



GOMBE SAVANNAH

**JOURNAL OF LANGUAGE, LITERATURE AND
COMMUNICATION STUDIES (GOSAJOLLCOS)**

**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
GOMBE STATE UNIVERSITY**

VOLUME 2 No. 1
October, 2021

AUDIO-VISUAL PRODUCTION AND CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION: LESSONS FROM THE KUTUNGARE EXPERIMENT

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Abstract

For decades, emphasis has been on the universal accounts of the development of children as individuals and what they could do at certain stages in their lives rather than on the social context and support that might enhance their lives. Many contemporary developmental psychologists are now however critical of this history and are conducting research and developing theories that emphasize the context of development and the process by which children collaborate with and learn from others. This paper therefore takes a look at a study carried out with children in a community in Kaduna, Nigeria. The aim of the study was to empower children through a Participatory video Methodology and in the process liberate their voices. The theoretical framework adopted for the study is the participatory communications theory the core principle of which is the recognition of dialogue, accountability and facilitation of decision-making processes in a shared milieu of interests which constitute true communication and participation. The paper takes a look at the project with a view to interrogating the communication strategy for working with children and how they participated in storytelling, script writing, camera handling and video editing. The paper concludes by making recommendations to the audiovisual production houses and regulatory authorities so as to mainstream children in the audiovisual production process.

Keywords: Audio-visual, Children Participation, Production, Children Development

Introduction

Development practitioners and researchers are now seeking to understand the process by which different groups of children become excluded from decision making and the development train. Varying concepts of childhood and adulthood, according to Johnson and Ivan-smith(1996), “depend on socio-economic status, ethnicity, sexuality, age and gender” and these must be explored in order to understand the changing roles and responsibilities of young people in households or families and society (p.6). James, Jenks and Prout cited in Johnson et al (1998) raise the debate about one or many childhoods: 'is it ever possible (or desirable) to speak meaningfully about 'childhood as a unitary concept?'(p.:6. Qvortrup cited in Johnson et al (1998) argues that there is value in understanding the 'childhood of society' and focusing on aspects and relationships that all children have with the rest of the society (Johnson et al, 1998).

Focusing on these aspects of relationships will give adults a better understanding of children's realities and how to work with them to generate information on how to help them communicate these realities to policy and decision makers in a language and style upon which they can act. This requires inevitably a detailed level of research and analysis of diverse childhoods so that the varying impact of change on different children can be linked with a broader analysis of the structural influences that may affect all children in a given society. Visibility does not equal participation or empowerment and it is also tempting to assume that the only hindrance for children's participation is invisibility. Even in areas where children are used for child labour, prostitution, farm work or street hawking, it does not enable these children to participate in their local communities or have their contributions recognized, rather, most children are mere pawns in the hands of adults engaging them in unrecognised and unrewarded labour.

From the foregoing, there is need to go beyond making them more visible and allowing them to participate in affairs that are exclusive to adults alone. Participatory processes can help achieve this result. These processes can help adults to understand social exclusion and different roles within the society from the perspectives of young people. Although there are tested techniques to work with and analyze differences in people's lives, these techniques have mostly been used with adults. There has been less participatory work carried out with children and young people. Despite this, "there is a growing emphasis on working to understand children and young people's roles in households and in society" (Johnson and Smith, 1998, p.7).

Using the example of Kutungare experiment, this paper examines the use of participatory video methodology to empower children, which in the process liberates their voices. The study was conducted by the author in Kutungare in Birnin Gwari, Chikun and Kaduna North Local Government areas of Kaduna state.

Background to the Project

In 2009, Boduvision Studio, a multimedia production centre based in Lagos Nigeria, came to Kaduna to shoot a Hausa children's television programme. With specialty in animation, documentaries, presentations and drama, the company has various children's videos and television programmes running on local and national network stations. These include Story Time with Grandma: a folk tale session with children in English and Hausa languages. The aim of the organization is the production of quality programme for the digital satellite television networks both

local and international. In order to achieve this, the organization produced some movies and television soap operas for Mnet, MyTv and other platforms.

