



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

THROUGH OUR EYES:

Participatory Communication for Community
Empowerment and Social Change

QUARTERLY REPORT #12

October 2010

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American Refugee Committee
I N T E R N A T I O N A L

Through Our Eyes:

**Participatory Communication
for Community Empowerment
and Social Change**



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TWELFTH QUARTER REPORT
July 1-September 30, 2010

Submitted to:

**U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)
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1) Introduction/Background

Through Our Eyes (TOE) is implemented by American Refugee Committee (ARC) and its partner Communication for Change (C4C). The project uses community-generated, participatory video activities to address gender-based violence (GBV), harmful traditional practices (HTP), and related health concerns in conflict-affected settings.

Participatory videos initiate a dynamic process of local engagement and dialogue on sensitive issues, such as GBV and HTP. Videos are produced by, with, and for community members through a process that emphasizes collaboration and inclusion. The faces, scenarios, and locales in the videos have immediate resonance for viewers and the medium is accessible to all, regardless of literacy level.

Originally piloted in Guinea and Liberia in 2006, *Through Our Eyes* has received multi-year support from USAID/WID. This funding enables activities with ARC-Liberia, ARC-Rwanda, ARC-Southern Sudan, ARC-Uganda, and ARC-Thailand. As of October 2009, video activities are running in all five countries.

2) Report Overview

Progress was made on all three project objectives this quarter.

Key activities during this quarter included representation at the International AIDS Conference, completion of the TOE desk review, and planning for the final evaluation and GBV advocacy video.

On August 23, 2010, ARC received approval for a 6 month no-cost extension, which will extend the cooperative agreement through March 29, 2011.

3) Security Situations: Liberia, Rwanda, Uganda, Thailand, Southern Sudan

The security situations in Rwanda, Uganda, Thailand, and Liberia remained relatively stable during the reporting period.

In Sudan, sporadic violence affected ARC's offices in Juba and Yei, however project activities were not significantly impacted. ARC's security team is on high alert in the lead up to Sudan's referendum in January 2011. ARC is taking steps to ensure that necessary precautions and preparations are observed in order to protect the security and wellbeing of staff and community members during the referendum period.

4) Program Implementation

4.1) OBJECTIVE 1

To conduct an in-depth desk review—in conjunction with participatory pre-, mid-term, and post-intervention assessments—on relevant social norms that influence or sustain targeted GBV/HTP issues in conflict-affected populations in Liberia, Rwanda, and Pakistan.

Activities ACCOMPLISHED during reporting period:

- **July-September 2010** – Monthly reports were collected from each team, including information about new films produced, playbacks conducted, technical support needs, challenges faced, and success stories. Feedback on monthly reports was generated for each team by the TOE Coordinator and C4C Consultant.
- **July-September 2010** – Kyung Endres and Melissa Thompson of *True Panacea, LLC* were hired to lead the TOE final evaluation. Initial discussions began regarding overall evaluation strategy and timeline.
- **August 2010** – The Uganda team organized a TOE stakeholders' meeting, aimed at bringing together various stakeholders in their target area to learn more about the project, prepare them for the upcoming project evaluation, and to solicit their views on how to move forward after global funding has ended. The meeting was attended by 43 people representing district and local leaderships, partner agencies, video team members and community members.
- **September 2010** – The TOE desk review was finalized and sent for printing. Hard copies will be available for distribution by October 21.

Activities PLANNED for next reporting period:

- Dissemination of desk review to partner agencies, working groups, and other relevant individuals and institutions.
- Posting of the desk review online.
- Finalization of evaluation strategy and tools, and implementation of final evaluation in each of the 5 field sites.

4.2) OBJECTIVE 2

To facilitate knowledge, attitude, and behavior change related to relevant GBV/HTP issues in each country context.

Activities ACCOMPLISHED during reporting period:

- **July-September 2010** – The following number of playbacks and productions were completed by each team during this reporting period:

	Southern Sudan	Liberia	Rwanda	Uganda	Thailand
Productions	1	2	1	1	3
Playbacks	28	16	50	17	15

New videos produced during this reporting period covered such topics as: Counseling Techniques, Economic Empowerment of Adolescent Girls and Young Women, Forced Marriage, Widow Inheritance, Benefits of Girls' Education, Sexual Harassment, and the Importance of Reporting Rape Cases within 48 Hours.

