

VIDEO VOLUNTEERS  
**TWO-YEAR REPORT**  
2017-2019



Stories that speak truth to power have never  
felt more relevant than they do today.



# Table of Content

[Introduction](#)

[The Community Correspondent Network](#)

[Mobile Journalism \(MoJo\)](#)

[Building Capacities for Better Journalism](#)

[Our Most Impressive Videos this Year](#)

[Creating Change at the Grassroots](#)

[Campaigns](#)

[Data Gathering & Data Journalism – Surveys for Action](#)

[Taking Community Media to the World](#)

[The Importance of strong Civil Society Partnerships](#)

[Awards and recognitions for our work](#)

[National Meet](#)

[We're Excited to Announce...](#)

[In Memoriam](#)



# Introduction



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Doing journalism for change, stories that speak truth to power, has never felt more relevant. In India and the world, the blight of fake news and paid political propaganda threaten to erode every principle of good journalism – to report the truth. India fell from 136 to 138 in the 2018 World Press Freedom Index. Our brave Community Correspondents continue to highlight India's most pressing challenges; often despite threats and intimidation. They make sure that the communities they serve become informed citizens who can claim their own rights.

The past two years have brought many firsts for Video Volunteers. We launched a new website that celebrates community journalism. We launched two significant programmes — Mobile Journalism and Surveys for Action — that further VV's goal of amplifying the voices of marginalised communities far and wide. Mobile Journalism, or Mojo as we call it, is enabling our network to film and edit videos directly on their tablets. This makes our production process much faster and increases the quantity of VV's hyperlocal content. Through Surveys for Action we are deploying our large network to gather data and information with the aim of monitoring the SDG targets.

Our work continues to be about creating 'actionable content' which helps communities create social change. It has also been about improving the quality of journalism; making sure that our network produces sharp, factually correct pieces that grab the interest of a global audience. As always our work continues to bridge the information gaps between rural and urban areas, and turns the spotlight to media dark areas in India.

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## SNAPSHOT

IndiaUnheard Videos Produced:

**1033**

MoJos Produced:

**5457**

Impacts Achieved:

**472**

Lives Impacted:

**3,934,992**





# The Community Correspondent Network



## WE ARE A STRONG NETWORK OF

**213** COMMUNITY  
CORRESPONDENTS

**20** STATES

**188** DISTRICTS

**213**

COMMUNITY  
CORRESPONDENTS are

**57%**

WOMEN

**25%**

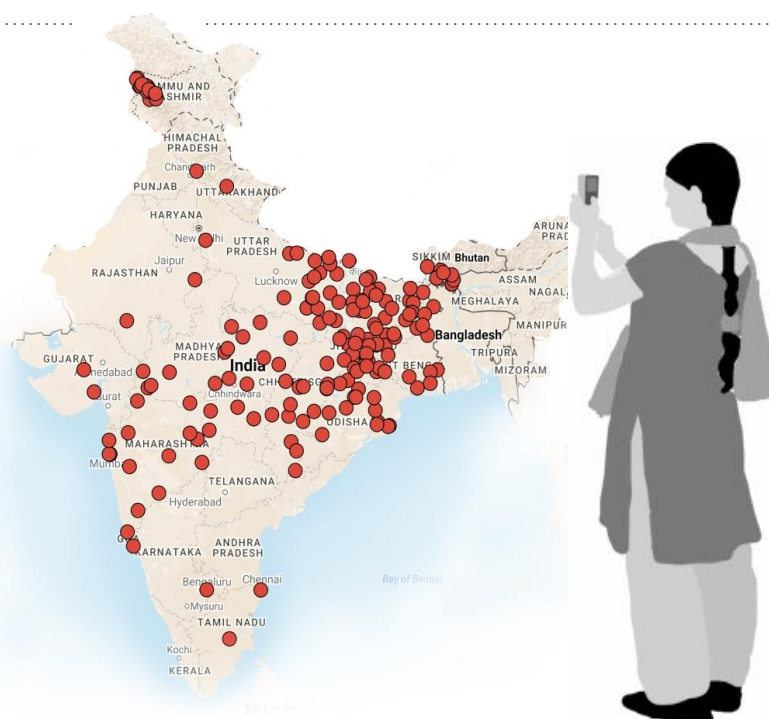
ADIVASI

**29%**

DALIT

**24%**

RELIGIOUS  
MINORITIES



Figures as of **September 2018**

We recruited 52 new Community Correspondents in 2017-18 and 10 in 2018-19. We expanded our presence to new areas like Delhi, Haryana, Punjab, Uttarakhand, and Himachal Pradesh. We also strengthened our network in Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Jammu & Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal.

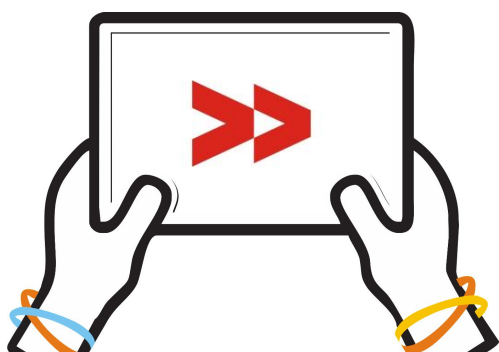
We're excited to be working with these Correspondents as they've brought a deep understanding of issues that VV will be working on. Our CCs have a personal connect with Dalit rights movements, construction workers' and domestic workers' unions, women and child rights, environmental concerns, urban issues like sanitation and housing, and anti-human trafficking efforts, among others.



## Mobile Journalism (MoJo)



We launched a significant new program in June 2017 – Mojo, short for mobile journalism. Now that video editing is possible on a smart phone it is possible to imagine anyone being able to film and edit videos. The Correspondents showed a great enthusiasm for this new format. Just nine months after we started Mojo, they had already produced 2100 such videos. As of this year, 90% of our Correspondents control the production process end to end, by shooting, editing and sharing from their devices.



#### Benefits of phone-based editing:

- Correspondents control content and the final message, as they don't need to rely on someone else to edit the footage.
- Faster turnaround time for impact processes – no need to wait for an edited video to show an official.
- Correspondents learn an additional marketable skill.
- Reduces production costs.

This is a huge step towards creating a strong hyperlocal media amongst marginalized communities. The videos are shared on VV's state Facebook pages and WhatsApp groups.

## The Best Mojo Videos:

### Twenty Years and No Electricity for Child Care Centre:

Community Correspondent Reena Ramteke's video documents the challenges faced by women who run the local Child Care Centre in Gariaband District, Chattisgarh. Reena Ramteke's video is a good example of how photos and an interview can make a powerful evidentiary video. [Watch the video.](#)



*"Mojo has changed how we work. I really like that I can edit my own video, share it on WhatsApp with officials, and talk to them about resolving the issue. If there's an urgent issue we can film it, and share it straight to our Facebook group."*

– Saroj Paraste, Madhya Pradesh

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## The Best Mojo Videos:

### Kashmiri Journalists Continue to Work on Razor's Edge:

Pulwama, Jammu and Kashmir | Community Correspondent reports how journalists in Kashmir brave grievous injuries while reporting on the worst conflict the state has seen in over a decade. Rayees Ahmad's video uses multiple testimonies and strong visuals to corroborate an incident in which five photojournalists were hit by pellets while covering a gun battle between Militants and Indian forces in the Shopian region on 22nd January 2019. [Watch the video](#).

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### How Will we Live Without Water?

6,30,00,000 people living in rural India do not have access to drinking water. Raju Parteti reports this story from Chindwara District, Madhya Pradesh. Rasho Darshana, asks the government how she is supposed to survive without this basic human right. Raju's video is a good example of how mojo videos are given more context using graphics in the Goa office after a CC films it. [Watch the video](#).

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### No Foodgrains for a Year, Starvation Deaths in Jharkhand Continue:

Pardeshiya Devi, a septuagenarian from Bariyatu village, Jharkhand hasn't received her food rations under the central food distribution scheme since 2017. This is only because her Ration card isn't linked to her Adhar Card. The order to compulsorily link the two identification cards caused chaos in Jharkhand and India in 2017-18. The right to food campaign said it was the direct cause in 7 of 14 starvation deaths in the state between September 2017 and July 2018. Community Correspondent Sunil Kujur's



video uses a single testimony and text graphics to explain the gravity of the situation. [Watch the video](#)

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## The Best Mojo Videos:

### School Children Forced to Drink Water on All Fours:

"These children digging a pond are not playing, but struggling to get a drink of clean water." CC Prakash Gupta's opening voice over accompanied by the visual of children knee deep in mud hits hard. It is an evidentiary video which shows that kids in Chhattisgarh's Betul Block have only two options -- fluoride laced water from the school hand pump or dirty water from the local river. [Watch the video.](#)



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### Rajasthan Elections: Trans Community Left out of Electoral Rolls:

Only 2% of the transgender community in Rajasthan is registered on electoral rolls. Rajasthan's first engineer from the trans community, and Community Correspondent Malini Das speaks about why she wasn't able to cast her vote in the Rajasthan Assembly Elections held on 7th December 2018. This is a great example of how CCs use Mojo to get quick updates on current issues. [Watch the video.](#)





**Manish Kumar**, VV's Principal Trainer and Trustee, on strategies and tactics learned by the Training and Mentoring Team this year.

Manish Kumar has been with VV for over ten years, and has a wealth of information on enabling communities to create their own content. For CCs, he's the go-to person when they need help to report stories, and to navigate personal challenges.

*Q: Can you say a little bit about why and how Mojo was rolled out to the CC network?*

**A:** We started training some Correspondents to edit on their phones in July 2017 with a training of 13 Correspondents in West Bengal. We thought of Mojo as a way to get 'pitches' from Correspondents. Instead of telling their mentors what videos they might want to make, why not shoot a little footage and send it in? But we gradually saw that it had the potential to be a proper video and end product in itself. It was a big move; how would we get over 200 people to start filming and editing on their tablets?

We had to train CCs who had already been in the network and those who were completely new to it. The latter aren't always technologically strong. We changed our whole training plan. So our training for new CCs starts with Mojo and we train them to film a longer IU video later. When the first pilot training in Kolkata worked well, we replicated it. The training now also pays a lot of attention to the tech aspect and the app on which we edit.

*Q: What was the initial reaction?*

**A:** The quality of the videos wasn't great to begin with. Some of the CCs couldn't really understand the new short format of the videos. The end product was not as great as we had envisioned. Then there were technological challenges. Tablets would hang, video formats wouldn't match up, our Samsung software malfunctioned and that created all kinds of problems. Things were smoother after September. Even now, I get daily tech-related questions like 'where are the photos and videos in the gallery?'

In December 2017 we started advance Mojo trainings at the quarterly meetings with CCs. We saw improvements after that. Our training goal is to get Mojo videos to the same level as an IndiaUnheard (IU) video. The edit should be as good as what we call a "high-rated" video. Some CCs have reached that but for some, especially those with low-literacy, this is a great challenge. For example, we have Shantabai Yevtikar, who only speaks Marathi and cannot read. This is by far the hardest thing technically we've asked of our CC's.