Located in Lagos State of Nigeria, Boduvision Studio has established an excellent reputation for a range and quality of its secular audiovisual productions. *Tatsuniya da Gwaggo* (Storytelling with *Grandma*) is one of their children's video programmes produced for the television. The show uses the medium of film and video to positively mould the future of children through a concept that transcends mere routine claims to entertainment, information and education. Over 90 episodes of the programme were produced and transmitted on national television and cable stations across Africa.

Tatsuniya da Gwaggo was designed with the idea of reviving the tradition of storytelling by elders to children while seated around the camp fires, but in this case, it has been modernized to capture contemporary issues. Some of the aims of the project include: to entertain, educate and inform, to rekindle the fast fading morals, mores and values for which our society once had a reputation, to skillfully communicate healthy and beneficial messages whose results can be monitored and evaluated and to produce a children's programme with an African appeal and international standard. Grandma (the storyteller) keeps the African tradition of storytelling going by sitting with the children and telling entertaining, didactic and morals infused stories, which teach values and virtues. Boduvision's journey to Kaduna in 2009 was to realize more episodes of *Tatsuniya Da Gwaggo*. This author was a consultant on this set.

In the process of shooting the project, some of the children artistes were interested in participating beyond acting in the production. For example, Jemima Paul Mshelia who was 9 years old at the time of the production of *Tatsuniya Da Gwaggo*, yearned to be part of make-up design. Anytime the make-up artist had to dab a face or make any adjustment, she was eager to assist her. But almost all the time, she is told by the director to go back to her position. Looking back ten years today, she is wiser and would not rush into action as she did then. But her desire was to assist a little and she was denied that opportunity. To her, it was an opportunity for expression as she always helped her mum do her make-up at home and due to the fact that the make-up on the *Tatsuniya Da Gwaggo location* was not comprehensive, she felt it was too easy.

On another occasion, the author also witnessed another incident which almost stalled the production for some hours. As was the tradition on the set, the animator almost always acted out for the kids as an example before each scene or at a

complicated juncture so as to clarify different acting styles for the children, but in this instance, he added a cliché, that for it to be natural, the child actors should act it their own way-the way a child of their age will act it. The scene took off and Grandma (*Gwaggo*) was in the middle of telling her story when another child - Ahmed Dikko - interrupted her. As a talented actor, she manoeuvred her way and the act continued. But that did not go down well with the director who stopped the act and proceeded into another take of the same scene after warning the kids without being specific about Ahmed Dikko.

The Animator had his act and the scene continued. But almost at the same spot, Ahmed Dikko still interrupted. Grandma liked the interruption because it provided her a cue to add other comments but it still did not go down well with the Director who now chided Ahmed Dikko directly. But Ahmed Dikko responded that that is how a child will do it. Ahmed's caregiver, a senior cousin of Ahmed scolded him which made the boy to withdraw from the act. The scene was retaken but it did not have the initial spark as Ahmed was the star actor in this scene and he was the one putting the spark in the story. *Gwaggo* had to call the Director aside and advised him to go easy on the boy. The Director finally agreed and the scene was completed with the Director now satisfied. With this and many other instances where children were denied input in the production process, the need to probe how participatory the production process of the Tatsuniya production arose.

Though Boduvision like all other experts in the Hausa tradition, believe that the storytelling culture has a positive effect on children of today, a whole lot of questions came out of the author's observation of the production process of Tatsuniya Da Gwaggo.

- I. Beyond the presentation of the people's culture of storytelling. Tatsuniya has been told this way for generations. But in what significant way has it benefited the children other than giving fun? Can the fun be adequate enough to build their capacity thereby unlocking their tongues?*
- ii. Shouldn't the culture of Tatsuniya (storytelling) be used by Boduvision to build the capacity of children instead of somebody just telling them stories?*
- iii. Shouldn't the children tell their own stories from the child's angle using their own paraphernalia?*

- iv. *To what extent can the system of storytelling help children develop mentally?*
- v. *If at all storytelling helps children develop mentally, how can this mental development be sustained through their participation in this storytelling art and its presentation style? Shouldn't their voices be heard in packaging this story instead of sitting as mere audiences?*

With these and more questions to find answers to as the project concluded, the author chose to have a rehash of the production process of *Tatsuniya* with children, but this time, children would be in the driving seat.