- **July-September 2010** – The TOE Coordinator and C4C Consultant provided ongoing technical support related to GBV/HTP/gender themes covered in the films to the Liberia, Rwanda, southern Sudan, Uganda, and Thailand teams through emails and monthly calls.
- **July 2010** – The TOE team in Liberia partnered with the Ministry of Health & Social Welfare to produce a training video on counseling methods, local referral mechanisms, and definitions and symptoms of different types of traumas. The video will be used by the Ministry to train MOH psychosocial counselors.
- **July-August 2010** -- In partnership with the Fistula Rehabilitation Center, the Liberia TOE team led awareness-raising workshops in Montserrado and Margibi Counties. These activities were intended to highlight the links between fistula, gender-based violence and harmful traditional practices. Workshops were conducted in ten communities with 1,091 participants in total; 629 females and 462 males. The workshops included video playbacks on gender-based violence (focusing especially on early/forced marriage and rape), a documentary featuring testimonials by rehabilitated fistula survivors and a discussion with the community. The outreach team engaged the communities during the question and answer period and was able to successfully spark discussion with them to draw the links between early/forced marriage, rape and fistula, and was able to link survivors to services at the Fistula Rehabilitation Center and other local facilities.
- **August 2010**– The second issue of the Through Our Eyes bi-monthly newsletter was compiled and circulated amongst the country teams. The newsletter includes global updates, summaries of new videos produced, and troubleshooting tips and advice from team members.

- **August 2010** – A TOE Global Network website was launched. The website will allow an opportunity for team members to share achievements, resources, and troubleshooting tips across country sites. The website features discussion boards, a forum for live chats, and forums for uploading photos, videos, and reports.
- **September 2010** – A “Playback Strategies” document was produced, with feedback from the field teams. The document is a 5 page quick guide to help the teams review tips for conducting strong playbacks, including tips for how to best start the discussions, discussion energizers, strategies for taking the discussion deeper, and tips for dealing with challenging comments or participants. The document was inspired by challenges and suggestions shared by team members during the TOE Global Workshop.
- **September 2010** – The southern Sudan team recruited a Participatory Video Volunteer, Danielle Spencer, who will provide technical support to the Yei team to improve their technical skills in film production, editing, and use of subtitles. Danielle will also work with the team to produce videos to be aired on national television and to produce a pilot 12-session radio soap opera in Juba Arabic to be aired on national radio.
- **September 2010** – The TOE Coordinator traveled to Minneapolis for an ARC Leadership workshop, which involved senior management from ARC field sites and headquarters. The TOE Coordinator was able to meet with country directors and senior program managers from each of the TOE focus countries to discuss the status of program activities and upcoming deliverables.

Activities PLANNED for next reporting period:

- Ongoing production and playback activities in all 5 country sites.
- Ongoing partnership and capacity building activities in country sites.
- Provide continued technical assistance and support to TOE teams.

4.3) OBJECTIVE 3

To create a toolkit and advocacy materials to facilitate replication and disseminate lessons learned among an international audience to aid others in the use of participatory communication to address HTP and GBV.

Activities ACCOMPLISHED during reporting period:

- **July 2010** – The TOE Coordinator attended the International AIDS Conference in Vienna Austria, where she presented a poster on TOE, titled “Let’s talk about HIV & AIDS in our community: Participatory Communication and Community Engagement for Social Change in Conflict-Affected Settings” and attended workshops by Panos London and WITNESS, among other sessions. The Through Our Eyes project was included on the “List of Participatory Communication Resource People and Projects” compiled by Panos London and disseminated at the conference.
- **July-September 2010** – The TOE Coordinator and C4C Consultant continued to work on the TOE Toolkit. An updated detailed outline was sent to the AoTR for review and feedback.
- **August-September 2010** – Through Our Eyes Global Workshop Report was finalized and disseminated to field teams.
- **September 2010** – The list of Through Our Eyes videos produced to date was circulated to the field teams, and feedback was solicited. The video list has now been updated with complete information on all videos produced across project sites as of September 2010.
- **September 2010** – An application was submitted to AIDSTAR-1 for Through Our Eyes to be included in the initiative’s “Promising Practices Database.” The database catalogs good and promising programmatic practices that users can search to identify successful HIV programs to inform their own design and implementation efforts. ARC is awaiting notification about the application status.
- **September 2010** – The TOE Coordinator and C4C Consultant briefed each of the field teams on plans for the Through Our Eyes final advocacy video, and solicited feedback.

Activities PLANNED for next reporting period:

- The TOE Coordinator to compile TOE “success stories” for internal and external dissemination.
- A Video Consultant will travel to Liberia, Rwanda, and Sudan to work with the teams to collect footage for the GBV Advocacy Film.
- The TOE Coordinator to begin making arrangements for a Through Our Eyes close of project event in Washington DC, to be held in March 2011.

