EMPOWERING WOMEN: PARTICIPATORY FILM PROJECTS FOR WOMEN

by

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ABSTRACT

Women have long had to suffer oppression and gender inequality. Films and filmmaking, which were initially created largely for the purposes of entertainment, now are more accessible and have the power to enhance women's agency and change people's attitudes and thereby to create a better world for women. Participatory filmmaking has become increasingly popular for empowerment in a wide range of projects and scholarship. This research focuses on the connection between participatory filmmaking and women's empowerment by analysing three case studies from NGOs which are providing women in developing countries with positive experiences through participatory film training. It emphasises the roles of NGOs and how different contexts of the projects contribute to different degrees of women's empowerment. These projects also challenge and add to Bill Nichols' concept of participatory documentary by highlighting participants' participation in the filmmaking process. This research investigates how the women make use of filmmaking to create their own voice, messages or stories they deliver to the audiences and how women's empowerment is achieved in the process. It also hopes to contribute with insight into the potential development of participatory film projects.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Discussions of participatory filmmaking has been scattered widely among scholars in different fields and used for advocacy by different organisations. Filmmaking, as a male-dominated industry, lacks women's voices, but these can be strengthened through training women to become filmmakers. More and more organisations are using a variety of film training projects to get more women involved in filmmaking for advocacy. How do participatory film training projects aimed at women enhance women's agency and enable them to use their voice to create change through filmmaking? By showcasing three participatory filmmaking projects for women in developing countries, this thesis examines how participatory film training for women can achieve women's empowerment. The thesis also intends to consider how this kind of filmmaking differs from the traditional participatory mode of documentary and provides insight into the potential of participatory filmmaking for empowerment in the future.

1.1 Gender Inequality in General

Women's rights merit considerable attention in today's world and there are more and

more campaigns initiated by women and organisations. 'No country in the world can yet say that they have achieved gender equality', British actress Emma Watson said in her address to the United Nations (UN), as she launched a campaign called HeForShe in 2016.[1] The campaign successfully invited 10 leading global universities to commit to and chart progress on achieving gender equality.[2] Following the feminist campaign by HeForShe, in January 2018, a group of women, including many from the entertainment industry, formed an initiative called 'Time's Up' to address and combat sexual harassment and systematic sexism in the workplace.[3] As Naila Kabeer describes, long-standing patriarchal constraints have acted to limit women's agency in everyday life, hindering gender equality.[4] Domestic violence, rape, sex slavery and other forms of gender-based violence against women are commonly found in the world, especially in developing countries, which are often patriarchal in culture. The oppression of women has a long history, but it is striking that even today women continue to be disadvantaged when compared with men, in a range of areas, including employment, family relations and education. For example, Women in the Workplace, a

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[1] UN Women News, *Emma Watson: Gender equality is your issue too* (UN Women, 2014), <http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2014/9/emma-watson-gender-equality-is-your-issue-too> [accessed 10 January 2017].

[2] UN Women, *Press Release: New UN Women HeForShe IMPACT Report puts spotlight on gender equality in global universities* (UN Women, 2016) <http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2016/9/press-release-heforshe-university-parity-report> [accessed 1 August 2017].

[3] Time's Up (2017) <https://www.timesupnow.com/> [accessed 30 March 2018].

[4] Naila Kabeer, 'Empowerment, Citizenship and Gender Justice: A Contribution to Locally Grounded Theories of Change in Women's Lives', *Ethics and Social Welfare*, 6.3 (2012), 216-232 (p.217), <https://doi.org/10.1080/17496535.2012.704055> [accessed 28 August 2017].

comprehensive research project carried out in the United States, states that nearly 50%

of men think women are well represented in leadership in organisations where only one

in 10 senior leaders is a woman.[5] In terms of education, the World's Women 2015

statistics presented by the UN show that nearly two thirds of the world's 781 million

illiterate adults are women living in developing regions, and that the proportion has

remained unchanged for the last 20 years.[6]

1.1.1 Women in the Film Industry

Shifting the discussion to film studies and the filmmaking industry, scholars have

criticised the misleading representation or misrepresentation of women in films.

According to Laura Mulvey, popular films, especially Hollywood films, attract

audiences by manipulating their visual pleasure in ways that are usually patriarchal.[7]

The relevant visual pleasure is all about the male gaze, which requires women to be

regarded as objects. Images of women in mainstream films and other types of media

production are often negative, highly sexualised or focused on women as passive.