The first step was to carry out an appraisal of the production process of *Tatsuniya Da Gwaggo* with a view to ascertaining how participatory it was for the children involved in the production. For the purpose of this appraisal, the author x-rayed the form and content of the *Tatsuniya* production. This appraisal is split into two namely:

1. Content analysis (taking a look at the issues contained in the *Tatsuniya da Gwaggo* stories).
2. The Form (x-raying the mode of packaging or realization of the production).

The findings from this appraisal threw up a whole lot of issues on the non-participatory nature of the *Tatsuniya* production.

Firstly, participants were involved in the production as tools, actors and actresses to be used by the directors on set. The producers of *Tatsuniya Da Gwaggo* had a mindset from the outset of the project. This objective was not one to be shared by participants as they were tools to change another group of people through the actions of participants on air, but behaviour-change initiatives (which is the Boduvision objective) use indicators to measure change which might be flawed because there is no room to pretest the process. *Tatsuniya Da Gwaggo* throws up an additional factor into the idea of 'sustainability failure' – the tension between producing a quality product and following a participatory process. It is an example of a commercial endeavour where the result from successful delivery of a quality product was at odds with the results from the empowerment of a well-managed participatory process. Working with children goes beyond generalizing and concluding on the capacities of children participants.

Secondly, Jones, lists the core skills required for effective communication

with children. These include listening, being able to convey genuine interest, empathic concern, understanding, emotional warmth, respect for the child, and the capacity to reflect and to manage emotions (Jones, 2003) He stresses the importance of these skills in seeking to communicate with children. The producers of *Tatsuniya Da Gwaggomet* none of these conditions in their production with children.

Thirdly, the method employed by the Tatsuniya project was very different from those used in participation-in-development projects(a process of development execution known for its efficiency, effectiveness, self-reliance, sustainability), and is self-evidently highly suitable for conventional video production. However, it relies on a relatively good understanding of technology. The production highlights the importance of identifying different types of stakeholders, and working with them - both separately and together. This has the potential to avoid some of the problems with teamwork.

Finally, access to spaces of communication and dialogue is crucial in any participatory communications activity. What is often not made explicit in participatory communication approaches, however, is the important role of media access, which is increasingly crucial considering the rapid changes in media tools, coverage and worldwide use. Thus, participatory communication is also about visibility and voice in the mediated public sphere. *Tatsuniya da Gwaggo* gave no room for dialogue.

These findings highlighted a gap between the goals of the Production Company and genuine development which empowers the individual/group to take their future into their hands. In the exploration of the production process of Bodu vision as presented above, it was discovered that there was need to explore an alternative production process which encourages participation of children and will translate to their empowerment. The author therefore proposed a participatory video communication framework as a strategy that can enhance and deepen children's voices in the development process. This design, which was implemented in workshop style, is presented below.

Description of the Workshop

The workshop process was designed in different independent phases along the production cycle of an audiovisual production, which includes, preproduction, production and post-production phases. These subsequently took the following procedure:

- Background research
- Advocacy
- Training workshop (Preproduction)
- The shoot (production)
- Participatory editing and previews (Post-production)

Stage 1. Background Research

Background research is a continuous process. The process involved the selection of participants and locating a conducive venue for the workshop. This Background research was built around: Identifying participants, their family backgrounds, their access to electronic media platforms (video, radio and television), past involvement in audio-visual productions and identifying a conducive venue for the workshop.

