Video Stories - digital opportunities for communication in research for development

Time: December 11-12, 2008 (1½day)

Venue: University of Copenhagen, Department of Geography and Geology, Øster Voldgade 10, 1350 Copenhagen K. Meeting Room 06.0.613.

In May 2008 a new series of workshops and seminars on research communciation was launched by the Danish Development Research Network, jointly with Danish Water Forum and Danish Research Netowrk for International Health. The second workshop of the series aimed to introduce participants to digital video primarily as a tool that can be used to strengthen dialogue, information sharing, participation and learning in research and development projects, and between projects and wider society. A successful workshop was held in Copenhagen on May 19, 2008, and now a second and improved version of the same workshop will be held on December 11-12, 2008.

1. Objectives

The workshop is designed as a practical exercise in facilitation of story making. The overall purpose of the workshop is to provide participants with an introduction and basic skills for facilitating digital video, and constructing a video story. There will be special focus on challenges and opportunities for video as a tool for analysing issues and for self expression in situations where use of video cameras may be new. At the close of the workshop participants will:

• Have been introduced to or revisited the basics of digital camera use;

• Have facilitated others in developing and filming a story in a practical video story making session;

• Have participated in peer review of their video stories and their role as a video facilitator;

• Be aware of some major uses, advantages and limitations of digital video in development;

• Be better equipped to use digital video in a participatory way in their work.

2. Background

Over the last decade, the costs of acquiring and using digital video have dropped markedly. It is now easier than ever before for ordinary people to create their own video stories. In spite of decreasing costs and difficulty, digital video is still not used as often as it could be in many promising projects on research for development. Nor are community groups, trade organisations and NGOs necessarily accustomed to using video as an empowering tool for their members. Whilst access to visual media is fast increasing in developing countries, there is still limited availability of relevant local information to inspire and motivate people to acquire new skills, make new decisions and re-organise to benefit from markets, new technology and social

opportunities. When people do take or are offered the opportunity to make their own videos (see examples in section 5 below), the video products can be an inspiration to the communities who make them, and can significantly improve ordinary citizens' access to information and ability to influence other stakeholders. These video stories, or participatory videos, can be a source of important new ideas in rural/community social networks and can be

used as innovative tools in participatory research and development projects. The process of making the videos through dialogue and debate can act as a catalyst to shift relations between

professional service providers and rural learners towards more learner-centred approaches. Video stories can also be used in support of advocacy, assisting communities to effectively present their own circumstances, views, and demands at appropriate decision making fora at policy making level. Video, particularly in the form of various kinds of video diaries, can be a valuable input in participatory monitoring and evaluation (M&E).

3. Target group

This workshop is primarily aimed at young researchers who are about to carry out an internship or field study in the South in relation to their Master or PhD theses and who wish to use digital video as a participatory tool. However, other interested stakeholders are encouraged to participate.

4. Content of seminar/workshop

The workshop is designed to achieve high levels of participation. After introductions and a short illustrated presentation of digital video in development, the participants will work in small groups. During the first day, they will try different roles/functions in a hands-on video story production process. During the second day, they will review and discuss their results in relation to different communication needs and facilitation requirements.

Finally, participants will be encouraged to sketch out Take Home plans on what concrete steps they can take to make more use of video storytelling/participatory video in their own work. Information will also be available on useful cameras and accessories, video editing programmes, and web-based guides to video editing.

5. Examples of video stories in a variety of development contexts

The examples range from basic videos designed and filmed by ordinary people and used to good effect (Video Letters Project, Video Viewing Clubs Ghana, Everyone's a teacher Malawi) to more 'finished' educational videos (Well Dried Seed is Good Seed, Bangladesh) made in partnership between local people and outside specialists.

Video Letters Project, Scotland (UK) and Brasil (pdf) A collection of short films created by local residents living close to the oil industry in Grangemouth (UK). Each film describes different aspects of the impact the industry has on individual lives within the community. See in particular section on Participatory Video p 8 in pdf document. Everyone's a Teacher, Everyone's a Student (link) HIV/AIDS affected people in Malawi are using participatory video to boost their own self-esteem and to encourage others to get tested.

Video Viewing Clubs Ghana (link) Sharing cocoa research results in Ghana. Women farmers benefit from video stories made by other farmers to share information on improved cocoa management.

Well Dried Seed is Good Seed (link) Bangladesh – VIDEO English version. Farmer educational video produced in collaboration by ordinary farmers and researchers in a process where each learned from the other to create a credible educational video.

6. Practical details

In order to make sure that everyone is able to play a full role, workshop participation will be limited to 12 persons. Furthermore, in order to devote maximum workshop time to an active and interactive process, all those interested are encouraged to look at the background information above (5).

Interested individuals are requested to fill in **the registration form** available at

http://www.ddrn.dk/filer/forum/File/Comm_seminar_2_Cph_registration_form.doc indicating their current experience with digital video and their interests in using video in communication in research for development.

This will help us in fine tuning the workshop contents. Registration forms must be sent by email to Lone Frederiksen lf@ddrn.dk **no later than December 1, 2008**. Please await confirmation of your registration.

7. Facilitators

Nick Quist Nathaniels is a freelance development consultant with a background in natural science. He has worked in East and West Africa as a full time project worker, short term consultant, and agricultural researcher. He has a professional interest in communication techniques and learner-centred processes.

Maria Roslev has an MA in Danish and Film Studies. She works as a freelance language teacher, and with projects in the field of communication, writing and documentary film. She

has produced and directed two short films for the Danish NGO MS in Tanzania, and directed her own documentary film "En rigtig neger", which was shot in Malawi.

Programme Day 1

10:00-10:15 Registration and coffee

10:15-10:30 Introduction of participants and facilitators

10:30-10:40 The workshop agenda

10:40-11:15 Introduction to video stories with examples from actual cases

11:15-11:30 Choosing groups and roles for the day

11:30-12:30 Preparing for the roles (including camera and facilitation tips)

12:30-13:00 Lunch

13:00-15:30 Developing the story/ making videos

15:30-16:00 Viewing the videos

       (includes afternoon refreshments)

16:00   Close for the day

Programme Day 2

9:00-9:10   Agenda for the day

9:10-9:30   Second screening, videos from Day 1 (plenary)

9:30-10:15 Discussions on the process of making a video, and on facilitating others to make a video

       (group work)

10:15-10:30 Coffee/tea – refreshments

10:30-11:15 Sharing lessons from the group discussions (plenary)

11:15-12:00 Back home plans – take home plans - concrete ideas on what to do next – including tips on editing programmes, cameras etc.

12:00   close