PARTICIPATORY VIDEO METHOD NOTES

July 28, 2022

Tell me and I will forget

Show me and I may remember

Involve me and I will understand

CONTENT

INTRODUCTION PV METHOD NOTES

Over the past years, War Child Canada (WCC) has been testing the Participatory Video Evaluation (PVE) methodology to engage project participants in data collection and evaluation of programming focused on their rights related to education, peacebuilding and livelihoods in Uganda, DRC, and South Sudan.

Reflecting on the three PVE pilots and making use of PV experiences of War Child Canada and EyeOpenerWorks in other countries and contexts, these 'method notes' harness the learnings from the three pilot countries and aim to share the PVE experiences with other organizations who are interested in integrating PV in their M&E practice.

The Method Notes contain an introduction to the used methodology, outline the key phases and steps to take when setting up a PV process, present an overview of best practices and lessons learned, and provide an overview of the PV processes that were conducted in the three pilot countries.

Further information on the PV evaluation pilots by War Child Canada can be found in the following documents:

1. **Framing impact with participatory video** – Evaluation by Diana Harper of the PV methodology in Uganda, DRC and South Sudan focusing on the experiences of PV reporters, community members, respondents, and key stakeholders.

2. **PV Guidance Package** – Practical, step - by - step guidance package developed by EyeOpenerWorks on how to set - up and implement a PV process, including reference training materials for PV facilitators.

INTRODUCTION TO PV

The PV method

Participatory Video is a research and story building tool that supports (groups of) people to harvest their own thoughts, ideas, experiences, suggestions, and perspectives with the aim to create their own video stories. Instead of speaking 'about' people, the methodology allows people to choose and shape how they are represented, without interpretation of their narratives by external researchers.

The defining element of the methodology is the participatory nature. Community members and stakeholders are involved in all stages of a PV process, from research design, story collection, data analysis to video editing, story building, and screening of the video stories. The PV approach thereby supports agency, empowerment, and skills development of the involved people to address and table social issues and innovative ideas. It also contributes to transparency and accountability of implementors and/or decision makers.

Participatory Video processes support both horizontal (between community members/ participants themselves) and vertical dialogues (between communities and NGOs/ government bodies/policy and decision - makers) about social issues and social change. Video stories that are produced during a Participatory Video process can, for example, be used to voice (marginalized) community needs, address community issues, advocate for policy change and/or social action, communicate ideas to decision - makers and improve the design and implementation of development interventions.

Participatory Video can be used as a qualitative Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning tool that puts the target group, project implementors and stakeholders at its center. PV can be applied throughout the implementation of a development intervention. As a monitoring instrument to assess implementation progress and map community needs and experiences, as an evaluation approach to determine project outcomes and impact, and as a learning tool to identify ideas, improvements, and suggestions for project implementation and/or future project design.

PV skills development

During a PV process, community members, stakeholders, and/or project staff members act as PV reporters. Often, they have (very) limited prior experience with the methodology and its core component. Therefore, PV is not only a research process, but also a skills development process. The following skills are central to the methodology:

Interviewing skills

During the introduction training of a PV process great emphasis is placed on the interviewing skills of the PV reporters as the quality of the video interviews will largely determine the quality of the whole process. During the introduction training significant time is therefore spent on practicing this skill. This starts with understanding the different elements of an interview such as introductions, consent, building rapport, questions, and closure. In that way, the reporters learn to structure their interviews. Moreover, the reporters learn about the required attitude and (non) verbal elements that are of importance: think of body language, eye contact, objectiveness, and respondent encouragement. Lastly, attention is paid to creating a comfortable interview setting that is conducive to both the interviewer and the respondent and supports quality video recording (light and audio management).

Next to the above, the most crucial aspect of interviewing skills is the capacity to formulate and ask relevant questions. Reporters learn the difference between closed - ended and open - ended questions, and how to integrate mostly open - ended questions in their interviews. In addition, they are taught to encourage respondents to elaborate and deepen their answers, by applying the LSE technique (Listening, Summarizing, Expounding) and asking follow - up questions. In terms of the scope of their questions, the reporters are challenged to produce questions that motivate respondents to share information about the change, results, lessons, challenges, recommendations, and experiences that they can bring forward when reflecting on the interventions that are under review.

Basic video production skills

The PV reporters learn technical skills that enable them to produce short, basic videos. The training process focuses on skills like: framing; audio, light, and location management; filming of interviews; filming of contextual (background) images featuring locations and activities; data storage. In addition, the reporters gain basic editing skills that enable them to cut video clips, and add background images, subtitles, and name titles to their movies.

Research design and planning skills

As the PV reporters participate in the PV process, they learn how PV can contribute to the monitoring or evaluation of development interventions. They gain basic research design skills as they define the scope of the PV process, determine respondent categories, formulate research questions, and plan their story collection.

Basic qualitative data analysis skills

Following the data collection, the PV reporters are supported to analyze the qualitative data that they have harvested in a systematic way. By reviewing their data, the reporters validate and evaluate the harvested data and produce a selection of the most significant data that will be used to present the outcomes of the PV process.

Reflecting and advising skill

A PV process results in the production of one or more final videos that feature the most significant answers from respondents. The reporters learn how to use these videos to reflect on the interventions that they are monitoring/evaluating and are challenged to formulate recommendations based on their findings.

Interpersonal and communication skills

Throughout the entire PV process, the PV reporters are encouraged to interact with their peers, respondents, and stakeholders. By doing this, they gain leadership skills, grow self-confidence and self-esteem, improve their relationships with their peers and communities, and expand their communication skills.
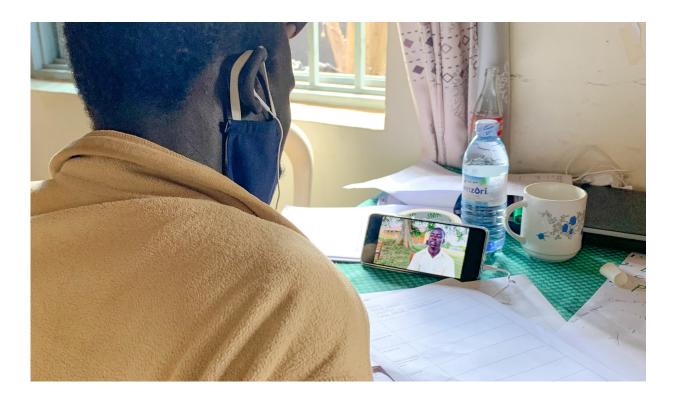
How and when to use PV

Because its participatory, skills based and visual nature, PV is an attractive tool to add to the M&E instruments of development organizations. However, it's important to consider what PV can and cannot deliver. The following overview shows the considerations before choosing PV.

