



Figure 1. Photo by Fernanda Baumhardt: Portrait – South Sudanese Refugee Group. Gloria Avo, Maaji 1 Settlement, Adjumani, Northern Uganda

# DIALOGUE WITH COMMUNITIES

## Uganda- Participatory Videos. Learning & recommendations, June 2019

By Maria Jimena Peroni Galli- CashCap Expert with the collaboration of Fernanda Baumhardt NORCAP PV Expert

This pilot project was a joint initiative between NORCAP's CashCap and Communication with Communities experts with the collaboration of UN Women and Refugee Law Project (Jan-Feb 2019). It aimed to contribute to a culture and mindset change on behalf of all those involved in delivering humanitarian assistance to place a greater emphasis on listening and understanding refugees. Participatory video is a tool that enables affected communities to reflect, identify, direct and film their own narratives and stories in the way they perceive as the most relevant and appropriate to portrait their realities. Uganda is one of the largest asylum countries worldwide, and the largest in Africa, with 1,190,922 refugees<sup>1</sup>. The 8-minute video depicts the reality of 2 groups of Ugandan and South Sudanese women in Maaji 1, Adjumani, Northern Uganda. This document captures our learnings and recommendations to move forward.

**Self-portrait of their realities**

**Amplifying their voices**

**They organize and direct their stories**

**They lead the editing**

**Highlights of the process  
2' video**

<https://vimeo.com/album/5834629/video/323266609>

**WE HAVE RAISED THEIR VOICES, IS ANYONE LISTENING?**

This document reflects on the field experience and interdisciplinary exchanges of the team conformed by Maria Jimena Peroni Galli- CashCap Expert, Fernanda Baumhardt – NORCAP PV Expert, Alice Kuczkiewicz – Programme Analyst- Women’s Economic Empowerment-UN Women and the fantastic staff from UN Women and Refugee Law project in Adjumani Offices. However, opinions and any error or omission in this document is the responsibility of the author (s).

All photos are credited to Fernanda Baumhardt/NORCAP, CashCap Participatory Video Project, Uganda, February 2019

The special thanks to the 23 women from Uganda and South Sudan in Maaji 1 Settlement, Adjumani in Northern Uganda, who voluntarily and actively participated in this process, as students of English Learning Courses (UN Women/Refugee Law Project).

### 1. Watch and listen! <https://vimeo.com/album/5834629/video/323153524>

- ✓ In 8 minutes, the tool allows you to navigate through these women’s realities in Uganda Settlements (Maaji 1, Adjumani, Northern Uganda) portrayed by them. By seeing and listening to their own voices without intermediation, it may bring you new insights.
- ✓ We truly recommend watching the highlights of the PV process (2 minutes), which will not be duplicated in this document; “*one image is worth 1000 words*”, isn’t it?
- ✓ Additional audiovisual Outputs: PV processes create many footages, which allowed to develop from a different angle several audiovisual and communication outputs (photos, advocacy videos, WhatsApp clips, social network, etc.). Check all the outputs in the following album (Pilot Album), including original community PV (15 minutes), which contain rich information for programming purposes on each group and showing the idiosyncrasy of Ugandan and South Sudanese women respectively.



Figure 2. **Day 1:** Training to participants. Ugandan group, “Discovering the equipment”, Uganda, February 2019

<sup>1</sup> By December 2018 (UNHCR)

## 2. What inspired us?

The commitment to **put people at the center** and place communities' voices in strategic platforms during the first quarter of 2019, such as the National and West Nile Cash Working Group, Donors Partners Working Group, Inter-Agency Coordination, CashCap steering Committee meeting, Grand Bargain Cash Workstream, gFSC annual partners meeting<sup>2</sup>. There is an increasing focus on investing in seeking feedback and engaging refugees in two-way communication<sup>3</sup>; so we were keen on emphasizing the importance of listening to and understanding refugees' basic needs, what is their say on how they would like to be assisted and women's experiences and perceptions about cash assistance. We wanted to contribute to the dialogue from a different angle, providing a group of women a safe space and opportunity to engage in a meaningful conversation on how to achieve self-reliance and empowerment. It could also contribute to the bigger reflection on how the system is moving towards people-centered approach and Grand Bargain's commitments on community engagement and accountability.



