Harnessing the Power of Videos

A Video Storytelling Training Toolkit for Organizations Working with Adolescent Girls

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Advancing the Dignity of Children and Youth Worldwide
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Cover photo: Video storytelling workshop, © Tiana Markova-Gold
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Adolescence is a critical period of physical, emotional, cognitive, social, and economic transition, and particularly for girls in the poorest countries, it is often characterized by a lack of autonomy. Millions of girls around the world continue to face discrimination and numerous obstacles to their development, including being denied access to a basic education, nutrition, and healthcare; facing sexual abuse and trafficking; and being subjected to early marriage and forced labor.

These and other challenges that suppress and deny the human rights of girls and women have contributed to making this vulnerable group a large subset of the world’s poorest people. Yet, according to research, women and girls, if empowered “to become active citizens and strong leaders and to lead productive lives with more choices,”* have the most potential to lift themselves, their families, and their communities out of poverty.

As advances in communication and technology bring people from all corners of the globe together to share their stories, opinions, and experiences, the role of visual tools such as video in spreading these messages cannot be overlooked. Film and video serve as immediate and powerful visual tools to entertain, inform, and educate. Video storytelling has been used by people worldwide as a means to share their ideas and communicate with others.

Traditionally, girls and women in many parts of the world have been deprived of opportunities for learning and advancement, especially in the realm of technology. Understanding and applying technology is an essential part of gaining the power to share and amplify the voices of adolescent girls in order to create social change.

Introduction
Harnessing the Power of Videos is a training toolkit for community-based organizations on how they and the adolescent girls they serve can use visual media and technology to tell their stories and those of their communities; to be heard; and, in the process, to be empowered through increased skills and self-confidence. This manual was designed in consultation with several organizations focused on promoting gender equality and improving the lives of adolescent girls and young women.

In 2009, six adolescent girls from Kaduna State, in northern Nigeria, and six adolescent girls from Lagos, in southwestern Nigeria, were brought together to take part in a project aimed at training and empowering them in the art of video storytelling. The project was initiated by The Global Fund for Children (GFC), an organization dedicated to advancing the dignity of children and youth worldwide. Coordinated by Communicating for Change (CFC), a leading Nigerian developmental communications organization, the project involved two of GFC’s Nigerian grantee partners that work with girls, the Kudirat Initiative for Democracy (KIND) in Lagos and Girl Child Concerns (GCC) in Kaduna.

Through a nine-day comprehensive workshop, which included modules on creative scriptwriting, production, camera operation, and the editing process, the girls were empowered and equipped with a foundation in video storytelling. During the workshop, the girls acquired new skills and were able to film, produce, and edit their own videos inspired by their shared life experiences.

As part of the project, KIND and GCC were able to take the production and computer equipment and the software used during the workshop back to their respective centers to allow the girls to build on their newly acquired knowledge and continue to produce and distribute films.

Three to four months after the workshop, follow-up sessions were held to enable the girls to assess their progress since the initial training, review some of the skills and techniques of video storytelling that they had been taught, and learn how to share the stories they produce by holding community film screenings and participating in social media.

“Adolescent girls are sometimes forgotten when it comes to several issues, especially issues of sexual harassment and abuse.”

“It is quite glaring that even from a very tender age girls are made to believe that they are second-class citizens.”

— KIND & GCC staff
This toolkit was developed for organizations working directly with adolescent girls. A video storytelling project is valuable both for these organizations and for the girls they serve.

Benefits for organizations: By training adolescent girls in the art of video storytelling, organizations encourage them to tap into their creativity and develop skills that ordinarily they might not discover. Video storytelling is also a wonderful advocacy tool for organizations to create awareness about the realities of many adolescent girls. In addition, organizations can use a video storytelling project as a selling point for donors who are interested in funding their programs.

“Investing in girls is the right thing to do. It is also the smart thing to do.”
— Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Managing Director, World Bank

Thoughts on Video Storytelling from Participating NGOs in Nigeria

“It will teach the girls how to tackle some issues that really affect them, and these girls love to watch films, so if messages are in films [the messages] will easily be passed across to them.”

“With video storytelling, you can pass your culture to others and video gives you the coverage to feel free to express yourself. … [A video] can go all over the world, that means that a lot of people can hear you and learn from it. … [A video] has the ability to solicit emotions from people who watch it.”

“It will help to showcase our work, expose the community, expose the girls’ story, and expose their voices too; i.e., [it] will make a space for the girls to talk back to us …”

“It gives us credibility as people recognize what we are doing with the adolescent girls. This will boost our morale and push us to try and achieve more …”
Benefits for adolescent girls: Video storytelling is an intuitive art that can be practiced by anyone, including adolescent girls. Video storytelling gives girls a platform through which their voices, ideas, and opinions can be strengthened and shared with audiences far and wide. It provides an outlet for girls to express themselves and, in so doing, to gain self-confidence and self-fulfillment.

What does it feel like to be a young girl growing up in northern Nigeria? Everyone’s gaze reveals a different perspective, and an adolescent girl, with guidance and equipped with the right tools, can offer a more articulate view of her own world than anyone else.

“The importance is not only to tell your own story but also how you tell your own story.”
— Wole Soyinka, Nobel Laureate

Adolescent Girls’ Voices Amplified

“It has been fun, and scriptwriting has improved my English.”

“I have never had experience of video production before, but now I can [make videos]…”

“I am a director and editor in the making.”

“The workshop is a wonderful one, because it empowered me to have an alternative career by learning how to handle a camera and operate a computer.”

“… a very important impact in my life because before I didn’t know how to use the camera, Internet and so on, but now I can use them.”

— Feedback from adolescent girls who participated in the 2009 video storytelling workshop in Nigeria

Some Important Facts

• There are over 600 million adolescent girls living in developing countries.
• Of the world’s 130 million out-of-school youth, 70 percent are girls.
• More than 70,000 teenage girls are married each day—many without their consent.
Similarly, giving girls the means to express and record their own stories enables others to learn more about the girls’ unique reality; this can inspire a change in negative perceptions about girls and get people thinking and acting to help girls attain their full potential.

Video storytelling gives girls tools and resources that they can use to make informed decisions about their lives and future ambitions. Furthermore, by providing important vocational skills, video storytelling can assist in empowering girls financially, which lessens their dependence on others and gives them the means to help support their families.

Video storytelling is a unique way to challenge the stereotypical roles assigned to women in many developing countries. It gives girls the opportunity to get behind the scenes in the media and technology fields and enter areas such as scriptwriting, camera operations, and video editing, where women are typically underrepresented. Encouraging young girls to film events in their community not only enables them to present their unique point of view but also inspires them to reflect on their observations; to learn more about their space; and to advocate for, participate in, and contribute positively to social change and the economic, social, and political development of their community and country.

The production of videos by adolescent girls and the subsequent public screening of these videos can help to bring communities together and can put forward a gendered perspective that has the potential to foster debate and create a greater understanding of gender issues among community members.

**How to Use This Toolkit**

Before undertaking a video storytelling project, organizations are encouraged to critically assess their capability, skills, and levels of interest in engaging in such a project. While the pilot project was done with a modest budget, video projects can be very time consuming and expensive. Organizations might consider various approaches or strategies, some of which are discussed in the toolkit, on how to effectively deal with such issues.

Aside from providing the necessary backdrop and context for working with adolescent girls, the toolkit offers a series of icebreakers and energizers to make the training more interesting, engaging, and fun. It also describes the necessary steps for planning, identifying, and training adolescent girls and implementing training sessions and activities. The training sessions can be completed in diverse environments; however, they are most effective with smaller groups of about 12 participants.
Section One: Getting Started: The Planning Stage

Kudirat Initiative for Democracy, © Tiana Markova-Gold
There are several phases involved in running your own video storytelling project for adolescent girls. The planning phases are as important as the workshop itself and ensure that the objectives of the video storytelling project resonate with your target audience (adolescent girls) and meet their needs.

This section of the toolkit covers three important components of planning a video storytelling project: the needs assessment, curriculum development, and the project structure.

The Needs Assessment
Before you begin your video storytelling project for adolescent girls, you should conduct a needs assessment.

A needs assessment is a process through which you evaluate the current situation affecting your target group of adolescent girls and identify their existing needs. You might think of it as an in-depth process of answering these two questions: “What is the situation currently?” and “What, at the end of this project, do we want the situation to be?”

Girl Child Concerns, © Padma Ugbabe (Communicating for Change)
Why Carry Out a Needs Assessment?
The needs assessment phase allows you to gather information about the background of the girls with whom you are working. What are their ages; their socioeconomic, educational, and family status; their religious and cultural background? Do they live with their parents, with guardians, or on their own? This phase is also the time to seek the buy-in of the girls’ parents and guardians.

One way to approach this is to assess the girls’ needs in terms of the following five categories. (The following quotes are taken from a needs assessment for a video storytelling workshop held in Nigeria in 2009.)

• Their family and community life:

“The people in Bariga [an area of Lagos, Nigeria] are poor … most of them sell along the roads, which are now being demolished, so they turned to stealing … but we have a group that advises the young people to stay away from sex or use condoms to avoid HIV/AIDS.”

“The people in my community are farmers, civil servants … and it makes me feel angry because many parents would not send their children to school.”

• Their goals and dreams:

“If I learn how to sew, I’ll save money.”

“Presently I go to my aunt’s shop to learn how to do business because I’d like to go into business later.”

“I wish that I could be one of the journalists taking pictures and getting people’s opinion about particular issues.”

• Challenges they face at home or at school (including traumatic experiences such as physical, emotional, or sexual abuse):

“I am afraid that if my father dies, his family members and my mother’s will not allow me to continue school, they will give me out for marriage.”

“I feel sad about the way my parents always misunderstand me, they usually judge me wrongly … my mum told me one day that I sometimes behave like a prostitute and this really hurt me.”

“Anytime I ask for money to buy something, maybe books, one of the people I live with will be asking to sleep with me.”
• Stories they would like to tell:

“I would like to be educated so that I can have the ability to stop child trafficking, rape…”

“I have noticed that [at] most hospitals you visit, there is a shortage of female doctors, so I want to be a medical doctor so that I will be attending to the females, because I don’t like being touched by a male doctor.”

• Their prior exposure to video technology (cameras, computers, etc.):

“I only have access to video on my phone.”

“The only time I held a camera was when my church was shooting a drama, I participated. I even went to the studio to see how they edit it.”

“I don’t know how to browse but I’ve checked my [exam] results before with the assistance of someone working in the cyber café.”

Obtaining this kind of vital information is critical to adequately addressing the girls’ knowledge gaps and emotional needs, such as self-confidence and self-esteem, as well as to incorporating their interests and areas of strength into your video storytelling project (for example, some of the girls may already have a creative outlet, such as writing poetry, that the other girls in the group can learn from).
The needs assessment phase also takes into consideration background information that may already be known to your organization through the girls’ previous or current participation in your programs. For example, you may already be knowledgeable about the community in which they live and aware of what academic, financial, and other resources they have access to in their community and at home. These factors may determine what the girls stand to gain from a video storytelling project as well as what may be a barrier to their participation in such a project.

Case 1:
Bose lives with an aunt and uncle in Lagos. She is expected to help out with the chores and earn some income. This she does by helping to sell bread at the roadside when she is not in school. How will her guardians react to Bose attending an extended training that will take away from the time she is expected to spend assisting them?

Case 2:
Halima is from a Muslim community in northern Nigeria, and her parents hesitate to permit her to attend a training program without being accompanied by a male member of her family. “If I must go anywhere, either my older brother or father must follow me,” says Halima.

Concerns like these will likely need to be addressed in a parent/guardian information session or by meeting one-on-one with parents and guardians. These sorts of issues will also help determine how training sessions are scheduled; for example, to allow time for helping around the house or with a family business.

Possible Data Sources for a Needs Assessment

Qualitative:
• Focus-group discussions
• Semi-structured interviews
• In-depth interviews
• Observations

Quantitative:
• Survey questionnaires

Best Practice
It is important to adopt a participatory approach when working with adolescent girls. A participatory approach means that the girls are involved in every step of the planning and implementation. Not only are their views considered, but the girls are also involved in the decision making.
Who Carries Out the Needs Assessment?

Your organization’s trained staff can carry out the assessment, or you can engage the services of external consultants or research and evaluation firms.

If necessary, the needs assessment phase can also be used as a selection process to determine which girls will be better able to participate in the video storytelling project. Any selection process will likely also depend on how many girls can be accommodated by your budget for the project.

Focus-group discussions and in-depth interviews with the girls (where questions center around their hobbies, current outlets for creative expression, etc.) may reveal which girls have a passion for telling stories or display enthusiasm for other forms of creative expression. These girls might be more likely to apply themselves to the tasks and challenges presented in a video storytelling project, and they might also be more likely to benefit from and expand on what they would be exposed to through such a training program.

