A Reporter's Guide

PROMOTING INCLUSIVE GOVERNANCE AND COMMUNITY REPORTING

christian aid

HOG-Hope Givers Initiative

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Table of Content

Preface

The improvement of governance processes for better accountability and the delivery of democratic dividends to the citizenry has been at the front burner for most state and non-state actors and especially a major concern of development actors. Consequently, interventions are designed to bridge the identified gaps along policy and programmes across all levels towards engendering accountable and transparent governance systems that delivers on its mandate.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) accentuates the principles of participation, accountability, transparency, responsiveness, effectiveness and efficiency, equity and inclusion and the rule of law as guiding principles that will facilitate enjoyment of rights by all persons irrespective of gender, age, location and other inclusion strata like disability and religion.

While there are extant international treaties and conventions which Nigeria have signed unto, there are evident gaps in the implementation and domestication of these treaties thus the need for increased citizens involvement in governance processes to demand accountability across communities and levels of government. Some citizens remain excluded in the sphere of governance and decision making thus making inclusion and active participation a subject of concern. Inclusion has been misinterpreted in varying ways, with tradition, religion, and disability as key hinderances to its actualization. Inclusive governance serves and engages all people. Hope Givers Initiative strongly aligns with OECD's position that an inclusive system is when institutions, policies, processes, and services are accessible and responsive to all members of society (OECD 2020).

Promoting active citizens participation in governance processes, pre, during and post-election period, is therefore one reason for citizens and community engagement in setting the development agenda that responds to the needs of the greatest number. However, to engender active citizens participation in the process, there is need to bridge the knowledge gaps and build a consciousness of open government partnership that promotes a more accessible, more responsive, and more accountable governance while improving the relationship between people and their government for the benefit of all citizens. Citizens will better understand their rights to engage in their own development and participate in decision- making processes that pertains to their lives and communities. Community engagement has been adopted as a strategy to effect change from a rights-based perspective.

The engagement process can be facilitated using civic tools to share information, inform government policy, influence public attitudes and influence service provision via mobile technology, giving everyone the opportunity, they deserve to have a say in the matters that affect their lives. Hope Givers Initiative recognises this, knowing that citizens need resources, tools, knowledge, skill and competence to participate and engage development processes. The Inclusive Governance and Community Reporting Guide is a product of several research, participatory discussions and co-creation to garner stakeholders input on best approaches to engender improved citizens participation in decision making processes. This guide is therefore a response to the need to bridge identified gaps. It is a reference document for improving community participation and voice in the governance processes.

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[1]the process of working collaboratively with and through groups of people affiliated by geographic proximity, special interest, or similar situations to address issues affecting their well-being. It is a powerful vehicle for bringing about social and behavioural changes that will improve the wellbeing of the community and its members. It often involves partnerships and coalitions that help mobilize resources and influence systems, change relationships among partners, and serve as catalysts for changing policies, programs, and practices."

Acknowledgment

Objective of the Community Reporter's Guide

Hope Givers Initiative believes that transformation is only possible when citizens have the knowledge, skill and competence to participate and engage the development and governance processes. As part of contribution to knowledge around community organising, the Promoting Inclusive Governance and Community Reporting Guide is intentioned to serve as a reference document for bridging the knowledge gaps and building improved consciousness in communities. To be better able to monitor and track development interventions towards holding government and its representatives to account for the delivery of public good in the interest of all populations especially the most vulnerable and excluded persons and groups across all levels.

As a guide, it serves as a tool for collective organising and learning. Considering it focuses on building community capacity in setting the governance agenda themselves, articulating and communicating their demands, needs and aspirations, the guide is an apt tool for community organisers, facilitators and reporters. It opens community mindset for the recognition and application of community-based approaches and new media such as mobile technology for information gathering and evidence generation, analysis and use of information to advocate for positive and transformative change in their communities.

It is adaptable and can be delivered under a training approach where community reporters are trained over a three-day period, or it can be delivered through a peer-to-peer approach and over a long period of time based on time availability of facilitators. The latter allows participants to internalise and experiment with each learning module or session. The inclusion of infographics and pictorials helps persons with disabilities especially the deaf.

Users of the Community Reporter's Guide

Any person or group that is passionate about addressing inequality from social development perspective will find this manual a useful resource. It is designed in a simple, user friendly format and community tailored to fit any category of users. Organisations that are working on thematic areas such as democracy and good governance, women's rights and community-based and rights programming as well as those working with persons with disabilities will certainly find this guide very useful and adaptable to fit their programming context.

Hope Givers Initiative encourages all development organisations to use and adapt this guide in their community work and for building capacity of stakeholders across communities towards engaging development and governance processes.

MODULE 1:
INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNITY REPORTING

This module introduces citizens/participants to the concept of community reporting. It defines relevant concepts and highlights how citizens can be part of community reporting by investigating, gathering evidence and using same to tell community stories in a way that it attracts attention, while also holding government and other duty bearers accountable.

Sessions in this module include (i) Introduction to citizen journalism; (ii) community reporting; and (iii) Roles, responsibilities and qualities of a community reporter.

