Video and voice: How participatory video can support marginalized groups in their efforts to adapt to a changing climate

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Climate change is hindering the rights of poor women and children to live a safe life due to its negative impacts on their livelihoods, health, education and food security. New innovations and approaches are needed to link these impacts to policy-makers in a way that not only amplifies the concerns of poor women and children but promotes their participation in and capacity for creating adaptation solutions. This paper shares the experiences of a participatory action researcher who studied how participatory video could be used as one method to educate and empower marginalized groups to advocate for climate change adaptation support. It will explain how a year-long research project in Nepal explored participatory video as a supportive development tool to generate local knowledge on impacts and coping strategies, build the capacity to act on this knowledge, and advocate for adaptation support from the local to the global level. The paper will also examine and share the strengths and limitations of using participatory video for transformational social change through observations and lessons learned that can be applied in the climate change debate as well as to a wider scope of development issues.

Overview: Bringing together video, voice and climate change adaptation

Scene 1: I am relaxing in the Sherpa Hotel in Kyanjin Gompa in Nepal after a long day of trekking. All around me are snowcapped Himalayan peaks. A tall Belgian man and his shorter Nepali guide flop themselves by the wood stove exasperated. Their ice climbing gear clangs noisily to the floor. The guide tells me how they set out early that morning to practice ice climbing techniques for a difficult pass they would cross later in their trek. In past trips, the glacier was accessible and a perfect practice area. Not today. In just three years it receded more than 300 meters and was too difficult to reach. This is just one of the glaciers, he told me, that flows into the Langtang Khola River, a water source for the people living in the valley below.[2]

I believe that climate change is a rights issue. I believe this as a citizen from a country abusing its access to the world's resources (the United States); as an environmentalist deeply concerned about glaciers melting, coral reefs degrading, and the biodiversity of the planet shrinking; and as a participatory action

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[2] 05/2009

researcher who spent a year in Nepal working with poor women and children who are facing severe climate-induced hazards (floods, drought, landslides and unpredictable weather). This experience reinforced my view that those who will suffer and are suffering the most have contributed least to the problem. Within this group, the most vulnerable are those with limited abilities to cope, often poor women and children. I use the term 'vulnerable' with caution as it can reinforce a view of people within marginalized groups as victims affected by a problem beyond their control instead of as partners who can play an active role in identifying and building community-based adaptation solutions. In a science-driven discourse on the issue, this unified endeavor by poor women and children and decision-makers will not be easy. Innovative, aggressive efforts are needed that not only amplify the voices of those most impacted by climate change, but strengthen their 'right to safety' and 'absence from danger' as 'adequately established by international human rights frameworks' (see Polack, 2008).

In the past few years, development organizations have increased their research efforts to understand climate change impacts in developing countries and how they can best respond. Their findings often take the form of written reports that are used for raising awareness and influencing policy. My interest in helping marginalized groups build their resilience to climate change started with one of these reports, which was conducted with poor women in Bangladesh, India and Nepal (Mitchell, Tanner and Lussier, 2007). The 2007 report by the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) and ActionAid (AA) 'demonstrated the impact of climate change on women in the Ganges River Basin, and the coping strategies and mechanisms they have adopted in response' (Khamis, Plush and Zelaya, 2009). It sought to influence national and international policy-makers in ensuring women's priorities are met for adaptation funding. As a Masters student at IDS in Participation, Power and Social Change, I questioned if this academic report had generated any impact on the research participants themselves. I was not surprised to learn it had minimal local impact (see inset). I then wondered if there could be an alternative way to provide similar data for global advocacy efforts, but also foster positive change for the women involved.


Shyam Jnavaly,
ActionAid Nepal[3]

Though we have a very good report, it is still in English. The participants are all Nepali. While it is very appreciated by outsiders, it is not usable in the community because many members cannot read and write. They don't have any idea what it says. They just saw their picture, but that's not of much use. Even our ActionAid Nepal partners are not very familiar with the English language so they cannot use the information.'

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[3] ActionAid Nepal Senior Theme Leader, Human Security, Emergencies and Disasters, 12/2008

Because I have a 15-year background as a professional video producer, I knew that video could be a possible development tool for addressing climate change as I have used its power to educate and influence. I did not know, however, how to use it as part of a process where video itself plays a role in transformational social change – a practice often described as 'participatory video' (see inset). This exposed some interesting questions to explore: Can participatory video ensure local impact in a more meaningful way than traditional academic studies? Can participatory video, as many practitioners tout (Protz, 1998; Braden, 1999; Suarez et al., 2008), bridge the communication gap between non- or less-literate groups and decision-makers due to its non-written form? Can participatory video provide social change benefits beyond the standard sensitization workshop approach of community-based climate change awareness and advocacy? And, most

Participatory video historically supports an empowering process where community members 'move forward in iterative cycles of shooting-reviewing' to 'create video narratives that communicate what those who participate in the process really want to communicate, in a way they think is appropriate' (see Kindon, 2003, p143). (Photo from workshop training, Dhunche, Rasuwa District)[4]

important as my core research question, can participatory video support marginalized groups in their efforts to adapt to climate change? I use the term 'support' deliberately because I also want to explore the value of linking participatory video and climate change activities to on-going, community-driven disaster risk reduction (DRR) efforts.
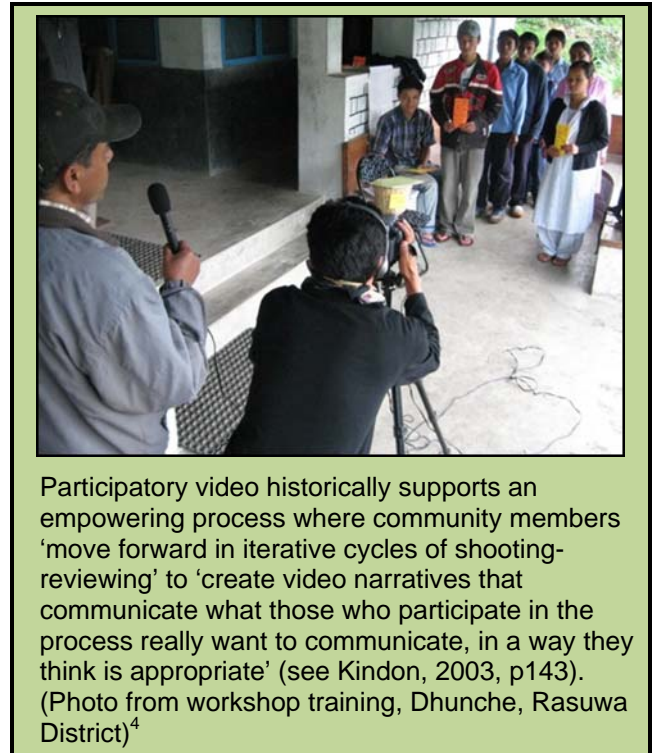
This synthesis paper captures what I have learned in response to these questions through a year-long participatory action research project in Nepal. It provides stories of my experiences and illustrates the conceptual framework I used to help with project design, implementation strategy and impact assessment. Finally this paper brings forth lessons I believe are valuable for using participatory video with marginalized groups in future climate-related projects, as well as for broader development efforts. It is important to note that my intention for this paper is not only to synthesize my research, but to build a foundation for the values that will guide my work as I move from academia to practice as a participatory video consultant for social change and action.

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[4] 05/2008

In exploring my research questions, I was fortunate that ActionAid Nepal (AAN) and IDS shared my vision for a year-long joint research initiative on the use of participatory video with the women from the Banke District in Nepal who took part in the Ganges River climate change report – as well as in two additional Nepal locations. The participatory video research project expanded early on to include poor children when ActionAid partnered with Children in a Changing Climate (CCC),[5] an action research network committed to 'securing children and young people a voice in preventing and adapting to climate change' (Children in a Changing Climate, 2009).

Servaes (2007) argues that participatory research should have a 'beneficial impact on society' where the participants 'gain an understanding of their situation, confidence and an ability to change that situation.'

To do this, I designed the participatory video project where community members would become filmmakers researching local climatic impacts, reflect on their findings, prioritize adaptation needs and make final films for change. This process supports the argument by Gaventa and Cornwall (2008) that knowledge is socially constructed and embedded. They point out that approaches allowing for 'social, group or collective analysis of life experiences


Community-led filmmaking in Sybru Besi, Rasuwa District[6]

of power and knowledge' are needed for building people's rights. By providing the means for poor women and children to research and share their own coping strategies, my hope was that the process and outcomes could help address and improve their economic and social rights, including their rights to secure livelihoods, food security, adequate housing and healthcare, and safe access to education. I held no illusions that one participatory video project alone could achieve such lofty goals, but I believed it could be a valuable tool within broader efforts already working with communities to claim their rights to climate change adaptation support.

