

# 1

## Using Video for Advocacy

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In 1995, I was working as an attorney doing civil rights work in Washington, DC. A friend returned from a trip to Siberia, where he had been investigating the illegal trade in tiger pelts. Undercover, and in the midst of discussions on a sale, the traffickers had offered to sell him women. He asked me if I wanted to help him do something about it. I said I would spend some time after-hours researching the issue and see what I thought about getting involved.

Two weeks later, I resigned from my job as a civil rights attorney and camped out at his office, telling him that I would wait tables if necessary until we raised the money to support our proposed campaign into the illegal trafficking of women for forced prostitution out of Russia.

And so, my adventure in video advocacy began. Just over two years later, we released the film *Bought & Sold: An Investigative Documentary About the International Trade in Women*, a documentary based on our investigation, which received widespread media coverage, including BBC, CNN, ABC, *New York Times*, and *Washington Post*—and significant results internationally in terms of policy change.

*Bought & Sold* integrated an unusual mix of video. There was undercover footage shot with miniature tie cameras in meetings with the Russian mafia—gathered while we posed as foreign buyers interested in purchasing women to work as prostitutes. And there were conversations with women around the world who had been forced into the sex trade. Additional interviews with counselors and advocates helped frame the key issues surrounding trafficking and conveyed recommendations to policy-makers.

What made *Bought & Sold* influential internationally was that it was ground-breaking in the information it revealed in a powerful visual medium. At the same time it could be used in screenings before a broad array of audiences, including law enforcement, NGOs working to meet the needs of women, girls and women at risk for recruitment, and a range of policy-makers worldwide.



*Figure 1.1* Undercover footage shot for *Bought & Sold* (Global Survival Network/WITNESS)

Video has several strengths that convinced us that it was worth the considerable time, energy and resources required to integrate it into our work. We recognized that video could elicit powerful emotional impact, connecting viewers to personal stories. It can illustrate stark visual contrasts and provide direct visual evidence of abuses. It can be a vehicle for building coalitions with other groups working on an issue. It can reach a wide range of people since it does not require literacy to convey information. It can help counter stereotypes and assist you in reaching new, different and multiple audiences, particularly if broadcast is a possibility. And it can be used in segments of varying lengths for different contexts.

But even given its strengths, video isn't right for every campaign or organization. For one thing, it is a very time-consuming and potentially expensive endeavour. Additionally, at WITNESS we often talk about whether or not an issue lends itself to being conveyed convincingly with images and compelling human stories. Are the images accessible, or are the risks and difficulty of obtaining them obstacles you may not be able to overcome? When assessing whether to use video, even more important than the strength of the images themselves is the power of the stories they help convey. A video is only as powerful as its ability to touch the people that watch it, to

connect them to the experience of the people portrayed in the film, and to motivate them to get involved to make a difference. Do you have access to the people and the stories you will need to make your video compelling, engaging, and powerful?

This chapter provides a brief strategic overview of some of the key themes echoed throughout this book and helps you begin to analyze whether and how you may integrate video into your advocacy work. I will draw on my own experiences between 1995 and 1998 in launching the video advocacy campaign on trafficking in women, and on the experiences of many other social justice video advocates around the world. I also recommend you look at the “WITNESS Video Action Plan” (see Appendix I) for a more formal step-by-step, question-by-question guide to the process of incorporating video into your advocacy.

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So, to begin with, when we talk about “video advocacy,” what do we mean?

“Video advocacy” is the process of integrating video into an advocacy effort to achieve heightened visibility or impact in your campaign.



*Figure 1.2* Women interviewed for a film by RAWA, filmed in Afghanistan shortly after the fall of the Taliban (RAWA/WITNESS)

## 4 Video for Change

“Advocacy” is the process of working for a particular position, result or solution. For example, in an environmental context, you might advocate to prevent the construction of a sewage treatment plant in a poor neighborhood. In a human or civil rights context, you might advocate to stop a woman from being stoned to death for infidelity to her husband or to press for a change in laws to enhance women’s rights. In a community context, a group may mobilize support for the construction of a new school.