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**Q:** *Video editing is so technical. How do you provide support when the CC network is all over the country?*

**A:** We're making tutorial videos on how to format your tablet; tips for editing; finding the right music; placing text plates, and so on. We send these to the CC network so that their memory gets jogged on a regular basis. We also talk to them on WhatsApp and send them screenshots on how to go through each step. One big achievement as a result of Mojo is that we got 50-60% of our network fully active on WhatsApp. We have created different groups for each state so that people can use this to communicate with their mentors.

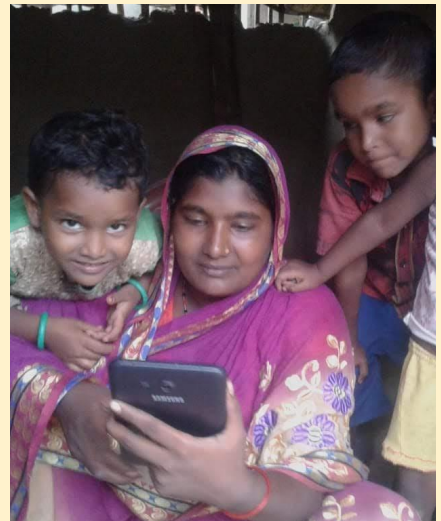
**Q:** *How do the CC's share the self-edited videos in the community?*

**A:** We saw Mojo as a chance for CCs to take charge of distributing their content. We have created a Facebook page for every state. After filming the Mojo video, a CC sends it first to the state WhatsApp group and when it is 'approved' by the moderator, it is uploaded on the Facebook page. Many CCs also share these videos directly on their pages and other WhatsApp groups they are part of. Vinod Wankhede, a CC from Maharashtra told us how his videos were circulated and came back to him via WhatsApp. This shows that the videos are getting popular. We're also teaching them how to use tools like WhatsApp to network with state-level officials.

**Q:** *Does this change the type of videos that the CCs have been making so far?*

**A:** Mojo doesn't change our original goals. With our long-format IU videos [and Mojo], we are trying to improve the quality of journalism. We are training them to focus on fact checking, the importance of sources, doing research, and so on. In the areas we work, the quality of information depends entirely on the individual CC's skills. There are few local statistics available online [or regional language content]. We support them in getting data and information from Goa too.

Further, at every quarterly training we roll out 10 special story briefs, which might have media interest, are unique, or are issues with gravity. This year, it included issues like the government's promise of model villages; the prevalence of corruption; farmer distress and so on, we want to build a wider narrative through long-term coverage rather than episodic coverage.



*As internet arrives in rural India, distribution platforms open up that give Correspondents more control over the distribution of their content.*

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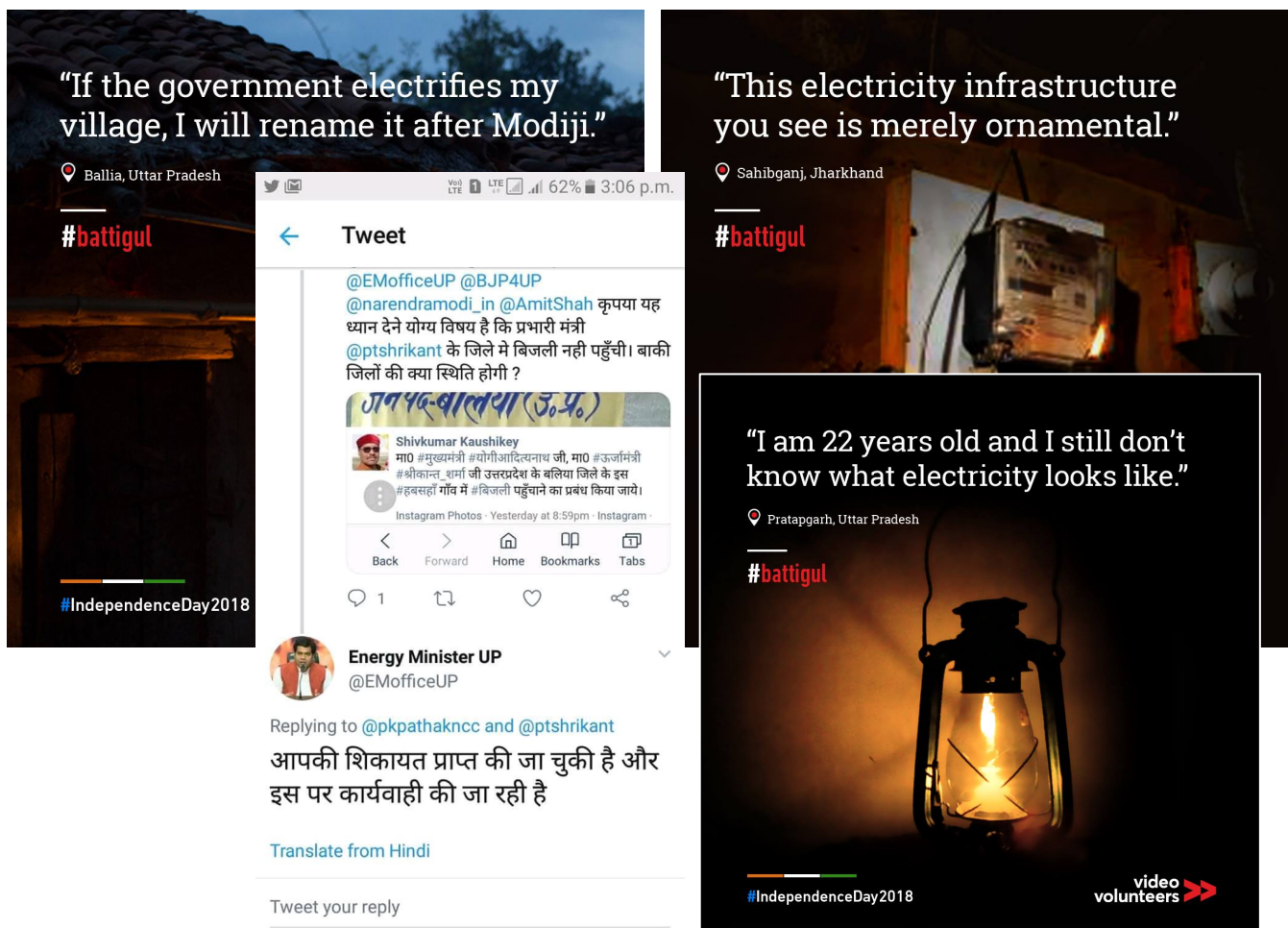
*Q: What are some of your biggest learnings this year while training CCs?*

**A:** Filming good visual content and being a good journalist are two different skills, and not everyone has both. Giving CCs support on both aspects is crucial to the success of any work. It's also really heartening to see our CCs' eagerness to learn and experiment. When I see some CCs filming and editing on their tablets, I can hardly believe that we managed to teach them how to do this.

*Q: How important is quality in community media, where practitioners often say process is more important than product?*

**A:** Our self-edited videos are often very raw and basic. They are intended primarily as evidence videos to be shown back to officials to provide visual proof of the problem. And in fact, we've realized that for that, the quality of the video doesn't actually matter! Interesting, right? All that matters is that you have the shot of the evidence, and for that, the most basic filmmaking skills are sufficient.

Where quality matters is for videos intended for a national or global audience – for the videos we publish on our website. So this year, we invested more in our edit room with additional producers, to raise the quality of our best content.



## BATTIGUL: Citizens use Video to Monitor Government Claims

#Battigul (No Electricity) was our first crowd-sourced online campaign. We launched it in response to the claim made by Prime Minister Modi in a tweet on 28th April 2018 that every last Indian village had electricity.

To verify this statement, we put out a call via our network of Correspondents, asking people to simply tell us their name, location and whether or not they have electricity. In about 10 weeks between May and August 2018, we gathered photo and video testimonies from 106 villages and settlements, which was only the beginning. Nearly 40 people beyond our CC network sent us ground reports from remote locations via WhatsApp and SMS.

These citizen testimonies told us many things: villages or hamlets didn't have electricity; in some cases only part of the village had electricity; in some cases villages were supplied faulty transformers or electricity poles so access to electricity was intermittent.

In the run up to achieve the SDGs, such citizen generated data can play a powerful role in monitoring their success. Read our article about it [here](#).

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## Training Other Organizations in Mobile Journalism:



Civil society organizations are catching on to the power of video and social media for social change. VV had many requests for trainings from organisations and groups who want to explore this media. Some of our new partners are listed below.

In trainings that last between one and four days VV's staff train people in the principles of community media and the technicalities of producing videos on their phone. Some highlights:

- **Sixth Annual Anti-Trafficking in Persons Conclave:** Practitioners from government law enforcement agencies, NGOs, and activists working on the issue were trained to use Mojo for storytelling and investigative journalism. The conclave was hosted by the US Consulate General, Kolkata in partnership with Shakti Vahini and Bangla Natak.
- **woMEn: Understanding my Responsibility in Combating Gender-Based Violence and Inequality:** VV conducted a module at this workshop on understanding gender equality and technology. It was hosted by Shakti Vahini, in partnership with US Consulate General, Kolkata and other local stakeholders.
- **Gunvati J. Kapoor Medical Relief Charitable Foundation:** The organisation supports programs in education, healthcare and social services in Mumbai. They will use Mojo to document case studies and generate awareness about cancer tests and treatments.
- **The Goat Trust:** The organisation trains women with medical skills to care for local goats, and make these a marketable skill. 13 employees were trained. They plan to use their newly learned Mojo skills to document their field work and its multiple processes.
- **International Council for Research on Women and Pradan:** We did one training each in 2017 and 2018 with 13-14 women identified by the organisation. The women learnt how to capture gender stories, specifically on maternal and adolescent health issues.

- **School for Democracy, Rajasthan:** Students were trained in creating micro-campaigns using social media and Mojo.
- **Bailancho Saad:** Nine members from this women's collective based in Goa attended a training session on videography and photography. The women were enthusiastic to learn how they can use the medium to collect in-depth information on the many cases of VAW that come to them. They will also use the training to raise awareness of women's issues via social media.
- **Mahita & Plan India:** A Media Advocacy Training for the Girls Advocacy Alliance (GAA) was attended by 22 people from seven partner organizations in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. The group learnt the use of different media and communication tools for different advocacy goals. The participants then developed plans for their own campaigns like secondary education for girls, prevention of child marriage and child trafficking.

**VV's video-trainer and mentor, Rajkumar, and communications coordinator Alankrita Anand, share their experiences based on some of the MoJo trainings they've conducted with other organisations.**

We have been using WhatsApp and Facebook to build distribution networks for our MoJo videos, and to design social media campaigns to complement and amplify the issues raised in the MoJos.

Reflecting upon a training we conducted with a Mumbai-based cancer relief foundation, Rajkumar says that knowing how to produce video is useful for people from a host of professional backgrounds, not just for the media.

In trainings with partner organisations in Rajasthan Pradan, ICRW, and School for Democracy, what surfaced was people's desire to use mobile journalism to document their work and project it to their online audiences. The aim could be awareness, storytelling or taking concrete action on specific issues. Moreover, there was an acknowledgement that the audio-visual medium, especially a simple format like MoJo, was often a better way of communicating impact, than the written reports. This was specifically true in areas with low literacy.