For the project design, it was important to incorporate ActionAid's rights-based approach that Chapman and Wameyo (see 2001) define, as 'involving people in their own development not as a privilege, but as a right. This 'recognizes that facilitating the empowerment of poor and vulnerable people to benefit from

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[5] See www.childreninachangingclimate.org/project_5.htm
[6] 05/2008

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morally and legally enshrined rights is the only lasting way to eradicate poverty and ensure social justice

and equity.' Because I believe social change must be part of long-term, ongoing efforts to empower

marginalized groups, I conducted the research through AAN's Disaster Risk Reduction through Schools

(DRRS) project.[7] DRRS strives to 'reduce people's vulnerabilities to disasters' by empowering them to

'identify the most common hazards that threaten their lives, assets and livelihoods and organize

themselves to take action' (Khamis, Plush and Zelaya, 2009). This link between disaster risk reduction

and climate change adaptation is supported by Venton and La Trobe (2008) who argue that by

'improving the capacity of communities, governments or regions to deal with

current climate vulnerabilities, for instance through existing DRR activities, their capacity to deal with future climatic changes is likely to improve.' The participatory video research project focused on three geographically diverse parts of Nepal running DRRS projects: The plains (Banke District in the Terai), the mountainous zone (Rasuwa District), and the urban core (Kathmandu).
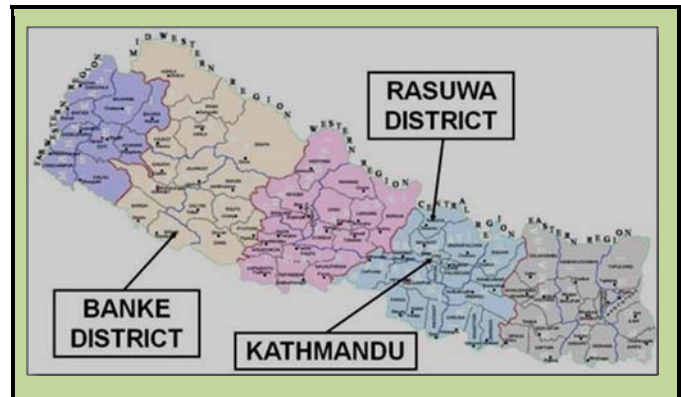
DRRS operates with ActionAid partners[8] who help communities with high disaster risk run the project

through locally led Disaster Management Committees (DMC). The DMC members oversee local DRR

activities to enhance community resilience to disasters. One of their first tasks is to understand

community vulnerabilities through a methodology developed by ActionAid that builds on participatory

approaches

> Participatory Vulnerability Analysis (PVA) is different from previous participatory
> methodologies because it not only collects data, but also mobilizes the people to assess the root
> causes of their vulnerabilities and the effects at individual, family and societal levels, and is
> followed up by them designing appropriate action plans. The main motto of the process is that
> the communities know their own situations best and so any analysis should be build on their
> knowledge of local conditions (Gautam, 2007).

DRRS stresses the importance of involving those normally excluded in the climate change debate – such

as poor women and children – in understanding their vulnerability to disasters through PVA. The PVA

findings in each DRRS community revealed links to climate-induced hazards (such as floods and

drought), but it did not specifically focus on climate change. Thus, the DRRS management team was

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[7] DRRS funded by the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID)

[8] Bheri Environmental Excellence (BEE) Group, Banke District; Manekor Society Nepal (MSN), Nepal Agroforestry Foundation (NAF) and Dhunche Red Cross, Rasuwa District; and Lumanti (Kathmandu)

interested to see if participatory video research project to could work as a supporting tool to raise climate change awareness, build capacity and strengthen advocacy efforts.

Context: Why the climate concerns of marginalized groups need to be heard in Nepal

Scene 2: I am talking with Ramraj from the AAN partner BEE Group. He has just finished facilitating the child interviews in Bageshwari. 'Did you know,' he asks, 'that children are having problems studying when the rain falls on the tin roofs? We had no idea.' This seems like such a small problem in the massive list of climate change impacts. But the rain must be incredibly loud. And, because the rains are getting stronger and happening more often, it must be a real problem for the children. How can they concentrate? What happens during exams? Are they scared? With these thoughts, it struck me for the first time that children have their own unique concerns around climate change. They may be easily solved by adults, but only if the children's voices are heard.[9]

When I started my research, most of my experience in linking climate change and poverty was on an academic level. I had read Yamin, Rahman and Huq (2005) who acknowledge that 'human societies have adapted to climate variability and other changes for millennia and much of the knowledge is embedded in the fabric of social structures operating at the community level.' And I strongly agreed with Polack (2008) that climate change 'is exacerbating existing inequalities and driving those with poor adaptive capacity into deeper conditions of vulnerability to shocks and stresses.' But until I visited

highly impacted communities and heard personal stories about how poor women and children are having to cope, I did not truly comprehended the links between the complexity of climatic science and the day-to-day problems marginalized groups are facing.

Ram Raj Kathayat, BEE Group[10]

It is important to hear from women and children directly in the community. Men can manipulate opinions, but women and children give the real problems. Compared to men, women and children are marginalized so their information is useful to change community lives.

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[9] 06/2008
[10] DRRS Coordinator, Banke District, 11/2008

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Poor women and children were selected as the research participants because they are especially vulnerable to disasters and climate change hazards due to their marginalized status in Nepal. Regmi and Adhikari (2008) explain how poverty can exasperate adaptation difficulties:

> In the context of Nepal, poor means those people who are landless, who depend entirely on nature and in particular natural resources, who are economically backward, isolated i.e. in terms of trade, weak infrastructure, and lack of access to technology and information and armed conflict. These factors will make it more difficult for these people to cope with the agricultural consequences of climate change.

ActionAid Nepal explains that women comprise more than 50 percent of the Nepal population, but have been consistently socially excluded mostly because 'patriarchal legal provisions do not give women constitutional rights to inherit parental property.' Thus, 'women's control over land, the main source of livelihood of the majority of Nepalese people, is marginal.' Children might fare better if they are able to access youth organizations working to strengthen their education, engagement and voice in Nepal. Girls, however, need special attention as they are 'amongst the most marginalized members of society and particularly vulnerable to poverty and exploitation' (ActionAid, 2009). Through watching the video interviews of poor women and children, I gained a better understanding of their hardships due to the changing climate. This reinforced my belief that climate change is a rights issue.

Binita Glan, Sybru Besi	Furba Lama, Ramche	Vijay Giri, Bageshwori	Chandra Devi B.K, Bageshwari[11]
'Last year, the winter was very cold and this year the summer started earlier. Many diseases are spreading.'	*'Water sources are drying up because of the landslides. And we have to go very far to collect firewood and grass. As a handicapped person, I cannot walk that far.'*	*'It is difficult to go to school at the time of flooding. A lot of children have lost their lives in accidents. Many are now disabled.'*	*'We are farmers. We don't know how to do anything else. Since there is no production, we will definitely face poverty.'*

Scoones (2004) points out that 'popular and often policy images of climate change… tend to grab the headlines.' While these images may provoke much needed funding for humanitarian response in times of crisis, the images tend to 'reinforce a view of climate change being associated with an event, a disaster or a drama.' I found through the participatory video research that climatic impacts are much

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[11] 05-06/2008

more organic and complex, and are often tied to other problems. For example, many of the recent landslides near Ramche in the Rasuwa District have at their root deforestation by both the local villagers and soldiers from the nearby army barracks. However, as the rains become more frequent and intense, it exasperates the landslide problem. The day-to-day impacts of a changing climate range in severity, but all affect women and children in their right to develop.[13] Gaventa (2007) communicates this as the right to 'participate in, contribute to and enjoy economic, social, cultural and political development, in which all human rights and fundamental freedoms can be realised.'

Tamang women from Ramche sing a song led by Mangali Tamang[12]

TAMANG SELO
'We are living in a problem land.
How do we live inside the landslide?
Sometimes ascending way.
Sometimes descending way.
Sometimes windy way.
Sometimes terrible sunshine
And sometimes heavy rain.
Everywhere landslides.
Our life is a very tortuous life.
How can we live inside the landslide?'

The participatory video research revealed diverse impacts.[14] In Balaju, Kathmandu, the weather changes towards a colder, longer winter are negatively affecting children's health. This impacts both their education through missed study and the family income when money needed for basic necessities must be spent on hospitals. In Ramche, Rasuwa District, the social fabric of the community is being torn apart as agriculture production declines due to landslides and unpredictable weather. Many of the young men are migrating to the Gulf states for work. In this environment, some women have even resorted to polygamy, which is normally discouraged by Buddhism, the main religion for the Tamang people who live in the village. In the Banke District, women are also frustrated with migration practices. The male farmers are leaving the villages due to low crop production linked partially to increasing floods, drought and irregular rainfall patterns. Most travel to India for seasonal labor, leaving the women behind to raise the children and take care of the land.

Laxmi Adhikari, Bageshwari[15]

'Females have more problems because of weather changes. We have to prepare food, and collect fuel wood, which sometimes takes a whole day. We have to provide children with stationary for school. Men are not always at home because they are earning a living. They are not there when there are floods.'

The coping strategies the women farmers in the Banke District have identified and prioritized through their final films are livelihood approaches that consider alternatives to agriculture rather than only alterations to current practices. This contrasts with pre-determined adaptation

Filmmaking in Banke[16]

Filmmaking in Kathmandu[17]

responses from government, donors or nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that, as Scoones (2004) points out, 'remain stuck in a static and stable vision of a full- time farmer or livestock keeper.' The prioritization by the Banke women for training programs in areas such as sewing or goat rearing highlights the need for donors to listen more to women's adaptation needs by emphasizing livelihood alternatives for community-based adaptation programs. Scoones' (2004) argues that a fundamental shift will be needed for those deciding adaptation responses to start 'thinking in more holistic livelihood terms (in parallel to the changing tactics and strategies of the rural people themselves).'

Children also have solutions for their specific adaptation needs that may differ from top-down donor adaptation strategies. In a written report and film that built on the participatory video project in Nepal, children could clearly identify both the impacts and their prioritized coping strategies (see inset). This knowledge by women and children shows a different side of the climate change discourse and provides valuable insight for policies that are often driven by experts and high-level decision-makers. Yamin, Rahman and Huq (2005) argue that 'understanding and strengthening the agency of communities is imperative as much adaptation will be undertaken at the local level.' They do, however, see barriers to this engagement: 'Unfortunately, national and international policy are not good at reaching poor and vulnerable people and when they do, tend – unhelpfully at times – to plan interventions 'for' communities instead of supporting initiatives led by them.'