This is, however, not always the case. Different girls have different ways of expressing themselves during a group discussion or interview, and their responses do not necessarily translate into how they would benefit from and contribute to a video storytelling project. For example, the project may just be the occasion that awakens a particular interest or passion for writing, photography, or video making in an adolescent girl, a part of herself that she would never have had the opportunity to discover without this training.

Assessing Organizational Needs

Your organization should use the needs assessment phase to take stock of how a video storytelling project will best meet your own needs, such as to better document and share the work that you do to empower young girls, or to enhance your advocacy and fundraising efforts. This phase is also an opportunity for your organization to determine what financial and other resources will be needed to conduct and sustain the video storytelling project.

Key Questions to Answer through the Needs Assessment Process

• In what ways can girls be meaningfully involved in producing videos to tell stories relevant to their lives?

• What are the expected/intended outcomes for the girl participants with respect to self-efficacy, self-confidence, leadership, participation in community activities, acquisition of video storytelling and production skills, creative empowerment, etc.?

• How can video be used to effectively document best practices in girls’ programs?

• In what ways can video be used to raise the profile of girls’ programs and as a tool for broader advocacy?
You should also think about further applications of the project for the girls after the initial training is over. Here are some ideas to explore:

- Trained adolescent girls can train others. This ensures that many other girls are able to learn about and share the power of videos.

- Girls can use their newfound skills to provide services within their community. For instance, the girls from KIND now provide coverage for the organization’s activities and programs. They are paid for their work and use this platform to practice what they learned. Also, when possible, some of the trained girls are invited to assist with on-location production at CFC.

- Video training can lead to internship placement and other opportunities within production and media houses.

- The girls can enter their work in amateur competitions, film festivals, and platforms for international recognition.

**What Does a Needs Assessment Look Like?**
To begin the needs assessment process, identify a group of girls whose ideas and perceptions will be able to give you a good idea of the general background, interests, skills, and knowledge areas of the target group of adolescents that you plan to train. This group could be divided by age (for example, 11- to 13-year-old girls in one group and 14- to 17-year-old girls in another) to allow for less-inhibited responses from the younger girls.

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**Resource Mobilization**

Consider accessing resources from the following sources:

- Bilateral agencies and embassies
- International NGOs
- Foundations
- Private organizations such as banks and corporations
- Individual philanthropists
- Women's funding organizations
- Community development organizations
- Human rights organizations

Also consider leveraging resources from and with others. For instance, you could work with organizations that have some video-making equipment and expertise.

Finally, you could ask existing donors to recommend other sources of funding.
After you’ve selected the girls to survey during the needs assessment phase, think about the following questions:

• **What dates and times will work best for the needs assessment?** Think about the school schedules of the girls if you don’t plan to hold the evaluation during a vacation period.

• **Have you gotten permission from parents and guardians or school administrators?** Make sure to get the consent of these key stakeholders for the girls to attend a focus group or an in-depth interview. It’s also a good idea to give parents/guardians and school administrators some background information on what the evaluation is for.

• **Where will you hold the focus groups or in-depth interviews?** If your office has a conference room that can seat six to ten people comfortably, this could be used. Also think about holding evaluations somewhere more secluded where noise from the external environment won’t interfere with the conversation or your recording of it.

• **Who will moderate the discussions?** You can designate one of your female staff members to play this role as long as she is willing and is able to make the girls feel at ease, probe for answers when they aren’t forthcoming, and generally keep the conversation flowing.
Each focus-group discussion (FGD) that you hold can have up to six girls participating, with one moderator to ask questions and facilitate the conversation. FGDs can be recorded (audio and video) to aid in transcribing the discussions later, but the moderator should first get the consent of the participants to be filmed, photographed, or recorded. A discussion guide should be prepared in advance, with questions that are shaped around topics that would inform how you structure your video storytelling workshop. (See section 4 for a sample focus-group discussion guide.) You might also want to provide refreshments for the participants during or after the FGD, which could take a few hours.

The girls should be encouraged to express themselves freely, even if it means writing down anonymously what they don’t feel comfortable saying in a group (see the examples below), and should not feel constrained in their responses by a male discussion moderator or another adult (such as a teacher or parent) whose presence may influence their answers. Such factors should be considered before the needs assessment is conducted.

Experiences written down by girls during a needs assessment in Nigeria

In-depth interviews (IDIs) work well for finding out the needs of the staff members who will be working directly with the girls you plan to train in video storytelling. IDIs bring out participants’ perceptions of how the project will benefit the girls and the work of your organization (see the section above on assessing organizational needs). An IDI is conducted in a similar manner to an FGD, except that it involves just the moderator putting questions to one participant. (A sample in-depth interview discussion guide can be found in section 4.)
A questionnaire can also be used to assess the needs of potential participants in a video storytelling project. A questionnaire can be created by adapting the information in your FGD or IDI discussion guide to a written format, which can include multiple-choice questions as well as open-ended questions that allow for free responses from participants.

Once you have conducted your FGDs and IDIs and/or administered surveys, the next step is to transcribe and analyze the results. Analysis can be completed by grouping together responses to each question, using both quantitative methods (for example, counting how many girls out of the total number surveyed said they had used a computer before) and qualitative methods (for example, listing some of the responses to the question, “What would you do with the money if you won the lottery today?”).

Through this process, you will gain a better understanding of the backgrounds of the girls, their current media and technology skills, and their interests and needs. This will help your organization determine the areas on which to focus during the video storytelling project.

Securing the Buy-In of Parents and Guardians

Another important aspect of the needs assessment process focuses on the parents and guardians of the girls who are going to participate in the video storytelling project. Involve the adults in the project from the beginning to give them a sense of ownership in the development and empowerment of their daughter or ward.

In order to provide an incentive for the parents and guardians to allow the girls to attend the training, you might need to address what they stand to gain by letting their daughters or wards attend. They may have little interest in having their daughters or wards empowered—some might feel that the more empowered the girls are, the more rebellious and threatening they will become. If, however, they feel that the girls will be learning skills that will be useful in the home or a household business, or will empower the girls financially in the future, then they will be more likely to encourage the girls to become involved in the training.

“\nIn my community, they are not used to the Internet … and they look at you negatively."
— One of the girls taking part in the needs assessment

In addition, this is an excellent opportunity to educate parents and guardians, who may have been influenced by negative community perceptions of the Internet, about the benefits of computer and Internet literacy and how these skills will contribute positively to the future of their daughter or ward—for instance, by making her able to compete successfully in today’s global academic environment and workforce.
The buy-in of parents and guardians can be sought by organizing an information session for them. As an incentive for low-income families to attend, refreshments and perhaps a transportation allowance can be provided.

The agenda for an information session for parents and guardians might include the following:

1. Brief parents and guardians on the video storytelling project and its aims, as you have defined them. At this point, you could also let them know the details about the structure of the project (how much time will be required for the girls to participate, whether it will be a residential program away from home, etc.).

2. Give parents and guardians an overview of the benefits to their daughter or ward from taking part in a video storytelling project. Examples include the acquisition of new skills that will set her apart from her peers; reinforced academic learning, such as reading and writing; a dynamic and supervised workshop environment that will encourage hard work, discipline, and teamwork; and the opportunity to develop the skills acquired during the workshop into a future income-generating activity or career.

3. Provide an opportunity for parents and guardians to ask questions and make comments. They may want to know more about your organization if their daughter or ward hasn’t previously been involved in any of your programs, or they may take this opportunity to ask more specifics about the project.

4. Get parents and guardians to sign consent forms. You will need parental consent to release any video or photographic footage that you take of their children or wards, and also permission for the girls to participate in whatever activities the video storytelling project will entail. (A sample video footage release form is in section 4.)
Curriculum Development

Using the findings, conclusions, and recommendations from the needs assessment phase, you can begin to develop a curriculum for your video storytelling project.

Step 1: Set Your Objectives
The first step in the curriculum development process is to set your overall objectives for the video storytelling project. The training and activities should be designed to build the girls’ capacity for critical thinking, financial and entrepreneurial thinking, team building, and advocacy. Based on what the needs assessment has revealed, decide what you intend to accomplish through the project.

Sample Objectives for a Video Storytelling Project:

• To document the creative involvement of adolescent girls in learning about and creating videos that tell their stories

• To demonstrate how to use video to document best practices in girls’ programs

• To demonstrate how to meaningfully involve girls in all aspects of video production and distribution

• To demonstrate how to use video to raise the profile of girls’ programs and as a tool for broader advocacy

Step 2: Organize Your Project’s Content
Once you have determined the project’s objectives, you can begin to think about how to organize the content involved in training girls in video storytelling.

For instance, if the needs assessment phase revealed that the majority of participants have little or no experience using a computer, you will need to develop a workshop module dedicated to teaching computer and Internet skills.

Similarly, a good grasp of the English language is, in today’s world, an important skill to have and often a prerequisite for acquiring technological proficiencies (both in general Internet and computer use and in using particular software, such as for video editing), so you might decide to include a module on improving reading and writing in English in addition to computer literacy sessions. Alternatively, exercises in reading and writing can be built into the entire training, from story development to video editing.
Tips: Making the Training More Girl-Friendly

• Focus on the needs and issues of adolescent girls.

• Engage the gatekeepers of the girls (parents, guardians, and school authorities).

• Create an environment where the girls are physically and emotionally safe during the training and during follow-up activities.

• Take into consideration the needs of the girls in the timing of the training—some girls might need to do chores, schoolwork, or other activities.

• Encourage the girls to take ownership of the process by forming a girl’s advisory board.

• Consider legal and ethical issues by getting proper consent from the girls themselves and their gatekeepers.

• Incorporate into the training opportunities to teach the girls about their human rights.

• Make it fun and interactive!
Step 3: Identify Potential Trainers

Next, you should identify potential trainers for the project. Your organization can reach out to local film or media-focused bodies to see if they can provide members of their staff to facilitate video training or if they can recommend any freelance cinematographers, scriptwriters, video editors, IT technicians, and/or social media experts who would be willing to participate in a video storytelling workshop for adolescent girls. If you have worked with a particular media group in the past (for example, to provide video coverage of one of your events), contacting them would be a good place to start.

Here are a few things to keep in mind when selecting trainers for the video storytelling project:

- **Trainers as role models**: Where possible, it is great to have female trainers. The girls may feel more comfortable interacting with a female trainer, depending on the content of the module (for example, if there are exercises that touch on self-confidence issues). In addition, a female trainer can be seen by the girls as a role model in terms of representing future career opportunities, such as screenwriting and video editing, that are available and achievable for women.

- **Good teachers**: When choosing trainers, it is important to identify professionals who not only are authorities in their given field but also are adept at teaching young people in a way that will enable them to comprehend and absorb the information provided and apply what they have learned. Not every technical specialist has this ability, so look out for those who have a track record as a trainer or have other demonstrable experience.

- **Sharing the vision**: The chosen trainers should demonstrate a willingness and commitment to being part of the process of empowering young girls from disadvantaged backgrounds with the skills and confidence to tell their own stories using video. In other words, the social development aspect of the training should be more important to the trainers than the financial or work experience gains.

Step 4: Bring Together a Curriculum Team

The final step in the curriculum development process is to bring together a curriculum development team to draw out the details of your video storytelling project. This team could include:

- Your organization’s staff members who will be coordinating the project
- An educational or curriculum development expert
- The trainers whom you have identified to train the girl participants

One option is to hold a two- to three-day curriculum development retreat where this newly formed team decides on and lays down the outline for each of the modules to be offered during the video storytelling project.

After being briefed on the outcomes of the needs assessment, the trainers will have an idea of the skill levels of the participants and how in-depth each module should be.
The team should also agree on the objectives to be met by each module. (See below for an example.)

The overall outcome or outcomes of the project should also be decided. For example, an outcome could be for the girls to produce (script, shoot, and edit) four short films—two dramas and two documentaries.

During the curriculum development process, the team of experts should generate ideas for practical, hands-on exercises and lessons to engage the girls and should determine the appropriate time allocated to each activity. The overall structure of the project should be discussed; for example, the practical exercises could be built into each module or could be at the end of the project, after all the classroom modules.

Exercises and handouts for the participating girls can also be generated or compiled during this time. Handouts could include a diagram of the parts of the computer for a computer and Internet module, or a character grid for a story development and scriptwriting module. (Some sample handouts are included in section 4.)

Additional fun activities, like a field trip to the cinema or to the location of a film production, can be built into the training to provide learning and cultural activities outside the classroom setting.

The role of the curriculum development expert will be to take all the ideas that come out of each discussion during the retreat and assemble them into a complete curriculum for a comprehensive video storytelling project. The elements of each module may change based on how quickly participants are able to grasp concepts. The curriculum should thus be seen as a guide.

