Grassroots Visual Storytelling about Community Food Growing

Introduction

> "Food is a powerful vehicle for storytelling. This is true both for individuals and at the collective level. Food is who we are, where we come from, how we live, what we believe, and who we will become." (Williams, 2017, Telling Stories Through Food, URL: https://thinkingfood.org/food/telling-stories-through-food/ Accessed: 06/09/2021)

Food and storytelling have always been connected. On an individual and collective level, the food we grow and eat not only generates stories about its origin, but also creates a space for people to share their stories and to create a feeling of community. These stories we tell each other make a community. These are positive, uplifting stories which bring people together and galvanise action to overcome personal, community and global challenges.

This course is about empowering people to create their own radically hopeful, uplifting stories of community food growing during the Covid-19 pandemic and beyond. Our approach is 'accessible tech' i.e. the course revolves around using everyday tools (smartphones and simple editing software). It's true that we do not need any technology to do this. But simple accessible technologies give us the means to go beyond face-to-face storytelling, to put our stories online and so reach more people.

What type of transformation around food and agriculture do you think we could bring with our phones? We can use smartphones to gather rich audiovisual information for our stories, to produce them at minimal cost, and to share them virally throughout our community and beyond. Using smartphones allows us to capture the story as it unfolds in real time, to enhance the story with additional information (drawings, maps, pictures, graphs), and to add diverse perspectives afterwards. Digital storytelling about community food growing can therefore support your initiative by engaging a wider audience and creating a 'social memory' of local impacts and benefits.

This course builds on the highly successful 'hands-on' and participatory approach developed by the Cobra Collective to empower communities through digital storytelling of positive local practices.

This course is part of the project "Digital storytelling about group food growing" run by the Open University and the Cobra Collective in collaboration with the Reading International Solidarity Centre (RISC) and Sustain: The alliance for better food and farming.

Course Outline and Learning Outcomes

This course will introduce you to grassroots visual storytelling and to the basic skills for producing visual stories using a smartphone or tablet. The course theme focuses on how food growing initiatives support community flourishing and is for us to create together, with your stories acting as key examples of radically hopefulness.

After completing this course, you will

1. Understand the connection between food growing, storytelling and community
2. Be able to recognise and use different digital storytelling approaches
3. Understand the fundamentals of ethics, consent and copyright considerations
4. Be able to use various communication techniques such as images, sound and video
5. Be able to design an inspiring story
6. Know how to edit digital stories
7. Amplify the impact of your stories through sharing on social media and other communication platforms

Prerequisite Skills and necessary equipment

There are no prerequisite skills or knowledge needed before taking the course. You will just require openness, curiosity and interest in learning about digital storytelling and community food growing. To do the practical activities, you will need a smartphone.

Learning Journal

When doing the course, keeping a learning journal can be helpful as it enables you to write and create written and visual notes about what you are learning as you engage in the various module activities. Some entries may be short and specific, while others reflect on what you have read or learned. Noting your reflections can deepen your learning experience. You can use a physical notebook or create a Word document to record your learning on the computer or other digital devices. The key is to make it a fun, interesting experience rather than a chore.

(Photo created by freepik - www.freepik.com)

We really hope you'll enjoy this course!

Module Content

1. Food and Storytelling

To live well and fulfilled lives, we need to feel safe, secure and nourished on a physical, intellectual and emotional level. At the most basic level, what gives us this nourishment are shelter, food, water, a sense of love and belonging, and stories, of course. This is probably best illustrated by Leo Lionni's children's book about Frederick the mouse. You might remember this story from when you were a child, in fact it is one of the authors of this course favourite children's stories:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=njiUZrH1BPI

Activity: Storytellers in your life (10 minutes)
Take a moment to reflect on the 'storytellers' in your own life. Who are the people in your community, family or food growing initiative that keep and share stories and memories? In your learning journal, note down some of those storytelling moments. How do they make you feel? What values do those storytellers bring into your life and your community?

As humans, we navigate our internal and external world by telling stories. Stories are how we make sense of the world around us. They also shape the way we are going to interact with the world in the future. They are one of the most powerful ways to unite people and to

influence, teach and inspire others. Storytelling creates connections among people, and between people and ideas and is a very powerful way to link and share your culture, history, experiences and values with others. But storytelling requires space and food is one of the primary ways that creates space for us to share, tell and create stories.

Activity: Exploring what is meant by 'food' (10 minutes)

When we refer to 'food' in this course, we are thinking about it in a very holistic way that includes different types and varieties, how it is grown, where it comes from and is distributed, how it is stored and processed, how it is made into a meal, with whom it is shared, and what happens to whatever is left over. We are also thinking of the multiple social and environmental impacts: effect of people's mental and physical wellbeing; impact on planet Earth (deforestation, pollution, soil loss, loss of agro-biodiversity, pest and antibiotic resistance) and impact on communities (active or passive role in its production, food security and sovereignty, resilience and flourishing). Pick two completely different items of food (maybe one that comes from your community food growing initiative and another imported from abroad and brought in a supermarket) and explore their origins, impacts and/or benefits. Write down your reflections in your learning journal.

The connection between food and storytelling

In Spanish, there is a word called 'sobremesa' which describes the moment when you sit together after having finished a good meal, when the plates are empty and you are feeling full, happy and content, sharing stories with each other.

sobremesa

(n.) lit. *"over the table"*; the time spent after eating, talking to people you shared the meal with to savor not just the food, but the companionship as well

SPANISH | wordstuck

https://i.gifer.com/9F10.gif

We can probably all remember some moments like this, where we feel warm, safe and connected with the other people around us and can simply relax and enjoy this moment and connect with others. For some, those memories might be tied to the cultural importance of food, for example in religious celebrations like Ramadan, Christmas, Passover and Diwali. In moments like these and others, stories can bring meaning to our lives. They can reaffirm and validate our perspectives and convey our values and emotions to others, thereby connecting us more to our inner selves and to others.

Sharing food or talking about food (its origins, how we prepare the dish, its taste…) is one way that makes conversations and the stories we share personal and emotionally engaging. Talking about food connects us to our own individual felt experience of the world and can

bring abstract topics down to concrete examples. Our food can be at the centre of the stories we tell each other given the cultural importance of food. As expressed by Nicholas Williams: "Food is who we are, where we come from, how we live, what we believe, and who we will become. Our biographies are condensed into dishes and bites, like memories garnishing our stories. Through the foods we consume and the foods we make–and don't–we stake claims in our identities and stories, as if announcing to the world, "this is me and this is what I eat." (Williams, 2017, Telling Stories Through Food, URL: https://thinkingfood.org/food/telling-stories-through-food/ Accessed: 06/09/2021)

Optional Activity (15 min): Are we in need of new stories around food?

Current industrial food systems might be limiting the ways we talk about food. Many argue that we've actually grown disconnected with food (through processes of mechanised mass production and processing, commodification, etc.).

What kind of stories are being promoted through the current industrial food system?

What different stories do community food growing initiatives generate?

Write down your reflections in your learning journal.

The transformative power of storytelling

Stories also have a transformative power to allow others to see the world in a different way than they would if they just experienced the world on their own. There is no such thing as true and objective stories. Rather, stories are an entry point for others to understand a different experience of the world. They are subjective, emotionally charged and often very performative.

Storytelling is nonetheless a powerful tool, because it can help to make hidden experiences visible. There are so many choices one takes when telling a story - what to include and what to omit? Who's the hero and who is the victim? Who tells the story? This always makes certain events and aspects visible, while overlooking others. Historically, there are many examples of how storytelling in this way has contributed to the further marginalisation of certain communities and has perpetuated harmful stereotypes. For example, think about the way Indigenous communities are usually portrayed in Wild West stories or the way in which many stories about 'The American Dream' silence the struggles of structural racism and inequality faced by Black Americans. However, storytelling can also be a powerful tool for marginalised groups and communities to highlight their perspectives, struggles and realities. And again, as expressed by Nicholas Williams, thinking about food can help to make these expressions very concrete, "because talking about food easily brings us into the realm of personal story and individual experience, and maybe this helps us put faces and lives to the all-too-often faceless oppression and inequality. Maybe we struggle to articulate these systems of inequalities when they're abstract and faceless and what food helps us do is localize the experiences and talk about something we can put words and stories to." (Williams, 2017, Telling Stories Through Food, URL: https://thinkingfood.org/food/telling-stories-through-food/ Accessed: 06/09/2021)

By making sense of and increasing our understanding of challenging experiences, stories can help us to develop and share coping mechanisms, which can inspire others to adopt similar practices. Especially funny stories with humour can be a really powerful tool to make otherwise painful experiences bearable and to turn those hard experiences into moments of connection with others that leave us with positive emotions. Sharing such personal stories also allows community members to form connections and bonds, creating interdependent support networks where people can listen to, hold space for and support each other. We can use storytelling to celebrate the positive achievements in our communities and to develop visions of the future that we want to strive for, imagining flourishing communities and helping us bridge the gap from the present to this future.

A social and environmental justice lens for food and storytelling

The Covid pandemic generated an explosion in food related issues and resulting stories. We saw in the news how supermarket shelves were being emptied of certain foods. Conversely, communities came together in novel ways to share seeds and seedlings, reclaim derelict land for food growing and support families that may have otherwise struggled to access fresh vegetables.

