

WORKSHOP

for the SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

WHAT IS PARTICIPATIVE ADVOCACY?




A long-term action which allows groups to make their problems visible, and look for solutions by involving all the actors of a geographic zone: the people concerned, the community, the governing bodies, other organisations...

Implementing a participative advocacy approach

This booklet is the result of a co-production process carried out by four member organisations of the collective Train to Transform: APEF, Duhamic-Adri, CENCA and Frères des Hommes. During peer-to-peer capacity building sessions, APEF, Duhamic-Adri and CENCA presented their experiences in participative advocacy. These exchanges allowed us, together, to identify commonalities and differences in these approaches, and to decide to produce six posters for facilitators who wish to develop these approaches or reflect on their practice.




In this booklet, you will find the six posters and pedagogical tips for facilitating a team reflection on participative advocacy.

3 posters to reflect on participative advocacy approaches

- Participative advocacy : what for? 
- Steps of participative advocacy 
- Mobilising actors of participative advocacy 



3 posters to learn more about the actions and get inspired

- The community barza 
- The virtual parliament 
- Participatory video 



What is participative advocacy?

A long-term action which allows groups to make their problems visible, and look for solutions by involving all the actors of a geographic zone: the people concerned, the community, the governing bodies, other organisations...

Who is behind the process?

the organisation

for example, following problems identified during a participatory analysis or the support of groups

OR

the people we meet

who are already organised in a group and who identify problems on which they would like to act



Participative advocacy: what for?

The governing bodies

- ⚡ Strengthening links with the population
- ⚡ Taking better account of local actors for future actions

The participants

- ⚡ Empowerment, self-esteem, self-confidence
- ⚡ Knowledge of their rights
- ⚡ Exchange of experiences
- ⚡ Capacity building in communication and expression. One's own voice on one's own reality. Becoming a spokesperson.

Effects for whom?

«Becoming able to talk with people of high class.»

Trainers and animators

- ⚡ Strengthening of coaching and facilitation skills (helping to express problems, accompanying participants to propose solutions)



Organisations

- ⚡ Visibility
- ⚡ Exchange and collaboration with others
- ⚡ Improved relations with institutions
- ⚡ Opening up to new opportunities
- ⚡ Developing new approaches



Developing empowerment, participation, awareness-raising:

- for participants to become aware of their abilities, rights, power, and how to claim them
- for the community to foster community dynamics for change, awareness of problems, injustices, inequalities and the capacity to act collectively

What's the point?



To seek solutions to concrete problems, to allow governing bodies to take decisions that improve the situation of the people

These two aims are mutually supportive and complementary: the more that people see the governing bodies take decisions on the basis of their analysis and recommendations, the more confidence they gain. This leads to an awareness of their power over their situation.

Participants become aware of their power over their situation

«The empowerment is also the road that helps us to solve the problem.»

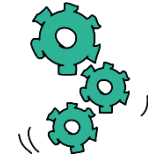
The governing bodies take into account the diagnoses and recommendations of the participants

Communities

- ⚡ Strengthening of the feeling of belonging to a community
- ⚡ Awareness of injustices
- ⚡ Reduction of domineering relationships thanks to the democratic dimension of exchanges
- ⚡ The whole community benefits from the process initiated by a small group and the concrete solutions provided
- ⚡ Access to a space for expression with the governing bodies and development of links with new actors and movements
- ⚡ Recognition by the governing bodies
- ⚡ Strengthening of the dynamics of citizen participation

Spill-over effect

Participative advocacy : what for?



The first poster shows that the aims of the participative advocacy approach can be situated at different levels:

- **Promote empowerment, participation and awareness:**
 - For participants: to become aware of their rights, abilities, power
 - For the community: fostering community dynamics for change, awareness of problems, injustices and inequalities
- **Seeking solutions to concrete problems, getting the authorities to take decisions that improve the situation of the people.** Depending on the approach, priority may be given to one or the other of these levels. But in any case, these two aims feed off each other: the more the populations see that the authorities take decisions on the basis of their diagnoses and recommendations, the more they become aware of their power over their situation.

Within a team, within an organisation, we may not all the same representations regarding the most important purpose when engaging in participative advocacy.

