USING VIDEO IN COMMUNITY HEALTH ADVOCACY:
Critical review of a participatory workshop with Breastfeeding Patrol, Mandaluyong City, Manila

Megan Lynagh
September 2010

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the MA degree in Development and Emergency Practice
Oxford Brookes University
ABSTRACT

Participatory video (PV) is an established but under-recognised technique in development practice. It offers marginalised, impoverished, and even illiterate people a method of expressing themselves in their own unfiltered voice, and in the process empowers and informs those taking part. This dissertation seeks to illustrate the benefits of PV, by discussing first the historical and theoretical basis for it, and then offering a narrative of a participatory video workshop conducted with members of Breastfeeding Patrol, a community breastfeeding advocacy group in Mandaluyong City, Manila. Participatory video is born from familiar modes of thinking: traditional Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), cinema for social change, communication initiatives, but it is uniquely able to capture participants’ true voices and to bring their ideas to other communities. As technology rapidly develops, video is becoming more accessible to larger groups. Video may emerge as the universal communication mode of the future, and development practitioners should become fluent in this language.

Cover Photo: Maryjane directs Mavel
# ABSTRACT

iii

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

v

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

vi

# FOREWORD

1

# INTRODUCTION

2

- Context: Mandaluyong City and Block 37, Welfareville Compound
  2
- Breastfeeding Patrol
  4
- Video and Breastfeeding Patrol
  5

# WHAT IS PARTICIPATORY VIDEO?

6

- Participation and development
  6
- Communication and development
  10
- History of cinema for social change
  11
- The Fogo Process
  13
- Effects of participatory video
  15
- After Fogo
  17

# THE PARTICIPATORY VIDEO WORKSHOP

20

- Research approach and goals
  20
- Pre-production
  21
- Production
  26
  - Film 1: Technical explanation of cup-feeding
  26
  - Film 2: House visit with new mother
  29
- Post-production
  31
  - Results
  32

# CRITICAL REFLECTION

33

# CONCLUSION

36

# APPENDIX A: Workshop exercises

41

# APPENDIX B: Storyboards

46

# BIBLIOGRAPHY

47
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many thanks to David Sanderson, Dr Shari Sabalvaro, the mother volunteers from Breastfeeding Patrol, Mayu & Abraham Gonzales, Jesse Kiendl, Patrick Bell, Anne Leewis, and especially, my old friend and 'batchmate', Nina Gonzales, for this and many other adventures.
FOREWORD

I started to think about video as a participatory tool after trying Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) in South Africa and India. I really enjoyed these trips, but both experiences made me eager to give something back to the people we had worked with. While everyone I met seemed happy to take part in the exercises we led for our research, I couldn’t help but feel that they had given their time and received little in return. I was the one leaving with another line to add to my CV, a handmade souvenir, and, especially, dozens of photographs to complement my memories. I noticed that when I travelled in places where most people were too poor to own a camera, people often asked me to take their picture. Most people were eager to see the result on the back of my digital camera, but I also often encountered older people who were unaware that this technology existed. Assuming the photo would have to be developed later, their hope had only been that I would take their picture, and in the future remember meeting them. Film captures a specific moment in time, and in doing so, somehow manages to make the moment feel important. It is no wonder that most of us cite photo albums as the thing we would grab if our house were burning down.

My first thought was that I would explore this idea further, and rather than write a paper for my final project, I would make a film. I could then give the film to the subjects, for them to remember forever. As I began to look around for a topic, something about this idea didn’t feel quite right. If I held the camera, it would again likely be a case where the project benefited me more than anyone else involved. And in making a documentary film, one can easily misfire: a stranger with a video camera can often be more intimidating and manipulative than an interviewer writing notes. A camcorder is simple to use; with a bit of instruction, anyone can make their own video and get great satisfaction out of it. You do not need to be artistic, technical, or even literate. I stopped looking for a subject and started looking for a group to partner with, whose work might benefit from making a video. In the
appropriate context, a participatory video project can be more effective than traditional PRA at capturing a subject’s voice and building their self-esteem. And, unlike a written report, the process results in a concrete piece of work that the participants can keep and share with their community.

INTRODUCTION

“Quiet on the set!” Maryjane shouts, though it doesn’t result in much quiet from the group of curious children, peddlers and neighbourhood drunks who have gathered around her. Eager to participate, some of them shout it as well. But Maryjane holds a tight rein on the production and shouts again, louder this time. She motions to Mavel, and says, “Action!” Mavel is introducing the video. “We are here at the Panatag Health Centre,” she starts, strolling toward the building like an old TV pro doing a walk-and-talk. “Today we are...today we are...” She loses her place, and doubles over laughing. I don’t understand the fast stream of Tagalog that comes out of her mouth after that, but I hear my name and I know what’s happened. I had been standing next to Maryjane, grinning like a proud teacher, without thinking about how distracting it looked. I slink off to the background. The women don’t need my guidance anymore. Maryjane quiets everyone down again, and this time Mavel finishes the sequence intact. “We are Breastfeeding Patrol of Mandaluyong City, and this is our video project!”

Mandaluyong City and Block 37, Welfareville Compound

Mandaluyong City is a borough of southeast Manila, and is one of the world’s most densely populated urban areas. Panatag Health Centre serves the residents of Block 37, in the barangay –district– of Addition Hills, which is part of a larger compound known as Welfareville. I was told that name came about in the 1960s, when the office of Department of Social Welfare and Development was located there, surrounded by otherwise grass-
covered fields. Reliant on the benefits handed out by the Department, homeless set up shacks near the building. By 1980, there were almost 21,000 residents in Welfareville. Today, about 17,000 people live in Block 37 alone (Sabalvaro, 2009).

As its name suggests, life is not easy for the residents of Welfareville. Most are unemployed or under-employed, surviving hand-to-mouth as labourers and street traders (Sabalvaro, 2009). Housing is improvised and crowded; extended families often live together in one small makeshift room. Infectious diseases, such as TB and chicken pox, thrive on this proximity (Sabalvaro, 2009). Access to clean water is an issue. The government pipes main lines through the area, but residents I spoke with said the system is unreliable and polluted from people tapping the pipes and diverting the supply to their own homes. Electricity is similarly unregulated. A heavy snarl of illegal power lines weaves its way up over the rooftops, making fire an ever-present threat. It is not uncommon to see the volunteer fire brigades racing past Mandaluyong City Hall on their way towards Addition Hills.

“If it was easy, I think I would get bored very quickly,” Dr Shari Sabalvaro says, explaining why these challenges her patients face do not faze her. She took up the role of Physician in Charge at Panatag Centre in 2006, having just completed a year as the sole medical professional on one of the Philippines’ famously remote islands. She was looking for opportunities closer to her family home just outside of Manila, and had already heard of the women in Block 37. Earlier that year, a small group had started an informal club to help educate new mothers in the area on the proper techniques to care for and feed their babies. Their aim was to help raise happy, healthy children in the barangay, but specifically, they sought to cut off the influence of milk formula companies. Dr Sabalvaro, a general practitioner with WHO training in Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF), has a special hatred for formula companies. Formula milk, she believes, is not only unnecessary but can be
harmful, and the companies use sophisticated marketing to prey on poor people in particular. When the Department of Health contacted her, she accepted their job offer right away.

Breastfeeding Patrol

In 2007, Dr Sabalvaro petitioned the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and the Mandaluyong City Department of Health, Centre for Health Development, to sponsor IYCF training for the local breastfeeding group. Upon completion of the training, the mayor held a public gathering where the group pledged their commitment to breastfeeding education. They christened themselves ‘Breastfeeding Patrol’, a name that reflects their tactic of moving “their way quietly through the community with an infectious interest [and asserting] themselves to their neighbours” (Sabalvaro, 2009). Within one year they had persuaded all of the sari-sari (sundry) shops within the barangay stop selling formula. Since then, BF Patrol has grown to include women –and a few men- from five other Blocks of Welfareville. Nutrition Committees of nearby barangays have also started similar advocacy groups, but Breastfeeding Patrol remains the most well known in the area. Dr Sabalvaro credits its success to the fact that the group was started by local residents, rather than as a government initiative. Block 37, she says, is the only block in the barangay that the milk companies just don’t bother with anymore.