The sessions are presented in simple to facilitate format with objective and methodology to apply for each session clearly defined. Additionally, a facilitator's note and in relevant places, guiding questions are included to ensure facilitator stays on track of each session. Finally, reflection information is added so that facilitator ensures participants take away the most important information for each session.

SESSION 1:
Introduction to Citizen Journalism

🎯	**OBJECTIVE:** To introduce participants to the concept of citizen journalism, building their keen interest in participating in community development through communication.
⚙️	**METHODOLOGY:** The facilitator should use discussion method and allow for discussion and group task using question and answer format where relevant.

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

- Everybody in the world has the right to speak and be heard.
- We all deserve to have a say on the matters that affect our lives, whether it is about speaking out against an abuse and violation, or it is about communicating a positive change, or about a crisis, or simply about asking questions of how collective resource is being used.
- Those in power also need information from the people that they are governing to be able to apply the resource in the most needed area and for making change the people desire.
- Our voice is our power.
- Barriers, however, exist in information sharing. These barriers can stop people from being heard such as literacy and not knowing how or who to communicate or hold accountable.
- Those living with disabilities may also find it difficult to access information or share information.

- Infrastructure can place limitation such as interrupted/unavailable power supply to change devices and money to buy data.

- Until recently, only qualified reporters and professionals were trusted to tell the world about a crisis or a matter of community importance. Formal communications training was expensive and inaccessible to most people. To report to government, you needed a formal position of power or responsibility. To report for the media, you needed equipment that was unavailable to most people. As a result, a small group of elite people were responsible for shaping the way the world understood one another.

Activity: 1.0: Exploring our communities and stories

The facilitator should guide the community reporters to reflect on the power they have and how they are well placed to share information and stories happening in their communities.

Facilitator's guiding question

1. What kind of news can a community reporter find in his/her community?
2. As a group, try and come up with a list of five different stories that a citizen might be able to find in their own community.
3. Ask for anyone who can share an experience of where communities stories have been shared outside of the community and how they feel about such information.

REFLECTION
- Our voice is our power!
- Power is shifting to communities and information is flowing!
- You can tell your own story and benefit your community!

The power is starting to shift.

The emergence of mobile phones and the internet has led to a new type of reporter - the citizen reporter. This is a member of the public who is not attached to any media organisation or government department, but who chooses to record and share information about the things that are happening in their community, independently. They can use internet facilitated devices for information collection and sharing, as well as community communication tools such as score card sheets, accountability boards, community charters and other participatory tools.

Information is flowing.

- Information is now starting to flow from communities, amongst individuals and between organised groups!
- The media, NGOs and governments are changing the way they get information. People no longer need to wait for the media to come to their community and ask them a set of questions.
- More and more people have the tools and the confidence to raise their voices and share their experiences as they happen.
- Information is shared in real time – as it is happening.
- Government and its agencies are being more careful on what they do and how they do it as people continue to engage and ask questions.

SESSION 2:
Community Reporting

OBJECTIVE:

1. To build participants knowledge on community reporting.
2. To identify importance of community reporting and how they can participate in community reporting.
3. To collectively reflect on how to use information in advocating for the rights of marginalized groups and encourage decision makers to make the decisions in the interest of the community.

METHODOLOGY:

The facilitator should employ instructional approach, but also allow participants to share their own perspective for the purposes of ensuring participants voices are heard.

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

1.   What is community reporting?

Community reporting is about providing communities with a voice and a platform to be heard. According to the institute of community reporters, community reporting is defined as "a model borne out of wanting to 'plug the gap' between people's desire and the ability to have a voice in the world". It is about digital inclusion. It supports community empowerment through informal learning and facilitates active citizenship and participation.

- Technological developments have helped community reporting.
- This is made possible through the emergence of mobile telephones and other devices.
- With reduced price of mobile phones that even comes with camera, this has increased the availability of user-friendly content capture devices, such as flip cameras and mobile phones.

2.   Who is a Community Reporter?

The emergence of mobile phones and the internet has led to a new type of a reporter, called the community reporter. A community reporter is a member of the public who is not attached to the media, an organisation or government department, but chooses to record and share information about the things that are happening in their community, independently using devices that are readily available such as phones and cameras.

Put simply, a community reporter is an independent person who reports issues of interest without working for any media organisation. The person may not have gone through specialised school such as School of journalism, mass communication, and may not necessarily be working for any media.

A community reporter simply finds interest in reporting issues about a community for purposes of bringing attention to the issue whether positive or negative.

3.   Importance of Community Reporting

Community reporting gives rural communities voice. It enables them to tell their stories, sharing their successes, challenges, sufferings, and issues in the communities. These could be about absence of public services such as health facility or non-availability of basic drugs for treatment in health facilities. It can also be about lack of qualified teachers in community schools or absence of school infrastructure such as toilets, tables and chairs. More still, it can be about inaccessible roads, which makes transportation of their farm produce difficult, further making

Activity: 2.0: Issue identification

- Ask everyone to think of one issue from their community that they have heard or experienced recently that they think is important. As a facilitator, have one idea you can share as an example with the participants as a motivation for them to speak.
- Ask participants in turns to explain what the issue is and why s/he feels it is important.
- Write down the issue that each person identified on the board- take note of the depth of issue from all participants as this will be used in section on in Module 3.
- Reflect together on why they might be well placed to report on these issues as a community reporter.