Egham and Englefield Green plant swap group

🔒 Private group · 136 members
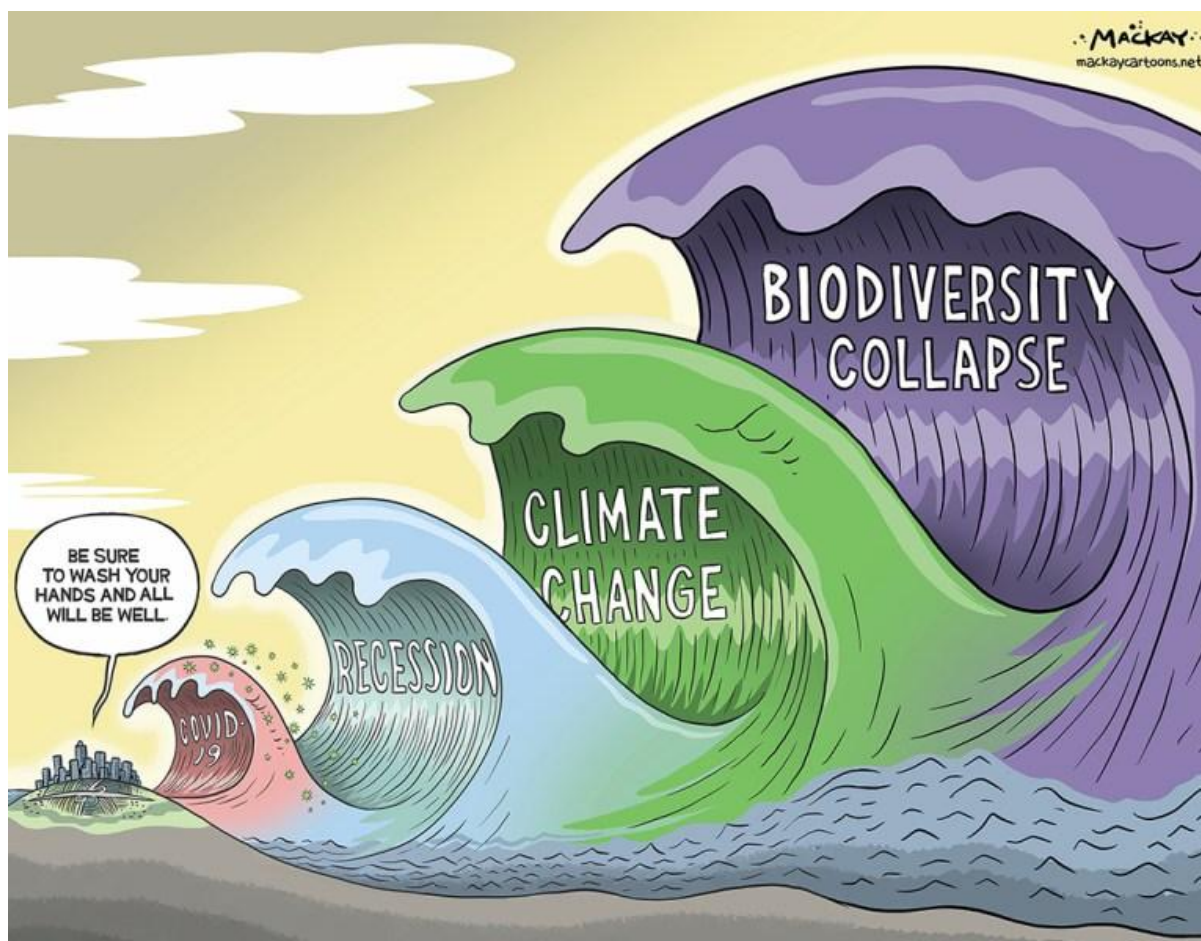
Yet, as the powerful cartoon by Graeme Mackay suggests, the Covid pandemic is just one of many, potentially greater, crises that humanity faces. Underlying all of these emerging crises are unsustainable and unjust systems i.e. we are confronted with issues of environmental justice. Environmental justice deals explicitly with addressing the unequal distribution of environmental benefits and burdens. Environmental benefits include being surrounded and having easy access to green spaces, natural resources, clean air and water, a tranquil soundscape and infrastructure that enables communities to cope with extreme weather events such as heatwaves, floods and droughts. Environmental burdens include exposure to pollution in the air and water, vulnerability to extreme weather events, excessive noise, and limited to no access to green spaces and natural resources in which, for example, to grow food.

Through an environmental justice lens, it is possible to see how low-income and minority groups are more likely than affluent people to live near toxic industrial facilities and waste disposal sites, live in areas with high levels of air pollution or exposed to flood-risk, and work in hazardous places. Exposure to hazards is aggravated by limited opportunities for these groups to be formally educated on environmental health issues and have access to decent levels of health monitoring and care. The result is that low-income and minority groups have significantly higher levels of disruption, disability, disease, and death resulting from exposure to environmental hazards. For example, Oxfam's 2020 report, 'Confronting Carbon Inequality', showed that the richest one percent of the world's population are responsible for more than twice as much carbon emissions as the poorest half of humanity during the

1995-2015 period. Yet it is the poorest communities and young people who are increasingly experiencing the greatest impact of crises such as climate change.

So, what role can community food growing play in helping us not only confront these emerging crises and our vulnerability, but actually create a thriving and healthy environment? How do we 'bounce forward' from crises in ways that address environmental and social challenges?

Optional Activity (45 min): "Humanizing the food system with real food real stories"

If you are interested, listen to this episode of the "Unwasted" podcast and reflect on the way they talk about food and storytelling. Can you come up with similar examples of stories from your own life and community food growing initiative? Note your thoughts and reflections down in your learning journal.

https://thewholecarrot.com/2020/12/real-food-real-stories/

Communities in your life

Traditionally, a 'community' is defined by the people located within the place where you live or work. A fundamental assumption exists that 'communities' are homogenous, spatially fixed social groups that share cultural understandings distinct from others. In essence, communities are often characterised as having unique cultures, high levels of cohesion, consensus and solidarity. There is also an assumption that local community members have an attachment and commitment to their local surroundings, and that they bring high levels of motivation and local knowledge to managing local challenges. Communities are thus often seen as willing to take charge of complex problems. But a locality may be characterised by a highly mobile and transient population, made up of diverse cultures, with differing levels of understanding and motivation with regards to addressing local challenges. How would we be able to identify a 'community' in these conditions? Is 'community-based action' even possible here?

With increasing mobility and digital methods of social interaction, membership of a community is increasingly less determined by distinct geographical boundaries. Some communities can have clearly defined boundaries like memberships, for example, or be more fluid. Perhaps being part of your community food growing initiative's Facebook group is what being a member means, perhaps it's a more formal arrangement as a garden volunteer.

You can also see the different types and meanings of the word 'community' in the films produced for this project. Charlotte Allchin's story talks about the community of people with 'Green Hearts' in Reading. They include organisations and individuals maintaining community food growing spaces, museums, urban gardens and the nature reserve team: https://vimeo.com/showcase/6851866/video/651239360

In contrast, Anne Gray's story about the Wolves Lane Centre depicts its diverse activities, together generating interdependent sub-communities which may rarely meet each other. The Covid-19 pandemic disrupted their activities and stimulated new ways to gain income: https://vimeo.com/showcase/6851866/video/651245757

Rather than seek a static homogeneity in order to define communities, another way is a focus on relationships, whereby people belong to a range of diverse communities, actively connecting with each other. These individuals making connections may very well live in different places, have different identities and/or interests, but come together in coordinated action, such as supporting a food growing initiative. In this sense, a community of people may be formed quite quickly, and it doesn't necessarily need a large or stable membership to have impact.

Some have described these types of communities as 'networks'. This concept highlights the idea of relationships and interdependencies between different people that make up a 'community', through collaboration, sharing and coordinated collective action. This marks a shift in focus from a prior 'what' (community as place-centeredness, social and cultural homogeneity, and commitment to a cause) towards the 'how' (new interconnections and activities for reciprocal benefit).

As a network of relationships, a community needs regular conversations, which requires 'infrastructure', which can be both physical and social. These infrastructures are places where people can exchange ideas: the pub, mosque, village Facebook page, hairdressers, the post office, school gates, the local corner shop, sports clubs, and, fundamental to us, a communal growing space. These places create opportunities for dialogue, the generation of shared histories, understandings and trust. It is these social relations that generate information sharing and commit people to collective action. Collective action can enrich, re-create or even generate 'community' in new forms, opening up future possibilities for societal change, as illustrated by some food-growing initiatives during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Suzanne Geoff's video about their neighbourhood garden share shows a very different example of a community garden much more resembling a network than the traditional view we have of a community perhaps: https://vimeo.com/685574586

Fundamentally, a community is a clearly identified group of individuals that together, identify themselves as a community – regardless of whether they live near each other, have similar ethnicity or beliefs or have similar interests. A community is formed when people have a sense of belonging to each other and have a shared understanding. For example, when the Calthorpe Community Garden screened films about other community gardens, the discussion featured many Calthorpe volunteers saying 'We feel at home here', expressing diverse kinds of belonging. See the article at
https://cobracollective.org/news/calthorpe-community-garden

However, as we just tried to demonstrate, the concept of a community is also somewhat fluid: any person can be part of multiple communities at the same time. For example, you might belong to a community based on your geographic location or as part of a specific growing initiative, but at the same time you could be part of another community based on your ethnicity.

Activity (10 min): "Exploring the communities in your life."
What comes to your mind when you hear the word community? Who are the communities you belong to? Try to think about which of these are relevant in the context of community

food growing and write those down in your learning journal. Think about what stories you connect to each of those communities and the role they've played in your life.

Community Resilience

'Resilience' is a term that has achieved significant prominence in popular discourse. You might have often heard this word being used by different people, in very different contexts with different definitions. Initiatives such as the Transition Network have 'resilience' as one of their foundational concepts for rallying community action. In their words, 'resilience' is:

"...the ability of a system, such as a local economy or community, to withstand shock and then adapt to that shock. It's the ability to flex, adapt and to change, and think on its feet in any given situation. The twist which we try to put on resilience in the Transition Network is that the ability to react to those threats shouldn't just be a process to avoid the worst possible outcome, but should be seen as an opportunity to engage with economic development in a positive and creative way. Resilience is an opportunity and a step forward, rather than purely a disaster avoidance strategy." (Transition Network, Online: https://transitionnetwork.org/news/building-resilience/ [Accessed 22/02/2022])

As you can see from the above quote from the Transition Network, the resilience narrative builds a story of communities experiencing increasing stress as a result of unpredictable change. This change is often portrayed as overwhelming, inevitable and irreversible. 'Resilience' signals that communities need to prepare themselves by resisting, adapting and eventually, transforming themselves. Specifically, when confronted with shocks, a resilient community is able to react by sustaining key functions, such as food provision, but when these functions can no longer be maintained effectively through existing practices (such as affording food from supermarkets), a community's survival depends on radically transforming key functions – for example, by turning more spaces into food growing initiatives.

Royal Roads University: Leading in Extraordinary Times Webinar Series, May 15th, 2020

The 'Resilience by Design' Lab at Royal Roads University champions yet another understanding of resilience focused on seeing resilience as a process that has to be enacted through creative, participatory engagement (https://resiliencebydesign.com/our-vision-mission/).

As advocated above, the term 'resilience' might still sound quite vague to you in practice. What exactly does this mean in a particular context and how can we measure or describe this? How does one assess whether a community is resilient to shocks? How does such an assessment broaden our understanding of 'community'? When is it appropriate to resist, adapt or transform? And by what means?

As an entry point in this course, many community gardens have stimulated or influenced external activities. For example, they have generated food-growing initiatives in more places, greater knowledge about the origin of healthy food, and wider practices towards a quality 'food culture'. More subtly, some volunteers have gained social skills in cooperative decision-making, a crucial basis for group food-growing and community-building more generally. Together these roles strengthen the basis for an alternative agri-food system. When community gardens creatively responded to the Covid-19 pandemic, new practices also strengthened social resilience for dealing with future disruptions.

Community food growing for a flourishing future

In this course, we would like to introduce you to a framing of 'resilience' which has a greater focus on wellbeing, emotion and mental health. Telling stories that imagine a better future and community gardening are both hopeful acts that acknowledge our vulnerability. In a world where it is easy to be cynical about the future, they are acts that say "I care and I'm trying", thus opening us up to transformational change but also potential disappointment...but we won't know unless we try! That seed we just planted might or might not sprout, our little seedlings might wither and die, people we care about might leave our community food growing initiative and those stories we imagine might not come true. They are also acts that not only envision a better future, but are a way of enacting this future in the present moment. We refer to these acts and stories as *radical hopefulness.* They stem from a critical engagement with the world around us that acknowledges the issues we face right now with regards to, for example, the climate crisis and social justice and inequalities. This means acknowledging and facing any of our own difficult emotions we might have, like fear, eco-anxiety and a sense of despair. However, acting with radical hopefulness means responding to those emotions with care and putting this care into practice. Community food growing itself is a way of acting with care by engaging in an alternative form of food production that challenges the dominant agro-ecological food system and in a way that is often deeply connected to other people.