Representations of women in the media are often narrow, which gives rise to certain

[5] Alexis Krivkovich and others, *Women in the Workplace Study 2017* (Lean In and McKinsey&Company, 2017) < https://womenintheworkplace.com/> [accessed 30 March 2018]
[6] United Nations, *The World's Women 2015* (United Nations, 2015) <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/gender/downloads/Ch5_Power_and_decision_info.pdf> [accessed 30 March 2018]
[7] Laura Mulvey, 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema', *Screen*, 16 (1975), 6-18 (p.8), <https://doi.org/10.1093/screen/16.3.6> [accessed 14 October 2016].

stereotypes, of women as sex objects, powerless victims, aggressive leaders and over-emotional. Through their internalisation, these representations debilitate social expectations of women. Toby Miller suggests in his article 'Goodbye to Film School: Please Close the Door on Your Way Out' that film-directing is still misogynistic, even though there are more women working in the film industry nowadays.[8] Carolyn Byerly and Karen Ross also mention that, in general, the media (television, film, advertising and so on) disproportionally depict women's traditional domestic roles and objectify them sexually.[9] They further specify that women working in the media industry find it difficult to reach senior positions even though there are now more of them participating in media production than in the past.[10] These scholars all suggest that the film industry has been dominated by men for a very long time and that this has created a male-dominated atmosphere and culture therein. Even though there are now more women involved in the industry, their decision-making power and career potential are still limited.

Data collected by the New York Film Academy shows that 28.8% of women compared with 7% of men wore sexually revealing clothes on screen in the top 500

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[8] Toby Miller, 'Goodbye to Film School: Please Close the Door on Your Way Out', in *The Education of the Filmmaker in Africa, the Middle East, and the Americas*, ed. Mette Hjort (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp.153-168 (p.156).
[9] Carolyn M. Byerly and Karen Ross, *Women and Media: A Critical Introduction* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), p.17.
[10] Ibid, pp.78-79.

films between 2007 and 2012.[11] In the industry, there is a 5:1 ratio of men to women working on films and in the 40-year history of the Academy Awards, only four female directors have been nominated for Best Director and only one has won.[12] The World's Women 2015 statistics also established that the media industry remains male-dominated, with women representing only 7% of directors and about 20% of filmmakers, writers and producers.[13] These statistics reveal significant differences in the treatment of men and women both on screen and in film production. Such an imbalance in mainstream cinema suggests that it is important to enhance women's agency and to empower them to demonstrate the same ability as men in film production. Educating women to become film and media practitioners is an important topic that is well worth pursuing in some depth. To change the images of women in communities through films, women have to take up the role of filmmakers themselves.

1.1.2 Film Education for Women

The film education and training offered by universities and schools is often provided by professionals and is well-organised. However, in film education too, women are

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[11] Nicholas Zurko, *Gender Inequality in Film* (New York Film Academy Blog, 2013) <https://www.nyfa.edu/film-school-blog/gender-inequality-in-film/> [accessed 26 August 2017].
[12] Ibid.
[13] United Nations, *The World's Women 2015*.

given fewer opportunities and are treated unfairly. Alia Arasoughly, the founder of Shashat, has written a detailed chapter in *The Education of the Filmmaker in Africa, the Middle East, and the Americas* that provides a comprehensive picture of both her organisation and Palestinian film training, along with a cogent account of why Shashat focuses on training women. She realised that Palestinian women and girls in universities and schools were not being given the chance to get close to cameras and other equipment when being taught practical filmmaking skills, due to a lack of gender sensitivity.[14] Aside from the traditional doctrine in Palestine, it is the stereotype that girls are not good at handling equipment that has created this situation in educational institutions. Another study conducted by Anne Orwin and Adrianne Carageorge based on their teaching experiences and observations points out that female students feel less competent than men when using filming equipment and find it hard to gain opportunities to work with male students or to take up leadership roles.[15] As suggested above, there seem to be institutional and cultural limitations that present obstacles to women receiving proper film training. This thesis therefore focuses on NGO film training projects for women and considers how women's agency can be enhanced through filmmaking. Therefore, rather than focusing on the film education

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[14] Alia Arasoughly, 'Film Education in Palestine Post-Oslo: The Experience of Shashat', in *The Education of the Filmmaker in Africa, the Middle East, and the Americas*, ed. Mette Hjort (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp.99-123 (p.114).
[15] Anne Orwin and Adrianne Carageorge, 'The Education of Women in Film Production', *Journal of Film and Video*, 53 (2001), 40-53 (p.46), <www.jstor.org/stable/20688348> [accessed 14 October 2016].

provided by universities and organisations, I consider how filmmaking programmes or film training projects designed particularly for women in developing countries can enhance women's agency and enable them to use their voice to create change through filmmaking.

1.2 Video-making/Filmmaking for Social Change

Filmmaking and training are available not only in film schools and through specific organisations; with recent developments in digital technologies and portable cameras, they have become increasingly accessible to the public. Short films and videos can be made directly with smartphones and shared online. People who are not familiar with film production can make effective use of technology to express themselves and achieve video activism. Tina Askanius explores video activism in contemporary online environments, and suggests that 'self-proclaimed amateur filmmakers' are placing themselves within the participatory cultures of the Internet to carry out advocacy, due to hybrid media technologies.[16] Ordinary people and activists can share stories and express their political views by uploading video to online social media platforms. Storytelling through the camera is no longer exclusive to professionals.