Children in Ramche cross a landslide on their way to school.[18]

Children 'clearly know what they need in order to adapt their lives to a changing climate:

- Stop deforestation and plant trees;
- Provide access to improved agriculture technologies;
- Improvement of basic infrastructure;
- Improved awareness of climate change; and
- Good disaster risk reduction'
     (Gautam and Oswald 2008)

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[16] 04/2008
[17] 03/2008
[18] 10/2008

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Exploring if the participatory video process can help develop these initiatives with marginalized groups is at the heart of the research project. It is not about creating final films that present problems to decision-makers as 'if they could be solved by filling knowledge gaps with new, objective data' (McGee 2004). The project is about trying and testing a participatory video process and methodology that allows women and children to investigate, understand and amplify their climate concerns in their own voice in a way that leads to action. By regarding empowerment as 'both a strategy and a goal of citizen-centred advocacy,' the research will explore if participatory video can support efforts to build the confidence of poor women and children so is helps 'eliminate barriers that underpin exclusion and powerlessness' (VeneKlasen and Miller, 2007). Cornwall (2002) challenges those engaging in participatory practices with marginalized groups to 'find ways of addressing their exclusionary dimensions in order to make the right to participate real for all citizens.' This is especially important with the women in the study who might be facing, as Röhr (2006) observes, 'gender differences in property rights, access to information and in cultural, social and economic roles' that impede inclusion in decision-making.

In Nepal, poor women and children have a stake in decisions made at the local to the global level. At the local level, this might include funding decisions for infrastructure projects such as building culverts or planting trees to help alleviate flooding. The resource allocation processes can have limited community input or the funds go to male community leaders who

Kipta Tamang, Ramche[19]

Men used to ask for and get the wired fences, but women should also get the fences. And I think we should also plant trees.'

determine which projects have priority. National policy processes, such as the National Adaptation Program of Action (NAPA) designed for countries to identify their 'urgent and immediate needs in regards to climate change adaptation' (Least Developed Countries Expert Group, 2002), can be more structured. The Nepal government will complete its NAPA by the end of 2009. As of December 2008, preliminary documents to guide the NAPA list poor women as needing additional adaptation support due to their marginalized status, but poor children are not mentioned.[20]
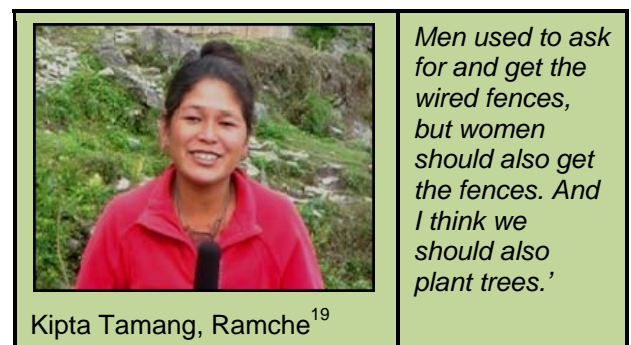
Participation in the NAPA's development by grassroots-people is regarded as essential due to the fact that they can 'provide information of coping strategies that the NAPA is trying to enhance' and that 'they will be affected most by climate impacts and hence will benefit the most from the actions

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[19] 05/2009
[20] According to Shyam Jnavaly, ActionAid Nepal, 12/2008

prioritized by the NAPA' (Least Developed Countries Expert Group, 2002). Yet, even with this

invitation for participation, it is almost impossible for many poor and marginalized people in Nepal to engage as they are scattered throughout thousands of villages far from the Kathmandu hub of policy-making. Poverty or social status can also limit their movement. International policy engagement is even more inaccessible to poor women and children despite the fact that global funding decisions may directly impact them through large community-based adaptation projects in Nepal. In this political space, participation at all levels by poor women and children is needed as their knowledge is specific and unique. Yet they are hindered by poverty, and in many cases, the inability to read or write. For example, in Matehiya, one of the DRRS communities in the Banke District, the literacy rate among females is

Diji Pun, Bageshwari[21]

'Due to weather change, the streams and rivers are overflowed. Crops and plants are flooded. We are not getting production. What do we do? We have no good farming. How can we feed our children?'

just 11.65 percent (Gautam et. al 2007). Because video has the ability to convey information visually and orally, I wanted to explore if participatory video would, as Braden (1999) argues, 'provide a conduit between under-represented, non- or less-literate groups and those they would not normally be able to address' through written means.

The AAN partners and ActionAid Nepal would need to play an active role in making the connections between marginalized groups and decision-makers. Samuel (2002) points out that 'the arena of networking and alliance is important for sharing resources, coordinating multiple strategies and involving a large number of actors in advocacy. Networking widens the outreach and helps to build up a multiplier effect in terms of impact and public discourse.' Since ActionAid and the AAN partners are experienced at networking, I also planned to explore what organizational challenges exist in using participatory video as a new advocacy tool, and how this would this impact the women and children in their efforts to reach the proper decision-makers to help meet their needs.

Vijay Giri, Bageshwari[22]

'We would like to appeal to all the leaders who are making decisions about climate change. We want to explain our problems: the children's problems. We hope that the adults will listen to our voices and act on what we have to say.'

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[21] 04/2008
[22] 08/2009

My role as an outsider in the participatory action research

Scene 3: I am on the grounds of the Harihar School in Bhalam Village outside Pokhara. Uday, the headmaster, whom I have known since 2001, is giving a tour. Suddenly he stops. 'This is where it happened. This is my blood on the doorframe.' I know his story. I had been horrified five years before to hear about his attack for 'a donation to the cause' by a Maoist gang with machetes. As he fell to the ground in the mud outside the school room, he put his hands over his head. They attacked his back, his legs and nearly chopped off his ankle. He shows me his scars and I am reminded that I can never, will never, truly understand what many Nepalese experienced during the ten-year conflict that ended in 2006, and how this exposure to violence still impacts them now. I am very much an outsider.

In many ways – as defined by Chambers (1997) – I was an 'upper' in Nepal with dominant power over the participatory video research project. I came to it with more than 15 years video experience, the funding from ActionAid, the video equipment, the skills training, and the ties to additional funds due to my connection to the United Kingdom. I was also the only Western *Badeshi* or foreigner in the office. At the same time, I was a 'lower' as a student rather than ActionAid staff with limited experience in development, climate change, workshop facilitation and working through a rights-based approach. I found it interesting during the project to realize my own tensions of shifting between these two roles in deciding how much oversight and advice to give during the project verses how much to let go in an effort to learn through participant observation. I would often turn to Reeler (2007) who provided good advice for development practitioners working for social change:

> Core to our intention and purpose must be assisting people to ask their own questions, to develop their own theories for themselves from their own and each others' experiences, in processes of horizontal learning. Without this independence of learning and thinking, any notion of indigenous self-governance or healthy social interdependence, indeed of authentic freedom, is impossible.

My path to this research project in Nepal starts in the United States where I had worked since university as a video and multimedia professional with mostly corporate clients (i.e. Microsoft, Nike). In 2000, I traveled to India and was overwhelmed by my first exposure to extreme poverty. This stirred a desire to help address global inequity. I voluntarily led the Seattle chapter of Room to Read, an international nongovernmental organization (INGO), and helped raise money to build three schools in Nepal. I spent a few months in Nepal directing and filming *In the Shadow of the Himalayas: How People Live in Nepal*, which educates Western children about Nepal and raised funds for girls' scholarships. In 2005,

I spent my vacations photographing in Burma and taking a photography class in Uganda on working with relief organizations. This part-time exposure was not enough. Three years ago, I closed my consulting company and volunteered for a year as a communications director for an INGO in Tanzania, Africa. Here I discovered how much I needed to learn about international development and decided to pursue my Masters at the Institute of Development Studies.

When I started my Masters, I considered my video career to be behind me as I was often unsettled by the traditional media approach that extracts stories to share with audiences who have access to watch them. Because my interests lay in helping those with limited resources in developing countries, the practice of extractive video in this context – especially when driven by someone from the West like myself – often felt like exploitation rather than a means to help those sharing their stories. It was only at IDS that I was exposed to the practice of participatory video and its history of social action (Protz, 1998; Braden, 1999; White, 2003). I realized with my background, I could build on my video skills by helping the participants create their own films and reducing the distance between myself and the audience. This led to the participatory video project in Nepal.

Training in Banke District, Kathmandu and Rasuwa District.[23]

In the ActionAid Nepal office, I could speak in English with the staff and a few people from the Kathmandu AAN partner, but most of my exchanges throughout the year-long project occurred through translators. This immediately created a communications barrier between me and my research partners in rural Nepal. In more than one instance, small problems that could have been easily solved – such as technical or financial issues – became large problems due to language and cultural misunderstandings. This had implications on the research as it caused aspects of it to be delayed, or, when the funds came through, rushed. James and Haily (see 2007) argue that 'outsiders can only facilitate, not provide, capacity building.' I share this belief and explored how my part in the action research could build on my own strengths while leading to positive outcomes for those in the project.

