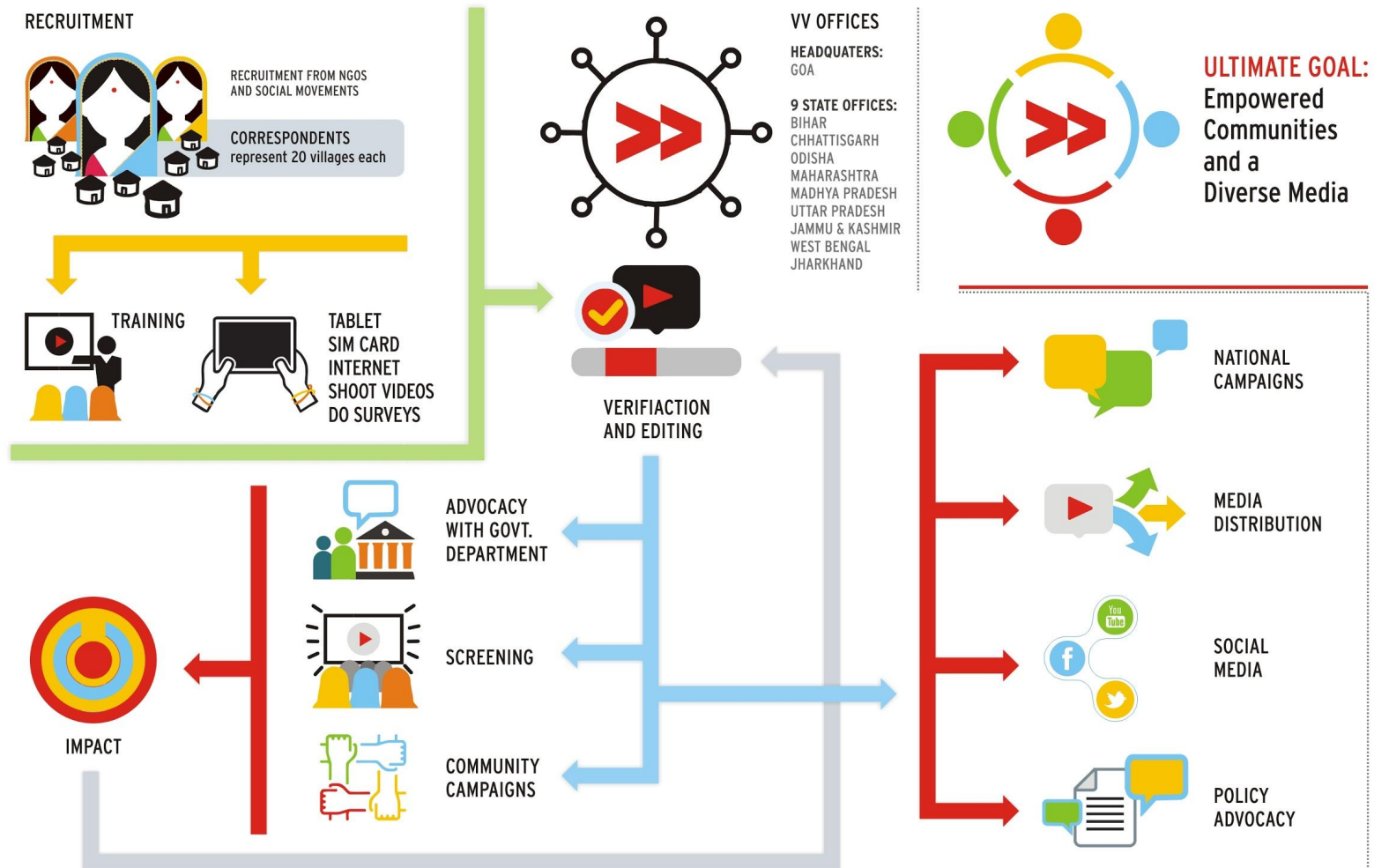




THE VIDEO VOLUNTEERS' REPORTING AND DATA-SURVEYING MODEL

This document explains the operational model of VV's IndiaUnheard reporting network, through which 215 Correspondents are producing stories regularly from 146 districts in India, organized into 7 state-level networks. It also describes the local impact model, the national advocacy and distribution model and our data-gathering methodology. The model is replicable, in whole and in parts, and so this note is written for those who might wish to create a similar program in their own countries or regions.

How the VV Model Works





RECRUITING AND TRAINING THE NETWORK



Create a plan for the reporting network

What geographies will you work in? How many reporters will you train? What will be their educational qualifications? Who will you partner with? Will the Correspondents be full time or part time? How will you fund it? Who will manage it? And most importantly, what are your goals: What is your goal : community-owned change? Enabling citizens to make local government more accountable? Mainstream distribution? Producing great content? National level advocacy? The model outlined here works towards all these goals. In your design you may choose to emphasize some of these more and others less.

