

Responses to Questions Received During SPRING-Digital Green Webinar

On December 17th, 2013, the SPRING project hosted a global webinar featuring the India-based NGO Digital Green, focused on low-cost video for agriculture and nutrition development. The following questions were asked during the webinar but were unanswered due to time constraints.

Below, Digital Green has provided short responses to all questions asked during the webinar. Additionally, an in-depth, 2-day moderated online discussion took place on the SPRING Agriculture and Nutrition Agrilinks group page and can be accessed [here](http://agrilinks.org/working-group/agriculture-amp-nutrition-global-learning-and-evidence-exchange-agn-gee/group-25).
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Have you found the video to be effective more so than personal interaction with groups?

Carol Henry, University of Saskatchewan

The Digital Green approach centers on facilitated screenings of locally produced videos to community organizations, such as self-help and special interest groups. The approach does not seek to replace human mediation with video; rather it amplifies the impact of the message delivered by reinforcing it through the use of video. Personal interaction or video screening alone are not as effective in promoting behavior change through a combination of both.

SPRING/Rikin- are facilitators recruited by the project compensated, or volunteer?

Liz Caselli-Michael, Partnering for Innovation

Facilitators recruited by each project are compensated. Depending on the partners with whom we work, the modes of compensation vary. Some facilitators receive a fixed periodic stipend for their work, while others have their benefits tied to their performance. Still others may have a mix of both fixed and performance-tied incentives.

Will you be able to facilitate discussion groups (online) for various geographical interests? I am interested in engaging in this type of work in Sub Saharan Africa.

Vicki Morrone, Michigan State University

Thank you for your interest, Vicki. We would like to know how best we can collaborate with you. You can write to us at contact@digitalgreen.org

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Have private sector input providers or out-growing operations partnered with DG to improve their customer/grower relationship and product quality?

Liz Caselli-Michael, Partnering for Innovation

We are exploring opportunities to collaborate with private sector providers to amplify development efforts.

How is the interested/adopted data collected? Does the farmer respond to a call or text?

Jamie Henneman, USAID Bureau for Food Security

-AND-

Is this self-reporting backed by any kind of follow-up M&E?

Leah Quin, Abt Associates

Each Digital Green video shared with the community contains a set of ‘non-negotiables’ or adoption points defined by a subject matter specialist. Only when the community members adopt the non-negotiable points defined in a video is an adoption counted and registered in our data management system. We follow a defined ‘adoption verification’ process which includes:

Feedback from the community: During the video screening/dissemination process, mediators, i.e., community-level intermediaries trained on facilitating these sessions, collect feedback from the viewers on the practices that they have adopted from the videos screened previously. Community members who claim to have adopted a practice are identified by the mediator.

Field verification of adoptions: The mediators visit the fields of the identified farmers to verify adoptions by checking the individuals’ understanding of the processes as well as confirmation of all the key adoption points being implemented. Adoptions are recorded in the data management systems only after they’ve been verified in person by the mediators.

Regarding health and nutrition videos, the adoption of practices may not be visible for physical verification – for instance, hand-washing or exclusive breast-feeding. In such cases, self-reporting and recall of essential steps for implementing the featured practice (which we term ‘non-negotiables’) are used for validating adoptions.

Verification by Digital Green and partners: In addition to the verification done by mediators, Digital Green’s partners also undertake adoption verification on a sample of the total adoptions using a checklist.

Our monitoring and evaluation team is in the process of rolling out randomized control trials and process evaluations. We also contract out external agencies to conduct studies – both quantitative and qualitative – to verify our data.

Can the reporting be done on a non-smart phone?

Gregg Rapaport, USAID

We've just recently piloted our mobile COCO (data management) application which works on low-end Symbian phones. The application helps ease the work of the data entry operators and reduces the time lag in data entry and sync on our server. The app is compatible with phones running Android and Symbian S40 operating systems.

Do you edit these videos and how much time does that take?

Maria Scurrah, Group Yanapai

Our team does not edit the videos produced by the community. As with the local video production team, our partners help us identify computer literate members of the community in each district, and we build their capacity in basic video editing. Our staff provides initial handholding support to these video editors, but as the intervention matures, the editors become proficient enough to make the edits on their own. Based on the storyboard, the editor stitches together the most appropriate clips from the shoot using simple editing software. Typically, editing a video using our standard operating procedures takes a couple of days.

Can you let us know a bit more about adoption rates of viewers?

Liz Caselli-Michael, Partnering for Innovation

Over the last one year (December 26, 2012 – December 25, 2013), the adoption rate among active viewers (community members who've attended at least one video dissemination in the last 60 days) across our domestic (India-based) projects has been 39.95 per cent. For the same reference period, each video screening resulted in an average of 1.68 adoptions. Since one video can be screened multiple times, each video has resulted in 73.44 adoptions in the last one year. A total of 80,270 adoptions and 29,047 unique adoptions have occurred in the preceding year.