Some of Breastfeeding Patrol’s other achievements include successfully lobbying for breastfeeding stations at the mall and in the offices of major employers, such as Globe Telecom. But BF Patrol’s greatest strength is that its volunteers are a resource that is firmly rooted in the community. The mother volunteers (and a few father volunteers, and one grandfather volunteer) are active socially and stay alert to any new pregnancies among their neighbours. Many new mothers seek them out, especially when they have decided to return
to work. One of BF Patrol’s specialties is advising how to balance caring for an infant with a job outside the home. But the group acknowledges that its success relies on maintaining its strong social ties with the community.

In November 2009 an overturned gas lamp sparked a fire in Block 37 that wiped out 400 houses. 700 families were left homeless, and the authorities collected them in Fabella Elementary School. Breastfeeding Patrol again found itself in a unique position to help. The volunteers completed a rapid needs assessment, something that the government didn’t have the staff or local expertise to do. Dr Sabalvaro told me that she has often seen mothers stop breastfeeding in vulnerable times after a disaster. During the needs assessment, the group also took the opportunity to connect with the affected families and reinforce the importance of breastfeeding. They also intercepted care packages that had been sent to the local radio station and removed any donated formula.

**Video and Breastfeeding Patrol**

Dr Sabalvaro is happy with Breastfeeding Patrol’s successes so far. She feels they have earned a good reputation in the area and their next goal is to expand. She would like to help implement more breastfeeding facilities in public places, and see more health volunteers in nearby clinics trained in IYCF. But above all, she would like to see the message of
Breastfeeding Patrol spread further, to more health care workers, local women, and to the government. She is frustrated that the regional ‘lying-in’ facilities—where mothers and newborns often recover after birth—tend to be uncommunicative with her group. Word of mouth and legwork are her only means of publicity, and this relies on diligent participation from her volunteers. And although many women come to Breastfeeding Patrol with great enthusiasm to be trained, its long-term retention rate of volunteers remains fairly low, usually down to their other domestic responsibilities. With this in mind, in 2008 Dr Sabalvaro shot a few short videos on childbirth and breastfeeding, hoping to use these for publicity and training. But lacking resources and time, her videos did not get very far. When we approached her about running a participatory video workshop with some of her volunteers, she said yes immediately.

**WHAT IS PARTICIPATORY VIDEO?**

**Participation and development**

Participatory research emerged from the same attitudes that generated 1970s grassroots movements (Braden, 1998). These locally-focused perspectives came about in different contexts and for different reasons, but the effect they had was the same: an increasing emphasis on local knowledge and skills. One of the first theorists to put forward the idea that marginalised people were as, or more, qualified than outside professionals in determining their needs was Brazilian educational theorist Paulo Freire. What was prohibiting poor people’s involvement in programme and policy making, he argued, was that they were lacking the tools to analyse their situation in the context of the larger society (Underwood and Jabre, 2003).

Freire developed interactive learning methods based on a challenging exchange between teacher and learner. He called these methods ‘critical pedagogy’—a critical approach by the
Using video in community health advocacy

learner to their education—and for the first time put forth the idea that the learning process itself leads directly to social change. As people “develop their power to perceive critically the way they exist in the world with which and in which they find themselves, they come to see the world not as a static reality, but as a reality in process, in transformation” (Freire, 1970, as cited in Underwood and Jabre, 2003, p.237). If a citizen understands that it is possible to challenge a society’s status quo, then he can grow to feel empowered enough to enact social change. An interactive educational process will bring about this understanding. This new mode of thought set the stage for development projects in which marginalised populations work alongside decision makers.

Around the same time, agencies such as the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) began to work more closely with indigenous people, in an effort to create more sustainable programmes (Ramirez, 1997). Chambers (1994, p.956) admits that many of these initial efforts were attempts at cost-saving, but they were also a result of professionals who had become familiar with the richness and potential of local knowledge. Sillitoe (2004, p.19) elaborates that it had become clear that “many previous interventions failed in part because they overlooked situating their work in the local context, resulting in a mismatch between development initiatives and local cultural understandings and environmental management.” Indigenous ecological intelligence draws on generations of local experience, and “compared with many modern technologies, traditional techniques have been tried and tested; are effective, inexpensive, locally available, and culturally appropriate; and in many cases are based on preserving and building on the patterns and processes of nature” (Grenier, 1998, p.9). A compelling reason for indigenous populations to take an interest in development activities is so that they can have more control over their local natural resources. The next question, according to Chambers (1994, p.956), was how to efficiently tap indigenous knowledge “as a source of information for analysis and use by
outsider professionals.”

By the 1980s development practitioners had grown disillusioned with their established methods of communicating with local populations. The traditional survey questionnaire was seen as tedious, bureaucratic, and probably unreliable (Chambers, 1994), tending to “produce information that was biased by the social position, context, and gender of the respondents” (Braden, 1998). It was easy for an urban professional on a typically quick site visit to overlook a community’s worst poverty and deprivation. The research they did gather was usually not shared with the community (Grenier, 1998). Fed-up practitioners discarded these surveys and started collecting information more casually, engaging more closely with the community through conversations and semi-structured interviews. This practice was mostly kept quiet, however, as workers felt pressure to back up their findings with evidence gathered in traditional ways (Chambers, 1994). Over time, these interactive research methods proved to be effective, and the techniques became known as Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA).

In RRA, the researchers do not attempt to plan every question in advance, and instead allow for programme changes as they learn from local people (Grenier, 1998). This marked an important step in participatory development, as it deferred the outsider’s knowledge to that of local people. However, the process of gathering information in RRA is still largely extractive, with the data usually taken elsewhere for analysis (Chambers, 1994). In the late 1980s, researchers started incorporating participatory activities, such as group work and diagramming, into RRA, and these methods were quickly termed PRA – Participatory Rural Appraisal. While there is much overlap between the practices, their essential difference is that the PRA practitioner attempts to facilitate local people’s own research and analysis, often so that communities can plan and take action (Chambers, 1992, p. 13). The PRA
process seeks to empower local people through a learning process, as Freire had advocated in the 1970s. This required a new, relaxed attitude in the development professional, in which he or she is not the dominant personality in the research process (Chambers, 1992). The facilitator must be humble, respectful, and interested in learning from the community. PRA also has an emphasis on visual exercises, which can engage with individuals with low literacy levels.

PRA is a complex process to manage, however, and there is no guarantee that it is truly participatory, or that external bias will be removed. The practice evolved as a flexible tool, but, under pressure from funders and budget cycles, has given way to checklists and mechanical applications of exercises (Braden, 1998). Logging much of the data gathered in PRA relies on a researcher’s interpretation. A paper-and-pen sketch of a map drawn in the dirt, for instance, is a representation of the original. Its accuracy is dependent on the quality of exchange that occurred between the researcher and the community during the exercise. Braden (2002, p.36) goes so far as to say that these “outputs are seldom debated and analysed by either participating communities or facilitating development workers. Rather they play a token role in the credo of participatory development.” For these reasons, PRA works best as an open-ended process, when it acts as a means of focusing dialogue, rather than with an emphasis on concrete results. PRA’s major pitfall, therefore, is that if the communication between actors is poor, the research result will be weak. It is therefore important that communication methods in development projects continue to be examined, refined, and applied in new and evolving ways.
Communication and development

Communication refers to the two-way exchange of information, and since the development of RRA and PRA it is now accepted as a key component in effective development practice.

As Ramirez (1997) puts it:

Communication for development is about aiding different types of actors interested in understanding needs and assessing opportunities jointly; it is about providing them with the methods and media to reach common meaning, and about enabling them to negotiate with other actors with contrasting perceptions and interests.

