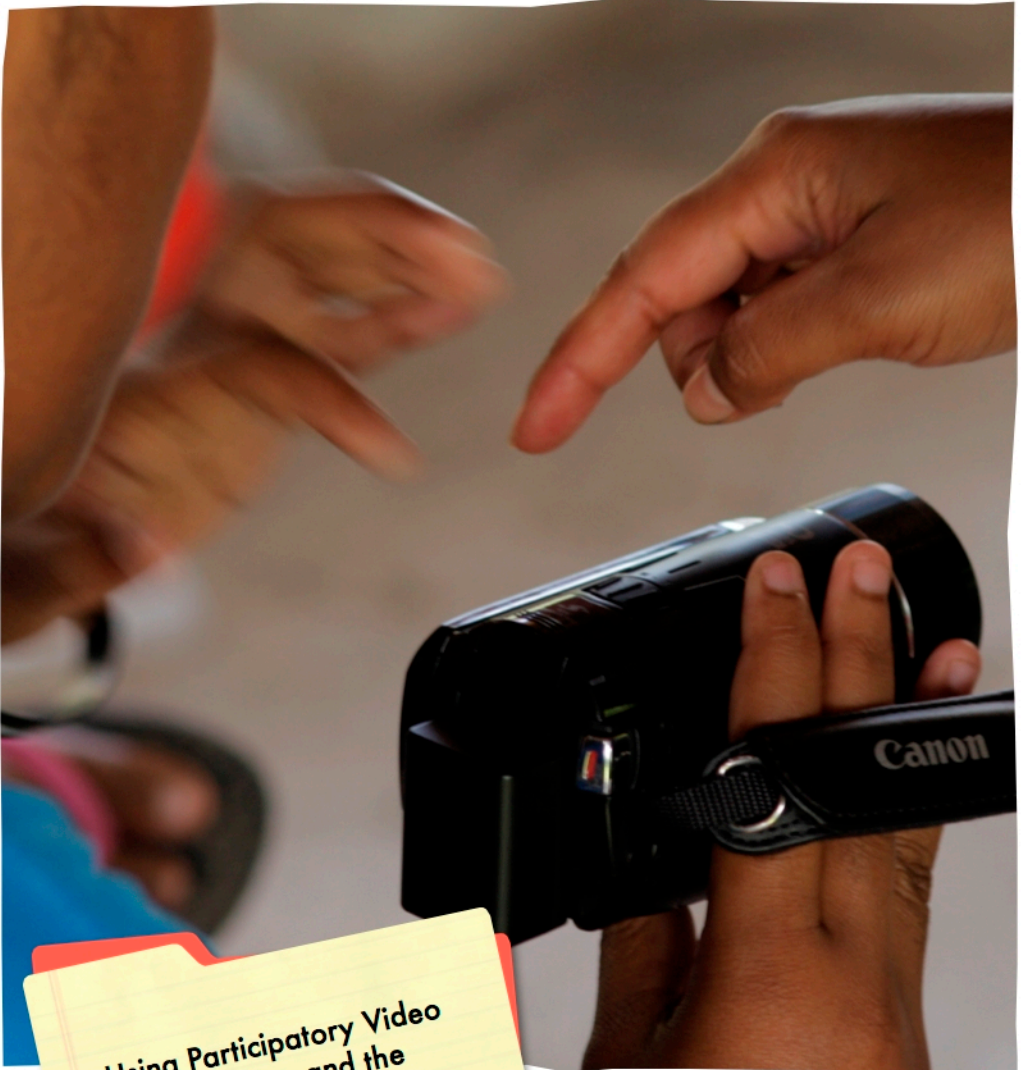


A 10-step method

Participatory Video



Using Participatory Video
in Vanuatu and the
Solomon Islands

Glossary of some useful film terms.

