



Proceedings of the Resilient Cities 2014 congress

Session: Presentation Session

Giving people a voice: The use of participatory video for empowerment and inclusion in a changing climate

A participatory approach to climate change adaptation on community-level

Lissel, A. and Segebart, D.

Abstract:

Applying participatory video (PV) in which communities and individuals collaboratively tell their story and experiences through the use of camera is increasingly being used in sustainable development. Our paper reflects on the potential of PV in a community in South Africa when used as both an educational tool to explore options to enhance adaptive capacity and as a measurement tool to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of those changes amongst communities dealing with climate change. Using participatory visual methods in the context of climate change and adaptation strategies, we need to consider them in the planning stage, valuing the knowledge of the people who know most of their own livelihood systems. Engaging with PV can amplify people's voices regarding their matter of importance as well as affecting policy makers for their benefit development.

Keywords:

Adaptation, Climate Change, Global South, Participatory methods, Video

1. Introduction

Climate change is a global phenomenon including causes of natural climate changes and anthropogenic changes in climate. It hits most seriously the livelihood of the most vulnerable groups, which have generally little capacity to adapt (Adger et. Al 2003). Therefore, it is of particular importance to look at the status of knowledge of climate change and its effects on community level. While local communities may have little knowledge about global causes and impacts of climate change, they are often aware of changes in their livelihood and environment. However, less attention has been paid yet to the role of local knowledge and experiences of communities in their efforts to cope and adapt to their changing livelihoods (Reid et al. 2009).

This study presents some results from the analysis of the work on adaptation to climate change and participatory approaches realized by a community in South Africa. We were particularly interested in exploring potentials of the aspects empowerment, ownership and inclusion in the participatory video process.

To complement the analysis, we asked what are the advantages and disadvantages of participatory video? What are the challenges and limitations of the tool? Are their requirements to increase the potential of participatory video? The focus is not on any particular video but rather analyses the process of the method as a whole.

2. Participatory Video Approach

The idea of using participatory video as a tool in the context of a people-centered sustainable development approach is not new. A facilitating group around Don Snowden accomplished first experiments with the visual media tool already in the late 1960's (Harding 2001).

Tamara Plush defines participatory video as a bottom-up approach in which a group, community or individuals produces their own oral recordings or film/video clips on issues according to their own sense of importance (2009, 12). Using participatory video aims to develop participant's ability to express their issues of importance in the way of filmmaking and providing an authentic voice on grassroots level (Lunch & Lunch 2006). Focusing on the content, the use of participatory video can also enable participants to show their achievements, increase awareness and responsibility for their own living circumstances and prospected futures. Participatory video is also defined as a form of learning from and with each other at equal level (Lissel 2013).

Conference organizers: ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability

In cooperation with the City of Bonn and the World Mayors Council on Climate Change
*ICLEI does not accept any kind of liability for the current accuracy, correctness,
completeness or quality of the information made available in this paper.*

<http://resilient-cities.iclei.org/>

3. Case Study

The case study presented in this study is of tea farmers in South Africa. The community is located in a region called *Suid Bokkeveld* in the district municipality which is part of the Northern Cape Province. Within the context of adapting to climate change, the community has been cooperating with the NGO Indigo and university based researchers applying a Participatory Action Research approach since 2000 (Archer et al. 2008). Participatory video was introduced as part of a larger project on climate change adaptation in 2009. Several film clips and video interviews have been recorded on daily livelihood and mapping water resources. Some footage are recorded for internal learning and communication purposes and is not accessible to the public, while other filming have already been shown at international decision-making meetings (Koelle et al. 2010)

4. Research Methodology and Analysis

The research study uses an explorative qualitative approach (expert interviews, observation) and is integrated in a broader action research on adaptation. In order to measure potentials of participatory video in the context of climate change adaptation, an analytical framework was developed. The framework presented here, is based on an analytical framework developed in the context of participatory monitoring (Segebart 2007) and modified to the research objectives of this paper. It outlines the basic concept to the practical objective of this research study by formulating categories, indicators and measurements (Lissel 2011).