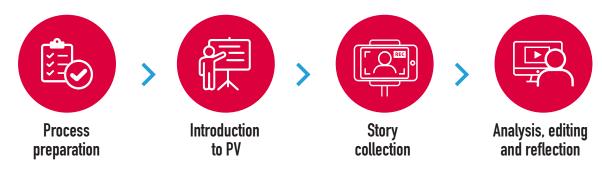| PV characteristic	Advantages	Disadvantages	Implications
Qualitative	Data is rich, human, and contains information on experiences, attitudes, needs etc. that can't be discovered through quantitative data collection.	The outcomes are not statistically representative, difficult to replicate and depend on the skills of amateur researchers and their facilitators. Usually, smaller sample size than quantitative research.	Use PV to illustrate the outcomes and impact of interventions. Supplement PV with quantitative tools to present quantitative facts and figures. Build capacity of the researchers before data collection starts.
Participatory	PV gives voice and ownership to the participants as it allows people to speak in their own words, shape the presented stories and suggest ideas and solutions that matter to them. Empowering people to become agents of their own development. Method supports self - confidence, skill - building. PV processes can support conversations between different actors, there function as a tool to bridge hierarchies/language/locations.	PV process involves the participation of non/amateur researchers in a researcher role, and non/amateur filmmakers in a filmmaker role. This can affect the quality of the data, both in terms of the harvested content and the image quality. Voluntary nature can limit time and commitment. Data can be biased both during the data collection phase and analysis and editing phase as participants are heavily involved and review their own context. If not addressed, existing power balances can be replicated in the PV process.	Take time to select the voices that need to be heard, review and safeguard inclusiveness throughout the process from scoping, until reflection and follow up. Communicate required commitment and time - investment to participants. Validate presented data during screening sessions, ask respondents, other community members/stakeholders if presented stories represent a wider perspective.

Skills development	During a PV process, community/organizational reporters are trained to collect stories and bring their suggestions about a topic, interventions, or services forward. The reporters learn skills like interviewing, video production, research design and planning etc. and improve their communication and interpersonal skills. Participants can use their acquired skills in other settings.	A PV process can be time - consuming, as it requires participant selection and participant training, as well as continuous guidance of participants throughout the PV process.	Investing in capacity building and guidance throughout the process is key and facilitators of the process need to understand the concept of skills - based learning/ capacity building next to their knowledge of M&E.
Process	Communities, project officers, stakeholders are involved throughout all stages of PV. Adaptations are made based on the needs and skill level of the different participants, acknowledging their backgrounds. Learning takes place through the entire process.	The video product (s) is/are secondary to the process. Learning and reflection have more emphasis than communication. High level of flexibility and significant time needed to engage all participants throughout the process.	Involve a professional film production company if communication value of the videos is of key importance. Allocate sufficient time to adapt the process and continuously engage all participants.
Videography	Harvested data directly finds its way into videos, without interpretation of quotes by respondents. Images show information about living/working context and conditions of respondents. Videos are a more accessible and attractive way to digest information than written reports. Participants enjoy working with video equipment and gaining (basic) video production skills.	It is hard to include respondents anonymously. Video production requires investment in video production equipment and if equipment is taken away after data collection participants can't continue.	Analyze if respondents are at risk by sharing their story publicly. Set up thorough and informed consent procedures. Allocate sufficient budget to procure (or rent) video and editing equipment. Inform participants about what happens to equipment after data collection.

Monitoring	PV can detect implementation progress and map community needs and experiences, supporting project implementation and management as well as signaling necessary adjustments in the project approach.	PV is less relevant if (emerging) outcomes have not yet been achieved. PV is rather time - consuming if the main objective is to monitor project outputs.	Plan PV for monitoring at a moment in time when the implementation has surpassed the inception phase and (emerging) outcomes can be expected.
Evaluation	PV usually brings about rich information on the achievements of a project at the outcome and impact levels and can inform future programming. The open approach allows for unexpected outcomes to emerge in the evaluation.	When asked about experiences and recommendations, participants quickly have expectations about follow - up of their suggestions, whereas this is not always feasible at the evaluation stage of a project.	Consider what can be done with suggestions and recommendations that emerge from the PV process and communicate clearly to all participants and stakeholders if and how follow up can take place, prior to engaging them in the process.

SETTING UP A PARTICIPATORY VIDEO EVALUATION PROCESS

A typical PV process consists of four phases

Process preparation > **Introduction to PV** > **Story collection** > **Analysis, editing and reflection**

This chapter describes the different phases, and the key activities per phase.

1. Process preparation

The preparatory phase of a PV process is used to define the scope, planning and activities of the PV process. It is also the moment to select coordinators/facilitators and PV reporters. In addition, this phase is used to organize practicalities like video equipment, training venues, logistics, supportive materials, data collection permission. Consider the following activities:

- Define the scope of the PV process – Which interventions or project(s) are we monitoring/evaluating?

- Select PV coordination team – Who coordinates the process on behalf of our organization? Do we need internal or external capacity to facilitate the PV trainings and reflection sessions? Who provides in-field support for the PV reporters?

- Select PV reporters – Who will execute the data collection? How do we include relevant and inclusive voices?

- Procure equipment and data storage – What equipment do we need to execute the PV process?

- Selection of training venues – What are conducive locations to host the training sessions with PV reporters and reflection sessions with stakeholders?

- Preparation of logistics and supportive materials – What is needed to ensure the PV reporters can perform their task in the designated locations?

- Securing permission of relevant authorities – Who needs to be informed and committed? Do we need authorization to film in the target communities?

- Define planning and duration – When are we going to implement the PV process?

PV ACTORS

The following actors play a role in the PV process:

PV coordinator(s) * : one or more organizational representatives who coordinate the entire PV process on behalf of the implementing organization. Responsible for planning, procurement, stakeholder management, scoping, overall guidance, and selection of all actors.

PV facilitator(s) * : one or more people who manage and facilitate the PV process for the PV reporters, as well as the reflection sessions with stakeholders. Quality checks, technical advice during data collection, and editing and polishing of final videos. Can be internal or external. Can provide input on scope, reporter, and respondent selection.

PV focal point(s) * : linking pins between PV reporters and organization. Practical guidance, quality checks, and support of data collection on location.