We can also put this into practice by telling radically hopeful stories, so stories that acknowledge difficult situations and challenges, but also show us ways to engage in those situations and leave us feeling empowered. These are the kinds of stories that we want to tell together during this project. Madeleine Jubilee Saito's comics shown below illustrate the spirit of radical hopefulness beautifully. They also highlight the emotional impact of visual communication and the potential power of visual storytelling.

Kath Burton's story about Lavender Place is also a great example of such a radically hopeful story. Her film tells the story of Lavender Place, which is currently facing eviction. Even though engaging with this reality is painful, Kath chose to tell this story to acknowledge and remember how important this place has become for her and the community: https://vimeo.com/showcase/6851866/video/651245521

Even though they do not know yet what will come next, telling these stories can help to focus on what we want and need in our lives, as a basis for new community relationships.

Victoria Emanuelle's story about her experience setting up a community food growing initiative in her college is also a great example of radical hopefulness. Victoria's story clearly shows the difficulties she was facing during lockdown that led her to setting up a community food growing initiative, as well as the difficulties of creating and maintaining a community. Yet, her story also shows all the warm and wonderful moments in between and their potential impact: https://vimeo.com/showcase/6851866/video/651241746

But why is our approach aimed at catalysing flourishing communities through food growing centred around *visual* storytelling? Through the use of colour, composition and framing, visual representations such as drawings, photos or videos can elicit strong emotions and create an emotional connection to the viewer. Often, visual representations also help to simplify complex stories while delivering a powerful message and creates a rich contextual environment for the viewer. They can provide a more holistic, and multi-sensorial (sound, colours, shapes...) account of the story. For example, these videos produced during our first community food growing course revolve around the same idea as the comic above. They illustrate the difficult situation Nieves and Safia were in, being and feeling stuck at home, and the jump they took with diving in their community food growing experience and the influence this act of hopefulness and the engagement with their community food growing initiative had on their lives: https://vimeo.com/showcase/6851866/video/573919644 (Nieve's video) and https://vimeo.com/showcase/6851866/video/573916941 (Safia's video)

How does this view resonate with you? Take a moment to note down your thoughts and feelings.

Even though we cannot address them solely on an individual or systemic level, working on a community level can generate action and help us feel connected by making real local change in a world of global problems. Right now, choosing how to imagine and envision the future is more important than ever. As we reflect on our experiences from the Covid-19 pandemic and think about rebuilding better to meet the environmental and social justice challenges of our times, we need those hopeful visions of the future to have something to build towards grounded in existing successful practices within our community food growing initiatives. And fundamentally, we need to explore what the ingredients are that generate a flourishing community.

Wendy Alcock's story about Incredible Edible Barnet illustrates how we can address those bigger problems through local action:
https://vimeo.com/showcase/6851866/video/651244931

Belinda Murray's story likewise shows that a sense of trust and community can help prepare for whatever is to come. Building community can help us be prepared for the Winter to come – for future challenges, even though we might not even know yet what they are.

https://vimeo.com/showcase/6851866/video/651244013

Activity (15 minutes): Exploring ingredients to community flourishing

We've started our own little brainstorm of what exactly these ingredients could be on this interactive whiteboard here: https://padlet.com/CobraCollective/Flourishing. Some of us have added pictures, others have added words. Please feel free to make your own contribution so that we can create a broad collective picture of what constitutes community flourishing.

We know that given all the dark things currently going on in the world, we need strong communities where people can come together and support each other to flourish. These two videos produced during our first course show the importance and power of community for these food growing initiatives:

https://vimeo.com/showcase/6851866/video/573918852 (Emily's video)

https://vimeo.com/showcase/6851866/video/573941751 (Colette's video)
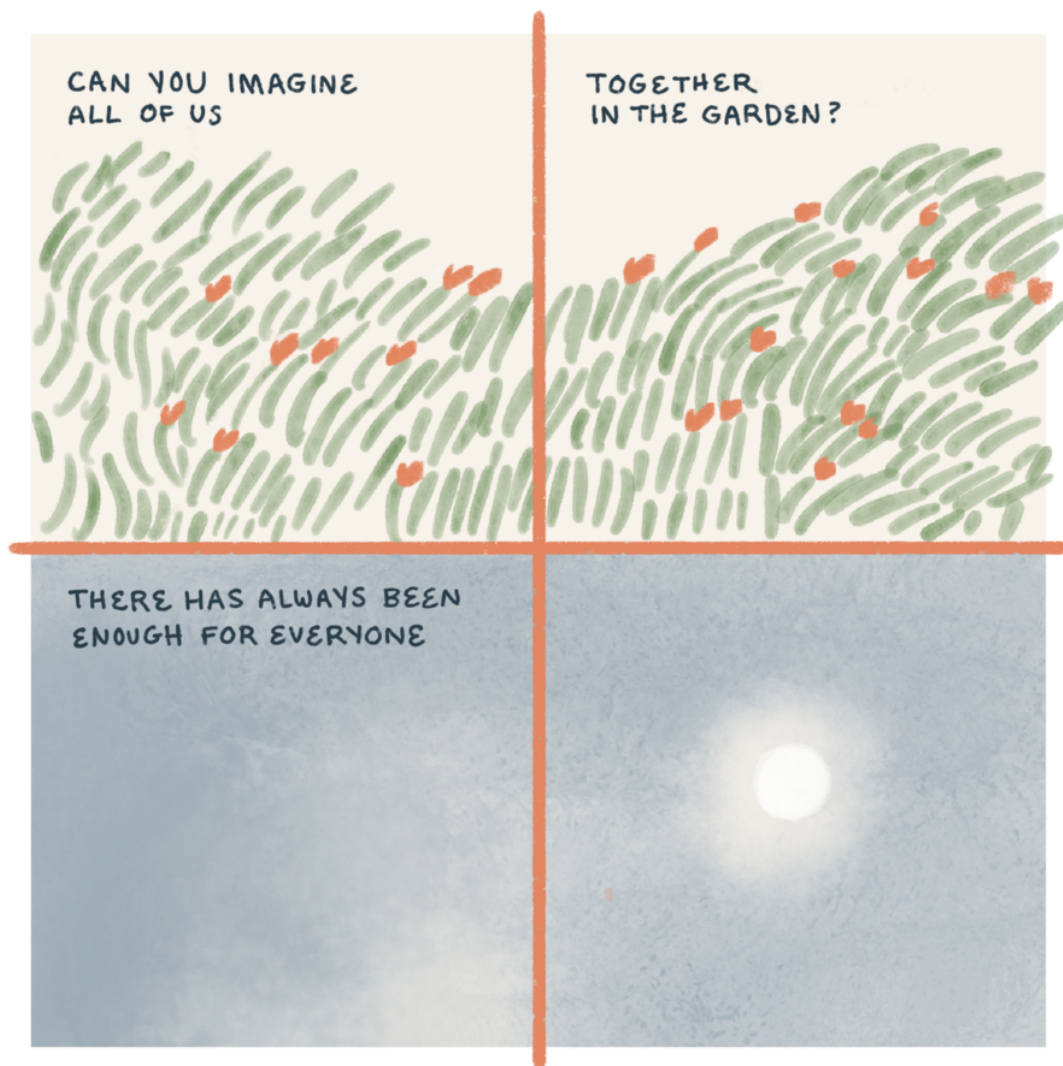
Telling such disruptive hopeful stories means acknowledging any difficult emotions we might have, such as fear and anxiety, validating them, and then moving through them, trusting that brighter things are possible. It can be scary to be hopeful, to tell hopeful stories because we might be disappointed, but that makes telling those stories and focusing our energies and efforts towards the things that might help create a more positive future even more powerful. Fundamentally, it means being willing to imagine and to trust that this future is possible as well as allowing ourselves to be vulnerable and acknowledge our emotions openly. This video from our first course illustrates this leap of hope beautifully:

https://vimeo.com/showcase/6851866/video/573918419

2. How to create visual stories about community flourishing

Creating visual stories is a messy, cyclical process - like many good things in life. The big challenge is weaving your thoughts, feelings and emotions into a coherent narrative and finding ways to express this visually in a way that others can follow and understand. This means switching between thinking about what you want to say and how that's going to come

across for others watching and listening to your story. Like anything, these are skills you can practice, though, and this section of the course is going to introduce you to a process you can follow to develop your stories.

Visual storytelling

One of the most important things about digital visual storytelling is that it's about constant learning, trying and improvement. In most cases, the first product or output you are going to produce is not the final story that you will share publicly. So, imagine developing a digital visual story by following the process shown in the figure below.
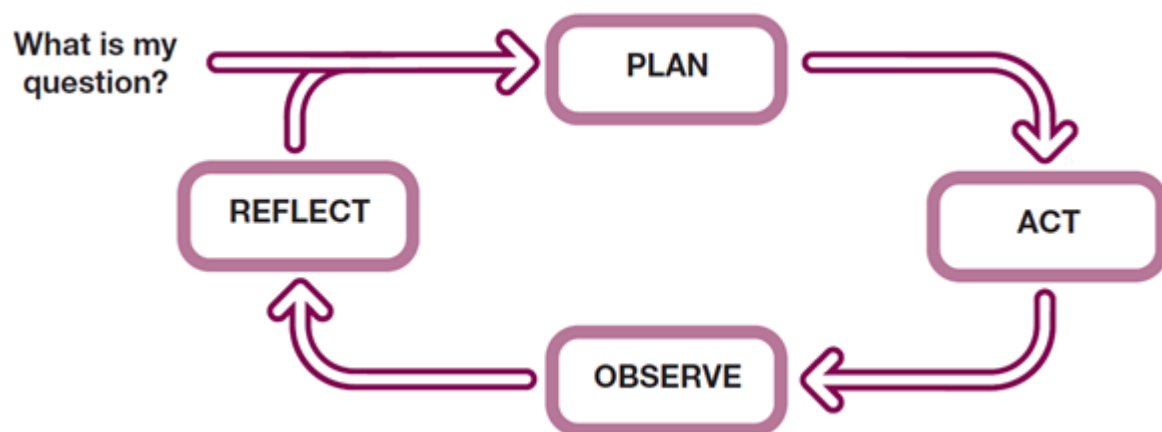
Creating a digital story through cycles of continuous refinement and improvement.

Refining the idea for your story usually happens in a continuous cycle of planning something, trying out your idea, seeing what happens and reflecting on whether that's what you want your story to be. In a way, this mindset and approach is the most important element about creating digital visual stories, it's all about continuous learning and improvement and seeing whether your story fits for you. So, try to keep this in mind when something doesn't work out quite the way you wanted it to, that's a perfectly normal part of creating a story and part of the process. Overall, the main goal is to capture and share positive things that work well in your community food growing initiative and to share them with the wider community food growing network.

Visual storytelling methods

There are many different methods to visual storytelling, depending on the meaning you want to convey, the resources you have available and the emotions you want to evoke. There are many different ways to tell a story and different methods you can use. Stories can be highly narrativized, similar to a Disney movie where characters, morals and messages are clearly defined. Inversely, they can have low narrative appeal. Similar to an abstract painting, there is no clearly defined intent, message or character. Audiences become participants and imbue the story with their own understandings.