Initially, communication initiatives in development projects focused on rural communities’ traditional means of communication, such as through oral history or singing. While an important cultural step, traditional communication methods can be difficult for outsiders to connect with and capture information from. PRA encourages more engagement between actors, but, as noted before, its emphasis on results can pre-empt or imbalance the research process. A successful project will involve honest interaction between partners in a way that is accessible to all parties.

Practitioners in participatory research are now increasingly using visual media to further participation by marginalised groups. “These approaches [take] an interactive and participatory approach that stresses the interrelationships that exist in practice along the main line of action” (Ramirez, 1997, p.49). Ramirez calls this concept CIME: "communication at the grassroots level; the exchange of information; two-way media; and non-formal education.” The best CIME specialists, he says, act as “brokers between the needs of people, different kinds of development interventions, and quickly evolving communication and information technologies.”

In the 1970s the FAO started videotaping agricultural communities in Peru as a means of preserving and reproducing local knowledge. Sceptic observers thought the agency was
using a too sophisticated medium in a primitive environment. But despite their lack of exposure to modern media, the rural Peruvians embraced video, and the project was surprisingly successful (Ramirez, 1997). As Richardson points out, “much of FAO's historical success with communication for development approaches has involved the use of a medium that many development planners first dismissed as too ‘high-tech’ and as being ‘inappropriate technology’” (Richardson, 1996, p.11). Although even the most basic video project requires quite a bit of moderately expensive technology, over time, video has proven to be an effective tool to unify local knowledge and participatory research techniques. It documents the wisdom of its subjects, empowers its participants, and is accessible to even the most remote or marginalised populations.

A history of cinema for social change

The first public film screening was in 1895, Workers Leaving the Lumiere Factory, shown as part of a series by the Lumiere brothers at the Grand Café in Paris. The film, one short, static shot, showed workers as they left the brothers’ photographic factory at the end of the workday. In cinema’s early decades, these types of ‘documentary’ films remained more popular with audiences than staged films (although filmmakers often interspersed staged footage with non-fiction footage without differentiating between the two). As Pearson (1996, p. 38) explains, “the first film audiences did not demand to be told stories, but found infinite fascination in the mere recording and reproduction” of the world around them. Even the simplest representations of the world we recognise have always appealed to our deepest natures. In the early days, cinema was a rapidly evolving medium and in 1922, with Robert Flaherty's feature-length film Nanook of the North, the concept of documentary as we know it was born. It was the first widely seen film to attempt to raise social awareness through the use of the medium.
Nanook of the North follows a young Inuit as he struggles to provide for his family in the Canadian arctic. Many of Flaherty’s cinematic techniques would be frowned on today, such as dressing his subjects in traditional furs that their tribe no longer wore, and his credibility would be called in to question (he was sponsored by a French-Canadian furrier), but Nanook marked an important shift in cinema perspective. Like his contemporaries, Flaherty staged some scenes and manipulated his subjects, but for the first time, a feature-length, non-fiction film was shot with the intent of presenting the point of view of a non-actor subject. Up until this point, non-fiction films, such as Workers Leaving the Lumière Factory were snapshots from the filmmaker’s perspective. Flaherty intended Nanook to enlighten his audience, and to present them with an unfamiliar culture. To make the film, Flaherty spent extended periods of time living with the Inuit in northern Canada, an impossibly remote location at the time. When participatory video was first emerging in the 1970s, Flaherty’s work ethic was often credited as inspiration. Pearson (1996, p.160) emphasises that “the Eskimos [Flaherty] depicted as naïve primitives mystified by a simple record player actually fixed his camera, developed his film, and actively participated in the filmmaking process.”

A history of film for social change would not be complete without a discussion of Dziga Vertov (1896-1954), the film theorist and pioneer in Marxist documentary. Vertov’s most famous work, Man with a Movie Camera (1929), is often cited as the greatest documentary of the period, if not of all time. Unlike Nanook of the North, which showed an exotic, far-away culture, Man with a Movie Camera depicts everyday events occurring around the filmmaker: weavers, paperboys, cyclists, and is edited into a heightened visual style that synthesises the actions into a symphony of urban Soviet life. Each person is an important part of a greater whole. Vertov also includes footage of filmmakers at their jobs, shooting and editing a film, working just as the baker and cart-drivers do. He impresses upon the viewer that “cinema’s role is to show these truths to the new Soviet citizen and so bring
about understanding and action” (Musser, 1996, p.163). Vertov was the first filmmaker to promote the idea that film could be used to inspire social change, not just to inform and entertain.

Vertov developed this theory early in his career, when he worked as a filmmaker in Lenin’s agit-prop programme from 1918-1920. Lenin had embraced film as an educational tool, and thought it would be a good way of reaching the Soviet Union’s considerable illiterate population. Many of the programme’s films were geared towards rural villagers, and centred on hygiene, sanitation, and health care (James, 1996). As he travelled around the country showing these films, Vertov encouraged feedback from the audiences, interacting with them, and often filming individuals to splice into the film before the next screening. He “set out to present the wide spectrum of Common Man and Woman to each other, as dignified and heroic figures not portrayed by actors but by the real people themselves” (James, 1996, p.113). Throughout his work for Lenin, he refined this method of audience feedback, often with the goal of raising understanding between antagonistic rural groups (James, 1996). This technique became known as the Vertov Process, and, like Nanook of the North, its spirit lives on in participatory video.

**The Fogo Process**

The inception of participatory video is credited to Donald Snowden, a Canadian academic who specialized in communication and rural development. In the late 1960s, he headed a team that made a series of films with the residents of the Fogo Islands, a group of remote fishing communities off the coast of Newfoundland. The islanders were dealing with increasing poverty and isolation, as modern commercial fisheries developed technology they could not compete with. When Snowden arrived on the island in 1967 more than 60% of the
population was on welfare, and the Canadian government was planning to relocate the residents inland (Crocker, 2003). The films Snowden and his team made on the islands, and, more importantly, the method they developed while making them, became known as the Fogo Process. Its principles form the basis of all participatory video projects today.

The Fogo Islanders suffered from not only economic poverty, but also what Snowden called a “poverty of information and organization” (Crocker, 203, p. 126). The islands are terribly remote, and at the time had little infrastructure or local media. Residents were scattered among settlements that were isolated by physical distance and historical differences. The population had no collective identity. This affected not just their social cohesion, but also their ability to represent themselves to policy makers in Ottawa.

After shooting for a few months, Snowden and his colleague, filmmaker Colin Low, thought it would be nice to show the community the footage. They received so much feedback after the screening, almost all of it positive, that they decided to organise a screening for the Canadian premier and his cabinet. The officials, in turn, were equally enthusiastic about the footage, and the Minister for Fisheries recorded a response for Snowden to bring back to Fogo. The films gave the citizens a voice they had not had before. As he later put it, film removes “the inherent threat in communicating with persons of authority” (Snowden, 1983, p.70).

Snowden and Low’s intent had been to make a conventional film documenting the poverty in Fogo, but after experiencing the feedback generated from these screenings their focus changed. Their film had opened up a channel of communication between citizens who had little contact with the government, and officials who were otherwise too busy to visit or offer much attention to the islands. Unlike a traditional film, theirs became less about the
quality of the final product and more about the communication process that arose while making it (White, 2003).

Snowden wondered whether by holding regular screenings and discussion groups, he might help smooth out divisions between villages and make it clear to the residents that if they did not want to be relocated they were going to have to organise as a group. Low began to shoot short films that were centred on one interview with one individual, whose concern seemed representative of the community. He felt shooting this way gave an appropriate respect for the subject’s opinion. The interviewee would not feel as though his story were swallowed into part of a larger theme. As Low put it, when you edit interviews together into one film, “you get one person who is all wrong, one person who is partly right, and one person who is right. He becomes the smart guy, who puts others down. This putting down can harm people within a community” (Crocker, 2003, p. 129).