All these efforts represent different kinds of advocacy, and each advocacy campaign requires its own analysis of several important factors to lay the groundwork for success. For example, who is in the best position to help you get what you are looking for? How can you be most influential with that audience? What arguments, stories or evidence should you present? At what time and in what place?

When considering whether or how to integrate video into your advocacy work, the process can be broken down into five key steps:

- Step 1: Define your goals.
- Step 2: Talk to other people who have worked on the issue you want to tackle. What has worked, what hasn’t, and why?
- Step 3: Analyze your style and strengths, and identify your allies.
- Step 4: Define your audience and think through how to communicate your message to them—your format, style and the “messenger”).
- Step 5: Decide on a level of involvement and start planning production and distribution.

### Step 1: Define your goals

By 1995, trafficking in women for forced prostitution had been going on for centuries, but trafficking out of Russia into Asia, Western Europe and the US was a new and growing business in the wake of the fall of the Berlin Wall. We knew that written and video exposés on trafficking from Asia and Latin America had been generated, but noted that they had not received adequate attention from the US government or the international community. We hoped that a campaign focused on an area of strategic interest to the US (that is to say, the former Soviet Bloc), and the introduction of powerful undercover investigative video, would garner fresh attention for the problem on a global level. Our first goal, then, was to address

a fundamental ignorance about the scope and dimensions of the human trafficking industry, which was valued to be as lucrative as the international trade in drugs and guns. We wanted to educate government and a broader public about the issue.

A second related goal was to campaign for laws and law enforcement responses to trafficking that would ensure that women were treated fairly in the legal process. For example, we wanted to be sure they were offered adequate support in a language they could understand, that they received a stay of deportation and time to consider whether to provide testimony against the trafficking rings, that they were offered witness protection where necessary, and that they received assistance to meet their basic needs in terms of housing, counseling, health care and other support once trafficking was identified as the underlying problem.

A third goal was to increase funding to support locally based organizations in Central and Eastern Europe that could provide education and support to women at risk, or already caught in the trafficking system.

All these goals were thoroughly analyzed and understood before we began our investigation and our filming—and we referred to them continually throughout the process to be sure that our original aims coincided with our newly gained perspectives and experience and that we were gathering compelling arguments for making the changes we were recommending.

The first question to ask, then, when thinking about a video advocacy strategy is: *What problem are we trying to resolve, and what solutions will we be proposing?* For example, in a human or civil rights campaign it is important to determine early on whether changes in the legal system are required or whether, instead, the campaign is about addressing the failure of the system to enforce or comply with laws already on the books. In most cases, there will be national as well as international laws, treaties and conventions that prohibit the abuses you have identified, and the focus of your campaign will be on documenting and highlighting the violations taking place and pressuring the responsible parties to take action to stop the abuse. In other instances, the solution to your problem may not lie in the legal system but in community solidarity or collective action, or in persuading particular individuals that it is in their best interests to behave or act in a different way. It is in the process of bringing the human experience of a situation or problem to life, and

in presenting it powerfully to key audiences, that video can play an important role.

**Step 2: Talk to other people who have worked on the issue you want to tackle. What has worked, what hasn't, and why?**

As I mentioned above, our early research revealed that several other documentary films had been produced on trafficking, with a focus on the experience in Southeast Asia, but that those films had not generated the responses advocates were looking for on a national or international level. Perhaps cynically, and perhaps realistically, part of our assumption was that a documentary video that highlighted the experience of Caucasian women trafficked from Russia would generate greater public attention and visibility within US government circles, and that once we got their attention we could educate regarding the broader global problem. We also noted that there was a relative lull in advocacy on trafficking within the US at the time.

It is very important to get a sense of the “landscape” surrounding the issue you want to address. Very few successful advocacy campaigns occur in isolation—many individuals and organizations, often from different parts of the world, play a role in influencing the course of events.