The easiest way to create a digital story is to simply take and share some visual imagery with an associated text or commentary. For example, this photostory, created for a simple exercise by Nieves Gomez, one of the participants in our first course, tells a clear story about growing and sharing your harvest with the sheep.

"sharing our growings with the sheep"

To create a more sophisticated story, you can weave the imagery together into captivating, entertaining adventures. These could include villains, victims and heroes. Such characters need not be people; they can be plants, animals and even supposedly inanimate objects.

The 'wave storyline'

Another technique to create more complex and structured stories is the 'wave storyline'. You first start by tracking down the 'who', 'what', 'where', and 'when'. As you approach the crest of the wave, you start addressing the problems and quid-pro-quos. In other words, the interesting, splashy and explosive part of your story. Then you slowly decrease the intensity of your story and maybe begin to offer some insights of where the story is going to go next i.e. a new wave..

The 'wave storyline' approach offers you a chance to visualise the structure and rhythm of your story. Once you have a story in mind, try to map it onto the wave!

The aim is to encourage creativity and playfulness, so that the process of documenting and sharing your or your communities' challenges and solutions is fun for both you as the creator and the eventual viewers. Maybe you've already seen some of the videos produced by our first project cohort in your gardens, but you will experience how powerful it is to see videos or images of places and situations that you are familiar with from your community food growing initiative and how this can help to engage others.

A process for visual storytelling

We will show you a process now that can help you come up with and realise your ideas. By doing that, we'll show you a few different ways in which you can develop and tell a story. The process we're suggesting goes like this:

Each of these steps will be explained in detail below, but in summary, a 'rich picture' is a very straightforward hand-drawn visual exploration of a situation on a single canvas (this could be on paper or digital). This represents a story with low narrative appeal. Similar to an abstract painting, there is no clearly defined intent, message or character. People viewing your rich picture should be able to develop their own understanding of what you are trying to communicate. This unstructured 'jumble' of visual imagery can then be used to inspire a more structured, 'linear' sequencing of images using the 'photostory' technique (as the example produced by Nieves above shows). We are now moving more towards a 'highly narrativized' structure. You can then go to the next stage where you can record a narration of a slightly more sophisticated sequence of pictures, photographs or video clips. A more

advanced option is where you combine your narration with questions you can ask fellow community food growers, so we can directly hear from their experiences, which we have called a 'journalistic video'. And at the most advanced level, a 'participatory video' is co-produced collectively within your community food growing initiative, where a group of people work on the storyline, collect the audiovisual material, collaborative edit, and then screen the emerging results to a wider group of people to gain feedback and make improvements.

However, you can also always use each of these ways separately if you don't want to go through the whole process or already know exactly what you want to do. We're just suggesting this as a way for you to clarify your thoughts, work through an idea and gradually involve other people, but this is by no means a fixed structure that needs to happen exactly like this for every idea. For now, we'll focus on introducing you to tools that can help you design your story, later on in the course we will provide you with a step-by-step instruction for the technical elements. Besides what we're showing you here, there are also many other approaches you can use to tell a visual digital story. For example, the fiction video approach, where you write a script and design a fictional story that is then played out by actors. This can be a really powerful tool, too, but for this course we are only focusing on approaches that can help you with telling stories about your perspective and direct experience of actual community food growing.

Where to start? - Picking your seed

The starting point for telling your story is you. No matter if you already have a clear idea of what you would like your story to be about or if this whole idea still seems quite daunting to you - there are great stories within each of us as well as the capacity to bring them out. For this project, we want to tell captivating stories about community food growing initiatives that explore the many ways they can contribute to building a radically hopeful future.

Storytelling always has two roles: the storyteller and the listener. You are going to be the storyteller here. So, the next step is determining who your listeners are going to be. Knowing who you want to tell your story to can help you define exactly what you want to say and think about what type of language and framing you might want to use. Your listeners could for example be your other community members, other community garden initiatives, potential community members that you might want to attract or decision-makers in your local context. For each of those groups, you can tell your story in slightly different ways that will best suit their approach using language that is familiar to them and that they can relate to. In professional terms, this is called your audience and can help you set the tone of your story. Thinking about your listeners and audience is really related to the purpose and potential impact of your story. We will talk more about the impact and dissemination of your stories in the final part of the course.

Activity (10 minutes) Exploring community flourishing

Go back to the [padlet exploration of community flourishing and resilience](#). Spend a few minutes re-exploring the page and note down any thoughts, ideas or feelings in your learning journal. What kind of images come up for you? Do these images and writings remind you of something in your own community garden?

Is there one thought, image, feeling or story that stands out to you in particular? Hold onto that thought, this will be your seed.

How to question your stories? - The Iceberg metaphor

Whether it is through writing or oral, storytelling is a performative act. There might be a discrepancy between the reality and your story. It is not a direct representation of what happened. In fact, it can never fully encapsulate an event objectively. But how we tell that story and use words, narratives and characters might subtly or explicitly reveal some of our underlying structures, beliefs, values and patterns. What we call the underwater iceberg!

Our actions

1. What is an example of a radically hopeful act you did that contributes to community flourishing?

2. How did you feel in that moment?

3. What were your practical values that determined what you did?

What determines our actions

4. What were your motivations?

A crucial aspect in storytelling is an appreciation of the 'iceberg'. The iceberg is a great metaphor for allowing you to engage with what is out there. A lot of us see things happen, we look at the news, for example, and we treat individual news items just as events. Even in our day to day we often feel like we are just firefighting; we're just reacting to the events that hit us and we're just rushing from one challenge to another. But, metaphorically, that is just the 'tip of the iceberg' that is above the surface of the water. It's what hits us in our daily lives. The 'Iceberg model' demonstrates that storytelling can go beyond a simple description of events that have taken place, and/or are in the process of unfolding. It's about understanding that below the surface of what is more immediately apparent, there are patterns and structures connecting different events which result in certain outcomes. But more significantly, it's about understanding the values which underpin behaviour. How we tell our story, the linguistic tropes, the arc we use, and characters, should engage with the underlying patterns, structures, beliefs, and values that we are challenging and/or championing. Once we are reflecting on these underlying glacial structures, we can actively use this self-awareness in our stories and lives and might even be able to change and alter some of these processes, questioning our assumptions and values. Ultimately, engaging with our own and trying to understand other's icebergs is a way of transforming the way we act and see the world.

Let's look more concretely why an Iceberg approach might be fundamental to one of today's contemporary crises, climate change. This crisis is often approached through an objective scientific lens. To fix the climate, we must be rational and objective. We need to create new innovative structures, implement those net zero policies, and propose new conservation schemes. But, how can these actually change our behaviour? What are the mechanics underlying

our behaviour? As we have seen with the iceberg metaphor, to change people we must change the hidden part of the ice. We need to question the values, assumptions and processes that underlie our behaviour. Instead of looking at climate change through a rational lense, we must complement it with an emotional perspective that encourages people to re-evaluate their value systems, like, for example, how participating in community food growing in one's spare time is more fulfilling and generates greater well being compared to other high-carbon emitting pastimes.

Activity (20 minutes): Mapping onto the Iceberg Metaphor

Take a few minutes now to explore your community food growing initiative in terms of the iceberg metaphor:

1. What is an example of a radically hopeful act you did that contributes to community flourishing?

2. How did you feel in that moment?

3. What were your practical values that determined what you did?

4. What were your motivations?

Rich pictures - Planting your seed

In this step, we're going to plant the seed of your story. For this, we first have to fertilise and prepare the soil and then to carefully plant your seed, which we will do by creating a rich picture.

When looking for inspiration for a visual narrative, often a good way to start is by drawing a Rich Picture. A rich picture is a visual brainstorm where you can explore a topic freely, exploring ideas, emotions or thoughts about a certain topic. Rich pictures are a compilation of drawings, pictures, symbols and sometimes text that represent a particular situation or issue from the viewpoint of the person or people who drew them. They can show relationships, connections, influences, cause and effect. They can also show more subjective elements such as character and characteristics as well as points of view, prejudices, spirit and human nature. The idea of using drawings or pictures to think about issues is common to several problem solving or creative thinking methods (including therapy) because our intuitive consciousness communicates more easily in impressions and symbols than in words. Rich pictures can be regarded as pictorial 'summaries' of the physical and emotional aspects of the situation at a given time. They are often used to depict complicated situations or issues.

As examples, we developed the rich pictures below to quickly, and visually, brainstorm some of the worries and aspirations of a household that lived next door to one of the authors as they were exploring how they could improve their wellbeing and that of their community. The first rich picture shows some of the concerns the couple had at that moment in time: stressful commuting to work, stuck in traffic; worries about climate change and increasing weather disruptions; decreasing wage package and pension benefits; rising fuel and food prices; decreasing security in the streets and community spirit; increasing consumption of consumer goods; increasing levels of waste and air pollution; leisure time spent alone