Create a job profile for the Correspondents

VV's criteria is as follows: must be below poverty line, associated with an NGO/social movement but not employed, no journalism experience, basic literacy (2nd standard education) at a minimum. Diversity is crucial. Trainings must have 50% women and more than half must be minorities (in India, Dalits, Tribals or Muslim.) Must be willing to give approx 10 days a month.

Decide where the network should work geographically



Recruit the Correspondents

VV recruits largely through social movements and activists because of our rights' based approach. NGOs, government agencies, CSR programs are a possibility. We recruit state-wise. When we've decided to launch a new state network, we recruit one Correspondent per district aiming for at least 20. We email the JD to around 60 activists in a state, asking them to recruit a Correspondent by a particular date, and will call at least 40 to get 20 Correspondents. However, it would be possible to partner with a single very large NGO to find them. We interview on the phone and, in most cases, in person all candidates; this takes time, but finding the right person greatly improves our retention of the Correspondents.

Recruit a coordinator and video editor

In most states for VV, the state coordinator is a Senior Community Correspondent trained in a previous batch. Alternatively, staff the project with one local activist who does and one video editor/filmmaker. The Coordinators job is: local networking with NGOs; mentoring Correspondents on their videos; arranging their payments; helping them do screenings; conducting group meetings/trainings.

Find a work space

VV opens two-room state offices in the state capital. The State Coordinator and video editor work from there, and Correspondents come to the office to help in the edit of their videos or receive personalized training. The office is also used for monthly state meetings of all Correspondents, some of whom stay overnight on mattresses on the floor

Acquire Equipment

VV gives each Correspondent a tablet computer worth Rs. 10,000 which they can use for shooting, screening, and accessing the internet where possible, for conducting their surveys or downloading videos. Part of the cost of the camera is deducted each month .



Train the Correspondents

There are several options:

Video-activism module (6 hours to two days)

–this is recommended if you have the ability to gather easily large numbers of people, say, 30-100. VV's training modules vary from half a day to two days and teach people to edit very simple evidentiary videos on their phone. From this batch you could select a smaller group to attend at a later date the ten day video journalism training, based on their output.

Video Journalism (ten day residential)

– this covers journalism, journalistic ethics, the rationale for community media, activism and advocacy, video production, storyboarding, video screenings. All manuals are available for download on the VV website

Data-surveying: (one day)

if you plan to include data gathering via surveys on tablets in your design, this can be added to the training plan.





STORY-TELLING, DATA-GATHERING AND CREATING LOCAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Correspondents shoot the videos

- Output varies: some produce only a few a year, others produce two a month, the maximum VV will take, depending on the time available
- Stories are on 22 different themes, ranging from health to corruption to education to water, that affect the poor. 50% of story ideas are found by Correspondents themselves in their villages. Others are suggested by VV staff journalists based on what is in the news, or are on campaign issues they have been trained to address in VV trainings.
- They pitch their one liner to their mentor, and once it is approved, they spend 3-6 days shooting the story.
- They then take it to an internet café or computer and review and folder their footage properly.

Correspondents write video outlines

(Very few want to write scripts.)

- They get the footage to the editor
- They snail mail the footage because they live in areas without internet. Some Correspondents with internet dropbox their footage.



THE VIDEOS

The basic video template for fifty percent of the videos is as follows: what is the problem? Who is your main character (a person who experiences it in the most egregious way and whose interview forms the emotional heart of the story)? What is the law/entitlement say about this and if there is a violation, what is it? What is the government agency involved? Who is the person community members can meet and where does he sit? What has the community done on this issue and what are the committing to do now? What is the call to action – ideally at community level and for online audience?





Correspondents conduct surveys

VV currently uses Kobo collect, a free software that works offline in the villages. VV staff create a national survey, aiming for two a month, in partnership with different advocacy organizations, that are later turned into infographics

Correspondents create local advocacy campaigns and achieve ‘impact’

– meaning, the problem outlined in the video is solved.
each video is the starting point for a local campaign:

- CC visits the block-level office in person with the footage, the visual evidence. Shows it on the cell phone, a laptop or the official’s own computer.
- Often, the official commits to resolving the issue during the meeting, and the CC will follow up by phone till it is done. (Sometimes, it is not even necessary to visit the office. Merely the knowledge that the report is being done causes the administration to act.)
- If the problem cannot be resolved in one visit, CC engages the community. She screens her video - **either on her cell phone, the tablet computer, or by borrowing the state office’s projector to do a big screening** - and brings the character in the video or other leaders to accompany her call for change.
- If it is still not resolved, she will contact the VV office. Other tools available now include online petitions, phone calls further up the chain, engagement of local NGOs.
- Impact is achieved



The CC produces an ‘impact’ video

This video shows that the problem has indeed been resolved and documents all the steps it took to achieve it. The Correspondent is paid for her impact video, at a significantly higher rate (she gets Rs. 7500 for the impact video) to compensate for the extra time taken.