- Director:** the woman or man in charge of how the story is told.
- Producer:** the person who arranges things (actors, locations, scheduling, props, production meetings).
- Script:** the story being filmed - written by beneficiaries!
- Focus:** the system used for concentrating the camera on a subject in a frame.
- Zoom:** the system by which you change the shot/frame size on a camera - you can zoom in or zoom out.
- Panning:** staying in one spot and rotating left or right.
- Tilting:** staying in one spot and elevating the camera view up or down.
- Tracking:** focusing on a subject and moving with it.
- EDL:** Edit Decision List - what you decide to include in the final movie.
- NLE:** Non-Linear Edit system - software for editing on a computer.
- Log Sheet:** the list of clips you have filmed - we used Post-It notes for this task.
- Tripod:** a stabilising system for holding a camera steady.
- Shotgun Microphone:** a high quality external microphone with good signal sensitivity and noise rejection.
- Hot/Cold Shoe Mount:** where you mount items on a camera (lights, microphones) - 'hot' is with electricity, 'cold' without.

www.vivo-media.net
Not for use without
permission

An Introduction

Participatory Video (PV) is a powerful technique for empowering communities to advocate for themselves. It is a method for 'enabling the citizen voice' using one of the most engaging and lucid types of communication - video. PV is a particularly compelling tool for enabling memorable dialogue between communities and citizens, and other concerned stakeholders involved in their lives.

There are many potential uses of PV, for you as a facilitator:

- PV presents a reliable technique for expression
- PV can help overcome literacy barriers
- PV can help to surmount geographical barriers
- PV can promote democracy and advocacy with an appropriate audience
- PV is an instance of technology and knowledge transfer
- PV is an example of Experiential Learning
- PV can facilitate multi-stakeholder interaction
- PV can fit with and extend oral traditions
- PV can provide low-cost outreach possibilities

PV is often used for advocacy and awareness-raising

- From community to community / NGOs / policy makers / CSOs / researchers
- From marginalised or isolated groups to the wider community
- Community to community > policy makers to community > multi-stakeholder workshops and dialogue

PV is often also used for capacity building, as a tool for sharing information, best practice and new technologies and techniques - eg. for agricultural extension and resilience building. And **PV is regularly used for stakeholder engagement and reporting**, as well as project planning, gathering baseline data, evidencing practice, monitoring and evaluation, noting a Most Significant Change, mediation in conflict situations between groups, community consultation and more. Following is a guide!



1 Sit In A Circle

// Bring the participants together and form their group

Gather your group, sit with the group, at the same level, demonstrating your respect for their authority and state your plans and goals for community.

// TIPS

- *Observe local customs when meeting.*
- *Consider separating men and women if gender considerations are an issue.*
- *Give time for participants to feel comfortable and respected.*

Key things to consider:

Explain what you wish to do (technology and techniques transfer, community capacity building, policy engagement - if appropriate).

Explain how the community can benefit. Present the opportunity for dialogue, both between you and the community, as well as between the community and other stakeholders (local, national or international).

Advise that all their stories can be told, and that this is not the only chance they will have. This can mitigate the risk of certain participants wishing to dominate a narrative, if all know that they will be heard in one film of the many films they can make.

Ask the community, even at this stage, to think about to whom they would most like to show their films and enrich a dialogue. Reassure them that the community is leading the process - you are just a facilitator.

*"The Facilitator is a person who is substantively **neutral**, who has **no substantive decision-making authority** and intervenes to **help a group explore, solve problems and make decisions.**" Schwarz 2002*

2 Camera Basics

// Demonstrate the functions of the camera

Show the person next to you. Then let them demonstrate to their neighbour!

// TIPS

- *Check your camera settings first (codec, resolution, sound).*
- *Show precautions (don't touch the lens, microphone).*
- *Consider leaving the camera in AUTOFOCUS mode.*

LET THEM TAKE CONTROL. Don't be tempted to interfere.

Key items to demonstrate

Make sure you show how to locate and use the following aspects:

Where to plug the camera in for charging the battery.

How to turn the camera on/off.

How to open any lens cap (if there is one) - being careful not to touch the lens.

Where the microphone is, how to change the ***microphone volume***.

Where to place any memory cards, if needed.

How to check which codec to use (show them essentials in the menu).

Where to plug in headphones and how to change the ***headphone volume***.

(For alternate cameras, refer to the manual for instructions on the above)

The Camera

Turn the camera on/off here.

The shotgun microphone plugs into the 'hot shoe' here. Be careful of the pins - they're delicate.



The microphones are here. Mind your fingers!

The lens cap opens and closes automatically with power.