watching television. All these pressures combined to create a lot of tension and stress within the couple.
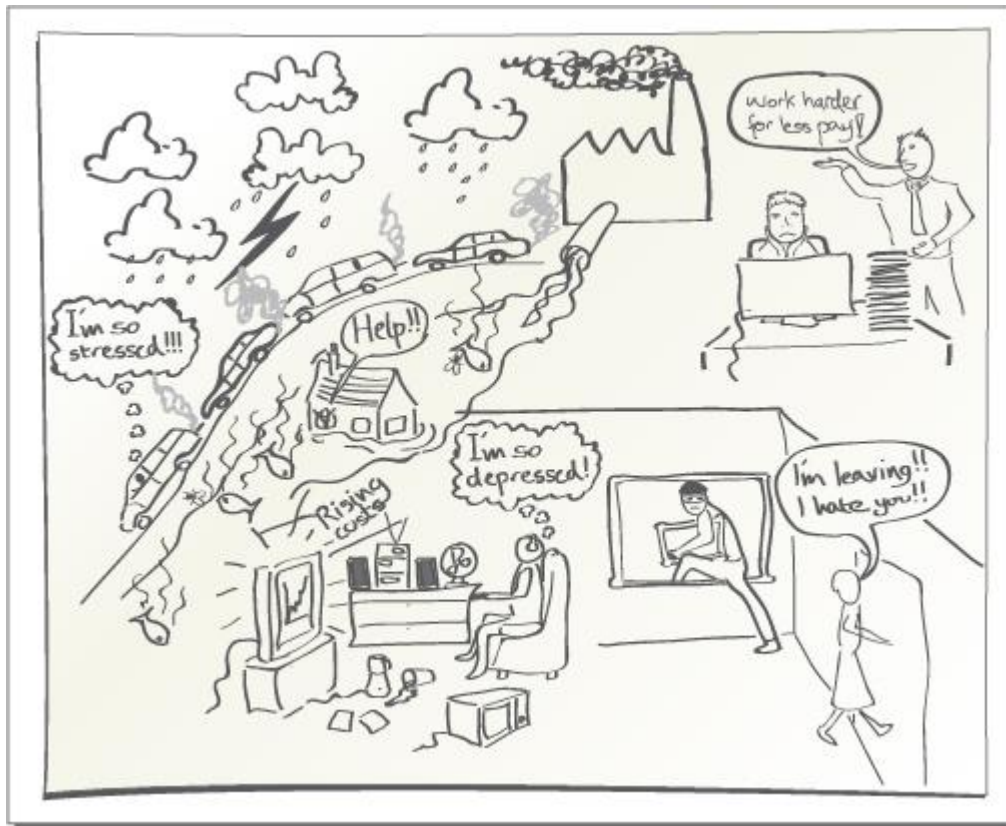
The second rich picture shows how we used the rich picture technique to explore what is, and what could, work well in their lives: working locally; contributing towards maintaining a stable and predictable climate (rather than contribute to emissions which will lead to more extreme weather events); higher quality of life reliant on local resources (e.g. growing food locally and generating electricity through solar panels) not dependent on an ever-increasing salary in order to pay rising bills and living costs; fresh air, clean water and open green spaces; more time for spending with family and friends in fun, relaxing, productive, useful activities.
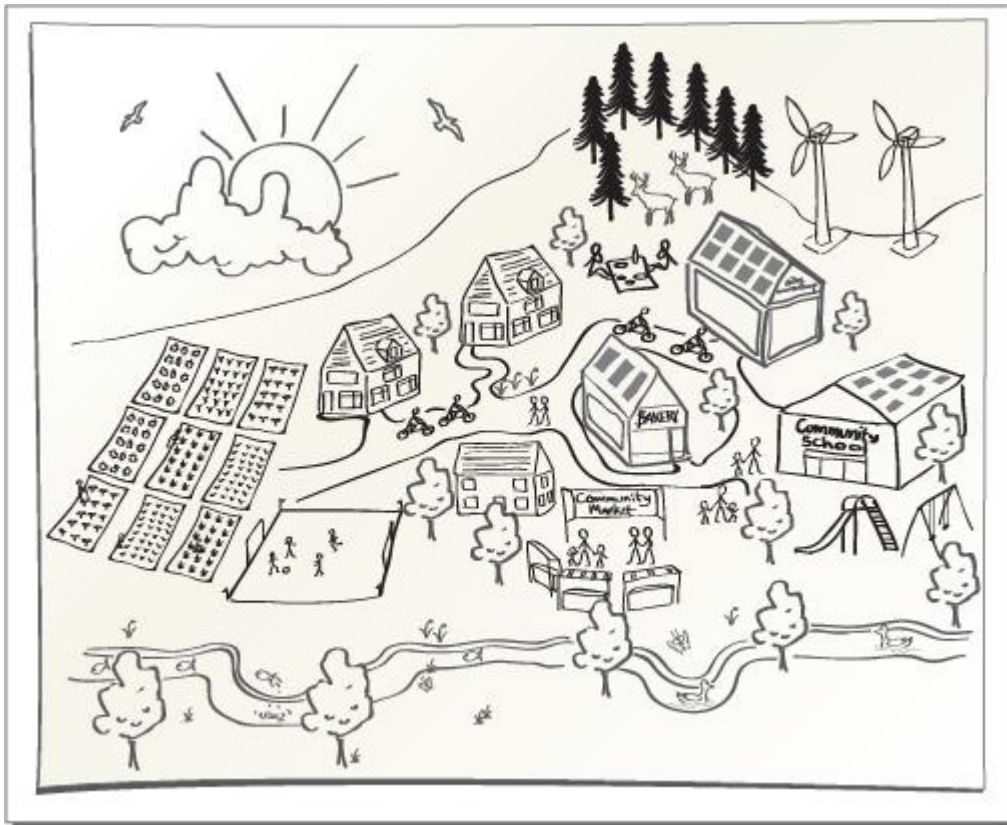
A rich picture offers a great deal of scope for creative thinking and freedom in how you represent your ideas. A lack of drawing skill is no drawback as symbols, icons, photographs and/or text can be used to represent different elements.

Drawing a rich picture is often done most effectively as a communal activity, so that the different stakeholders in a situation can portray things as they see them. They are made up from:

- pictorial symbols
- key words
- cartoons
- sketches and symbols
- a title

It is usually best to avoid too much writing, whether as commentary or as 'word bubbles' coming from people's mouths, although some people find it easier to use short phrases than to try to come up with a pictorial representation of ideas difficult to represent visually.

If you're interested in a more detailed guide for how to draw a rich picture, you can also watch this video: http://vimeo.com/577158363

Photostories - Watering your young seedling

Now, that your seed is planted. It's time to water your young seedling and give it some more attention. We will do this by creating a photostory of your seedling - carefully examining your idea more closely and starting to build a first soft and fragile representation of your story.

Photostories are a way to represent certain issues or practices through photos. This can be done either individually or in a group to answer a specific question or tell a particular story.

You can use your rich picture to identify key issues, events and impacts, and how they could be visually represented, that could be strung together into a more linear narrative. The idea is to take photos and/or draw pictures of your linear narrative which you then compile into a sequence and sometimes with additional written text to add to the visuals. A photostory can be really helpful as it enables you to quickly produce and share your perspective with a group or wider community and to start a discussion.

Link to Paula's photostory
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1WduVuLqiFOrAW3o6Ci50nuYp3FadIqrQ/view?usp=sharing

Video Narrative - Harvesting the first crop

You've done so well taking care of your seedling that now it's already time to harvest the first crop - the first video representation of your story!

We have created your own step-by-step guide for creating your own video narrative later in this course. But here's a first example that shows you how Paula developed her photostory further into a video narrative:

https://vimeo.com/showcase/6851866/video/573920659

Journalistic video approach - Sharing your harvest with others

After you've started harvesting your first video stories, you can share your harvest with others and invite them to take part. This is done by creating a journalistic video. This means interviewing someone as part of your video and inviting their perspective in sharing part of your story with them.

This approach is especially useful when you want to share and highlight someone else's perception, experience or knowledge on a specific issue. It's a way of storytelling that uses a set of questions to investigate a specific topic. This approach depends on the storyteller's ability to conduct a good interview to be able to share other's point of view. Here is a brief video tutorial illustrating what we mean by conducting a good interview: https://vimeo.com/397999680

Some of the tools shown in this video might be useful for the digital stories that you are going to produce, too. If there is someone else in your community who is not participating in the course, but who's perspective you'd like to include, this is how you might go about including them.

Paula's interview: https://vimeo.com/showcase/6851866/video/573921554

Participatory Video - Growing your seeds together with others

One of the main differences between a journalistic video and a participatory video is how much agency your other community food growers have. In the case of a journalistic video, you're inviting them to share their perspective, to eat from your harvest, but they don't have much agency in terms of how the harvest comes to be. Participatory video in contrast is where you share seeds from your plant to your fellow gardeners, you all grow something together, taking turns watering and caring for your plants and then cooking a big meal out of it together.

In other words, the aim of the participatory video approach is to bring a group or community together to explore issues and concerns or tell their story in a

collaborative way. Creating a video here is a way to bring people together and engage in a process of exploring an issue in depth. Participatory video can also help to empower marginalised communities and help give a voice to their stories and concerns. This video tutorial has a good explanation of participatory video https://vimeo.com/397994533

In the next sections we are going to introduce you to the main concepts and techniques you can use to actually create your digital stories, but this idea of continuous learning and constant improvement is actually the most important one.

3. Concepts and techniques for producing visual digital stories

Before diving into designing your own digital stories, we are going to give you some background information about the key concepts and technical approaches that you can use when creating digital stories.

If you are new to shooting video using your smartphone, we recommend you watch this brief introductory tutorial on how to capture video footage using your phone or a tablet: https://vimeo.com/397996167

Framing

Let's start by talking about how to frame your video when creating single shots. Framing means selecting a part of reality according to what you want to show in your story. There are different types of framing and this video provides an overview of the different frames you can use to tell your story: https://vimeo.com/397997428

Shooting a steady video

The best way to shoot a video is by using a stable place to hold your mobile phone or tablet. Often, people use a tripod for this, but if you don't have one, don't worry! We are sure you can find a creative solution to put your smartphone where it is not shaking too much, like setting it on a table or shelf. If that's not an option, you can also shoot the video by hand. This video tutorial gives you an overview on how to use different types of camera movements with and without a tripod to shoot your video:
https://vimeo.com/397999185

In addition to the overall frame, it's also important to choose the right camera angle for taking your shots. The camera angle marks the position of the camera in relation to the subject we want to shoot.

- **Low angle**: when the camera is placed below the subject and the lens is pointing up. Filming a subject just a bit below the eye level makes them look heroic, powerful and grand.
- **High angle**: when the camera is placed above a subject with the lens pointing down. High angle shots are used to make the subject or object seem vulnerable, powerless, or weak.
- **Eye level angle:** when the camera is placed at the same level of the eye of the subject. Eye level angle is the most neutral angle and it is perfect for interviews.

Eye level angle

Low angle

High angle
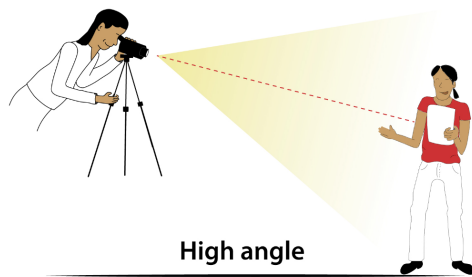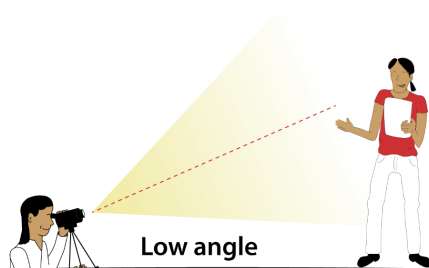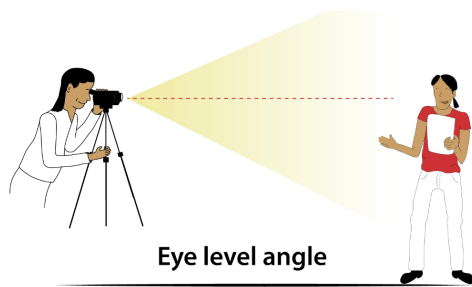
Lighting your videos

Choosing the right lighting for your videos is also very important as it can help the viewer follow the main action of your story more easily.

Lighting can help you to highlight the main action or actor in your shot and to make sure they are well visible.

Watch this video tutorial to learn more on how to use light in your visual digital stories: https://vimeo.com/397997137

Here is a summary of the different types of light that exist:

- Natural light: is any light that we can find in nature, such as sunlight.
- Artificial light: is any light produced by electrical means, such as a light bulb.
- Direct light: is when there are no obstacles between the source of light and the subject.
- Diffuse light: is when there are obstacles that filter or reflect the light between the source of light and the subject.

If you are interested, you can also watch this tutorial to learn more on how to shoot a video with diffuse light in outdoor or indoor spaces.

https://vimeo.com/482642023

Shots - Scenes - Sequence - Film

Now that you know more on how to frame and choose the right lighting for single shots, let's talk about how different shots can be used together to create the scenes and the sequences of your film.

