



DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH CENTRE
Citizenship, Participation
and Accountability

Reflections on Participatory Video as a Research Method

With Steve Abah - Theatre for Development Centre, Nigeria and Idaci Ferreira - Action for Rural Development and Environment (ADRA), Angola

Transcript of YouTube film

Steve: I don't speak Portuguese but I heard you talk about *Populacion* and other groups that are popular. Is Participatory Video (PV) far more popular in Angola now than when you started? Or what is the reaction of other groups to it?

Idaci: It is more popular now. I am very happy because I think we introduced PV to Angola context. Before, we saw some experiences but not PV, not involving people in the process at all. But now we bring the perspective of PV where people take the camera and capture the stories by themselves so it is a completely different perspective.

And we have a lot of interest by other groups that work in development asking us to help them to train the communities, to train leaders in this experience of PV. Even in ADRA's context, because we started to use PV in Citizenship DRC research, the experience has been simulated for the work in general of ADRA, not only in the context of research but in the context of people working within the community.

The other people of ADRA captured the relevance of using of PV to disseminate messages to policy and decision-makers, to disseminate the experience to others. I've heard from people in ADRA about this, people who work in the community. The report has been done by us but and we send our report to the donors, to the government, but now we have a real opportunity for the people to say the messages by themselves. What is the significant change of this action in their lives?

Steve: They are hearing their own voices directly.

Idaci: Exactly it is a totally different perspective so we think this is very, very interesting and we started to make other links with other groups that has interest to use PV in the context of Angola in different situations, not only in research.

Steve: When you talk about this kind of popularity, part of the challenge for us, because it does have challenges, the challenge for us in Nigeria is, what to do with the results in terms of how much have you spread the training? And also the time that you have to work with other groups, because increasingly other groups want to learn about it. If they want to know how to use it, and even within the different community based organisations where we work, the community groups are saying 'we want to know how to use this'. In Nigeria for example we work in 3 big states, Kaduna, Kano and Plateau and it is quite diverse and so one of the big challenges is how do you scale this new interest up? I'm not quite sure I know the answer yet I don't know what your experience is?

Idaci: I think the first thing for me is that I don't have a simplistic view about the use of PV, so spread out, used by the community in general. I think it is not too easy. Because we have seen in the Dombe Grande situation that it is not easy to train all the people, the whole community. But what we do in Dombe Grande is to train some leaders of different groups - some people who have more [education], some people who can read the paper. These people of the community are able to work with the whole of the community.

It is a different job than you think. It is not that you work with the whole of the community and you leave the camera. It is not too easy but the people need some kind of engagement with this kind of thing. Of course if we can train a lot of people then good. But I think it is not necessary as well. I think one CBO or one network of CBOs is our experience. We have a network of CBOs in Dombe Grande and this group has been trained. And they start to do the shots by themselves and now they are learning how to use PV in other contexts of their work, not only in the work of the DRC but by themselves doing other things. But of course I am also conscious that the part of editing is a big challenge.

Steve: The editing is definitely a big challenge.

Idaci: But I think we can work in partnership between the organisation that has more technical capacity and the groups of the community, the Community Based Organisations, they can make a very good partnership. And be supported in the part of editing and training by other others

Steve: You were talking about doing some kind of collective editing in which the community members whom you were recording were making the decision this is the picture we want to be in the final version and so on. This is one level of editing and a collective one which is a very wonderful one. But in terms of the technical aspect it is very challenging. It needs as you say one technical group to give support to the others.

In our own case we have the technical resource within the Theatre for Development Centre, Jenks is very interested in editing. He does a lot of that. That makes it a lot easier for us. But of course some of the equipment we don't have so we have to work in studios outside our own office to be able to do a good job of it but having a knowledge of what editing is helps a lot.

Idaci: For me it was an amazing experience in terms of how to edit the process. We had four hours of recording. How now to choose what to put in the film? It was amazing that people spent a lot of time choosing what they wanted to put in the film. They spent a whole day, but everyone was there. Sitting in front of the television looking...

Steve: “I want this, I want that.”

Idaci: If I say, “This shot could be good?” they say “No Idaci!”

Steve: There is a lot of debate!

Idaci: A lot of debate. It was an amazing moment in the process. I can see and I realised that, ok, people don’t need to be in front of the computers to do the editing they can do other things. But they can decide for themselves what they want to put in the film. It is possible. And someone who has ability, technical capacity with the computer can put these things in order they should be in. For me it is clearer now how to work to see where the community will use specifically this part of the editing, even when people don’t have the computer to do these kinds of things.

Steve: I think the whole process of using PV in the field is also a learning experience for those of us who are researchers. Because on the one hand it’s easy for us to say this is very modern equipment, therefore we have control over it. But the decisions that the people in the communities are making also tells you that the technical equipment is one thing, the ownership of the stories is a different matter.

I think the balance of what there should the camera see and who should the camera be picking and what are the stories and this is where the community members and the organisations you are working with are useful as they decide what the story is and who should be recording the stories. I think we learnt a lot. If anything, it is not us going there and saying this is a new tool and this is how you use it. I think that for me is exciting about the camera and the whole practice that surrounds it.

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