



Dear Friends

Our big social experiment, to bring together our Community Producers with activists, students, researchers, journalists and NGOs in an interactive and educational camp, was a great success!

With over 250 applications — way more than we could accommodate -- from around India and overseas, it was clear that VV's work in community video has really created a buzz here.

For five days in August, 2009, VV hosted 130 people for five days of video workshops, panel discussions, presentations, focus groups, movie screenings and networking. Participants attended workshops on blogging, silent film, animation, music video and creative camera — all the while catching up with old and new friends, and for many Community Producers, staying in a hotel and touching the ocean for the first time.

One aim was to create an environment where community producers and college graduates learned side by side. “When I saw the Community Producers’ videos, all my stereotypes went away. I had no idea they would be making films better than our own student projects,” said Utpal Bhattacharjya, a volunteer at the camp who came to learn about community media as a possible career. With so many people telling them how inspired and impressed they were with their work, the Community Producers’ belief in themselves as agents of change grew by leaps and bounds.



The instructors included a communications person from the Obama campaign teaching digital activism to Community Producers, some of whom some were using the Internet for the first time, and noted Indian documentary filmmakers. There were three distinct languages in the classrooms, and it

was almost comical how translators had to keep coming back and forth from groups.

“It is really nice that they have brought outsiders to train us,” said Zubair, a

“because we feel like we are going to the next level of our technical training. I am really happy that they got professionals to train us this time. Arjun Bali is a Bollywood director! To learn from him was really great!”

Many of our Community Producers are from disadvantaged communities, or placed in positions of subservience by the misfortune of their birth -- as women or Dalits. For them being involved in CVUs is more than a job, it has meant being more in control of their life.

“I showed people in my village a film about migration and told them that we did not have to leave the village for work. Under a new government law, we are entitled to 100 days of daily work each year. I led 300 people in a rally to the government office, demanding work. Even when they tried to throw us – and the camera – out, I persisted. The next day, we were all given work,” recounted Neeru, from the CVU Apna Malak Ma, breathlessly.

Bipin, who works in an all-Dalit CVU in Gujarat, and who recently married a Community Producer from Mumbai whom he met at a previous VV gathering, told a journalist, “the most important change in me is that I wanted to marry a woman I respected, one who worked with me. That’s why I married Yashodra. I cannot imagine marrying a woman who doesn’t think for herself.”

Rajen Varada from UNESCO told us, “What you guys have here is the groundswell of support from the grassroots. This is the thing that is missing from other similar efforts. Now if you can keep growing this groundswell, and simultaneously others can work at a policy level to gain more support for programs that empower people with a voice, then real change can be created.”

NGOs came to the Camp because they wanted to learn a new tool to spread awareness and stimulate action. They left understanding that community video is not just a project, it is a new way to create permanent grassroots leadership in slums and villages. Snippets of conversation heard around the dinner tables all screamed one thing: This is the beginning of a social movement.

You can read the full blog on the [CV Camp](#). VV is [blogging](#) more regularly, so sign up to receive new blogs as an email.

Are you interested to work in a dynamic new media org? [Video Volunteers India is hiring!](#)



[Contribute](#) to VV — donations received this month online will go towards putting on the next CV Camp

Want to learn more about Community Video? [Volunteer with VV](#)

Jessica is a [TED India](#) Fellow. If you are going to TED India please be in touch!

Thanks for reading!

Jessica, Stalin and the VV Team

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