



# ARE WE READY TO ENGAGE COMMUNITIES IN HUMANITARIAN PROGRAMMING?

A participatory video evaluation  
review of the Global Framework  
for Climate Services (GFCS)  
programme in Tanzania and Malawi

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In times of increasing discussions on the importance of community engagement in humanitarian programming, it's equally importantly to debate what level of engagement we are aiming at, and notably ready for. A high level of community engagement entails far more than dialogue. It needs to include community participation and community ownership. This means not only collecting data from the communities, but engaging communities by supporting their participation in the full programme cycle from beginning to end. The ultimate purpose of community engagement should go beyond providing them with a voice, having consultations, and providing them with timely information and feedback opportunities for accountability purposes. Communities should increasingly sit at the decision-making tables, co-lead clusters and co-design humanitarian preparedness and response interventions. **Are our mind-sets, structures and programmes ready for this?**

*“People themselves are the most important resource for their own progress, which can only be sustained through their own leadership and ownership of the process.”*

IFRC Strategy 2020, p. 23. Go to: [ifrc.org/Global/Publications/general/strategy-2020.pdf](https://ifrc.org/Global/Publications/general/strategy-2020.pdf)

Over the past decades, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) has been using multiple participatory methods and approaches to engage communities to map needs and to identify vulnerabilities, capacities and potential solutions. In line with this approach, and following up on the participatory video of the GFCS programme “Connecting the Dots” undertaken in 2014, the IFRC piloted a Participatory Video Evaluation (PVE) in December 2016 in Tanzania and Malawi for the Global Framework for Climate Services (GFCS) Programme. The PVE was to complement the final evaluation to be undertaken by the GFCS programme. It was planned with the intention of closing the loop between communities' perspectives and programming design, and at the same time, enable communities themselves to video document and transmit their feedback and recommendations to decision makers with minimum interference and intermediation.

Video can be a powerful communication tool as it combines images and sounds. It conveys and legitimates communities' messages and realities as audiovisual content is transmitted directly from the emitters to the receivers. It enables the audience to see and hear directly from the communities their side of the story, and helps bring the viewer into the realities the communities face on a day-to-day basis. Moreover, our current times of “leaving no one behind” calls for a more inclusive approach to ensure that all voices are represented and brought to the forefront of organizational policy and practice. In this PVE, we have gone beyond simply using video as a tool to showcase stories. We facilitated an evaluation process that applied community-led video to strengthen participation, ownership and community interest in the programme.



*“This initiative gave an opportunity for communities to be part of an evaluation and tell how the project has benefited them.”*

Chance Muwama, Nsanje District Officer,  
GFCS Project Field Coordinator at Malawi Red Cross Society



Participatory Video (PV) methodology has been explored for decades in development work and is far more than creating video products. It is a process that strengthens social transformation. As described by Gumucio in his article *The New Communicator* (1998), “the process of communication with communities and by the communities is far more important than the products, it is a communication and participation process that activates social change”.

Therefore, this community communications approach can serve as an innovative evaluation method to not only collect and share qualitative feedback to all relevant stakeholders but more importantly, to generate community reflection and discussion that can be tangibilized in their own videos.

In this participatory video evaluation for Tanzania and Malawi, the participatory video method was adapted to integrate localised evaluation criteria where communities dove deeper into analytical thinking so that they could look closely, individually and collectively, on how the interventions impacted their daily lives. **How was it before? What has changed? What is missing? What can be improved? What are the recommendations for the next phase moving forward?**

The different angles and analyses discussed were then expressed in the form of storytelling filmed in a collective video production approach. Indeed the PVE was designed to walk bolder steps. We risked taking them and found it important to share our learnings to inspire not only the expansion of a people-centered humanitarian response, but mostly, to help build the long road to people-led humanitarian action.

*“The main goal of the GFCS project has been to bring together the interface of users of climate information and the producers of climate information, to be able to enable the communities at the grass root level, to demand for climate services and advisories, to enable them to make informed decisions about their day-to-day livelihood activities.”*

Renatus Mkaruka, Disaster Preparedness Manager and  
GFCS Coordinator at the Tanzania Red Cross Society

The IFRC works in coordination with other major international players through the GFCS programme, to strengthen the resilience of the most vulnerable communities in Malawi and Tanzania to weather and climate-related events. In the GFCS 2013-2016 workplan, IFRC activities focused on the following outcomes:

1. *Improved awareness and capacities of sectors (food security, health, Disaster Risk Reduction) to integrate climate-related issues.*
2. *Strengthened capacity of intermediate and local institutions, including health and food security workers, to link climate information into action.*
3. *Targeted households and communities are able to demand and use climate services for the management of climate risks at household levels.*
4. *Collection and integration of learning from the programme and effective communication of this to stakeholders.*

2 PVES,  
2 COUNTRIES,  
2 DIFFERENT  
CONTEXTS,  
2 COMMUNITIES



Tanzania



Malawi

<b>Location</b>	Kiteto district, Tanzania	Nsanje district, Malawi
<b>Common hazard</b>	Drought	Floods
<b>Selected community for PVE</b>	Ndaleta community	Bitilinyu community
<b>Total population</b>	3,473	4,140
<b>Composition of the community</b>	Livestock keepers (Maasai), Farmers	Farmers (agro-pastoralists)
<b>Who we worked with</b>	Elderly, Women, Men and Youth	Elderly, Women, Men and Youth

