

Voices of ethnic minority children

Participatory Video on

Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change in Vietnam

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Introduction

Participatory video (PV) is an innovative methodology which amplifies the voices of traditionally excluded groups who are greatly affected by disasters. These marginalised groups are rarely included in decision making processes which determine policies and programmes that directly impact their lives. This is despite the fact that they are at the forefront of adaptation and already deploy a wealth of knowledge, experience and initiative. Participatory video methodology encourages a shift away from research 'about' the impact of disasters on marginalized groups, towards an empowering process that promotes local action and change led by vulnerable community members of all age groups. Conventional

communication and awareness raising approaches are extractive; they do not effectively engage beneficiaries to improve their own lives. Community members, including children, need to be granted the opportunity to speak for themselves and to find solutions that respond to their own needs and living arrangements.

Participatory video is an innovative methodology in DRR because it not only gathers data for a broad understanding of grassroots' concerns and needs, but it also supports beneficiaries' own efforts to address their issues locally. The participatory approach allows the children to develop their own video while media experts provide initial training and on-going support as needed by the children.

The films are available on www.youtube.com with the following links:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5VUyjWe0tXo>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FgkqsUXy2Hk>

Objective of Participatory Video

Broadly, the objectives of the participatory video are:

- To increase reflection and dialogue *between* children and other community members (children, ethnic minorities and the wider community) about how climate change and natural disasters are affecting them and how they might address these issues both internally and with external support.
- To build capacity and empower the children to learn, voice their opinions and effect change.
- To increase dialogue between children, community members and local authorities regarding their role in reducing risks and how to move forwards.
- To provide education on engaging/new forms of documentation of the issues being discussed by the local groups in relation to climate related risks and hazards. This documentation can be used at different levels to stimulate reflection by a number of child rights actors and climate change and disaster risk management actors on the linkages to advocacy and awareness raising.
- To explore forms of communication from the community level upwards on the issue of climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction.
- To document elaboration of the process (beyond the making of the video) and to share with related Governmental and non-Governmental agencies



The goal of the participatory video workshop was for the filmmaking process to be used as a means to empower and strengthen the voice of ethnic minority children in understanding and advocating for climate change and disaster risk reduction strategies within their communities. The anticipated outcome of developing and screening the films is that local populations [children, ethnic minorities and the wider community] living in disaster prone areas will have increased awareness of local disaster risks and coping mechanisms, and that this awareness will lead to action in support of risk-reduction activities.



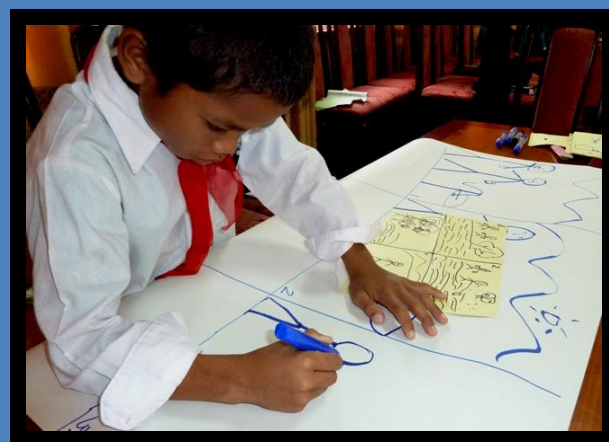
Participatory Video Process in Vietnam

The PV was held in late 2010 with 12 children (6 boys and 6 girls) from two communes – Thuan and A Ngo – participating. The resulting films will be used both in those communes and in 10 additional Quang Tri communes that are part of the DIPECHO-funded project for community and government awareness and advocacy .

Through the process (facilitated by the international PV consultant, two Vietnamese filmmakers, and Plan in Vietnam's DRM Manager and DRM Officer) the children 1) actively engaged in participatory activities to determine the main disaster risk reduction and climate change [DRR/CC] issues they wanted to address ; 2) learned how make a film [i.e. storyboard, script writing, interviewing, working as a film crew and how to operate video equipment]; 3) developed their individual films through scriptwriting and production planning; and 4) recorded the visuals and narration to tell their story. The Vietnamese filmmakers in coordination with a professional editor, technically edited the story the children designed using their video footage and audio recordings to create the final film production. The next step is to screen the films in the children's communities for awareness-raising and advocacy.