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[23] 03-05/2009

I spent considerable time learning about DRRS so that the participatory video research could support its existing structure. For example, because DRRS works through AAN partners and DMC members, I decided to train them to become participatory video facilitators with the women and child groups as they were already engaged with them (see photos Appendix 1.0). I hoped this train-the-trainer approach would drive a participatory research process that supported community members in doing their own research and analysis to plan their own solutions. My role would be to facilitate the workshops, formally hand over the research project to the women and child groups in each village, provide on-going advice and support as needed, build links between the organizations involved, and oversee national and international advocacy efforts promoting women and children's rights for climate change adaptation funding. I would also be observing the participatory video process at both the local and national level to determine limitations and best practices for future projects. The participatory video research and filmmaking with the women and children would be managed by the trained partners and DMC members. Through the workshops, the participants and I defined a methodology that started with the participants interviewing each other (and their elders in the case of the children), watching the footage and reflecting on what they learned. These interviews would help raise local awareness on climate change to feed into final dramatic films, as well as provide video content for national and international advocacy films and reports (see methodology Appendix 2.0).

Hema Budhathoki, Matehiya [24]

'Since I had never touched or seen a camera, I was really excited and happy that I could see the picture as soon as I took it and it was seen on the TV as soon as it was shot. At first I had a hard time using it and I didn't think I would be able to do it. And I didn't think I would be able to teach my community to use it. But as I participated in the training, I became more confident in using the camera and I think I can go back and teach them many things. When I go back to my community, I will form women's groups and teach them how to use the camera.'

Many participatory video projects focus on having one film as the final output. I wanted to explore whether or not using new technologies (i.e. hard drive camcorders rather than mini-DV tape camcorders) would allow me to technically equip each partner to edit their own films on their own equipment. This would allow local films to be completely driven by the AAN partner, DMC members, and women and child groups based on their needs rather than my Western, professional filmmaking style or AAN, IDS or CCC advocacy goals. As a professional video producer, I originally felt a great deal of tension in letting go of control because the communities' storytelling styles were slower than I would use and included more group discussion scenes than action. However, I have since altered my views as the

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[24] 04/2009

community-led participatory videos have not only met many of the local advocacy goals set by the participants, but the footage was also easily used simultaneously to create national and international advocacy films. Had the local filmmaking projects set strict parameters for their outcomes, as is often prescribed in participatory video projects, I do not think local change would have happened as meaningfully (see Appendix 3.0). That said, I do believe those trained could become better filmmakers with the support of local professionals who can speak the language and teach storytelling from a Nepali point of view. In future projects, I would include more involvement by local filmmakers from the beginning.

In reflecting on my role in the participatory video project, it is important to note that I had the luxury of a year's time to explore the limitations and best practices of using participatory video with women and children in the context of climate change adaptation. As a dedicated researcher and student, I was able to devote unrestricted time and energy in the project's inception, training and implementation, which is rarely the case for outside consultants. Also, the year-long immersion experience provided valuable insight into the day-to-day operations of an established, nationally staffed INGO, its partners and the communities in which they work. With this experience, I understand my role clearly as a facilitator for social change who recognizes the challenges of living and working in a developing country. The key findings and lessons learned from my action research in Nepal will guide my future participatory video consultant projects to ensure they reflect the realities and needs of the people they are designed to help.

Participatory video workshop in Kathmandu.[25]

A conceptual framework emerges: Awareness, capacity and advocacy

Scene 4: I am on-stage at a theatre in Basel, Switzerland, talking about my research in Nepal. After speaking, I am invited to join a participatory video workshop. One by one the participants – who mostly come from the media – explain how they are using participatory video. Most of their stories relate to video projects that involved those in the film in the filmmaking process but did not include any element of long-term empowerment or social transformation. The term, participation, I realize, is being used quite generically rather than in its academic sense as I understand it through Robert Chambers,[26] the person often credited with leading the participation movement in development. I realize that if I want to work in this practice, I need to more clearly define my approach. I decide on 'participatory video for social action.'[27]

For the participatory video project, I wanted a conceptual framework to help guide the research design and implementation methodology, but also for impact assessment. Too often, participatory video projects are evaluated by the fact that a final video was made with local people's input and shown to decision-makers rather than assessed in relation to a planned methodology based on current development theory. Transformational social change requires knowledge of the power relations that exist within the context of the project, which many outsiders introducing new technologies do not have the time or background to understand. Also, because the outcomes of using participatory video can be qualitative (empowering marginalized groups) as well as quantitative (the outcomes), more rigorous evaluation is needed to understand its long-term impact. This project is no exception.

The participatory video methodology in the Nepal study supported the theory that the women and child groups would use video themselves as a participatory action research (PAR) tool to help them understand, prioritize and act on their climate change adaptation solutions. Gaventa and Cornwall (2008) explain that 'the role of PAR is to enable people to empower themselves through the construction of their own knowledge, in a process of action and reflection, or 'conscientisation' to use Freire's term' (see Figure 1). They elaborate on this framework by defining
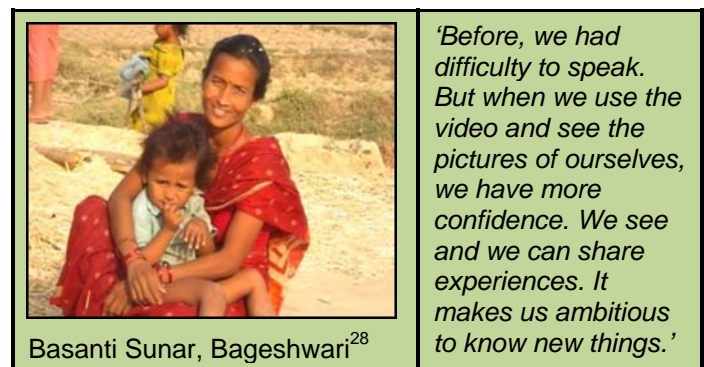

Figure 1

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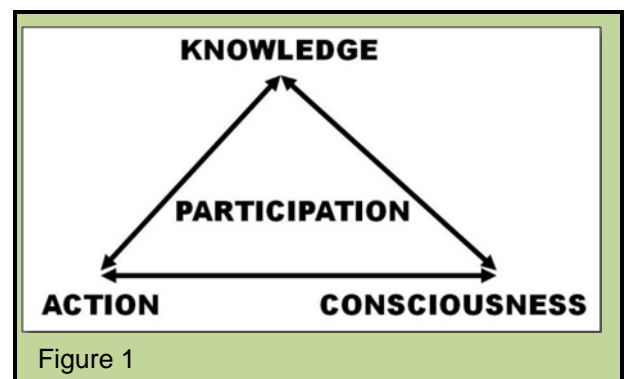
[26] Chambers (2005) describes participation as 'a growing family of approaches, methods, attitudes and behaviors that enable and empower people to share, analyze and enhance their knowledge of life and conditions, and to plan, act, monitor, evaluate and reflect.'

[27] 02/2009

'**Knowledge** as a resource which affects decisions; **Action** which looks at who is involved in the production of such knowledge; and **Consciousness** which looks at how the production of knowledge changes the awareness or worldview of those involved' (Cornwall and Gaventa 2001). My conceptual framework builds on their 'dimensions of change' within the context of using participatory video with marginalized groups as a tool for social change and is defined by **Awareness/Knowledge**, **Capacity for Action** and **People-Centred Advocacy** (see Figure 2):
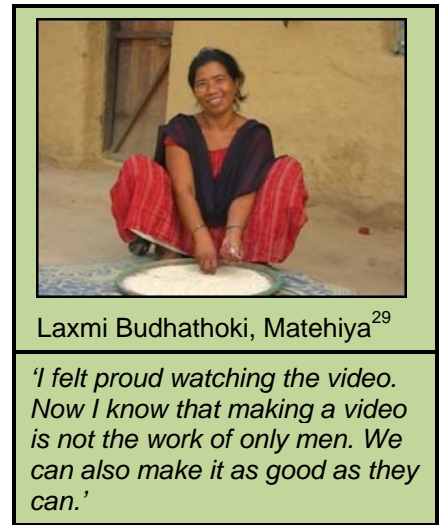

Figure 2
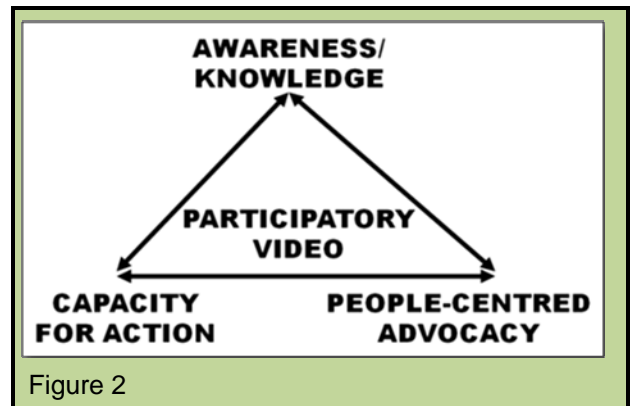
- **Awareness/Knowledge** – using video as a means for awareness raising, which creates knowledge as power. This supports the Gaventa and Cornwall (2006) argument that 'perhaps as much as any other resource, knowledge as power determines definitions of what is conceived as important, as possible, for and by whom.' In this tier of the framework, the intent of the

participatory video research project is for community-led knowledge generation to help amplify and strengthen the voices of women and children their coping needs due to climate impacts. Through these actions, they will raise their own awareness as well as those they can reach through video at a local to global level.
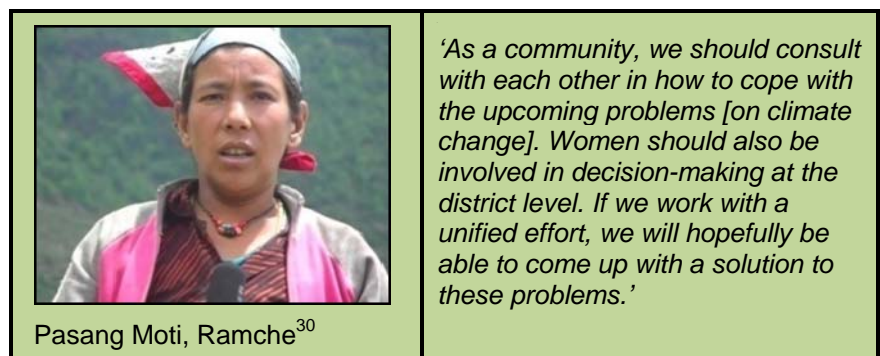

Basanti Sunar, Bageshwari[28]

'Before, we had difficulty to speak. But when we use the video and see the pictures of ourselves, we have more confidence. We see and we can share experiences. It makes us ambitious to know new things.'