# THE PVE PROCESS AND METHOD

## A WALK THROUGH THE PROCESS



Evaluation and participatory video were two techniques combined together for this PVE. Highly engaging participatory video methods were combined with evaluative techniques adapted for the field in order to receive feedback and recommendations from the communities. Most Significant Change was adapted and applied, as it *“...contributes to evaluation because it provides data on impact and outcomes that can be used to help assess the performance of the program as a whole. Essentially, the process involves the collection of significant change (SC) stories emanating from the field level, and the systematic selection of the most significant of these stories by panels of designated stakeholders or staff.”* (Davies & Dart, 2005, Guide to MSC, p. 8)

Further to the MSC stories, second ranked stories were also used in this evaluation to gather key community recommendations.

The team aimed at using methods that would not only collect qualitative data against the OECD/DAC criteria and related questions posed, but which would also contribute towards community reflection and discussion, allow for peer-to-peer consensus building and strengthen the understanding and the links of the communities to the programme interventions being made on the ground. Video as a medium provided them with the outlet to tell and capture their story, and the subtitling of their local language videos have allowed for their voices to be amplified even further. As storytelling, in its various forms has been used by communities throughout time, it is also a practice that is familiar to them.

PV and MSC methods have both been experimented and documented and PV has been successfully used in the past by IFRC for community-based climate change and disaster preparedness programmes.

For this PVE, the team's aim was to empower the communities that benefited from GFCS programme in Malawi and Tanzania to identify, highlight, video-document and report in their own way and perspective the following points:

1. *Their current knowledge of local climate change and weather hazard risks and vulnerabilities;*
2. *Their simple practical examples (Most Significant Change stories) of response, including early warning system, livelihood adaptation and potential use of information received for better preparation and management of climate risks at household levels;*
3. *Any existing gaps and potential local solutions and recommendations to address them;*
4. *Lessons learned and recommendations.*

The evaluation was designed with the vision of how can we best engage and capture feedback from the communities on the GFCS programme using participatory evaluative methods adapted for the community. At the same time, efforts were also made to build capacity at the field level for both National Society staff and community representatives accompanying and/or participating in this evaluation.

# VOICES FROM THE COMMUNITY

“Now rains are erratic. There is hot sun all over. A lot of crops are drying by the sun. People are starving with hunger because of lack of water due to lack of rains. Because of the coming of Red Cross to train us in ways of new methods in agriculture, people are now able to produce better yields. We are thanking the Red Cross and that they must continue training us.”



WILFORD NYIRENDA

“I received the information from radio. I also received the information from phones. I received some information from megaphones which were going around spreading the message on climate change. Some of the message we received from the Red Cross team through meetings. Some of us were sharing the message amongst ourselves and that one could tell his or her friend that the climate has changed this year.”



FYNESS CHAKALAMBA



ZHUWAWU MPHAMBA

“About the relevance of the project, it has enabled us villagers, through Tanzania Red Cross Society to understand the effects of climate change for the side of livestock. Due to limited rains and reduced vegetation there is a need to allocate grazing land. For example if I have 50 acres, I will use 20 to 25 for food production and the remaining 20 to 25 for grazing.”



OLENDIMAMA OLENGUDI

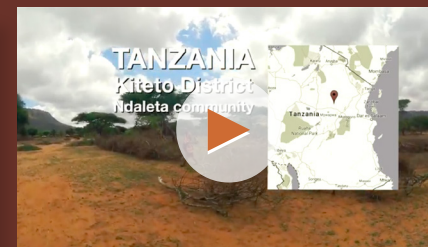
“With the information I received from the Red Cross, I went to train my relatives on how the climate is changing. The information pleased my relatives and all of them have migrated to this upper land. So these are the benefits which I have received from the Red Cross.”

“We are now more knowledgeable on agriculture. We are planting good seeds and improved farming. We have put down water-saving irrigation systems. We cultivate with water terraces built in our farm. We educate our children and have better economies after adopting the climate change advice. Now our children are educated in good schools that before we could not afford.”



ASIYA LWALU

CLICK ON IMAGES TO VIEW EACH VIDEO >>



IFRC PMER YOU TUBE PLAYLIST



# LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE GROUND

“I see the importance of working at the regional level in terms of peer-to-peer interactions and learning from each other.”

“As we trouble-shoot multiple challenges, we must have a fluid dialogue with the team. This is key for a successful project.”

“Think of everything related to PV process: decision making, engaging and ownership.”

## KEY WORDS

- ✓ Flexibility
- ✓ Respect community's daily routines
- ✓ Buy In
- ✓ Collaboration at all levels
- ✓ Building Trust
- ✓ Teamwork
- ✓ Respect
- ✓ Listen
- ✓ Dialogue
- ✓ Engagement
- ✓ Ownership

## PVE TALK SHOW: LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE PARTICIPATORY VIDEO EVALUATION IN TANZANIA AND MALAWI - [CLICK TO VIEW VIDEO](#)

“The PVEs complemented the final evaluation report - the quality of the final report was increased with the PVE. It was effective to the documentation of the programme.”