Community groups and nongovernmental organizations often fail to collaborate as effectively as they could or should—whether because of competition for scarce resources, personality differences, ego, or political differences regarding recommendations for reform. Wherever possible, learn from the work that other advocates are doing and find ways to reinforce each other with the video material you produce. The more tactical and collaborative you are in your thinking around problems and solutions, the more likely you are to succeed—and the more allies you will have developed who are vested in using your video to help advocate alongside you. In our case, we researched and communicated with dozens of key organizations already working around the world to address the problem, and we learned from their experiences. We involved them in the process of producing our video by conducting on- and off-camera interviews and soliciting their advice on key recommendations for reform. The inclusive process of production we developed helped to solidify their connection to the video as a resource they could use to support their work.

### Step 3: Analyze your own style and strengths, and identify your allies

It is important to be as objective and clear-sighted as possible in analyzing your style and strengths. In our case, we were a small, underfunded start-up. There were two of us working together on a very ambitious, multinational campaign—and my colleague was only working part-time on it. We had no reputation or experience in the national or international community on the issue. In fact, we didn't even have nonprofit status in the US and our sponsor for tax purposes was the Marine Mammal Fund, a group with a history of working on trade in endangered species. Needless to say, it wasn't easy to establish our credentials for conducting an undercover investigation on the Russian mafia!

It was therefore clear from the outset that we would need to take a highly collaborative approach to our work. There was no sense in reinventing the wheel, since so much important policy work and analysis had already been done. And we needed credible allies. The point was to draw on the strong groundwork that had been done by international coalitions such as the Global Alliance Against Trafficking in Women. We found the international community very receptive to our requests for interviews and information, and rarely came across what can sometimes be described as “territorial” behavior among nonprofit and nongovernmental organizations. Your approach is very important, and of course influences the response you receive.

The strength of the material we researched, the insatiable media interest in it, and the added credibility we gained by recruiting several well-placed experts as part of our advisory committee, opened the necessary doors and landed us in the autumn of 1997 with the ear of top advisers in the Clinton administration in the US, when we helped them craft the first multi-agency task force on trafficking. We were also able to work with our colleagues in the movement to draft a resolution for the late Senator Paul Wellstone that became the basis for a bipartisan Trafficking Victims Protection Act that passed the US Congress in 2000. And we became the only NGO partner for the Open Society Institute/Soros Foundation on a regional initiative in Central and Eastern Europe to train, fund, and support NGOs to work on trafficking.

What helped make our distribution campaign internationally successful was our commitment to involving a range of key players throughout the process—they reviewed scripts and rough cuts and

their voices were heard and reflected in the final product, so they felt a sense of ownership and began using it in their work.

It is very important at this stage of your thinking to assess where your strengths lie. Questions like: Are we a formally organized NGO or a people's movement for change? Do our strengths lie in our access to grassroots communities that can be mobilized, or do we have credibility and access to the "halls of power"? Do we use a litigation-based approach, a popular protest strategy, a lobbying strategy, or some combination? Do we work best in coalitions or independently? Who are our key allies?

For the more established organizations, a style and reputation may precede you, which will help define your approach to using video in advocacy. If your constituency is grassroots, consider drawing on that strength to produce something that can be used to educate and activate a broader audience. If you tend to have more influence with well-placed officials and governing bodies, consider developing a piece that would educate, inform and motivate them toward your intended goal. Ideally, you can outline a video production that will speak to multiple audiences. No matter what, research well, collaborate as much as possible, and while you should have a series of clear, achievable goals in mind, don't forget to dream. In the end, our accomplishments exceeded our wildest expectations.

### Step 4: Define your audience and think through how to communicate your message to them

In our campaign on trafficking, we had numerous audiences and allies in mind. We wanted to reach a global international public, women at risk for recruitment, organizations working to educate people about the problem, government authorities around the world, and intergovernmental bodies such as the United Nations.