***Video-activism as a tool for social change is only going to grow.***

A report by [Boston Consulting Group](#) estimates that 2020 nearly 50% of Internet users in India will be from rural India. Video streaming is one of the fastest growing consumptions among smartphone users in India showed an 11% growth between 2017 and 2018.



# Building Capacities for Better Journalism



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Training is at the core of what VV does. All CC's attend a training camp when they join the network and then attend regular refresher trainings at least once in six months, that are organized either by state, or by thematic, or skill level. Many of the CC's in the network have been with us for over 3 years, so each year, we ask ourselves what new skills we need to impart to the network.

A total of 15 trainings were conducted in the last two years. Participants learnt how to produce Mojos, conduct surveys, plan impacts, and were also given briefs on special stories to look out for. Since 2018 we've started creating tutorial videos which help answer common questions we hear from CCs about filming and working on impacts.

Each CC is assigned a mentor, who is part of VV's Training and Mentoring Team, and for each story they produce, they get phone-based support. Every two years, they come together for the National Meet, held in Goa. This is our big jamboree, our chance to celebrate the bold heroes who make up our network. a

## This Year's Training Goals and Training Impact

- Mojo: CCs should learn to edit the videos on their tablet or phone.

**Result: in 2017-18 190 CCs out of 230 produced 2096 Mojo videos. In 2018-19 192 CCs out of 213 produced 3397 Mojo videos**

- Hyperlocal internet-based distribution of videos: 165 CCs have been taught to use WhatsApp, Instagram and Facebook to share their videos, as well as a file-sharing app developed by Microsoft research.

**Result: 60% CCs are sharing the videos via WhatsApp and Facebook to audiences in their states. All CCs actively participate in VV's whats app groups.**

- Surveys for Action and other apps: CCs learnt how to operate Kobo Collect, the app we use to carry out surveys. CC are also learning how to use file-sharing apps like Dropbox, Shareit and WeTransfer.

**Result: More than 75% of our network participated in a survey.**

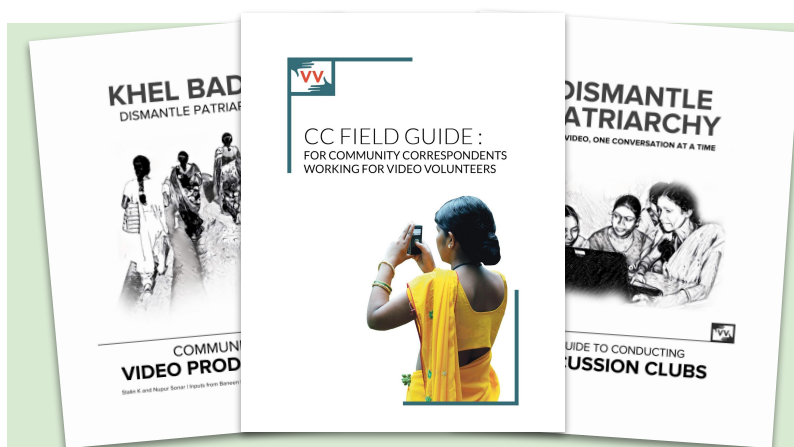
- We aimed to make our production process more rigorous so that the videos going to our mainstream media partners and our website would be thorough. At different trainings we rolled-out 10 specific story briefs on which our CCs can give unique insights. This included issues like farmer's distress and the hurdles in services deliveries, SDGs like maternal and child health, education, toilets, 100% electrification.

**Result: Over 100 story ideas were pitched after these briefs were rolled out to the CCs.**

- We provided additional training and support on how to use videos to achieve local-level change. While new CCs were exposed to the ways of video for change for the first time, older CCs who hadn't had an impact were given additional tools and support to resolve the issues they were documenting. This included hiring two people, one to do high level advocacy work in Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal, and another to mentor CCs as they worked on stories that were difficult. Both helped the CCs learn tactics like filing applications, collecting evidence in a specific way, and mobilising communities while working on an impact.

Various members of the team carried out 15-20 field visits. We produced over 10 tutorial videos on production aspects like data verification, solving tech problems, making better impact videos, conducting surveys, etc.

**Result: 120 CCs were able to achieve at least one impact in two years.**



All these trainings are based on training manuals that our trainers write. They include everything from tips to finding a good story, to filming with sensitivity, to getting the details like audio and lighting right. The CCs get a copy each. [They can all be seen on the website.](#)

## Learning from other leaders:

India has a rich ecosystem of journalism trainers and innovators, with whom VV is widely networked, including for sharing learnings and best practices.

- **Gender and Technology Institute, Asia:**  
VV's Trainer and Producer, attended a workshop that offered practical support and training to activists in different movements to be confident and skilled in their use of technology for activism in the face of online harassment. It contextualised how digital technologies are implicated in gender and sexuality rights, and freedom of expression, along with online and offline participation, particularly for women and women identified people in Asia. The workshop was particularly helpful as we move towards mobile journalism and bringing out CC network onto online platforms like WhatsApp.

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- **Microsoft Research:**  
CCs were taught to use a sharing app called Swapit based on the internet. Developed by Microsoft Research, the app allows VV videos to appear automatically on friends' phones within a range. It is trackable - so from a research point of view we'd know who had seen a video. An added feature is that it allows for monetization. When someone watches a video, they are given a talk time credit, and this becomes an inexpensive way to provide financial incentives to citizens to watch videos with social change messages.
  - **Down To Earth & Centre for Science and Environment:**  
VV staff attended this workshop led by data specialists, journalists and communication experts on using data in a digital age. It focused on 3 areas: (1) how and where to look for relevant raw data (2) How to analyse, interpret and clean raw data (3) How to process, visualize and present data.
  - **IndiaSpend in collaboration with the Global Investigative Journalists Network and the University of Chicago:**  
Select staff attended a data journalism workshop. It was a two-day certificate programme where participants were trained in the skill of sourcing, scraping, mining and cleaning of data sets.
  - **Change.org:**  
VV's Advocacy and Partnerships Manager was selected to participate in the She Creates Change Learning-lab. This workshop taught campaign skills, training and community building using online tools.
  - **Sambhaavnaa Institute:**  
Our State Coordinator from Jammu and Kashmir attended a workshop called Pahar aur Hum (The Hills and Us). It was organised for youth from the Himalayan region to understand the roots of some of the current socio-economic, political issues and debates – histories and collective cultural identities; understanding mountain geology and ecology; the state of rivers, forests, land; politics of development; re-imagining mountain economies and society; and conflict zones in the Himalayas.
  - **Sexuality, Gender, and Rights Institute, CREA:**  
Our Communications Coordinator attended CREA's, an annual residential course. It focuses on a conceptual study of sexuality. It examines the links between sexuality, rights, gender, and health and their interface with socio-cultural and legal issues. The participants critically analyse policy, research, and programme interventions using a rights-based approach.
  - **Google News Initiative:**  
Our Head of Content attended a Google News Initiative training on fact-checking and detecting fake news.



## Our Most Impressive Videos this Year



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We categorise great videos on a number of factors. Firstly, the story itself and the way it is filmed are important. We recognise that our correspondents go to great lengths to get that one interview that'll make or break a story. A combination of great research, interviews, shots, edits, and often the timely nature of the story, are perhaps the golden combination. When videos rack up huge views on YouTube or get picked up often by the media, we know we have a winner. Here are some of this year's best videos.

### Solar Energy, a Cash Crop for Gujarat Farmers:

The video documents the story of Phodabhai who, with five other farmers, formed India's first 'solar cooperative society' in the small village of Dhundi in Gujarat. Dhundi Solar Ujra Udpadak Sahakari Mandali (DSUUSM) is a solar cooperative supported by International Water Management Institute (IWMI). The cooperative means that farmers need no longer be completely dependent on agriculture for livelihood. Correspondent Yashodhara Salve's video won the CMS Vatavaran award.



[Watch the video](#)

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### The Green Guardians of Goa: A Citizens' Movement Against a Brewery:

December 2015, the residents of a Goan village, Amdai, woke up to bulldozers clearing over 100,000 square metres of orchard land. This was the first time that they became aware of the fact that the Investment Promotion and Facilitation Board of Goa (IPB) had granted an in-principle approval to Vani Agro Farms Limited to construct a brewery and distillery there. Correspondent Devidas Gaonkar's video documents the impending destruction of the river in the area, the threat to indigenous farming community, as well as a gross nexus between politics and business that is slowly destroying Goa's ecology. The strong visuals capture the struggle of the community really well.



[Watch the video](#)

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## The Unsung Heroes of the 2017 Mumbai Flood:

Nana Kale is one of thousands of migrant workers who travelled nearly 500 kilometers, with his wife and two-year-old daughter, to work in the city-wide clean up to prevent floods in Mumbai. Employed by contractors under the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), he is compelled to enter the sewers without gas masks, protective gloves, shoes and suit. Nana does this task for INR 300 (\$ 4.5) a day. Correspondent Amol Lalzare documents the blatant violation of laws that prohibits the employment of manual scavengers in India. The BMC is India's richest civic body with a budget exceeding 25,000 crores. Can it really not take better care of those who perform such an essential job for the city? This video received a lot of media attention because it is located in Mumbai and is about manual scavenging.



Every year thousands of poor people get inside these drains to clean them up

[Watch the video](#)

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## When Doctors Don't Care About Consent:

"No, I was not willing to have a copper-T inserted," says one of 30 women who was forcibly implanted with an intrauterine contraceptive device after she delivered at the local government health facility in West Bengal's Kalpani Village. Bikash Barman's video highlights how women bear the brunt of invasive contraceptive methods with even government policies like the National Health Mission pushing for these. The local health worker reveals that she has seen about 40 cases in her career. This is one of our strongest reproductive rights video on an issue that isn't often documented in this way.



Insertion of Copper T cannot be done without the woman's consent

[Watch the video](#)

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## Enforced Disappearances in Kashmir:

A State's Denial and a Community's Agony: In Kashmir, there have been more than 8000 cases of enforced and involuntary disappearances between 1989 and 2009, according to the Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons ([APDP](#)), a collective of family members who campaign against enforced disappearances and are in search of their loved ones. [The government, however, pegs the number of enforced disappearances at 4,000.](#) This discrepancy in the number of enforced disappearances has been highlighted by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in its first ever report on the status of human rights in Kashmir released in June 2018. However, the Indian government rejected the report. [Watch and Read a special production](#) to mark the International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances.



[Watch the video](#)

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## Why Farmer Suicides Continue in Uttar Pradesh:

Around 35,000 farmers from all over India marched to Delhi on November 30 2018 to demand a one-time unconditional loan waiver, increased minimum support prices, and a special session in the parliament to address the agrarian crisis. Munna Lal from Uttar Pradesh's Lalitpur district is one such farmer, trapped in a seemingly unending cycle of debt. He often sees ending his life is the only plausible solution to this. According to data from the Ministry of Home Affairs, 6,531 farmers and cultivators committed suicide across India in 2016. Munna Lal has applied for the loan waiver scheme announced by the Uttar Pradesh Government in 2017. He has had no response from the District Magistrate of Lalitpur on this. CC Shankarlal Raikwar's report is an insightful documentation into the multiple factors that are causing the ongoing agrarian crisis in India.