PV reporters : project staff and/or community members/stakeholders who perform the story collection and play a role in the entire PV process to ensure the voice of the target group(s) is documented and communicated. Consider inclusiveness in terms of background, gender, location, position, culture etc. and note that selected people need to level with the targeted respondent categories. Can provide input on scope of process and respondent selection.

PV respondents : selected number of people representing the target group(s) and willing to share their stories on camera. Consider inclusiveness in terms of background, gender, location, position, culture etc. and select between 20 - 30 respondents per respondent category. Respondents can optionally provide input on scope of process and participate in reflection sessions.

PV stakeholders : representatives of relevant organizations, government agencies, community structures etc. Participate in reflection sessions and follow - up recommendations linked to their mandate. Can optionally provide input on scope of process and reporter and respondent selection.

Roles can be combined in case PV facilitation skills are available at organizational level. If facilitators lack technical video production skills, this support can be given by an external videography consultant.

2. Introduction to PV

During the introduction phase of a PV process the selected/nominated PV reporters are introduced to the PV methodology and gain the required skills to participate in the story collection phase of the PV process. They refine the scope of their PV process, design research questions, learn how to operate a camera, how to shoot quality images, save their footage and will be introduced to basic video editing skills. Moreover, they practice their interviewing skills, learn how to ask deeper investigative questions, and how to focus on harvesting honest and relevant responses from their respondents. Lastly, the reporters prepare the story collection phase, by defining their intended respondent categories, creating a plan for their story collection, and defining roles and responsibilities for this second phase. Consider the following activities:

- Conduct the PV introduction training for PV reporters – this is a 5 - day training session to get started with the PV process.

- Finalize the planning of the story collection – Who will be our final respondents? When are we conducting the filming? Where will the filming take place?

MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGE

The research and question design can be strengthened by using Most Significant Change (MSC). MSC is a qualitative, participatory, monitoring and evaluation technique whereby respondents are invited to share stories and communicate their perspectives. Central to an MSC research is the "Most Significant Change question", a key question that focuses on harvesting answers from respondents that relate to the change they have experienced in a certain area of their lives, looking back over the period of time that the intervention(s) have been implemented. Because studying 'change' is at the core of MSC, the approach allows researchers to harvest data on an outcome and impact level first, and to then follow up with questions that explore what caused the change and what or who contributed to the change. Consequently, MSC puts the experiences of the respondents first, and also opens up the opportunity to harvest unexpected outcomes.

3. Story collection

During the third phase of a PV process, PV reporters interview their respondents (community members and/or stakeholders) using video recording . Where possible they record additional video footage that highlights the living context and relevant activities of the respondents. During this phase, the reporters are asked to collect informed consent of their respondents, meet the intended number and categories of interviewees, and safeguard proper data storage. In addition, the reporters perform a pre-analysis of the harvested data. Consider the following activities:

- Execute the story collection – Systematic recording of interviews and contextual footage for all respondents in the given timeframe. Facilitators/coordinators perform frequent quality checks (imagery, audio, content).

- Back-up and store data – Systematic duplicate back-up of all collected data by coordinating organization, ensuring safe data storage.

- Pre-analysis of data – First review of collected interviews by PV reporters to review quality and content and prepare first selection of most relevant information.

DATA STORAGE

A PV process results in a significant amount of video clips (interviews and imagery). Safe data storage is crucial for quality outcomes of the process, and to safeguard the privacy of participants and respondents. A few pointers:

- During story collection, regularly (after every data collection day or every week) back-up all collected data by PV reporters on at least two mirrored hard drives and/or in the cloud.

- Store hard drives in a safe and secure place in the organization, for example in a safe or lockable file cabinet.

- For cloud back-up: note that all collected video material will likely add up to (a multiple of) 100+ gigabytes. Consider internet speeds of the PV location to determine if a cloud-based back-up is feasible.

- Follow local privacy and data storage laws and/or organizational data protection policies.

- Delete data from the recording devices after completion of the PV process, and only keep the back-up of the data as long as the law and/or organizational regulations demand.

4. Analysis and editing and reflection

The fourth phase of a PV process starts with an analysis of the harvested stories by the PV reporters. The video interviews are reviewed by the PV reporters, and the most relevant answers are selected. Through a process of story building and editing, the final PV videos are developed – either by PV reporters or an external editor who uses the selection of the PV reporters. These videos are then screened during one or more reflection sessions with PV reporters, community members and/or other relevant stakeholders. The reflection sessions focus on 1) verification of presented outcomes, 2) identification of key needs and ideas of the represented community, and 3) definition of follow-ups by community representatives, implementing partners, government agencies and/or other stakeholders. To close the feedback loop, PV reporters and community members are updated about the implementation of the identified follow ups of the organization and/or stakeholders. Consider the following activities:

- Analysis of data and story building – Systematic review of all data, selection of most significant data, and ordering data for final videos.

- Pre-analysis of data – First review of collected interviews by PV reporters to review quality and content and prepare first selection of most relevant information.

- Production of final videos – editing of selected interview and contextual footage into videos that can be screened during the reflection sessions and shared with a wider audience.

- Process reflection and evaluation with PV reporters – screening session with PV reporters to reflect on PV outcomes and PV process.

- Preparation and execution reflection workshops – engagement of stakeholders for screening, validation, reflection, learning and recommendations. These sessions can also act as a moment for a second analysis of the PV outcomes.

- Safeguarding and execution of follow-ups – defining responsibilities of the coordinating organization and stakeholders for the follow-up of the identified

recommendations, follow-up actions and/or implementation of necessary project adjustments.

STORY ANALYSIS

Next to the data collection, the analysis of the collected video interviews forms a crucial step in the entire PV process. A systematic approach to the data analysis is required in order for the final videos to represent the respondent population. Consider using a pre-designed analysis - format that reflects the key focus areas of the semi-structured interviews. Think of reviewing the interviews using thematic areas, (unexpected) project outcome areas, aspects of change (what, how, who, when, where, before/after), suggestions/ recommendations, etc. Furthermore, to honor the participatory nature of the methodology, ensure that the PV reporters actively participate in the data analysis, so they can indicate what is most relevant, representative, and significant for the community they are representing.

BEST PRACTICES, KEY SUCCESS FACTORS, LESSONS LEARNED

Based on the experiences with the PV methodology in Uganda, DRC, and South Sudan the following best practices, key success factors and lessons learned emerge.

