

Learning event 6: Most Significant Changes filmed



Kenya, Nairobi, 8-12 May 2018

Name: _____

The Horn of Africa Regional Environmental Network is a regional network of universities and civil society organisations, which have embarked upon a collaborative programme on climate change (HOA-CCP). This programme is a collaboration between the Horn of Africa Regional Environmental Centre in Ethiopia, and the Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation in the Netherlands. The programme is funded by the Directorate-General for International Cooperation (DGIS) of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The HOA-CCP programme has a sub-component of regional learning, which is called the 'HOA-CCP landscape learning journey'. The objective of this landscape learning journey is to share experiences; learn from each other; and learn from external facilitators about the ins and outs of landscape approaches and landscape governance. This Most-Significant-Change workshop is the last one in a series of six, and aims to provide insight in the major lessons learned and the most significant changes achieved within our respective landscapes.

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Introduction

Dear participant,

Welcome to this workshop in which you will be trained in facilitating the Most Significant Change (MSC) story collection and selection method.

The aim of this training is to be fully prepared to facilitate and document the collection and selection of stories of change with the HOAREC&N climate change programme's stakeholders, and to film the selected most significant stories.

You will be using your skills to collect, select and film stories to find out about outcomes and impact of the HOA-CCP programmes. Your filmed Most Significant Change stories will be edited and screened during a regional stakeholder workshop in November 2018.

The training will be facilitated by Tessa Steenbergen (t.j.steenbergen@gmail.com), Ilse Hennemann (ilse.hennemann@wur.nl), and Cora van Oosten (cora.vanoosten@wur.nl).

We look forward to your active participation in an informative and meaningful training!

Handout 1: Informed Consent

Aim:

For storytellers to make decisions about the use of their stories

Why?

To ensure the participants are fully aware of the Aim and consequences of agreeing to share their stories for the report and their image on video.

Stages of informed consent:

1. Consent to participate – before sharing stories
2. Consent to be filmed – before recording stories
3. Consent to share – by individual storyteller – after they have recorded their story
4. Consent to share – by the group – after watching back the footage to discuss editorial decisions and final consent
5. Consent to share – after viewing the final product

Hand-out 2: Story Collection – Workshop exercise

Aim:

To share honest stories from real life experience and collect the stories for the evaluation process.

How to arrange a story circle:

1. Participants and facilitator sit in a circle.
2. The facilitator will ask 3 people to take roles as: storyteller, interviewer, and note taker. All people within the circle will exchange roles.
3. Facilitator explains the aims, the process, and how much time there is for storytelling.
4. Facilitator introduces the main question: *What is the most significant change in your life since your involvement in BENEFIT in the past two years?*
5. Hold a brief discussion to define the terms 'most', 'significant', and 'change', and check the question.
6. Allow for a few minutes reflection time and start sharing stories when everyone is ready.
7. Ask for a volunteer to start, or when people hesitate to start, the facilitator can start sharing his/her own story.
8. Each participant shares a personal story of change, answering the main question. Take turns in any particular order or go one-by-one around the circle.
9. Each story is recorded in audio (by mobile phone or video camera without image for privacy reasons).
10. To make the story richer, the facilitator can ask follow-up questions if, necessary, and invite other participants to respond and/or ask questions for clarification.
11. The note-taker notes down the story in bullet points or drawings on a flip chart. Use the story collection format (handout 3).
12. Give a title to each story (storyteller's name is optional).
13. Thank everyone for sharing their stories, and take a short break before the next stage of story selection.
14. After finishing the story collection and selection, the facilitators transcribe each story for later evaluation purposes.

"The main question: what has been the most significant change in your landscape, since the last four years?"

Note:

- It is important that participants are sitting in peer groups and feel free to share a story.
- The maximum duration of the story is 10 minutes (per person).