Stage 2. Advocacy

Advocacy was carried out in order to interact with the gatekeepers and opinion leaders in the Kutungare community. It was used as a tool to lobby the community as a whole to ensure their active participation in the research and workshop. People in the community needed to have an idea of what the project was about and why. Many visits were made to the community to talk with opinion leaders and elders. It took several visits to get an approval for the workshop. The team was able to discuss the issue of participatory video (PV) and the possibility of carrying it out with members of the community including children. After some deliberation among themselves, it was agreed that some of their children will be part of the workshop. After securing permission from the elders of Kutungare community, TRAPCO (a resort in the community) was secured as our venue for workshop and training. At this stage, arrangement was also made for equipment for the workshop ahead and other logistics.

Stage 3. Workshop and Training

The training was done in order to set a base for the eventual workshop. To achieve this workshop and shoot of *Tatsuniya Da Gwaggo*, the researcher keyed into the assembled crew of Boduvision from Lagos who were in Kaduna. This crew was made up of the following: Director, Assistant Director, Producer, three cameramen, Cameraman, Production manager, Costume/Costumiere, Make-up, Set Designer and a Location manager. There were about forty people in all: this was

made up of children, technical and artistic crew members and trainers.

In addition to this production crew, the researcher also invited three trainers who were experts in working with children. The researcher and these three trainers facilitated the crew members, adult cast members, some parents and the children through the rudiments of shot composition, camera handling script writing, make up, costume etc. This was a training which was geared at building capacity in participants to face the work ahead.

The curriculum for the training workshop had to do with imparting knowledge into the group related to production with emphasis on children. This knowledge ranged from directing and facilitation to artistic skills. Emphasis was laid on using objects and pictures to illustrate complex concepts. The games and exercises also helped to breakdown complicated technical concepts as a way of imparting technical skills in the children and bond them into a team.

The workshop content was made up of skills acquisition which translated to the successful production of an audiovisual product. This included-Group Development, Capacity building and skills development, Acting and storytelling skills, Camera handling skills, Drawing and Participatory Editing

a. Group Development

The first day of the workshop was dedicated to group development which is key to any successful participatory video project. Building bonds of trust, respect and understanding between participants was the first stage in the process and this influenced everything that followed. A lot was influenced by the project set up and the atmosphere created during this initial workshop stage. Time was committed early in the process to activities that focus on getting to know one another such as 'Listen & Share' or the 'Name Game', games which made participants familiarize themselves with each other, the equipment they were to work with and their environment in general. Games and Play were used bearing in mind that majority of the participants in the project were children.

b. Capacity Building and Skills Development

Day 2 of the workshop was dedicated to capacity building sessions basically to build children's capacities and skills in line with the work at hand. It was a session filled with the use of games and exercises to build children's innate skills like storytelling and the art of camera handling without supervision building in order to build or instil confidence in them. Issues emerged naturally from the participants

and trainers used this to their advantage by building on such issues to move the project further. Trainers were very informal, helping people to be relaxed, with issues arising as the sharing went on. This put participants in control. In the make-up session, Aisha Kelani, a 10-year-old girl showed her dexterity at making up artists. The difference between making up for the set and the one for everyday is very little and according to her, “this one is very simple since you use only pad and powder.”

The trainer also used different Participatory Learning and Action tools to deepen analysis of the main problems by revealing how problems, causes and effects are inter-linked, he used the Venn diagram. This was used to represent the power/influence of different stakeholders, using larger or smaller circles. This was done in order to gain an overview of the problem of adult power and influence over children and its effects. Reasons were put forward but the most fundamental reason was simply because adults felt children cannot think for themselves.

The facilitator guided participants toward an understanding of the Venn diagram by letting them physically manipulate hoola hoops which he rented for the session. He also came with different colors of pool balls. He began with the two hoops and two colors of pool balls, with another set of multi colored balls. With the hoops side by side, he made participants sort the balls, with one colour in each hoop. He also allowed participants to figure out what to do with the multi-coloured balls, prompting them by physically overlapping the hoola hoops if needed.