Shot
A shot consists of a single take of video footage. One take can also last just a few seconds.

More shots together create a scene
A scene is generally made of different angles and frames of the same character that happen in the same location in a precise time of your video story.

SCENE

shot 1   shot 2   shot 3
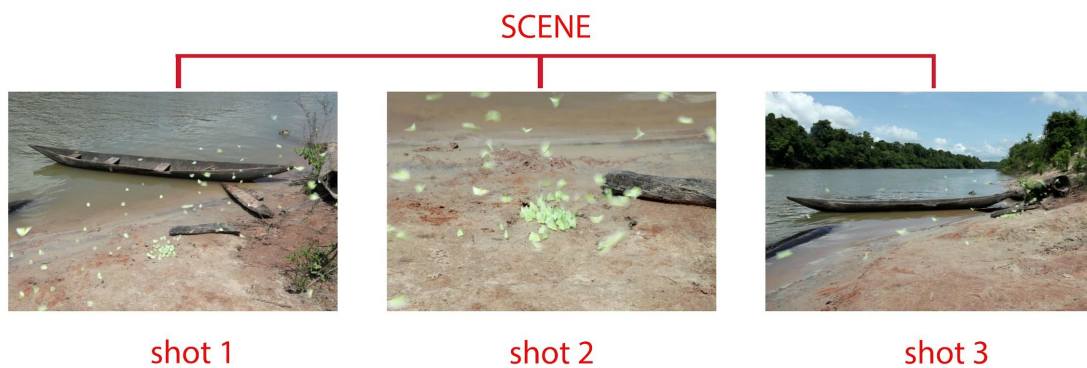
More scenes together create a sequence.
A sequence is a part of the narration where each event follows a set of related events, movements that follow each other in a particular order.

SCENE 1

shot 1   shot 2   shot 3

SCENE 2

shot 4   shot 5   shot 6

SCENE 3

shot 7   shot 8   shot 9
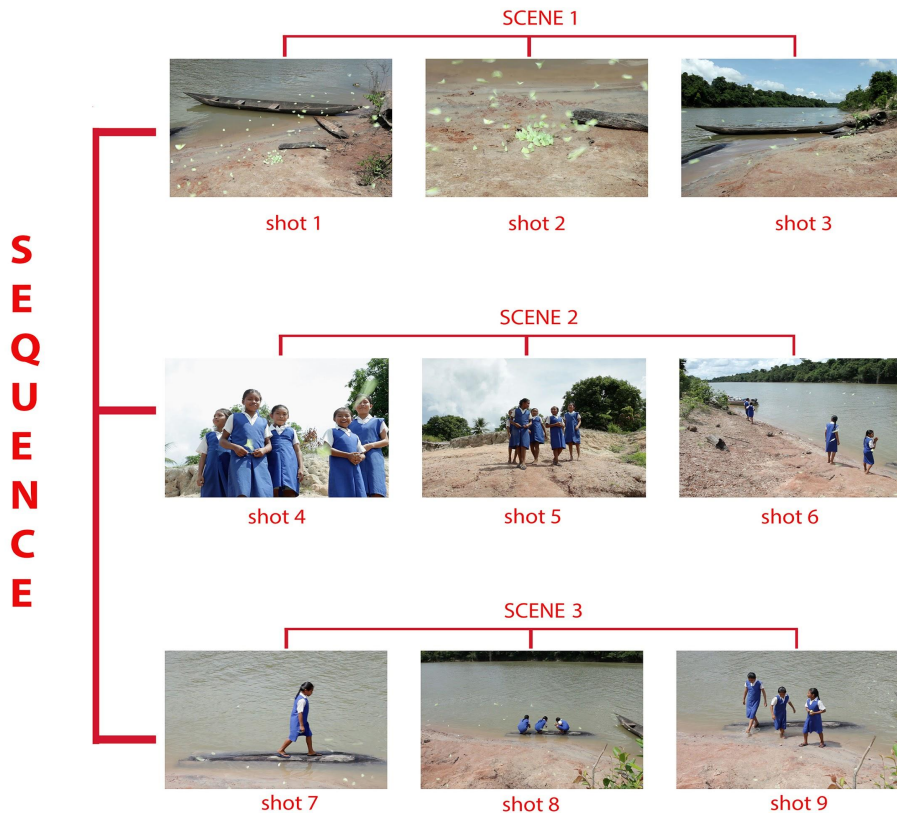
SEQUENCE

A film is made of many sequences.
Here, you can see an example of a short film made with the shots, scenes and sequences that we showed above: https://vimeo.com/528028848

Here are examples of 3 simple ways that you can use to put together a scene or sequence.

move in: start with a long shot or extreme long shot to set the scene, then move closer.
move out: start with closeups, then gradually use wider shots to reveal where the scene is set.
Use three shots: the thing, the person, the person with the thing.

A-Roll and B-Roll

Now that you know a little bit more about the different elements of video production, we need to talk a little bit more about the different types of footage you need to collect to create your stories.

In video production, A-roll is the primary footage of a project's main subject, while B-roll shots are supplemental footage. For example, if you interview someone, shots of the person you are interviewing will be the A-Roll footage of your video. All the footage you will collect to show what the person is talking about will be the B-Roll footage. The term "A-roll" is no longer used, but "B-roll" remains a common term in today's film industry and a useful concept to keep in mind when creating your stories.

B-roll shots are important for any type of video production. They are necessary for creating the context and adding depth to your story. The B-roll shots can help to cover up potential errors and are crucial to illustrate and demonstrate the actions that the main subject is talking about that might otherwise remain unexplained. By doing so, they also keep your audience actively engaged while watching your story.

Planning your video using text:
All stories start with a great idea. To create your visual digital story you can start writing down your ideas on a piece of paper by answering some of these simple questions below.

The list of questions to answer to develop your idea:

- What is your video about?
- What is the message you want to send and why?
- Why is it important for you to tell this story?

The list of questions to answer to realise your video idea:

- What happens in your story?
- Where does it happen?
- When does it happen?
- Why did it happen?

Watch the video tutorial below to learn more on how to plan your video using text:
 https://vimeo.com/398000805

More complex films need to have a script. A script is a written document that helps you remember what and where something happens in your video. If you want to learn more on how create a script you can watch this video tutorial https://vimeo.com/398001311

Planning your video using a storyboard

Storyboarding is a visual way to represent what is going to happen in your video shot by shot. A storyboard is made up of a number of squares with illustrations or pictures that represent each shot in your story.

This video tutorial describes storyboarding in more detail: https://vimeo.com/398001773

For your digital stories, you will be creating quite short stories of only a few minutes to share your experience, so it's important that your storyboards will be quite short and that the main content of your story can be written in 5 or 6 lines.

The importance of sound in your video

Using a microphone
Sound is another important element in creating visual digital stories. Remember that you need to be very close to the subject and select a place with very little noise to make sure the audio is good. If you plan on being outside with a microphone, avoid recording in a windy area. Seek a shelter or shield your microphone from the wind by placing your back against it.

There are very cheap microphones (10 GBP) that you can buy to improve the sound captured from your smartphone or tablet. To learn more about sound and the different microphones watch the tutorial below on the importance of sound in your video https://vimeo.com/397996617

If you are interested in buying an external microphone, here are some suitable options. Please note that it is **not required** to buy a microphone for this project! These are entirely optional and probably most useful if you are planning to create more additional digital visual stories beyond this project:
Option 1
https://www.amazon.co.uk/Lavalier-Microphone-Smartphone-Canon-Camera/dp/B00MPDYGBE/ref=asc_df_B00MPDYGBE/?tag=googshopuk-21&linkCode=df0&hvadid=310171959482&hvpos=&hvnetw=g&hvrand=8326946562680359762&hvpone=&hvptwo=&hvqmt=&hvdev=c&hvdvcmdl=&hvlocint=&hvlocphy=1006886&hvtargid=pla-297942445163&psc=1
Option 2
https://www.amazon.co.uk/Microphone-Professional-Omnidirectional-Recording-Conference/dp/B073GJQKL1/ref=asc_df_B073GJQKL1/?tag=googshopuk-21&linkCode=df0&hvadid=309785494452&hvpos=&hvnetw=g&hvrand=8326946562680359762&hvpone=&hvptwo=&hvqmt=&hvdev=c&hvdvcmdl=&hvlocint=&hvlocphy=1006886&hvtargid=pla-358095939106&psc=1

Remember, when talking in a microphone, you want to sound natural but also lively. Try practising with a friend. Your voice and tone should be similar to the one you use when you explain a story with friends over dinner.

Integrating ambient sound

We are holistic and sensorial beings. Part of storytelling is to transport us to a world whether real or fictive. Sound becomes a crucial aspect of how we record audio-visual stories. Just think how bland a movie would be without the soundtrack.

Try to bring us to the soundscape of your garden. We want to hear it breathe and live.

What do you hear in the morning? Are there birds, people working and laughing? Can you hear the busy streets nearby? Do you hear people watering the soil? What about the sounds made when you work the soil and harvest the food? How festive and lively is sharing food afterward?

You can interweave these sounds in your audio mix, using microphone/phone to record and sound softwares to integrate like GarageBand or by simply adding different soundscapes in between and/or underneath narrations in your video. The clip can last 10, 30 or 40 seconds, it is your choice.

Voiceover

Another way to use a recorded text and create the sound for your video is a technique called voiceover. You can create a voiceover recording someone reading a text. The voiceover is a piece of narration in a video not accompanied by an image of the speaker. In the final edit, the voiceover can be accompanied by words, illustrations and videos that clarify what you are listening to.

You can record the voiceover using the simple "Voice Recorder" app already preinstalled on most smartphones. Place your phone on a table and make sure you are speaking close to it in a calm and quiet environment.

4. Designing a story

Using the tools you learned about in the previous sections, here's a simple way to create a short story with a narrator and a smartphone

The instructions below are valid for any high narrative story, whether it is a simple photostory or a complex participatory video process.

For whichever story technique you chose to develop, it's always a good idea to start with the rich picture. Get a blank piece of paper and draw the images that come to mind when thinking about your community food growing initiative: its location; the people involved; the challenges overcome and those that continue to affect the initiative; how the location changed over time as you intervened; the result achieved (both in terms of produce grown and social achievements).

Based on this rather random visual Rich Picture representation of your community food growing initiative and the higher-level questions listed above, maybe you can now begin to identify a story that emerges. You could for example tell a positive story about a group effort to deal with a challenge.

1. Identifying the story: Identify a radically hopeful experience in your community food growing initiative. Think through whether it has the ingredients for a good story: Are there interesting characters involved? Is there a challenge that was overcome? How was the solution a truly community effort?

2. Once you have a rough idea, share your story with some friends or family members, possibly using your Rich Picture as a prompt. Especially in those early stages just sharing your ideas with others can really help to shape them and for you to figure out what you want to focus on. Speaking with others about it can also help you find the exact words and terms you might want to use to explain your idea. Feel free to draw a second version of your Rich Picture based on input from others.

3. Write your project idea on a piece of paper. Why do you want to tell this story? What is your story about? Where does the story take place?