The discussion groups were a success. Snowden found that many people were uneasy raising grievances face-to-face, but were comfortable discussing an issue after it had been introduced in a filmed interview. Eventually, the islanders did band together and successfully resisted the government’s plans to resettle them. Snowden was always reluctant to credit his work directly with this achievement, saying that “films did not do these things, people did them.” But he did admit that “there is little doubt, however, that film created an awareness and self-confidence that was needed for people-advocated development to occur” (Snowden, 1983, p. 61).

**Effects of participatory video**

Snowden touches on an output of participatory video that is hard to define, but that practitioners argue is its most compelling quality. PV has consistently been shown to raise
the confidence of participants, by increasing self-awareness and tightening their bond with their community. There are no concrete explanations for how this happens, but it is thought that in seeing herself onscreen, a participant separates from her own perception of self, and temporarily sees herself through the eyes of the community. It gives the impression “that one’s own knowledge is important and it can be effectively communicated...[it shows people] that they can say and do things that they thought were not possible before” (Snowden, 1983, p.71). The participant also recognizes that she is part of a larger group, and her experiences and thoughts that were captured on film belong not only to her, but to everyone watching as well. It creates a sense that her experiences are shared, even with people outside her immediate area. The academic Benedict Anderson (1991, p.35) calls this phenomenon an ‘imagined community’, and its effect is so powerful, he argues, that it built our concept of the modern nation state. Nationalism can be directly traced to the emergence of printed mass media:

the newspaper reader, observing exact replicas of his own paper being consumed by his subway, barbershop, or residential neighbours, is continually reassured that [this] imagined world is visibly rooted in everyday life ...creating that remarkable confidence of community in anonymity which is the hallmark of modern nations.

As Crocker puts it, ‘The nation is an imagined entity but one that is quite real, one of the few things, in fact, that people are willing to die for’ (Crocker, 2003, p.131).

In even the most participatory PRA, as mentioned earlier, information is usually transformed by the facilitator before it is presented to the group for discussion. Video, however, “can enable under-represented and non-literate people to use their own visual languages and oral traditions to retrieve, debate, and record their own knowledge” (Braden, 1998, p.19). It is a much more pure representation of the participants’ experience with their community, and reinforces the reality of the whole community. This community strengthening can lead
to significant social change. Referring to a project in Brazil, in which the Kayapó tribe successfully resisted the construction of a dam that would have flooded their land, Dudley (2003, p.155) explains,

By engaging in a process of elaborating messages through video, the participants were forced to examine their social, economic and political locations to devise an approach that would allow them to influence the status quo. In each case, the process of developing their arguments proved to be extremely enlightening.

So participatory video can even create a bond that was otherwise impossible to imagine, as in the case of the Fogo islanders who were also close to losing their land. For people who feel marginalized, this communal experience can be revolutionary.

**After Fogo**

Donald Snowden continued to use film and video in rural community development projects until his untimely death in 1984, but the process didn’t start to catch on with larger development organizations until portable, affordable video equipment emerged in the 1990s. PV remains a process that is being studied and refined, but successful, well-known projects have taken place all over the world. In particular, PV has proven to be an especially effective tool for empowering marginalised women. Sara Kindon (2002) claims that the participatory process subverts the asymmetrical power dynamic inherent in traditional filmmaking. This power structure, known in film theory as the camera’s ‘gaze’, appropriates any power from the subject being photographed and transfers it to the person in control of the camera. The cameraperson has the active role, while the subject is entirely passive. It is usually accepted that the camera gaze comes from a male perspective, and that the subject is feminine, objectified to the point of fascination or even fetishisation. Kindon (2002, p.143) likens the male camera gaze to the ‘colonialist’ relationship inherent in traditional
research/researched practice. She argues that “participatory video may offer a feminist practice of ‘looking alongside’ rather than ‘looking at’ research subjects’”.

An excellent example of this is a 2006 venture sponsored by the American Refugee Committee, with Liberian refugees living in the Lainé camp in Guinea. Named ‘Through Our Eyes’, the project addressed gender-based violence from the perspective of its victims. The group made more than 20 documentary and dramatic videos with titles like ‘Rape is a Bad Thing’ and ‘Wife Beating Is Not Good’. The project was conceived as an empowerment exercise for the camp’s women, who took the leading roles. They coordinated the films, conducted interviews, and also appeared on camera. But Lowen (2008, p.35) notes that the whole community took an interest. Although the films articulated women’s voices, “lured by the opportunity to use technology, men [were] also eager to become involved in the production process.” The project ended up being so positive for the community that USAID sponsored its expansion to Rwanda, Southern Sudan, and Uganda.

Through Our Eyes is especially representative of good PV practice because its output –to raise awareness and discussion about a specific issue– was clear. Gender based violence, “often shrouded in secrecy...can be particularly difficult to combat in these settings because cultural traditions place the social stigma and shame on the victims” (Lowen, 2008, p. 34). Like the Fogo Islanders, the women of Lainé felt comfortable speaking about difficult experiences in a structured and facilitated environment. For many women, “choosing to tell their stories on camera [became] an important part of the healing process” (Lowen, 2008, p. 35). Other women, uncomfortable speaking publicly about their experiences, were able to contribute to the project from behind the camera. Communication for Change, the New York-based organization that trained the Liberian staff, noted that the communication skills developed during the PV process linger after the project is over. “Young women [became]
better communicators with or without the video camera and they are growing stronger and willing to take on tough issues such as rape and STDs” (C4C, 2008, online). “Because the videos are made by members of the community, told in a local dialect and with respect for local customs, they have a big impact. People can’t dismiss the stories as happening somewhere else” (Lowen, 2008, p. 34). As Dudley (2003, p. 148) puts it, in reference to a similar project addressing sexual abuse among domestic workers in Colombia, ‘the public response to questions being recorded on a video camera brought a taboo topic out into the open, and in so doing provided a window for the women to begin to establish a public dialogue to address the issue.” For instance, after a community screening of a video about rape, the ARC field staff in Liberia reported an immediate increase in women seeking their counselling services.

Television was rare in the Lainé camp, and screenings of the Through Our Eyes videos attracted large audiences. For participants with low literacy levels, video offers these opportunities to clearly articulate their thoughts in a public arena, which can be especially satisfying. PV is also widely used in projects with marginalized communities to document and swap information that they otherwise do not have a means of sharing, similar to the initiatives started by the FAO in the 1970s. Insight, the Oxford-based participatory video group, commonly works with rural people documenting local practices for posterity, such as traditional harvesting techniques. Often these videos are passed along to nearby tribes, to share and exchange information. “Visual documentation of local innovation through PV provides material in a form that is easily understood. [In such a context] this gives PV a decided advantage over the written word” (Lunch, 2006, p.14). These videos can also give researchers and policy-makers insight into a poor community’s cultural richness and knowledge, such as what the Fogo films showed the Canadian officials. In Manila, the members of Breastfeeding Patrol felt confident and experienced with the educational work
that they did, but they wanted to communicate more often and more effectively with their community and officials. They therefore chose to make a documentation-type video, to supplement their work training new mothers and to increase their public profile with the local government.

THE PARTICIPATORY VIDEO WORKSHOP

Research approach and goals

I have a degree in filmmaking and previous video instruction experience. My partner, Nina Gonzales, is a photographer who works frequently on participatory projects in the US and the Philippines, and is fluent in Tagalog. We structured our workshop around exercises drawn from our previous experience, and from techniques outlined in *Insights Into Participatory Video: A Handbook for the Field*, by Insight. We also consulted Jesse Kiendl, an adult education teacher at the Centre for Immigrant Education and Training in New York, for advice on defining lesson objectives and the timing of exercises (Appendix A).