He also facilitated participants to label the Venn diagram using index cards, and explore other ways it can be used. The use of Venn diagram also showed other adult participants the power relationship between them and children. It showed them that with a little trust and patience with children, they can come out with things they never expected. A Venn diagram approach is then used to represent the power/influence of different 'stakeholders' using larger or smaller circles. The location of the circle on a 'map' reflects the degree of involvement each stakeholder has with the group. The Venn diagram represents both parameters simultaneously by drawing the appropriately-sized circle at a representative location directly on the map. A Venn diagram approach is then used to represent the power/influence of different 'stakeholders' using larger or smaller circles. The location of the circle on a 'map' reflects the degree of involvement each stakeholder has with the group.

c. Acting and Storytelling Skills

The facilitators kick-started this session by reminding the participants of the project

objectives but this time with scenarios created by the author and his team. The game River of life was used at this session. A game which helps participants go through the events of their lives; the high and low moments; the indifferent moments, and so on. This has a way of helping the participants shed emotions, because in the process of going down memory lane, they come out with different acts for different moods. It is also a therapy in itself because emotions are purged in the process.

The workshop participants worked in pairs to tell the story of his or her life. To aid the process, writing materials were provided to illustrate highpoints of their life stories. The games and energizers were another form of play used to motivate participants.

The second session was more of a production meeting between the Director, crew members and the Children. At this meeting, the crew members were briefed of their different tasks in relation to the main production. They were also informed of their added task of supervising some of the children who would be given a free hand as crew members. After this, the children were auditioned to discover those that had the capacity to be used in sensitive roles. This audition was carried out with games and the successful ones had adult crew members at their disposal in different groups to interact with. Role play was used to audition the children. One of such is a game which had to do with replicating what your partner has done. The children were facilitated to pair up after taking numbers. Odd and even numbers faced themselves and the facilitator tells any one of them to act a particular role ranging from what they had seen adults do, and which they were conversant with. The second person was to play out the role exactly how the partner had presented it. The democracy in the exercise was that everyone was asked whether it was well replayed or not. The choice was theirs and not from the facilitator. Through this game, the best actors were selected for speaking roles while the rest acted as audience. In all, every one of the children had a role and those without speaking roles formed part of the audience in the story.

d. Camera Handling Skills.

This is the stage where participants were introduced to handling the camera fully. It was processed using games. The aim of this session was to pass on camera handling skills and engage participants in group work using games. This was in preparation for “Handing over control” to participants. Though the game 'knowing the camera’ was used in the first session as an Icebreaker, it is now to be used in an

advanced mode: introducing the children to the equipment (camera) and also for the children to overcome the fear of using the camera. But most of all, it was done so the children could learn through experiencing it (Experiential learning).

Children and adults were made to go through basic camera operations process such as focusing, maintaining white balance, and zooming in and out in a peer sharing mode. Participants also learnt shot types and story boarding (planning on paper with pictures) while using the video camera to capture role plays and discussion. Picture Composition Exercise was also used. This exercise focused on the different types of pictures a camera can produce if handled correctly. Many of such games and exercises were used to get children and adults conversant with camera operation and its effects. But in all, these exercises succeeded in sensitizing the trainees to the biases that camera manipulation, both knowing and unknowing, can introduce.

e. Drawing and Story boarding

Although, it is relatively easy to learn basic video recording functions, making a coherent video involves a range of technical, narrative and organizational skills. For this reason, the researcher's role developed from structuring video exercises, and facilitating a bonded group, to following and supporting the group production agenda. Participants were not expected to plan a complete video in advance, when they had no previous production experience. Instead, video-making progressed in iterative stages, with new sections planned and storyboarded, after reflection on the last section and current needs. This structure maximized the possibility of participant creativity by creating a sequential flow the bits and pieces. The storyboard helps to pre-visualize your production so that you can look at the scenes before videoing or editing and therefore are able to arrange the video the way that you want it.

In this session, facilitators teased out stories from participants with the aid of drawings. The session was facilitated using exercises such as the storyboard. With games and exercises, facilitators teased out what story participants would like to tell. Using the storyboard technique, participants put their stories into pictures and proceeded to film the shots in the order laid out in the storyboard.