- Give people a way out: “if this is not what you expected and you no longer wish to participate, please feel free to leave”.
- Be respectful of each other and each other’s stories.
- Give people a chance to express how they feel about hearing the stories and telling their own.
- Make clear that stories can be noted down without names.
- Follow-up questions that can help encourage a full story (but not make it an interview!):
 - Can you tell us more?
 - Can you tell us why that was so significant for you?
 - Can you remember an example when that happened?

Tips for good storytelling:

- **Start the story before the change.** This can help turn a statement about how someone feels into a story of how change came about, which is more likely to include details.
- **Tell it again.** Storytellers build confidence with each telling. Repeating the story keeps the original account intact, while the story structure becomes clearer and sharper. The group can also give feedback about what they most appreciated about the story and details they feel are important to include.
- **Facilitator shares first.** Sometimes people will be unsure about what is being asked of them in telling a ‘story’, and how much they should share. It can help to get the tone and build an atmosphere of trust if the facilitator begins by sharing their own personal story, honestly and openly. You can use the story you shared during the training for this.
- **Individual reflection first.** Ask participants to spend 5 – 10 minutes in individual reflection on their story of most significant change. If it helps, participants can use drawing or noting down their story before bringing it to the circle.

Hand-out 3: Format for story collection

Title of the story		
Content (bullets)		
<i>Beginning</i>		
<i>The middle</i>		
<i>The end</i>		
<i>Optional: name storyteller</i>		
Reference information		
Location:	Date:	Recorder:

Hand-out 4: Developing criteria for story selection

Aim:

To define agreed criteria by all group members to be able to select the stories of changes.

Why we need criteria?

In selecting story of changes, one choice that must be made is whether to identify criteria for selecting stories before or after reading them. When MSC is implemented in an organization as part of monitoring and evaluation, if the criteria are agreed beforehand, the process of learning (via selection of story of changes) will be significantly influenced by what the organisation already thinks it knows. When the selection criteria are not discussed until after the stories have been read, the process becomes much more open to new experiences. Personal preferences may also be relevant. People vary in their degree of personal comfort about making judgments with or without predefined criteria. Although there is a choice here, it is believed that if MSC is being used to aid organisational learning, the selection criteria should not be decided in advance but should emerge through discussion of the reported changes.

How to develop the criteria?

- Facilitator can decide whether criteria will be defined before or after telling the stories of change (it is easier to make criteria after reading the stories).
- After all stories are shared, the facilitator recaps the summary of stories in bullet points (assisted by co-facilitator or note taker).
- Facilitator will lead the selection process by asking each participant which of the stories should be chosen, and why. The co-facilitator or assigned note taker notes down all choices and arguments that are mentioned by the participants.
- Facilitator guides an in-depth conversation about which story should be chosen and why. Developing a list of criteria usually helps.
- The criteria can be taken from the participants' reasons in nominating a story that represents the most significant change.
- Another way to define criteria is based on personal preferences/views/values in capturing the content of the story.
- Example of criteria: type of change that can influence other people to change ('strategic change'); types of change, which include change in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviour; whether the change is positive or negative change; the closeness of the change captured in the story to personal experience, etc.
- Using the agreed criteria, then participants can select the most significant change story (use hand-out 6).

Examples of criteria:

- Categorize SC stories/type of change, e.g.:
 - Changes in behavior/attitudes
 - Changes in participation level in development activities
 - Changes in sustainability of organizations
 - Any other changes
- Effect of the change: e.g. whether or not the story has 'ripple/domino effect'. Use values used by selection committee as criteria.

Hand-out 5: Selection of the Most Significant Change Story

Aim:

To select the most significant change story according to the criteria built through consensus.

Why we have to select the most significant change story?