Although there are many possible outputs of a participatory video project, we sensed correctly that our group would want to create a video that would be functional for their work, rather than a film that would be used to address empowerment or group communication dynamics. The members of our workshop were already friends and colleagues, and Breastfeeding Patrol’s success is largely driven by its supportive working
style. It seemed unlikely that the women would choose a topic that might mean airing grievances over something that could support their teaching. This may have partly also been wishful thinking on our part, as the workshop was not long enough to sufficiently tackle any difficult subjects, had they arisen. It is important to note here that if we had been mistaken, and had the participants chosen a difficult topic, our project may have caused more harm than good. We may have opened some wounds and not had time to negotiate a resolution. But Breastfeeding Patrol felt like a group that we would be equipped to deal with, which is why Nina and I pursued it over leads we had with other organisations. We decided to work with only six women, which would allow us to keep the teaching style intimate and flexible, and give the volunteers space to experiment.

Many of Insight’s exercises are geared towards rural people with little knowledge of modern technology, which we knew would not be the case with BF Patrol’s urban dwellers. Both Nina and I have had a lot of creative success as students and as teachers using a loose formal style. We therefore skipped some of Insight’s conceptual exercises and focused on first building up the ladies’ technical competence with the camera, and then letting them work freely. We used three formal exercises in the pre-production phase of the workshop: to familiarize the group with the mechanics of the camera, to learn how to compose a shot, and to understand how to plan a video sequence. Two days of the workshop were reserved for the video shoots, and the last meeting was for discussion. Nina and I would edit the footage after the production sessions. We kept the output manageable: two short, specific videos, the subjects of which would be of Breastfeeding Patrol’s choosing.

**Pre-Production**
We asked Dr Sabalvaro to select six volunteers who had a mix of backgrounds representing all the members of Breastfeeding Patrol. The women she chose were from Block 37 or the neighbouring barangay, Highway Hills: Delia, the eldest of the group, who tended to be quiet but always had wise words to say; Marcelina, nicknamed ‘Baby’, a sharply funny mother of two who had the most natural talent with the camera; Margie, an experienced IYCF trainer with a boisterous personality, Maryjane, 27, the youngest of the group, who often brought her 5-month old daughter to the sessions; Mavel, a glamorous mother of two; and Thess, who often held back but when she spoke revealed a stinging sense of humour.

These women were each highly accomplished outside of their achievements in BF Patrol as well. Thess worked as a nutrition counsellor in Highway Hills. Mavel worked as the nutritionist in Panatag Centre, completing her training in her thirties and as a single mother. Margie had been interviewed about IYCF on the local radio and television stations. Twice a week, Baby, along with some friends, brought 90 kilos of rice to the barangay landfill to feed local children whose families didn’t have enough to eat. And Maryjane, the most educated of the group, was about to take up a 2-year housekeeping position in Jeddah, a job more lucrative than any available to her (or anyone else in the group) in Manila. Despite their achievements, the women faced the same challenges as the other residents of Block 37. Margie, for example, had lost her home in the November 2009 fire.
Although all in the group watched a lot of television and films, none had ever held a video camera before. We spent the first two sessions getting them acquainted with the mechanics of the camera, learning to compose a shot, and conceptualizing the sequence of a film. We shortened some of Insight’s very detailed exercises, but we found the handbook’s step-by-step instructions for teaching novices very useful. In Exercise 1 each woman had a chance to turn the camera on and off, and record another woman introducing herself. We then watched the footage and discussed what parts of it were good, and how to improve other shots. In Exercise 2, we discussed framing, and used index cards with a rectangle cut from the middle to ‘frame’ objects around us. In Exercise 3 we moved on storyboarding, and drew a shot sequence that we later used as a reference for the final films. As homework, we asked the group to think of two possible subjects for the videos we would shoot the following week. Although all Filipinos are taught English in school, many are more comfortable speaking in a local language. In our discussion groups, the women spoke Tagalog, I spoke English, and Nina switched between the two languages.

Some of these exercises were more useful than others. Panatag Health Centre is bordered by a noisy basketball court, so Nina and I had opted to work with the group indoors. We held the initial sessions in Dr Sabalvaro’s office, which was very small for the eight of us to squeeze into. Much of the footage from Exercise 1 was too close to the subjects. While the group understood this immediately when we played the video back, this flaw was in so much of this exercise’s footage it hindered the opportunities for learning in the follow-up discussion. There were few options available to us as venues, but I stress now that it is important to find the right one, big enough and with little background noise –something that can be very difficult when working in a neighbourhood filled with children playing, dogs barking, roosters crowing, and a non-stop buzz of tricycles speeding down the street.
Nonetheless, we did achieve the lesson objectives for Exercise 1, which was for the participants to become comfortable using the camera. We repeated the exercise on the second day, with the group introducing plants in the community garden outside the clinic. Despite somewhat intrusive street noise, this footage allowed the group to become more familiar with all the possibilities of the camera.

Exercise 2 is designed to demonstrate different types of shots, and how to decide the best framing for a particular scene. We asked the women to think about a film they had watched and remember the ways the camera had been positioned. We then discussed the effect each shot can have in a film. A ‘wide shot’, for instance, shows the whole location, and might be necessary for establishing the scene. A close-up, on the other hand, is useful for showing more detail. We asked each woman to use the index card to frame an object in the room from two perspectives, and to say in what scenario they would use each framing. We also discussed composition, and what makes for an image that is pleasing to the viewer. We explained the ‘rule of thirds’, in which, for a more pleasing shot, the cameraperson imagines that the frame is divided horizontally and vertically in thirds, and positions the subject along one of these imaginary lines, as opposed to in the centre of the frame. The group understood shot variation immediately, and could reframe objects instinctively. The discussion about composition appeared to reach only a few of the team members.
In Exercise 3 we talked about possible video subjects and started to plan how these might be filmed. The women had three ideas for videos: a technical explanation and demonstration of ‘cup-feeding’ (feeding a baby stored breast milk with a cup), a trip to the hospital to see how they educate new mothers on breastfeeding, and a ‘home visit’ by a Breastfeeding Patrol member, where one of the team would check up on a new mother and offer her guidance. We discussed which two films the group would like to make. It was agreed that getting permission to film in the hospital would be complicated, and that the hospital workers might take an investigative visit from the group as criticism. The women therefore decided to film an instructional video on cup-feeding, which could be used to supplement their training sessions, and a home visit to a new mother, which is the service BF Patrol is most famous for. This video could be used both educationally and to show officials the value of the group’s work.

We asked the group to plan and draw the shots that would be most necessary for each video. This storyboard would be used as a guide for each film. Despite their outgoing personalities, none of the ladies felt comfortable drawing the storyboard, so Nina drew, with their direction (Appendix B). Starting with the home visit, they drew an exterior shot of the house, and a ‘two-shot’ of the visitor and the mother. For the technical demonstration, they planned a wide shot of the equipment needed, a close-up of the equipment, and a wide shot of a mother and baby who would demonstrate the technique. We also took this opportunity to make it clear to the group that the films would be edited after they were shot, and it was not necessary to film each shot in order. For instance, we all agreed that any shots with a baby should be filmed first. Nina and I saved the storyboard to bring to the shooting days. Margie volunteered to find two mothers willing to appear in the videos.
As individuals, each of the women in our group was very self-possessed. After these planning sessions it was clear to me and Nina that the workshop would be less of a self-esteem builder for the participants, such as in the project at the Lainé refugee camp, but would serve as a team-building exercise, and would strengthen the work that Breastfeeding Patrol already does. We faced no challenges as far as their enthusiasm, communication skills, and willingness to work together were concerned. The only constraint we faced, really, was time. We could schedule only six sessions, and a few of the women missed one or two of them due to family or education obligations. This had an impact on group cohesion. With so few people, everyone worked closely together, achieved a lot in a short space of time, and in doing so, strengthened the group dynamic dramatically each day. If a woman missed even a few hours, it felt like she had been gone for much longer. It meant catching her up at the next session and re-familiarising the team with each other. However, at the next meeting the ladies made sure to give anyone who had been absent the first chance with the camera. With a less cooperative group these disruptions would have been more severe. I do think, however, that it is no coincidence that our more successful video was made on a day when everyone was present.