It is very important to be clear about your key audiences from the beginning of any campaign for change, and this is certainly no less true where you are planning to integrate video. One of the basic premises of communications strategy is that you need to have a clear, concise message, and you have to identify your intended audience before you can craft the message. Having a clearly defined audience makes it easier to shoot and construct a compelling argument using video. But remember that some of the most powerful video advocacy campaigns successfully speak to multiple audiences at once, or in a sequence using a variety of materials for different settings. Analyze your situation carefully to determine how to proceed.



So, how to define your audience? You must decide which audience has the most influence on the change you seek, and whether that audience is accessible to you, or whether you will first need to seek alliances or work with an intermediate audience.

Once you have identified your audience you need to be sure you know what you want them to do, and how they will be convinced to join the effort. If there is a direct appeal to get involved, decide who should encourage them to take action. Recognize what will be appealing, persuasive or intriguing to them—in terms of factual information conveyed, the people interviewed or featured, and experts you may include for commentary. You also need to understand who you'll alienate and repel as you make these choices. For a more detailed analysis of this process, read Chapter 3 below.

Once you have identified your key audiences and goals and crafted your message, you can prepare a distribution plan drawing on some of the strategies outlined in Chapter 7. You should think carefully about the appropriate timing to get your video to your audience, and the most appropriate messenger or “bearer” of the news—is it you or your organization or should the approach and the delivery be by someone else? All this should be ready, at least in draft form, before you begin the process of producing or selecting a video for use in your advocacy campaign.

### Step 5: Decide on a level of involvement and start planning production and distribution

In launching a campaign that uses video, there are many varying levels of involvement in the actual filmmaking process for an organization to consider. An organization with limited resources may choose to use an existing film in their campaign, since video production is always more time consuming and expensive than web or written communications.

If more resources are available, you could also team up with a filmmaker who is producing a film on the issue and offer support either in the form of guidance, connections for filming and interviews, and/or funds.

The third option is to take on the actual production of a film yourself. In the case of *Bought & Sold*, we made the decision to produce a 42-minute film, making it the centerpiece of our campaign. But it took us two years of working around the clock to produce it, and in the end we had filmed over 150 hours of videotape! Making a documentary-length film is an immense undertaking in terms of

time and financial resources, even though the cost of production has been reduced by the development of digital video and laptop editing technology. Organizations and individuals new to making film are taking on the task of learning about filmmaking as well as the task of furthering their knowledge of the issues they choose to cover. So it is often larger organizations that choose to tackle this scale of video productions themselves. Taking this route requires extensive planning and committed human and financial resources. For more details, see Chapters 3 and 4.

If you do decide to commit to production yourself, you will need to determine the length and whether you will generate different language or content versions of your piece. It is not always necessary or even advisable to produce a documentary of 40 minutes or longer—many successful campaigns have been supported by videos of between five and twenty minutes in length. In fact, a 15 to 20 minute video is often the perfect length to introduce a group to the key issues and to connect them to the human struggles involved. From there, the advocate can help direct and engage them in addressing the problem.

When you are thinking about using video as part of your advocacy, and whether you have decided to produce your own work or utilize videos produced by others, there are numerous ways you may consider integrating video into your campaign for change. Remember that none is mutually exclusive and you may want to work with a variety of them to reach or communicate with different audiences. Often timing will be crucial—look at the case study below about the psychiatric hospital in Paraguay and the cumulative impact of using video in the legal setting and on the news. Thomas Harding also opens his chapter with an example from his own experience of how you can tap into multiple distribution opportunities and secure a greater effect.