For more statistics, visit <http://analytics.digitalgreen.org/>

How important is step by step explanation by farmers and availability in local languages?

Phil Malone, Access Agriculture

Clarity of messaging is crucial for the success of our community-led video-enabled behavior change communication tool, and hence the step-by-step explanation of the process in the video. To encourage retention and recall, the key adoption points within a practice are clearly identified and paraphrased by the actors in the video. The mediator conducting the video dissemination is trained to 'pause' the video at strategic points after every few steps to ensure that the message is clearly

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understood by the attending community members. Thus, by the end of the mediated video screening, the key elements of the promoted practice are reinforced multiple times.

Given the sheer diversity within the Indian population, localization of the videos and using the local language for mediation are vital. We produce videos documenting the exact same practice in different dialects of the same language to encourage engagement and retention of key adoption points in different geographies. Linguistic familiarity is essential to homophily, which in turn increases the level of trust community members place in the video messaging. Therefore, even the mediator conducting the video screening is chosen on the basis of her/his proficiency in the local dialect.

Can you provide more information on how to access COCO? Do I understand correctly that this is the software platform for Farmerbook? Can other organizations use this software to create similar online communities since it is open-source?

Eric Anderson, United States Peace Corps

Connect Online | Connect Offline (COCO) is a data management framework which serves as the foundation of our technology stack. COCO captures data related to the key processes of our approach (video production, dissemination and adoption of practices), with a unique offline data entry feature targeted at areas with limited internet connectivity. The source code for COCO is open source and available as a repository on GitHub. Organizations are free to use the source code for COCO and to modify it for their own needs, including using it to create online communities.

DG seems able to track what people watch and when. How do you ensure that viewers retain their privacy?

Sam Clark, SPRING project

We take the privacy of the community members seriously. Most of the data collected and aggregated for analysis is anonymous. The identities of the community members are not publically accessible. For Farmerbook, which features names and photographs, informed consent from the community members in the form of a signed consent form is a must.

Given that the videos showcase the experience of farmers with similar conditions as the viewers, how do you guarantee the technical “soundness” of the interventions promoted? Does your system allow for including the input from “external experts”, including extension agents and scientists?

Carlos A. Perez, CCRP-McKnight Foundation

While our videos showcase the experiences of progressive farmers in similar communities, the content of the videos is identified based on agro-climatic conditions, existing practices, local relevance, traditional knowledge, community’s interests, and validation by our partners’ subject matter specialist (SMS). The SMS recommends a package of practices that is best suited to the communities we work with. Progressive community members already using these practices on their land are identified to feature in the videos.

Responses to Questions Received During SPRING-Digital Green Webinar

Each Digital Green video undergoes a thorough quality check for thematic and aesthetic approval before being shared with the community. Our partners' quality assurance team and the SMS review the technical accuracy, completeness, and audio/visual quality of the content. Depending on the feedback received, the videos are approved for screening, sent back to the video production team for modification/revision, or rejected.

Given the need to have a facilitated meeting, follow up and group meetings the use of video doesn't necessarily lessen the staff and time requirements for behavior change and training in communities. The important question, then, is: are the videos a more effective training tool than those traditionally used in BCC? Does using a video increase uptake and long term behavior change? Has this type of comparison been studied?

Amy Ostrander, Fintrac

Traditional approaches to behavior change communication involve extension agents visiting sites and promoting practices in the most accessible language known to them, without the use of video.

Our video-enabled behavior change communication approach leverages existing social infrastructure to deliver key messages and promote best practices. We build the capacities of local community members to promote best practices through videos in local dialects featuring people from within the community. The social distance between those who promote the practices and those who are targeted by such promotion is significantly lesser than in the traditional behavior change communication models.

As for the cost-effectiveness of our approach, in a controlled evaluation, on a cost per adoption basis, our approach was shown to be at least 10 times more effective than a conventional approach to agricultural extension with a seven-fold increase in the rate of behavior change. Refer - Gandhi, R. Veeraraghavan, K. Toyama, V. Ramaprasad. 2009. Digital Green: Participatory Video and Mediated Instruction for Agricultural Extension. ITID, 2009: (<http://itidjournal.org/itid/article/view/322>)

In 2003, the Government of India sponsored a National Sample Survey to understand the sources of information farmers were relying upon for new technology and farm practices (Sample size: 51,770). As per the survey, the formal channels of extension – including, the 'Training and Visit' method of extension and the government's broadcast media programs – are limited in terms of outreach. A significant finding was that farmers primarily relied on informal channels of knowledge sharing within their own village communities.

At Digital Green, we overlay video messaging over these channels of information sharing to aid comprehension, ensuring that the messaging is checked for technical strength, accuracy, and relevance.