Production

Film 1: Technical explanation of cup-feeding

The first film we made was the demonstration of cup-feeding, which we filmed in an examination room at the clinic. Although the finished film has been useful to Breastfeeding Patrol, the shoot was rife with difficulties, and I felt that most of the footage was unusable. Again, we faced the challenge of shooting in a confined space. The room was too small for both of our two cameras to capture unique perspectives, which made editing the footage together too awkward. It was also very hot, as we had shut the noisy fan off and closed the
exam room door that led on to a busy corridor and waiting area. The environment was too intense for the baby who was to be fed, and he cried most of the time.

Virtually unknown in the developed world, cup-feeding is the practice of feeding an infant from a small cup instead of a bottle. It is commonly used in the developing world, where there might be a shortage of supplies or a lack of clean water and capacity to sterilise equipment. A cup is easier to clean than a bottle, and so is less likely to harbour bacteria. More important, when fed with a rubber nipple, a baby can potentially become confused and later reject the mother’s breast. And for older babies who can hold a bottle on their own, a cup provides healthy physical contact with a caregiver. “A cup cannot be left for a baby to feed him or herself. Someone has to hold the baby and give him some of the contact he needs” (WHO, p. 39).

Dr Sabalvaro and Breastfeeding Patrol follow the guidelines for cup-feeding laid out by the World Health Organisation, that teach a baby should not be fed from any artificial teats. The caregiver should instead use a small cup without a lip, such as those used in hospitals to dispense medication. The child is held upright in the caregiver’s arms, and the cup is tilted gently into the baby’s mouth. The child will ‘lap’ the milk up at his or her own pace. The movements of the infant’s tongue and jaw during cup-feeding more closely resemble breastfeeding than bottle feeding does. In developed nations, cup-feeding is used in hospitals to feed pre-term babies and to stimulate the development of the muscles needed for breastfeeding (Kuehl, p. 58).
Breastfeeding Patrol’s primary interests in training mothers about cup-feeding are so that feeding can be shared by members of the household, and so a mother who chooses to work outside the home can store her breast milk for later feedings from another caregiver.

Panatag clinic has a storage refrigerator that is available to the community. Dr Sabalvaro recommends that mothers breastfeed for up to three years.

The group decided that Mavel, Panatag Centre’s vivacious nutritionist, should host the video. Mavel coyly agreed, and then assumed the role wholeheartedly. We shot the video in two parts, first with Mavel coaching the mother through a cup-feeding session, and then a sequence in which Mavel demonstrates the technique using a doll. The footage with the mother was awkward and ruined by poor sound and composition that often obscured the action. In the final film we did not include any of this footage.

After we filmed the demonstration with the mother, we filmed Mavel going through the process again, explaining in detail how to express breast milk by hand, when using a pump, and with the plastic end of a syringe. She then used a doll to demonstrate the proper cup-feeding position, which is in an upright position in the caregiver’s arms. This footage was all relatively uncomplicated and we cut it together to make the first video. The final product is satisfactory, but as an exercise I did not feel this shoot went very well. My reservation was down to a very simple but important factor: the small size of the room we used to shoot in, because only the team members holding the
cameras could fit inside. The others waited outside, and were thus not involved with this important part of the project.

It was not just that I felt splitting the group like this isolated some members and interrupted the team’s working dynamic, I had also noticed that the group had been experiencing a steep learning curve. The women were all attentive to each other, and it took only one mistake, such as forgetting to turn on the microphone, by one of the participants, for everyone to learn from it. As this shoot was more problematic than I anticipated, I was more hands-on with the production team than I had planned to be. The camerawomen for this video, in effect, had a lesson that the others did not have, and I regretted this. Nina and I tried to make up for this after the shoot when we viewed and discussed the footage, but nothing can compete with hands-on experience.

Film 2: House visit with new mother

Our second shooting experience went much more smoothly. The group found a young mother, Charmaine, who was willing to have a visit from BF Patrol videotaped. Charmaine was 22 years old and had given birth to her second child 15 days earlier. She and her mother welcomed our whole team into their home, about a five minute walk from Panatag Health Centre. As we walked there, it was clear that the video team, who were wearing purple T-shirts with ‘Breastfeeding Patrol’
Charmaine and her mother, Charmaine thought she would return to a job outside the home in about a year, so Margie took this opportunity to teach her about cup feeding. This demonstration felt much more natural than the one we filmed in the clinic, and better illustrated Breastfeeding Patrol’s expertise in working with the community. Margie guided Charmaine through expressing breast milk by hand into a small cup, positioning the baby correctly for feeding, and how to recognise when he’s had enough. Charmaine’s very small baby cooperated throughout, and the footage was comprehensive and engaging. There was space in the house for the team members who weren’t filming this time, so everyone got to watch the action and offer any suggestions during the 

emblazoned across the front, were well-known to residents. Charmaine and her mother greeted us while we were still down the street. They shared their small house, one room made of cinder blocks, metal siding, and tarps, with five family members. They have electricity but no running water. Margie sat on the bed with Charmaine and her baby to talk about Charmaine’s plans for the future and how she will care for her baby.
shoot. And although there were a few awkward shots, the footage had a good variety and held together well.

After the visit to Charmaine, the women decided to film an introduction that explained who they were and what they were doing. Again they nominated Mavel to be host, and she agreed this time without hesitation, earning ribbings from the others about becoming a ‘diva’. We went back to the clinic to film a sequence outside. Maryjane instructed Mavel to walk up to the entrance to the clinic, and Maryjane said she would tilt the camera up to the sign above that read ‘Panatag Health Centre’. It was the first take of this sequence that I ruined, by distracting Mavel, but in doing so realised that we had achieved all the goals of the workshop. I wish as a team we had had more time together, but the videos are evidence of the success of our project. As we were leaving on the final day of the workshop, Dr Sabalvaro reported that other members of Breastfeeding Patrol were already asking when Nina and I might come back to run another.

Post-production

Nina and I edited the footage after the six sessions at Panatag Health Centre. It was unfortunate that we could not involve the women of Breastfeeding Patrol more closely in this phase of the project, but it was impossible to transport the editing equipment to Block 37. We decided therefore to leave in as much footage as possible, so that we would not inadvertently cut out any shots the camerawomen thought were important or that they had been personally proud of. We also put together a DVD for the volunteers that included extra footage and outtakes. After we had made a rough cut, we showed the film to Dr Sabalvaro and Mavel, who were thrilled with the results. Dr Sabalvaro asked for a couple of small adjustments, and also gave us some PowerPoint slides outlining the major points of cup-feeding to add for reinforcement at the end of the video.
Results

As our group was made up of ladies who were already very self-assured, the workshop served mainly to reinforce their confidence in the work they did with Breastfeeding Patrol. Margie commented that she felt it was “an effective tool for showing the details of a situation,” and said that when she was explaining cup-feeding on camera she found that she thought extremely carefully about each word she said. The experience made her re-examine her technique as a trainer, and think about whether she was being comprehensive and clear enough in her teaching. Mavel said she had been “shy on camera,” and that she had been “speechless” at first, but quickly became confident and excited to appear in the videos. Although, she joked, surely the whole thing worked better with tall people. All the women agreed that the videos would help them when training women about cup-feeding. Very often they have to explain the process in a seminar without any visual aids, or using only a doll. They thought the videos would not only serve as visual references for women who attending the seminars, but also for the trainers while they were teaching. They would worry less about forgetting parts of the training. Delia said it was a “good way to capture a scenario.” Baby said, “all the details are there, so I can refer back to the video,” and that it would be “clearer than just explaining.” The women nodded vigorously at this point, and Margie said that videos seemed to be the best way for “dissemination of information.”

After this final discussion session, the video group and Dr Sabalvaro took tricycles down to Mandaluyong City Hall, where we met with Teresita Lim, the City Health Officer. She presented each of the women of Breastfeeding Patrol with a certificate for completing the training, which everyone recorded with the cameras on their mobile phones. Despite all their self-confidence, it was clear that getting this recognition from the City was a source of pride for the video team, as was the work they did to receive it.
Since the workshop, Dr Sabalvaro has shown the video to other advocacy groups and numerous NGOs, and government officials, including the US Embassy fellow from the United States Department of Agriculture. The six women who participated in the workshop show the video in their trainings of new mothers, and Dr Sabalvaro reports that they are “so proud” of it.