### Using videos for organizing communities and allies

Video was used successfully by the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights in California, together with WITNESS and other allies as a tool to mobilize youth audiences to pressure Alameda County in California to stop its plans to build a “Super-Jail for Kids.” *Books Not Bars* is a 22-minute video that documents the inspiring youth-led movement against the growth of the US prison industry, particularly in California. The video is particularly geared toward youth of color, who are disproportionately victims of the human rights abuses

highlighted in the video, to encourage them to participate in the grassroots campaign. WITNESS and its partners developed an Action Pack to accompany the video that provided examples of tangible ways for youth to participate in the movement to reform the prison system, and created extensive Lesson Plans for high school students that examine incarceration-related issues within a human rights framework. As a result of two years of collaborative campaigning by The Ella Baker Center and other groups, the grassroots campaign successfully derailed the “Super-Jail for Kids” proposal.

With an appropriate distribution network and accompanying screening materials such as information packets, handbooks or action packs, many video lengths, styles and formats can fit a local audience.

### Communities using video in a “participatory” context

Participatory video has most often been used in the context of development, as a way to help document and convey the way in which a community identifies solutions to the challenges it faces. Although WITNESS has not used this methodology, many other development and rights organizations have effectively done so. For example, here is a description of its use in Tanzania by the local development organization “Maneno Mengi,” cited in the book *Making Waves*:

Consider this scene at the Kilwa fish market in the Mtwara Region of southeastern Tanzania: the image shows a group of fishermen accusing the district executive director of not sharing the collected tax with the marine environment fund and the village. “This is the truth. Money is collected, but the way they use the money is bad, as you can see. First he does not know himself what he collects, and then we don’t know what we should get. That is how they grow big stomachs, while we are becoming very thin.”

The discussion goes on as if the camera was not there; people have gotten used to having the camera inside the circle, as another participant. Nobody looks at the camera; nobody modifies the wording or the attitude to please the camera. This is one of the participatory video sessions organised by Maneno Mengi and it is only one step in a long process of using video tools to help a community better understand a social or economic development initiative.

The final product, *Utuambie Wananchi* is a “video digest,” short report on how the interactive process developed over a period of several months. But this is neither an end result nor the main objective, only a way of sharing with

others the process in an encapsulated form. The real objective of Maneno Mengi's work is in the interactive participatory process.<sup>1</sup>

Around the world, video is increasingly embraced as a tool to support education, reinforce cultural identity, and encourage organizational and political participation. In a participatory video process, members of the community film and watch and use the video they are shooting, and the *process* is generally considered more important than the *product*, as demonstrated by the Maneno Mengi experience. This is a very different proposition from having an outside organization or filmmaker record video and construct a story that is then used by members of the community to educate and mobilize around issues they are confronting.

### Streaming video footage on the Internet with associated advocacy campaigns

A trailer from Michael Moore's record-breaking documentary *Fahrenheit 911* was streamed on the net and circulated by numerous groups throughout the United States, including the advocacy group <[www.moveon.org](http://www.moveon.org)>, as part of a very successful effort to encourage people to attend the film's premiere and to get involved in voter registration drives for the 2004 presidential elections in the United States. Getting footage on the Internet provides exciting opportunities for advocacy work, especially when supplemented by advocacy components such as background materials, relevant links and resources and a call to action. See the WITNESS Rights Alert online video broadcasts at <[www.witness.org](http://www.witness.org)> for numerous other examples. Bear in mind, however, that the Internet audience that can view your footage online is limited to those who have fast enough connections and computers to stream or download video, and to hear audio. For that reason, the Internet can be a useful way to reach sympathetic international audiences with high Internet connectivity, or to reach a diaspora or exile population. But it may not be the best strategy for reaching remote rural populations in developing countries, or other communities that may be offline. For more information, see Chapter 3.

### Presenting focused, action-oriented video to government, corporate or NGO decision-makers

Amazon Watch, a campaigning environmental NGO, produced the *Camisea Project*, a film that vividly illustrated the damage inflicted on habitats and local communities by a Peruvian gas pipeline. Under

mounting pressure from environmental and human rights groups and members of Congress, and after viewing footage shot by Amazon Watch of land already devastated by the pipeline, the board of the taxpayer-supported Export-Import Bank of the United States rejected \$1.3 million in financing for the project.