Reflections

- Everybody has the right to speak and be heard on the matters that affect them.
- You are an 'expert by experience' on these issues.
- Achievements in your community should be shared and celebrated.
- But problems and challenges are also important to share, otherwise they cannot be fixed.
- It is not always easy to speak out about your situation or things you witness but it is a brave and powerful act.
- If decision makers and duty-bearers understand our problems, they serve us better.
- Speaking out is a way of holding duty bearers accountable for service provisioning

communities poorer. It simply can also be about issue which the community think is important to living a life of dignity and enjoyment of their human rights as citizens of Nigeria. Community reporting empowers communities. It provides real time stories and evidence, enabling communities to share information, while learning in the process. It allows for inclusion and creates an enabling environment for the voices of all citizens to be heard. It creates spaces for people to input and contribute to their own development, playing an active role in decision-making processes. And when a systemic approach is adopted, it provides opportunities for citizens to be more proactive, to engage with the appropriate authorities using their stories. Thus, stories for change activates development.

Community reporting is the new power! With the coming of technology, issues are now projected faster and resolved even much faster. Community reporting now enable communities to tell their stories in their natural environment, using these stories to gain priority attention in a way that that other people see the stories from the community's perspective.

This type of reporting encourages ownership and enhances collective action. It is a valuable tool for social deliberation, social cohesion, and the shifting of responsibility and accountability for information away from top-down to bottom -up.
It is cost effective and could easily be done using simple phones - in schools, community centres, rural villages, urban marketplaces, family homes and workplaces.

- **It is important to note that the heart of community reporting is the ability of people/individuals to use stories to change systems.**

- **Telling stories about their own lives rather than reporting on news is more empowering approach that benefits both the individual and the community.**

SESSION 3:

Roles, Responsibilities and Qualities of a Community Reporter

OBJECTIVE:

1. To highlight the expected duties of a community reporter towards community reporting.
2. To motivate participants towards becoming a committed and enthusiastic community reporter.

METHODOLOGY:

A mixed method - instructional and facilitation of conversation.

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

One of the best ways to bring about social change is if the people who are directly affected by change can identify with and learn from the experiences of people like themselves. As a citizen reporter, you have a duty to look beyond your own personal experience and comfort zones. You need to have confidence to ask questions and reach out to the wider network around you. When you take on the role of capturing and sharing community information, it is called **'crowdsourcing'.** You are sourcing information from the crowd around you.

You can do this in person, by going to meetings and events, or visiting people in their homes. You can also build up a contact list of people in the community and keep in contact with them via mobile phone to find out what is happening where they are. As a community reporter, you can also connect with community based-organizations (CBOs), community health agents (CHAs), community development committees (CDCs) school-based management committees (SBMCs), community WASH committees, ward development committees (WDCs) and other structures who have a wealth of information on issues. Others include elders, community and religious leaders, and teachers who are valuable stakeholders in the community can also be engaged to share their insight. Ask them regularly for new information.

Case study 1 HOG-I ECID Project Experience

Community reporting is about providing communities with a voice and platform to be heard. Under the Evidence and Collaboration for Inclusive Development (ECID) project with funding support from Christian Aid, Community reporters were selected and trained to record and share information about the things that are happening in their community.

HOG-I set up the community reporting model in Anambra state, Awka North. As part of community entry, selection criteria were developed and used in selecting reporters. Following the selection process, participants were trained on community reporting and requested to be submitting their reports through the 'Our RADAAR" platform which was designed for documentation of stories and managed by Christian Aid.

Community reporters signed on to the Safeguarding and Code of Conduct as part of compliance to Safeguarding policy.

Lessons from the project:
1.   It increased community voices
2.   It amplified community issues – challenges and gaps
3.   Most of the community reporters were committed, while some few were not. Sustaining interest of reporters who signed on to community reporting is important. Constant follow-up is needed, with provision of data to enable them do their reporting.

Facilitator uses the case study to elicit conversation. Encouraging participants towards reflecting on what community reporter's roles and responsibilities are.

Facilitators Guide

1.   I am sure you are motivated by the HOG-I ECID project experience, can you think of what your duties as a community reporter is or what you can do differently?

2.   Note their response and guide them through the list in the box if those are not already captured by them.

3.   Appreciate them for their contribution.

Criteria for Selecting Community Reporters.

To be a community reporter, it is important to note the following:

- Community reporters should be resident in communities with good ethics and personal values. They are volunteers with good knowledge of their community.
- They should be persons of integrity, honest and trustworthy.
- Should have good knowledge of the context and familiar with the terrain.
- They should have phones and should be able to use their phone to record and share information (Text, audios, videos)
- They should be able to communicate information clearly and accurately in local language especially in their own dialect.
- They should have good listening skills.