At a selection process, the participants are required to reflect deeply on the stories they have heard, and work in groups to select the most significant change story. The work of selecting one story over another draws participants into an analysis of the lived experiences of participants reported through the stories, and thereby the change created by the program. In having to justify their reasons to select one story over another, they reveal their values and the assumptions behind their choices. In building a criteria for selection, the group is coming to consensus around what change is most significant. These can become powerful statements or indications of where a program could or should be aiming to make change. So making a selection between stories of change becomes a discussion about values and change. The reasons for selecting a significant change story as the most significant should be documented and attached to the story following the explanations given by people who initially documented the story. The documentation attached to the most significant story should also record the process used to select the story. This will provide other users of the significant change stories with important contextual knowledge, and explain the origin of the most significant story they are reading.

How to do the selection:

1. In each group, the facilitator will assign roles for: one co-facilitator to assist the main training facilitator to lead the selection process, one note taker, one time keeper and the rest as discussion participants.
2. Introduce the process and reasons for selection (it is not a game where the best story wins, but it is about the underlying values in the stories).
3. The facilitator recaps the stories and the group holds an in-depth conversation on each story to clarify unclear information in the stories together.
4. The facilitators lead the discussion and makes bullet points of each story discussed (in a flipchart) to make sure all participants know the content of the stories
5. Each participants writes down his own choice of MSC story on a piece of paper
6. The facilitator makes a first round where every participant can name the story of his choice and explain why he choose that story.
7. After the first round, a second round is made where participants can tell whether they changed their opinion while listening to the others, and why. The aim is to reach consensus! Again, it's not a game for winning the best story.
8. Select the story reflecting the Most Significant Change using the criteria agreed in the group.
9. The group decides which stories are the most significant and what are the reasons - ideally each group selects one story as the most significant change story. If there are two very different stories considered both to most significant, then both can be selected.
10. Come to a decision with regard to which story is the most significant - try to reflect all views. Various ways to arrive to a final decision:
 - a. Consensus
 - b. Negotiation
 - c. Score/ranking
 - d. Using criteria

- e. Voting (can be done in secret ballot)
- 11. Document the reasons for the choice. Make sure the whole selection process is documented (by the note taker).
- 12. Reflect on the selection process and outcome in the plenary.

The *reasons WHY* certain stories are as important as the stories themselves. Therefore, it should be carefully documented.

Note:

- **When selection is difficult.** When coming to consensus proves difficult, or there are people in the group dominating or influencing the decision-making process, you can move to select a story by 'Secret Ballot', i.e. anonymous voting. Each person writes their choice of the most significant change story on a slip of paper, and then the total votes are presented. Followed by an open discussion of the reasons for the choices. This process can be surprisingly useful, especially if there are power inequalities in the group, or if people are initially reluctant to cast their votes publicly. Additionally a 'talking stick' can be used, that moves around the circle, to help ensure each person has a chance to speak (they can pass their go if they wish). Also, establishing a rule that people cannot vote for themselves can help the process.
- **Selecting/filming more than one MSC story.** The basic idea of this process is for every story circle to choose one most significant change story, which will be filmed. However, the outcomes of the process should be adapted to the participants to represent their views. There are some cases where a group cannot decide between stories, and there is a clear reason why, in which case two stories can be filmed. For example, where experiences of a project were mixed – some highly positive, others less so – or where a group selected two stories which are both considered equally important to be recorded on film. This provides rich data for the organisation, and creates opportunity to discuss improvements to the project.
- **Selection remains uncomfortable.** For some people or groups, the idea of promoting one person's personal story over another will remain uncomfortable. The facilitator can provide encouragement by recognizing this, and repeating the reasons for selection: to provoke reflection, discussion and consensus about underlying values. This is also a way to filter data from all the stories into just a few key stories, which will make a stronger impact on those who would not otherwise have time to listen to all the stories. Groups can sometimes suggest making a film that summarizes all the changes, rather than selecting an individual story. This is not desirable, but should be respected, and their reasons for doing so can be recorded, for why each story is as significant as each other.