Although the different purposes are mutually reinforcing, it is important to know where you stand on the purpose 'slider' for several reasons:

- To be able to exchange and reflect calmly within the team on the issues of participative advocacy,
- To be able to clearly present the different issues to the people we work with,
- To take these different aims into account when evaluating the results of one's action (for example: not to consider that there were no results if one did not succeed in changing the laws, but that the empowerment process worked).

Modalities of animation

This poster can be used to facilitate a team reflection on the objectives and effects of participative advocacy. This can be done with a team that is already doing participative advocacy, or that wants to start doing it.

To facilitate this reflection, with a team of facilitators and/or participants, you can organise a four-cornered debate, by posting the following statements in the 4 corners of the room. You can then propose the following instruction: "What is most important to you in the participative advocacy process?" The people present will position themselves under the poster that best corresponds to the goal they consider to be a priority. Each group will then propose arguments. Participants can change places as the debate progresses, or stand halfway between two statements.

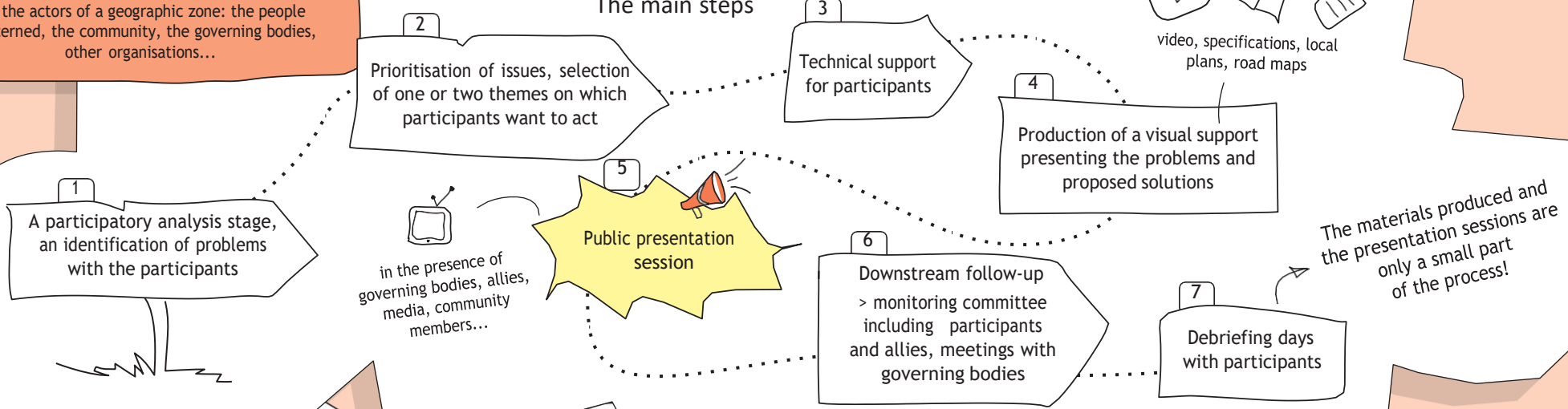


Then, as a team, we can exchange in order to understand the arguments of the one and the others, and think about how we are going to try to follow these changes in the participants, in the community, and on the side of the authorities as the process progresses, based on the "Effects for whom?" part presented in the poster. These exchanges can also allow for the rethinking of accompanying spaces, if one wishes to favour one or other of the aims more but the implementation has not been thought out in this sense.