5) Lessons Learned and Applied Action

VISUAL DOCUMENTATION OF THE COMMUNITY VIDEO PROCESS

ARC recognizes the importance of documenting the “Through Our Eyes approach” through capturing visual footage of project activities. These images can help external audiences to more clearly understand the process involved in planning, producing and screening films. This is key in order to raise awareness of the power of the TOE approach, and to build “buy-in” (both locally and globally) for continued and expanded use of community video as a tool for promoting social change around GBV, HTP, and other related issues. Listening to someone explain the steps involved in the production and screening process does not bring the process “to life” in quite the same way as visual images of teams and community members collaboratively creating storyboards, filming in the community, and facilitating dynamic playback sessions.

In order to encourage the teams to capture more process-oriented footage of their project activities, we equipped the teams with small camcorders and digital cameras. Since then, two of the teams have produced overview of the “TOE approach” in their setting. These films were used to orient community members to the goals and key components of the video project, in order to build local trust and support for the project.

In Rwanda, for example, the team produced the video “TOE Project for Social Change” which shows the narrative history of TOE in the camps, and presents the goals of the project within the Congolese refugee communities. It shows the activities that the team conducts in the camp: pre film production activities, production, playbacks and trainings, and community reflections on TOE project activities and how the project has influenced their daily lives.

The Uganda team also produced, “Through My Eyes: A Day in the Life of Miriam Adoch – a Community TOE Volunteer in Uganda” which shows the experiences of a community volunteer working on the TOE project. She introduces herself and shares the reasons she joined the TOE team. She describes her work with teammates as they plan and produce a video film, and then conduct a playback session. Miriam explains that the aim of Through Our Eyes is to create awareness about harmful cultural, traditional and social practices which put people’s lives at risk and also promoting helpful community practices that lead to healthier lifestyles.

Project footage like these two overview videos produced during this quarter can help to provide more of a “human face” for the project, and promotes broader understanding of, and trust in the process, both at the local and global levels.

QUALITY ASSURANCE MONITORING FOR PRODUCTIONS AND PLAYBACKS

Regular quality assurance monitoring of project activities is critical. ARC has found that regular “refresher” technical skills trainings, playback facilitation practice, and opportunities for group reflection can help to ensure the success of project activities. It is also important for local program managers, and key technical staff, to be closely involved in the planning, production, and screening of films.

In cases where quality assurance monitoring has not happened as planned, we have noticed that videos may be produced without a gender sensitive approach, or with technical problems, or with inaccurate information. If these difficulties are not addressed early on, the team may end up spending valuable time and resources on the production of a video that may not ultimately be useable. Playbacks can provide similar challenges, if teams do not keep their facilitation skills and thematic knowledge refreshed and up-to-date.

We have found that producing and circulating checklists amongst the teams can be especially useful in ensuring that key processes are followed and standards are met. Through the project, we have produced such tools as the “Before Filming,” “Post-Production,” and “Before Playbacks” checklists to help guide the teams in their work.

6) Voices from the Field

“I am 43 years. I come from Paduny Lamogi village, Paduny parish, Anaka sub-county in the new district of Nwoya, separated from the old district of Amuru in Northern Uganda. I tested HIV positive several years ago and have been living with HIV but until last year I did not want anyone to know about my status. When this video project was brought in Anaka, I got interested and joined the team to act in a film that was promoting HIV counseling and testing, because I felt that we needed to sensitize everybody about the importance of knowing one’s HIV status. I was allowed to act in this film. I knew that I had exposed myself to the public, so the fear I had been having slowly went away as people watched me revealing my HIV status. I later got a lot of information from the playbacks and from the various HIV/AIDS sensitizations in Anaka Hospital. I have now joined the club of People Living with HIV in Anaka hospital and I move with colleagues in communities giving testimonies and passing HIV/AIDS messages to people. I have encouraged many couples to get tested together for HIV and a number of them have taken my advice and known their status. The community video helped me to come out of my fear and seek medical treatment, thanks to ARC.”

-Community Member, Anaka (Uganda)

“Communities are more receptive and are prone to coming up with viable solutions to issues raised by their own members, they easily identify the issues as they are brought about in the production. Mostly because what they see and hear in the video is from members who constitute a greater part of their community.”

-TOE Team Member, Nimule (S.Sudan)

"[One woman I spoke to] said that this project had helped her, first of all, to open up and talk and to participate in discussions during video playbacks. She said she got the courage when she watched the video on couple counseling and testing. When she went home after watching the playback, she introduced the idea to her husband about them going together for HIV counseling and testing. He refused at first but she talked to him again emphasizing that it did not matter whether they got negative or positive results: she was ready to support him. He later accepted and they went to Anaka Hospital for the counseling and testing. She said they were happy to learn that their results were negative and to them that meant that were still safe. From that day she and her husband swore not to bow to temptations about extra marital sex or anything that would predispose them to being exposed to HIV infection."

-TOE team member, Uganda