Hand-out 6: Format for story selection

Facilitator		
Co-facilitator		
Note-taker		
1st round MSC story	Story title	Reason of choice
Participant 1		
Participant 2		
Participant 3		
Participant 4		
Participant 5		
Participant 6		
Participant 7		
Participant 8		
Participant 9		
Participant 10		
	Criteria	Reasons for selecting criteria
Based on chosen MSC stories: define criteria for selection	1. 2. 3. 4.	1. 2. 3. 4.
2nd round MSC story	Story title	If different from 1st round, reason for change
Participant 1		
Participant 2		
Participant 3		
Participant 4		
Participant 5		
Participant 6		
Participant 7		
Participant 8		
Participant 9		
Participant 10		
Selected Most Significant Change story		

Hand-out 7: Preparing the storyteller

Aims:

To build the skills and confidence of the selected storyteller to record their story on camera. To help them tell their story clearly, succinctly, with all its key elements, in a way that is relaxed, clear, personal and engaging.

Tools in preparing the storyteller:

There are several ways to help the storyteller develop their delivery of their story:

1. **Tell it again.** Ask the selected storyteller to tell their story again, while the group listens attentively, to check there is no detail left out. Repeated tellings build confidence and skills in storytelling
2. **Draw your story.** The storyteller works with other participants to break down their story into stages, which can be represented in drawings on separate sheets of paper. This is called a **storyboard**. This method helps the selected storyteller clarify and practise their story before recording it on video. Using separate sheets allows for easy restructuring
3. **Step your story.** The selected storyteller can work with a partner to physically step the stages in the story. These methods help to clarify the elements of the story, and build the storyteller's skill and confidence to tell it
4. **Story matrix.** Clarify a story by breaking it down into 6 key elements:
 - i. Where the story takes place
 - ii. Who is involved
 - iii. What problem or obstacle was faced by the storyteller
 - iv. What actions did the storyteller try to overcome the obstacle
 - v. What factor, event or person helped them to overcome the obstacle
 - vi. What solution was found and what was learnt

Note:

- At this point you can make sure that the content of the story will not have any negative repercussions for the storyteller or anyone else identified through the story. If the storyteller mentions other peoples' names, make sure it is appropriate, necessary, and will not cause anyone to feel upset.
- Don't overdo the preparation with the effect that it will be too rehearsed and feel 'unreal'. The story needs to flow naturally and with genuine emotions to have the most impact on the audience.

Hand-out 8: Filming stories of change

Aim:

To support the filming person to operate the camera equipment and film the storyteller.

How to film stories of change:

1. Choose a quiet spot with neutral background and stabilize the camera.
2. Make sure the storyteller feels comfortable and is prepared (see handout 7).
3. The storyteller and selected participants film the testimony.
4. Film the story in one take (instead of breaking up in sections).
5. The storyteller watches back the footage. Repeat the filming if necessary.
6. Discuss and film consent.

Additional instructions:

- Research for possible locations for filming. When possible, have the equipment ready set-up beforehand to reduce waiting time for the storyteller, which can increase nervousness.
- Ideally the facilitator is also around for technical support, unless the storyteller prefers not to. The facilitator can walk out before the filming starts and return after the storyteller has finished speaking to check whether everything has gone well.
- The person operating the camera should be someone the storyteller feels relaxed with. If this person needs technical support, the facilitator can help set up the camera, frame the shot, check the sound etc. Another option is for the storyteller to sit next to or across from a friend (out of the frame) so they feel connected to those people as they tell their story, rather than speaking to the inhuman camera.
- Sound is crucial for the story to come across to the audience so make sure sound quality is high. Use an external microphone and make sure someone is monitoring the sound carefully. Agree on a signal if they hear a problem.
- Frame the storyteller in a way that his face and body language is clearly visible in the frame. This is important for the audience to be able to connect with the storyteller.
- How to film safely? In some instances during the process of using participatory video for monitoring and evaluation certain information is better accessed if the author remains anonymous. It is possible in such instances for participatory video facilitators to use a variety of tools such as off-screen voice, drama, backlighting or filming only part of the body (like hands) to conceal the identity of the speaker.

