

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT
SPOTLIGHT
Participatory Videos to Amplify Client Voices

September 2023


SUMMARY

Challenge: Giving clients direct voice to influence projects and services.

Opportunity's Solution: Participatory video production in which client and local staff collect stories and client journeys to identify the most significant change in client lives, due to the project.

Evidence of Success: PV MSC approach was applied in evaluations of 2 projects in Uganda, giving clients a direct voice and communication channel to project stakeholders.

Next Steps: Participatory videos are being integrated into Opportunity monitoring, evaluation, and learning practices.

THE CHALLENGE: GIVING CLIENTS A VOICE IN PROGRAMS

Opportunity international strives to be client-centric, to design and evaluate programs with client perspective and experience in mind. Opportunity has developed and deployed a number of tools to engage clients and enhance our understanding of clients' lived experience and needs. With most of these tools, however, client voices are filtered through a researcher's lens, rather than giving direct voice to clients. One approach that gives clients voice is the use participatory videos (PV) in which clients hold and speak to the camera. While Opportunity has extensive experience with video production of client stories, this is the first initiative in which clients were invited to produce such videos, generating a less filtered, more direct channel for client voice and participation.

OPPORTUNITY'S INNOVATION: PARTICIPATORY VIDEOS AND MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGE TOOL

Starting in 2019, Opportunity implemented an innovative approach to raising client voices that merged participatory videos (PV) with an evaluation approach that captured "most significant change" (MSC). The objective was to support clients to share their lived experiences in their own words with other project stakeholders, including Opportunity. This involved—

- ▶ Training participants in participatory research tools and basic videography
- ▶ Storytelling and journey mapping
- ▶ Identifying the "most significant change" stories to highlight in videos
- ▶ Supporting clients to select subjects and record their story on video
- ▶ Editing videos to merge stories with dramatizations produced by participants
- ▶ Viewing/analyzing videos to incorporate into Opportunity project evaluation
- ▶ Sharing the videos with stakeholders to give voice to clients in guiding the project

The methodology was applied in Uganda in two projects focused on financial education with very marginalized populations – people with disabilities and refugees. The projects delivered financial education, organized savings and loans groups, and linked clients to banking services. Both projects substantially engaged stakeholder groups in the disability and refugee communities, including NGOs and government representatives. The PV MSC process was integrated into project evaluations to give clients direct voice in providing feedback to Opportunity and key stakeholders.

To view these videos, see Opportunity-UK's YouTube pages, [here](#) and [here](#).



RESULTS: CLIENT UNDERSTANDING, EVALUATION FINDINGS, REPLICATION

This project contributed to client understanding and project learnings. Insights into client experience included the following:

- ▶ Financial aspects of client lives are only one factor for clients in considering their financial choices. Other aspects of client lives play into financial decisions just as much, including displacement or disability trauma, social exclusion and isolation, mental and physical health, and family dynamics.
- ▶ The project interventions were valuable broadly, and there were substantial benefits beyond access to microfinance. Additional physical benefits included starting and sustaining livelihoods and investing in education.
- ▶ The social interaction and community that emerged from savings and loan groups was highly valuable to participants.

“I received another training from Opportunity on how to acquire loans. This was my first time as a refugee hearing about loans.” (Client, Petronia)

“I got this hope from Opportunity Bank. They told us that disability is not inability.” (Client, Moses)

In addition, the PV MSC process acted as a platform to support exchange and dialogue among diverse stakeholders. This exchange was designed to foster understanding and action. For example, after a stakeholder session with the (Central) Bank of Uganda in which the videos were shared, Opportunity project staff were asked to be an advisor to the Bank on financial service policy for reaching people with disabilities.

With the success of the pilot initiative in Uganda, participatory videos – and the research tools accompanying them – have become an integral part of Opportunity’s monitoring and evaluation practice. Originally trained by an international company, InsightShare, Opportunity staff are now using the PV MSC methodology for the final evaluation of the refugee project, and have integrated the methodology into proposals as a key monitoring and evaluation tool.

LESSONS LEARNED:

The program produced valuable lessons, including the following:

- ▶ **For successful implementation:** put community members and local staff in the driver’s seat; facilitate the complicated logistics of training community members and local staff, assembling materials to participatory journey mapping, ensuring appropriate setting for video production; pay attention to social dynamics in asking people to come together to share potentially intimate details of their lives with one another.
- ▶ **For widespread adoption:** build the method into proposals; bring everyone along with you (train a large organizational team); give the method time to be tested, adapted, integrated; build in accountability to client voices (share with staff and partners and stimulate, advocate for responses); and, build opportunities for continuity through capacity building and peer sharing.



For more information or to suggest a topic: Contact Knowledge Management at km@opportunity.org.

Opportunity International | 101 N. Wacker Drive, Suite 1150, Chicago, IL 60606 | 800.793.9455 | opportunity.org