Overall responsibilities of community reporters is about reporting on social issues such as issues affecting marginalised groups (violence, abuse, discrimination against people with different diversities). It could be focusing on social issues affecting service delivery sectors, which can include Health, Education, Water and Sanitation, Infrastructure and Agriculture.

1.   Specifically, a community reporter is saddled with the following:

a.   Acting as a bridge between your local community and influencers.

b.   Using community meetings and social spaces to record issues affecting people's lives.

c.   Sharing information on the dashboard via text (SMS), video or audio.

d.   Keeping up with all the local happening.

e.   Covering a variety of stories using text or multimedia formats.

f.   Conducting and scheduling interviews

g.   Verifying information provided by interviewees.

Qualities of a Community Reporter

For ease, we will use the **S.W.O.T** analysis methodology to analyse the qualities of a community reporter. This method of analysis looks at the probable strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of a community reporter.

Strengths

- The trust that communities have in you.
- Knowledge of the language, terrain, and context
- Familiarity with the people and places people may be.

Because community reporters are selected from their communities of residence, they share the same experiences as other community members, therefore, community members are more likely to tell them something of importance than a journalist or researcher. Secondly, the lived experience and the expertise that one has is another strength. Your life experiences are highly valuable and that sits at the heart of your strength to report and ask questions of others around you.

Weaknesses

- Inability to recognise news opportunities, and or stories that are important.

Not knowing how to turn our mobile phones or tools into story collection materials.

Opportunities

Varying opportunities abound such as access to move freely in your community without being suspicious, especially because the terrain is not alien to you.

Being resident in the community all the time: living, breathing, seeing, bearing, witness to what is happening around you can bring up so many reporting opportunities. If you are curious and watchful you will be there when someone is ready to share their story for the first time or when something happens that is key to capture and share.

Threats

Reporting can bring risks and your personal safety must come first. When you are putting yourself in a different role and giving yourself a slightly different perspective, you are going to open yourself up to that little bit of extra risk.

So, it is important that you remember that no story, no information is ever, ever worth the risk to your life, your well-being or the health and well-being of other people.

Reporting Skills

Each person is uniquely gifted with one or more skills, that is how reporters are expected to apply their unique skills when reporting community issues.

Be realistic - Look local before trying to tackle a national story. If you want to discuss a wider issue, find and use local examples.

Be cautious - Always think of safety, both yours and the safety of all others who are involved.

Be aware - Study every angle of the story, look at it from all perspectives.

Be patient - Sometimes stories just do not develop in a snap. Take the time to stay in contact and regularly monitor issues and things.

Be available - Let people know you can offer a channel for them to share their stories.

Be proactive - The best reporters continue to supply new information weekly, sometimes daily. If you want to earn respect and get the most out of community reporting, then make reporting your habit. Be inquisitive, seek information.

Be ambitious - Instead of just reporting problems, suggest solutions or explore ideas for change.

Be inclusive - Everyone deserves a chance to be heard. Make sure you reach outside your normal circles to find those who may have the quietest voices and face the greatest challenges.

MODULE 2:

TOOLS FOR COMMUNITY REPORTING

The overall aim of this module is to expose the participants to the tools for community reporting. The module is segmented into two main sections; Session 1 focuses on information technology with specific reference to mobile telephone as the newest and main tool of community reporting. It highlights how a simple device that hitherto was mainly used as tools of communication and exchange of ideas can be transformed into a tool of power – for advocacy and causing societal change – depending on its usage. It highlights how mobile telephones have helped in breaking digital divide and how communities can use the device for holding duty bearers accountable by telling their story in their own way.

Session 2 explores the traditional tools and spaces– local communication tools that can still enhance story collection, and that which enhances the new technology.

At the end of the session, participants are motivated to see the power of their mobile devices and begin to use that as an advocacy tool for transformative change.

13

SESSION 1:
The Information Technology – Mobile Phone as a Reporting Tool

OBJECTIVE:
1. Participants understand what information technology is, how it can be used for social change demand and accountability.
2. To motivate participants to using their devices for community reporting.

METHODOLOGY:
Instructional and interactive approaches.

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

Information technology has changed the way communities communicate, it has open new ways of information sharing and use. Information technology is concerned with the use of electronic devices such as computers, telephones including mobile phones and emails to generate information, store information, save information and use information.

With the technology which has moved from being in one place to spaces, one can get any kind of information and at any time without physical travelling.

Information technology has now allowed for creating groups and spaces – such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram and many more. For a community reporter, the choice is endless. Community gathering like we know it has changed – even though physical gathering still happens in our communities, but through WhatsApp, Zoom and other social media spaces, we can get information on any subject matter or issue. We can equally share our own information and get followers or listeners who will help us amplify our issue.

If social groups do not fit our purpose, we can simply set up our own – bringing like-minded persons to join of course.