Best practices & key success factors

Experienced and prepared facilitator team

The PV method combines active learning, monitoring and evaluation, visual storytelling, and video production. This asks for a facilitator team with knowledge and skills to:

1. Facilitate trainings/workshops using an experiential/active learning approach

2. Apply monitoring, evaluation and learning practices and tools

3. Tell visual stories, including the use of video recording equipment and editing software.

Often, this means that a PV process is facilitated by multiple facilitators, and that capacity building of prospective facilitators and/or external support is required to implement a quality PV process.

Availability of equipment in quantity and quality

PV processes rely on the quantity and quality of video recording and editing equipment. In terms of the quantity of the equipment, plan for having one equipment set available for each 2-3 PV reporters throughout the entire PV process. This allows all participants to familiarize themselves with the equipment and gain practical skills during the introduction training. Having enough equipment also supports the story collection, analyzing and editing as small groups can work simultaneously and independently.

PV EQUIPMENT LIST

HD camcorder or smartphone with video camera.

Additional battery or power bank.

Tripod stand.

External microphone.

Headphones

Laptop suitable to run editing software and external mouse.

Extra microSD card for smartphone or external hard drive when working with an HD camcorder.

Bag to transport equipment safely and comfortably.

In terms of the quality of the equipment, first consider the quality of the imagery. Choose equipment that can record on HD (720p) or full HD (1080p) in order to comfortably screen the final videos on various platforms. Secondly, keep in mind that PV reporters are often 'first-time filmmakers.' Select equipment that is easy to use, for example an HD camcorder or a smartphone and refrain from introducing DSRL cameras if the introduction training is between 3-5 days and the PV reporters have no prior experience. Choose content over gadgets. Thirdly, consider the context of the PV trainings and story collection. Choose equipment that is sturdy enough to perform in remote and outside story collection settings and allow the PV reporters to focus on their task, instead of worrying about their equipment. Lastly, consider what will happen to the equipment after the PV process is concluded. Will the participants have a chance to use the equipment, or will the organization remain with it? Inform the reporters timely about this, to avoid disappointment or dissatisfaction at a later stage.

Skills practice

The PV methodology is built around principles of skills-based learning. And, for a PV process to be truly participatory and get the PV reporters ready for their tasks, it is important to emphasize and encourage skills practice of the PV reporters from start to finish. This asks from the coordinators and facilitators to put the learning process of the PV reporters first, by offering practice time, reflection moments, and experimenting with all key PV skills. Note that a demonstration by a facilitator is not enough to support skills-based learning. PV reporters need to perform every PV practice themselves, so they can take charge of their own learning process and know how to execute the story

collection, analysis, and creation of final videos. This does not mean that facilitators leave everything up to the PV reporters. Active guidance and support by the facilitators are required to create quality outputs. In addition, some parts of the process – for example, the editing of final videos – require more advanced technical skills than the PV reporters have after one or two training sessions. In those cases, involve PV reporters in the decision-making and selection, and use technical support to create their story. Avoid a situation whereby the data is transferred to an external consultant/researcher for analysis, without consultation and participation of the PV reporters in the analysis process.

Story collection support

Most PV reporters will have no (or limited) experience with monitoring and evaluation and/or videography. At the same time, the PV reporters are the driving force of the entire process, and the quality of their data collection determines the quality of the final outputs, and the outcomes of the PV process. To ensure data collection is executed well, story collection support by the facilitators and/or in-field staff is of key importance. Think of:

1. **Quality checks:** reviewing of random video clips (interviews and imagery) and providing guidance and feedback on content, audio - and light management, framing, and length of videos. This can either be done on location, or remote when PV reporters are able to virtually share review clips with facilitators.

2. **On-demand support:** PV reporters know who to contact in case of any questions about their story collection.

3. **Monitoring of implementation of data collection planning:** facilitators/coordinators regularly check in with PV reporters if the intended respondent categories and respondents' numbers are achieved within the set timeframe.

Respondent safety and consent

A PV process invites the participating respondents to share their personal stories, needs, experiences and ideas on camera and this requires creating a safe environment sdfdfor all respondents throughout the entire PV process.

Informing the respondent

Initial contact with the intended respondents can be done in a one-on- one (phone) conversation, or during a community/group meeting. During this first interaction, the PV reporters should inform the intended respondents about the following:

- Purpose of the PV story collection: showcasing (a selection of) respondents in videos for learning and communication in the context of monitoring/evaluation of a development intervention.

- How the data is collected, stored, and processed.

- How much time the video recording lasts, and which type of images will be collected (interview footage + footage of the respondent in his/her context, in action).

- When and where the final videos will be published. Note that the visual nature of PV means that, in principle, respondents will NOT be promised that their contributions will be treated anonymously.

- When and where the respondent can view the video(s) and if/when there are opportunities to provide feedback on the content.

- What the follow - up of insights and recommendations that emerge from the process looks like and who is responsible for follow-up.

- Participation is voluntary, has no financial benefit and data collection only takes place after consent of the respondent. Service delivery and/or project participation of the respondent is not dependent on participation in the PV process.

Informed consent

Participation of any respondent in the PV process can only take place after informed consent is collected. The abovementioned introduction entails the most important aspects of informed consent (purpose, method, publication, time investment and duration, free and voluntary). During a PV process, consent will be recorded on camera, and it is recommended to follow the informed consent procedure the implementing organization has in place. Often, this means respondents will sign a consent form next to the recorded consent.

Underage respondents

Extra awareness is advised when it comes to obtaining informed consent and the guidance of the underage respondents. The coordinators, facilitators and PV reporters need to be informed about any Child Safeguarding Policies of the

implementing organization and how these policies relate to the context of the particular PV process. Guiding principles are:

- Verify if participation in the PV process is in the best interest of the child. Do no harm.

- Involve parents/legal guardians in the informed consent procedure and let them co-sign the consent form.

- Carefully select the interview location: create a comfortable, quiet setting, but avoid being alone with a child in a closed room or fully out of sight of other adults. When possible, involve a trusted adult when filming.

- Encourage children to tell their story in their own words and note there is no 'right' or 'wrong' answer. Share with the respondent that the answers given do not influence the services a child is receiving from the project.

- Emphasize that the participation in the exercise is voluntary, and that the child can stop at any time if he/she doesn't like it. Appoint a contact person whom underage respondents can talk to in case they have concerns and make sure children are aware of this prior to their participation.

- Make sure that all recorded images and the final edit preserve the dignity of the child and are accurate, fair, and balanced. Discuss if names and ages of children will be mentioned in the videos prior to the start of the story collection and discuss this with the child and legal guardian when informed consent is obtained.