The memory card plugs in, under the handle on the other side.



The battery attaches here.

Plug headphones in here - remember to change the menu settings from microphone to headphone.

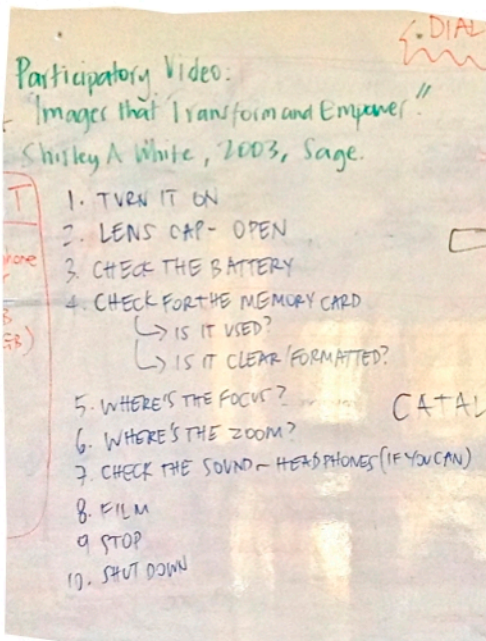
Charge the battery behind this cover.

3 Name Game

// Show the group how to film an introduction

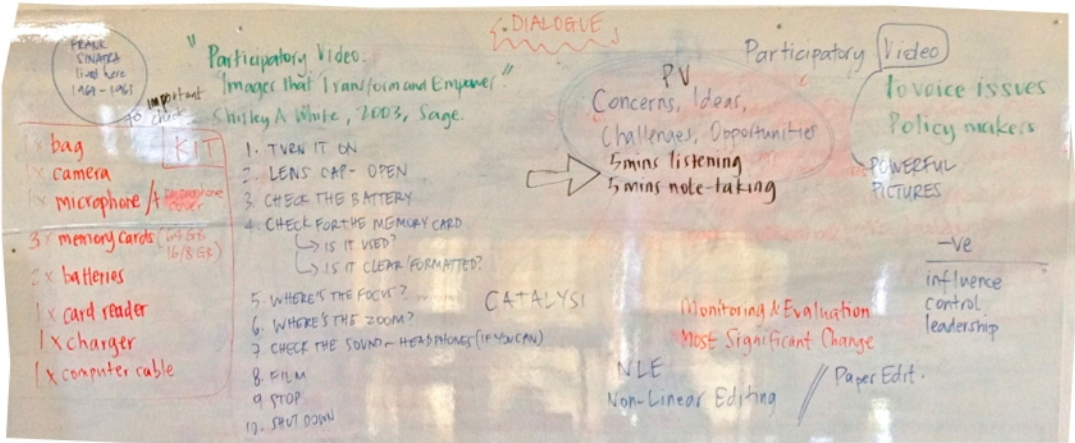
Film the person opposite you as they introduce themselves - hand the camera around, allowing each person of the group to do the same. This is a chance to practice camera basics again, but with sound.

- Turn the camera on
- Lens cap - open?
- Check the battery is charged.
- Check the memory card is installed
- Where's the focus?
- Where's the zoom?
- Check sound - use headphones.
- Press record - film a few seconds.
- Stop
- Turn the camera off
- Pass it to the next filmmaker.



LEAVE THEM IN CHARGE. Only help if asked.





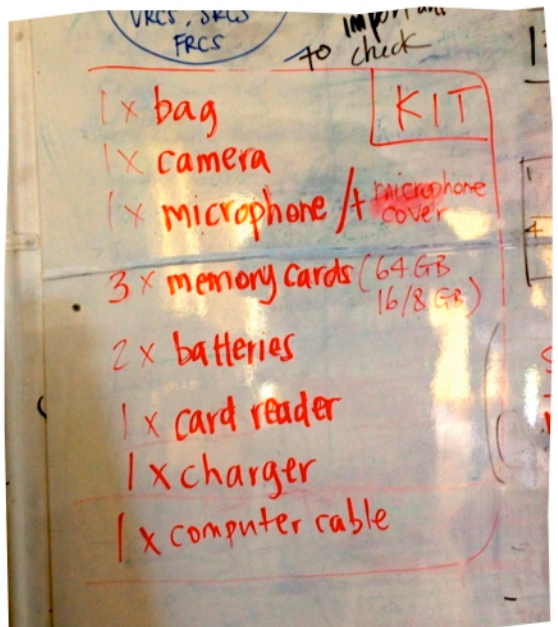
// [above]

Remember what to take with you into the field [see far left].