[Watch the video](#)

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## Rape by Any Other Name Would Still be Rape:

“Yes, he is my husband but does that mean he can rape me?” The argument against marital rape is as simple as that. It does not matter whether the perpetrator is a complete stranger or your husband of many years; forcing an individual to engage in a sexual act amounts to rape. CC Reena Ramteke’s interview with a survivor of marital rape and domestic violence is a powerful testimony which challenges the denial that surrounds marital rape in India.

When Rita (name changed), approached the local police station, she was told that since he is her husband, she must submit to his demands. The police eventually arrested her husband, but he was charged with domestic violence and not rape. Their attitude, along with the attitude of her parents and her community is telling of how women are still treated as someone’s property, and as subservient.



[Watch the video](#)



## Creating Change at the Grassroots



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Community Correspondents solved 472 cases in two years using their video reports. Over 39,34,992 people benefitted from these impacts across India. The most common method is for the Correspondent to take the visual evidence collected to a concerned government officer and ask for action to be taken. This ranges from the village head to Block and District level officers. Simultaneously the Correspondent also mobilises the affected individual or community to come with them to the government office, and to advocate for themselves.

We've also been exploring other methods to help Correspondents create social change, which includes working with government mechanisms through campaigns, petitions, and meetings. A majority of the impacts involve getting communities entitlements like water, electricity, education and access to welfare schemes. A smaller but significant proportion of impacts are related to addressing systemic imbalances such as caste-based discriminations, gender based violence, and the continued lack of land rights for adivasi communities, among others.

## Our Correspondents' Greatest Impacts:



**Ameerka Devi has been running a human trafficking racket from the past 5 years**

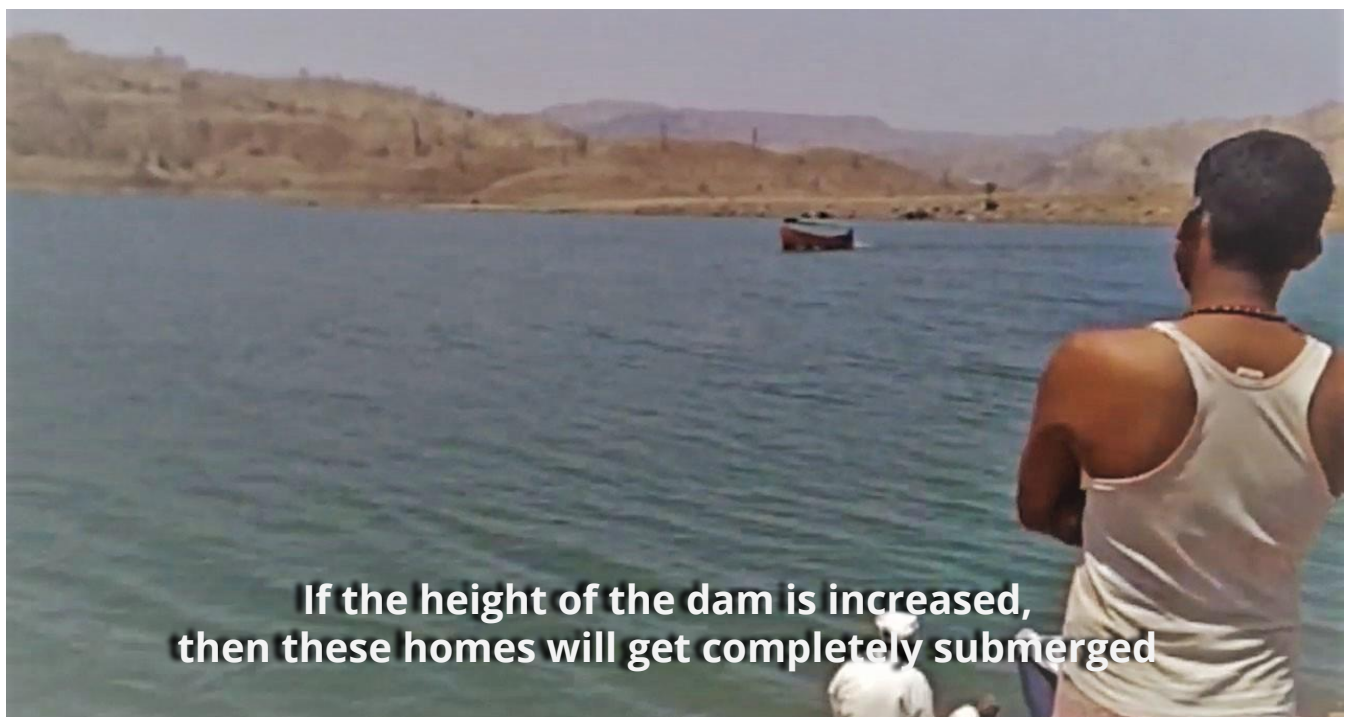
### Human Trafficking Racket Brought to a Halt:

Navita Devi started following the trail of a woman running a trafficking ring in early 2016. She documented two cases of trafficking that Ameerka Devi a.k.a Meena Devi had been involved in. Ameerka Devi and her gang of goons operated over an area that covered three blocks in Katihar District; hundreds, mostly women and children, had been trafficked to states like Uttar Pradesh. Katihar district in the East-Indian state of Bihar is a hotbed for human

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trafficking because of its proximity to Nepal and West Bengal. Navita Devi, has been reporting on the lack of basic facilities like schools and healthcare, and the effect of corruption on these communities since 2013. It was her ability to highlight such aspects of life in Bihar and bring justice to disenfranchised communities that made people confide in her about Ameerka Devi's trafficking racket.

Navita persisted despite being threatened by Ameerka Devi, and with little help from the apathetic government machinery. In one case, police refused to file a missing person's report for the woman and her children who had disappeared overnight because of Amreeka. Success finally came in May 2017 when Ameerka Devi was caught red-handed as she planned to traffic a 14-year-old-girl to Uttar Pradesh. This happened because the CC and some locals had been tracking her movements. The story exemplifies that networks built by CCs over time act as strong allies during difficult pursuits like Navita's. We've also selected this story because bringing trafficking agents to justice is a difficult process as corrupt officials are often involved in the racket. [Watch the video.](#)



## Land Rights for Families 23 Years after Being Displaced by Sardar Sarovar Dam:

Chetan Salve, a key member of the Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA) and a Video Volunteers Community Correspondent. He has been telling the stories of those worst affected by the Sardar Sarovar Dam in Nandurbar, Maharashtra. He has reported on the scale of displacement, the lack of rehabilitation, life after rehabilitation, and on the resultant

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environmental degradation in the area. Most recently, his reportage and activism helped rehabilitate 14 people from two villages. “It was difficult to see our land get submerged but we are happy now. I have cultivated cotton on the one hectare of land that I own and things will be fine if the yield is good,” says Vijay Bhau, whose family is amongst the 4,300 displaced from 33 villages in Maharashtra, predominantly from Nandurbar district. It took 23 years for the family to get ownership rights over the land promised to them under the project’s rehabilitation scheme.

Chetan produced a video on the issue and shared it on a support and resource group on Whatsapp– the Sardar Sarovar Project Right to Rehab. District authorities like the Collector and the Sub-Collector are all part of the group, helping citizens and activists take pertinent issues to government officials. The group also comprises journalists and activists from the NBA. The affected community also visited the District Collector with applications and the Andolan got together to stage a protest in the district. It took Chetan and the communities in Dhankhedi and Shivag Khed villages a year and two years, respectively, to get rights over the land they had been rehabilitated in. They have not been compensated for the years they spent living with uncertainty and insecurity. Unfortunately, the government is yet to rehabilitate over a 100 families in Maharashtra alone. [Watch the video.](#)

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## Indigenous Communities Finally get their Land Rights:

The Forest Rights Act, 2006 ensures that indigenous communities who have traditionally lived in and depended on forestland get access to rights to the land and to forest resources

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such as leaves and fruits. Such ownership of the land grants them the right to protect and preserve these forests. Communities like those in Sundarpahari, Jharkhand, face several challenges in accessing these rights. There is often conflicting information on procedures and a lack of transparency. In this scenario NGOs and civil society organisations have stepped in to create awareness on how the Act works. Salomi Hansda from Badlao Foundation, was central in initially mobilising residents of 11 villages in Sundarpahari to file claims in 2015.

Sensing a lack of response from the government machinery she called on Correspondent, Mary Nisha to document the matter. Mary herself is a veteran leader of the local Hasa Bhasa Movement, one that has been working hard to conserve the forests of the area from destruction by the hands mining projects. Together they held a silent protest outside the Circle Office responsible for giving out land titles. In July 2017 200 people from 11 villages got papers with their land rights. This is a huge achievement as Jharkhand has been particularly lax in implementing the Forest Rights Act. The state is also known for land-rights conflicts where tribal communities stand to lose their livelihoods when their land is diverted for industrial use like mining. [Watch the video.](#)



**Rajvati cannot speak because her throat is cut.**

## **Crowdfunding Campaign aids Recovery of Domestic Violence Survivor:**

In August 2016, Rajvati was attacked by her husband. It left her with a fractured voice box, and nerve damage, which means she will probably never speak properly. The attack was the culmination of the harassment she had faced from her husband and in-laws for more dowry.

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Rajvati's husband has been under arrest since, but no legal proceedings have started against him.

Rajvati hasn't received any compensation from the State under the anti-domestic violence laws, forcing her father to take huge loans for her medical treatment. A video made by CC Rekha Bhangre helped start a crowdfunding campaign. We raised over INR 1.5 lakh (USD 2225) to help Rajvati with her medical expenses. Rajvati's family has used the money to pay off debts from the first round of treatment and to buy a cow to give her milk (Rajvati can't eat any solid food). It has also been used to visit the All India Institute of Medical Sciences in Delhi. Rajvati is currently waiting for her surgery. Rekha Bhangre, has been helping the family deal with visits to the hospital and plans to accompany them for the final surgery too. She says that despite medical complications early in 2018, Rajvati was able utter a sound after almost a year and a half. We're all rooting for her recovery. [Watch the video.](#)

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## Flood Affected Farmers in Bihar Get Compensation:

West Champaran District is nestled on the border between India and Nepal. Repeated flood and droughts in the area have caused a constant agrarian crisis which is exacerbated by people's lack of awareness of their rights. Community Correspondent Tanju Devi, who reports from the region, has been documenting the issues that farmers in the area face since 2013. When Tanju started making a video on the devastation caused by the floods of 2017, she realised that the farmers were not aware that they should have been insured under government's compensation and insurance schemes. Had they done so, they wouldn't have been burdened by the additional debt.

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Tanju's efforts resulted in farmers understanding their rights and applying for compensation. It also got a government team to conduct a thorough survey, geo-tag the damaged fields and submit a report to the District Agriculture Office and the Block Development Office. A compensation amount of 400 rupees per katha (1360 sq ft) of land lost was deposited in the farmers' accounts after the block office approved of it. The entire process took six months". The next step is to get the damaged land levelled under MNREGA so that farmers can cultivate the next cycle of crops without further delay and debt", says Tanju, who is making a video to get the land levelled. Another step Tanju wants to work towards is to register the farmers of Harkatwa panchayat for the centre's crop insurance scheme. [Watch the video.](#)

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## 100 Informal Waste Pickers Get Identity Cards:

Kanitbai Yerode, along with many informal waste-pickers and sanitation workers, is one of the foot soldiers of the much-hyped Swachh Bharat Campaign. She performs the indispensable task of collecting recyclable waste from garbage dumps which eventually reach recycling factories. The work of her community remains unvalued.