Technology is power in our hands. Whether you have a smart or simple phone, you have a range of different tools in your pocket that you can use for citizen reporting. Around the world, citizen journalists are using SMS, phone calls and voicemails to share news, and smartphone users are capturing audio and video reports and sending photo and text reports. Some of the best and most important media stories have been captured and broadcast via mobile phones. Because news does not always wait for the cameras. In fact, the most important news often happens well away from the watchful eye of the media -in schools, community centres, rural villages, urban marketplaces, family homes and workplaces and in most cases centred on specific themes.

Now we know we have power in the phones in our hands, we can begin to act. These are steps to take when starting your reporting process.

Getting Started:
- First, you want to establish who might be interested in speaking to you.
- As a starting point, you might pick three people you feel safe with and ask them these simple questions:
    - What matters to you?
    - What are some of the challenges you are facing in your community?
    - What could make it better?
- If you want to keep record of what they are saying to you, then ask their permission to take notes as they speak, or record the conversation using your phone through audio or video recording. Doing this allows for accuracy and for capturing those powerful quotes that bring life to a story.

Going on Record

Even when you ask, not everybody will want to go on record. You can take time to share your reflection of what you heard. You can do the same if you witness or experience something in your day and want to share a reflection later. If someone is happy to be recorded, then try to get them to repeat what they said when you turn on the recorder.

You can say "I'm just starting the recording; can I get you to confirm that you are happy for me to record this conversation." Then everyone is clear that consent has been given.

No Need to be formal

If the idea of holding a conversation makes you nervous, write down your guiding questions ahead of time to act as anchors. Once again, you do not need to be formal. You can even grab short little interviews on the fly, from people you bump into unexpectedly. These are sometimes called vox pops, vox meaning voice, and pops meaning pop-ups.

Reflections:

- Your mobile phone is a tool for story collection including photos, audio and video.
- Stories are everywhere, watch out for them. Know when to pick it, who to get it from and where to get it from.

SESSION 2:
Traditional Tools and Spaces for Community Reporting

OBJECTIVE:
Exploring other tools and spaces the traditional tools – local communication tools that can still enhance story collection, and that which enhances the new technology.

METHODOLOGY:
Interactive method. Facilitator allows the community to generate the existing methods for story collection before the emergence of information technology and how these can enhance or be enhanced by mobile phone and devices.

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

Before the advent of technology, communication existed. Communities have traditional ways of sharing information. These can be through songs, storytelling, idioms and dances. Through community spaces like age grade, community meetings and ward meetings, issues are tabled and discussion for collective decision or for solution finding. The difference is that such information is restricted or confined by time and space. These traditional tools and spaces are still relevant and can enhance technology as community reports can use community meetings and structures as spaces for information gathering and dissemination.

Group Task:
1. Ask participants if they see connection with the old and new ways of communication tools.
2. How can each of the tools and spaces be mutually beneficial to a community reporter?
3. Document responses and appreciate the participants for their responses.

MODULE 3:

GATHERING AND SHARING INFORMATION FOR PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

This module focuses on sharing information of how information can be gathered. It defined news and the elements of what makes news worthy. With three interconnected sessions, it looked at tools of news collection like interview and multi-media news collection. The aim is that at the end of the module, participants are able to define news, identify news elements and tools for news collection.

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

Hard news can be defined as "newsworthy information about recent events or happenings". For example, a national election, the opening of a new hospital, or a corruption scandal.

For this kind of news, there are four factors to consider. These include:

- **Timing –** Topics should be of current interest or importance and information needs to be captured and shared rapidly.
- **Significance –** The number of people affected by the story is important. An epidemic which affects hundreds of people is more significant than a single man whose roof has fallen.
- **Proximity –** For someone living in Nigeria, there should be little interest in a corruption scandal in Sierra Leone, for example. People tend to respond to news that they find relatable – either they care for those the issue affected or they simply want to know the outcome of the story.
- **Prominence –** Public figures get more coverage because they are well known. If you break your arm, it will not make the news, but if the President breaks his arm, it is a big news.

Following from the above, it is important to think about the 'n' in news, news can be 'new' in different ways.
Think of examples of stories that share:
- **New** information
- **New** angles
- **New** voices
- **New** ideas
The acronym 'NEWS' can be broken down as:
- **N**ew
- **E**nergetic
- **W**orthy of public attention
- **S**olid facts

This entails that the community reporters should be New (also take note of the different aspects of new above), Energetic, Worthy of getting the interest and attention of the public and should have solid facts and evidence backing it up.

THE 5WS

In reporting a news story, it is important to also think of the 5Ws. The 5W stands for – Who, What, Where, When and Why. This means that a community reporter must ask the following questions when preparing to take a news story. This will guide his/her reporting and ensure that all the information about the report is captured.

- Who was involved?
- What happened?
- Where did it take place?
- When did it take place?
- Why did it happen?

Here is an example:

"Youth flooded the streets last night in the heart of the city to celebrate a peaceful end to the election."

It is important to know your boundaries.