The storyboard is like a comic drawing of your story. For this reason, drawing was introduced into the workshop to build capacities in the children so they could bring out their stories in drawings. This session was facilitated by the author and a professional cameraman. The researcher kick started the session by teasing out stories from the children. This is a way of finding out what stories they would like to

tell. To build confidence in the children, the researcher started by stimulating them, asking them to relate stories like how they eat biscuits. These presentations were followed with praises and encomiums. They were then given papers to write out short stories around topics of their choice.

Stage 4. The Shoot

After a few days of training at the workshop, the children acquired some talents. At the stage of the shoot, their assignment was to use the talents acquired to shoot a video in the format of *Tatsuniya Da Gwaggo*. This stage of the process involves participants making a video to communicate their experiences, stories, ideas or views they learnt so far from the workshop to an external audience. At this stage, video obviously functioned as the creative medium, and the focus of the activity external communication.

The story to be shot was a product of the story writing exercises, drawing and storyboarding. The key points from both fieldwork and the discussion sessions were put to test at this stage. In the process of the workshop, the groups agreed on a story to shoot. This story was patterned after the *Tatsuniya* series. The major difference between this story and the Boduvision approach is the fact that children were allowed to come up with their own storyline. The children were given the opportunity to handle several aspects of the crew, while others played the children's role in the story. Planning tools such as storyboards were helpful to ensure equal and meaningful engagement of all participants.

All participants had equal opportunities to take roles during the production phase. Roles such as 'camera operator' and 'director' particularly, can be attractive to those who might otherwise dominate the process. Hence Participants were encouraged to rotate roles on a regular basis to prevent any individuals from appropriating particular roles. The 'Storyboard Technique' provided the ideal tool for ordering and regulating these rotations. Adult crew members monitored the children to ensure they got the shot type correct and picture quality was good. This shoot was for the children to test out the capacity built in them during the training workshop.

Stage 5. Participatory Editing

This session was a very slow and delicate one and a key stage in understanding which footage the participants valued and what they preferred to exclude. This is so because many professionals will simply not appreciate the value

of footage, which to them may appear poorly shot or otherwise imperfect. This in turn can cause participants to lose confidence in their abilities and ultimately derail the wider participatory process. Editing is an important and powerful stage in the process, yet it presented the greatest challenge to participation. All the time and care spent ensuring an authentic, honest and empowering participatory approach can be easily diminished at this late stage in the production of video messages. This is because if the wrong shots are used, the videos might not communicate. Undertaking a genuinely participatory edit also requires time, commitment and plenty of patience. All the footage gathered from the field were reviewed and logged. An editor who understands how to edit as part of a participatory process respects and complies with decisions made by the group regardless of their own opinions, and who will not impose their own aesthetic judgments or preferences on the editing worked with participants through the editing session.

The editing stage is where this kind of project (participatory video) is most likely to come under pressure from other stakeholders and interested parties, as more people begin to take an interest in the video messages created and often start putting forward their opinions and even asserting their own agendas. The decision about who edits the group's footage will have a bearing on the editing processes.

Undertaking a genuinely participatory edit requires time, commitment and prolonged patience. The whole footage taken from the field was reviewed and logged. A system of story construction emerged from the editing trials. The team collectively marked out relevant segments on the storylines. Discussions were then held on how the storyboard should be put together. A process of discussion and decision-making was then undertaken as the group decided how their video will be structured and which shots to use, how and when. Gradually an order and structure were built from the chaos and the outcomes of decisions taken, discussed and explored. The completed edited version was then shown back to the group for their comments and additions.

Discussions and Findings

However, despite the problems encountered in the workshop, findings about children's abilities in this research challenge the notion by adults that children cannot contribute meaningfully to research. They shed light on some of the developmental limitations on children that are imposed by age and the implications for researchers for doing research with children that facilitate the platform of meaningful accounts of their subjective experiences. Donaldson (1978), for example, argued that we often

confuse children's language ability with their general intellectual ability, and that when we attempted to make ourselves understood to the children, we find them to be more competent than we expected. Furthermore, when young children find it difficult to remember an event, we are inclined to allow that to reinforce our prejudices about their credibility more than we do when older children commit the same mistakes (Lieppe, Mannion, & Romanczyck, 1991 367-377). This was confirmed in the workshop as the children were able to comment and report on different activities coordinated.