Capacity for Action – using video as a means to raise consciousness, and thus shift power inequities that hinder decision-making action. Capacity for action also encompasses raising the technical literacy skills of those involved to foster sustainable use of the technology to educate, empower and advocate. Participatory video can foster what VeneKlasen and Miller (2007) define as the *power within* that builds a person's sense of self-worth and self-knowledge. This supports a tradition of 'grassroots efforts that use individual storytelling and reflection to help people affirm personal worth and recognize their *power to* and *power with.'* The *power to* is the emergence of 'the unique potential of every person to shape his or her life and world,' and is

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[28] 08/2008

especially important for collective action, or *power with*, that can help 'promote equitable relations.' This self-empowerment – combined with video use – can be especially valuable for non- and less-literate groups to reach policy-makers who often use written communications as the main vehicle to understand and engage in the climate change debate. Participatory video can thus help balance inequities of access, engagement and influence often inherent in decision making.

Laxmi Budhathoki, Matehiya[29]

'I felt proud watching the video. Now I know that making a video is not the work of only men. We can also make it as good as they can.'

- **People-Centred Advocacy** – using participatory video as a strategic process to communicate the knowledge generated by poor women and children to influence decision-makers at local to global levels. Samuel (2002) explains that people-centred advocacy 'enables and empowers the marginalized to speak for themselves,' which is a vital first step in having their specific needs met. As the women and children raise their awareness on climate change impacts and coping strategies, and strengthen their capacity to act on that knowledge, the intent of people-centred advocacy efforts in the participatory video project is for their final films to help solve their local problems with local support. AAN can also simultaneously make advocacy films to be used at the national and international level to 'bring the voices of poor communities to the global climate change debate, in order to put pressure on governments to support communities in adapting to climate change' (Khamis, Plush and Zelaya, 2009) because a digital camcorder was used, which allows for easy transfer of the video footage.

Pasang Moti, Ramche[30]

'As a community, we should consult with each other in how to cope with the upcoming problems [on climate change]. Women should also be involved in decision-making at the district level. If we work with a unified effort, we will hopefully be able to come up with a solution to these problems.'

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[29] 09/2008
[30] 05/2009

Awareness/Knowledge

Scene 5: I am leading a small focus group in Bageshwari in the community flood shelter. We are reflecting on the participants' experience in using participatory video. After hearing their opinions, I ask if there are any final questions. Nar Bahadur Pun Magar, one of the trained DMC members leading the community-based child group study, asks, 'How long until we die from climate change?' I am immediately taken aback, and then deflated because the question reveals a deep flaw that had been gnawing at me throughout the project in regards to the learning tools available for rural communities. I had shown Nepali videos in the video training workshops and provided materials developed in Kathmandu by NGOs, but I often felt that their scientific message brought more anxieties to the rural communities rather than providing realistic, practical adaptation knowledge. [31]

When the action research started, only a few people in each DRRS community had been exposed to climate change information, mostly as an aside to disaster risk reduction workshops. A few DRRS communities have television access and all have radios, but climate change is a relatively new topic for the Nepali media and most stories still focus on the scientific impacts rather than adaptation strategies. Yet more adaptation discussions are needed as people in Nepal are already suffering due to 'weather-related extreme events like excessive rainfall, longer drought periods, and landslides and floods that are increasing both in terms of magnitude and frequency' (Regmi and Adhikari, 2008). The links to these problems in Nepal are just starting to be more actively documented by climate experts. Community members, however, can give detailed histories of how the weather is changing, its impacts and their current coping strategies such as 'diversifying crops, trying alternative irrigation technologies, improving drainage systems, setting aside food reserves, and participating in savings/credit activities and farming cooperatives' (Gautam and Oswald, 2007). As Yamin, Rahman and Huq (2005) argue, this community information must be widely shared:

> Human societies have adapted to climate variability and other changes for millennia and much of the knowledge is embedded in the fabric of social structures operating at the community level. This knowledge is highly relevant for climate adaptation and provides an important supplementary source of expertise to the information generated by more formal scientific institutions and processes.

Rather than just extrapolate this information from marginalized groups, it is vital to hear from the poor women and children themselves. Gaventa and Cornwall (2006) argue that 'through access to knowledge and participation in its production, use and dissemination, actors can affect the boundaries and indeed

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[31] 11/2009

the conceptualization of the possible.' This vision of a desirable future is a key theme in the women and child groups' final films. Through participatory video, the groups created dramas showing their lives as they are and how want them to be. These 'possible lives' include acquiring new skills to diversify their livelihoods, self-sufficiency to stop their reliance on men's incomes, more accessible forests through tree planting campaigns, safe passage to school during flooding, the ability to stop landslides, a closer healthcare post to better cope with climate-induced disasters, and new cropping techniques that will improve their yields so men will not have to migrate for work.

Bageshwari women's film.[32]

Women's group meeting with district official

Social Worker: *'We are all from the village. We have made a group and have come in the hope that you will be able to help us learn some income generating skills, like vegetable production, rearing of goats, chickens. Is there any way you can help us?'*

Sir: *'You have done well by coming here. I feel that you are all able to be independent. You have to form a group and once that is established you need to identify the type of training you want. We will arrange short-term training and provide you with resources.'*

Text: 6 months later

Scene 3: Women taking care of animals, children; social worker arrives

Social Worker: *'The goats look healthy. I am very happy. How much have you earned? Have you made any profit?'*

Women: *'We have earned some. We have sold 2-4 goats and one is about to have some babies.'*

Social Worker: *'How are you feeling now?'*

Women: *'We are feeling very good. We have learned a lot and have been able to earn a lot too.'*

Social Worker: *'You don't have to rely on your husbands do you?'*

Women: '*No, we can earn on our own and take care of our children. Thank you so much. Namaste.'*

Used as it was for research as a community-led knowledge-gathering tool, participatory video helped the communities see climate change as *their* problem. This was made clear in outcomes of the final films (see inset) and when comparing the research projects in the Banke and Rasuwa Districts with a DRRS community in the Makwanpur

Yagya Rokaya, Manekor Society Nepal[33]

'For awareness, people can learn more easily and practically through visuals. The Ramche films by the women and children showed the links between deforestation and landslide problems, and the need to plant trees. While community people knew that, making the films and seeing the visuals made them think more deeply about the problems. When they saw the films, they decided to ask for trees from the district government and do the planting. Before, educated people might have requested the trees and made the women and children plant. Now, the films have shown them that it is their own problem to solve.'

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[32] 05/2008
[33] DRRS Coordinator, Rasuwa District. 12/2008

District that did not use participatory video within their climate awareness efforts. In this project, a group of women attended a sensitization workshop by climate change experts and then presented their demands to local decision-makers. While this traditional form of engagement helped raise awareness, the AAN DRRS Coordinator said it failed to create the same sense of local ownership or on-going action as in the communities using the participatory video.[34]

Capacity for Action

Scene 6: I am leading a workshop in Nepalgunj with staff members from BEE Group and DMC members from Bageshwari and Matehiya. It is the first day and I ask them to line up according to their technical comfort between two chairs at opposite sides of the room. Most of the women are near the chair for low technical literacy. Five days later, we rejoice when everyone is above the half-way mark. I think back on the slow process to get them there. The men in the group were more vocal and comfortable with the technology. They often grabbed the video camera from the women during practice sessions. In an attempt to humorously address power issues, I suggested a 'pockets rule' where anyone not handling the camera had to keep their hands in their pockets. This worked since women do not have pockets in their *kurtas*. I also knew that while I could set rules in the workshop, social change has deeper roots. I was not surprised to hear later that the women videotaped the interview part of the filmmaking process, but when it came to shooting the final films, this was delegated to one of the male staff members from BEE Group.[35]

I agree with Miller et al. (2006) who believe that 'inequality is not solved by widgets' (to which I am adding video technologies). They argue that widgets 'will fail to achieve their potential if complex political realities of human interaction and social structures are not addressed in some ways.' Thus, the participatory video process must strengthen the agency of marginalized groups by helping them to challenge and overcome inequities in decision-making due to social status, literacy ability, cultural traditions or age.

While it was easy to improve the resource capabilities of the AAN partners by giving them the video equipment, the more difficult task was to use participatory video to improve their human capacities – defined by James and Haily (2007) as 'attributes that can be found in individuals, their skills, their knowledge, experience, values and attitudes.' Through the process of using participatory video, I was interested if it could, as Chapman and Wameyo (2001) explains, foster transformational change 'when the passive and paralyzing attitudes of self-blame and ignorance, so common to many powerless and

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[34] According to Nahakul Thapa, AAN, 01/2009
[35] 04/2009

disenfranchised groups, are transformed into proactive attitudes and concrete capabilities.' This 'allows people to become active protagonists in the defense and advancement of their own rights.'

I found at the project's end that once the women and child groups finished their local films, they were more likely to hold the AAN partner accountable for helping them meet their adaptation needs. This had not occurred in the past through traditional research as the

Birma Budhathoki, Matehiya[36]

'We have shown the problems and issues we have at hand. We want BEE Group [the AAN partner] to take our work to various organizations and show it in their meetings. We would like to appeal to them to help us find solutions to our problems and advise us and support us and tell us what we should do.'

community members had little access to and ownership in the final findings and output.