It is vital to distinguish between a qualified journalist and a citizen reporter: journalists train for years to qualify for their press pass and that must be respected. As a result, they have identification and can access crime scenes and press areas reserved for qualified media. They also tend to have a paid position within a news organisation and work often in a team.

A citizen reporter is not paid and is self-taught. They do not carry a press pass and will be barred from entering the same press spaces as qualified media. But a citizen reporter will have access to community networks and hold community trust in a way that media professionals do not. That is very powerful when it comes to knowing what news is.

The best moments are when citizen reporters work alongside journalists to report events and issues. This is becoming more and more prevalent and has led to award-winning media reports.

Your voice is vital.

Your voice matters because you represent a significant proportion of the global population, and your life experiences are unique. You may have seen, heard, and felt things that others may have missed. Perhaps you have felt excluded from accessing the same services of other people within your community. Maybe you have overheard negative language used by the media or have felt unable to access a local community meeting. Experiences like this are important and often go unrecorded. When there is a safe, accessible platform to speak out, your voice can bring a great deal of value to public dialogue - whether that is in the home, in school, in a community meeting, during a campaign, in national parliament or through the media.

SESSION 1:

Interviewing Skills

OBJECTIVE:
To build participants skill in conducting quality interviews for generating information for their community reporting.

METHODOLOGY:
Instructional and simulation where the process is explained and participants take turn to conduct the interview themselves.

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

Interviews are process of asking questions and getting answers from targeted audience. This process allows you to ask a pool of questions that will help you to develop or write your story from a respondent who knows an issues or is affected by an issue. If handled well, it is a good source of getting first hand stories, quotations that would spice your story and gives your story credibility.

Interview is a key tool for getting people to talk and share their experiences. There are different ways of conducting an interview, depending on whether you are trying to hold those in power to account or whether you are trying to gather rich and detailed information from your community.

INTERVIEW TECHNIQUES

There are two main types of questions when interviewing - **'open' and 'closed'** questions

OPEN QUESTIONS

Open questions are good when you want to invite people to share their stories in their own words, questions give the interviewee the chance to describe, explain or expand, sometimes revealing surprising details that you did not yet know about.

Examples:

- Tell me what happened. What did you see?'
- What do you think about that?'
- How does that make you feel?'

You can use the '5 WHY's' to keep someone talking e.g. 'I didn't go to work'. Why? 'Because I was ill.' Why were you ill? 'I had malaria.' Why did you have malaria? 'Because I live in a slum that's full of mosquitoes due to stagnant water and litter' Why do you live there? 'Because we are poor. Malaria is a disease of the poor'.

CLOSED QUESTIONS

Closed questions, demand 'yes' or 'no' answers. If you use closed questions for an emotional human story, the results can be a bit dull as you may only get one-word answers. Closed questions work well when you need a response from someone in power or get exact details about what happened at an event. For example:

'Was the person who stole the items a man or a woman?'

- This question helps us to make sure we have the important details of the story right.

'Are you aware that crucial medical supplies were not delivered to the hospital?'

- This question could be used to pin a corrupt official into a corner. Sometimes it may be necessary to repeat this question numerous times until an adequate answer is given.

It is always important to be honest with people about why you are interviewing them.

In exceptional cases, the facilitator to adopt an open-closed set of questions which has a blend of open and closed ended questions. This will enable the facilitator glean responses that meets both human angle end and the need for aptness.

SESSION 2:
Multimedia Reporting

	OBJECTIVE:
	To build participants skill in use of multi-media for information gathering and community reporting.

	METHODOLOGY:
	Instructional and simulation where the process is explained, and participants take turn to conduct the interview themselves.

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

Audio and video

- Audio and video can be a powerful reporting tool.

- The best way of telling a story is just to allow people to hear the voices of those involved.

- Most smartphones have inbuilt tools for recording audio – in most phones especially Android phones it is usually called Voice Recorder, and on others such as iPhones it is called Voice Memos. If yours is not easy to find or use, you can download from Apps store or you can be supported to get the right version that fits your phone during the reporters training.

TIPS FOR RECORDING AUDIO

- Go somewhere quiet. Background noise can ruin the sound and you want to avoid being interrupted. Even the sound of a generator, a TV or a fan can disrupt the sound.
- If you must do the recording in the street or in public and cannot avoid background noise, then tell the listener what they are hearing in the background. Make the sounds part of the story.
- Keep your mouth close to the phone. In most phones, you speak into the bottom when recording audio in the same ways you hold your phone while making a call. If you want to interview someone else for your story, turn the phone around so the bottom of the phone is facing them.
- If there is a lot of wind, keep your hand cupped round the mobile or pull a t-shirt or scarf up around it to block the wind. Do a test first to make sure you are not blocking the mic.
- Listen to your favourite radio shows and experiment and copy the techniques they use.