Figure 3. The term 'engagement' encompasses a wide variety of activities, ALNAP, 2014

## 3. Why Participatory Videos?

**Because the tool fits for purpose.** PV is more than making a film product: it is a process that stimulates a high-level of community engagement, empowerment, and ownership. The training method is designed to facilitate community-to-community capacity building on a horizontal and spiral way. It creates safe spaces for dialogue, and expression of and perspectives in a constructive way. It's a participatory process of community self-empowerment from beginning to end. One of the ultimate goals of the process is to develop the participants' capacities to listen and build consensus based on guiding editorial principles defined by the group. It aimed at enabling women to individually and collectively reflect about their own situation, priorities, and needs, discuss in group and as a team, capture the messages they would like to communicate to the outside world. Participatory Video is one of the tools recommended by CDAC Network.<sup>4</sup> The tool is super flexible and can be customized to assist multiple initiatives, researches, and objectives.



**Access to multiple Participatory Video resources** ([link](https://insightshare.org/resources/)) - prepared by Fernanda Baumhard. More on this webpage <https://insightshare.org/resources/>

## 4. What did we learn from the pilot in the field?

**Collaboration and partnerships were key to optimize resources, increase the quality and outreach of the pilot. CashCap leading allowed independent project management, rapid and flexible decision making in the field and multi-disciplinary teams.**

**Your key resource is the PV facilitator.** You need an experienced PV expert to carry out the activity. CashCap funded and teamed up with NORCAP communications with communities' expert, Fernanda Baumhardt, a senior CwC Expert with 10 years of experience in Participatory Filmmaking around the world, to help facilitate the process and produce the media products (6 weeks).

<sup>2</sup> The CashCap deployment was focused on supporting technically the CWG, specifically on the development of the Minimum Expenditure Guidance 2019/2020 which acted as a trigger and foundation for a basic needs lens in cash assistance across the response. You can access to the document at the UNHCR portal ([link](#))

<sup>3</sup> It is beyond the scope of this document to map engagement and accountability initiatives in Uganda Refugee Response. However, we can highlight initiatives from Ground Truth Solution on perceptions surveys on Grand Bargain Commitments ([link](#)), Kuja Kuja Project, American Refugee Committee, ([link](#)), WFP Hotline and Storytelling ([link](#)), UNHCR (and partners) centralized Complaint Response Mechanism; among many community based individual approaches, focus on protection services ([link](#)).

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.cdacnetwork.org/>

**Partnering with UN Women made it possible.** It hosted the PV expert. UN Women engaged a fantastic and diverse group of women including host and refugees in the same settlement, which embraced the spirit of integrating host communities in all activities within the Refugee Response. UN Women allocated experienced staff to put together the team, provided logistic support tapping into their current English learning Courses with their implementing partner, Refugee Law Project. It also helped to leverage the output to strategic decision makers within the organization and learn for future PV initiatives in UN Women (2019).

*"We thought we knew about participatory processes, until we saw how a PV is done"*

Yusrah Nagujja – Programme Management  
Specialist Head of Sub Office Adjumani, UN  
Women



Figure 4. **Day 2.** Photo 1 "The journey through my day". Voting which story will be part of the film. Consensus and participatory decision making on the narrative is key for truly participatory video. **Day 3.** Photo 2 taken by South Sudanese women. "They decide how to build the set and the narrative". Photo 3. During the whole process, they watch and recognize themselves, they give consent to have their faces into the screen or not. It is a powerful exercise where they are always at the driver seat of the process.

