Narrative Storytelling Videos in Agricultural Technology Learning and Adoption

Michigan State University
Tian Cai
Goals

• Sharing our experience on producing narrative storytelling videos
• Helping you know HOW TO

• We will not have time to let you practice to make a storyboard during this talk ;(
• We will held two 1-day workshops in Tanzania and Uganda (September 2016)
• How to improve this approach
“It is not the technology, but the fellow farmers in the video and their stories inspired me to try out the technology”
• We use ICTs to bring farmers the awareness of a technology
• But awareness does not necessary lead to adoption
• Believe
• Encouragement

“The video made us feels that we are not the first to try compost manure making. Our friends in the video started making compost before us. If it was the extension worker teaching us here, we could think we are the first to know about compost manure making.”
What are narrative storytelling videos

• Featuring local farmers
• Detailed personal stories about adopting an agricultural technology
• Stories include social and cultural hints unique to certain communities
• Technical steps demonstration mixed with narrative stories
Prepare the farmers to test and adopt the technology -- making the adoption easier

- Making the connection between technical knowledge and personal benefits
- Encouraging the farmers to test and adopt a technology
  - Mentally and culturally prepare the farmers
  - Plans and strategies for technology adoption
Our approach is different from Digital Green

• Similarities
  • Made in the community
  • Featuring agricultural technology and other rural development topics

• Differences
  • Farmer actors are not just technology presenter, but content creators
  • Farmers actors co-create the content with experts & videographers
Testing narrative storytelling video in the field

• Two qualitative studies in Malawi
• A Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT) in Machakos, Kenya
Video Production

• Stage 1. Assess regional context and engage stakeholders
• State 2. Develop narrative video storyboard
  • Storyboard development
  • Engaging the farmer actors
• Stage 3. Video shooting and editing
• Stage 4. The video screening
The storyboard

• What are the main components
• How to develop
• How to use a storyboard (Hastings via skype)
This is the first part of the storyboard, which guides you to breakdown a video into scene. It helps you control the flow of a video and plan for the field shooting. You will elaborate each scene into more detailed stories (examples on the back).

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**Where** are you going to shoot each scene

**Who** are going to act in each scene, & what’s the relationship between actors (help you to indicate the farmer actors)

**What Topics** guide farmer actors present a technology & share personal stories

*These topics are emerged from your interviews or chats with adopters or farmers tried a technology.*

Control the **time** for each scene
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Control the time for each scene
Who’s involved in field video shooting:

- Directors
- Farmer actors
- Videographer
Topics/Stories

• A simple story to start the video (First example)
• Discuss more complex stories/topics in the later part of the video (two examples)
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Control the time for each scene
First example: video about new varieties of maize seed

• Topic for the scene: Food shortage due to changing climate and unreliable rains
Scene 1a Food shortage

1. Women A prepares lunch
2. Woman A finds there is no maize left at home
3. Women A goes to B’s house and requests B to share some maize
Scene 1b. Food shortage and poor harvest due to the drought

1. Women B gives the maize

2. Women B asks A what happens and why her family don’t have food in December

3. Women A complains that the rain was not enough and came so late

4. She used to have enough harvest for food and a lot for sales too. But in recent years, it was difficult for her to get enough harvesting even for the household consumption because of the unstable rainfall.
The second example: video about compost manure making

A video we produced in Malawi teach farmers three different ways to make compost manure

• Topic: Overcoming women’s constraints on testing compost manure technology – gender labor division
Scene

• The gender labor division is an outdated social norm

• Women’s activities are not constrained by this social norm
Nowadays, even women are thatching houses. Come to my house, you could see me on the roof!
The third example: video about compost manure making

Topics

• Subsidized fertilizer does not always come, and waiting for it is not the solution

• Soil degradation and low yield problems can be reduced by applying compost manure
Scene

- Couple A goes to visit Couple B
- Couple B explains to Couple A that they had a poor harvest
- Couple A tries to help Couple B find the reason for their poor harvest
- Couple A complains that they always depend on the subsidized fertilizer, but could not get any this year
- Couple B suggests that they try compost manure. They did not receive the subsidized fertilizer, but they used compost manure.
- It helped them grow enough maize this year for the family.
They did not give us any coupon.
How to use storyboard during video shooting

• Hastings Chiwasa
• Lecturer at Lilongwe University of Agricultural and Natural Resources, Malawi
Engaging farmer actors

- Co-creator of narrative content
- No script
- Encouraging farmer actors to improvise
- Topics actors are familiar with
Building Role Models

Similarity
- Connection
- Attainable
- Encouragement
- Trust

Difference
- Reflection
- Trust
• Narrative stories may be useful beyond the videos
• The content can be used in other ICTs (e.g. radio) or in combination across different ICTs.
  • Current project in Kenya: Video + audio messages sending by mobile phone (engageSpark)
So what does a video cost?

- Actual production costs do not have to be great
  - We spent approx. $3,500 for professional videographer for shooting and editing video
- Other costs may be more significant
  - Information gathering, needs assessment to inform the video
  - Developing and testing the storyboard
  - Screening the videos
    - Special equipment (e.g. pico projectors, accessories)
    - Cost of transport for team to scout venues and screen the video
    - Costs of mobilizing attendance
    - Moderators
  - Assessing impact
  - Complementing the video with other channels (mobile)
Scaling up

- Scaling up in communities sharing cultural and social similarity (e.g. same ethnical groups)
- But may not be used in other communities with different cultural and social conditions
Our team
• Thank you
• Asante Sana
• Hope will see you at the workshop!

https://s-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com/736x/8c/66/f7/8c66f77c18ba4176e5efef196b2790816.jpg
The fourth example: video about food and nutrition

• Man and women have equal responsibilities to improve family diet and nutrition
A man wants his wife and her friend to teach him how to cook a food he heard about.

This kind of food is made by coating pumpkin flower with egg. It is especially good for children because it is full of vitamin A and protein.
Connecting Mobile with Participatory Video

• Used the Engage Spark platform to send voice recordings to farmers’ mobile phones
  • Reminders of content from the video in farmers’ local language
  • Doesn’t rely on SMS, text competence
  • Doesn’t require farmers to spend their own phone credit
  • Can send the reminder at appropriate time
  • Can monitor who receives and listens to the whole message

• Four messages tested
  • Reminder to consider DTM when time to purchase seeds
  • Reminder about planting DTM when rains come
  • Reminder about how to properly apply top dressing at appropriate time
  • Reminder about timing for harvesting and drying maize properly