I also regarded technology choices as a key component in building capacity. Because using video requires a certain technical literacy, I took great care from the start in choosing appropriate technology that I thought would be sustainable (see Appendix 4.0). I relied on successful information communication technologies (ICTs) projects to build my own knowledge on using technology for social change in developing countries. Gumucio-Dagron (2007) points out that 'technology should be adequate for the needs of the communities, not in terms of technical standards alone, but in terms of utilization, learning and adoption.' I chose the video kit equipment for its cost-effectiveness and ease-of-use both in shooting in communities without electricity and editing on the AAN partners' existing computers. For example, the project intentionally used a digital-only approach that was easy for people with little technical experience to understand, and also avoided expensive video cards and fast computers for editing. At the same time, because I knew the video footage might be used for wider advocacy efforts, I considered the quality output for national TV broadcasts and at conventions. Gumucio Dagron (2007) goes a step further in explaining that having the skills to use the equipment and adoption of the technology is not enough. The people using the participatory video tools must take on a sense of ownership in the

Druba Gautam shows the final film to women in Matehiya.[37]

In a meeting with AAN researchers, Banke women groups identified issues they would like explore in future participatory video projects:

- Message for men for not to leave for abroad
- Encouraging the use of compost fertilizer and discouraging the use of chemical fertilizer
- Use of improved seeds
- Irrigation methods through canals
- Starting adult literacy classes

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[36] 08/2008
[37] 09/2008

future management of the technology. This reinforced my belief in the necessity to integrate participatory video into existing development projects and keep budgets low to help ensure its capacity for long-term use on a wide range of topics. I initially formed this opinion based on a previous ActionAid study that, although successful in its use of video to link poor people with decision makers, struggled to continue after its end due to its management requirements and operational costs (the equipment budget alone was £10,500) (Owusu 2004) (Braden 2003). A follow-up peer study on the project reported that 'the considered and consistent application of the process, on a wider scale…potentially conflicts with existing structures, systems and working arrangements – rather than reinforces them' (Owusu 2004). I believed that by keeping the video equipment kits at less £1000, integrating participatory video into DRRS and using the AAN partners own equipment for editing, the project can be a first step in a longer empowerment process in using participatory video with marginalized groups for ActionAid Nepal and its partners.

People-Centred Advocacy

Scene 7: I am running through the halls of IDS yelling 'They got the bridge! They got the bridge!' Everyone who has followed my research from the beginning knows I am talking about the children in Bageshwari. Whenever I describe my research, I show the drama the children made about the problems they face crossing the *Murgiya Nala* River to reach school during flooding. After making the film, Ram Raj Kathayat from BEE Group said they showed it to community members who were impacted by the drama showing the difficult crossing and the trauma faced by a drowning child. When BEE Group applied and received funding from UNDP and DRRS to support a small construction project in the Banke District, the community members and key decision-makers agreed to make the bridge its top priority. It is to be finished by the end of April 2009.

Samuel (2002) argues that 'people-centred advocacy encompasses a rights-based approach to social change and transformation.' It promotes the belief that 'people are not passive beneficiaries or charity seekers of the state or government' but citizens with the 'right to demand that the state ensures equitable social change and distributive justice.' People-centred advocacy supports the ActionAid Nepal (2009) mission to 'create an environment in which poor and excluded people can exercise their rights, and address and overcome the causes and effects of poverty.' Within the climate change debate, this would include the right to participation. Chapman (2005) quotes Samuel in her description of what is necessary for effective engagement in policy:

> If human rights are to have real meaning, they must be linked to public participation. And participation must be preceded by empowerment of the people. A sense of empowerment requires a sense of dignity, self-worth and the ability to ask questions. The sense of empowerment along with a sense of legal entitlements and constitutional guarantees gives rise to a political consciousness based on rights. A process of political empowerment and a sense of rights empower citizens to participate in the public sphere.

Based on this argument, the ideal action in the participatory video research is to use the community-led final films to elicit and drive adaptation responses that respect and incorporate solutions identified and prioritized by poor women and children. As an example, participatory video is being used as a powerful tool for advocacy in Bageshwari as a means for the children to not just tell information about their need for a bridge, but show their reality of crossing the *Murgiya Nala* River during the monsoon. This brings decision-makers to the root of the problem in a way that can have more impact than written words alone. Using video also keeps the children's story intact in their own voice and language. And as long as the video editor follows the child-driven storyboard (see example Appendix 5.0), it keeps their intended message intact as well. The successful outcome of the bridge being built in Bageshwari shows the potential for using participatory video for policy influence. The different community-led videos were instrumental in achieving many of their goals (see Appendix 3.0) – including a promise by the Nepali government to add children as a priority group in the NAPA.

Nahakul Thapa, Action Aid Nepal[38]

'The government has many issues to prioritize. But once they went through the videos and reports at COP-14,[39] they realized that the real situation at the local level that has been reflected. There was a large NGO forum there too advocating on child and women rights. They saw that there is a large group behind these issue and they need to be prioritized in the NAPA. It was agreed there that women and child rights need to have priority. That was a great achievement so we will see what happens. Since they are committed, I am hopeful that we will have these two sectors of society strongly represented in the NAPA and that they will get support.'

The research also influenced ActionAid Nepal itself as it is in the planning states of a three-year Country Strategy Paper. At the project's end, I shared my lessons learned from the project, as well as my recommendations, in the new AAN foundation themes of education, food security and women's rights (see Appendix 6.0).[40] I also presented my observations at the DRRS Quarterly Meeting in December 2008 for the ActionAid partners (see Appendix 7.0) so they could share knowledge horizontally and work together for more united advocacy efforts on climate change adaptation funding for marginalized groups.

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[38] ActionAid Nepal National Coordinator, DRRS. 01/2009
[39] United Nations Climate Change Conference, 12/2008
[40] Presented at ActionAid Nepal National Meeting, 01/06/2009. Approx. 50 AAN staff members in attendance.

Concluding thoughts: The final scene

Scene 8: I am walking barefoot through mud on the way to one of the DRRS projects in Matehiya. The mud sloshes up my calves and I wonder what lives in the stagnant water. To get this far, we have taken a van from Nepalgunj to a human-powered river boat, waded through a rice field, and ridden in a small rowboat. A few hours and many kilometers of walking later, we meet with community members for an international DRRS peer review. To return, PV Krishnan has had enough and rents a tractor to take us as far as it can. We will return to Kathmandu tomorrow. Back in Matehiya, as we pile onto our hired transport, I am starkly aware that we have the ability to leave. We have the power to make a decision and the resources to act on it, unlike most of the women I worked with during the year. Our situation is not limited by anything but time. I look back to the village one final time and sadly wave good-bye.[41]

One year is too short to both implement a participatory research project and evaluate social change impacts for those involved – especially due to my status as an outsider. However, I have gained valuable insight into my original research question of how participatory video can support marginalized groups adapt to climate change through participant observation as an action researcher, analysis of the video footage and films, focus groups and informal interviews. These lessons learned can be applied to future efforts to use participatory video as a means to engage marginalized groups as active citizens with the right to participate, be heard and be responded to in the climate change adaptation debate. Based on the Nepal study, I offer the following insight to guide future projects:

Integrating participatory video into an existing disaster and climate change risk reduction project can strengthen video's use as a tool to educate, empower and advocate. Many development projects fail to take into account the important components of familiarity and trust. By working through organisations with strong community ties and experience in DRR, the participatory video process can add value to on-going efforts to help poor women and children reduce their risk to disasters and climate change impacts. The organisations' established links to local, district, national and international networks and decision-makers can also enhance advocacy efforts as it is easier for familiar groups to introduce video into climate adaptation discussions that may have started prior to the video project, and will continue after the project's end.

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[41] 08/2008

Using participatory video specifically with poor women and children can be an empowering method to understand, validate and amplify their climate change concerns. Poor women and children experience a range of climate impacts and have specific coping strategies that are not always considered due to their

marginalized status. If participatory video is used as a process of research-reflection-action, it can both generate local knowledge and raise the consciousness of those involved. Because video is an oral and visual medium, it is especially empowering as non- and less-literate people can express themselves and their concerns with decision-makers, which they cannot do through written means. This can build self-confidence when they see that their concerns are considered valid, thus strengthening their power to act towards adaptation solutions.


Children from Matehiya, Banke District, watch themselves on camera[42]

Using participatory video as a tool for awareness-raising and people-centred advocacy can strengthen links between scientific climate change data and local knowledge for more meaningful adaptation debates. As climate scientists and decision-makers reach to the micro-level to deepen their knowledge on community impacts, participatory video with marginalized groups has the potential to not only provide data, but offer prioritized solutions in the voice of those most impacted. This creates an alternative to expert-driven reports and may have more impact if backed by people-centred advocacy efforts that effectively link poor women's and children's concerns to development issues.

Using appropriate technology that is easy-to-use, affordable and fits with the quality needs for video distribution increases is sustainability. From its inception, project sustainability requires an honest assessment of how people will use the equipment, where it will be stored, who will have access, how it will be maintained, who will coordinate and pay for repairs or replacements, and how will the organization get funding for future projects. Working in collaboration with local video staff or professionals can help technically support the project during implementation and at the project's end. As well, plans should be considered for on-going workshops with the trained participatory video facilitators on storytelling, advanced filmmaking techniques, editing and visual advocacy. This can be built into future projects to continuously improve skills training efforts.