### With PV you take the back seat, are you prepared?

- **You don't decide on what story to tell, they do.** The core of cash programming is transferring the decision power to recipients of assistance. It is about choice and decision making. It is about engaging and benefiting local markets, hence host communities. That was the CashCap pre-defined theme. **TIP:** Refine the theme with multidisciplinary teams on the ground. Have three simple guiding questions or thematic to help inspire the PV theme and discussions (1 day). It is a process of collective thinking but be prepared to let the stories fly where participants decide so.
- **Who participates?** That is called the household profile, which will shape greatly the final output and is clearly linked to the objective of the PV. We planned for 2 groups. It was recommended a maximum of 12 participants per group and we required 4/ 5 days with each group. So, the challenge was Cash & In-kind? Host & Refugees? Women & Men? Congolese & South Sudanese? ...**TIP:** Work with community mobilizers to refine the profile (1 day). The number of groups will depend on the diversity of voices you need. Participants can interview the community to increase the sample. It is recommended that the PV is part of a broader research, evaluation or program. In this case, the HH profile selection can be aligned to the complementary research methods and/or assistance recipients list. Meet with Protection officers beforehand on the ground. Be flexible, and prepare your team to be so, to understand their point of view and adapt HH profile with other expert's inputs and concerns.
- **You don't have the editorial control.** The fundamental principle of PV is that participants are at the driver seat. They have the editorial control, guided and supported by the facilitator. No sort of filter, censorship, and resistance on what may be said and heard. **TIP:** Make sure decision makers in your organization and partners are appropriately briefed on this aspect. Having high-level support on the following principle allows the tool to gain all its potential and the facilitator to ensure the technical quality, the principles and the ethics required to be considered a PV.
- **Informed consent takes a new level.** The consent in a PV goes beyond as the whole process is built on a willingness to speak out, a safe space to do so and on a natural consent: "I speak because I would like to

do so". After they discussed, selected and filmed their messages, they watch back and review them. After repeating this cycle of filming-watching-discussing and learning, we move to the participatory editing stage.

**TIP:** After completing all these phases, in addition to the verbal consent given throughout the whole process; a written media consent form is presented for them to decide to sign it if they want their voices [to be heard by the world](#) or not.

- **Bottom-up or business as usual?** You are working with a truly bottom-up methodology. Embrace it. Collaborating and informing stakeholders of video activities is a good communication practice. However, there is a thin line between coordination and reinforcing the concept of gatekeepers and power imbalance dynamics in the system and on the ground. **TIP:** Partnering with local NGOs and universities (i.e. journalism), involving community mobilizers and mainstreaming in current programming can help.



Figure 5. "Take our message to the world". "These people in these meetings, are discussing what we talked here", South Sudanese Group.

## We have raised their voice, is anyone listening?

The essential aspect of listening to communities and inviting them to the center of the dialogue is to turn their voices and feedback into action. How prepared are we to attentively listen on what they are saying and transfer it into programming? How flexible is the system to enable communities to influence decisions that affect them? Do we put the people we serve in the center of the conversations in coordination meetings? More questions than answers. We ensured to fit the video into every agenda in coordination meetings to contribute to this discussion.

We used the original PV, to reaffirm messages that were delivered in written reports, such as transfer value suitability and/or expenditures ([link](#)). We ensured sending it to key decision makers

and reflect on these issues and to advocate for investing in independent initiatives to seek feedback and hold agencies into account. **Is that enough?** For sure it is not. We shall go back and show how (and if) their messages were really heard, explain to the PV participants where their film was screened, to what audience and in what country, and how their concerns and suggestions were received and taken into account. That is an important step in a participatory video exercise. Now, **closing the loop** can only happen if there are concrete actions by the humanitarian community, based on what was heard. That is another whole story, perhaps one of the greatest challenges across all listening to communities' initiatives. **Are we ready?**

## 5. Now what? 5 recommendations for CashCap

As of June 2019, CashCap deployed 28 experts, on 57 missions to 31 countries. The experts sit in strategic, technical and/or operational coordination platforms such as CWG, ICCG, Clusters, and Collaborative Cash Delivery Network; at global, regional and country level. It is recommended to:

- explore how to leverage on Cash Cap's interagency and neutral role and on these multiple deployments to contribute to all levels of participation of affected communities across cash responses;
- continue promoting multi-disciplinary teams working with NORCAP experts on the ground with expertise in community engagement and accountability, such as Communication with Communities, GenCap and ProCap [www.nrc.no/norcap](http://www.nrc.no/norcap) ;
- build capacity among Cash Experts in community and engagement tools, techniques and user-center methods (PV, perception surveys, user journey, feedback response mechanisms, etc.);
- explore strategic partnerships with independent initiatives on accountability to understand what people affected by crisis think; such as the Cash barometer <https://www.cashbarometer.org/> from Ground Truth Solutions;
- expand the use of Participatory Videos as a key tool to amplify the voices of the people we serve and to enable a meaningful dialogue with affected people for cash and voucher assistance.



*Figure 5. Photo by Fernanda Baumhardt: Portrait – Uganda Group. Ojolu Afisa, Maaji 1 Settlement, Adjumani, Northern Uganda*



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