Sample Objectives for a Story Development and Scriptwriting Module

The girls should:

• Understand what creative writing is all about
• Generate story ideas from their environment and experiences
• Create strong and believable characters and write good dialogue
• Tell their story with the three-act structure
• Produce a short film script (in groups of three)
Project Structure and Other Logistics

The structure of the project, in terms of calendar dates, the total length, and the time allocated for each lesson and module, as well as the daily schedule, should be decided by the curriculum team.

Through discussions and filling in the details for each module, the trainers, with the help of the curriculum development expert, will be able to decide how much time will be needed for each activity. (A sample workshop schedule can be found at the beginning of section 2.)

Following are some additional things to take into account when organizing your project:

- **Time:** How much time do you and your trainers have for a video storytelling project? How much time do the girls have available outside of school, homework, chores, and other activities? Can the training take place for two to three hours after school for a couple of days a week, for several weeks in a row? Or will the project have to be held during a school holiday, with sessions every day for two consecutive weeks?

- **Venue:** Consider an appropriate space, taking into account the number of girls you will be training in video storytelling. If your organization has a sufficiently large conference room, this might work, provided that it is conducive to using different and multiple pieces of media equipment. You might also consider a venue with a computer lab, such as a school or training institution, as that will make some of your logistics and planning around equipment easier. (Remember that if you will be training the girls using Mac-based video editing software, such as Final Cut Pro, you will need a lab with Mac computers.)

Sample Project Structure

- Ten days, with a minimum of two days allocated for each module
- 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM daily
- Brief tea/coffee/snack break in the morning, a lunch break, and a brief tea/coffee/snack break in the afternoon
- Field trip to the location of a film production on day 4

Tips

- It might be cheaper to hold short after-school training sessions as opposed to a longer residential workshop.
- It is also not a bad idea to see if facilitators are willing to accept a transportation stipend only or even volunteer their services.
• **Meals:** Meal or snack breaks should be planned in advance and will depend on how the project is structured. If the girls will be attending video storytelling trainings after school for two to three hours, a snack and a drink will probably suffice; if they are in training for full days at a time, consider providing one to two meals and one to two snack breaks each day.

• **Accommodations:** If you decide to hold a training workshop that takes place all day for several days in a row, you might consider making the program a residential one. If the girls are on school holiday, they may have more time available to attend an extended training, but it is also possible that their parents or guardians might see the vacation as idle time that should be used productively for assisting with additional household and income-earning responsibilities. For this reason, it’s a good idea to host the girls outside of the home in a safe space where they can focus on learning and interacting with each other and where they will not be distracted by parental requests that could result in them coming late or missing entire days of the workshop.

When looking for accommodations for the girls, consider such things as **affordability** (based on your budget), **proximity to the workshop venue** (the workshop could be held in the conference rooms of the hotel where they are lodging), and **security** (trusted chaperones with whom the girls are already familiar could stay with them to ensure that they are safe and behave appropriately).

• **Transportation:** Will the girls be traveling some distance to attend the video storytelling project? It is likely that they won’t have the resources to take care of their own transportation, so you might consider either providing a bus for pick-up and drop-off (every day for a nonresidential project, or at the beginning and end of a residential project) or providing the girls with a transportation stipend to travel between their homes and the training venue.

• **Equipment:** Your equipment needs will vary depending on how many girls you will be training at a time. **A general principle, however, is for each girl to have as much hands-on, practical experience with the tools of video storytelling as possible.** This means, for instance, that you should have at most three students for each camera or computer. Other equipment you might need includes a multimedia projector and screen, a DVD player, and a TV monitor. (A sample equipment list for a video storytelling project can be found in section 4.)

• **Budget:** The level of financial resources you have available for the project will determine many of the project’s other elements, including how many girls are trained, where they will come from (in terms of the cost of getting them to and from the training, or paying for accommodations nearby), and how long the training will last. **Try to be creative** when planning the project to keep it within your budget.
Are You Ready to Begin Your Project?

Video Storytelling Project Checklist

✓ Have You Defined Your Overall Goals?
  • Why do you want to hold a video storytelling project for adolescent girls? What do you hope to achieve?
  • How will you monitor and evaluate the project to know whether your goals have been met?
  • Once the project is over, how can what has been learned be shared and applied, both by the girls and by your organization?

✓ Have You Carried Out a Needs Assessment?
  • What is the current situation of the girls who will participate, of their families and communities, and of your organization?
  • What would you like the situation to be at the end of the project?

✓ Have You Secured the Buy-In of Parents and Guardians?
  • Do parents and guardians understand the benefits of the video storytelling project for their daughters or wards, and if not, how can you get their buy-in?
  • Have they given their written consent for their daughters or wards to participate in the project and be filmed and photographed during the project?

✓ Have You Developed a Project Curriculum?
  • What gaps and challenges faced by the girls, identified through the needs assessment, can the project address?
  • What are the training modules you would like to develop, and what are the objectives to be met by each module?
  • Who will be the trainers to teach these modules?
  • Have you included hands-on exercises and fun in-class and out-of-class exercises and activities?
  • How can you get the girls involved as much as possible in the process? Will there be a girls’ advisory board to contribute to decision making?

✓ Have You Decided on the Project Structure and Handled Logistics?
  • How will you plan your project schedule regarding time, venue, meals, accommodations, transportation, equipment, etc.?
  • How can you be creative with your budget while making sure all the essential elements are still included?

You are now ready to begin your video storytelling project!
Section Two:
Sample Curriculum for a Video Storytelling Project
The following materials focus on the actual training and are intended both to help the curriculum development team in designing an appropriate video storytelling project for your organization and to assist the trainers in carrying out the project.

This sample curriculum is based on an intensive nine-day video storytelling workshop for 12 girls, the schedule for which follows. Your curriculum development team can use this section of the toolkit as a guide for creating a schedule and curriculum that works for your organization and the participating girls.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>DAY 1</th>
<th>DAY 2</th>
<th>DAY 3</th>
<th>DAY 4</th>
<th>DAY 5</th>
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<tr>
<td>8:00 AM - 9:00 AM</td>
<td>Arrival and Registration</td>
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<td>9:00 AM - 10:00 AM</td>
<td>Debrief and Pre-workshop Questionnaires</td>
<td>Presentation of Synopses</td>
<td>Critique, Review, and Edit of Four Scripts</td>
<td>Intro to Cameras</td>
<td>Intro to Lighting</td>
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<td>10:00 AM - 11:00 AM</td>
<td>Icebreakers</td>
<td>What Is a Script?</td>
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<td>Basic Features and Operations</td>
<td>Intro to Sound</td>
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<td>Tea Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:30 AM - 12:30 PM</td>
<td>Intro to Creative Writing</td>
<td>What Is a Plot?</td>
<td>Critique, Review, and Edit of Four Scripts (Continued)</td>
<td>Types of Lenses and Shots</td>
<td>Lunch Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:30 PM - 1:30 PM</td>
<td>Writing a Synopsis</td>
<td>Theme</td>
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<td>Composition and Camera Movements</td>
<td>Filming Four Interviews</td>
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<td>2:30 PM - 3:30 PM</td>
<td>Story Structure</td>
<td>Character Development</td>
<td>Departure for Field Trip</td>
<td>Composition Exercise</td>
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<tr>
<td>3:30 PM - 4:30 PM</td>
<td>Exercise: Write a Story</td>
<td>Emotions</td>
<td>Visit to Cinema</td>
<td>Camera supports</td>
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<td>4:30 PM - 5:30 PM</td>
<td>Discussion of Class Exercise</td>
<td>Interview Exercise</td>
<td>Projection Room Tour</td>
<td>Shooting an Interview</td>
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<tr>
<td>5:30 PM - 6:30 PM</td>
<td>Video Diary Intro and Schedule</td>
<td>Dinner</td>
<td>Film Screening</td>
<td>Dinner</td>
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<tr>
<td>6:30 PM - 7:30 PM</td>
<td>Dinner</td>
<td>Assignments</td>
<td></td>
<td>Assignments</td>
<td>Assignments</td>
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<td>Assignments</td>
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<tr>
<td>TIME</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:00 AM - 10:00 AM</td>
<td>Intro to the Computer</td>
<td>Basic Editing Tools</td>
<td>Filming of Four Dramatic Scripts</td>
<td>Complete Editing and Postproduction of Films</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:00 AM - 11:00 AM</td>
<td>Computer Operations</td>
<td>Audio for Editing</td>
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<td>Intro to the Internet and Operations</td>
<td>Basic Titling</td>
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<td>Complete Editing and Postproduction of Films</td>
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<td>12:30 PM - 1:30 PM</td>
<td>Producer and Production Team</td>
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<td>1:30 PM - 2:30 PM</td>
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<td>2:30 PM - 3:30 PM</td>
<td>Intro to Editing</td>
<td>Locations, Contracts, and Budgets</td>
<td>Editing of Four Dramatic Scripts</td>
<td>How to Run a Community Film Screening</td>
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<td>3:30 PM - 4:30 PM</td>
<td>Capturing, Importing, and Exporting</td>
<td>Production Process</td>
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<td>Wrap-Up Session</td>
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<td>Editing as a Storytelling Tool</td>
<td>Directing the Camera and Actors</td>
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<td>Final Screenings and Awards Ceremony; Post-workshop Questionnaires</td>
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<tr>
<td>5:30 PM - 6:30 PM</td>
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Below are outlines for the six modules that make up the sample nine-day video storytelling workshop. The first module outline is more detailed, while the other outlines give the curriculum development team and the trainers a general idea of what occurs in each portion of the sample workshop.

**Story Development and Scriptwriting**

**Objectives**

For the girls to:

- Understand creative writing
- Generate story ideas from their environment and experiences
- Create strong and believable characters and write good dialogue
- Tell their story with the three-act structure
- Produce a short film script (in teams of three)

**Duration**

Three days

**Day 1**

Begin with some icebreakers to help the girls feel comfortable and get to know each other.

**Icebreaker 1: “What Do We Have in Common?” (30 minutes)**

*This icebreaker helps the girls find out more about each other by using things they have in common.*

**Activity Overview:** The girls make a circle with their chairs, and one chair is taken out so there is one less chair than participants. The first volunteer stands in the middle and tells the group something about herself that she thinks one or more of the girls might have in common with her. For example, she might say, “I was born in Lagos.” Every other girl in the group who was also born in Lagos will then stand up, locate another girl who is also standing up, and sit down in that girl’s seat. The girl who was originally standing in the middle will also locate a recently vacated seat and sit in it. The odd person out who doesn’t find a seat in time will be the next person to tell the group something about herself, and the seat switching begins again.

**Icebreaker 2: “Mirror Mirror” (30 minutes)**

*This icebreaker addresses the issue of self-confidence among adolescent girls and is a way for them to (literally and figuratively) see themselves first and foremost as important, beautiful individuals with so much to offer the world, before any other categorization, such as “girls” or “women.”*

**Lesson 1 Exercise**

Screen one or two short films for the girls and ask them to come up with suggestions, in groups of three or four, about where the makers of the film might have gotten the inspiration for the story. The point of the exercise is to demonstrate that inspiration can come from a variety of diverse sources, from true life to imagined situations.
Activity Overview: A full-length mirror is propped up at one end of the room. The girls take turns looking in the mirror and telling themselves what they see: “I see a strong girl with a passion for helping others” or “I see a beautiful young woman who will go to university and become a doctor.” The girls should be guided to see the most positive things about themselves and their future aspirations.

Lesson 1: Introduction to Creative Writing (1 hour)
Engage the girls in a discussion about:

• The definition of creative writing (using the imagination when writing, free and individual written expression, sharing experiences with others through writing, a record of certain important experiences, etc.)

• Types of creative writing (poems, fiction and nonfiction, short stories, plays/scripts for the screen and stage, autobiographies/memoirs, songwriting, etc.)

• Where to get ideas and inspiration for creative writing (personal experiences, newspapers, magazines, books, television, conversations, etc.)

Lesson 2: Writing a Synopsis (1 hour)
Teach the girls what a synopsis is (a one- to three-sentence description of the highlights of a story that reveals the story’s core problem or conflict). Let them know that a synopsis is useful to refer to when they are writing a script, as the synopsis will keep them focused on the essential story.

Three Steps to Writing a Synopsis

1. Identify the major character, the problem confronting him or her, the character’s goal, and the obstacle in his or her way.

2. Summarize all these elements in one to three sentences.

3. Keep rewriting the synopsis until it seems perfect!

Example of a synopsis:
Maria is away at boarding school when she learns that her parents are planning to pull her out of school to marry a much older man. She has to figure out how she can stop this from happening.