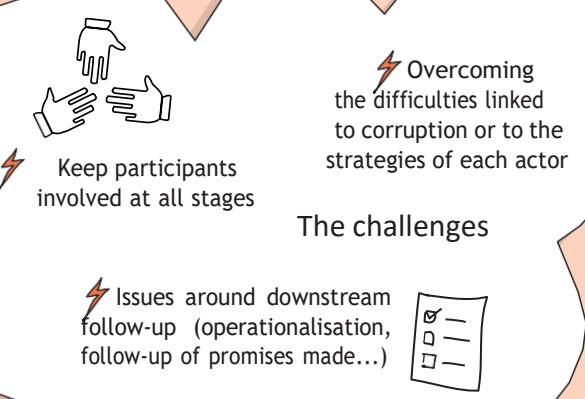
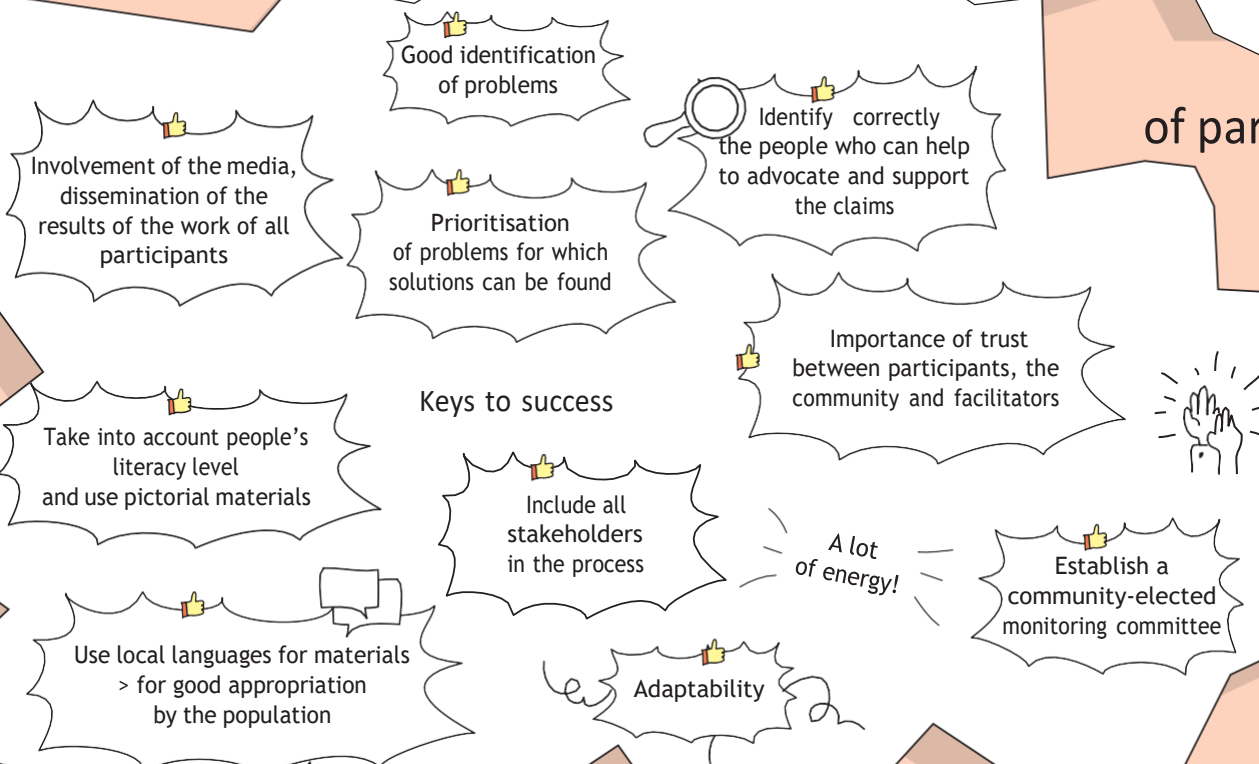
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The main steps



Steps of participative advocacy





Steps of participative advocacy

The team reflection can continue with the poster presenting the essential steps of participative advocacy, the keys to success and the challenges identified in past experiences.

With a team that already has experience in participative advocacy, the following questions can be asked:

- How did the main steps presented in the poster unfold?
- What are the specific difficulties encountered at each stage?
- What particular successes can be identified for each of the stages?
- Next time, are there steps where we do things differently?

With a team that has no experience of participative advocacy but wants to get started, you can facilitate the reflection by following the steps on the poster, and asking the following questions, step by step:

- How do you think this stage can be carried out?
- Who could run it?
- What difficulties might be encountered?
- How can we prepare to overcome them?
- What resources do we have (in our experience, our skills, our network) to carry out this step?

The "keys to success" and "challenges" sections can be used to help identify resources and difficulties for each of the main steps.

This work on the steps makes it possible to underline that the materials produced (video, roadmap, terms of reference) and the presentation sessions in the presence of the authorities and the media (presentation of the video, virtual parliament session, mobilisation day, etc.) are only the tip of the iceberg!

What is participative advocacy?