Comfort and safety

PV is meant to be personal, but should not result in unsafe situations for the respondent, nor cause harm or discomfort. Next to the emphasis on consent, it is advisable to keep an eye on the experience of the respondent during story collection. This can be done by the PV reporters, but equally by organizational representatives who guide the story collection process. Check frequently with respondents if they feel comfortable participating in the process, and consider power relations, cultural practices, gender, trauma, energy levels and agency of the respondent throughout the process. This goes for the story collection phase, but equally for the screening of videos as viewing stories can trigger trauma experiences or emphasize existing/experienced inequalities. Notify participants to whom they can reach out in case they wish to reflect on their experiences and/or need counsel.

Sufficient time to prepare and complete PV process

The PV methodology is often experienced as more time consuming than other qualitative M&E tools – especially because the process involves a thorough preparation phase, and the data collection, analysis and processing requires recording, reviewing, and editing of video footage. In addition, a PV process requires engagement of different participant groups throughout the process, not just the engagement of an external evaluator who delivers a report. It therefore helps to map out the process well in advance and to maintain a broad planning that both keeps the attention of those involved, but also gives room to perform all activities properly. Count on a minimum lead time for a PV process from start to finish of 4-6 months.

Lessons learned

PV provides visual evidence, gives voice to communities

The people involved in a PV process often appreciate the methodology for its ability to show the reality of the respondents. People speak about their own life and experiences in their own words, and the complementary imagery of activities and locations gives a glimpse into their lives.

In addition, the method provides a platform for the respondents to directly share their thoughts and experiences with a wider audience, while having a say in the way they are portrayed. Also, the method facilitates dialogue between actors, as respondents and PV reporters can start a conversation with decision-makers, donors, government, and other stakeholders during screening and reflection sessions.

Both the participatory process – whereby PV reporters co-design questions – and the reflection sessions – where reporters and respondents bring their stories and

ideas forward – support agency, empowerment and ownership of the process and its outcomes. A PV process thereby differs from research whereby the set-up and data collection are defined by external researchers and merely extracts information from the respondents without giving back or discussing the outcomes in a joint conversation.

Note again that these promises depend on participation of the PV reporters in all stages of the process and requires an inclusive approach when it comes to reporter and respondent selection.

PV supports inclusivity of M&E

Monitoring and evaluation forms a key component of any development project. However, many implementing organizations struggle to design and implement M&E activities that meaningfully include the target groups of their interventions.

Participatory Video puts the target group, project implementors and stakeholders at its center and provides opportunities for the diverse groups to be involved in monitoring and evaluating development interventions. Moreover, a PV process offers a platform to support exchange and dialogue between different people.

Fit between PV reporters and respondent groups

The quality of the data collection benefits from respondents who feel at ease with the PV reporters. During the selection of the PV reporters, it can therefore be worthwhile to mirror the demographics/characteristics of the respondent categories in the PV reporters. Think for example of the following:

- Language

- Age group

- Ethnicity/tribe/community

- Gender
- Educational background/organizational position

Interconnected planning of introduction and story collection

During the introduction phase of a PV process the selected/nominated PV reporters are introduced to the PV methodology and gain the required skills to participate in the story collection phase of the PV process. Increasing the time between the end of the introduction training and the start of the story collection, increases the chance that the PV reporters forget their newly acquired knowledge and skills. This risk can be mitigated by limiting the space between the two phases to maximum two weeks, or by offering a refresher/re-start day when the story collection commences.

Systemized, transparent, data analysis

That the PV process is largely executed by non-professionals, does not absolve the implementing organization from safeguarding a systemized, and transparent data analysis. To honor the participatory nature of the methodology, it is highly recommended that PV reporters are fully involved in the data analysis and selection of answers that will feature in the final videos. In addition, the data analysis benefits from the use of pre-designed review formats that structures the data analysis of every respondent interview based on the same relevant themes, output/outcome/impact areas, locations and/or other pre-defined characteristics.

Feedback loops and follow-up

A PV process is not complete without a screening and reflection moment with the involved participants and stakeholders. For this part of the process to work out, reserve time when planning the entire PV process to set up reflection sessions with

stakeholders and communities (think of: invitations, venue, program development etc.).

Moreover, successful reflection sessions require a clear understanding of responsibilities and accountabilities when it comes to screening of final videos and follow-up of recommendations that arise from these sessions. In other words: what can and cannot be followed-up? Who will take action? And most importantly, how will respondents, communities, and stakeholders be informed about what they can (not) expect? Participants and stakeholders deserve acknowledgement of what they bring forward during the process and need to be informed about any next steps.

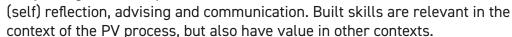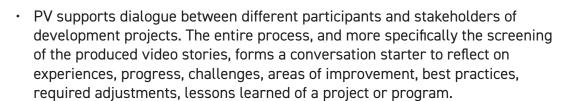## Room for contextualization of approach

Every PV process is executed in a different context and not all aspects of a PV process work in every setting. This requires the implementing organization to adapt the process to the scope and respondent groups of the process every time a new process is initiated. A PV process that monitors or evaluates the interventions of the implementing organization has to be set up differently than a process that encompasses the interventions of other organizations. And, executing a PV process in an urban setting with tech-savvy young professionals looks quite different from a process in a remote area with refugee-youth who missed out on quality education. Specific attention should be given to the onboarding of the PV reporters and the respondents. Additional activities during the introduction training and/or sensitization and activation sessions can support PV reporters and/or respondents to ignite their inquisitiveness, learn to express themselves, share their experiences, build self - confidence, and gain trust in the PV process.
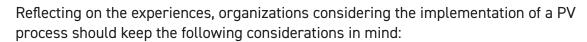
CONCLUSION

Participatory Video has been an addition to the existing M&E tools in the three pilot countries as the methodology adds value in the following ways:

- PV gives voice to communities and supports people to share their own stories, in their own words. As a result, the methodology supports agency, empowerment and ownership of the process and its outcomes.

- PV provides an opportunity for organizations to include their target group in their Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning activities in an active, participatory, and meaningful way.

- PV contributes to skills development of its participants, in particular in areas of research and interviewing, storytelling and video production, (self) reflection, advising and communication. Built skills are relevant in the context of the PV process, but also have value in other contexts.

- PV supports dialogue between different participants and stakeholders of development projects. The entire process, and more specifically the screening of the produced video stories, forms a conversation starter to reflect on experiences, progress, challenges, areas of improvement, best practices, required adjustments, lessons learned of a project or program.

Reflecting on the experiences, organizations considering the implementation of a PV process should keep the following considerations in mind:

- Invest in implementation time and equipment. A typical PV process easily takes between 4-6 months to implement, and implementation is preferably done with a video production kit for every 2-3 participating PV reporters.