Table 1: Framework of analysis to measure potentials of PV (modified from Segebart, 2007)

Category	Indicator	Measurement
Participation	Level of participation	Quantitative/Qualitative participation
	Ownership	Who owns the impulse, design, edit in the participatory process?
	Intensity of participation	Sum of Level of participation and ownership
Effectiveness	Occurrence of expected effects	Collective learning processes Individual learning processes
	Efficiency	Cost-Benefit Analysis
Adaptation	Flexibility of the method to be adapted in other research contexts	Transformation Difficulties and challenges
Sustainability	Institutional sustainability	Feasibility Adaptability Transformation potential

5. Key Findings

In this paper, we elaborate potentials of participatory video in the context of climate change adaptation strategies in sustainable development in South Africa. The study investigate potentials of participatory video when implemented as a learning tool to enhance empowerment and ownership dealing with climate change as well as a measurement tool to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness those changes. Based on the analysis of the interviews and secondary data, we found that participatory video is an engaging and multi-functional tool promoting the voices of the community effectively, however the results suggest long-term commitment within the assigned project cycle. The results from the analysis show that PV can be an innovative way of monitoring and evaluating change and adaptation practices. (Lissel 2013).

From the analysis, we found consistently high levels of participation throughout the participatory video cycle in the case study. The participating group consists of more than 30 people in an age group from 22-50 years old. Equally both women and men participated and the level of engagement depends on the person themselves. The roles of the participation in the process are quite clear. Throughout the different stages, they can vary or be the same but nevertheless it is clear who is doing what. Together with the NGO the participatory video process is designed but the community holds the decision-making rights on the video content and requested to use participatory video as baseline study for monitoring the water resources. A high level of active engagement and with good facilitation can maintain the potential of participatory video. If participants learn skills in storytelling, video production and editing than this may create the opportunity for a more efficient use of the video. The level of participation is determined through the interest and enthusiasm of how the instrument is introduced into the community and project work. Thus, an effective and sustainable application of the video will require an appropriate level of trust between the facilitating body and participating group. The decision-making process is based a communal understanding and respect.. The community members are involved from the start to the finish of the process and can always interfere and change the way they want to be represented and shown in the video. The video process enables participants to take their own actions to solve their problems.

Moreover, the participants should be given autonomy in decision-making and have access to the films. The resources of human, financial and time capacities need to be secured, once a trusting and responsible relationship between the people involved is established.

Often costs for the equipment and computer software are not affordable by low-income households unless they cooperate with an organisation or have other funding available. In addition, other material costs such as photocopies and travel costs need to be considered in the calculation as well.

Conference organizers: ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability

In cooperation with the City of Bonn and the World Mayors Council on Climate Change
*ICLEI does not accept any kind of liability for the current accuracy, correctness,
completeness or quality of the information made available in this paper.*

<http://resilient-cities.iclei.org/>

However, the non-material costs such as how much time the participants have to take out of their daily work patterns is difficult to estimate but the video process is certainly time consuming. Consequently, the filming can take up to a day depending on what is filmed because the participants need to take a day off their daily work responsibilities. In the case study, the filming appointments are coordinated by the temporal needs of the community (Lissel 2011).

The assessment of the results lead to the conclusion that the potential of participatory video as a measurement tool to show the effectiveness of change is still in the initial phase and continue to unfold. Change cannot be rushed and requires continual reflection loops. However, great potentials occur when participatory video is applied as learning tool to contribute to build capacities empowerment and ownership. we found that it has comparative advantages, especially in a context where the literacy rate is low and participants have different level of education. Making a good movie that they can be proud of is another important outcome of the video process. The learning process can induce the participants to learn how they acquire and use new skills and knowledge effectively as well-functioning ability. when interacting with participatory video may help the participants to gain self-confidence and it is certainly helpful for building new learning competences. The acquisition of technical knowledge might be an obstacle but once it is done, it can represent a new freedom and self-esteem for communities as well as for the individual participants.

The main results reveal high potentials of PV when used as a shared learning experience in climate change adaptation, the importance of acknowledging local knowledge and innovation. However, assistance is especially required in the initial phases of the approach – learning to deal with the new technology.

We found that participatory video is suitable for strengthening the development process of a community. Establishing autonomy for the participants in terms of both skills training and production/editing increases the potential of participatory video. If the people's opinion is taking into account, it creates both social acknowledgment and active participation.

6. Conclusion

In this paper, we elaborate potentials of participatory video in the context of climate change adaptation strategies in sustainable development in South Africa.

When we use participatory visual methods in the context of climate change and adaptation, participatory approaches need to be considered in the planning stage, valuing the knowledge of the people who know most of their own livelihood systems. We conclude that if engaging in participatory video research, it can

Conference organizers: ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability

In cooperation with the City of Bonn and the World Mayors Council on Climate Change

ICLEI does not accept any kind of liability for the current accuracy, correctness, completeness or quality of the information made available in this paper.

<http://resilient-cities.iclei.org/>

show people's voices regarding their matters of importance as well as affecting policy makers for their benefit development.