A long-term action which allows groups to make their problems visible, and look for solutions by involving all the actors of a geographic zone: the people concerned, the community, the governing bodies, other organisations...

It is the mobilisation of participants that leads to the mobilisation of other actors

Mobilising actors of participative advocacy

It requires a lot of time and energy



Organise regular meetings and gatherings, mixing allies and participants in advocacy



Different mobilisation strategies are possible

Use of the audiovisual tool to broadcast on social networks and thus reach as many people as possible

Extensive use of the media, both at the time of the day and beyond (radio and TV interviews, online broadcasting)

Make the session or presentation day as visible as possible in the public space

The actors of participative advocacy

The mobilisation of participants is an important support and vector for the mobilisation of allies

Mobilisation will be facilitated if the participants are recognised and have the trust of the community

Their mobilisation is essential in the action!

The participants

= Individuals or groups involved who are already familiar with the organisation, for example from previous training courses

This makes it possible to have an existing bond of trust



The community

It is important to find strategies to spread the work of all within the community

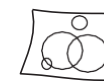
Spill-over effect: the whole community benefits from the process initiated by a small group

The allies

= People or groups who may share the same problems and demands as the participants

This can be: other civil society organisations, community and religious leaders, elected officials, other citizens concerned with the problem...

The aim of this mobilisation is to increase collective empowerment and influence final decisions for policy change



To identify them, it is possible to create a map of the allies

The governing bodies

Identify the relevant governing bodies



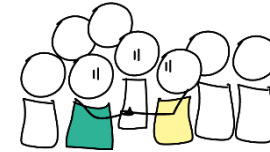
Target governing bodies with the power to act on the laws you want to change, rather than just technical departments responsible for enforcing these laws

Establish focal points among allies

Joint planning with the allies

Not easy to mobilise at the beginning, as often the visions are different

Mobilising actors of participative advocacy



Mobilising the actors of participative advocacy takes a lot of time and energy, but it is crucial, as it is the mobilisation of the participants that leads to the mobilisation of other actors.

This poster provides an opportunity to reflect as a team on the different actors of a participative advocacy approach, and the different mobilisation strategies possible.

The facilitator of the reflection can propose to the team to use the section "actors of participative advocacy" to reflect concretely on past or future advocacy efforts:

- What group of participants are concerned? What relationship do the facilitators have with this group? How long has this relationship existed?
- What allies can we mobilise? Can we imagine other allies that we haven't thought of yet?
- What strategies can be found to disseminate the whole approach within the community?
- Have the relevant authorities been identified, i.e. those with the power to act on the problem?

The section "what are the possible mobilisation strategies" can give some ideas for reflection and action!

Afterwards, the team can continue its reflection by taking inspiration from the following posters, which present in detail examples of actions already carried out: the community barza at APEF, the virtual parliament at Duhamic-Adri, and the participatory video at CENCA.



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What problems does Barza solve?
 Any problem the community faces that can be solved by the decision-makers.
 E.g.: the multiplicity of taxes, competition from products from neighbouring countries, non-involvement of the state in their activities



The APEF Community Barza

(Democratic Republic of Congo)



«The power to act is strengthened when there are several of us.»

«Together we look for solutions.»

Sharing experience

What is Barza?
 It is a temporary framework for exchange and advocacy. The group makes demands and seeks solutions with the governing bodies.

Over 1 year, about 10 meetings

Who is behind Barza?
 The women accompanied by the APEF, who bring up common problems during collective meetings
 > The need to act collectively!

The objectives of Barza:

