the school were worth looking into. Neeru had been trained on how to listen to community issues and identify a "solvable story" that could have a positive impact on the community. As a result of her training, she quickly recognised the corruption in the MDM scheme as an issue that should be addressed.

## Building community awareness of issues and rights

Through her conversations, Neeru soon found out that the man appointed to organise regular distribution of supplies for the scheme was not doing his job well. The school cooks had to go to his home to collect supplies, and he rarely gave enough food. He owed the cooks several months of their wages, and he did not pay local grocery store owners, causing them to refuse to sell to the school.

Neeru began with long discussions with the residents about the Right to Education Act[7] and the MDM scheme. Many didn't know anything about the provisions in place for their children. They collectively agreed that their children deserved better. Neeru emphasised that the community members themselves should hold government accountable to ensure that the children received what they needed.

To achieve the required changes, Neeru knew she needed to engage the right people. She said: "I interviewed a representative from each of the groups I met, including school staff, cooks, as well as the guardians. Then, I went to the deputy magistrate and informed him of this situation and showed him the video. His response was intriguing. He said: 'I must have misunderstood the situation.'" The video allowed Neeru to present multiple perspectives and realities to the magistrate.

## A bottom-up approach to galvanising communities

After speaking with the deputy magistrate, Neeru returned to the village and provided updates to the residents; it was essential to ensure community involvement and ownership throughout this process. Some of the women in the village felt so empowered, they wanted to go with Neeru to the deputy magistrate's office. Neeru duly wrote the application form for them, and they went to his office. In this way, the magistrate was able to hear directly from the people affected in addition to watching the video.

This interaction prompted a government investigation. Within a month, the investigator arrived and met with everyone in the village, including the village head and the Education Committee. Shortly after the investigation had concluded, the corrupt organiser of the MDM scheme was dismissed.

Neeru was able to involve community women in the process, empowering them to speak directly to government officials on an issue that mattered to them. They held the government accountable and, in so doing, experienced a direct link between action and the positive changes that followed.

"
**We as citizens tend to let [government corruption] slide because it either suits us or it doesn't directly affect us, ... I called all the villagers together and asked them about the situation. They all agreed that it was a shameful situation and that I must take it up to administration.**
"

Neeru
Participant

## Empowered communities challenge injustice

The children of Kanpara Primary School started getting full rations, including spices and vegetables. This change was possible because the community was empowered to speak up for the changes they desired to see. If similar inequities arise in the future, this particular community will know that they can create changes on their own.

Neeru reflects: "One important lesson I learnt while filming this video was strength in unity. Kanpara is a very small village. For years the children had suffered, but no one had taken this issue up because no one wanted to be in the limelight in case things went wrong. Once I agreed to be the sacrificial goat, everyone rallied around me. It's a win-win situation for me. You see I am never afraid to take up issues. I know my community will always be right there, with me."

For more information about Video Volunteers and their approach to community media, visit videovolunteers.org

Crystal Williams is a fellow with the American India Foundation (aif.org) and is currently working with Video Volunteers. She is from the United States of America and has worked with American nonprofit organisations and government agencies to advocate for children and families.

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# ENDNOTES

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