Hand-out 9: Checklist for filming stories of change

1. Find a quiet place with enough light
2. Find a neutral background, or one with added value to the topic
3. Avoid disturbing background noise, colours or movement
4. Avoid high contrast and shadows in people's faces
5. Use a tripod to stabilize the camera
6. Make sure the topic is in focus
7. Do a sound check before recording
8. Count down before record
9. Try to film the testimony in one shot
10. For other shots: Record at least 10 seconds for every shot
11. Avoid frequent zooming during recording
12. Vary shots in frame size (close-up, medium, long shot)
13. Vary shots in camera angle (bird, eye-level, frog, over shoulder)
14. Watch back and learn from mistakes
15. Have fun!

Hand-out 10: Storyboard for filming extra footage

Aim:

To help participants plan their films.

To illustrate the story with scenes that provide additional contextual information. The whole group participates in representing their story, through which a sense of group ownership is built over the selected story.

Why use storyboards:

Before starting to film, preparing a storyboard is necessary to help participants to structure their story and make a plan. A storyboard helps to bring together different ideas, viewpoints and experiences in one story around a common theme. It helps participants to communicate ideas and feelings in a visually interesting way with different locations and presenters.

Making a storyboard helps participants to translate a story into a visual piece, with a beginning, middle and an end. Visual illustrations are important in any story, written or filmed. In most instances, illustrations enrich and deepen the story for extra understanding and impact. Therefore, if there is enough time and the added output is desirable, the group can use participatory video techniques to plan and film extra footage, which illustrates key moments in the story. This can be done in several forms: drama re-enactment of key actions, 'cutaways', documentary style, illustrative or symbolic shots etc.

How to make a storyboard for filming extra footage:

1. Take the storyboard boxes that were prepared for the storyteller to help him/her to tell his/her story.
2. Order the boxes in the right sequence in which the group wants to present the story
3. Make sure there is a clear begin – middle – end
4. Identify potential illustrating shots for the different story elements, which can be used in the editing process. Think about:
 - Activities
 - Environments
 - Interactions
 - Objects
 - People
5. Draw each illustrating shot in a box on a separate sheet of paper. Make the drawing the same as you expect it to be on the film.
6. For each drawing in a box, also add additional important information, like: camera position, shots size, sound, roles of team members etc.

Note:

- Check whether the storyteller is comfortable having his/her story re-enacted. Is the content sensitive, and can it be handled sensitively? Is the storyteller comfortable acting in the extra shots, or should someone else take on the role?
- When you start filming, you may think of changes or some new scenes to include. Of course you can add them to the storyboard and decide during the editing process how they are best integrated in the film.

Hand-out 11: Checklist for filming extra footage

In general: if you want to combine the shots with the video-story, keep the filmmaking simple, not to overpower or distract from the testimony. This means you should not use any dialogue or extra speaking that might change the story, and keep the scenes to just the images or background sounds.

Preparation:

1. Collect all equipment and check if batteries are charged.
2. Bring along your storyboard and/or list of shots
3. Make clear agreements on roles and responsibilities in the team
4. Ask permission before filming persons and private spaces

Filming:

1. Take your time to choose the right location and camera position
2. Set up camera and do a sound check
3. Ask if everybody is ready and count down before recording
4. Record at least 10 seconds for every shot
5. Always check if the camera is indeed recording
6. Check the sound with headphones during filming.
7. Avoid frequent zooming during recording
8. Vary shots in frame size (close-up, medium, long shot)
9. Vary shots in camera angle (bird, eye-level, frog, over shoulder)
10. Use your storyboard to make sure your video material is complete
11. Film only what you need to avoid long rushes of material
12. Review your shots and if necessary, do a retake