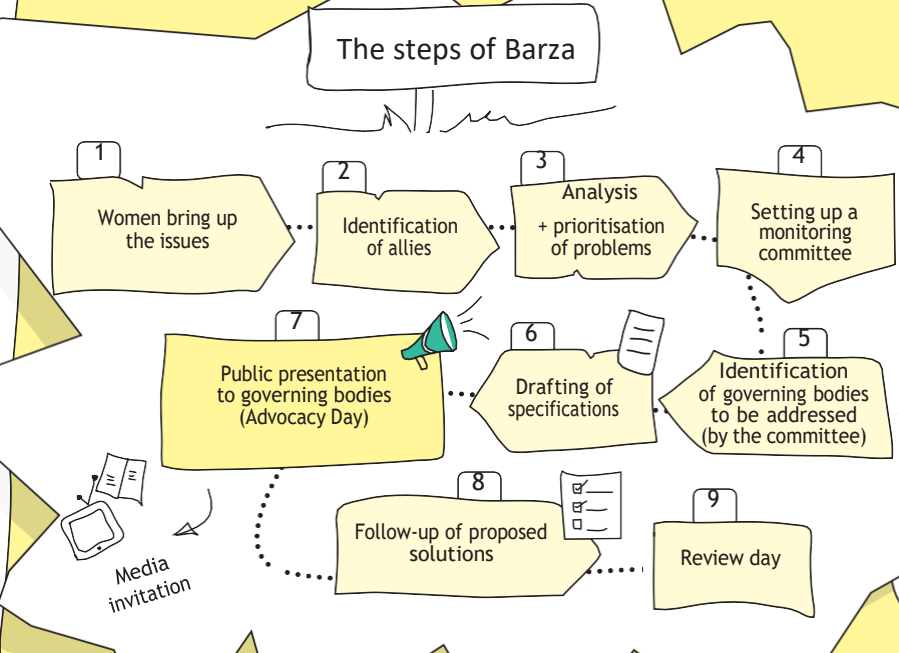
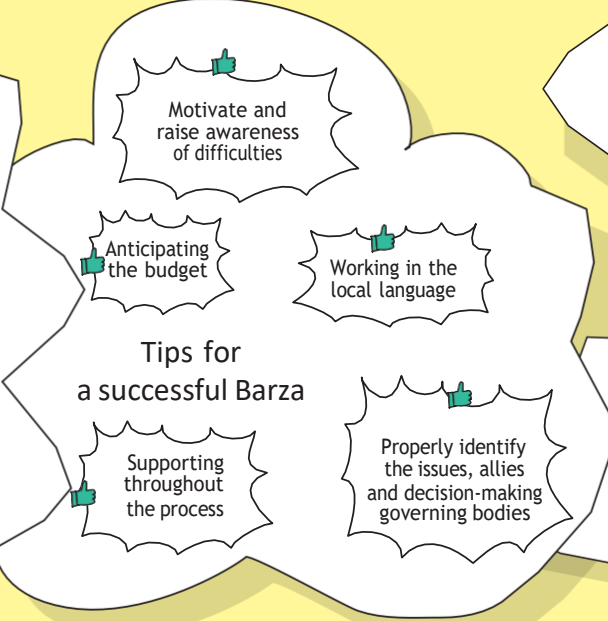
- Collective awareness of the problem
- Claiming rights together
- Finding solutions for the whole community
- Getting the governing bodies to take action

Positive results

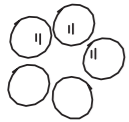
- + The governing bodies become allies: promises from the minister on taxes, training offered to women, collaboration with a state service, 2 years of tax exemption, invitations to fairs
- + Women are empowered: creation of a positive collective synergy between women, self-confidence, public expression, ability to propose

Challenges

- ⚡ For follow-up: changes of contact persons at the level of the governing bodies
- ⚡ A long and arduous process that may discourage women or allies



What is the virtual parliament?



It is a process and a space for dialogue between the population and the governing bodies around the challenges of the community

Virtual because it is not an elected parliament

1 virtual parliament per year max

The objectives of the virtual parliament:

- Leading to a sustainable solution
- Empowerment and capacity building of participants
- Raising awareness in the community

Community-based organisations (CBOs)

Who is involved in the virtual parliament

The governing bodies

The allies, local leaders



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Examples of topics covered

Gender-based violence
Child protection and fatherhood
The full school meal for children

Sharing experience

«Let's create a community dynamic for change.»