Community Correspondent Maya Khodve made a video on the issues faced by waste-pickers like Yerode in Nashik, Maharashtra. Without any official recognition or government identity cards the women were discriminated against every day – rickshaw drivers denied them a ride, people called them 'filthy', accused them of stealing, and even set their dogs after them.

Maya is a former waste-picker herself and has since become an advocate for the community's rights. She took the matter up with the Municipal Commissioner of Nashik and

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urged him to recognise the women's work and issue identity cards to them. As a result the municipality issued cards for a 100 women. Maya is still organising the remaining waste-pickers of Nashik and trying to get the identity cards, as well as documents like Voter Identity Cards, which will entitle them to benefits under official schemes.

With official paperwork, the women hope they will be treated with more dignity and therefore increase their income. Waste-pickers in Nashik earn around 100 rupees a day, as against the [minimum wage of 200 rupees per day](#). On days when they were chased away or had their sacks confiscated, they didn't make any money. "Now, if people try to accuse the women of stealing, they can prove that they are legitimate workers", says Maya. She too hopes that people will begin to realise the important civic function waste-pickers perform.

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## Global Support for Kashmiri Man Disabled By Cross-firing:

In June 2017, Altaf Ahmad a resident of Aglar Pulwama, in the district of Pulwama, Kashmir, North India, was driving home from work on his bicycle. Living in Kashmir, one of the world's most heavily militarized zones, 1 Altaf became the victim of unlawful military action, when he got shot three times by members of the Indian military who took him for a militant. Altaf fell to the ground and was left for dead. CC Rayees Ahmad was able to convince Altaf to share his story. The focus of the video was on Altaf and how the incident has affected his family: their young child, Altaf's pregnant wife, and their highly uncertain future. On Facebook alone, it was shared 5000 times and seen by over 200,000 people. Support for Altaf and his family started pouring in.

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Enough money was raised for Altaf to undergo surgery (December 2017), cover the medical costs of the delivery of their second baby, and start a small shop. The video was also brought to the attention of the district commissioner of Pulwama district and reported to the police. Again, financial compensation was given, but no further investigation took place and the soldier firing the shots has never been prosecuted. The above is an [excerpt from an article in the Video4Change blog](#). [Watch the video](#).

## Enabling Local Impacts to Create Change at the State Level



Community Correspondents attempt to create change with each of their videos, usually showing it to a village or block level official to get a problem fixed. Recently, we've been trying out new advocacy methods to create change at the state or at least district level. The logic is, the more powerful the official who will listen to us, the bigger the change.

- **District Screening Events:** Community Correspondents held events to introduce their work to block and District level officials; build a rapport with them; and get help in solving community issues quickly.

**15 such events have been held in West Bengal and 27 in Jharkhand.**

- **In-Person Meetings with State Commissions and Ministries:** Members of our advocacy team presents (or follows up on) letters that compile information from multiple cases on a similar issue.

**16 meetings have been held and 20 letters sent to various departments.** They are enabling large-scale impact on issues. For example, by working with the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights, we resolved three cases each in Bihar and Jharkhand, one in West Bengal and several others are underway.

- **Testing the Effectiveness of the Bihar Public Grievance Redressal System (PGRS)** Bihar's PGRS is perhaps the most ambitious and well-designed government platform for grievance redressal in India. Anyone can file a complaint or query about entitlement violations, and everyone is guaranteed a hearing. We trained our CC's to use.

**30 such cases were filed by Correspondents. 15 cases have been resolved** resulting in improved access to water, appointment of staff at health centres, people getting their pensions, villages getting electricity, etc.



**Azim Premji  
Philanthropic  
Initiatives**

With support from APPI, we are experimenting with novel ways that Community Correspondents can improve service delivery through community mobilization.

Read more [here](#) about these innovative community media-based advocacy strategies.

## University of Virginia and MIT Research Study:



Dr Gabi Kruks-Wisner from the University of Virginia is carrying out an extensive field study of VV's work. Dr. Kruks-Wisner was struck by VV's high 'impact' ratio, in which about one in five IndiaUnheard videos manage to solve the problem they are about. Dr. Kruks-Wisner's specialty is citizen-state interactions in India, and she is studying VV to understand what motivates communities and government officials to take action to solve issues.

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Her project began with an exploratory research, in which over 50 of VV's correspondents were interviewed during the National Meet in August 2017. In 2018 four researchers traveled to Jharkhand and Bihar to carry out further research over two months. Then, four full time researchers were sent to Bihar and UP for 4 months, to shadow four Correspondents as they carry out their work.

This research will help us develop even more scalable models for community media. Alisa Zomer, Assistant Director at MIT Governance Lab, which is also a partner on the research, writes her impressions from an initial field visit to Bihar [here](#).



## Campaigns



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## A Campaign to Combat Human Trafficking



VV's new campaign uses community media to report on and create awareness about human trafficking in communities where trafficking is rampant. The **campaign tackles the problem that communities have very little information on how they can stop trafficking and get justice for victims of it.**

We've specially **designed video-talks**, and trained 12 Correspondents from high trafficking areas to conduct these polished, TED-style talks in their communities. These generate awareness on the rights of trafficked persons and their families; disseminate information about government officials and NGOs who can help in rescue and rehabilitation; and facilitate action plans in remote villages where trafficking is high. Some of our **CCs give this talk in local adivasi languages**. So this is the first time that some communities are hearing this information in a language they understand, through people they know.

The talks also aim to **prevent the stigmatisation** faced by rescued women and girls. The campaign ensures that the rights of the trafficked person and their family, and standard operating procedure after an incident of trafficking become common knowledge. At these talks, **CCs also gather information about past incidents of trafficking so that they can video-document and solve them**. We are working closely with other organizations to document new cases and rescue trafficked persons whose stories are told in VV reports.

**23 talks took place in Jharkhand and West Bengal this year.** The next step will be for communities to form anti-trafficking action groups in their villages. [Read the detailed report here.](#)

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## Case Study: Anti-Trafficking Talks Galvanise Action



Soria Banu works out of Maldah district, an area with notorious for trafficking. She was chosen as a Community Correspondent because of her work with Malda Sahojida Samiti, which gave her an in-depth understanding of the area and the issue. While working on trafficking cases from an office she found herself wondering if there would ever be a long-term solution. Soria organised three combat-trafficking talks between July and September 2018 with different women's groups, reaching about 80 women.

Thirty women from the local SHG group, including ASHA workers and housewives attended her first talk in Jadupur village, Kaliachak-1 block. She felt that these women could spread further awareness.

Soria explains that people know that trafficking happens but they think that only women or young girls are victims of it. They hadn't realised that kids in general or men can also fall prey to trafficking. Someone also shared a story of how 10 people recently went to Malaysia. The contractor told them that they have a visa for 16 months but turned out that it was only for 16 days. Someone shared the story of a girl who had been trafficked, which turned out to be one of the stories that Soria has already produced.

Soriya expressed that the best outcome of the talk was women talking about how they feel confident to fight agents and reach out to police and other organizations for help. The women resolved to stay vigilant and go to the police station together if a case of trafficking happens again. They said that contractors come often to their villages, but people usually pay no attention. They decided to take photos and carry out proper verification of such contractors in the future.

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The women really liked watching these videos, especially after they realised that they are all real-life incidents from communities like theirs, and some are made by Soria. They asked if Soria would support them if they alerted her to such cases in future. “I think it is great that they will have support, and that I too will be able to count on people from the community in the future.”

## Khel Badal: A Campaign to Dismantle Patriarchy



Our campaign, Khel Badal (change the game), has gone from strength to strength. The campaign uses video to enable people to expose patriarchy, question it, and dismantle it. The campaign was funded from July 2016 to December 2017 by UNFPA. 2017 was the major year of the campaign with 62 Community Correspondents conducting 311 out of a total of 408 discussion clubs in 2017. Between 2018-19 13 Community Correspondent will be conducting 156 clubs.

In this campaign, Correspondents formed discussion clubs in their villages that meet once a month to watch videos on patriarchy made by the network. After watching the video, the people gathered would talk about how they might have had similar experiences of facing patriarchy, or fighting it.

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## Khel Badal's Impact

So far 1000 people have regularly attended these discussion clubs. Over two years, we've seen how such sustained conversations on the ground still matter. These discussion clubs have empowered their members — both adolescents and adults — to negotiate and challenge patriarchy in their lives. We saw that many took a stand against patriarchy at home, at work, at school, in cultural and public spaces. For instance, members of a discussion club in Madhya Pradesh, run by Jahanara Ansari, ended up in a spontaneous demonstration outside the office of a senior government officer. Many of the women faced domestic violence at the hands of their drunk husbands, and young girls were harassed on the streets. The women demanded that strict action be taken against such miscreants so that girls could attend classes in peace and women would be safe at home. There were concrete acts, like a widow participating in her daughter's wedding against prohibitive social norms, as well as attitudinal changes like men acknowledging the importance of sexual consent.



### *Read Gender Lens, to learn more about KhelBadal*

We published [Gender Lens, a report](#) on ten years of our work with women and community media. It drew a bigger picture about how gender-sensitive community media can play a vital role in amplifying women's voices enabling them to advocate for themselves. It specifically examined the impact that VV's work has had on the lives of its female CCs and the communities they serve. Using in-depth interviews, it also gathered lessons and impacts from the Khel Badal campaign.

Creating this space for a dialogue between the gatekeepers of patriarchy and those trying to break the system has been a crucial impact of the campaign. For young girls the clubs were a chance to find allies. Many were already at stages in their lives when they are aching for lives that are different to their mothers and grandmothers. The club gave them a space to voice these ideas of freedom, of wanting to work, finding their own life-partners and so on. It gave them the tools to have these conversations at home so they could take control of their lives. For men it was a chance to question their privilege and to let go of it. Those in mixed groups heard a whole new perspective when they spoke to women of the same generation –realising for the first time how different their lives are.

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## Case Study: Shabnam Begum, Varanasi District

Ever since she joined the VV network in 2013, Shabnam Begum has pioneered the fight for women's rights in Varanasi District, Uttar Pradesh. At the beginning of the Khel Badal campaign she captured the [dynamics of relationships between husbands and wives](#) in a poignant video. The fact that the male subject of her video play-slaps his visibly pregnant wife sparked debates on patriarchy at every discussion club it was screened at across India.



Shabnam's work was one of four Indian NGOs documented by a crew from YouTube Social Impact for their Educate a Girl Campaign.

[See the video.](#)

We don't just cover problems, we show the solutions and impact as well.

Shabnam's work in the area has earned her a tremendous amount of respect. Women especially, want to be like Shabnam – confident, mobile, in charge of their own lives. She shares how conducting discussion clubs in the village have helped the women do this.

"Women, who earlier kept their daughters locked up at home because of the fear of censure asked me to help them enrol the girls in college and school again. A few older girls started computer classes while they waited for college to start. Because of these classes one girl now has a job in Himachal Pradesh and another one in the neighbouring city of Allahabad," she explains the transformation.