TOP TIPS FOR SHOOTING VIDEOS

- Whenever you are capturing video, remember to turn to airplane mode. This ensures that you will not be interrupted by a call from your friend or by message notifications while filming.
- Videoing can take a lot of battery so always aim to start with a full battery. Always plan for alternative like charging points of use of power banks.
- Unless you are capturing something urgent or essential at night then do not aim to shoot video in the dark as it rarely comes out well. Even in the daytime it is worth thinking about light- where the light is positioned and try not shoot in front of a window.
- Photos and videos can take up a lot of space. Make sure you have got enough memory to save them on your phone. You can send them to through Signal and then as soon as you get confirmation that it is received, you can delete it off your handset to create more space.
- Top tips for shooting videos
- Focus - lock your focus in place by tapping the screen. Try to do a test clip before shooting anything critical. Make sure your lens is clean too.
- Stability - use both hands or balance your phone on a stable surface like a table or wall.
- Zoom - move closer, for better quality, rather than using the zoom. Sound - move closer or use the headphones as a microphone.
- Light - record in a location where there is as much light as possible. Use audio for dark scenes.

MODULE 4:

ETHICS

There is a whole list of ethics that a journalist needs to consider and adhere to when reporting. Luckily, your communities are unlikely to challenge you in the same way but there is still value in considering two key ethical points.

The first is around staying true to facts and the second is around avoiding judgment.

FACTS VS. OPINIONS

Mixing up facts and opinions can have very serious consequences. As citizen journalists, we need to be very careful that we distinguish between the two. We live in a world where we are surrounded by people's thoughts and opinions and views, whether it is on the radio, in the workplace or in WhatsApp groups. We are surrounded by people's opinions the whole time. And that is the sign of a healthy society. It is very important that we understand different perspectives so we can learn from each other and evolve our thinking.

Facts are things that can be proven to be true.

Opinions are judgements which may be formed around facts, but they are not provable truths.
Mixing them up can have serious consequences.

Example
"During the COVID-19 lock-down, the Councillor always gave the best food items to his friends rather than sharing it fairly."

As a citizen reporter, people might share big bold claims like this, but you need to think independently. Did they see or experience that happen? Can you speak to the Councillor to get his or her point of view? Is there any evidence?

A statement like that could do a lot of damage if it is treated as a fact without backing it up. The Councillor could be in trouble, and it may damage his reputation. So, we need to think very carefully about sharing a statement like that as a fact. If that same person was worried about the Councillor and still wanted to make that clear. Perhaps you could report it by saying: **"I have heard concerns voiced by participants around how food items are distributed."**

If you hear something that is concerning, and you are worried about someone's safety or wellbeing, reach out to your mentor for help.

PREJUDICE

We are living in a multicultural society made up of many different faiths, cultures, and lifestyles. Reaching out to a diverse group of people for this project is critical to better understanding the experiences of marginalised women and people. Putting yourself in the role of the listener and reporter means that you are likely to be privy to a range of statements, ideas, and perspectives, as well as some intimate and perhaps overwhelming insight into people's lives.

You do not have to agree with what you hear to report it with dignity.

If you hear something that just goes against your own preferences, then listen and move on. Pushing away prejudice is key to this role. If you hear something that is concerning, and you are worried about someone's safety or wellbeing, reach out to for help.

MODULE 5:

SAFEGUARDING

Safeguarding can be defined as protecting people from intentional and unintentional harm that may arise from coming in contact with them or what they do.

Some of these harms can be physical, emotional, sexual harassment and exploitation and neglect.

Activity 3.0

Identify all the possible risks that you can be exposed to while doing your work as a community reporter.

What are the possible solutions or strategies to mitigate such risk?