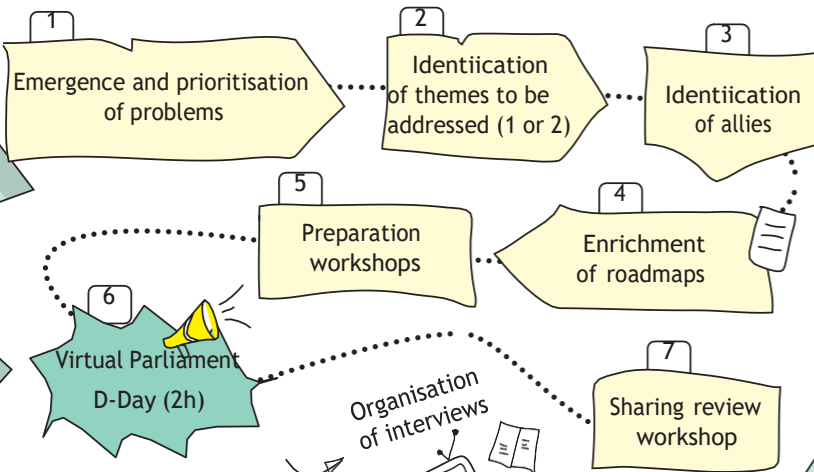
«Let's act together for the transformation of the community.»

The virtual parliament of Duhamic-Adri

(Rwanda)



The stages of the virtual parliament



Knowing the population well

Tips for a successful virtual parliament

Building trust with all stakeholders

Be vigilant to maintain cohesion

Involve all actors

Positive results

- ➕ Awareness of the extent of injustice in the community
- ➕ Strengthening participants expression, communication
- ➕ Community dynamics of change: ideas spread within the community

Challenges

- ⚡ Long preparation time
- ⚡ Mobilisation of substantial funds
- ⚡ Requires adaptability and openness (to unforeseen circumstances and individual sensitivity)

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Who is involved in the participatory video?

A group of volunteer residents of the neighbourhood.
For example: the community team, a youth group, women's groups, etc.



Examples of topics covered

- 3 participatory videos since 2017 on :
- The risks of the area (rock falls, access to water...)
 - The importance of green spaces
 - Community canteens for food security

It is a video made by and with the residents to talk about the problems of the neighbourhood and present solutions to the governing bodies.

What is participatory video?

The objectives of the participatory video

- Involving and raising awareness in the community
- Sharing knowledge and proposing solutions
- Developing audiovisual skills
- Promoting the work of the group

Sharing experience

«This allows us to raise awareness in a playful way.»

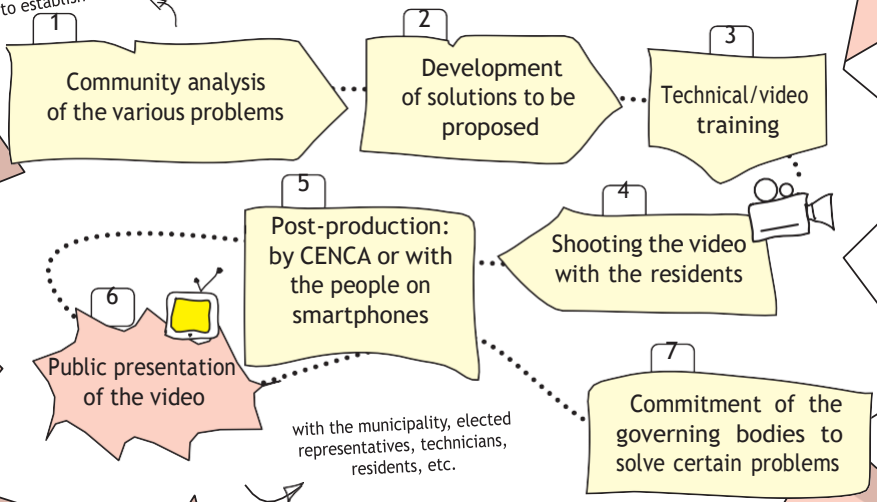
«What is important is that people learn, have fun and share knowledge.»

CENCA's participatory video (Peru)



The steps of the participatory video

The initial dialogue with the group is important on the subject to be dealt with, on the motivations of the group, to establish trust.



Build trust between facilitators and participants

Tips for a successful participatory video

Be open to experimentation

Cultivate informal relationships with participants

Know the reality of the participants

Explore other participatory videos

Positive results

- + Development of individual empowerment: pride, self-esteem
- + Collective empowerment through analysis
- + Success of the video: spreads beyond the neighbourhood

Challenges

- ⚡ Organising the timetable for presentation to the governing bodies (pay attention to elections, covid...)
- ⚡ Monitoring the commitment of governing bodies
- ⚡ Overcoming initial fears related to unfamiliarity with the video tool
- ⚡ Women's participation in the context of patriarchy