Lesson 2 Exercise
Have the girls each think of a story idea and write, in one or two sentences, whom and what their story is about. Then ask them to read aloud their synopses, and have the group talk about the inspiration for the story idea, the main character, etc. The purpose of this exercise is for the girls to brainstorm and learn to express potential story ideas.

Day 1 Evening Assignment
The girls will each write a synopsis of a new short story. After all the synopses are presented in class the following day, the group will pick three or four (depending on the number of girls and how many groups of three they form) to make into short films.
Lesson 3: Story Structure (1 hour)
Show the girls how a story is told through a structure or framework (beginning, middle, and end; or introduction, conflict, climax, and resolution). Explain why stories need sound structure, and point out that a flawed structure can impede the flow of emotion and make it difficult for the audience to “hear” the author’s message.

Exercise (1½ hours)
Have the group write a story with a beginning, middle, and end.

Discussion of Exercise (30 minutes)

Video Diary Introduction & Schedule (1 hour)
In order to do active research and document the learning process throughout the workshop, the girls should record feedback from their fellow classmates through short video interviews taken with a hand-held video camera, or camcorder. Draw up a schedule for who will conduct the video interviews at the end of each workshop day. One way to do this is to group the girls into pairs and have one pair interview three fellow participants each day. This peer interviewing should elicit some realistic, honest, and truthful feedback about the girls’ experiences during the workshop.

Take the girls through the basics of operating the camcorder: how to open the camera and insert the DV tape, how to record, how to zoom in and out, how to play back the recorded video, etc. Monitor the use of the camcorders and answer any questions that arise.

While you should encourage the girls to come up with their own questions for their peers, they can start out with the following:

• Tell us your name and where you’re from.
• Name the first emotion that comes to your mind (what you’re feeling right at this moment).
• Name one new thing you learned today. Why did you choose that one?
• How do you feel about how everything went today?
• What was your most enjoyable moment today?
• What was your worst or least enjoyable moment today?
• What do you think of the workshop so far?
• Is there anything else you want to talk about?
Day 2

Presentation of Synopses (1 hour)
Have the girls present the synopses they wrote the previous evening. Make sure each synopsis includes the required elements.

Lesson 4: What Is a Script? (1 hour)
Explain that a script is like an architect’s plan for a building. In the same way that a building’s plans are not the building itself, the script is one step toward making a film or play.

Discuss with the girls:

• **What a script is** (“a written version of a play or other dramatic composition; used in preparing for a performance,” per wordnet.princeton.edu; “written document containing the dialogue and action for a drama; the text of a stage play, movie, or other performance, especially, the final form used for the performance itself,” per en.wiktionary.org)

• **Different types of scripts** (for film, TV, or stage performances; scripts for film and TV are also called screenplays)

• **The elements of a script** (a script is a form of story, with a beginning, middle, and end)
Talk about how a strong and entertaining story always starts with a good idea. The first stage, then, in writing a script is finding inspiration for the story—finding that good idea. Have the girls examine what goes into making a script, using the checklist of essential story elements below. (This checklist is also available in section 4 as a handout.)

Checklist of Essential Story Elements

1. Briefly, what is your story about?
2. What is the theme?
3. The main character:
   a. For main characters, it’s best to write a full biography.
4. The secondary characters:
   a. Who are they?
   b. What will their role be?
   c. What is their relationship with the main character?
5. The beginning of the story:
   a. Who will be telling the story? (viewpoint)
   b. Where will the story take place? (setting)
   c. How will you introduce the main character?
   d. How will you introduce other characters?
   e. How will the story begin?
   f. What will happen in the beginning?
   g. What is the conflict?
   h. What is the character’s goal?
   i. How will the conflict prevent the character from reaching his or her goal?
   j. What is motivating the character?
6. The middle of the story:
   a. What events are going to occur?
   b. How will you show your character’s personality?
   c. What problems are you going to introduce? List each problem and how the character solves it.
   d. How are you going to make things harder for your character?
   e. What will happen to make the climax?
   f. What will happen in the beginning section of the middle of your story?
   g. How will this be tied to the beginning of your story?
   h. What will happen in the middle section of the middle of your story?
   i. What will happen in the end section of the middle of your story?
7. The end of the story:
   a. Will the character achieve his or her goal?
   b. How will the character achieve it, or why will he or she not achieve it?
   c. What is going to happen in the end?
   d. How are you going to end your story?
Film Script Format
Introduce the girls to the specifics of how to format scripts. Film scripts, or screenplays, are written to include the elements that the camera operator will need to know when he or she is filming scenes from the script; for example, where the scene is taking place, what time of day it is, the location of objects and characters in the scene, and the body language of the actors.

The format of the script can be broken into three parts:

Headings—At the beginning of each main scene, there should be some description of the following three elements:

- Where the camera is located (EXT. for exterior or outside; INT. for interior or inside)
- Where the scene is located (for example, LIVING ROOM)
- The time of day (DAY or NIGHT)

There are also special headings for things such as the beginning of the film (montage), a flashback, or a dream scene.

Narrative—Narrative comes in between the dialogue and describes what’s happening in the scene in terms of:

- Action
- Characters and settings
- Sounds

Dialogue—Dialogue consists of three parts:

- The name of the character speaking, in capital letters
- Where needed, a comment in parentheses (the actor’s direction) that gives the actor an idea of how the character is feeling or looking or describes the character’s body language at that particular moment
- The character’s type of speech (what the character actually says appears below the character’s name and any actor’s direction)

You can hand out copies of the Sample Scene from a Film Script (see section 4) so the girls can see an example of what the script format looks like. The FilmScriptWriting.Com website (www.filmscriptwriting.com/basicscriptformatting.html) gives lots of tips on formatting scripts, as well as other tips for the scriptwriting process.

Lesson 4 Exercise
Ask the girls to write one short scene (not more than one page long) using some element from each category of headings, narrative, and dialogue in the proper script format. Two or three examples should be presented to the group (the girls should write them out on a flip chart or blackboard for everyone to see the formatting) and critiqued.
Lesson 5: What Is a Plot? (1 hour)

Explain to the girls that the plot of a story is a map that helps them to write a structured story instead of leaping into the unknown, which rarely works. The plot is the foundation of a story; it gives a sense of direction to the story and helps to hold it together.

The plot structure of the story deals with the way the story is dramatically arranged, including significant events that determine how and in what direction the story goes. In a screenplay, the plot can be divided into the following four elements:

1. Conflict
2. Goal (to find a solution to the conflict)
3. Obstacles (barriers that prevent the protagonist, or main character, from reaching his or her goal)
4. Outcome (success or failure in finding a solution to the conflict)

The conflict is the emotional or physical problem that a character experiences in a story. Every story is about a problem that needs solving. Conflict in a story can be either fatal (danger, calamity, disaster) or non-fatal (dilemma, dissatisfaction, disagreement, challenge). Conflict can be between two characters; internal (a character vs. him- or herself); or against society, nature, or technology. A good way for the girls to develop the core conflict of their story is for them to imagine a situation and ask themselves what could go wrong and how that would affect the character(s).

The conflict, goal, obstacles, and outcome are often arranged in a three-act structure: the beginning, or setup; the middle, or confrontation; and the end, or resolution.

Act 1 – the setup: introducing the main story, the main character and other characters, relationships, and the setting

Act 2 – the confrontation: making the main character confront the problem and begin a quest to find a solution

Act 3 – the resolution: solving the conflict by having the main character either achieve or fail to achieve his or her goal

Icebreaker: “Tell the Story”

Activity Overview: The girls tell a story as a group. The first person starts the story in one sentence (for example, “Once upon a time ...”). The next person continues the story, also adding only one sentence, and so on, with each girl adding one sentence until the last person ends the story. This funny exercise is meant to show how, without a plot, several things can happen.
Lesson 6: Theme (1 hour)
Teach the girls about theme. A theme is a one-line explanation of a story. It is the main, unifying idea that the writer wants to convey, and it runs through the entire story; characters’ actions, interactions, and motivations all reflect the story’s theme. For a theme to work, it has to contain three things:

- Character
- Conflict
- Resolution

If the theme doesn’t contain these three essential elements, then the story that’s written around it won’t be a proper story; it might turn out to be an essay instead. Explain to the girls that once they choose a theme, all the elements that make up their story (dialogue, conflict, scenes, characterization) should be written with the theme in mind.

Suggest that the girls try to explore their theme visually, through the actions of their characters, rather than through their dialogue, in order to avoid an overdone or too obvious theme. This way, the audience doesn’t feel as though the author is lecturing them, but instead experiences the theme in a subtle way as the story progresses.

Lesson 6 Exercise
This exercise contains two activities. The first activity results in an awareness of the existence of plot as an element of the short story, and the second activity shows how plots are shaped by a theme.

Activity 1: Write an incomplete phrase, or a sentence that can be expanded (such as “It was a dark and stormy night . . .”), on a piece of paper and give the paper to one girl in the group. Let her have two to three minutes to complete or expand the sentence to form the beginning of a story. Then ask her to pass the paper to the next girl, who has two to three minutes to continue the story. Repeat until all the girls have contributed to the story. The last person has to write (again, in two to three minutes) an ending to the story. Ask one of the girls to volunteer to read the finished story to the class, and then get comments from the girls on what they observed.

Activity 2: Ask the girls to suggest some popular sayings and then have them vote on their favorite one. Tell them to keep the saying in mind to guide them as they take their turns contributing to a new story, written in a chain (as in the first activity). The last girl has to end the story, still keeping the chosen theme in mind. Ask one of the girls to read the final story to the group, and discuss this story in relation to the story created in the first activity.

This exercise demonstrates how a saying/theme shapes a story (as in the second activity), in contrast to how a plot “wanders” without a theme (as in the first activity). The exercise is helpful in showing the function of theme by having a theme absent and then present. Explain to the girls that whatever theme is chosen for a story, all the elements that make up the story—dialogue, conflict, scenes, etc.—should be written with the theme in mind. The theme should progress the story.
Lesson 7: Character Development (1 hour)

Explain that there is almost always a central character in a script, and that characters are expected to be three-dimensional and rounded. Readers/viewers should get a sense of the characters’ history and how it has affected them, as well as understanding why they do what they do.

Have the girls:

- Fill out a character grid (see section 4 for a sample character grid)
- Illustrate their character

Ask the girls to examine each character, his or her goal and journey, and the obstacles in his or her way. Also discuss the role of emotions in character development, stressing that emotions are the lifeblood of characters and stories and are what motivate the characters’ actions. Characters can be revealed either through their actions (what they do and say) or their motives (the “why” behind their actions), or both.

There are four major types of characters:

- **Lead**—the main character whose story is being told; this can also be the protagonist, who takes the central action that changes the momentum of the story
- **Opposing**—a villain (typical bad guy) or a non-human force (earthquakes, sharks, aliens, etc.) that prevents the lead character from achieving his or her goal
- **Supporting**—a friend/supporter-helper who assists the lead in achieving his or her goal
- **Incidental**—extra characters used to fill spaces

Video storytelling workshop, © Hadiza Ubale (workshop participant)
Lesson 8: Writing Good Dialogue (1 hour)
Discuss the purpose of dialogue. What characters say to each other—their dialogue—helps build the characters and advance the plot of the story.

Dialogue can function in several different ways:

• As information. Dialogue guides the viewers and moves the story forward through the conflict; good dialogue is subtle about providing information in an entertaining way.

• As character revelation/differentiation. What characters say and how they say it reveals who they are internally and externally.

• As allusion to the theme of the story.

Dialogue is often determined by the background of the characters, which plays a role in language and accents. Stress to the girls that it’s very important for them to develop an ear for the way people really speak instead of how they think people speak.

Icebreaker: “Dialogue & Background”
Activity Overview: In this game, there are three social classes, defined as 1 (lower or working class), 2 (middle class), and 3 (upper class). These three numbers are written on pieces of paper, repeated as many times as there are girls, and folded up; each girl then picks one slip of paper. Based on the number she has chosen, she has to act out how she would greet the other members of the group. For example, a girl who has chosen class 1 might approach the others hesitantly, eyes on the ground, and say “Sir” or “Ma’am.” The others guess which class she is depicting. The purpose of this game is to convey the idea that a character’s background (where the character is from, his or her socioeconomic status, how much schooling he or she has received, etc.) determines how the character speaks.

Ask the girls to listen as often as they can to conversations between people from various backgrounds and in various situations. The girls will probably notice that people are generally not very eloquent; they don’t express themselves very well vocally, and a great deal of what is not said is just as important—often, more important—than what is said. People can express themselves using body language and gestures, and also in the subtext of their words.

Subtext is the content underneath spoken dialogue that illuminates what characters think or feel without them actually saying it. It’s often good to use subtext in a script when there’s something at stake emotionally in the story; for example, masked criticism or rudeness. Subtext is useful for making the audience actively participate in the story by compelling them to bring out the meaning in the dialogue.