In many cases reaching a key government committee, NGO or business decision-maker will be critical to your advocacy. Many top decision-makers are not regularly exposed to the voices of those affected by the abuses and problems their constituents may be clamouring about. Bringing these voices directly into their offices can be powerfully effective when combined with well-prepared background reports and concrete, realistic recommendations on how to resolve the problems presented. In my experience, it isn't always the number of eyeballs that see the video, but which ones. So targeted screenings before key decision-makers have often generated the strongest results in our partners' advocacy campaigns.

**Video presented as evidence before a national court, regional body, or international tribunal**

Mental Disability Rights International (MDRI), a leading organization working for the rights of people with mental disabilities, collaborated with WITNESS in late 2003 to prepare a video submission to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), exposing the dehumanizing conditions at the Neuro-Psychiatric Hospital in Paraguay. The IACHR is part of the pan-Americas legal system. The video focused on two teenage boys, Jorge and Julio, who were locked in isolation cells for over four years, naked and without access to bathrooms. Their cells reeked of urine and excrement and the walls were smeared with feces. In December 2003, MDRI filed an emergency petition before the IACHR requesting intervention on behalf of the boys and 458 others at the hospital. Along with a legal brief, MDRI submitted video documentation of conditions at the facility. Following this, for the first time in its history, the IACHR approved urgent measures to protect the lives and physical integrity of those in psychiatric institutions—a precedent that can now be cited in other countries in the region.

MDRI and WITNESS subsequently brought the issue to the general public by streaming the video on their websites and by collaborating with *CNN en Español* on a follow-up story. After this exposure, the President of Paraguay and the Minister of Health personally visited



*Figure 1.3* Documentation from inside a psychiatric facility, shot by Mental Disability Rights International (MDRI/WITNESS)

the hospital. They removed the director of the hospital from his position and created a committee to investigate the issue.

As you can see, your unedited, or edited, footage may be admissible and powerful as a source of evidence in a court of law or a less formal judicial process. But in order for it to be used, you must be familiar with the procedural requirements of the institution you hope to address. For more detail, see Chapter 6.

#### Submitting video reports before a United Nations treaty body, special rapporteur or working group

WITNESS supported Human Rights Alert, a group in Manipur, north-eastern India, to provide the UN Working Group on Forced and Involuntary Disappearances with videotaped eyewitness testimony, primarily from family members, about the forced “disappearance” of Sanamacha, a young boy abducted by the Indian government on suspicion of involvement in Manipur’s secessionist movement. The UN representatives were visibly moved by the family’s grief, and by the credibility of the eyewitnesses’ version of events. Although they were familiar with the pattern of disappearances in Manipur, the power of an individual story to supplement accumulated facts and

figures was undeniable, and the Working Group made a renewed call for action to the Indian government. Following this and other pressure at the local level, the Manipur State Government constituted a Commission of Inquiry to look into the case.

Video reports for the UN or other inter-governmental bodies can be structured in different ways: as a background documentary on the particular issue addressed; as a complement to a written “shadow report” submitted by an NGO to a UN treaty oversight committee; as direct, unedited testimonials by victims of a violation; or as raw unedited footage of an actual violation or event. In most cases, you will want to provide the material in tandem with written documentation, and link the video content directly to the arguments made in the written submission regarding violations. Bear in mind that opting for this approach will require that you organize screenings of your video report along with question-and-answer periods that can properly inform the UN treaty body or other intergovernmental body viewing your piece. You will need to review the calendars of the relevant UN bodies to determine the appropriate timeframe for your proposed screening or submission. More detail on this process can be found in the online “Video for Change 2000” manual in the training section of <[www.witness.org](http://www.witness.org)>.