- Balance the research ambitions with skills development. This asks for a coordinating and facilitating team that can support the PV reporters and other stakeholders in a process of guided learning and reflection throughout all PV phases.

- Pay constant attention to inclusiveness and meaningful participation of a variety of voices throughout all phases of the PV process. This starts with the scoping of a PV process, and keeps its relevance in each subsequent step, including during the data analysis and reflection.

- Formulate an outlook on the integration and/or possibilities for follow-up of the outcomes of a PV process at an early stage. Communicate this outlook to all involved participants of the process to avoid disappointment or raising false expectations.

- Contextualize the PV process for every specific setting, while upholding the core characteristics of the methodology. Implement all the steps, but build in extra time or activities if these benefit the quality of the process and/or support the participants better.

ANNEX

The next section contains a description of the PVE processes that were conducted by War Child Canada in Uganda, DRC and South Sudan between September 2020 and March 2022.

CASE STUDY – UGANDA

Country
Uganda

Community and locations PVE
8 secondary schools in Adjumani District, North Western Uganda Adjumani SS   Dzaipi SS   Maaji SS   Ofua SS Alere SS   Lewa SS   Mungula SS   Pagirinya SS

Project evaluated
Quality secondary education in emergency program (Q-see). The project provided opportunities for Accelerated Learning of out - of - school refugee and host - community youth at secondary school level.

Facilitators PVE process
EyeOpenerWorks with in field support of War Child Canada field staff for the story collection.

Participants PVE process
A total of 32 people participated in the trainings of the PV process. 30 secondary school students – of which 27 completed the entire process. The students participated in the process as PV reporters. 8 teachers . The teachers participated in the process as PV reporters. 2 War Child Canada staff members from North Western Uganda . These staff members guided the story collection process. 1 War Child Canada staff member, 1 student from Nakivale Refugee Settlement. These participants practiced the methodolog y in their own context, but this was outside of the PV evaluation of the accelerated learning program in Adjumani District.

Respondents PVE process

The PV reporters interviewed a total of 126 respondents:

67 secondary school students	14 Community Education Committee members
16 parents	1 Local Council I
26 teachers	2 War Child Canada staff members

Description of PVE process

The PVE process in Uganda took place between September 2020 and February 2021. In two equal groups, a total of 30 students and 8 teachers were trained for their role as PV reporters. The training focused on building skills and knowledge in the in the area of video recording, interviewing, evaluation, and question design using Most Significant Change, visual storytelling, planning of story collection and child safeguarding.

Guided by field staff of War Child Canada, the PV reporters conducted a total of 126 video interviews and recorded additional imagery to cover the activities and context of the respondents. Respondents were asked to reflect on their experiences with War Child Canada's accelerated education program and to provide suggestions and advice based on their experiences.

During two consecutive weeks in October 2020, the PV reporters reconvened for an analysis, editing and reflection session guided by the facilitator team of EyeOpenerWorks. This second training session focused on sharing the experiences of the story collection, making an inventory of harvested stories, analysis of the video interviews and selection of most significant answers, story building, editing of most significant answers into review videos and the screening review videos to evaluate the program and formulate advice to War Child Canada. The session was concluded by an evaluation of PVE process with all participants and during a small celebration all PVE reporters received a certificate to acknowledge their role and skills.

In February 2021, War Child Canada organized a PVE review workshop in Adjumani whereby various stakeholders and the PV reporters came together to screen the videos, reflect on the outcomes, and evaluate the PVE process.

Key evaluation outputs

The PVE process in Uganda resulted in 10 review videos made by PV reporters, a PVE process video showcasing the experience of participants and a PVE highlights video summarizing the most significant answers given by the respondents of the evaluation of the accelerated education program.

Key evaluation outcomes

The PVE process in Uganda resulted in an overview of good practices, suggestions for improvement and concrete advice for the program stakeholders (students, parents, WCC, government).

Good practices – keep doing this

- Provide scholastic materials e.g., books, pens, sets, calculators etc.
- Engage wel- trained teachers.
- Sponsorship e.g., paying teachers' salaries.
- Keep monitoring/following up to see if students are learning.
- Maintain the child-centered method of teaching e.g., group discussions, dictating of notes, presentation of research, summarizing, etc.
- Involvement of Community Education Committees
- Non-segregated nature of the program (mix of community and refugee youth)

Suggestions for improvement

- Increased support of teachers, in the form of additional trainings, accommodation, salaries, food.
- Attract additional teachers for subjects that are currently lacking a teacher/of which teachers have left (examples: Biology, English, Geography, History)
- Add subjects to the program, especially Agriculture, Entrepreneurship,   and Computer.
- Extend the Q - see program to other areas and to a higher level of education (A level/ University).
- Consider building classrooms and boarding f acilities for students. Learning takes place outside, and students often have to walk long distances, including seasonal river crossings.
- Provide food for students.
- Provision of lab equipment, excursions, textbooks in library.
- Uniform examinations in all Q-See centers, currently every center creates its own examinations.
- More regular supervision and maintaining of learning centers.

Challenges

During the implementation of the PVE process in Uganda the following challenges emerged:

1. Quality and quantity of equipment: procurement of equipment delayed the start of the PV process, there was limited availability of equipment for the number of participants, and the equipment was from basic quality with breakages of the tripods and unpractical autofocus of the smartphones.

2. Story collection logistics : respondents were located in remote places, which challenged the PV reporters and the coordinators from War Child Canada to organize the in-field logistics and resulted in long story collection days.

3. Unclarity about following up PVE recommendations: as the main objective for the PVE project was to pilot the PV methodology, the evaluation of the accelerated education project was subordinate to this goal. Furthermore, the project was ending and at the time of the evaluation and continuation of the interventions was not yet decided on. Because the involved PV reporters and respondents were asked to reflect on the accelerated education program, expectations in terms of feedback and follow up were raised. In addition, it was challenging to find an audience for the recommendations during the screening session, and even during the final review workshop there was some uncertainty among the PV reporters if the objective were to evaluate the PV method, or if they could present their findings to stakeholders who would respond and define follow-ups.

Lessons

Reflecting on the project, the following lessons stand out:

1. Dedicated in-field support when working with young PV reporters: The support field staff of War Child Canada provided during the story collection proved to be essential for the quality outcomes of the PVE project. As the PV reporters were in majority secondary school students in their late teens/early twenties, supervision, encouragement, logistical support, and distribution of equipment were required for the students to perform their story collection task, something that could only be done on ground.

