



MONITORING WORKING GROUP

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COMMUNITY-LED MONITORING PROJECT

Phase 1: Mapping members' initiatives on community-led monitoring to identify common strategies and challenges and inform collective action of ESCR-Net members.

a. Name of the organization	Video Volunteers
b. Name of the initiative (if applicable)	Surveys for Action & IndiaUnheard
c. Context	There are data gaps around the SDGs. We feel the beneficiaries of government programs should monitor whether the programs are working, rather than outsiders. Communities are excluded from the monitoring process itself – citizen monitoring is getting attention but that generally involves data we gather with smart phones and the digitally non-connected – the poorest of the poor – are left out.
d. What is being monitored?	IndiaUnheard is a program in which community members are trained to monitor government programs, tell stories of human rights violations, and report journalistically, using video, a tool which is very effective in the hands of people with little education. After producing videos, the videos are shared upstream with the mainstream media & to government officials (who they show the video to in local administrative offices) for action and resolving solutions, and downstream to the community to inspire active citizenship. In Surveys for Action, community members

	<p>conduct surveys on tablets. The VV office designs surveys in partnership with news organizations or NGOs and then community members gather them. The results are analyzed and turned into appealing infographics for social media.</p>
<p>e. Who is monitoring?</p>	<p>Communities play a central role in IndiaUnheard because they are independently producing the video reports and deciding what needs to be monitored. The role of our organization is to train them in the issues, perspective etc. but then they produce it totally on their own. But they are not able to distribute the content themselves to the mainstream media so we play that role. Also, currently about 80% of the content is edited by staff not Correspondents, though thanks to new editing apps on smart phones more are editing the videos themselves. In Surveys for Action the communities have slightly less say because they don't design the surveys (though in future they might.) However, the surveys are all on issues that have come to us via the community monitoring with video, so result from community monitoring.</p>
<p>f. How is the data collected and analyzed?</p>	<p>For the surveys, we use a free very basic software kobo collect that, crucially, works offline. We analyze it in excel.</p>
<p>g. How is the data collected being used?</p>	<p>With the videos, we've produced about 5000 videos over 7 years and at least 50% of them have been shown by the Community Correspondents to government officials. They do this on their own, either on their own tablets, on a DVD put onto the officials computer, or via whats app. With important individual cases, or when we see a theme emerging through many videos, we may choose to 'escalate it.' When we do that, the VV staff in our main office will get involved with writing petitions, helping to organize meetings with more senior officials and engaging other NGOs, legal or policy organization. We've done these escalations probably about 20 times on issues ranging from maternal health, to untouchability , to education and several others.</p>

<p>h. What is the impact?</p>	<p>We have an impact ratio of around 25% overall, meaning 25% of the 5000 videos we've produced – around 1250 – have achieved an impact. This has risen from 20-30% in the last one year. This is the concrete impact. These are usually small 'governance and accountability' issues like broken handpumps, no electricity, a closed health clinic. The nontangible impact is the transformation of the community correspondents, who always come from marginalized communities (and 50% women) and emerge as strong leaders. We also feel that participating in the production and action-taking – being interviewed, suggesting a story, attending a meeting with a government official – increases people's sense of civic engagement and fearlessness with authority. Though this is hard to measure and document!</p> <p>Surveys for Action has not yet had any impact. It's a new program – less than a year old. We hope that over time, the impact it will have will be to gather data that counters some piece of misinformation put out by the government that may be messing with the official data.</p>
<p>i. What challenges are you facing and what more you'd like to learn?</p>	<p>How to fund community-led monitoring; how to compare the data with official data; what apps to use; how we can collectively share our data into the same data sets; how to gather data in offline areas; how to gather data in a methodologically sound manner that governments would accept; how to navigate the international bodies ie the UN agencies that are very involved in SDG monitoring.</p>
<p>l. Resources/links</p>	<p>www.videovolunteers.org</p>