4. Think about your audience. Who is going to watch your video? For example, if you are producing a video for children, you will need to avoid using difficult language. Are you producing a video to involve more people to take part in your gardening project? Then you will want to use a warm tone to make sure people feel inspired. If you are unsure about who the audience is, our recommendation is that you tell a story that you can show to your friends, family and fellow community growing members. If you can inspire more local community members to become involved, then your story will certainly inspire other people from other communities. But don't worry about making the story 'transferrable' to other settings - make it as authentic as you can using language that you use every day.

5. Choose an engaging title for your story

6. Think about a narrator (a main character and the voice that will tell your story). You could be the narrator of your story or choose someone else to do that for you.

7. Creating a narrative: Once the story and narrator have been identified, write out the narrative of the story: set the scene; introduce the challenge and the key characters; describe how the challenge is resolved; explore the lasting wellbeing impacts on the community and on individuals. On a piece of paper, write down what you want to say in a few lines. Remember that all stories have a start (opening), a middle and an end (conclusion). Practice reading your text and estimate how long it will take to read it. Try to aim for a story that can be read out for about two to five minutes. Trick, if you want to practice your literary and linguistic creativity. Look at a nearby object around you and try to describe it in 5 different ways. This will help you diversify the words and angles you might use.

8. Make a list of the necessary B-Roll footage. To show what the narrator is saying in your story, what pictures or footage do you need to collect? Try to keep things simple: you won't go to the moon to film astronauts! Think of something that you can capture easily or with the help of your family and friends.

9. Develop a storyboard: try and break down the story into individual scenes and make a note of the different images that can represent the story. You have learned about different frames and how you can create scenes or sequences by putting together different shots. Sketch the sequence on a piece of paper to make sure you have a visual plan to follow when you go to capture your footage.

You now developed your storyboard, the next important thing is about consent which we will introduce in the next section.

5. Ethics, Consent and Copyright

For other participants, ensure that the objectives are fully understood and that no false expectations are built. Make sure to consider all the ethical aspects. All participants must be asked for their consent before collecting and screening any image or audio in which they appear. You can use a written form or they can give consent via video. For people under 18, you need to collect the consent from their parents.

Ethics

When creating digital stories that include footage of or the perspective of other people, it's very important to consider the ethics of sharing and creating such stories. When your story includes other people, it's crucial to ensure that the objectives of the project are fully understood by the participants and that no false expectations are built. Once everyone has fully understood those objectives and the process you are going to take, you have to obtain consent from everyone participating in your story. It is important that all participants are asked for their consent before collecting and screening any image or audio in which they

appear. You can use a written form or they can give consent via video. For people under 18, you need to collect the consent from their parents.

This video tutorial gives some more detail about those ethical considerations for digital storytelling and participatory video: https://vimeo.com/482642749

Consent

Free, prior and informed consent is a specific right to consent for Indigenous peoples that has been recognised in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). However, it is good practice to follow this principle for any digital storytelling project. A consent form explains the conditions for any specific project and must be signed before starting any project activities, like the form you signed before starting this course.

If you are interested, here is a brief video summary that explains free, prior and informed consent in more detail: https://vimeo.com/408316291

Copyright

Copyright is a mechanism to protect intellectual property and refers to the right to copy or use an intellectual piece of work someone has produced, such as a photo, video or audio recording. Copyright means that only the original creators of those products and anyone they give authorisation to are allowed to share and reproduce this work. Making something copyrighted, therefore is a way to protect your intellectual property against someone using it without your consent and gives you a legal mechanism to prosecute them.

In this project, we will use a copyright mechanism called "Creative Commons". Creative Commons is a type of license that you can use when you want to give other people the right to share, use or build on work that you have created. There are different types of Creative Commons licenses that you can choose if you for example only want to allow non-commercial uses of a piece of work you have produced. For other people sharing your work, it also protects them from any concerns about copyright infringement as long as they share or use your work in the ways and under the conditions that are specified in your chosen creative commons license.

Here is a good video that explains the idea behind creative commons in a bit more detail: https://vimeo.com/13590841

In this project, we are going to use a Creative Commons license where people are allowed to re-use and share the digital stories we are going to produce for non-commercial purposes.

Reflection (5 minutes)

What did you imagine under the concepts of ethics, consent and copyright before studying this section? Are there any misconceptions you had? What is the most important new insight you gained here? Write down your reflections in your learning journal.

6. Capturing and editing your story

1. Capture the main track of your video: The narrator telling the story. For this, we suggest using a mid shot or a headshot frame on a neutral background with a diffuse light to make sure that the attention is concentrated on the subject talking and not on other things happening around them.

Make sure to shoot the video in a quiet place with not many noises around and that isn't too windy to make sure the internal microphone of your smartphone is capturing the best sound. If you don't have a tripod for your smartphone, try to find a place with a table or a shelf where you can put your smartphone. Alternatively, you can also hold your phone with both hands while keeping your elbows right next to your chest, to make sure the image is as steady as possible. Remember to shoot your video horizontal.

It is not an easy job for a non-professional actor to remember the text of a 1-2 minutes story in front of the camera. To make the process simpler, we suggest that the narrator is recorded looking at the camera only at the **opening (Video PART 1)** and for the **conclusion (Video PART 3**). Collecting footage of the narrator saying 2-3 sentences at the start and at the end of the story is enough for a short story.
The **middle of the story** (**Video PART 2)** can be captured simply showing the narrator reading the story out loud.
This is because we will use only the **voiceover** and not the images from this part of the video. In this section we will use the B-Roll footage to show what the narrator is talking about.

2. Capture your other imagery (B-roll): now is the time to go into your community and take pictures to represent the story. Some of these pictures can be of actual real-life situations, while others you may need to role play with people involved in your community food growing initiative. When even role playing is difficult, you can be imaginative and take a picture of something drawn by hand. In some instances, when the subject matter is too difficult to capture with an image, a symbolic representation can also be a good substitute. Follow the list of B-Roll you have created and your storyboard to go and capture the footage you need for your story. Remember the sound of B-Roll is not that important. The narrator will be the main soundtrack of the story while the sound of the B-Roll footage will be deleted or reduced.

3. Select the best material you have produced. Start to select the best material from all the shots you have collected and delete the footage that you don't need. For bigger projects the first selection needs to be done during the shooting, taking notes of the right takes to make sure you don't have to re-watch all the footage again.

4. Download a free editing App for your smartphone. Powerdirector or FilmoraGo are good options, but there are also many other Apps if you prefer a different one. If you want to do your editing on a computer you can also send the footage via e-mail or WeTransfer to yourself and work from there. For this project, we (the Cobra Collective) are happy to help you with the main editing for you, but in case you want to create more stories later by yourself, this is the process you should follow:
    a. Create the title of your video
    b. Add the different parts form the narrator telling the story (Part 1, 2 and 3) on the **main timeline**
    c. Put the best B-Roll you have collected on the second **timeline** that overlaps with part 2. Delete the B-Roll sound.
    d. Add the credits with the names of all people who were involved in your video.

5. Render your story: once you are happy with all the editing, all video editing software have a 'rendering' option which allows you to export the video in different file formats and levels of resolution. We recommend that you render your video as an MP4, as it's the best quality for the smallest file size, and most devices can readily open an MP4 file.

6. Share your story: use one of the file sharing tools introduced in the previous section or any other means available to you to share your story with the rest of the food growing community to gain feedback on your story.

7. Debate and evaluate: look for opportunities to gain feedback on your story, what impact it may have had, and gain ideas for making some final adjustments to your story if necessary.

8. Consent for public sharing: once the final changes have been made, gain consent from your group to share this story publicly.

Practice activity (2 hours)

Try to create a 2 minute digital story following these steps about one element of your community food growing experience.

7. Sharing digital stories

One of the most important elements of creating digital stories is to work collaboratively and share ideas with others. You might do that in person or work remotely, for example with partners that live in different countries.

This will result in 3 main problems to solve:

1. How to send big size video files
2. How to backup and access your video file when travelling
3. How to work on shared documents with your partners

This video tutorial explains different ways of sharing your videos:
https://vimeo.com/398004200

Here, we have summarised some practical solutions for you:

WeTransfer is a simple way to send your files around the world and share lage files up to 2GB for free. You just need to have an internet connection and go to www.wetransfer.com, then type your e-mail address and the recipient's email address, write a text message, attach the file and send it.

Another solution to solve all 3 problems in one goal is to use a Cloud storage space. Cloud storage spaces are servers that are accessed over the Internet.

Google Drive is a good example.

Here are some of Google Drive's key features:
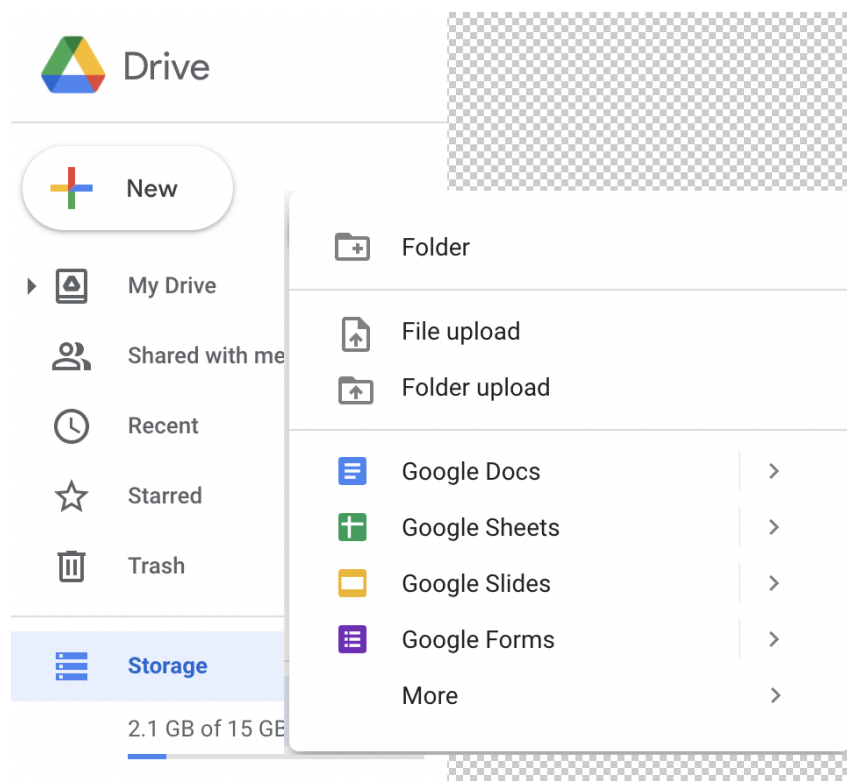
- Storing files: By default, Google gives you 15 GB of free storage space across Gmail, Google Drive and Google Photos.

- Sharing files: Files are private until you share them. But at any time, you can invite others to view, edit, or download files and documents by sending them an email invitation.
- Accessing files from anywhere: Files can be accessed from any smartphone, tablet or computer. Offline access is also available.
- Secure storage: Drive files are protected by an AES256 or AES128 encryption , the same security protocol used on other Google services.

Remember, if you need more space, you can upgrade both WeTransfer and Google Drive by paying a reasonable price on a monthly or yearly basis.