2. PV efforts deserve feedback and follow-up: in line with the challenge described above the lesson that can be drawn is to always inform PV reporters and respondents how their effort and input will be used and who is responsible for follow up, and to communicate what is and is not possible in terms of incorporating the recommendations in project implementation, future programming and/or the interventions of other stakeholders, like government.

3. Inclusivity of respondents, ask for inclusivity on the side of PV reporters: the PVE project in Uganda was not able to include Dinka speaking respondents as there were no Dinka - speaking people among the reporters and supporting staff members. If certain communities need to be included in a PV exercise, it is worthwhile to consider different respondent categories when preparing the PV pr ocess, and to select PV reporters based on the desired respondent groups.

CASE STUDY – DRC KINSHASA

Country
DRC

Community and locations PVE

5 educational centers in Kinshasa, DRC

Centre de Bandal	Centre de Lingawala	Centre de Ndjili
Centre de Selembao	Centre de Kasa Vubu	

In DRC, a second PV process was executed to evaluate the education program in Uvira. The information presented here, reflects the process in Kinshasa only.

Project evaluated

Interactive Radio Instruction program

Interactive radio instruction (IRI) is a distance education system that combines scripted radio broadcasts with active learning to improve educational quality and teaching practices. The radio programs challenge teachers and students to engage with the presented content verbally and physically. Group work, games, experiments, songs, and other active activities are a key part of the learning process

Facilitators PVE process

War Child Canada staff members, trained by EyeOpenerWorks to facilitate the PVE process

Participants of the PV process

A total of 21 people participated in the trainings of PVE process:

12 community assessors (students) including 6 women. The students participated in the process as PV reporters.

5 master trainers (teachers) including 3 women . The teachers participated in the process as supervisors of the story collection executed by the students.

4 members of the ministry. These representatives monitored the entire PV process and participated in the reflection sessions.

Respondents PVE process

The PV reporters interviewed a total of 45 respondents:

13 Assistant Educators (Teachers) including 6 women

28 students including 16 girls

4 parents of students including 2 women

Description of PVE process

The PVE process in DRC Kinshasa took place between October 2020 and June 2021 and aimed to reflect on the outcomes of the Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI) program. During the process, students, and teachers of 5 educational centers were asked to share their experiences, reflections, and recommendations about the program.

The process started with a series of online trainings conducted by EyeOpenerWorks to familiarize core WCC staff members with the PV methodology and prepare them for the execution of the introduction training session with the PV reporters. Throughout the process the facilitators received additional trainings and support from EyeOpenerWorks to execute the different phases of the process.

The introduction training for PV reporters took place in December 8-12, 2020, in Kinshasa with a total of 21 participants. As schools were closed in DRC as a result of a second wave of COVID-19, the story collection for the PVE process in Kinshasa only took place in April and May 2021. At the time, a total of 45 respondents (learners and teachers) were interviewed to reflect on their experiences with the IRI program. All filming took place on the premises of the learning centers, and as a result contextual imagery of the home-setting of the learners was not captured. To select the answers that would feature in the final PV videos, the raw interview material of each center was screened in the presence of learners and teachers and they – with help of the facilitators – decided which answers represented the reality best and would be included in the final videos. This process resulted in a total of 15 videos, 10 featuring teachers and 5 featuring learners. The process was concluded with a 3-day reflection and debrief workshop. These reflection and evaluation sessions were held with teachers (15) and students (5) for the first day, school directors (10) and pedagogy focal points (5) for the second day, and finally 22 members of the dedicated committee on the third day.

Key evaluation outputs

The PVE process resulted in 15 videos (10 featuring teachers and 5 featuring students).

Key evaluation outcomes

The PVE process in DRC resulted in an overview of what learners and teachers appreciate in the IRI program, as well as suggestions for improvement.

Good practices – keep doing this

- IRI methodology with scripted lessons and materials supports teachers to structure and conduct their lessons.

- The pre-programmed lessons make it easier for one teacher to teach all subjects.
- Content is clear, enriching and motivating for learners and teachers.
- Emphasis on reading and writing supports learners to improve in these areas.
- Group work supports learning process and allows learners to be more active.
- Timely payment of teachers working under the program .
- Exercises and games that are part of the practical approach support learning and keep students active.
- The radio broadcasting allowed students to continue their learning from home during school closures as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Suggestions for improvement

- Include more learning levels in the program (other classes and other programs).
- The radio program is sometimes too fast for students to follow, and students express that the lessons can be longer in order for them to digest the presented information better.
- Older students question the physical games that are part of the program, sometimes feeling the games are 'too childish'.
- Ensure steady power supply in learning centers to avoid interruption of broadcasting.

Challenges

During the implementation of the PVE process in DRC the following challenges emerged:

1. Disturbance of process by COVID-19 lockdown school closures: the start of the PVE process was delayed by the outbreak of COVID-19 and right after the introduction training in December 2020 the government instated a lockdown which forced learning centers to close for several months. As a result, it was hard to find a good moment to conduct the story collection as students were already falling behind with their school program. In addition, the students' knowledge and skills were not as fresh as if they had started the story collection right after the training and some already forgot (parts) of the PVE tools they learned.

2. Capacity of students to reflect on PV questions: the students in the participating learning centers in DRC struggled with providing elaborate answers on the reflective, open-ended question that were part of the PV process. Often, only simple 'yes' and 'no' answers were given, and the PV reporters and facilitators needed to encourage the students to provide more reflective answers.

3. Collection of diverse video imagery: the video recording of the DRC process only took place on the premises of the learning centers. This made it difficult to record a variety of images to complement the stories of the students and teachers.

Lessons

Reflecting on the project, the following lessons stand out:

1. Contextualization of PV questions supports quality content: the facilitators of the process in DRC noticed that the standard outline and manual of the PV process formed a good basis for the execution of their PV process but indicated that they could have taken more time to contextualize the materials to their specific context, for example by adapting the questions to the level of the students involved.

2. The entry-level of students might ask for more encouragement to express themselves: in some contexts, young people are not used to being asked questions and to express their thoughts and feelings freely. In these situations, participants need more encouragement to and practice with expressing themselves. Options to do this: organize group conversations before recording answers, let participants make a drawing first and discuss their ideas before recording, ask follow-up questions and repeat questions and answers as many times as needed, or let participants first practice with expressing themselves on a 'very easy' topic.

3. Plan the story collection as soon as possible after the introduction training: by connecting the story collection to the introduction training (leave maximum 2 weeks between introduction training and start of the story collection), the PV reporters can put their newly acquired skills and knowledge immediately to practice, when everything is still fresh.