### Producing a video public service announcement (PSA)

The Coalition for an International Criminal Court collaborated with WITNESS to produce a powerful PSA mobilizing people to pressure their governments to ratify the International Criminal Court (ICC) statute. The PSA incorporated stark footage of crimes against humanity across the twentieth-century. It was produced in English, French and Spanish in 30-, 60- and 90-second lengths and was broadcast in countries where governments were perceived to be “influenceable” and strategic in terms of ensuring the creation of the ICC. The ratification campaign was ultimately a success and the ICC is now in operation.

A short (generally 30-second) PSA can be an effective tool in your campaign to mobilize a broad audience around an issue. But remember that producing a PSA can be an expensive exercise because it is usually advisable to collaborate with someone experienced in producing commercials and publicity material. Remember also that it is a good idea to identify potential outlets for broadcast, or for widespread grassroots distribution through a civil society network, before you expend the resources to produce a PSA. In many television

markets around the world, major private networks charge high fees to broadcast a PSA, or exclude PSAs deemed “political” in nature.

### Producing a longer-form video documentary

In India, activist media-makers at the Drishti Media Collective, working with Dalit (so-called “untouchables”) rights activists at the Navsarjan Trust in Ahmedabad, produced the documentary *Lesser Humans*—55 minutes showing the degradation and disdain experienced by Bhangis, a particular class of Dalits. As well as collecting other people’s feces, these “manual scavengers” are obliged to remove dead animal carcasses and clean cowsheds. Shown across India in hundreds of screenings, with over 5,000 copies distributed, it shocked audiences with its direct portrait of the conditions Bhangis face and their own well-articulated understanding of the societal structure holding them back, contrasted with statements by officials showing their lack of concern, as well as the endless commissions of inquiry and legislative initiatives that had never been implemented.

Longer-form documentary storytelling (for instance producing a 30-minute, 45-minute or feature-length documentary film) can be an effective way of educating a broad public via broadcast and public screenings. However, be sure to factor in the extensive cost/time required, and the difficulty in securing broadcast. If you do not have a potential broadcast outlet, consider whether the benefits are worth the investment and financial resources required. A broadcast on a minor channel, or one that is not targeted to a key audience, may not be worth the effort. Also note that to produce a one-hour documentary, a film-maker may shoot 80 hours of raw footage. The more detailed your list of shots prior to shooting and the more you prepare for your interviews, the less raw footage you will need to shoot to achieve the same length for your final piece. For more detail on this process, see Chapters 3 and 4, and for more discussion on the challenges of securing a broadcast for advocacy-oriented video, see Chapter 7.

### Video as source for news broadcast and as an archive for news media

In 2000, WITNESS initiated a regional capacity-building project with long-time partner Joey Lozano—based in Mindanao, in the southern Philippines—to train the indigenous coalition NAKAMATA to use video as a tool for documentation and advocacy. In the summer of 2001, NAKAMATA was documenting its process of peacefully and