Finally, remind the girls that in order to have a strong, compelling story, the dialogue should complement the visuals that will be in the film, rather than replacing or restating them. For example, it’s probably more powerful to show a flashback scene visually rather than having a character talk about it.
Lesson 9: Documentaries (1 hour)
In this lesson, teach the girls the basic format for telling the story of someone in their community, including how to come up with interview questions. These questions will be used in the Camera Operations, Lighting, and Sound module, during which the girls will film an interview in the community.

First, ask the girls for their definitions of a documentary (a story about real life that presents the facts about a person or event) and discuss how documentaries differ from dramas. Then ask the girls if they’ve ever seen a documentary and, if so, to share some examples of the documentaries they’ve seen.

Remind the girls that while documentaries may sound boring, there are a lot of interesting documentaries that have been made; what they have in common is that, like dramas, they usually have interesting characters, conflicts, and plots (that really happened). Real life is full of interesting people and events. Ask the girls to share some examples of interesting real-life events.

Documentaries, like dramas, can be either short (one to three minutes) or long (two hours). If possible, screen an example of a short documentary and an excerpt from a long documentary and ask the girls questions about the subject matter and other aspects of the documentaries.

Documentaries, like dramas, need to be planned, and a script needs to be written for them. Go over the steps for planning a documentary:

1. **Pick a topic and do research.** Think about whom or what you want to feature and gather all the background information you need in order to form an idea of where you want your documentary story to go. Remember that you want whoever watches your documentary film to be as captivated as they would be by a dramatic film.

2. **Write an outline.** Based on what you think your story will be, write a basic outline that describes who your main subject or subjects are, what their main conflict or problem is (the reason why you’ve chosen them for the documentary), and how you think this problem will be resolved. Remember that your documentary will likely change once you start shooting because you’re dealing with real people and real situations that you should not manipulate.

3. **Come up with a list of questions** that you want to ask your subjects. Interviews play a big part in documentaries because they help reveal more about your subjects and their conflicts.

   Form questions for your characters that will allow them to express themselves in the best possible way. Try to modify any questions you have that can be answered with only “Yes” or “No.” For example, “Did you enjoy the workshop?” could be changed to “What did you think about the workshop and how did you feel taking part in it?”

   Also, make sure your list of questions is long enough, because you want to get as much video footage as possible. You never know which of your questions will reveal more about the subject, or even another angle to the story, that you will want to have on film when you are editing your documentary.
Lesson 9 Exercise
Have the girls, in groups of three, pick someone in their community who they think would be good to profile in a documentary. Ask each group to come up with an outline for their documentary; a list of ten questions to ask the main character; and a short, very basic, two-column script. Then review these with the whole class in terms of whether the visuals, narration, and questions asked have the potential to pull viewers in and evoke some emotion.

Day 2 Evening Assignment
The girls, in groups of three (determined in class), will develop the chosen story ideas for a drama (from day 1) or a documentary (from day 2) into full scripts.
Camera Operations, Lighting, and Sound

Objectives
For the girls to:

- Learn the basics of operating and maintaining a digital still camera and a video camera
- Identify the different parts of a video camera
- Identify the different types of shots and how to use them
- Learn about good composition of shots
- Learn how to light a subject/scene for good shots
- Understand and demonstrate the power of the camera as a tool for telling and interpreting a story
- Learn how to record good sound for their video productions

Duration
Two days

Day 1

Lesson 1: Introduction to Cameras (1 hour)

- Start with a brief introduction so the girls get to know a little about you.
- Find out from the girls what they know about still cameras and video cameras by asking simple questions like, “What is a camera?” and “What is a video camera/camcorder?”
- Show samples of different still photographic works, such as photos in magazines and photos of the girls.
- Demonstrate how to use a still camera—body and operations. Have the girls take turns taking different photographs and have the photographs reviewed by the class.

Lesson 2: Basic Features and Operations of a Video Camera (1 hour)

- Start with the blindfold game. Divide the girls into pairs. Blindfold one girl in each pair and have the other girl give the blindfolded girl instructions to do various things. This game is a way to lead the group into a discussion about the functions, power, importance, sensitivity, and usefulness of the human eye and, by extension, of the video camera.
- Explain the two main parts of the video camera—lens and body.
- Explain and demonstrate the features on the body of a camera: record button, removing and replacing tapes, playing back video on the camera, long play and short play, microphone, on-screen menu items, etc. Give each girl a chance to perform the above operations.
Lesson 3: Types of Lenses and Shots (1 hour)

• Explain and demonstrate the types of lenses, aperture, and focus, and talk about their uses and applications.

• Explain and demonstrate the basic types of shots (namely the close-up, medium shot, and long shot) and the variants, using comic books or photo books to illustrate the shots. Play a short video for the girls to further enhance their understanding of types of shots and uses of shots.

Lesson 4: Composition and Camera Movement (1 hour)

• Explain composition and good framing and the rule of thirds. With the use of pictures and illustrations, show what makes good or bad framing/composition and talk about look room, head room, and lead room.

• Explain and demonstrate the basic camera movements (pan left/right, tilt up/down) and lens movements (zoom in/out). Make sure each girl tries out these movements on her own.

Lesson 5: Composition Exercise (1½ hours)

• Have the girls work in groups and practice composing and filming different shots on the camera. Then play each group’s work back while you and the other girls discuss the shots and, if necessary, make positive suggestions on shots that are not well composed.

Lesson 6: Camera Supports (30 minutes)

• Explain the different types of camera supports and their uses. Show pictures of the camera supports discussed.

Lesson 7: How to Shoot an Interview (1 hour)

• The girls will be filming interviews with members of the community on day 2 of this module, so go over the necessary camera, lighting, and microphone techniques in preparation for the interviews.

Day 1 Evening Assignment

The girls, in groups of three, will prepare for filming community interviews.
Day 2

Lesson 8: Introduction to Lighting (1½ hours)

• Start with the blindfold game, using it to help the girls understand the importance and uses of light.
• Hold a discussion on what the girls understand as light.
• Explain and demonstrate natural and artificial light.
• Explain three-point lighting and ask the girls to identify the sources of light in the room.
• Have the girls practice lighting up a scene for a simple shoot.

Lesson 9: Introduction to Sound (1½ hours)

• Explain the importance of sound. Describe types of microphones and demonstrate how to record good sound.

Lesson 10: Filming Four Interviews (2 hours)

• Have the girls break into groups of three with their prepared interview questions (from day 2 of the Story Development and Scriptwriting module), and then have each group film an interview with one member of the community. Help them choose a location and conduct and film the interviews.

Lesson 11: Interview Critique Session (2½ hours)

• Have the girls view and critique the footage of their interviews.
Computer and Internet Appreciation

Objectives

For the girls to:

- Understand the functions and types of computers
- Learn the basics of hardware and software
- Use the computer to create and edit documents
- Understand the Internet and its uses
- Use the Internet to create an email address and search for information

Duration

Half a day

Day 1

Lesson 1: Introduction to the Computer (1 hour)

- To teach the girls computer appreciation, start by explaining to them what a computer is, using examples like the computer inside a mobile phone. Identify the various components that make up a computer and ask the girls to relate those components to the examples given earlier. Then ask them to state other examples of computers and explain what computers can be used for. Discuss the different types of computers and give examples. Once the girls understand about computers, ask them to draw a simple desktop computer and identify the various parts (monitor, keyboard, mouse, CPU).

Lesson 2: Computer Operations (1 hour)

- Explain how to turn on and shut down a computer.
- Explain how to open and close software, and show the girls how to create, edit in, save, and delete word-processing documents.
- Explain and demonstrate file structure and storage on a computer.

Lesson 3: Internet Appreciation and Operations (2 hours)

- Talk to the girls about what the Internet is and how it works, and teach them how to use it. Introduce them to search engines, such as Google, explaining how they work. Also show them how to sign up for an email address with a free provider like Yahoo.

Lesson 2 Exercise

Have the girls practice what they have learned by typing a one-page diary, saving it to a particular location, and recalling the document after it is closed.

Lesson 3 Exercise

Give the girls subjects to search for, and have different groups of girls use different search engines to come up with a list of three information sources (including web citation, or URL) and some basic information from each source.
Video and Audio Editing

Objectives
For the girls to:

- Understand basic video editing
- Understand how to use editing as a tool for storytelling
- Learn types of editing
- Learn and use basic tools for editing in iMovie or similar software

Duration
One day

Day 1

Lesson 1: Introduction to Video Editing (1 hour)

- Start by explaining what video editing is, the need for videos to be edited, and the types of video editing.
- Identify the basic tools of editing, including the non-linear editing interface, and list various non-linear editing software.

Lesson 2: Capturing, Importing, & Exporting (1 hour)

- Teach the girls how to capture, import, log, and export video using the various tools in the editing software you are working with. Give them time to practice with the footage they shot during the community interviews in the Camera Operations, Lighting, and Sound module.

Lesson 3: Editing as a Tool for Storytelling (1 hour)

- Introduce the girls to the use of video editing as a tool for storytelling. Start by giving examples of three different shots and arranging them in different orders to mean different things. Have the girls give additional examples and arrange and interpret various possible alternative sequences for them.
- Show the girls how time can be used in editing (slow motion, fast motion, and normal time).

Lesson 4: Basic Editing Tools (1 hour)

- Introduce the girls to the basic editing tools in iMovie or similar software and demonstrate the tools’ uses. Have the girls practice editing the community interviews.
Lesson 5: Introduction to Audio Editing (1 hour)

• Introduce the basics of audio for video editing, including laying sound effects and music.

Lesson 6: Basic Titling (1 hour)

• Show the girls about basic titling in editing and have them practice creating information frames, opening and closing credits, etc.

• Have the girls complete the editing of their community interviews.

Video storytelling workshop, © Monica Grover (The Global Fund for Children)
The Production Process

Objectives
For the girls to:

- Learn about putting together a team and managing resources for a production
- Understand how to take a simple project from script to screen
- Understand the resources and requirements needed for a successful film shoot that will tell their stories in a compelling way

Duration
Half a day

Day 1

Lesson 1: The Producer & the Production Team (1 hour)

- Discuss with the girls the role of a producer as an organizer with the objective of coordinating all the elements of production to produce a movie or television program.

- Divide the girls into groups of three. Have them take a scene from the scripts they wrote during the Story Development and Scriptwriting module and break it down to determine cast, location, costumes, props, and other requirements.

- Discuss the roles of crew and cast and how important each is in the production process.

Lesson 2: Location Scouting & the Basics of Contracts & Budgeting (1 hour)

Location Scouting
- Discuss the importance of getting the right location for a shoot and help the girls to identify and list things that can go wrong if a location is not properly secured or checked out before a shoot.

- Have the girls collectively draw up a checklist of things to look out for when scouting for a location, and discuss possible locations for shooting their four film scripts.

Contracts
- Talk to the girls about the importance of obtaining clearances and permits and of drawing up agreements with crew and cast members. Hand out examples of simple contracts and have the girls examine and discuss them. Finally, teach the girls the importance of release forms for anyone being filmed in their video.

Budgeting
- Show the girls the importance of budgeting by using examples of everyday living and relating these to the business of production.
Lesson 3: The Production Process (1 hour)
Discuss the production workflow with the girls and demonstrate the importance of each stage through examples of projects at various stages of production (preproduction, principal photography, and postproduction).

Lesson 4: Directing the Camera & the Actors (1 hour)
Separate the girls into their groups of three and have them select the cast (director/producer, camera/sound, actor) for each scene of their script. Rotate the casting during the filming so that each group member has a chance to be behind the camera, in charge of the camera and sound, and the talent in front of the camera.

Show the girls how to decide on suitable angles and shots for their projects. Then ask each group of three to pick and explain their camera positions and choice of shots, first on paper and then to the rest of the groups.

Day 1 Evening Assignment
The girls will rehearse the scenes of their scripts and review camera positions and shots in preparation for filming the next day.
Putting Knowledge into Practice

Objective
For the girls to:

- Apply what they have learned in the previous modules

Duration
Two days

Day 1

Lesson 1: Filming Dramatic Scripts (4½ hours)
Have the girls spend the morning filming the four scripts developed by the four different groups. By the end of lesson 1, the girls should have all the footage they need to begin editing.

Lesson 2: Editing (3 hours)
Have the girls log and capture their footage, choose music and sound effects, and begin editing.

Day 2

Lesson 3: Editing (4½ hours)
Have the girls complete the editing and postproduction of their four short films.

Lesson 4: How to Run a Community Film Screening (45 minutes)
Teach the girls about the basic resources, requirements, and planning needed to run a film screening in their home communities. (See section 3 for some tips.)