There's a practice list of what to remember [see left].

// [right]

Here's that list again. Yours may be slightly different. (1x bag, 1x camera, 1x microphone, 1x microphone cover, 3x memory cards, 2x batteries, 1x card reader, 1x charger, 1x computer cable).



4 Watch Footage

// Watch the footage, promoting reflection and comments

Let everyone handle the camera and see their filming. This promotes engagement.

// TIPS

•It is vital that everyone is engaged at this point, so ask them questions about what looks good, what could improve, etc.

•Do they have any questions at this point, about camera basics? Check!

•If they have questions, ask someone else in the group to answer and provide help. This will consolidate their learning.



// Use this stage to build engagement

This stage provides a great opportunity to build engagement. You will be tempted to notice all the errors made, and there will be a lot of them. But first, make sure you give some praise, and encourage others to do the same.

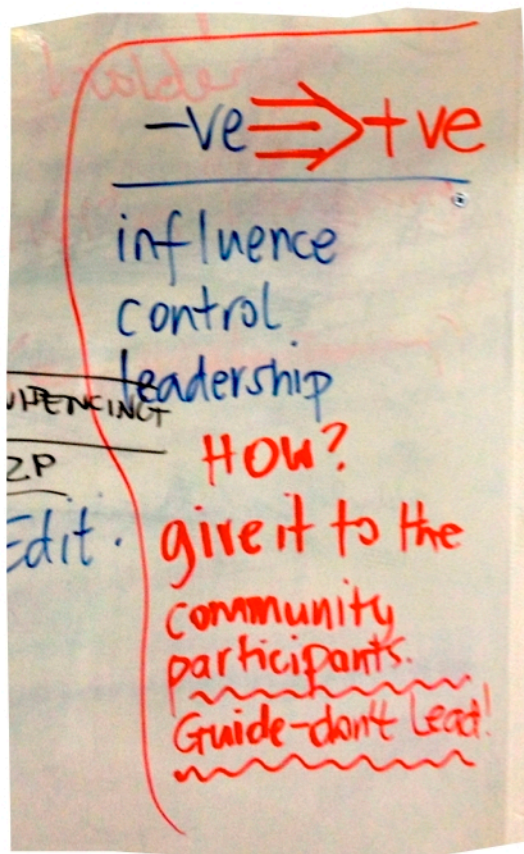
Noticing the good things your new filmmakers have done achieves two things:

First, it provides positive reinforcement, encouraging your community members to continue working.

And second, it provides a positive model of good practice on which they can build. This is important for building confidence and recognising capacity and ability.

After this, you can help shape discussion on improvements - which can be practiced during the next stage - by asking participants to notice what could be improved.

Doing this will build opportunities to add more techniques to the participants filmmaking (the rule of thirds, framing, using a tripod and so on).



// [above]

Give Positive Feedback! Ask others too as well. Make sure they do!

5 Practice Technique

// Introduce the tripod, framing, shot sizes

More techniques are introduced to address the participants reflections on improvement in Step 4. Be specific and provide solutions to any issues they were facing in their first practice. For example, if they were having a problem with sound, perhaps now is the time to introduce the shotgun microphone? Explain how it works and allow them to practice using it.

// TIPS

- *Introduce the tripod. Allow everyone a chance to practice setting it up and attaching the camera.*
- *Give the group a 'shot-size' challenge, using the tripod. Which shot size should you use? When? Why?*
- *Show the group how to handle light (filming dark skin against a dark background) and sound (using the microphone, shielding against wind noise).*



// [left]

You know when the camera is properly mounted on the tripod when you can lift them both together by holding the camera.

When adjusting the tripod, it's best practice to always hold the camera, in case it falls off.