“I really saw the value of integrating the OECD/DAC criteria. Sharing their stories in that manner helped communities make the link between what they were doing on the ground and the GFCS programme.”



*John Thomas Kinyagu, Tanzania Red Cross Society | Fernanda Baumhardt, IFRC PV Consultant  
Miki Tsukamoto, IFRC Geneva | December 2016*

“In programming we want to hear the voice of the community. We don't only want to design programmes for the community, but we want to design with the communities. The use of participatory video with evaluation would be an interesting way to spark that.”

“When we walk in the community with all participatory video cameras and equipment, we never know how it will turn out. Trust is key to build community engagement and therefore develop a participatory video process.”

“One important lesson learned and recommendation: when working on bottom up processes is to be flexible with putting the planning into practice. We must validate the schedule of activities with the communities themselves and adjust according to the local routines and reality. It must be participatory from the beginning.”

# FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

HOW CAN WE SHORTEN THE DISTANCE  
BETWEEN THE COMMUNITIES INTO ALL THE  
LAYERS INVOLVING PROGRAMMING?

**5** LAYERS BETWEEN THE **COMMUNITIES**  
AND THE **DONORS/GOVERNMENTS/PARTNERS:**

Donors/Governments/Partners

IFRC Global Representation

IFRC Regional Representation

National Society Country Office

National Society Branch Office

Communities

# THE CYCLE OF EMPOWERMENT

Empowerment should be a cyclical process. The community can empower donors/partners/governments, as much as these entities can empower the community itself.

Within this cycle, learning should be continuous from all parties involved throughout the cycle, which would allow for an environment suitable for true:

**Co-design—co-implementation-co-mentoring  
= COLLABORATION**

If legitimate collaboration is achieved throughout the programme/project cycle, then engagement from all stakeholders could allow for the further integration of community voices throughout the programme/project cycle from beginning to end, “...leaving nobody behind,” allowing for equal status, responsibilities and duties amongst all parties within this cycle of empowerment.



## THANK YOU FOR JOINING OUR JOURNEY THROUGH THIS PVE EXPERIENCE IN TANZANIA AND MALAWI.

To wrap up, instead of offering any conclusion, we are proposing questions to help us all - facilitators and readers - to further reflect.

Feel free to read and digest them at your own pace and time. You can also decide if better go through them individually or as a team.

- ✓ Would communities' increased involvement make a difference in the design and the implementation of programmes?
- ✓ What are the opportunities and barriers -institutional, geographical, financial, human, political and technological – that need to be considered?
- ✓ What kind of tools and processes are needed to overcome barriers and seize opportunities?
- ✓ What kind of tools and processes are needed to highly engage communities and ensure their interest?
- ✓ Are participation and ownership intertwined? Can there be legitimate participation without some degree of ownership?
- ✓ Are there mechanisms, tools and capacities in place at the field level, to support community decision-making processes?
- ✓ Is there space in humanitarian programming for communities to voice their opinions and recommendations?
- ✓ Do organizations have an obligation to strengthen the leadership and communication skills and capacities of the communities they serve so that they are better able to participate and express their own needs in decision making fora?
- ✓ Do you think participatory methods could be used as a process to bridge communities and the programmes implemented on the ground?
- ✓ How can you maintain sustainability and interest of all relevant stakeholders in this process?

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# ABOUT THE AUTORS AND FINAL CREDITS



**Miki Tsukamoto** is currently the Coordinator for Monitoring and Evaluation at IFRC Geneva's Policy, Strategy and Knowledge Department. She has over 15 years of experience in PMER, including in participatory methods and approaches with communities; and over 21 years of humanitarian experience, gained through her work in a variety of agencies and sectors, including the IFRC, UNHCR, the International Labour Organization and The Hunger Project. She is a Japanese national and holds a Graduate Certificate in Evidence Based Humanitarian Assistance from Tuft University's Friedman School of Nutrition and Policy and an MA from Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service in Latin American Studies.



**Fernanda Baumhardt** is an expert in Participatory Video and Communication with Communities with field experience in +30 countries on humanitarian action, disaster preparedness and response. Her BA is in Social Communications and Journalism and MsC in Environment Resources Management. Contributes to the academic world as a guest lecturer in Participatory Video at CERAH Geneva's Master in Humanitarian Action. She acts as an independent consultant for the humanitarian sector and also as a member of NORCAP's CwC/ Humanitarian Communications standby roster as well as CDAC pool of experts. In the past 12 years has collaborated with IFRC, OCHA, WFP, IOM and UN Women in multiple countries. Has begun her career in the media sector in 1998 with Bloomberg Television in São Paulo, Brazil then spent 7 years at Turner Broadcasting Systems and CNN Digital in São Paulo, London and Los Angeles offices. Fernanda lives in Geneva area, her home base and practices daily meditation for world peace.

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