**CRITICAL REFLECTION**

Much of our project’s success is down to operating within the correct context. We had an appropriate partner, an ideal subject, and defined objectives. Early on, we had some alluring leads with other organisations, such as an indigenous rights group north of Manila, but Nina and I both felt that Breastfeeding Patrol was the right group for us. We knew of Dr Sabalvaro’s interest in video and her previous attempts at making films, and thought that the workshop’s outcomes would fit in with her future plans for the group. We thought our presence in the lives of the volunteers would be less disruptive than a rural community, and that, as women, the members of Breastfeeding Patrol would be easier for us to get to know. We also assumed that, given Breastfeeding Patrol’s passion and grassroots history, the group would be eager to work with us. As Mavel put it, working as an IYCF advocate in Welfareville “does not fatten your wallet, but it fattens your heart.” We wanted to give the
group a chance to reflect on their accomplishments and create something tangible that was evidence of the work that they do.

It was important that Nina and I were prepared as facilitators. Up until that point, our teaching experience had been limited to creative classes, where the focus is on the experience of the individual student. We had not led a group project before, or one that aimed for measurable outputs. According to Shirley White (2003), while the content of a participatory video project can be about anything, the best results will come when the workshop’s learning structure is carefully planned. We turned to Jesse Kiendl to help us break down and define knowledge milestones for the pre-production phase. We decided that two short films would allow for two perspectives from the group and would be achievable during the time we had. (In the end we actually edited the two videos into one film, and marked them as chapters on the DVD for ease of reference.) It was extremely useful to have established learning objectives for each day.

We got on with the group exceedingly well, and it was not hard to act as facilitators. No one was shy, everyone was respectful of each other, and there was much laughter. A PV project, however, can have a unique effect on group dynamics, and special consideration must be paid before and during the workshop. Boisterous personalities can dominate the
proceedings, especially in an enthusiastic atmosphere. A more difficult problem to manage, and one that can be potentially serious, is the tendency of participants to mimic professional camera crews, as Maryjane did when she was acting as director (Braden, 1998). While the ‘director’ may be joking around, this behaviour still introduces a hierarchy that is inconsistent with participatory activities. This hierarchy can extend throughout the production process and after. The facilitator has to be acutely aware that she doesn’t instigate this tension. Turner (1992, p.7) explains:

“Which member of the community assumes the role of video cameraperson, and who makes the prestigious journey to the alien city where the editing facilities are located, become issues fraught with social and political significance, and consequently, social and political conflicts...My general point is simply this: an outsider attempting to facilitate the use of video by a community, either for political or research purposes, by donating a camera or arranging access to editing facilities, quickly finds that she or he does not escape the invidious implications and responsibilities of 'intervention' simply through handing over the camera to 'them'. Precisely whom she/he hands it to can become a very touchy question, and may involve consequences for which the researcher bears inescapable responsibility.”

Such political issues, he says, do not arise in traditional documentary production, when the filmmaker is an outsider. This very unique aspect of the participatory video process is easily overlooked by practitioners, but it is without doubt the greatest risk of such projects.

Although we were confident that our presence with Breastfeeding Patrol would not be disruptive to them, there was no way we could be sure of this in advance. We focused on creating an inclusive atmosphere in our discussion groups, following Insight’s advice in which the facilitator touches the camera only
minimally during exercises. Each woman was also to get her own DVD copy of the final videos. Despite these efforts, inevitably some more eager members of the group were more active during the workshop, and even still some continue to be more involved than others. For instance, I know that Margie and Mavel were present at the screening for the US embassy representative. This is to be expected, as they both work for Panatag Health Centre, but no doubt they have received accolades that the others have not.

There are two other points about planning a participatory video project that should be mentioned. The first is sensitivity to the subjects being filmed. The group must ask permission of anyone who might appear on camera, and must make it clear what the film will be used for. This is especially true if the subject being addressed is sensitive, such as ours was. Some of the women in our project were filmed breastfeeding, and we were very careful in filming this.

The other important point is to consider audience. While much of a PV project is about process, video is an expensive and time consuming endeavour. Project funders may demand a strong justification in the form of a finished video of relatively good quality. As Frost and Jones (1998) point out, the intended audience should be considered before making a video, as “many videos sit unwatched on shelves a year or so after production.” This is why we sought a group that would find a video useful in their educational efforts, as well as using the video for publicity if they so chose. The intended audience was, in a way, the participants of the workshop themselves.

**CONCLUSION**

The Fogo Process was developed in a rural setting, and until the end of his life Donald Snowden was convinced that a participatory video project would be less effective in an
urban environment (Snowden, 1983). Snowden’s reasoning was that groups with little exposure to modern media took to the process more, although he was never able to pinpoint exactly why this was. Insight, as well, tend to work more with rural groups, and they believe that the visual and verbal way many indigenous people communicate lends itself well to video (Lunch, 2006). I agree with these assessments, and I would be interested in doing a project in a rural setting for comparison. However, I think our project was enhanced specifically because the members of Breastfeeding Patrol were urbanites. Our second video, the visit with the new mother, took place in a one-room house in which about 8 people lived. It was held together with tarps and cinder blocks, and had no running water. Yet the family had a television. The members of the workshop mentioned that they were used to seeing TV crews in the area, such as from the popular Channel 7 action-adventure drama Asian Treasures, which used the streets of Welfareville for slum scenes. But none of the women had ever held a video camera herself.

Very little in my research mentioned demystification of media as part of the process of participatory video, and this concept must be less relevant for practitioners working primarily in rural environments. Many nations, such as the United States and Canada, have public access laws that mandate for every broadcast market there is a state-funded television station with facilities open to the general public. Like participatory video, the point of these stations is not the content of programming they produce, but that the medium is available to the average citizen. The Philippines, and presumably much of the developing world, does not have these public-access facilities. I think, unlike rural people who might have had very little exposure to media, the chance to use a camera, to appear in a DVD on their own televisions, and to show the film to others provided a small but valuable media experience for the women of Breastfeeding Patrol, and demonstrated that this type of expression is not confined to the elite. Participatory video may not have quite the same
reach as the airwaves, but it allows marginalised people the opportunity to address their needs through video. Norrish (1998, p.96) writes that

better access to media communication...can enable the poor to use the information revolution to help reinforce the processes of democratization and social reform. The most important change may be that the poor are increasingly able to use communication and information technologies for their own needs instead of just receiving messages.

It could be said that participatory video is an elaborate PRA exercise, but Frost and Jones (1998) point out that video can support the research process from the practitioner’s perspective as well. Video can establish context more quickly and accurately than notes and photographs. Pictures from a still camera are taken from the perspective of one person, and the act of snapping a photo can be disruptive to the subject. Video can capture a full scene, and can be set up in a corner and forgotten about. A photograph “can tend to exaggerate the importance of the ‘finished’ PRA diagram, at the expense of the process of developing it” (Frost and Jones, 1998, p.91). A video camera will record the group dynamics, body language, and an objective view of the PRA facilitation. Such footage can also be used in training workshops. Although I have focused on participatory applications, video can be integrated into development work from all angles. The PV process stands on its own, or can be part of a larger project.
I bring this up because communication technology is evolving so rapidly that video will only become an increasing presence in our lives. Participatory video is well-established as an effective tool in some scenarios, but the expense and technicality of the equipment required have kept the process on the fringe of development practice. Most of the women in our workshop had small video cameras embedded in their phones, and along with the open-source editing software that’s available on the Internet, and the many popular video streaming websites, it should be noted that they didn’t actually need to participate in a workshop to create a video and find an audience. The increasingly cheap cameras and Internet technology of the last few years are paving the way for the voices of marginalised people to be heard all over the world. These new technologies represent incredible opportunities for development workers to connect with and listen to local people. Video is likely to be the universal language of the future, and development organisations are ideally placed to help develop and share this language.
Appendix A – Workshop Exercises

Introduction to Participatory Video Production
A lesson plan for new participants

This class is designed to be an introduction to Participatory video for a group of six health volunteer workers in the Philippines. The aim of Participatory video is to empower participants to share and tell their stories from their own perspectives in their own words through video. Some of the activities in this lesson have been adapted from Nick and Chris Lunch’s Insights into Participatory Video- A Handbook for the Field (Insight, 2006).