## Data Gathering & Data Journalism – Surveys for Action



In 2016 we launched our Surveys for Action program with the vision that community members should be able to monitor the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. With the SDGs, the Indian government has joined forces with nearly every government in the world in a commitment to end poverty by 2030. Yet, more than 40% of the SDG indicators lack reliable data to track progress.

Correspondents use their tablets to connect to an app through which we deploy questionnaires; the CC then conduct surveys in their communities.

## Some Highlights from the 13 Surveys conducted between April 2017- March 2019:

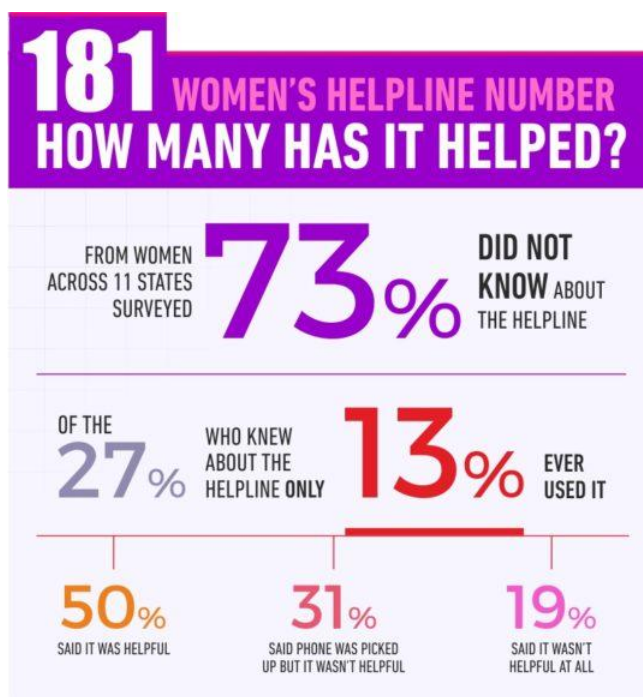


### Property for Her Perception Survey:

This survey was carried out in conjunction with "Property For Her", a national campaign for securing land and property rights for women in South Asia. VV conducted a perception survey spanning 71 districts across 10 states in India to find out what people think about a woman's rights over property, and if they are willing to fight for it. 74 CCs surveyed 280 people. 90% of the respondents felt that women should have property rights and 81% were willing to help a female relative or friend claim this right.

## Women's knowledge of 181 Helpline:

In 2013, the central government launched "181" as the national toll-free number for women's safety across the country. This helpline was one of the responses to the Nirbhaya rape case in December 2012. In some states, 1091 and 181 will be synchronized. The purpose of this survey was to find out how many women know about the helpline; whether they used it and whether it was helpful. 53 CCs surveyed 444 women.



## ATROCITIES AGAINST DALITS AND ADIVASIS RAMPANT IN INDIA



**64%**

faced discrimination or atrocity

490 people across 9 states from the SC/ST community were asked if they have faced atrocities.

45%

untouchability

15%

verbal abuse

12%

physical violence

10%

denied access to public places

7%

denied an economic opportunity

6%

social boycott

4%

damage to personal property

1%

sexual assault including rape

**21%**

filed a report with the police

**63%**

said the response of the police wasn't helpful

## Are Laws to Protect Minority Rights Functioning?

This survey was done to commemorate B.R Ambedkar's birth anniversary -- the architect of the Indian Constitution and a champion of Dalits. The survey aimed to analyse the prevalence of discrimination and atrocities against Dalits and Adivasis, and the effectiveness of the laws to prevent these. The survey was conducted with people who are either scheduled castes or scheduled tribes. 54 CCs surveyed 490 people from SC/ST community in 9 states. While 64% of the respondents said they'd faced some form of caste-based discrimination or atrocity, only 21% said they'd filed a police case.

## Monitoring the Public Distribution system in Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal:

In March 2018 we conducted a survey in 10 districts of Bihar to monitor the Public Distribution System, which guarantees the most disenfranchised communities right to food through subsidised rations. The survey was done specifically with Antodaya card holders -- given to the poorest of the poor families who live in complete financial uncertainty. We found that 54% of 208 respondents didn't get the rations they should have; 76% paid more than they needed to.



The Bihar Minister for Food & Civil supplies heard about it and requested for an even more detailed report - this time he wanted a month-wise break up of grains received by the card-holders. So, we conducted the second survey between July-August 2018 where we studied the food grain distribution for the months of March, April, May and June. We are now following up with the Ministry to ensure that the distributions scheme works without corruption in the state. Similar surveys were also conducted with Antodaya card holders, and Priority Household Card holders in Jharkhand and West Bengal.

Similar surveys were also conducted with Antodaya card holders, and Priority Household Card holders in Jharkhand and West Bengal.

## Monitoring the National Employment Guarantee Act:

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005 (MGNREGA) ensures livelihood security to households in rural India. It is a scheme sponsored by the Government of India and guarantees 100 days of employment to those who have MGNREGA job cards. The survey aimed to gather data in Jharkhand and West Bengal to find out whether or not individuals entitled to the scheme were in fact getting 100 days of guaranteed employment. Video Volunteers surveyed 83 MGNREGA job card holders in Jharkhand and 84 in West Bengal to find out the status of work allotted between April 2017 and March 2018. Our key finding suggests the majority of cardholders didn't get 100 days of employment.

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## Bringing Community-led Monitoring into the SDG Agenda



VV's unique perspective on community-led monitoring has been highly valued at several forums. We were invited to join the advisory committee for the project, 'Data-driven advocacy for gender equality and SDGs', implemented by SAHAJ and supported by Equal Measures (EM) 2030, and were also to the task team organizing the 'people' track at the Data4Dev festival in March 2018 by the Global Partnerships for Sustainable Development Data (GPSDD) held in Bristol. We're also on their citizen-generated data task team.




We are on the Monitoring Working Group at ESCR-net, and traveled to Mexico in February 2019 to work with ESCR-net members on principles for data-gathering that puts communities front and center.



We presented our model of Community Monitoring to Niti Aayog (the Indian agency tasked with setting the indicators for the SDGs) and representatives of several state governments, at an event organized by the National Foundation of India.



The International Council for Research on Women (ICRW) came on board as a research partner to Video Volunteers. UN Women India came on board as a supporting partner in a funding proposal and has agreed to explore opportunities to use the data we generate with governments, civil society and within the UN Women. White Ribbon Alliance has agreed to fund events for VV and WRA to conduct together in four cities including Delhi to promote community-led monitoring.



# Taking Community Media to the World



## Social Media Campaigns

Over the last two years VV has carried out 10 social media campaigns, to spread our content further and raise the visibility of our Correspondents. Some of these supported and amplified international and nationwide campaigns, and were run in partnership with other organisations.



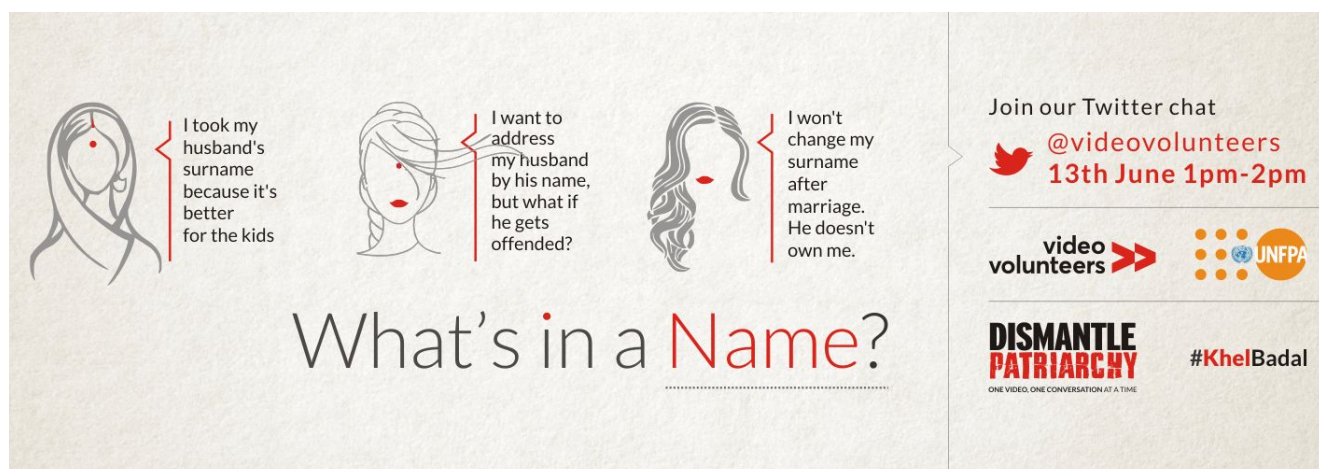
### Tools we Use in Social Media Campaigns

- Facebook Live
- Twitter chats
- Infographics using our community survey data
- Social media polls
- Video series on an issue
- Facebook slideshows
- Requests for the audience to send in testimonies
- Partnerships with other organisations to tap into their audiences

## This Year's Online Campaigns for KhelBadal, Dismantle Patriarchy

### What's in a Name?

This online campaign explored women's identity in the context of marriage. Many Indian women are discouraged from addressing their husband and in-laws by their first names. Instead they use pronouns or 'father of my child' supposedly to show respect. It is also the norm that women take their husband's surname after marriage. This one sided burden of



behavioural norms and practices reflect the subtle forms of patriarchal control, power and ownership that we have normalised in our everyday life. Our campaign brought together voices from urban and rural women who shared their experiences of facing these practices as well as their attempts to break conventions. We published an [article](#) about the issue that highlighted content sent in by VV facebook followers, and was covered in a [BBC article](#). The campaign culminated in a Twitter chat.



#### '#PropertyForHer: Why do Women Need to Own Property?'

This aimed to decode patriarchal norms behind property rights. Our two-week long online engagement around property rights for women, starting 11th October and leading up to a Twitter chat on 25th October, used data we received through the perception survey, which was conducted across 10 states by our CCs on the subject. It was published in the form of an infographic along with an [article](#) on the International Day of the Girl Child (11th October). A series of testimonies on property rights that our CCs sent in were used to invite our audience to share their stories in video or text format. A video of Kamla Bhasin, a prominent feminist, [speaking on property rights for women](#) helped contextualize the topic further. The campaign was run in solidarity with a campaign called #HerShare.