Identify how you can be a risk to others, how do you intend to avert that from happening?
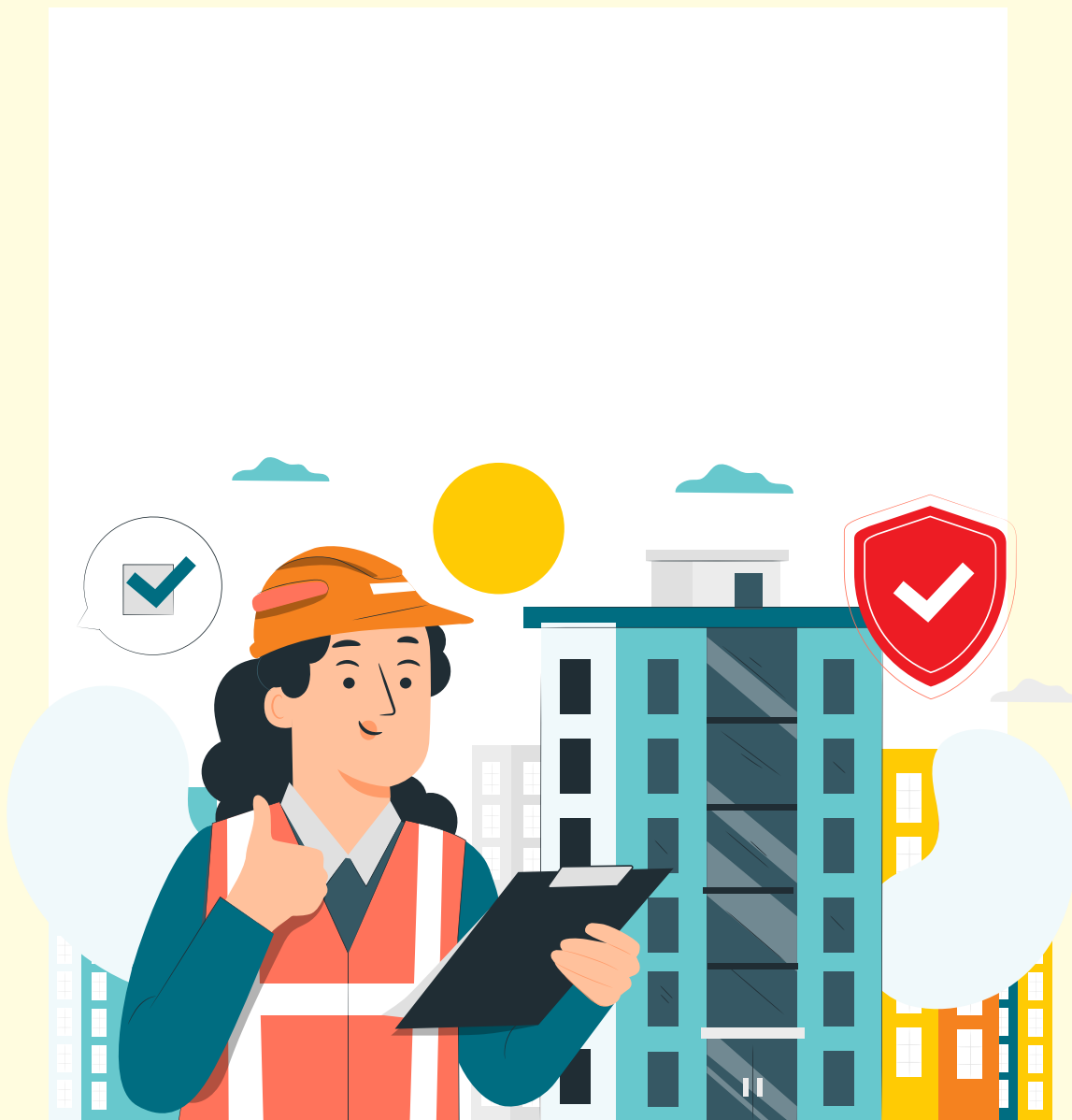
KEEPING YOURSELF SAFE

- Sharing a story can be an incredibly powerful act. But with that power comes some risk and responsibilities.

- First, to yourself, no story is more important than your own safety or your own well-being. The first key thing to reporting safely is good planning. Do you feel safe with the people who you are planning to speak to? Are you confident that you will be safe in the place you are planning to visit? And are you familiar with the community you are involving?

- There are world famous journalists who cover war zones, who cover crimes, who go into courts and police investigations. But these journalists have a big support network behind them, and they have years of training and experience in covering these difficult stories. But from our perspective, sharing our own experience, our own knowledge and our own community's experiences and knowledge can be just as powerful.

KEEPING OTHERS SAFE

You also need to consider if speaking out and sharing a story could put the safety and well- being of those that you are interviewing at risk. This is a big thing to consider that responsibility is not all yours to hold. If they fully understand the situation and what you are asking of them and where their voice might be shared, they can make an informed decision to participate or not. This is called informed consent.

Stories shared within this project will primarily be used by Christian Aid and its partners to help advocate for increased accountability of power holders, improved access to quality social services, and increased participation of marginalised groups in economic governance.

But there may be opportunities for stories to be shared with the media and online. You can ask those you speak to if they want their voice shared publicly or if they prefer for their story to remain with researchers. They can also choose to be anonymous if that makes them feel more secure.

PRIVACY

The last point to consider is around privacy, particularly around information you gather and share about yourself or about other people.

If someone is confiding in you, and perhaps sharing a story that is deeply personal, then they expect that to be used only for the purpose that they consented to. Sharing their story within the context of the project is completely fine but sharing the story on a local Facebook group that evening is not, even if you think that they will not even know or see it.

Another thing to consider when thinking about privacy is where that information is stored. If you are recording conversations on audio, if you are recording video, if you are taking notes on a notepad, these may have crucial details about people's personal lives, about their health, families or emotional experiences that have happened to them that we may not want to share with a wide audience. They may even have asked for their identities to be kept private. So, it is crucial that we all handle this information safely and securely, from the point it is captured, to the point it is shared.

TOP TIPS

- Use WhatsApp groups, SMS, phone calls or social media to gather stories from your communities.

- Talk to people that you would see anyway as part of your daily work or routine, from a safe distance. Remember, what you might consider to be an ordinary conversation or everyday event will often be extraordinary to others who are not part of your community. Those 'normal' activities can provide key insight, never think that something is too mundane to share!

CONCLUSION

- You are a Reporter.
- You are the VOICE.
- If you see or hear something, then you should say something
- REPORT with dignity and integrity
- Test all facts.
- Improve citizens voice in governance.
- LET'S GET TO WORK

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