VLS - Very Long Shot



LS - Long Shot



MLS - Medium Long Shot



MS - Medium Shot



MCU - Medium Close Up



CU - Close Up



BCU - Big Close



ECU - Extreme Close Up



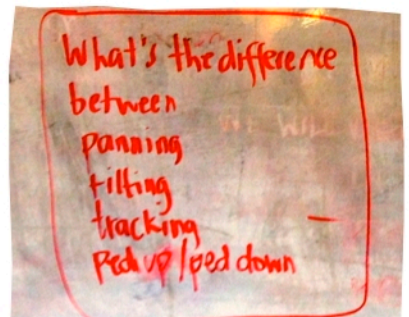
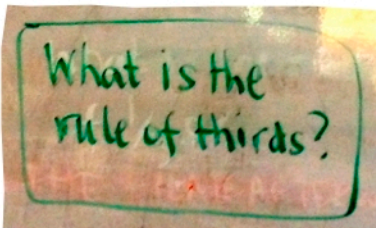
// [above]

Rule Of Thirds

Composing your shots using this rule makes images more pleasing and professional. Experiment!

// [left]

Shot or Frame sizes determine how big people appear in a shot. Which sizes are you likely to use when? Ask your new filmmakers why. This will help them think about what they're filming and why.



6 Storyboard

Storyboarding is a vital step in PV, assisting community members to clarify, organise and prioritise the key aspects of the story they want to tell.

Aside from organising the narrative, storyboarding also provides an opportunity to highlight important elements of the story which will promote policy engagement.

// Elicit stories from the group

Facilitate ideas and help the group prioritise which stories to tell. Divide a large piece of paper into 'cells' for drawing pictures of the action.

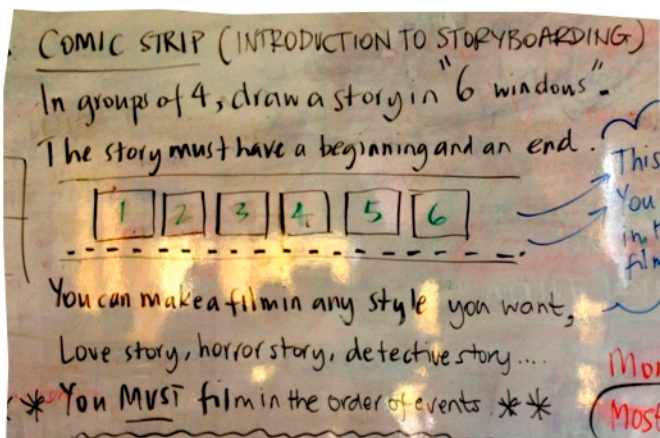
// TIPS

•All ideas are important. Some may have priority. Why? Everyone will want to suggest a topic. No time pressure? Let them organise all their own productions and make them, for practice. You can then suggest that the group find a way to prioritise their stories. How?



// [right]

Do you remember the practice activity?



// Which topics to choose? (optional - NOT mandatory)

Sooner or later, you will need to help guide a group in its selection of stories. You may have to do this due to time constraints, or other constraints on resources of some kind.

But here's a technique for relationship-building between you, your organisation and the filmmakers that will provide a method for facilitating the dialogue between you and your beneficiaries. You could suggest the following:

- Be ready to support all their filmmaking, within your capacities to do so.*
- Suggest that as filmmakers, they are free to tell what stories matter to them.*
- Point out that, as part of their audience, you are interested in what they want to say. Indicate that PV, and filmmaking in general, is a dialogue between the makers and their audience.*
- Tell your filmmakers that your organisation is empowered to respond along certain lines during a project or engagement with the community (eg. DRR or specific capacity building).*
- Propose that films that are somehow aligned to your ability to respond as an organisation, during a specific project, will get the maximum response from you and your project team.*
- Indicate that you can help to forward other films made along different narrative lines could be forwarded to other stakeholders and/or CSOs whom might be better suited as an audience - only if you need to.*

Your filmmakers can now prioritise their stories in a way that is meaningful to both them and your agency, in the time you both have available.

7 Film

// Time to start production!

Let participants experiment. Make someone responsible for the script at all times!