Materials:
- Video camera
- Index cards labelled with video camera parts
- Video camera parts and instructions gap fill/matching sheet (see accompanying sheet, ‘The Camera’)
- Index card frames
- Blank 4-frame storyboard
- Participants should have pen and notebook

Preparation:
- Make sure video camera is charged
- Prepare five index cards, with one of the following words/phrases on each of the cards: Zoom, Power Button, Screen, Lens, Record Button
- Cut out one frame for every student (template in materials section)
- Copy one gap fill/ordering sheet for each student
- Make sure the group is seated in a circle on the floor (if this is not culturally/socially acceptable, a tight circle of chairs is sufficient)

EXERCISE ONE
Lesson Objectives:
- Feel comfortable holding a video camera
- Become familiar with basic operating (recording and playback) functions of a video camera
- Become more comfortable filming and being filmed

1) Warm Up (3 min.)
- Take camera out of bag and present it to the group. Ask what it is and what they know about it.
- Ask participants if they want to hold the camera. Demonstrate how to hold the camera, and make sure to note that it is a fragile object to be handled carefully.
- Pass the camera to the right, encouraging the participants to sense the weight and size.
- Have the participants continue to pass it around until it comes back to the instructor.

2) Camera Parts (5 min.)
- Point to the lens, and elicit the name from the participants. If none of them know the name, the instructor can provide it.
- Repeat this process with the screen, zoom, power button, and record button.
Next, place the camera in the centre of the circle, and ring it with the index cards.

Encourage one participant to take a card, show it to the group, say, “This is the ______.” and point to the appropriate part. Instructor demos this with the Screen index card.

Depending on the participants’ familiarity with the terminology, this activity can be repeated.

3) First Filming (15 min.)

Tell the group that they are now going to practice using the camera. Let them know that everyone will have a turn.

Have the participant to your right pick up the camera. Instruct her how to hold it, with the right hand in the handle, and the left hand flat underneath the camera base with the elbow tucked into the chest to keep it stable.

Show (by miming, the instructor need not touch the camera) the participant how to open and tilt the screen. Show the participant how to turn on the camera by using the power button, and then how to start and stop recording using the record button.

Make sure to note that the lens is very sensitive and should not be touched.

Instruct the participant with the camera that she is going to film the participant opposite her. Show her how to zoom in and out, and have her zoom so that the subject’s head is in the frame.

Tell the participant to be filmed that he will say his name, where he was born, where he lives, and what he had for breakfast.

Have the participant filming ask the filmed if he is ready, and film.

After this first filming is finished, instruct the filmer to turn off the camera, and close the screen.

Next, have the filmer pass the camera to the participant to her right, and then give instructions to the new filmer like the instructor did initially.

The new filmer then films participant across from her, and the process repeats until the camera comes back to the instructor.

4) Feedback and Playback (20 min.)

After the first filming is finished, ask the participants to discuss with the participant next to them how it felt to film and how it felt to be filmed. Give the participants 2-3 minutes to discuss their reactions, and then bring this to a whole group discussion for 2 more minutes.

Hand out the ordering/gap fill sheet, and give participants 5 minutes to complete. (While the participants are completing the sheet, you can hook up the camera to the laptop/monitor)

When the participants are finished, they compare their answers with the participant next to them, and then the instructor elicits the answers.

Ask the participants if they want to see the footage. Gather the group in a horseshoe around the camera view screen, and play back the recording.

After viewing the video, have the participants take out their notebooks, and write for 5 minutes on the following questions: How does it feel to watch yourself on video? What other questions/topics would work to get people talking on the camera?

After the participants have finished writing, have them share their reflections with the group.

EXERCISE TWO
Lesson Objectives:

- Conceptualize and articulate frame
5) Framing (10-15 min.)
- Ask the participants what is different between seeing with the camera and with their own eyes. Lead the discussion into the concept of frame.
- Tell the group that they are going to practice framing. Hand out index card cut-outs, and tell the group that the cards represent the screen.
- Bring up the idea of distance. Demonstrate how the frame changes when you hold the card closer or farther from your face, and that this is equivalent to the zoom.
- Pair up the participants and have them take turns looking at each other through the cards while changing the distance. After the pairs do this for one minute, ask them what it feels like when the card is close and what it feels like when it is far away.
- Next bring up the idea of angle. Have the pairs take turns looking at each other from different angles (from above, below, left, right, high right, low left, etc.) for a couple of minutes. After the pairs have practiced, elicit from the group what feeling different angles evoke.
- The process above can be then be repeated to investigate content (what is included in/excluded from the frame).
- Explain the rule of thirds, and that a shot looks more pleasing if framed slightly off-centre rather than in the middle of the frame.

EXERCISE THREE
- Storyboard a short story

8) Storyboarding (30 min.)
- Put the blank storyboard in the middle of the circle and ask the participants what they think it’s for.
- Next, place the example storyboard in the middle of the circle, and introduce the idea of storyboarding (drawing planning sketches of the frames to guide the filming process)
  Tell the participants that they are going to film one of their ideas from the previous activity, and use the storyboard to plan it out. The boxes in the storyboard each represent one frame, and for this activity, each frame can last for no longer than 1 minute.
- Have each of the participants choose one idea from the previous journaling activity that they would like to film.
- Go around the circle and have the participants present their ideas to the group.
- Tell the participants that they have to decide on one idea to work together on (and that they will have opportunities later to film the other ideas), and give them 5 minutes to decide which idea they will film.
- Once a consensus has been reached, focus the participants on the first box, and ask how they will introduce the “story”. Make sure the participants understand that the story will have to be told in 4 frames each lasting a minute or less.
- Give the group 20 minutes to fill in the storyboard. Have each participant draw one of the frames, with the other participants giving the drawer instructions for camera and subject placement. Encourage them to note the camera in the storyboard sketch, so that they know the angle and camera placement.

9) Storyboarding review (15 min.)
Once the participants have finished drawing the storyboard, write the following questions under the frames: Who is talking here? Who is filming the shot? What is in the frame? When does the frame begin and end? What do you want to communicate in the frame?

- Lead the questioning for the first frame. Note that there are four frames and four participants, and that each of them will film one frame.
- Encourage the participants to take over the discussion of the questions for the following frames.
- Make sure that all of the participants are in agreement on/understand all of the answers.
The Camera

1) Label the pictures with the words in the box.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>zoom</th>
<th>power button</th>
<th>lens</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>screen</td>
<td>record button</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2) Order the instructions. *(The first one is done for you)*

- Turn on the power.
- Open the screen.
- Stabilise the camera.
- Put your hand in the handle.
- Press the record button when you are ready to film.
- Close the screen.
- Put the camera away.
- Press the record button when you want to stop filming.
- Turn off the power.

3) Fill in the gaps with the appropriate words.

When you hold the camera, put your _____ hand in the handle, and use your _____ hand to stabilize the camera.

Most importantly, be careful not to touch the _____!
Appendix B – Storyboards

HOUSE CALL (Version 1)

Shot 1: Going on the house call

Shot 2: Follow up on proper procedure

CUP FEEDING (Version 2)

Shot 1: Materials

Shot 2: Proper expression

Shot 3: Feed the baby

Materials: cup, syringe, breast pump, key, lola
Bibliography


Communication for Rural Development (1975), Programmes for Better Family Living Report Series No. 23 in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).


Datt, G. (2003), ‘El Niño or el Peso? Crisis, poverty and income distribution in the


Using video in community health advocacy