In the experiment, the children gradually took over the process which goes to show that the Participatory Video methodology provides them with an alternative way of communicating their perceptions Participatory Video is a powerful way to develop the participants' control over the project. This is because no matter how abstract the issue of participation was to the children and some of the stakeholders who had the question of “why participation of children in an industry more complicated than they could understand”, they were able to comprehend and this was revealed in their responses to group assignments.

Another strength of the participatory methods used was that they could help children express memories and recall childhood experiences. For example, the children often recalled memories of how they had played at specific places enabling them to provide nuanced dimensions of their neighbourhood experiences and building this into their storyline. For example, in the storyboarding exercise, Mohammed Yusuf who was ten years old could interpret the story to be shot into a sequence of sketches. To him, it was more of using comic strips to narrate the story, which is actually what the exercise was all about. It only goes to prove that it is not the activity that matters, it is the manner that it is presented to the child coupled with the atmosphere in which it is happening that makes the child either open up or lock up. The storyboarding exercise humbled many adults who missed the purpose of the whole exercise. Children can remember accurately, especially when they are freely allowed to recall the details of the events, they have personally experienced.

Children psychology was put into consideration through the lifespan of the project. The use of exercises that value and encourage group activities and collective decision-making was also employed to complement the games. The researcher observed that children were much more reserved as many were not used to this kind of play with adults around them.

What then is the value of using the participatory video methodology when aiming to empower children and what can be learned from employing a participatory

approach with children? Using photographs and drawings reduces the authority of the adult researcher and can empower participants. Rasmussen (2004) pp. 155–173. It was observed that the sessions where photographs, drawings, role play and video recordings that were used provided the children with greater control over the conversation, and enabled a more focused discussion. But while the experiment helped to reduce the authority of adult researchers and helped children to express their opinions, it is important to be aware of the power imbalance that remains between the participants and researcher. Due to differences between adults and children in terms of cognitive and communicative maturity, power, and physical size, equality is difficult to reach (Eder and Corsaro, 1999: 28 pp. 520–531, (Mandell, 1988 16: 433–467).

Editing the footage gathered was another matter. This is a key stage in the process. It was the most technically difficult, and very time-consuming. It was also the part of the participatory video process that required the most intensive intervention by the researcher. The nature of digital video editing makes it practically impossible to make the editing process participatory. Literacy can be a significant obstacle in research, and participatory video demands another layer of technical literacy. In the end, we settled for approximate participation involving a small number of people at each stage of editing.

Editing would almost certainly be the biggest barrier for researchers to use participatory video on their own partly because of the need for technical knowledge, and partly because it was the stage that led to biggest disagreements within the group. The process of creating a video with a single narrative implies reconciling the different agendas of those involved in the process. In the end, these different agendas were not wholly reconciled. The risk is that the video becomes reductive and superficial, but still evocative, therefore misrepresenting the situation. Certain things had to be cut out due to time limits and there were disagreements about what to leave out and what focus to give each of the films.

The role of the facilitator is crucial in addressing these problems, and what appeared in the final films represented the facilitators' best efforts to balance different perspectives. The researcher provided several opportunities for training in video and facilitation, both formal and informal, for the community researchers and research participants. However, there was still a need for support throughout the video production process, especially during the editing, when the technical support the researcher provided often consisted of carrying out the actual editing with one or

two participants guiding my choices. The researcher's role was often that of arbitrator, helping participants to reconcile differences or conflicts about the video.

Recommendations

In view of the findings above, the researcher provides the following recommendations below. There is a need for a regulatory framework and policy on participation of children in audio-visual production. There is need therefore to develop a national participatory video production framework or policy which will legislate for the leadership and coordination of children's programmes using appropriate participatory approaches.