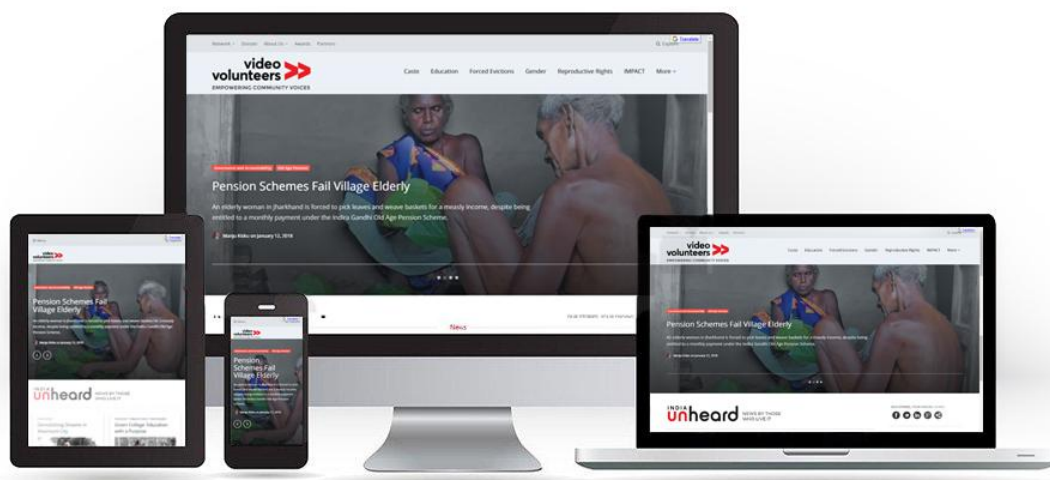
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## Beyond Assaults and Acid Attacks: Let's Talk About Violence against Women

This was an online campaign we ran in conjunction with UN Women for [16 Days of Activism](#). It was held to understand the need to talk about not just incidences of violence in the public sphere but also repression, control and oppression, which take place within the supposedly 'safe' space of homes as well. The campaign used video interviews of women from some of the discussion clubs being run across India to show how they face these challenges in their daily lives. As one [girl from Jharkhand asked](#): "Why do we girls have to be the carriers of a family's honour? Don't boys have any honour?" The campaign culminated in a Twitter chat on the 12th of December.

## The New Website: [www.videovolunteers.org](http://www.videovolunteers.org)

The number of views and growing engagement we're getting across platforms shows steady progress towards achieving our goal of getting a large audience for our content.



In March 2017 VV launched a new brand image and website, with pro bono support from Ogilvy India. The site was built to showcase the power of community media, its ability to change lives, and to make VV a destination for high quality content on social issues.

We currently publish three videos a week. While our goal is to ensure that hyperlocal issues become a part of the national discourse, it can be challenging to cultivate an audience for these stories in the overcrowded digital space. Therefore the videos we publish on our website are carefully selected and packaged for a national and international audience, and only the best content goes on the site, along with an article.

There was excellent overall growth in website visitors and time spent on the VV website, particularly for mobile users. Compared to 2015-17, there was a 268% increase in page views on mobiles. Adwords (paid search) is one of the VV website's biggest traffic sources. We were challenged towards the end of 2017 when Adwords changed their policies, reducing traffic to

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the VV website. These policy changes are expected to further impact the number of visitors who visit the VV website. However, we expect a higher number of 'quality' users - that is people who are actually interested in VV content. This will be reflected in page views and the time people spend on the website.

After Adwords, organic search is the second highest traffic driver to the VV website. It is important to optimise our content for search engines (SEO) using relevant and specific keywords we know are popular, as well as hyperlinks, so that people looking for news or information on issues VV covers can find the VV website. In 2017 we began systematically implementing SEO tactics in the following areas: Adwords, video tags, keyword integration into website articles and in meta fields on Wordpress and images. Adwords was easiest to implement and showed the highest success. Implementing popular keywords in video tagging and written content has been more challenging.

### Comparing 2015-17 to 2017-19:

- Page views increased by **36% increase** on desktop and **268% increase** on mobile
- Total new users have increased and people are viewing our website more on mobile than desktop. New website viewers on mobile **increased by 111%** while those on desktop decreased by 32%
- The bounce rate on the website **reduced by 76%**

### VV's New Editorial Process Drives Success

Our editorial unit, which is made up of producers and communications team at the Goa office, is focused on making sure that the best content gets showcased, and gets maximum traction. These strategies, along with a focus on improving the quality of our content and digital collaterals, led to a substantial increase in audience engagement between April 2017 and March 2018.

**YouTube:** [www.youtube.com/videovolunteers/](http://www.youtube.com/videovolunteers/)

Videos which have greater hyperlocal relevance are published on the VV YouTube channel.

Since 2017 we focused less on production quantity and more on production quality and impact. We also implemented new tactics such as including designed end plates and annotation cards, and optimised keywords for tags. Overall, our strategies yielded excellent results with substantial channel growth.

Over the year we monitored which issues people found most interesting based on which videos had the highest views. The top themes were government schemes, particularly MGNREGA stories, and videos from Jammu & Kashmir.

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Our success on YouTube attracted the attention of the YouTube Impact Lab that reached out to us. They informed us that we are one of the 100 biggest non-profit YouTube channels in the world, and the biggest in India. They find VV particularly interesting because unlike some of the other non-profit YouTube channels that use the platform merely as a place to re-share broadcast content, VV's content is produced in a manner consistent with the core ethos of YouTube – every person in the world being able to produce and share content. The Impact Lab invited VV to Delhi to discuss possible collaborations and projects we could do together, aimed at addressing an issue of concern to them, which is the fact that only around 21% of YouTube users in India are female.



**In November 2018 VV was one of X organisations that won the YouTube News Innovations Grant. This will focus on allowing us to move to a fixed programming schedule and to produce shows.**

Comparing 2015-17 to 2017-19 our average monthly **views increased by 546%**. For the same period we saw **an 857% increase in YouTube Subscriptions**.

After reviewing analytics of this period and working with YouTube strategists, we have started brainstorming news ways to produce and package our videos that are highly consumable and that make audiences return to our channel. We are working on new video formats, more programmatic and series-style videos, and possibly even new channels created by and dedicated to our most inspiring correspondents, as heroes of their communities.

We're also working to find creative ways to get over the language challenge that video poses in India, a country with more than 22 official languages. We began experimenting with putting titles and descriptions in English and a local language, to see if that makes our content more discoverable to non-English speakers, a huge segment of the 'newly online' in India, who are very underserved in terms of locally relevant, public interest news content. We're also considering launching language-specific YouTube channels.

## Regional Facebook Pages

We launched Facebook pages for 9 of our main states to expand our reach and engage audiences at a hyperlocal level, in regional languages. The content encourages healthy debates on state-specific issues and allows us to decentralise our distribution process, giving the creators of content greater control over its distribution. These pages are also the primary distribution platforms for Community Correspondents' Mojo videos.

<p>उत्तर प्रदेश <b>अनहर्ड</b></p> <hr/> <p>UTTAR PRADESH <b>unheard</b></p>	<p>महाराष्ट्र <b>अनहर्ड</b></p> <hr/> <p>MAHARASHTRA <b>unheard</b></p>	<p>छत्तीसगढ़ <b>अनहर्ड</b></p> <hr/> <p>CHHATTISGARH <b>unheard</b></p>	<p>मध्य प्रदेश <b>अनहर्ड</b></p> <hr/> <p>MADHYA PRADESH <b>unheard</b></p>
<p>झारखंड <b>अनहर्ड</b></p> <hr/> <p>JHARKHAND <b>unheard</b></p>	<p>पश्चिमवङ्ग <b>आनहर्ड</b></p> <hr/> <p>WEST BENGAL <b>unheard</b></p>	<p>ଓଡ଼ିଶା <b>ଅନହର୍ଡ</b></p> <hr/> <p>ODISHA <b>unheard</b></p>	<p>बिहार <b>अनहर्ड</b></p> <hr/> <p>BIHAR <b>unheard</b></p>



*"I post these videos on Facebook and send these to [government] officers on WhatsApp, so that they can see the community issue immediately. I am very active on WhatsApp; I share current information with them. It is an easy way to connect with others and increase community members' engagement; they respond well to the videos on social media. If the video is of a serious issue, I send it to the senior authorities so that they can see the issue. We often do not need to visit the government offices in person, social media does it for us,"*

– Saroj Paraste, Madhya Pradesh

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## Working With the Mainstream Media

Over the last two years VV has carried out 10 social media campaigns. Some of these supported and amplified international and nationwide campaigns, and were run in partnership with other organisations.



### **23 stories sold to mainstream media partners:**

Our paid media partners included Firstpost, Newslandry, Quint, IndiaSpend, and the Wire. Our media partners were most interested in the maternal health videos we produced with the White Ribbon Alliance, followed by stories from Kashmir. Stories on human trafficking and caste-discrimination also found buyers.

The number of stories we sold is higher than previous years, however, it is still small. The main challenge is that our stories aren't always in line with news cycles, as they represent community needs, and they focus on rural areas, where few mainstream channels focus their energies as ad revenue from there is lower.



### Our Partnership with NDTV

NDTV commissioned VV to produce content for their series, Every Life Counts. Nine Community Correspondents were trained at the beginning of 2017 to develop stories over several months. The CCs would enable NDTV to get access to stories in hard-to-reach parts of the country. The produced short segments and half-hour shows are then aired on NDTV 24x7 and NDTV India. Every Life Counts is funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. 6 videos were produced as part of this.

### Our Stories were regularly featured in:

Firstpost.



GlobalVoices

newslaundry.com

THE  
WIRE



### Notable Press Coverage on Video Volunteers:

Reporting for Community

Business Standard

Video Volunteers are bringing new angles to the news in India



"On YouTube only 20 per cent users are women":  
Jessica Mayberry



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## VV's Stories in the Mainstream Media:

The 'Dirt-Carriers' of Gujarat: India's Forgotten People



In India, some women use soil and ash to soak up periods



Nombres prohibidos: las tradiciones que anulan a las mujeres en el mundo



Calling your husband by name for the first time



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## Thought Pieces and Talks by the VV Team:

Dismantling Patriarchy in the Heart of India | Jessica Mayberry

VOICE MALE

One Death, Three Stories About Sickness and Starvation in Jharkhand | Jessica Mayberry

THE WIRE

The core question is being ignored, repeatedly | Sajad Rasool

The Background

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The VV team delivered a number of talks over the year. Two notable talks are:

The Entertainment Industry Is Missing out on the Grassroots Media Revolution | Jessica Mayberry at the VideoNXT Conference |



Mute Spectators of Democracy | Stalin K. at TedX





# The Importance of strong Civil Society Partnerships



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At VV we strive to build alliances with like-minded organisations to increase the impact of our work. Throughout the year our staff interacted with other organisations to build coalitions to strengthen grassroots advocacy on issues like indigenous rights, stopping forced evictions and human trafficking; to find new Community Correspondents; and to train organisations in videography and photography.

Staff represented VV at national and global forums such as the Symposium on Alternative Media; the ESCR-Net meeting on Corporate Capture; and Dalit Women Speak Out, among others.

VV's Directors attended the video4change network meeting in Sri Lanka, which coincided with the Global Voices Summit. Both were large gathering attended by several hundred people working to protect freedom of expression to democratizing the media. Stalin was also at the Global Voices Summit, hired as a consultant to facilitate their strategy design workshop involving more than 100 Global Voices bloggers from dozens of countries that took place over two days.

## Video Advocacy Partnerships with Civil Society Organisations:



**Vikalp Sangam**, an NGO that works with grassroots communities who have developed alternative initiatives, commissioned VV for a second year to produce stories that celebrate rural innovations and local successes. This year VV produced 17 videos documenting alternative practices and solutions. This included reviving traditional agriculture, garbage management solutions, innovations in media at the grassroots, and incorporating art and lessons on governance into working with children. These videos were published and distributed to the media by VV, and to networks of individuals working on alternative practices by Vikalp Sangam.