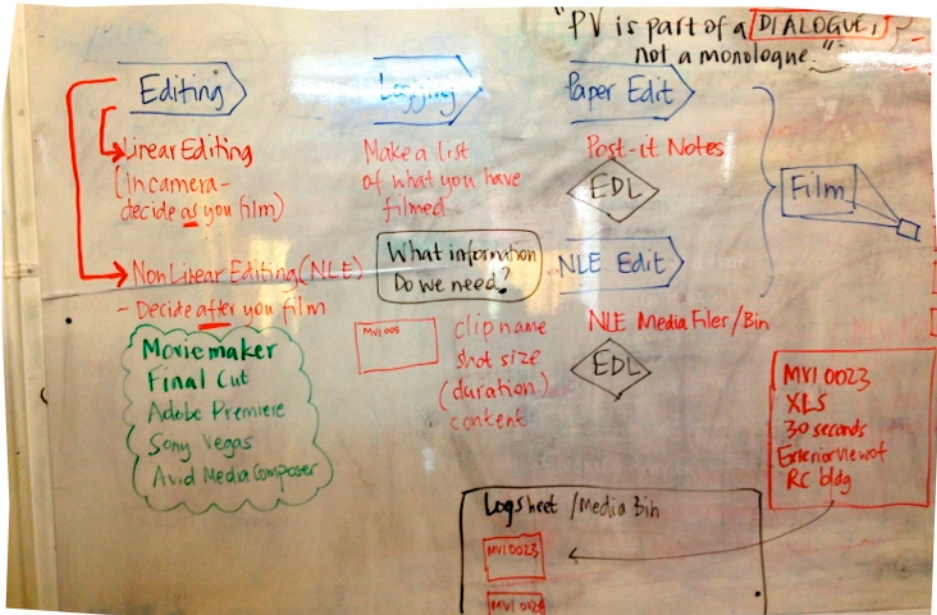
// TIPS

- *Keep an eye on the time for the participant filmmakers.*
- *Remind the participants about using a large variety of shots.*
- *Make sure someone in the group is in charge of batteries.*
- *Allow directors and producers to emerge naturally. Suggest other participants manage the script, sound, lighting.*
- *How much time do you have? How much time do your filmmakers need? can they film it all in a week? A weekend? An afternoon?*





8 Edit



// Log shots and make an Edit Decision List (EDL)

Ask the group to log their shots and then order them into a paper edit of the final sequence.

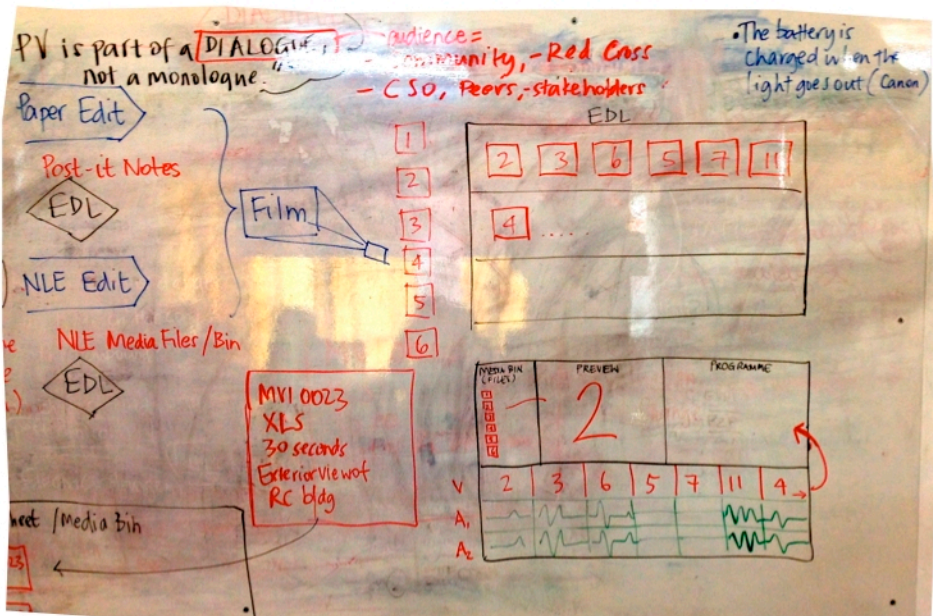
// TIPS

- What details do you need on each log note? Clip name? Content? Shot size? Duration? Anything else?
- Assign roles for this process - viewers, note-takers. Break up the task if it is long.
- Compare the logsheet with the storyboard. Did they get all the shots? Are some shots missing?