There is also the need for the strengthening of producers/Children collaboration. The study established that the authoritarian (top down) production process adopted by the Boduvision crew created no room for children's contribution and free/unrestricted participation. This affected the quality and outcome of the Boduvision project. This finding implies a wide gulf between producers and artists. To enhance a better quality of children's production, it is recommended that audio-visual associations and government regulatory bodies should be encouraged to work towards linking research with children/artists' performance.

Children and young people's participation do not mean that adults give up their share of responsibility, nor imply that whatever young people say will be taken at once without scrutiny and acted upon immediately. It simply implies that children should be given more opportunities to prove themselves. Hence, adults should be encouraged to always have trust in children and provide them more opportunities to showcase their abilities.

Working with children can present special challenges. In particular, adults in all societies have power over children, which allow children to become vulnerable to exploitation during research. Adults should be aware that children's participation is truly voluntary and not coerced. Participation is based on equality. Children's opinions do not have more weight or validity than anyone else's, but they should have the same regard/value as the adult's provided they are based on equal access to information and resources.

Conclusion

The Participatory Video Workshop has come and gone but those who participated in the workshop in different capacities benefited so much from it. One of the lessons learnt is that children who were generally thought to be uninformed or

ignorant are not at all. Participatory video enables children to express their feelings and share experiences. The emphasis of participatory Video workshop was placed on *process* rather than *product*. The process helped to achieve the following: build the confidence of participating children, increase the participation of marginalized commonly relegated children in group or community production, increase the capacity for advocacy, foster understanding and awareness within participating communities, enable participating children to clearly communicate with the target audience, challenge injustice and inequity.

One of the most important aspects to address when working with children is to diminish the power imbalance between the adult researcher and the child. An unequal power balance can cause discomfort for the child and may inhibit expression (Woodhead and Faulkner, 2008, pp. 9–35). By providing children with a wider range of methodological options which place them in equal share of control of the process, the child may feel more comfortable and express themselves with more honesty and openness (Noonan et al., 2016 16 p. 326). Thus one of the most important findings of this study is that there is a relationship between child participation, and power sharing/balance in audiovisual production.

The concept of child participation conjures up very different ideas and perspectives to different audiences. It is a term which has an everyday meaning in our daily lives, but also has a very specific meaning in the context of participation in audio-visual programmes. Children must be provided with full, accessible, diversity-sensitive and age-appropriate information about their right to express their views freely and their views to be given due consideration. Such information should also include how the participation will take place, its scope, purpose and potential impact. Though it was hard to explain the concept of rights and participation to the children, it got across to them in the course of the training because of the freedom that they were given to make suggestions in a process they never thought their contributions and views would be given high regard.

According to one of the adults, empowerment of the individual came through working as a group together to overcome shyness and lack of self-esteem; and through the instrument of a video camera, self-esteem increased as participants transferred their knowledge and experience to others. To him, the message of the approach came across in the participants' own words; and that they were in control of how they represented themselves. Rather than develop people's technical ability as videographers or filmmakers, participatory video is used more as a process to develop confidence and group working skills and take people through a process of

change as they realize their abilities and affirm their views and beliefs.

It is critical to the Participatory Research process that all stakeholders are actively engaged in building a common understanding. They should be provided with the opportunity to fully participate and have access to information in order to do so. If this does not happen, then there is the risk that some will dominate the research process. Care must be taken to communicate on technical and political levels at which all stakeholders can comfortably engage. Powerful stakeholders can end up controlling the process when activities and information are shared using the language and approaches that they have developed. Therefore, an important precursor to building a common understanding is determining the capacity of stakeholder groups to participate in the process.

People's participation essentially has to do with economic and political relationships within the wider society; it is not just a matter of involvement in project activities but rather the process by which they are able to organize themselves and, through their own organization, are able to identify their own needs, share in design, implement, and evaluate participatory action. It is only through people and organizations working closely together that a full understanding of a situation can be fully realised, and the most appropriate action be taken. Participation is a process of partnership between young people and adults, whereby they share ideas and arrive at common solutions (Wilkinson cited in Save the Children, 2000:8).

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