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[42] 04/2008

<u>Understanding the limitations of participatory video is important for determining if it is the appropriate development tool to use within a climate change project</u>. Using participatory video only to generate local climate knowledge has the danger of creating fear of the unknown without the support of good adaptation learning tools. Too often, science information creates anxiety or confusion that makes the problem too abstract and hard to understand for practical application. People creating tools to facilitate climate change education need to consider how people learn (perhaps by using more visual communications means such as video, art and drama), what information is relevant to them (such as more emphasis on adaptation over mitigation), and what strategies are viable within their context (as long as they provide guidance rather than as presubscribed activities). Participatory video also cannot magically change power relations within communities, and may even heighten or reinforce them. Because video is an expensive novelty in many communities, introducing it to a specific group can add to tensions around who gets to use it and for what purpose. The project should be structured to recognise and respond to these issues. Another limitation is that people share experiences differently on camera than in other types of interactions. Realistic expectations need to be set for the information gathered through video verses other means to ensure it is the appropriate choice to meet the project goals. Technology can also be a limitation. For sustainability, video requires on-going support and resources to maintain at a usable level. Skills transfer requirements, access to technical guidance, ease of equipment replacement and the capacity for continued project management oversight must be considered for long-term use. A final limitation is the intensity of time and energy needed to use effectively use participatory video as a process for social change rather than a one-off video project involving the community. This requires proper cultivation through the project design, implementation and impact assessment.
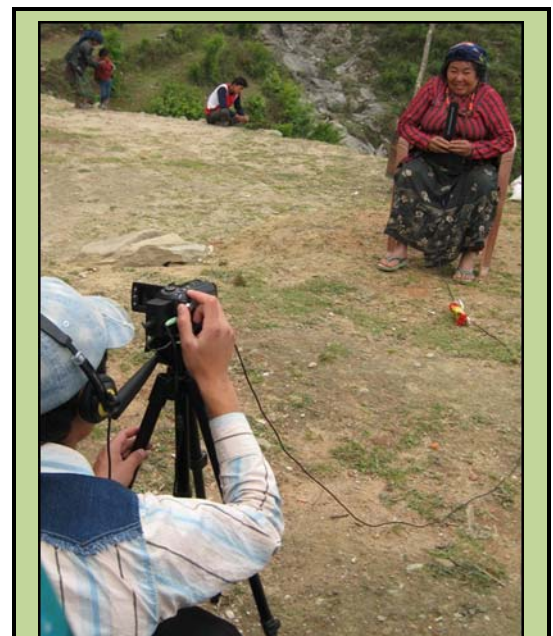
A workshop participant practices filming an interview in Ramche, Rasuwa District[43]

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[43] 05/2008

Despite these limitations, I strongly believe that participatory video can be an appropriate and viable tool to support marginalized groups in their efforts to adapt to climate change. It can help demystify climate change as an incomprehensible scientific subject by linking it to the day-to-day challenges poor women and children face in their livelihoods, health, education and food security. When people analyze their own situations, they learn and internalise the impacts and solutions. Mobilisation for adaptation support becomes their right and a cornerstone for advocacy, which they can address through filmmaking. The digital nature of video communications makes the concerns of marginalized groups accessible across distances for stronger participation and influence in local, district, national and international policy and planning decisions. As poor women and children continue to endure the impacts of a problem they did not create, every effort needs to be made to secure their right to climate change adaptation programs and funding. If used appropriately and with integrity, participatory video can be a powerful tool to support these efforts. This is the essence of climate justice.

Basanti Sunar, Bageshwori[44]

'Before, some people taught us how to help identify our problems. But the video helped us identify the problems ourselves. We did not know anything so we used the camera to collect the issues. The video encouraged us to identify the problems and gave us the means to solve them with more impact. Now we are able to distinguish the past and present of weather change and the challenges it brings to our life… When there are disasters we have to face the consequences and take on the responsibilities.'

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[44] 09/2008

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Appendix

1.0 Workshop Participants: Kathmandu, Banke District and Rasuwa District; Participatory Video in Action
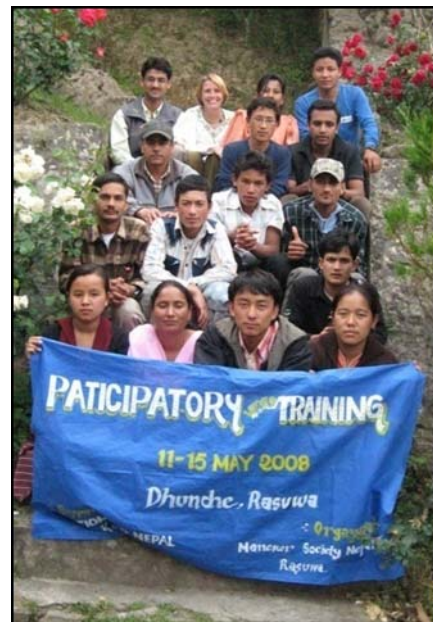
2.0 Participatory Video Methodology (specific to Nepal study)

- Participatory Video for Climate Change Adaptation Research Workshop: AAN/IDS researcher facilitates workshop with 12-18 participants. This includes the AAN partner staff and Disaster Management Committee members from the DRRS communities. It should have a good balance of men and women.

- Handover Meeting: Trained participatory video facilitators work with communities to create the child/women groups as key informers/participants in the research (15 children or 15 women). The main facilitator (AAN/IDS researcher) formally hands the project over to the AAN partner and DRRS community.

- Climate Change Education Meeting: The child/women groups receive a lesson from the local facilitators on climate change using the WWF educational toolkit, slides from AAN and CEN hand-outs. If possible, show climate videos (three available in Nepali).

- Community Interviews: The child/women group members interview each other on camera using research questions developed in the participatory video workshop. The children also interview an elder family member on camera. This knowledge-gathering process provides a community overview of the problem and local solutions.

- Child/Women Group Video Review: The child/women groups review the interviews and discuss the problems and impacts and reflect on what they are learning.

- Storyboard Meeting: The child/women groups use their new knowledge to create a drama or documentary on the topic. They create a storyboard (see Appendix 5.0) to illustrate their story.

- Make Film: The child/women groups make a film showing what they have learned and their suggestions for climate change adaptation support.

- Community Showing: The child/women group films are shown to family members and the community. This is a good time to show the Nepali climate videos (1 hour), the national videos from the AAN/IDS participatory video project, and bring a climate expert to answer questions. A discussion should follow about the actions called for by the children/women and determine what are the next steps in meeting their adaptation needs.

- Show to Decision-Makers: The films are shown to decision makers who can address the main issues at local and district levels.

- Show to National and International Decision-Makers for Advocacy: With permission, clips from the video dramas and interviews are shown to national decision-makers – government officials, NGOs, researchers, etc. as well as at international conferences

- Researcher Follow-up: The filmmaking is followed up with research that builds on the participatory video process to create a report of the child/women needs. This will include issues identified through the filmmaking process, and elaborated on further through focus groups and informal interviews. If possible, this report should also include video from the project.

## 3.0. Final Films – Local, National, International Advocacy

Group	Advocacy Goal	Advocacy Status
Bageshwari, Banke – Child Group	The children's drama shows how they are impacted by increased flooding. They are asking for a bridge over *Murgiya Nala* river to safely reach school. Now, children cannot access school during the monsoon or they lose books or drown when trying to cross the river. They also want a health post nearby to help as medical problems increase due to climate hazards. In their film, they dramatize a meeting with government officials who meet their needs.	Bridge funded by UNDP and DRRS – to be complete in April 2009; medical post pending.
Bageshwari, Banke – Women Group	The women's drama highlights their troubles of diminishing crops due to drought and the challenges they face from seasonal migration by the men in the village. They dramatize going to the regional agriculture office to request training in income generating skills like vegetable production or the rearing of goats and chickens. After receiving the training, they enact how they are now independent and do not need to rely only on their husbands' incomes.	Livelihood proposal submitted by AAN for 5-year project; videos being shown to local/district government and NGOs for support.
Matehiya, Banke – Child Group	The children's drama shows the challenges they have in crossing the river to get to school during flooding and the need for canals to help minimize flooding. In the drama they explain their problem to their families and community members, who listen and agree to help.	Culverts funded and built; bridge pending.
Matehiya, Banke – Women Group	The women's drama shows their problems with flooding and unpredictable weather that is leading to lower crop production. This has lead to seasonal migration by their husbands, on whom they do not want to rely on as much for income. They want training and resources for alternative livelihoods such as sewing and goat rearing. In the video, they receive the training and thus are able to afford to send their children to school.	Livelihood proposal submitted by AAN for 5-year project; videos being shown to local/district government and NGOs for support.
Ramche, Rasuwa – Child Group	The children's film to shows the devastating effects of landslides in the past 10 years. They show the deforestation that contributes to the landslides and the impacts on their families when the landslides destroy their homes, livestock and cropland. Because their families no longer have an income, the children are forced to go abroad for work or leave school to become household workers or porters. They are asking for support to stop the landslides such as resources for tree plantations and gabion wire fences.	Promised trees in May 2009 for planting campaign from District government