Unexpected outcomes

In the DRC, some of the students took the initiative on their own after the project had ended to interview other community members on topics of interest.

CASE STUDY – SOUTH SUDAN

Country
South Sudan

Community and locations PVE
Malakal Protection of Civilians (PoC) site & Township, South Sudan

Project evaluated
Bridge Builders peacebuilding and livelihoods project The project focused on combining peacebuilding and entrepreneurship training as an approach to rebuild trust between groups of conflict-affected youth in South Sudan to work together to start small businesses, empowering youth as bridge builders for peace and prosperity

Facilitators PVE process
War Child Canada staff members, with support of external consultant Andy Charles Milton Mamara.

Participants of the PV process
A total of 48 people participated in the trainings of PVE process: 32 youth from Malakal PoC (13 women, 19 men) 15 youth from Malakal Town (7 women, 8 men) 1 UNYDA staff member A total of 29 of the trained people participated in the data collection as PV reporters.

Respondents PVE process
30 youth respondents from different (occupational) categories: students, trade, shop holders, hairdressers.

Description of PVE process

The PV process took place between October 2021 and March 2022 and started with a PV introduction training of the PV reporters. The groups from Malakal PoC and Malakal Town were trained in different sessions. After the initial trainings they commenced their story collection, interviewing each other about the most significant changes in their lives as a result of the Peacebuilding and livelihoods project. In addition, the reporters focus on how the project contributed to peacebuilding and rebuilding trust between Malakal PoC and Malakal Town.

The story collection resulted in 37 videos that brought insights forward relating to a) Relevance of the Project, b) Impact of the project activities in terms of peaceful coexistence, improved livelihoods, c) Sustainability, d) Challenges of the project, and e) Recommendations to improve the project.

During 7 review and reflection workshops with youth, community members, and stakeholders the videos were screened, and the attendees engaged in a conversation about the best practices, results, improvements, and recommendations.

Key evaluation outputs

37 videos – 30 videos for the respondents of the PV process and an additional 7 videos that reflect on the PV process featuring representatives of government, NGOs and other local partners in youth, education and peacebuilding, and livelihoods sectors who intended to use the results of PVE.

Key evaluation outcomes

The 7 review and reflection workshops conducted in South Sudan resulted in an overview of recommendations for the Peacebuilding and livelihoods program: Project results:

- The project has built trust and confidence among youth in Malakal Town and PoC as a result of the trainings on peace building. Youth gained skills on conflict management and resolution, and this has supported the promotion of unity, trust, and confidence a mong the youth in Malakal. A positive example is that youth have initiated peace dialogues and visits between Malakal PoC and Town.

- The project also supported the youth in gaining business management skills. As a result, the youth were able to engage in business which supported them to spend their time meaningful and be productive. Youth brought forward they were able save money, which allowed them to go back to school. In addition, being engaged in a business gave less opportunity to engage in crime/conflict.

Suggestions for improvement

- Need for livelihood and peacebuilding interventions is high among youth, the project could enroll more people. Mix youth from PoC and Town in trainings and pay attention to equal representation of women and men in terms of the support given. Build capacity on non-discrimination when selecting beneficiaries.

- Youth are the backbone o f the country and can use support in skills development (agriculture, ICT, other vocations) and entrepreneurship to prepare them for (self)employment. If youth are supported by projects like these, they are less likely to engage in conflict and crime.

- Re-open the vocational training centers, so youth have more opportunities to gain skills. An additional Secondary School should be opened in Malakal PoC as there is only one school which is not enough for the youth population.
- Sports and recreational activiti es support youth to interact with other groups (PoC/Town) and change attitudes towards peacebuilding, trust building and confidence.
- Youth clubs can support young people to discuss their challenges. Open Youth Friendly Spaces where youth can convene, interact, and discuss their issues.
- Engage communities in peacebuilding, reconciliation, and healing activities. Involve church and mosque leaders in conversations.
- Government should provide security to safeguard a conducive environment for the people.
- Timely provision of seeds, water pumps, fishing materials, tools.

Challenges

During the implementation of the PVE process in South Sudan the following challenges emerged:

1. Flooding: floods have slowed down the movement of people and continue to present serious health risks to the communities. As a result, communities' priorities shifted towards survival instead of participating in program activities.

2. Emerging inter-communal violence: tensions between the Dinka and Shilluk communities made it difficult to engage members of the different tribes in the PV activities and required that the PV process be carried out separately in Malakal town and POC (without the planned interaction between people from the two communities as part of training, story collection, and review sessions).

Lessons

1. PV processes require adaptability and flexibility: the PV process in South Sudan shows that many external factors (floodings, security issues, COVID-19) can influence the implementation of a PV process. It is worthwhile to consider these risks before planning, think through mitigation strategies, and organize some leeway in the planning.

2. PV provides an opportunity to engage more people in M&E activities: reflecting on the PV process, staff members of WCC in South Sudan mentioned that the methodology provides a chance to engage more and more diverse people in M&E activities of programs. The visual and participatory nature of the process makes monitoring and evaluation activities accessible for staff members throughout the organization, not only the M&E officer, and allows communities and stakeholders to play a direct role.

Unexpected outcomes

In South Sudan, ICT infrastructure is poor and under-invested, with large parts of the population not having access and/or skills to use these means of communication. The use of mobile smart phones is however rapidly increasing across the country, especially amongst the youth. The PV process in South Sudan provided an additional opportunity for youth to expose themselves to smartphone use and videography, which increases their employability and provides employment opportunities in other data collection and/or research projects.

ABOUT EYEOPENERWORKS

EyeOpenerWorks is a creative agency with offices in The Netherlands and Uganda that supports organizations to create social and sustainable impact. EyeOpenerWorks provides services in four domains: 1) Active Learning, 2) Creative Monitoring and Evaluation, 3) Social Business Incubation, and 4) Organizational Development. Over the past years EyeOpenerWorks has supported over 50 clients in more than 15 countries.

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ABOUT WAR CHILD CANADA

War Child Canada is an international NGO with offices in Canada, Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, Sudan, Uganda, Yemen, and Afghanistan.

War Child Canada supports the most vulnerable people living in the most complex humanitarian environments around the world. War Child Canada utilizes a community-driven model of humanitarian action that is rooted in collaboration, local leadership, and a focus on long-term impact. War Child Canada's programs empower children and families to build brighter futures for themselves and their communities through access to high-quality education, legal and protection services, and income opportunities.

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