// Paper Edit

// TIPS

- The Paper Edit can be re-arranged at any time.
- Use the edit to identify if anything is missing in the narrative.
- This Paper Edit (EDL) can be given to an external editor to cut.
- Take time to explain the NLE editing process, if your project allows it.



9 Screen

// Help organise a community screening

Get the participants and key stakeholders together. Show the film(s). Encourage the filmmakers to present them.

Without this stage, PV does not work. Making a film that does not get seen is defeats the purpose and carries several risks:

- The group will be demotivated and may not wish to participate further.
- Involvement in the core activities of the project may decline.
- Your credibility may suffer.

Positive outcomes of a screening are several:

- Immense satisfaction is felt by the filmmakers and the community.
- Engagement in the project may be revitalised and encouraged.
- Your credibility may grow as a result - especially if your agency is able to respond to the film directly and develop 'your side' of the dialogue as a result.

// TIPS

- This is what matters the most - that the **right audience** sees the film.*
- Help resource the screening and gather the audience. Who is that?*
- How can you ensure the screening happens and happens **regularly**?*



10 Reflect

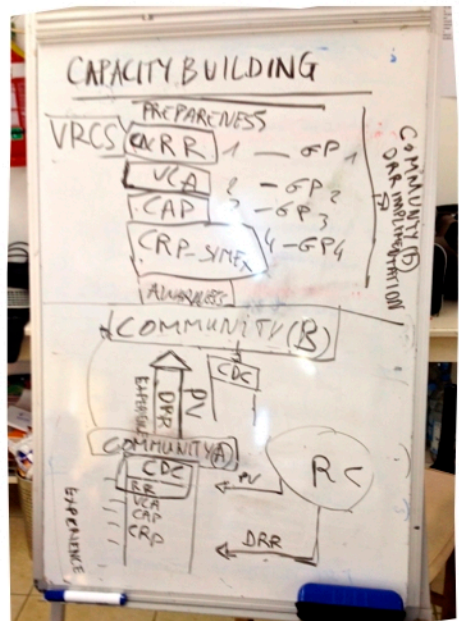
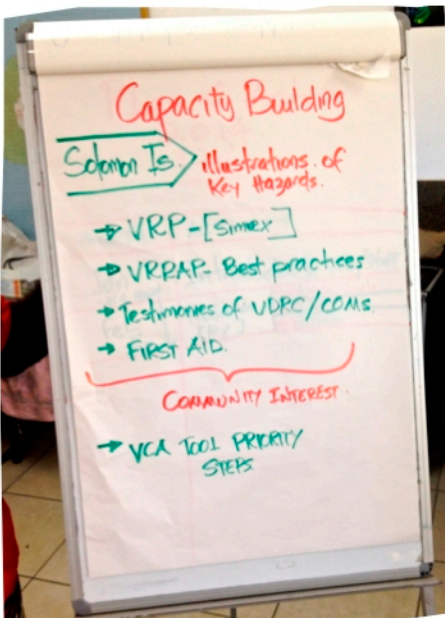
// Reflect on the process, the stories, the ideas

Ask for consent for distribution (online or otherwise). Do your filmmakers have plans for distribution? Can you help them with some ideas? When is their next production?

// TIPS

- After the screening, what should happen next? What do the participants want to happen?
- Who else should see the film? Who are the key stakeholders?
- Can the community organise distribution? Can you help?

How will you use this process and these films in your project?



10 steps Summary

1. **SIT** in circle – bring the participant together and form a group
2. **CAMERA** basics, handling precautions, on/off – one teaches next
3. **NAME GAME** – Camera basics again but with sound, using the microphone
4. **WATCH** footage, promoting reflection and comments
5. **TECHNIQUE** – Introduce the tripod – Let participant handle the equipment
6. **STORIBOARD** – Facilitate deciding what story participants want to tell
7. **FILM!** Go, make it! – let the participant experiment
8. **EDIT** – Refine your story – Participatory paper edit (EDL) or NLE editing
9. **SCREEN** – help organise a community screening
10. **REFLECT** on the process and ask for consent for dissemination