Lesson 5: Wrap-Up: (1½ hours)
- Screen and discuss the four films
- Discuss how to use the skills and films from the workshop in the future
- Explain the end-of-workshop assignment (to do a film profile of two people in the community—one youth and one adult)

Lesson 6: Closing Ceremony (2½ hours)
The closing ceremony can include:
- A workshop certificate, along with copies of photographs taken during the workshop, for each girl
- Prizes given for most creative, best film, best director, best attitude, etc.
- Refreshments
Video storytelling workshop, © Hauwa Saleh Baba (Girl Child Concerns)
Section Three: Reaching Out
Now that the girls have written their scripts, filmed their shots, and edited their videos into a final product, what’s next?

This section provides some ideas on how to use the girls’ videos as an advocacy tool in the community and how to share the videos online. It also identifies ways to measure the effectiveness of your video storytelling project.

There are various outlets available for disseminating the girls’ videos. For instance, video screenings arranged for the girls’ community can help raise awareness and advocate for issues of local significance, while the Internet provides a number of options for reaching a global audience.

Your organization, along with the girls in the video storytelling project, might decide to reach out to the community with the important messages that are contained in the girls’ videos. To inspire social change, your organization might also consider placing the girls’ work on CNN iReport, TakingITGlobal, Voice of Africa (if appropriate), or other networks.
Using Video for Advocacy: Screening Films with Social Messages in the Community

Below are some points for your organization and the girls to consider when thinking about screening the girls’ videos in the community.

1. Identifying Your Objectives
What do you want to achieve by screening the videos in the community?

• To provide recreation and entertainment
• To inform people about a particular issue
• To change people’s thinking about a particular issue

2. Planning the Screening
Questions to think about:

• What is the theme of the event?
• What is your essential message?
• Who is your target audience?
• What video have you chosen to screen? How is the video relevant to your target audience?
• What screening equipment do you need? Does the screening equipment work?
• Do you have a suitable venue?
• What training resources (flip charts, markers, etc.) do you need?
• Have you invited a community leader or celebrity to give an opening speech?

Know your audience:

• Know the needs, issues, and problems of your audience.
• Think about the videos the girls have produced and how these would meet the audience’s needs.
• Let target audience members know in advance how the knowledge and information in the videos will help meet their needs.

Other things to consider when planning a screening:

• What print or other support materials, such as flyers or brochures that give more information about the topic of the film, are you going to distribute or leave behind?
• How do you plan to evaluate the screening? For example, do you have a questionnaire you would like to distribute to the audience after the screening to get an idea of what they thought about the film and how their behavior might change as a result of watching it?
In trying to shape ideas and change lifestyles, you need to touch people’s core beliefs and reflect these beliefs in creative ways. Be solution-oriented and realistic, but also show positive examples.

3. Facilitating the Screening
The video screening should be an opportunity to create a meaningful group experience during which the participants can learn from each other. Having a staff member act as a facilitator at the screening can help to make this happen.

The video screening experience should be:

• **Meaningful** enough for people to personally identify with
• **Comfortable** enough for people to feel free to speak
• **Challenging** enough for people to question personal and social patterns of thinking and behavior
• **Informative** enough to give people new skills and models for living their lives
• **Entertaining** enough for people to have a positive and fun experience

Some tips for the facilitator are below.

**Asking Questions**
Asking questions is an important part of facilitation. The following guidelines can help lead to a productive discussion.

• Choose an experience that focuses on an issue that the audience finds interesting and relevant.
• Let the audience be free to explore and express themselves.
• Ask the audience questions that reflect on their experiences, and discuss their responses.

**Facilitators need to create environments that are conducive to learning**—environments that are devoid of conflicts and embrace different views in a creative and respectful way.

**Listening**
Listening is also part of the facilitation process. Three basic listening tips are as follows:

• Communicate openness with your body language (for example, nod your head when the speaker has said something you agree with)
• Maintain eye contact with the speaker
• Give the speaker your full attention
Some other ways to let the speaker know that you are listening:

• Make listening noises
• Touch the speaker (when appropriate)
• Use the person’s name when communicating with him or her
• Clarify what a person is asking before answering his or her question
• Ask probing questions

4. Discussing the Videos
Here are some video discussion points:

• How did the video make you feel?
• What did the video make you think?
• What do you feel about the title and the theme of the video?

It is also helpful to link the issues in the video with current newspaper articles, TV programs, or recent events or experiences in the community.

5. Achieving Your Objectives
Always remember your objectives for the video screening.

Possible objectives for your organization:

• Audience satisfaction
• Entertainment
• Education
• Profit (if you plan to make some money by selling tickets to the video screening)

Possible objectives for the community:

• Opportunity to see community issues reflected on-screen
• Opportunity for the community to discuss relevant issues
• Opportunity for the community to work together toward a common goal
• Opportunity for community organizations to network

Try to provide practical information for the audience, such as what they can do about an issue or where they can go for help.
Sharing the Girls’ Stories Online

People around the world are becoming more and more interconnected, thanks to the Internet. New tools such as weblogs (blogs) and video-sharing websites have made communication and the consumption of news, ideas, and entertainment more participatory and have brought people together from all corners of the globe and all walks of life. The videos the girls create can be shared with people across the world through a variety of online options.

Video-Sharing Sites

Video-sharing websites allow individuals or small organizations to upload their digital videos and share them with anyone else connected to the Internet. Rather than using up the space or bandwidth you have available from your website service provider by uploading large video files to your organization’s website, you can use one of the many online video-sharing sites that provide free hosting services for videos and connect you to an online community of other video creators and viewers.

One of the largest and most popular video-sharing websites is YouTube (www.youtube.com), which is owned by Google. After you sign up for a YouTube user account, which is a simple process, the website allows you to upload videos (in AVI, MOV, or MPG formats) that are ten minutes or less in length. After you have given your uploaded video a title, a description, and a tag and have placed it in a category, anyone who goes to the YouTube website can view it by entering keywords or category names into the YouTube search engine. You can also include on your organization’s website a link to your video on YouTube, or you can embed a YouTube video window that will enable visitors to your website to view the video right there rather than being redirected to your video’s YouTube page. Other online platforms for sharing videos include Yahoo! Video (http://video.yahoo.com) and Dailymotion (www.dailymotion.com).


Video storytelling workshop, © Padma Ugbabe (Communicating for Change)
Social Networking Sites
Social networking websites are another good way to share videos. One popular example is Facebook (www.facebook.com), which lets individuals set up profile pages where they can post text, photos, and videos. As a member of a community-based organization, you can register for your own personal Facebook account and then use that to create an open group for your organization where you can post videos and information on your activities. An open group is visible to all Internet users and open for all Facebook users to join. You can also create a Facebook fan page for your organization and post videos there.

Betsy Harman, of Harman Interactive LLC, has some useful tips for nonprofit organizations using Facebook at www.harmaninteractive.com/2009/02/05/facebook-nonprofits-use-pages-and-groups/.

You can also visit Beth’s Blog, a blog on how nonprofits can use social media, at www.bethkanter.org, or view the “in plain English” educational videos on social media and technology produced by Common Craft at www.commoncraft.com/videos#technology.

Blogs
A weblog (commonly called a blog) is a website that serves as a sort of online diary that is updated periodically. A blog is an easy way for community-based groups to keep networks of supporters, clients, and potential funders constantly informed of new stories and activities through text, photos, and videos. One easy way to add videos to a blog is to embed videos that have been uploaded to YouTube. The girls in your video storytelling project can also create a blog as part of their experience in using the Internet, learning about new media, and improving their computer and writing skills.

Some tips on using blogs for nonprofit or community-based organizations can be found on Nancy Schwartz & Company’s website at http://gettingattention.org/articles/42/blogging/nonprofit-blog.html.

For more on blogs and other forms of social media, see the guides created by Rising Voices, the citizen media outreach of Global Voices, at http://rising.globalvoicesonline.org/guides/.

Two Blogs Created by Adolescent Girls in Nigeria

Exceptional Filmmakers: http://exceptionalfilmmakers.blogspot.com

Destiny Filmmakers: http://gccvideostorytelling.blogspot.com
Measuring Your Project’s Effectiveness

You should be thinking about the effectiveness of your video storytelling project as it is being conducted to make sure you are collecting the information needed to properly assess its impact on the participating girls, as well as on the community and the organization itself.

Before embarking on a video storytelling project, it is important to critically think about the objectives of the project. Objectives could include:

- Empowering girls with the skills to tell their own stories
- Empowering girls with vocational skills that enable them to earn a living
- Building the capacity of your organization to engage in effective advocacy to create social change

Your objectives will form the basis for evaluating the project’s effectiveness. Identifying how you want to measure each objective is the next step. Below are sample goals and measures for gauging the effectiveness of a video storytelling project.

- **Capacity building** — How does video storytelling improve the skills of the girls?
- **Community involvement** — How are the videos used and to what effect? Are videos able to connect the girls and the community?
- **Quantity of videos** — How many videos are the girls able to produce?
- **Comprehension of videos** — How easily are the messages within the videos understood by community audiences?
- **Video production goals** — Does the production of a video have set targets? If so, how well do the girls meet them?
- **Impact of videos** — What is the impact of each video?
  - Does it inspire change?
  - Does the video empower the girls and community by promoting the girls’ activities and spreading their messages?
  - Does producing the video promote community understanding?
  - Who else watches the video? Can the video help to reduce the isolation experienced by some girls and their communities?
- **Viewer reaction** — What have been the reactions from audiences that have watched the videos?

During the video storytelling workshop in Nigeria, the adolescent girls produced videos that dealt with social and cultural issues that they and their peers face. They chose to focus on early marriage, which is a very common occurrence in northern Nigeria, and on women and work, in the form of a social documentary on an ordinary woman, mother, wife, and burgeoning entrepreneur. On the last day of the workshop, the girls held a screening for selected community members and some members of the press. The videos were well received by those in attendance, and the opportunity for the girls to share their videos with members of their community helped to build their confidence. The girls anticipate holding more community screenings in the future.
Section Four: Tools

Kudirat Initiative for Democracy, © Tiana Markova-Gold
Sample Moderator’s Guide for Focus-Group Discussions (FGDs)

Below are suggested points to cover during a group discussion. It is expected that more points will be added and other necessary modifications made as the discussion progresses.

Part 1: Introduction

*Moderator: Introduce yourself (name, occupation, interests, hobbies, etc.) and explain the purpose of the focus-group discussion. Tell the group the following:*

- There are no right or wrong answers, as all opinions are valuable.
- Please speak one at a time.
- Please note that you may be photographed and/or recorded to allow us to better analyze and interpret your answers, but your identity will remain anonymous.
- Please express yourself freely; the goal of this interview is to understand the views of people like you.

Warm-up:

- Please tell me about yourself—name, age, family, hobbies, etc.
- What three words would your best friend use to describe you? Why?
- Please take me through your typical day/week.
- Please take me through your typical weekend.
- How do you entertain yourself? (e.g., cinema)
- What three things would you say you cannot do without? Why?
- How do you spend your spare time?
  - What do you do in your spare time? (*Moderator: Probe on favorite things to do, such as TV/video watching, reading, going for outings, etc.*)
    - With whom do you go out? Why?
    - Where do you visit? Why?
    - What are the activities you engage in?
    - Other
  - Are there any limitations to your leisure activities? (*Moderator: Probe for homework, parental/guardian control, lack of pocket money, engaging in menial jobs or household chores, etc.*)

Part 2: Focus on girls

- What are your dreams/goals/ambitions in life?
- What are you doing to achieve them? Do you have a plan? Are you making progress?
- What obstacles/problems are you currently facing that can stand in your way and stop you from achieving your goals?
- What are your fears/concerns at the moment? Why?
- If you won lottery (lotto) money today, how would you spend it?
- Are there any skills (technical, creative, etc.) that you would like to acquire? Why?
Part 3: Mood/atmosphere of the community

• What can you say about, or how would you describe, the people living in your community? (Moderator: Probe with: What do they do for a living? What is considered “trendy”? What topics do people talk about?)
• More importantly, what do you feel about the community?
  • Are the people aspirational?
  • Are they satisfied with their way of life, or do they proactively search for ways to improve their lives?
• What creative endeavors do the people engage in?
• Are there areas/things that happen to you or happen around you that you wish you could freely talk about? Please tell me. (Moderator: Allow respondents to list them on paper, and explain why it is important to express these things.)
• Are there mediums/channels that you use when you feel like expressing yourself? Please tell me what they are and the reasons why you choose them.

Part 4: Role of technology/Internet

Information sourcing:
• Where do you normally go for information about what is happening around you? Where else?
• Which is your preferred source of information? Why?
• What are your current favorite programs that you watch or listen to?
• What do you like and dislike about the programs? Why?
• What is your favorite TV channel/radio station? Why?