The PV process in Vietnam included the following steps:

- 1) **Hire/train local filmmakers:** The filmmakers were hired to engage in four days of pre-production training on the PV methodology and equipment, co-facilitate the 6-day training workshop, oversee the filmmaking process in the community, and manage editing of the final films under the direct supervision of an international expert on participatory video on climate change.
- 2) **Purchase equipment:** Proper equipment that was cost-effective yet met the required quality needs for international use was purchased. The equipment included: a HD video camera (with micro plug-in for recording), a headset, light reflector, a tripod, a micro and an extra battery.
- 3) **Conduct pre-workshop training:** 03 days of training with the children selected for the PV workshop was conducted. This included answering a baseline questionnaire and going through the VCA process – including hazard-mapping using drawings and models. Basic knowledge on climate change and DRR was provided to the children.
- 4) **Require homework with elders:** The children were required to ask their elders a set of weather and disaster-related questions in order to gain an understanding of impacts in their community to bring to the workshop and to ensure adults were engaged in the work being carried out by the children.



5) **Conduct PV Workshop in large group (3 days):**

Worked with 12 children (6 from each village) and 4 peer educators to help them acquire the skills necessary to make a film about DRR/CC specific to the impacts and suggested solutions within their communities.

- **Day 1** – Focused on the children learning about using video to make a film about DRR/CC (discussed light, composition, sound and motion, and the basics of using the equipment). In addition to learning about filmmaking, the children further explored disaster and climate change impacts by presenting their hazard maps in detail to the other group for discussion. During the evening, the girls practiced with one camera kit and the boys with another.
- **Day 2** – Focused on working as a team, increasing interview videotaping skills (2 people on a camera/one person on a camera) and learning different crew roles. To move script development forward, the children separated into their village groups in order to prioritize the disaster impacts they had identified in their PVA/hazard mapping for further group discussion. At the end of the day, the group learned how to storyboard a case study (in this case, a scene where water makes them sick) and they filmed the scene (boys/girls separate).
- **Day 3** – Focused in the morning on technical filmmaking skills (interviewing, crew roles, etc) and watching the films for discussion and learning. The children studied what makes a good story (beginning/middle/end) and answered questions on climate change and natural disasters. At the end of the day, each village group wrote a “visualization” of the story they wanted to tell in preparation for field work. This included what they wanted to tell in the beginning (about their village and themselves), middle (how they were impacted by disaster/CC) and end (providing child solutions). The visualization included discussions with the children on how they would show what they wanted to tell (visuals, interviews with whom, re-enactment, drawing, etc), and ideas about how to tell each part of their story (narration, interview, song, etc). This provided a strong overview of their films which helped them decide how to narrow down to the final script.



- 6) **Conduct PV Workshop in community (2-3 days):** Through very detailed participatory work, the Vietnam PV facilitators worked with the children to finalize their scripts and make a plan for 2-3 days of filming in the future (including who would record narration, who would interview, who would act, who would make needed drawings, etc). During this time, they also filmed in the community. This taught them lessons on detailed planning, how long it takes to gather footage in the community, the importance of light, etc. One local filmmaker worked in each community using 2 different camera kits.
- 7) **Script review:** The Vietnamese filmmakers translated the scripts into English for review by the international consultant and Plan in Vietnam's DRM Manager, especially with regard to DRR/climate change content. In this case, the main suggestions were to change a few lines to ensure technical accuracy and to look for places to make the scripts a bit tighter. Plan Vietnam also reviewed the scripts before filming.
- 8) **Filming with the children:** The Vietnamese filmmakers traveled back to the villages to work with the children in gathering all the elements for their films: final narration, song, and all video (reenactments, interviews, photos of drawings, etc.). The shooting process was conducted solely by the children.
- 9) **Finish editing and film delivery:** The local filmmakers edited the rough cuts of the films. However, they did not have the skills for the final editing. Thus a professional editor was included to put the finishing touches on the films and to create the deliverables for web, computer and DVD delivery.
- 10) **Conduct community screenings:** Showed films within the community for discussion in 82 villages (5 events each) and 23 schools (10 events each) in Quang Tri. The films were also shown at national and provincial workshops and events, such as the National Workshop on Climate Change Education, DRR week in Vietnam May 2011, and at various forums and working group meetings. A partner of Plan – CARE in Vietnam – is also considering broadcasting the videos on local television in Thanh Hoa province. The videos will be aired in Quang Tri province by Plan in Vietnam.