Ramche, Rasuwa – Women Group	The women's film highlights the hardships they face from the landslides. They show the connection between deforestation and the landslides, and the fact that they are getting worse. They also tie the problems of the landslides to diminishing crops and land, which has lead to massive male migration to the Gulf states. The women face problems as men take out loans and do not send money to pay off the loan or support the family. They would like government support to stop the landslides through tree plantation and building barriers, as well as additional livelihood support.	Livelihood proposal submitted by AAN for 5-year project; Promised trees in May 2009 for planting campaign from District government.
Sybru Besi, Rasuwa – Child Group	The children's film shows the hardships faced in their village due to the changing climate. They show how one family loses their crops due to unstable weather and cannot afford medical treatment when their daughter falls sick. As a tourist hub, they also show the adverse affect of increased rains on the hotel industry. Their call-to-action is for increased education on climate change in the community and for the government to understand how the weather impacts the village so they can provide resources to help.	Videos being shown to local/district government and NGOs for support.
Balaju and Sunakothi, Kathmandu – Child Group	During the participatory video workshop training in Kathmandu, children from Balaju made a drama to show their fears due to the changing weather. These fears include not being able to study for exams due to the loud rain on their homes' tin roofs, possible destruction to their houses and the fear of relatives dying in floods. A climate change expert conducted a participatory research study in Balaju and Sunakothi in 2008 and has written a report on how the two communities are impacted by the changing climate, and what they need for adaptation.	Children trained by climate change expert. In 2009, the DMC committee members and children from the DRRS schools will make films for advocacy on the issues raised by the report.
Child Film	National and international advocacy (included as stand-alone, part of international report, and part of DVD climate change rights kit). More than 250 copies distributed in Kathmandu and internationally to raise awareness and advocate for child rights. Posted on Internet. Shown on Nepali TV. Shown at COP-14.	Nepal government given verbal agreement to make children a priority group in country's NAPA
Women Film	National and international advocacy (included as stand-alone and part of DVD climate change rights kit). Posted on Intranet. To be shown to women members of the Nepal Constitute Assembly.	Used for livelihood proposal submitted by AAN for 5-year project; used for natl. and intl. advocacy on women's rights

4.0 Video Equipment Kit

Equipment	Description	Cost
Camcorder	JVC 575 Camera – Hard drive	£382
Batteries - 2	JVC 575 Camera Batteries	£122
Microphone	Sennheiser-MKE-300 and Extension Cable	£126
SDHC card	SDHC card	£8.5
Hard Drive	Buffalo MiniStation - 500gb	£69
Software	Pinnacle Studio 11	£60
Headphones	Headphones, Speakers, Tripod, Camera Bag, Rechargeable Batteries and Charger, Adaptors, Cables, Extension Cord	£140
TOTAL	**£907.5 + 10% contingency (£90.75)**	**£998.25**

5.0 Storyboard Example from Rasuwa District Training (Practice Film on Sanitation)
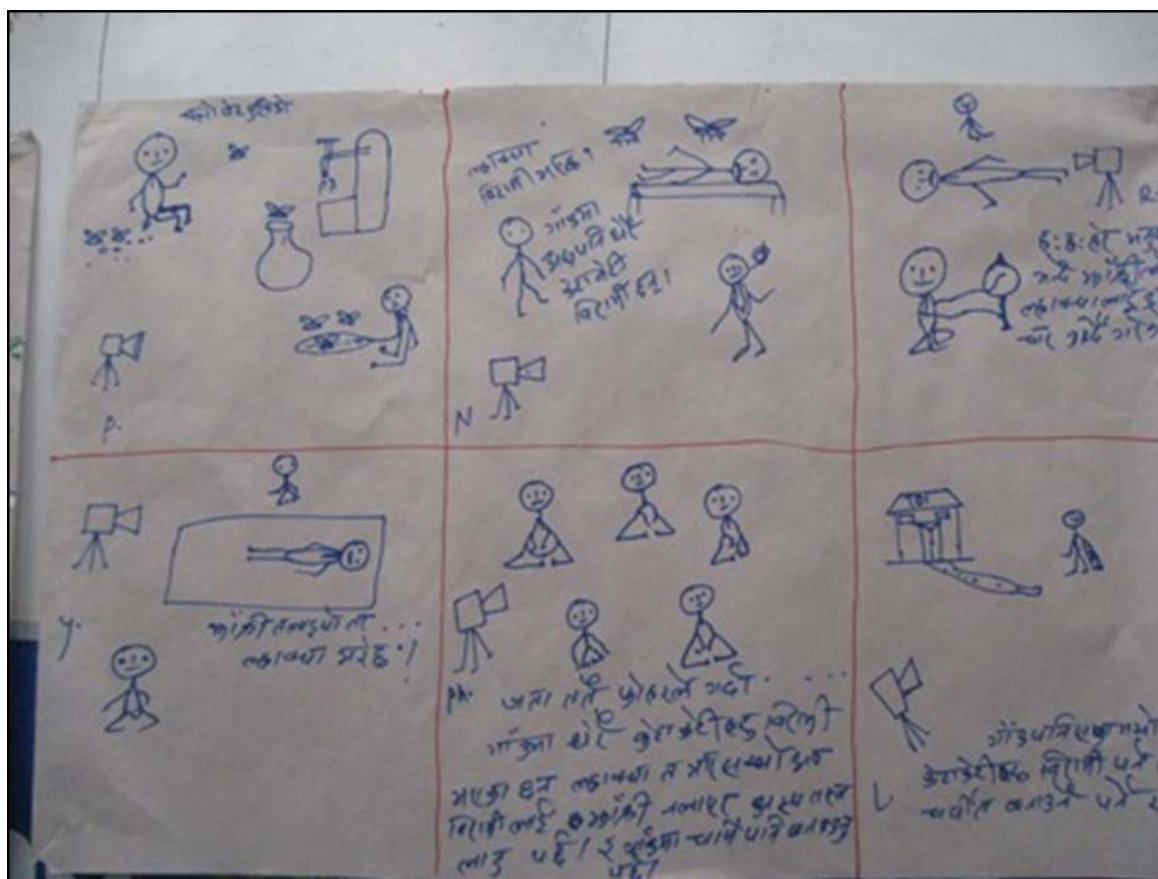
6.0 2009 Recommendations for ActionAid Partners

- Continue district level and community awareness programs using videos to discuss and solve problems; include budget for advocacy in 2009 DRRS plans.

- Work with ActionAid Nepal to find community-based adaptation support to meet the women and children priorities identified in the films (write proposals to ActionAid / NGOs / government).

- Obtain more training on video technical skills (editing, storytelling, camera) and advocacy include budget for advocacy in 2009 DRRS plans and project proposals.

- Work with additional marginalized groups for future climate participatory video projects (such as disabled or elderly people) to help them advocate for their concerns.

- Try different uses of video: documentaries, case studies, gathering visual evidence of disasters, evaluation and monitoring.

- When making films, <u>show</u> rather than just tell.

- Provide any video footage to ActionAid Nepal for on-going advocacy efforts and use their technical staff as a resource.

7.0 2009 Recommendations for ActionAid Nepal

Livelihoods/Food Security

- Improve own knowledge on long-term livelihood adaptation strategies.

- Advocate for and ensure that child and women community-based adaptation programs are part of the Nepal NAPA.

- Develop and support for alternative livelihood programs for women (sewing, goat rearing, etc).

- Partner with NGOs in DRRS community districts for joint efforts to address the women and children concerns.

- Use the participatory videos for fundraising to support local projects as well as to secure funding for large-scale projects for improving livelihoods.

- Provide the DRRS communities with funds for additional filming projects to record visual evidence of impacts, coping strategies, changing weather patterns, etc.

- Create people-centred advocacy campaigns with the AAN partners and the DRRS communities.

Education

- Create community-based adaptation programs that specifically address needs of children (see Children in a Changing Climate report and video for top priorities).

- Provide resources or knowledge to address children's concerns at the local level: examples might be to develop adaptation-focused climate change learning materials; replace or add turf to tin roofs of schools to combat the problems of monsoon rains (deafening noise distracts from study and rising heat is causing health problems); and help secure funding for infrastructure resources to make children less vulnerable to disasters: (culverts, bridges, trees to stop flooding).

- Advocate for changing the exam schedules in Nepal to reflect changing weather patterns (can use the camera to record visual evidence of how this impacts children – such as flooding or landslides that limit access or create unsafe situations in trying to reach school).

- Develop targeted climate change learning tools with a focus on understanding adaptation (rather than mostly mitigation). Use more visual communications means such as video, art, drawings, dramas, etc.

- Support adding climate education into Nepal's curriculum (not just climatic science, but information inclusive of understanding adaptation strategies. This requires a mind shift to risk reduction in regards to climate change).

Women's Rights

- Design livelihood programs that ensure food security. Design 'no loss or regrets' programs that reduce vulnerability (helpful whether the climate changes or not).

- Design programs that empower women so they have the ability to address their needs (such as attaining new skills to help them maintain, support or alter their livelihoods). Testimonial interviews and videos can be used for fundraising to support alternative livelihoods to farming; or better farming practices in regards to disaster risks.

- Women have right to community-based adaptation programs in NAPA. Advocate for funding that includes specific programs for women, not just generic community-based programs.

Additional Recommendations

- Improve local advocacy efforts: Provide training specific to using video for advocacy with AAN partners.

- Improve national/international advocacy: Share information with ActionAid International; engage more with campaigns/communications teams within AAN.

- Build on current DRRS participatory video projects: Rasuwa wants to create video documentary on landslides; Banke has submitted a proposal to expand the research. Extend video use with other marginalized groups.

- Strengthen understanding of community-based adaptation (CBA): Read latest studies for effective CBA / Gain understanding of climate change. Remember: not every environmental event is due to climate change.

- Directly assist community priorities: Improve fundraising and networking efforts (build climate risk reduction assistance into program planning and budgeting).

- Build local and AAN climate knowledge through stronger monitoring and evaluation.

- Strengthen AAN ability to use of participatory video for community-led advocacy: Ensure project manager has time to oversee and strengthen participatory video activities and advocacy (strong links with fundraising, education, communications, technology teams). Ensure all presenters can manage technology to show videos.