Technology:
• How would you define the word “technology”?
• What is the role of technology in your life?
• What gadgets/electronics do you own or have access to?
• Which is your favorite? Why?
• What technology has had the greatest impact on you over the last few years?

Internet: (Moderator: Ask these questions whether or not the Internet has been spontaneously mentioned.)
• Are you aware of the Internet?
  • If yes, what are your views toward it or what is your overall opinion about it?
• How do you think the Internet is viewed by your parents or guardians and the community at large?
• What does your culture or religion say about Internet usage? Why does it say this?
• Is there a place where you can access the Internet in your community?
• Do you use the Internet? If no, why not? If yes, ask:
  • Why do you use the Internet and what prompted you to start using it?
  • What activities do you typically do on the Internet? What else? (Moderator: Probe for favorite sites.)
• When do you use the Internet the most? With whom? Why?
• How often do you go online (e.g., daily), and how much time (e.g., 3 hours per day) do you spend online?
• Where do you access the Internet (e.g., cybercafé, community-based organization) and why do you choose that location?
• What external factors affect how often you use the Internet? (e.g., having the money to pay for Internet time, having a family member available to go with you to an Internet café, gaining permission to use the Internet)
• How has the Internet affected your life? (Moderator: Probe on positive/negative connotations.)
• How have you benefited from browsing on the Internet? (Moderator: Probe for needs that have been or have not been met.)
• How have your needs been met through the Internet?
• Are there obstacles to the use of Internet services in your community? What are they? (Moderator: Probe.)

Email:
• Do you have an email account? (e.g., Hotmail, Yahoo, Gmail)
  • If yes, tell me all about it.
  • If no, why not? What do you think would convince you to try it out? (e.g., friend helping you, quick setup guide, print advertisement)

Part 5: Trends & video production
• How do you find out about what’s cool and/or what’s new in your community?
• Do you have friends who are trendsetters? How do they influence you?
• What are some of the common technology trends you have noticed? How do you relate to them?
• Do you feel close to the rest of the world? If yes, how? If no, why not?
• Do world trends influence you? If yes, how? (Moderator: Probe, mainly in terms of webcam or YouTube activities.)

Video production:
• When you hear the words “video production,” what comes to your mind?
• What are the different kinds of video that you know? (e.g., documentary, drama, music video, home video)
• Have you ever used a video recorder or ever tried using one?
  • If no, why not? If yes, what did you use it for? Where? When?
• If given the opportunity, would you like to participate in a video production? Why or why not?
• What would you like to do during a video production? (Moderator: Probe in terms of production, editing, scripting, etc.)
• Would you like to know more about video production? If yes, what would you like to know? Why?
• How do you think video recording can help you or other girls like you in expressing your views to the world at large? Why?
Part 6: Video storytelling

• What do you understand by the words “video storytelling”?
• What is your opinion about it?
• Do you think message(s) can be disseminated to people through video? Why?
• Would you be willing to share your own story or that of others through video? Why or why not?
• What would you say are “burning” themes/issues that need to be expressed? Why?
• What topics would you want to tell through video? Why?
• Would you recommend that your best friend share her story using a video recorder? Why or why not?
• What would you like to have in place to effectively and creatively express yourself using video? (Moderator: Probe for types of resources/equipment/tools and type of learning environment, e.g., big or small group of girls, male or female facilitator, etc.)
• What do you think would be the most difficult part of video storytelling to learn? (e.g., shooting, editing, sound effects) Why?
• How do you think these difficulties could be overcome?

Girl effect:
• Imagine you are given the opportunity to express yourself through the art of video storytelling. What do you think would be the effect of it on you and on other girls your age? (Moderator: Allow for spontaneous responses, then probe with respect to:
  • Self-confidence
  • Leadership traits
  • Participation in community activities)

Part 7: Conclusion

• Is there any other information you wish to share regarding our topic of discussion today?

Thank you.

Girl Child Concerns, © Tiana Markova-Gold
Sample Discussion Guide for In-Depth Interviews (IDIs) with NGO Staff

Below are suggested points to cover during one-on-one discussions with NGO staff. It is expected that more points will be added and other necessary modifications made as the discussion progresses.

Part 1: Introduction

*Moderator: Introduce yourself (name, age, occupation, family, interests, hobbies, etc.) and explain the purpose of the in-depth interview. Tell the interviewee the following:*

- There are no right or wrong answers, as all opinions are valuable.
- Please speak up so that I can hear you clearly.
- Please note that you may be recorded to allow us to analyze and interpret your answers better, but your identity will remain anonymous.
- Please express yourself freely; the goal of this interview is to understand your views.

Warm-up:

- Please tell me about yourself—name, age, position at work, education, hobbies, etc.
- Could you tell me about the people living in this community?
  - What do they do for a living?
  - What is considered “trendy” in the community?
  - What kinds of topics do people talk about in the community?
  - More importantly, what do you feel about the community?
  - Are the people aspirational?
  - Are they very satisfied with their way of life, or do they proactively search for ways to improve their lives?
- What creative endeavors do people engage in? (*Moderator: Probe on adolescent girls.*)
- Are there areas/things that happen to adolescent girls around you that you think cannot be freely talked about? Please tell me about them.
- In your opinion, are there mediums/channels available in this community through which adolescent girls can freely express themselves? If yes, please talk about a few of them. If no, what do you think are the reasons why there are no such channels?

Part 2: Discussion about the organization

- Please tell me about the challenges facing your organization.
- How do you overcome or intend to overcome these challenges?
- Based on your organization’s involvement with adolescent girls and in other areas, what do you think are the challenges associated with adolescent girls?
  - What reasons do you think are behind these challenges?
  - How do you think these challenges can be solved?
- Have you ever organized a seminar or workshop to address these challenges?
- Are you aware of any seminar or workshop that has been organized for adolescent girls by other organizations? If yes, please tell me about it. (*Moderator: Probe.*)
• Have you used any media tools or strategies in any past projects involving adolescent girls? (Moderator: If yes, probe.)
• Imagine you are given the opportunity to organize a seminar for adolescent girls. What would be your input on how to meet the needs of these girls?
  • What would you expect the girls to derive from such a seminar?
  • How would your organization benefit? Why?

Part 3: Role of technology/Internet

Information sourcing:
• Where do you normally go for information about what is happening around you? Where else?
• Which is your preferred source of information? Why?
• What are your current favorite programs that you watch or listen to?
• What do you like and dislike about the programs? Why?
• What is your favorite TV channel/radio station? Why?

Technology:
• How would you define the word “technology”?
• How does your organization view technology? Why?
• What technology do you think has had the most impact on adolescent lives over the last few years? Why?

Internet:
• Is there an Internet facility in your locality or organization?
• What would you say are people’s views on Internet usage by adolescent girls? (Moderator: Probe on different views with regard to:
  • Nature of the people, i.e., the beliefs or personal experiences of people in the environs
  • Level of education
  • Ethnic group
  • Economic status
  • Geographical area)
• Do you think these views affect the creative ideas of girls?
• What is your organization’s overall opinion of the Internet?
• Do you encourage girls to make use of the Internet in your organization? Why or why not?
  • What kinds of sites do they browse while they are using the Internet?
  • How often are they allowed to browse?
• Are there obstacles to the use of Internet services in your community? What are they? (Moderator: Probe.)
• How do you think the Internet is viewed by the parents or guardians of the girls your organization serves or by the community at large?
• What does the local culture or religion say about Internet usage? Why does it say this?

Part 4: Video production

• When you hear the words “video production,” what comes to your mind? Why?
• What role do you think video production will play in the local society, especially concerning adolescent girls? Why?
• In your opinion, how can video be effectively used to document best practices in girls’ programs? (Moderator: Probe on ways that girls can be…
  • Meaningfully involved in video production in order to raise their profile
  • Taught how to use video to tell stories that are relevant to their lives)

Part 5: Video storytelling

• Do you think message(s) can be disseminated to adolescent girls through video? Why or why not?
• What do you understand video storytelling to be? Why?
• Do you think video storytelling can be of any help to adolescent girls in expressing their views? Why or why not?
• What systems/arrangements does your organization have in place to facilitate the art of video storytelling for adolescent girls?
• What role do you play in ensuring creative video storytelling among adolescent girls? (Moderator: Probe.)
• Are there obstacles or barriers that prevent you from effectively playing this role? What are they? (Moderator: Probe on suggestions or practical solutions to overcome these barriers.)
• How do you think organizations like yours would benefit from participating in a workshop or program on video storytelling for adolescent girls?
• How do you think a workshop or program on video storytelling for adolescent girls would affect the community?
• What is your vision for moving forward with video storytelling?
  • What specific elements do you think are key to establishing and maintaining a video storytelling program?
• How does your vision differ from that of adolescent girls and from that of society in general?
• What do you think would be the most difficult part of training girls in video storytelling? (shooting, editing, sound effects, etc.) Why?
• In what ways can these difficulties be overcome?
• How can video storytelling be used as a tool for broader advocacy? (Moderator: Probe.)
• How can videos from a video storytelling workshop be disseminated on a local and regional scale? Why would you want to disseminate the videos?

Girl effect:
• Imagine you are given the opportunity to participate in a training on video storytelling. What do you think would be the effect on your organization and on the participating girls? (Moderator: Allow for spontaneous responses, and then probe with respect to the girls’…
  • Self-efficacy and confidence
  • Leadership traits
  • Participation in community activities
  • Production skills (e.g., editing, recording)
  • Creative empowerment

Thank you.
Sample Release Form for Video Programs

I hereby authorize \textit{(name of organization)} to film or tape my child/ward by the name of \underline{__________________________} and record her voice in the production of \underline{__________________________}. I give \textit{(name of organization)} and its assignees the unlimited right to use:

1. All or any part of the films, music, tapes, and recordings of my child/ward as they may be edited by \textit{(name of organization)} at its discretion.

2. My child’s/ward’s name and photograph in the production as it may be shown throughout the world on the Internet or in any other present or future media, as well as in advertising and publicity of the production and organization.

I acknowledge that \textit{(name of organization)}’s use will not invade my or my child’s/ward’s privacy.

Signed: __________________________ Date: __________________________

Please Print

Name: __________________________

Address: __________________________
Handout: Field Trip Questions

Using Your Powers of Observation

Instructions:

• Begin by thinking about the importance of audiovisuals (what we see and what we hear).
• Carefully observe the environment around you on the journey to and from the cinema.

Here are some questions to think about. Write down your answers and we’ll discuss them when we get back.

1. Look out for billboards and signs. Write down the ones that, to you, are very interesting. Write down which one you liked the best.

2. Write down anything else that you see that you find interesting, strange, shocking, beautiful, ugly, etc., during the journey and while you are at the cinema.

3. Try to listen to some conversations around you (at any point during the trip) and write down the bits and pieces that you can remember.

4. What did you enjoy most about the field trip? Why?
Handout: Checklist of Essential Story Elements

You can use the following questions as a guide for developing the story idea for your script.

1. Briefly, what is your story about?

2. What is the theme?

3. The main character:
   a. For main characters, it’s best to write a full biography.

4. The secondary characters:
   a. Who are they?
   b. What will their role be?
   c. What is their relationship with the main character?

5. The beginning of the story:
   a. Who will be telling the story? (viewpoint)
   b. Where will the story take place? (setting)
   c. How will you introduce the main character?
   d. How will you introduce other characters?
   e. How will the story begin?
   f. What will happen in the beginning?
   g. What is the conflict?
   h. What is the character’s goal?
   i. How will the conflict prevent the character from reaching his or her goal?
   j. What is motivating the character?

6. The middle of the story:
   a. What events are going to occur?
   b. How will you show your character’s personality?
   c. What problems are you going to introduce? List each problem and how the character solves it.
   d. How are you going to make things harder for your character?
   e. What will happen to make the climax?
   f. What will happen in the beginning section of the middle of your story?
   g. How will this be tied to the beginning of your story?
   h. What will happen in the middle section of the middle of your story?
   i. What will happen in the end section of the middle of your story?

7. The end of the story:
   a. Will the character achieve his or her goal?
   b. How will he or she achieve it, or why will he or she not achieve it?
   c. What is going to happen in the end?
   d. How are you going to end your story?
**Handout: Character Grid**
Filling out the following grid will help you to define and develop each of the characters in your story, making them more realistic and convincing to your audience.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name of character</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family members</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conscious goal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal motivation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inner need</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character flaw stopping the character from meeting his/her inner need</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Backstory</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominant core trait</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other good and bad traits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imperfections or quirks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hobbies and skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Point of view/attitude</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dialogue style</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physiology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology, sociology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship with others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INT. MALLAM YUSUF’S LIVING ROOM — DAY

MALLAM YUSUF, an elderly man, sits in a chair and listens to LADI, his daughter. Ladi sits on the floor in front of her father as a sign of respect. He watches his daughter with a keen eye.