**White Ribbon Alliance**, one of the world's largest network of reproductive health advocates and organizations, commissioned a set of videos that focus on demanding respectful and dignified maternal healthcare in India. VV has produced 14 videos documenting the implementation of schemes for maternal healthcare and infants, stress the need for monitoring from the ground-up by village councils and local citizens' monitoring committees. We are also making positive stories to show examples of what's working. These steps will encourage more women to seek healthcare rather than be sceptical of it.

*VV charges civil society organizations fees for producing videos when they have the capacity to pay. However, VV does not charge grassroots social movements that are driven by volunteers.*

## Awards and recognitions for our work



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*It was thrilling to see most of the recognition going directly to the Correspondents – a true sign of their growth as leaders*



Video Volunteers was chosen as one of three finalists for the [Social Entrepreneur of the Year Award](#), 2018. The award is given by Jubilant Bhartia Foundation and the Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship



Video Volunteers won the [Sandvik India Gender Awards](#) for the Khel Badal Campaign. The award grant has enabled us to continue our campaign in 2018-19.



Correspondent Nadia Shafi won the [Martha Farrell Award for Excellence in Women's Empowerment](#) 2018. Video Volunteers was also shortlisted as a finalist for the award in the organisation category while another CC, Reena Ramteke, was among five semi-finalists for the award in the individual category.



The [U.S. Consulate General Mumbai](#) felicitated our Community Correspondent and Maharashtra State Coordinator Rohini Pawar at its 4th Women's Safety and Empowerment Film Contest marking the UN's [#16daysofactivism](#) against gender-based violence. Eight selected films were screened and Rohini's film declared the runner-up after an on-the-spot voting in which over 600 people participated.

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Our CC's filmmaking skills were recognised at the [CMS Vatavaran Fest](#), an annual wildlife and environment film festival and forum. We won award in the following categories:



**Dhashrati Behera** won in the 'Livelihoods' category: [Seeds of Life: A Quiet Revolution at the Foothills of Niyamgiri](#)

The [Samvaad Film Festival](#), which is part of a four-day celebration of tribal culture, felicitated **Dashrati Behera** with an award for his video.

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**Yashodhara Salve** won in the 'Sustainable Technologies' category: [Solar Energy, a Cash Crop for Gujarat Farmers](#)



Community Correspondent **Jahanara Ansari** won an award for child welfare related work.

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Community Correspondent **Gayatri Ambedkar** received a fellowship from the [National Foundation of India](#) to continue her work with Dalit girls who face sexual violence. [CREA](#) has given her a grant to bring vital information about access to safe abortion to rural women.



[Ankur Film Festival](#) gave **Chetan Salve**, a CC from Maharashtra, a certificate of excellence and felicitation of honour for his tireless efforts amongst communities affected by the Narmada Dam. The film festival is organised by Abhivyakti, a media for development organisation.



**Sajad Rasool**, State Co-ordinator and Producer at Kashmir Unheard, has been chosen as a [2019 Acumen Fellow](#). Sajad is one of 104 extraordinary leaders selected from 13 countries and 50 cities across the world.



# Network National Meet

August 19th to 23rd, 2017





Our entire network of nearly 300 people gathered in Goa in August 2017 for five days for our National Meet. This biennale gathering is an occasion to celebrate our achievements, forge new solidarities, and showcase our work to other organizations. Over five days, we shared successes (both individual and community), learnt about each other, learnt new skills like doing surveys, and improving MoJo. This was also a chance to collectively look at where we could improve our work and do course-corrections where necessary.





We were joined by a number of guests during the national meet which included a team from the U.S Embassy Mumbai who met our CCs, B.V Rao, Editor at Firstpost, spoke about the mainstream media; and Dhanashree Brahme, National Programme Specialist, Gender, UNFPA spoke about strategies to dismantle patriarchy.



Former VV Board Member and former CNN National Correspondent, Deborah Feyerick attended the National Meet, and shared her experiences in a letter to the board: **“These personal stories, like so many others I witnessed, represent the deep impact VideoVolunteers & India Unheard are having across India.”**

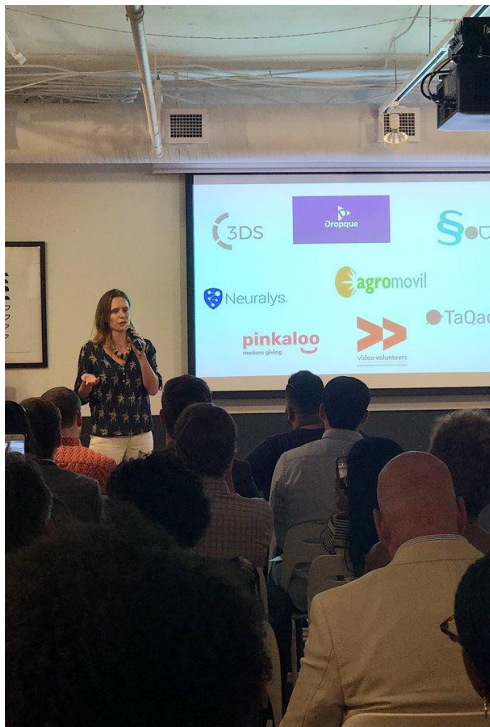
For the correspondents I met, solving problems in their communities began the moment they began to question the status quo in their own lives. They are challenging age-old traditions that have created a culture of crippling inequality in the modern-age and they do it in many cases despite pressure from families and communities whose power relies on those archaic traditions.

For VV's community correspondents the act of challenging the status quo has empowered to find their voice and purpose. They are taking control of their own stories and, as a result, tackling stories of injustice in their communities. They are making meaningful change and inspiring and empowering others to live deeper lives.”



We're Excited to Announce...

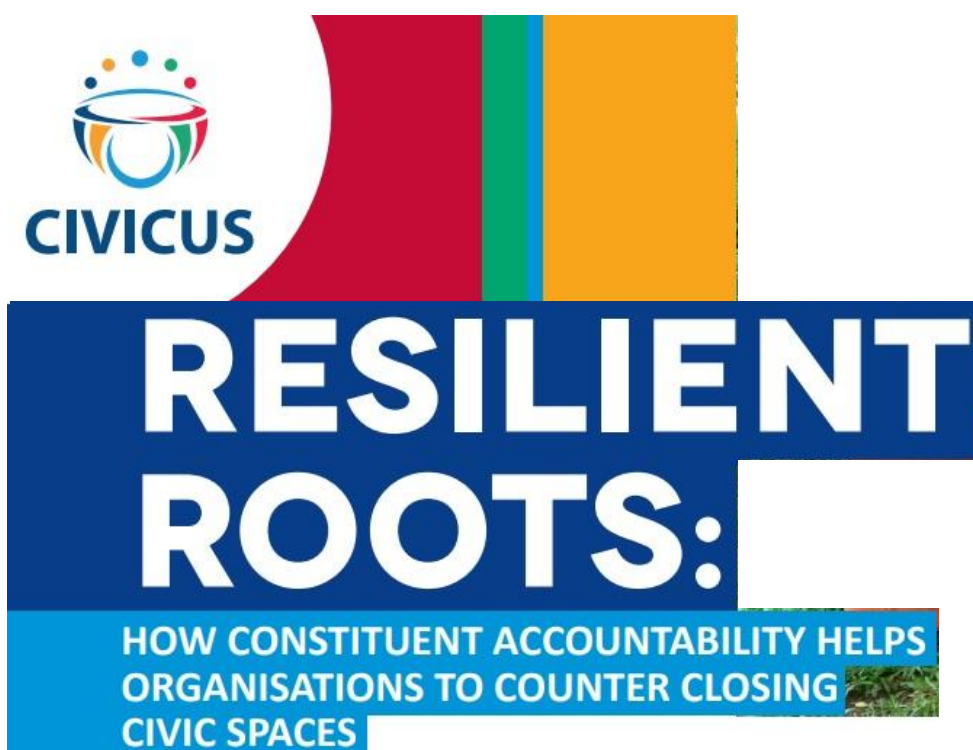




## VV at the PeaceTech Accelerator:

4 VV Board Members took part in the PeaceTech Accelerator in 2018 in Washington D.C. Over eight weeks, they planned how to expand VV's citizen journalism network to the U.S, which is a goal for 2020 and beyond.

"Think about a storyteller in Flint, Michigan for example," said former CNN Correspondent Deborah Feyerick in VV's pitch. "We went to YouTube and we identified a video that was uploaded a full year before the national media had picked up on the contaminated water coming out of pipes. We believe that had someone been able to tell that story using the model of Video Volunteers, the problem would have been identified sooner." Watch VV's pitch video [here](#).



## CIVICUS Resilient Roots:

Civics' hypothesis, in a project they are doing with VV and 14 other organizations organizations around the world, is this: organizations that are more accountable to their primary constituents are more resilient in the face arising from the closure of civil space. Through the project, we are learning to co-create VV's future with our CCs (our primary constituents), by bringing their needs and knowledge back into the center of everything we do. Specifically, we are identifying several recurring internal & external problems--related to HR/organizational processes as well as field realities- that our primary constituents keep raising. We are attempting to solve them one by one in new ways, based on feedback and solutions given by the Correspondents themselves.

The measurable goal is for us to increase our retention of the Correspondents and the wider goal is to get new insights into our program design and community media in India, by finding new ways to 'listen' to our Correspondents. It will make us a stronger organization that is driven, to an even greater degree, by the needs of our Correspondents.



## Change Chitra: A Documentary Filmmaking for Social Activism Programme:

ChangeChitra is a year-long programme mentoring 60 young people in documentary filmmaking for social activism, supported by the US Embassy New Delhi.

Participants in this immersive programme are learning filmmaking and editing techniques at three residential workshops of six days each. They get additional online mentorship while making their films between workshops. We've lined up award-winning filmmakers from India and the US to conduct the trainings.

The programme is a unique opportunity for us at VV because for the first time in many years we're going back to our roots of documentary filmmaking; we're also working with young people from urban areas.

With the first round of workshops completed in March 2019, we can't wait to see the what amazing films the participants come up with.



## Community Correspondent Amit Topno

In the wee of hours of 8-9 December 2018, Amit Topno, our Community Correspondent from Khunti, Jharkhand was shot dead. Amit had been with Video Volunteers (VV) since 2012. He also reported for Newscode and OK Times and most recently also drove a taxi for Ola Cabs.

Amit reported fearlessly on issues like sand mining, illegal alcohol sales, adivasi rights, education, sanitation, human trafficking, land rights and culture. His last report for VV was produced six months ago on the Pathalgadi, a movement in which adivasi communities across Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh are asserting their right to self governance.

Though Amit had not informed us of any threat or danger to him in the last 18 months, it cannot be ruled out that he was murdered because of his work as a journalist and social activist, raising issues affecting communities on the margins and working in an area, where conflict over land, resources is rife.

Video Volunteers along with friends and family members of Amit Topno demand a swift and thorough investigation into his murder and that the culprits are brought to justice.

Read the full story [here](#).



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**Thank you** to all our board members, staff members, funders, partners and Community Correspondents who made these accomplishments possible.

*For more information on our activities, please contact*  
***info@videovolunteers.org***