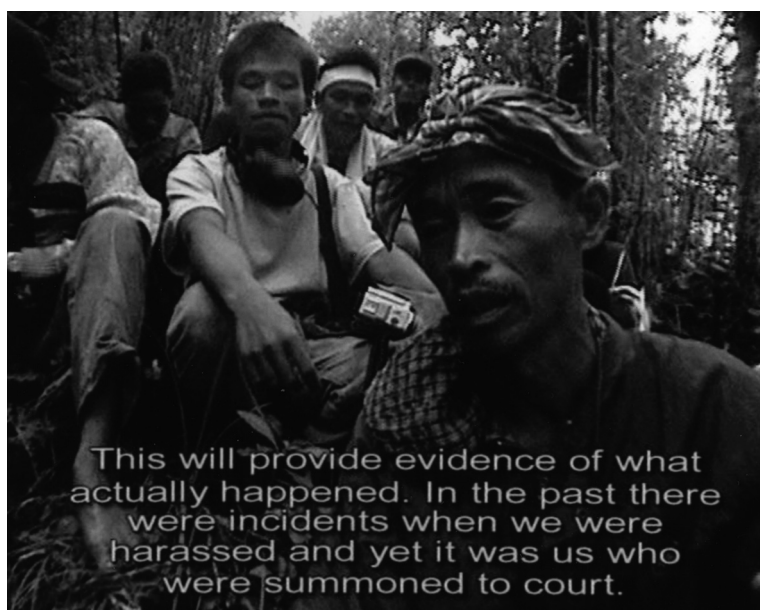


legally pursuing ancestral land claims when three indigenous leaders were murdered, others attacked, and a village razed. While the local authorities failed to act on the attacks, Lozano and NAKAMATA were on the scene with video cameras, documenting, gathering evidence, interviewing and recording the crime scene. *Probe Team*, the top Philippines investigative news show, aired NAKAMATA's footage on national television where it was seen by millions. The footage also proved to be pivotal evidence to the Philippine National Bureau of Investigation. Under pressure from local and international sources and responding to WITNESS' international call to action via the website, they finally conducted a thorough investigation. In early 2002, murder charges were pressed against three individuals and two arrests were made. The two suspects in the NAKAMATA murders are currently on trial in the Philippines.

As this example reveals, your high-quality unedited footage of a violation can at times be the only source of news or evidence available about an important event. In those cases, you may want to provide copies of your raw footage to local, national, regional and international broadcast outlets in a packaged format, showing the



*Figure 1.4* NAKAMATA films the assassination of one of its leaders (NAKAMATA/WITNESS)



*Figure 1.5* NAKAMATA leaders in the Philippines use video documentation (NAKAMATA/WITNESS)

highlights and providing background information in writing as well as biographies and contact information for potential spokespeople.

However, be aware that the feasibility of getting footage on local news will vary by your location; in parts of the world where media is government controlled it can be impossible to get challenging videotape broadcast. In other parts of the world where media is heavily privatized and commercial, the media may shun substantive coverage of social issues. Furthermore, getting footage on international news channels such as CNN is usually very difficult, and may depend on whether or not your material relates to the cause or issue of the moment. Rather than try to convince a television producer to do a story around your particular issue, you may try to place raw footage on television as source material for another related story. In that case, you may be less likely to see your advocacy intent and story retained in the final piece, but you may be able to obtain some fees for licensing the footage if you choose to charge for it.

A more detailed analysis of storytelling for different audiences is included in Chapter 3, while Chapter 7 focuses on practical tactics for reaching your audiences and using video in advocacy.

To summarize, there are five key steps to take when considering integrating video into advocacy:

- Step 1: Define your goals.
- Step 2: Talk to other people who have worked on the issue you want to tackle. What has worked, what hasn't, and why?
- Step 3: Analyze your style and strengths and identify your allies.
- Step 4: Define your audience.
- Step 5: Decide on a level of involvement and start planning production and distribution.

Once you have done that, and presuming you are as excited as we are about the possibilities of using video in your work, consider a variety of options for engagement—and remember that the strongest campaigns often use video in multiple formats and forums:

- Using video as a grassroots educational or organizing tool in your community or with solidarity groups elsewhere.
- Streaming video on the Internet with associated advocacy campaigns.
- Presenting focused, action-oriented video to key decision-makers.
- Submitting video as evidence before a national court, regional body, or international tribunal.
- Submitting video reports before a UN treaty body, special rapporteur or working group.
- Producing a video public service announcement.
- Engaging in a participatory video.
- Producing a video documentary.
- Using video as source for news broadcast.

Now that you have a brief overview of the ways in which you might consider integrating video into your advocacy work, read on for more detail on the process. Once you have digested the information we provide, you may also want to review the sample WITNESS “Video Action Plan” contained in Appendix I of this book and use it as a guide to plan your own video advocacy campaign.

#### NOTE

1. Alfonso Gumicio Dragon, *Making Waves: Stories of Participatory Communication for Social Change* (New York: The Rockefeller Foundation, 2001), pp. 283–4.