LADI
(in Hausa)
Ado says the bad fertilizer is affecting his crops. This year’s harvest will be poor if the government sits back and watches.

MALLAM YUSUF
(in Hausa)
(touches his chin and shakes his head slowly)
That is worrying news indeed. But there is still time. Harvest season is still far off. Allah is watching.

Ladi nods and tries to smile but fails.

The two fall silent. Ladi sighs.

MALLAM YUSUF (cont’d)
There is something on your mind.

LADI
(surprised)
How did you know?

MALLAM YUSUF
Am I not your father?

LADI
(shrugs)
It will pass.

MALLAM YUSUF
And if it does not?

Ladi sighs again.
LADI
Baba, it's been three years since I married Ado.

MALLAM YUSUF
Did the two of you quarrel?

LADI
No, Baba. I only told him I wanted to go back to school. He said no.

MALLAM YUSUF
Why?

LADI
No money. And no one to look after the house and children.

Mallam Yusuf sighs like his daughter.

MALLAM YUSUF
It always saddened me I had to marry you off so early. But we needed the money. I was ill and had just been retired. If not for Ado, I might not be here today.

LADI
Allah is merciful.

MALLAM YUSUF
Yes, but you shouldn't have to sacrifice so much, including your future, which is still very possible if you want it. (beat) I could have gone far myself, but no one bothered to tell me the importance of an education until I saw an old friend. Today he is a managing director in a bank. I always wanted you to go to school and have a better life than mine.

MARYAM, Ladi's mother, walks in with Ladi's two children.

MARYAM
(in Hausa)
Baba Ladi, what am I hearing? You want to drive your daughter out of her husband's house?

MALLAM YUSUF
(irritated)
Do I look like a fool?

MARYAM
Please, let us not upset the person that supplies our daily needs.
LADI
Mama—

MARYAM
Ladi, I raised you with sense. A woman’s place is in the home, taking care of her family.

MALLAM YUSUF
Those days are gone. The last doctor that treated me was a woman.

MARYAM
Good for her! Ladi will listen to her husband and stay home like a good woman should.

LADI
Wanting an education makes me bad?

MARYAM
Yes. You are being selfish. Who will look after your husband and children?

MALLAM YUSUF
It’s enough! (beat) We have been the selfish ones. We have forgotten Ladi is a person with talent, hopes, and dreams. (looking at his daughter) Ladi, there is nothing wrong with you wanting to go back to school. I will speak with Ado on the matter.

MARYAM
Who is going to pay for her school? I am not looking after anyone’s children.

MALLAM YUSUF
Give us peace, woman!

Maryam storms off with the children.

LADI
Thank you, Baba.

MALLAM YUSUF
No, thank you.
Handout: Composing Basic Camera Shots


A new take on home movies: the “grammar” of video. In written expression, the basic building block is the word. The video equivalent of a word is a camera shot. For now, let’s define a shot as whatever the camera records after you press the record button and before you hit pause. Using that definition, many traditional “home movies” would consist of only one or two shots, even though they might last five minutes each.

Don’t be a hoser! That style of shooting is often referred to as the “garden hose” approach. As you water your shrubs, the water continually flows while you wave the hose nozzle from side to side, up and down, concentrating the spray here and there, making sure the whole garden gets a good soaking.

The “garden hose” video maker will stand in one spot with tape running, wave the camera from one side of the scene to the other, up and down, merrily zooming in and zooming out, trying to capture the whole scene in one shot. If that shot were a written sentence, it would run on . . . and on . . . and on . . . and on . . .

Good writing is composed of well-chosen words, combined into thoughtful sentences and logically organized paragraphs. Good video follows a similar structure.

Shoot to edit. The ability to edit what you shoot gives you access to the same compositional tools as the pros. It also requires you to think about how your shots will be combined together before you take them. That doesn’t mean that every single edit needs to be planned in advance, but it does require that you have a sense of what shots you’ll need later when you sit down at the computer.

Steps for Basic Video Camera Operation

1. Attach tripod to camera
2. Attach camera to tripod
3. Insert battery into camera
4. Insert tape with record tab
5. Power on the camera
6. Switch camera to DV
7. Switch camera to CAMERA mode using the camera VCR switch
8. Point the camera at the subject
9. Switch the camera to manual and set the white balance to manual
10. Place something white in front of the subject to fill the frame with white and set the white background
11. Set the focus to manual
12. Zoom in all the way to the subject, maximum zoom
13. Adjust the focus ring until the image is clear
14. Zoom out and frame the subject as preferred
15. Push the record button; look for REC in the viewfinder to ensure that the camera is recording
16. To stop recording, push the record button again; the camera will return to standby
Also, record your shots for a longer amount of time than you think you will use, adding time at the start and the end of each shot. That will give you more flexibility in editing, where you can always trim the excess.

**Basic camera shots.** Shots are usually defined by how much of the scene you show in your frame (what you see in your viewfinder). This can be controlled a couple of different ways. One would be to change the distance between the camera and your subject by physically moving the camera closer or farther away. The other would be to change the **focal length** of your lens, which controls the **angle of view**. A zoom lens, which virtually all camcorders have, is a combination wide angle, normal and telephoto lens. You change the angle of view by **zooming in** to a narrow angle of view (telephoto) or **zooming out** to a wide angle of view. Here are the basic shots:

**Long shot (LS).** A **long shot** frames a wide field of view of your subject and its surroundings. It usually requires a greater distance between your camera and your subject. Most likely you would choose a wide-angle lens setting (zoomed out). Long shots are also referred to as wide shots or **establishing shots**. An establishing shot establishes the subject’s location for your viewers by revealing its surrounding. It might also be used to cover broad action involving several people in a large area. Use long shots sparingly! Details are lost in long shots. Overuse of long shots is boring.

**Medium shot (MS).** A **medium shot** frames more of your subject while still revealing some of the background. If your subject is a person, a medium shot would show the person from about the waist up. Medium shots provide more detail than long shots, which makes them more interesting to your viewer.

**Close-up shot (CU).** A **close-up** focuses your viewer’s attention on specific details. It demands that the viewer concentrate on the information you are giving them. In storytelling, close-ups have great emotional impact. They can also be used to give the audience information the characters in your video don't have. For example, showing a close-up of a sign reading “wet paint” right before a medium shot of your character in the process of sitting down on a painted park bench would build anticipation and set up the audience for the laugh. You will most likely need to use a camera support, like a **tripod**, in order to get a steady shot. A **close-up of a person** would frame the subject from the top of the head to the top of the shoulders. Human emotions are best revealed in close-ups!

**Extreme close-up shot (XCU).** An **extreme close-up** shot frames only a portion of your subject. It is a very dramatic shot that can generate great visual excitement. XCUs might be used to show the face of a wristwatch or words being typed on a computer screen. Like the long shot, extreme close-ups should be used sparingly, when it is important that your viewers see great detail. In most instances you’ll want to choose a wide-angle lens setting (zoomed all the way out) and move the camera lens as close to the subject as necessary. Use of a camera support, like a **tripod**, is a must.

An extreme close-up of a person’s face would detail the eyes, nose and mouth. When framing an **extreme close-up of a face**, be sure to include the chin and sacrifice the forehead. The reason for this has to do with how our imaginations fill in spaces we can’t actually see on the screen, using something called **psychological closure**. When framing human subjects, proper closure can be achieved by avoiding putting **natural cutoff lines** of persons at the bottom of your frame. Instead, frame your shots to include the area slightly above or below these natural body joints. Your shot will look awkward if you don’t supply enough visual information for your viewers to project what lies outside the frame.
Start out by playing by the rules. Some people feel that rules restrict them too much. However, if you’re trying to control the visual messages your video is sending, you need an understanding of traditional rules of composition. Then when you go about breaking the rules, you’ll be able to do so with purpose and intent! Many centuries ago, artists developed rules to guide them when painting or positioning objects in a rectangular frame. They discovered that certain placements were more pleasing and that the eye was drawn to some areas of the canvas more readily. You can use what they discovered to help tell your stories more effectively.

The rule of thirds. An offshoot of those artistic rules, used in still photography and video, is called the rule of thirds. The rule of thirds states that you should mentally divide the frame (what you see in the viewfinder) into thirds, both vertically and horizontally. What you get is like a tic-tac-toe board overlaying your screen. When you shoot your video, according to this rule, you should place your key subject elements along those lines. Where the lines intersect will be the best place for your subject. That means that centering your subject in the frame will create a less interesting composition. In most cases you will have control over where you are with your camera.

When framing your subject, move the camera so that the prominent subject elements fall along one of the third lines, preferably at a point where those lines intersect. If you can’t move the camera to a good spot, try to move the subject (kind of tough if you’re shooting a mountain!) A case in point would be the placement of the horizon line in an outdoor shot. Don’t center the horizon on your screen. Place the horizon on either the top or bottom third line. Which one will depend upon your subject. If you’re shooting a sailboat on the ocean, do you want to show more of the ocean or more of the sky? That would be your artistic choice! Which one looks the best to you? The point is to take control of the situation and try to frame the most appealing shot. Don’t just accept whatever happens to appear in your viewfinder!

Room at the top. Headroom refers to the amount of space between the top of a person’s head and the top of your frame. Too much headroom makes the person appear to be sinking. Most novice photographers and videographers will frame shots of people with too much headroom. Take a look through some old family photos if you don’t believe me. Too little headroom places visual emphasis on the person’s chin and neck. When framing shots of people, pay attention to where the eyes appear. Follow the rule of thirds and place the subject’s eyes on the upper third line.

Reminder: When framing shots of people, don’t forget to avoid placing the edge of your frame at one of the body’s natural cutoff lines: neck, elbows, waist, knees and ankles.

Lead them on. Lead space refers to space in front of your subject. Leave extra space in the direction your subject is looking. You might also see this space referred to as look space or nose room. Leave extra space in front of a moving person or object, like a runner, bicycle, or automobile, when following the action. Not doing so will make it look like your subject is in danger of running into the edge of your frame!
What’s in the background? Most of your shots will include background elements that are part of the location where you’re shooting. Make sure what’s in the background of your shot doesn’t draw your viewer’s attention from your main subject. We’ve all seen live TV interviews, shot on location, where somebody in the background is waving or making faces at the camera. This is one type of distracting background you need to try to avoid. Always check what’s in the background of the shot you are framing. Background clutter or distracting objects, like an overflowing garbage bin, can usually be avoided by repositioning your camera (moving it left or right, framing a tighter shot, changing the camera angle) or moving your subject. You might also be able to put the background out of focus by decreasing the depth of field in your shot.

Mergers are another form of distracting background. Background objects or strong vectors that visually merge with your subject can not only be distracting, they can be downright humorous. Again, reposition the camera or the subject to avoid mergers.
## Sample Equipment List for a Video Storytelling Project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Brand/Model</th>
<th>Qty</th>
<th>Approx. Cost per Unit (US Dollars)</th>
<th>Total Cost (US Dollars)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Video Camera</td>
<td>Panasonic NV-MD 10,000</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>2,400</td>
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<tr>
<td>Still Camera</td>
<td>Kodak EasyShare C913</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>334</td>
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<tr>
<td>Memory Card for Still Camera</td>
<td>memory card - 1GB</td>
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<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apple MacBook with iMovie Software</td>
<td>13-inch screen, 2.0GHz. Intel Core 2 Duo, 1GB memory, 120GB hard drive</td>
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<tr>
<td>External Hard Drive</td>
<td>My Book Hard Drive 500GB (x800 USB, 1x400 firewire)</td>
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<td>233</td>
<td>466</td>
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<td>Headphones</td>
<td>Sennheiser HD 201</td>
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<td>Short Gun Mic</td>
<td>Panasonic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lapel Mic</td>
<td>Ahuja</td>
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<td>Tripod</td>
<td>Fotomate</td>
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<td>Camera Bag</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lights</td>
<td>redhead kit (set of 3)</td>
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<td>Firewire Cables</td>
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<td>Extra Video Camera Batteries</td>
<td>for Panasonic NV-MD 10,000 video camera</td>
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<tr>
<td>Computer Monitor</td>
<td>HP 18-inch widescreen with DVI port (Mac connector)</td>
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<td>Mini-DV Tapes</td>
<td>Sony Mini-DV Premium, 60 minutes (5 tapes per package)</td>
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<td>USB Computer Mouse &amp; Mouse Pad</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adaptor Cable for Mac to Monitor Connection</td>
<td>Apple mini-DVI to VGA adapter</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extra Halogen Bulbs for Redhead Lights</td>
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<td>Extra AA Batteries for Still Cameras</td>
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