Lesson learnt and recommendations

As shown in the project, the digital nature of video communication makes the concerns of marginalized groups (i.e. ethnic minority children) accessible across distances, increasing their participation, generating awareness, and influencing communities, both at the national and international level.

However, a proven methodology and key elements are needed in order for video to be used as an effective and sustainable development tool. Key elements that proved successful in this project included designing the process so it can be replicated within Plan (including the design of the workshop), involving local filmmakers and Plan staff in the process, including participatory tools for scriptwriting, and being true to the children's story from start to end. Projects also need to include a realistic timeline and budget for the entire process— not only covering the workshop's costs and the video production process but also for follow-up awareness-raising and advocacy activities.

Ongoing monitoring (such as revisiting the baseline questions) can help us understand PV's effectiveness as a learning tool. The videos can also be used for ongoing learning activities and advocacy work for child rights in disasters (at national, regional and global levels). It can provide the the foundation for more-detailed reporting that builds on topics raised during the PV process.

The main recommendations for moving forward on the PV project include:

- Ensuring that screenings and discussions take place in the communities – and in the additional project communes – for effective awareness raising and advocacy.
- Sharing the videos at the national level with DRR/CC partners, decision makers, networks, etc., and at regional and international levels.
- Having the children answer the baseline questions again, after the screening to enable further knowledge sharing at the country, regional and global level (especially for the donor).
- Using video throughout the life of the project as an accountability mechanism for the issues identified both in the film and at the community showings.
- Replicate the participatory video process in other Plan projects/programs (in particular, Plan's child media work) and document the process/results.

As children continue to endure the impacts of a problem they did not create, every effort needs to be made to secure their right to climate change adaptation programmes and funding. If used appropriately and with integrity, this project shows that participatory video can be a powerful tool to support these efforts.



Conclusion

The methodology supports an empowering process whereby community members become **drivers of change** and are empowered to act on local knowledge by creating information videos that can help them prioritize and express their needs. The participatory video methodology involves awareness-raising, capacity building and people-centred decision making processes which can be built from the local level, to district, national and international levels.

Through new, affordable and easy-to-use video tools, community members can learn how to use video-making in rural settings as a powerful way to record their experience and strengthen their own knowledge on disaster risks and climate change, as well as to increase their capacity to act on that knowledge and secure change.

The value added of the video is that it bridges distance and space, which allows the voices of the most vulnerable to become part of the larger discussion where otherwise their views would not have been heard. It allows community members to share their viewpoints in their own voice and language. Through contextual imagery, multiple translations and strategic dissemination, participatory video allows the concerns of rural people to be shared with a wider number of decision-makers, on a national or international platform.

Because video provides an oral and visual medium, it can be especially empowering as illiterate and less literate people can effectively express their concerns, ideas and views to influence decision-makers at several levels, which cannot be achieved through more traditional written means. This ability to communicate with those previously hard to reach will help increase knowledge building. It can also help build people's self-confidence when they see (through the video-making process) that their experiences, concerns and ideas are considered valid, thus strengthening their capacity to act towards local solutions for social change and safer communities. Children have proven to be effective communicators through participatory video making – incorporating their creativity, energy and fresh views to challenge others to bring about positive changes in their communities.

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