Acknowledgements:

- Participants in the participatory video project and supporters in the South Africa
- Indigo Development and Change, South Africa
- Bettina Koelle, Director of Indigo Development and Change
- German Academic Exchange Services (DAAD) for financial support (scholarship reward) for the research trip

References:

Adger ,W N., Hug, S., Brown, K., Conway, D. & Hulme, M. (2003) Adaptation to climate change in the developing world. *Progress in Development Studies*, 3, pp. 179-195.

Archer, E. R. M., Oetlé, N. M., Louw, R. & Tadross, M. A. (2008) Farming on the edge in arid Western South Africa: climate change and agriculture in marginal environments, *Geography* 93, pp. 98-107.

Gregory, S., Caldwell, G., Avni, R. & Harding, T. (2005) *Video for Change. A Guide for advocacy and activism*. London, United Kingdom and Ann Arbor, USA: Pluto Press.

Harding, T. (2001) *The Video Activist Handbook*. London, United Kingdom: Pluto Press.

Kindon, S., Pain, R. & Kesby, M. (2007) *Participatory Action Research Approaches and Methods. Connecting people, participation and place*. London, New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.

Koelle, B. (2009) Take a walk on the Wild Side: Small Scale Rooibos Tea Farmers are taking action to adapt to climate change. Conference paper for "Climate change adaptation and disenfranchised people", University of York. Toronto, Canada.

Koelle B & Oetlé N M. (2010) Adaptation with Enthusiasm: Climate change adaptation in the context of Participatory Action Research. South Africa. Indigo Development and Change, Paper 1. 15 pp.

Koelle, B., Oettlé, N. M., Parring, S., Lissel, A. & Kotze, D. (2010) Farmers moving towards resilience. Suid Bokkeveld Case Study on Climate change adaptation, South Africa. In: J. W. Wakhungu, Kariuki Kung'u, J. and C. Tonui (ed): Community Based Adaptation to Climate Change (CBAA). N.p.

Lunch, C. & Lunch, N. (2006) *Insights into Participatory Video: A handbook for the field*. Oxford, United Kingdom. InsightShare.

Lissel, A. (2011) Potentials of participatory video as a monitoring and evaluation tool for climate change adaptation projects on community level. A case study from South Africa. Master thesis. Degree of Diplom Geography. Berlin: Freie Universität Berlin.

Lissel, A. (2013) Engaging in change: Participatory video as a tool for inclusion and empowerment in a changing climate – A case study from rural South Africa. Conference paper for “Third International Visual Methods Conference”. 06. - 09. September 2013 in Wellington, New Zealand.

Pegels, A. (2009) *Prospects for Prospects for renewable energy in South Africa, Mobilizing the private sector*. Discussion paper. Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik 44, Bonn, Germany.

Plush, T. (2009) Video and voice: How participatory video can support marginalized groups in their efforts to adapt to climate change. Warwickshire, United Kingdom.

Reid, H., Berger, A. M., Cannon, R. Huq, S. & Milligan, A. (2009) *Community-based adaptation to climate change: an overview*. In: Participatory learning and action – Community-based adaptation to climate change, 60(13) Warwickshire, United Kingdom.

Segebart, D. (2007) Partizipatives Monitoring als Instrument zur Umsetzung von good Local Governance - Eine Aktionsforschung im östlichen Amazonien/Brasilien. Dissertation Degree of Doctor of Geography. Tübingen.

The authors:

Ariane Lissel

Scientific Researcher

Institute for Future Studies and Technology

Assessment (IZT)

Email: a.lissel@izt.de

Www: www.izt.de

Prof. Dr. Dörte Segebart

Assistant Professor Freie Universität Berlin

Department of Earth Sciences

Institute Geographical Sciences - Human Geography Department of Development and Gender

Studies Email: doerte.segebart@fu-berlin.de

Www: <http://www.geo.fu-berlin.de>

Bio:

Ariane Lissel holds a degree in Geography, Politics and Geology from Freie Universität Berlin. She is currently working as a research scientist at the Institute for Future Studies and Technology Assessment in Berlin, Germany. Ariane's research focus is climate and environmental politics, participatory visual methods and approaches (in particular video), sustainable and gender sensitive planning and environmental education.

Conference organizers: ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability

In cooperation with the City of Bonn and the World Mayors Council on Climate Change

ICLEI does not accept any kind of liability for the current accuracy, correctness, completeness or quality of the information made available in this paper.

<http://resilient-cities.iclei.org/>