If you don't have access to the internet or prefer not to send your files online, you can also share and move files by using external SD cards and a universal card reader. There are different sizes of SD cards as shown in the photo below. Universal card readers come in many different looks and styles, but they usually have slots to insert SD cards and a USB connector to connect to a computer or other device.
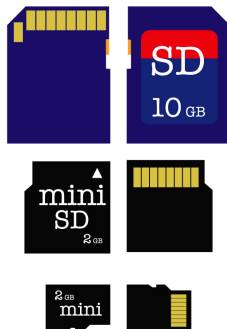
Most smartphones and tablets can use mini SD cards to expand their storage. This allows you to create and save more video footage on your device. You can also use the SD cards to transfer your files between different devices or if you want to move your file from your smartphone or tablet to your computer.

8. Editing

Editing is an important step in the digital storytelling process to bring all the different footage you collected together, delete unwanted footage and merge your A- and B-roll together into your final story. For this project, we, the Cobra Collective, will do the editing for you. If you want to do some video editing of your own for future digital stories, this tutorial gives an overview of the video editing process. While there are many different video editing programs and applications, the main concepts shown in the tutorial are usually the same.
https://vimeo.com/398002525

The apps we recommend for editing digital stories using mobile phones are PowerDirector and FilmoraGo. Both can be downloaded for Apple (PowerDirector, FilmoraGo) and android-based smartphones (PowerDirector, FilmoraGo).

If you are interested in some more advanced video editing using imovie, or other desktop based video editing programmes, you can also check out this course created by the OpenLearn team at The Open University:

9. Dissemination and Impact

So, you have created your powerful video…and now what? Obviously, you may have had ideas on who you were aiming your story at when you were developing your 'seed' (see Section 2). Now the task is to transform your story into a powerful tool that can deliver impact. It's a good time to develop a dissemination strategy: who are you going to target? How is your story going to reach your target audience? How are you going to follow things up in order to achieve the desired impact? How are you going to measure impact and learn from the challenges encountered so that your next video can be even more effective?

Showcasing your videos

Social Media

Video is the best way that you can engage an audience on social media. Video content performs best with social media algorithms because video captures a viewer's attention for longer (in some cases achieving 10 times more engagement than text-based posts). As most social media users have a preference for videos, posts containing videos have a greater 'shelf-life' i.e. they stick around for longer because videos generate more interactions (likes, shares and comments).

Key tips for creating videos for social media are:
- People on social media have very short attention spans. You need to capture their attention in the first 8 seconds. So make sure your very first sense communicates something captivating.
- Often, social media users scroll down their feed with sound muted, so if you can, you need to include captions with your video. Most platforms have automated caption tools to help you with this.
- Another aspect that you need to be careful with is that social media platforms have preferences for certain format types. For example, platforms such as TikTok and Instagram Reels require a 9:16 format (portrait view), YouTube and Facebook have a preference for 16:9 (landscape view), while Instagram generally goes for a 1:1 (square) format. Most platforms will crop the video to the right shape during the upload process, but that may result in loss of key visuals. One tip, if you think you are going to create videos for multiple platforms, is to always have your key informational content at the centre of the frame.
- Most platforms have a preference for short videos. TikTok, for example, limits video lengths to 60 seconds (although they are currently exploring extending this to 3 minutes). One potential workaround is that you could break your longer video down into shorter pieces, but these still need to be self-contained 'stories'.
- Finally, in order for people to 'find' your video posting, you may want to consider using hashtags. Basically, hashtags allow users to find content related to specific themes, it's a way to filter content and be able to find new initiatives operating in the same field that you're interested in. These could include Hashtags for your stories could be focused for example on location (e.g. #Reading) and key themes

(#communityfoodgrowing). Usually, it's good to use a range of hashtags, but the number depends on the platform. On Instagram, people commonly use a lot of hashtags, whereas on twitter it's best practice to focus on one of two key ones. If you want to promote a new project or initiative, it's good to use a mixture of established hashtags referring to existing commonly used ones and a new one that you might want to coin specifically for your project.

The following YouTube video will give you some more tips on size and frames that you should consider for different social media platforms: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z1vkxfhrtbo

Or you can refer to this as an example for how to use and upload different social media platforms: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3cmBR8GimJk&t=31s

While this YouTube video will give some tips on using a specific tool (which we are not promoting - there are plenty of other tools you could use) to edit a video for different social media platforms: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3STwBv0A4GA

Community events

A video screening is a great excuse to bring a community together. A screening can be used to celebrate achievements during a growing season, set the scene for a debate or planning the future of your community growing initiative. It's a great excuse for bringing people together during a 'quiet' time in the growing season to maintain and strengthen relationships.

Practical considerations for hosting a community screening are:
- Securing a venue - this could be your actual community food growing site but unpredictable weather, sourcing electric power, and finding appropriate space can be challenging.
- Securing screening equipment - you will need a good projector, a laptop, good speakers and a flat screen on which to project your video (often a white wall can do). Make sure you test all the equipment out with plenty of time.
- Why not combine the screening with sharing food cooked from your own community grown vegetables? A simple formula is to ask each participant to bring a dish and their own plates, cutlery.
- Don't forget that the community event itself could be excellent material for interviews and recording material for future videos!

This blog post shows an example from a screening event organised for this project in the Calthorpe community garden: https://cobracollective.org/news/calthorpe-community-garden/

Video-mediated dialogue

Video-mediated dialogue is a two-way video communication led by communities aimed at engaging decision-makers. A first video highlighting an issue or showcasing an initiative is first produced by community members. This first video is then screened to decision-makers which are then asked to record a response video, which is taken back to communities for viewing and feedback. In that way, you generate a record of interactions, with

decision-makers answerable both to the explicit issues raised by communities, and their subsequent commitments.

These are some key questions that you need to explore before you commit to video-mediated dialogue:
- What is the purpose of the engagement? Are you aiming to connect decision-makers with the reality of your situation, deliver a message, provoke them to think, or inspire them to act?
- How will you identify and find the most appropriate decision-makers to engage with? Can you find those with the power to implement change?
- Do you have any contacts in influential positions who champion your cause and will help you build relationships? If not, how will you find people to support you?
- How will you invite decision-makers and explain how you will engage with them so that they are motivated to participate and know what to expect?
- How will you communicate with decision-makers? Are you informing, requesting a collaboration or confronting? Your approach will determine the kind of reaction that you will achieve.
- Are there likely to be negative or unexpected reactions? How will you stop potential risks to vulnerable community members?
- How can you build on an initial exchange to generate future collaborations?
- What are your plans for following up promises and offers made by decision-makers during the exchange?
- How can you encourage active commitment on the part of decision-makers to support community-led change?

Planning and measuring impact

Let's now focus on how you can assess the impact of your video. The following impact questions have been adapted from ground-breaking work carried out by David Edwards and Laura Meagher[1]. Core Impact assessment questions you may want to ask are:
I. Impacts: Who or what changed, in what ways, and how do we know?
II. Causes of impact: Why/how did changes occur? Which factors or processes caused impact?
III. Lessons and actions: What lessons can be learned? Which actions should follow to generate impact?

Looking at impact questions in more details, you could ask:

Ia. What changed?
      1) Instrumental: changes to plans, decisions, behaviours, practices, actions, policies
      2) Conceptual: changes to knowledge, awareness, attitudes, emotions
      3) Capacity-building: changes to skills and expertise
      4) Enduring connectivity: changes to the number and quality of relationships

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[1] https://i2insights.org/2020/03/03/research-impact-evaluation-framework/

Ib. Who changed? (Influencers and influenced)
Stakeholder groups might typically include:

> 1) Your community members: did the video and associated activities result in more community members becoming involved? Did it attract a greater diversity of people?
> 2) Policy-makers: did it have an impact on key decision-makers?
> 2) Practitioners: did it promote the activities of a community organisation and its staff/volunteers?
> 4) Intervention champions: has the intervention changed how key individuals supporting the initiatives are perceived by the community and/or decision-makers?
> 5) Other individuals/groups/organisations: did it generate support from, for example, local businesses or other initiatives e.g. youth groups; wellbeing, employability?

Ic. How do we know? (Evidence and feedback)
Which indicators and methods should be used, and questions asked, to demonstrate impacts, and progress towards generation of impacts?

You may want to consider frameworks such as Ripple Effect Mapping to help you identify appropriate indicators and methods for collecting the information:

https://extension.umn.edu/community-development/ripple-effect-mapping

Having collected your baseline data on impact (what and who changed), you now want to understand how the impact came about. The following are some questions that you may want to ask:

II. Why/how did change occur?
1) Problem-framing: Level of importance; tractability of the problem; appropriateness of intervention.
2) Management: culture; team working; promotion of activities; planning; strategy.
3) Inputs: Funding; staff/volunteer capacity and turnover; legacy of previous activity; access to equipment and resources.
4) Outputs: Quality and usefulness of content (such as your video!); appropriate format and length.
5) Dissemination: Targeted and efficient delivery of outputs to users and other audiences.
6) Engagement: Level and quality of interaction with users and other stakeholders; co-production of knowledge; collaboration during design, dissemination and uptake of outputs.
7) Users: Influence of knowledge intermediaries, e.g. 'champions' and user groups; incentives and reinforcement to encourage uptake.
8) Context: Societal, political, economic, biophysical, climate and geographical factors.

III. Finally, what were the lessons learnt for impact identification and generation?
1) What worked? What could (or should) have been done differently?
2) What could (or should) be done in the future?

Conclusion

As the global Covid-19 pandemic has shown, the future will be characterised by an increased frequency and impact of extreme events, especially as the effects of escalating climate change and biodiversity loss escalate. Communities will be affected by heatwaves, floods, droughts, wildfires, mass migration of people, economic hardships, conflict and exacerbating health impacts. These disruptive effects will also increase pressures on public services, infrastructure and the wider economy, straining social functioning within families, communities and organisations, thus further deteriorating the collective capacity to mitigate and adapt to shocks.

Community food growing initiatives have shown how one can flourish during times of extreme hardship and lay a foundation for preparing for those extreme events. On a social, emotional and physical level they demonstrate the benefits that can come from connecting with others in dedication to growing and creating something despite all the challenges. By now, you will hopefully have an appreciation for the connection between food and storytelling and the ideas of radical hopefulness for a flourishing future. We really hope that by now you've also been able to put your skills into practice and to capture some of those acts and stories in your daily life!

Glossary

Community: is a group of diverse individuals that share one or more of the following features: geographical location, ethnicity, belief or any socio-ecological aspect that gives them a sense of belonging to the same group and sharing of similar issues.

Decision-maker: a person who makes important decisions that might affect the life of others. Examples are local leaders and politicians.

Ethical: refers to standards of equity, positive attitude, anonymity and consent that provide guidelines for what we do in terms of rights, obligations, benefits to society and fairness.

Data: are characteristics or information, usually numerical, that are collected through observation. They can also be photos, videos and text.

Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC): promoted through international agreements and safeguards, implies Free of coercion, intimidation, or manipulation, Prior involvement in decision-making about the activity, and Informed access to information such as the purpose, process, duration, location and benefits of the activity.

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