Correspondents receive regular mentorship

Senior Correspondents are promoted to be mentors – this is to create job growth and promote second level leadership. They are paid a small amount (around Rs. 350) to mentor Correspondents. We have also partnered with mainstream news companies whose staff provide mentorship to Correspondents. Mentors call CC’s once a week to discuss their story ideas and share VV news with them.

Correspondents receive in-person training

Currently, the state offices convene one monthly meeting (1 day) of the Senior CC’s who work as mentors, as well as one quarterly training. These quarterly trainings are usually theme-based. Training plans & manuals on themes ranging from trafficking to maternal health to gender are created by the training staff based in the Goa office, but conducted by the state coordinators. Ad-hoc trainings are skill-based or convened for specific projects: VV evaluates all Correspondents for their technical, journalistic and advocacy skills and organizes trainings according to whether Correspondents are at beginner, intermediate or advanced level. Every two-three years, funds permitting, we organize a National Meet of all the Correspondents.





STATE LEVEL CHANGES

VV staff carry out state-level advocacy

Our state coordinators present VV videos in advocacy meetings, show videos to state-level government officials and support CC's in their impact efforts for particularly important videos. They write grievance redressal letters and submit Legislative Assembly Questions, lobbying government on trends or themes that arise in the videos, and give recommendations for strengthening the citizen oversight mechanisms that are built into many government programs, but often non-functional.

VV staff and Correspondents distribute videos at the state level

Through state-level facebook pages (see [KashmirUnheard](#), [JharkhandUnheard](#), and [WestBengalUnheard](#)) and media partnerships.





POST PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION

Create a newsroom work flow & systems to manage video content and data –

Though excel can work fine in the beginning, VV now maintains an online database which tracks stories from the ‘pitch’ to publishing stage, and also functions as an archive for our 6000+ videos. Through this system, which is also our evaluation system, we rate videos and tag them with more than 200 data points. Excel works well in the beginning.

Edit the videos

VV’s videos are edited by staff editors, not by the Correspondents. In states with regional languages we employ an editor based in the state capital. Videos in Hindi, which is our main language, and our videos for mainstream national distribution, are edited in our Goa office, where it is easier to manage quality. Not having Correspondents edit videos does dilute their control of the process to an extent, we thought it a necessary compromise, due to cost (not all Correspondents can be given a computer) and drop out rates (editing can be difficult to master.) However, as of 2017, apps for phone-based editing are much improved, and we will start to do large-scale training of communities on mobile phones.

Upload to youtube

100% of VV videos are uploaded to the VV youtube channel, which is organized into playlists by state and issue.

Ensure the Correspondents receive the edited videos

Once edited, the videos are shared with Correspondents via snail mail, or in live training sessions for those without internet. For those with internet, they are shared via drop box or what’s app.

Screen the videos in the villages

The videos are screened locally through:

- **screenings on tablets** – correspondents shoot with a tablet that can be used for screenings. 20 people can gather round a tablet to watch.
- **Widescreen projectors** – Correspondents can collect a projector in the VV office to do a large screening
- **Local What’s app groups & facebook pages**, bluetooth and other peer to peer sharing methods, local sim/data card shops – as internet comes into rural India , more distribution options appear



Distribute to activists and NGOs

The videos are shared via newsletters, advocacy screenings with partners at conferences & events, where they bring the voice of communities into spaces where usually only educated experts are included.

Produce specials and packages

VV employs several journalists who function as a mini-news room within VV. They follow the news, develop story ideas (often commissioned) with news & advocacy organizations that they individually mentor Correspondents to produce. They also provide extra support to Correspondents on stories in pre-production that are flagged by the training staff in the database as having high potential for impact or mainstream media reach. These stories go with written articles.

Distribute the videos on the VV website, Facebook & social media

The videos of national interest go on videovolunteers.org and on social media.



Mainstream distribution

Our communications team builds relationships with national and state-level media houses, both online and TV, for further distribution of the videos.

Communicate with and Build the CC Network

Each Correspondent works on their own in very far-flung geographies. And so it is very important to build a sense of network solidarity and being part of a movement. What's app has been a boon for this; we have many different What's App groups, managed in a way to encourage participation & learnings.





NATIONAL ADVOCACY



Thematic Campaigns

Untouchability, maternal health, education, forced evictions and gender are our current campaign areas. In some cases, such as forced evictions & untouchability, systemic change, not hyper-local change, is needed. Other campaigns are started because the outsize importance of the issue in the lives of our communities necessitate a deeper focus, such as maternal health and education. Gender is a campaign because of the tremendous effectiveness of a communications-based model like VV's to drive change. In our campaigns, we set 3-5 year advocacy goals, devote significant staff time to leading the campaign, and network with the leading national advocacy organizations. In 2017, we have begun to use the Sustainable Development Goals as a unifying principle for our work, seeing great potential to bring the hyperlocal, state-level, national and international strands of our reporting together to work together towards an internationally recognized set of goals.





More Information: Interested to know more about Surveys For Action or want to collaborate on a project?

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