    More and more NGOs have been trying to make video technology accessible to a

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[16] Tina Askanius, 'Video for Change', in *Global Handbooks in Media and Communication Research: Handbook of Development Communication and Social Change*, ed. by Karin Gwinn Wilkins, Thomas Tufte, and Rafael Obregon (Somerset, US: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014), pp.453-470 (p.454).

broader public, encouraging grassroots communities to utilise moving images to spark

social change.[17] For example, WITNESS, a video advocacy organisation based in the

United States, trains and supports activists and others internationally to use video to

fight for human rights.[18] Using video/film as the medium for advocacy and for telling

the stories of disadvantaged communities is effective, as moving images can engage

audiences more directly and emotionally. Gillian Caldwell, Executive Director of

WITNESS, suggests that 'video could elicit powerful emotional impact, connecting

viewers to personal stories'.[19] She emphasises that moving images can connect

people who are concerned about the same social issues and reach different audiences,

who can understand the content even if they are illiterate.[20] Within the context of the

growing participatory culture on the Internet and the advantages of filmmaking,

NGOs organise participatory film projects that focus on empowerment and advocacy,

especially for specific marginalised or illiterate communities in developing countries,

and aim to raise people's awareness of particular issues and target social change.

Participatory filmmaking, which emphasises participants' authorship and their

personal involvement in filmmaking, is one approach that NGOs and facilitators can

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[17] Mary Jo Dudley, 'The Transformative Power of Video: Ideas, Images, Processes and Outcomes' in *Participatory Video: Images that Transform and Empower,* ed. by Shirley A. White (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2003), pp.145-156 (p.153).
[18] WITNESS, *About WITNESS* (2017), <https://witness.org/about/> [accessed 22 August 2017].
[19] Gillian Caldwell, 'Using Video for Advocacy', in *Video for Change: A Guide for Advocacy and Activism*, ed. by Sam Gregory (London: Pluto Press, 2005), pp.1-19 (p.2).
[20] Ibid.

use for advocacy and empowerment. Such an approach can also challenge traditional participatory documentary. Examples of both scholarship and projects are presented later in this chapter as evidence of the ability of this approach to enhance women's agency and achieve empowerment.

1.3 Methodology and Rationale of the Research

1.3.1 Aim of Study and Research Questions

The aim of this study is to relate participatory film training for women to women's empowerment. How does participatory film training empower women to resist demeaning and otherwise oppressive social representations and norms? How do women make use of filmmaking to create their own voice? How do the filmmaking techniques and aesthetics they use affect their ability to engage audiences? What messages or stories do they deliver? What impacts does participatory filmmaking have on the participants themselves? How is women's empowerment achieved in the process? How do the objectives of NGOs make a difference in the impact on participants? Extending these questions to film studies, what do these participatory film projects add to, or challenge in, the traditional participatory mode of documentary suggested by scholars such as Bill Nichols? By seeking answers to the above questions, this study hopes to provide insight into the value of research on the role played by NGOs

that provide participatory film training and on the potential benefits of this training for

women, thus enabling a wider audience to gain access to the important work that these

organisations are doing. More importantly, this study aims both to suggest that

participatory filmmaking as a creative process can be a powerful means by which

women, especially illiterate women, can express themselves, be empowered both with

knowledge and psychologically, and call for social action for a better community for

women in developing countries. To investigate how filmmaking is used in

participatory settings, it is important to focus on actual examples. By situating film

training for women in the more limited context of participatory film projects, this

thesis will examine how participatory film training, particularly for women in

developing countries, can achieve women's empowerment.

1.3.2 Selection of Case Studies

Three projects run by different organisations will be analysed as case studies in

separate chapters: the UNAIDS Participatory Film Project in Uganda and Namibia,

the Women's International Shared Experience (WISE) Project in Karachi, Pakistan

and the Young Palestinian Women Filmmakers Incubator Program in Palestine. These

projects were selected for this study because they all involve the concept of

participatory film production training for women in developing countries and have

achieved varying levels of women's empowerment in their different contexts. All

three of the chosen projects are found online and provide a positive experience for

their female participants in developing regions and illustrate varying impacts on

women's empowerment in different participatory film project contexts. The

effectiveness of the projects seems to be determined by the different NGOs that run

them. It may be problematic to describe the locations of the chosen projects as

'developing' or 'patriarchal' because the distinction between 'developed countries'

and 'developing countries' has become increasingly controversial for some

international organisations.[21] Besides, Palestine is not recognised as a country as such,

even though the State of Palestine is recognised by the UN.[22] Whether Palestine is a

country is a complicated question and it is not the intended discussion point of this

thesis. The other project locations (Uganda, Namibia and Pakistan) are countries.

Therefore, for the purpose of this thesis, Palestine, along with the other locations, will

be referred to as 'developing countries' in order to eliminate confusion. I use

"developing countries' throughout this thesis because these places are often

considered developing regions with male-dominated cultures, for example in the

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[21] Fred K. Nkusi, *WB is Eliminating the Term 'Developing Countries' from its Vocabulary* (The New Times, July 2018) < https://www.newtimes.co.rw/opinions/wb-eliminating-term-developing-countries -its-vocabulary> [accessed 25 October 2018].
[22] United Nations, *General Assembly Votes Overwhelmingly to Accord Palestine 'Non-Member Observer State' Status in United Nations* (United Nations, 2012) <https://www.un.org/press/en/2012/ga11317.doc.htm> [accessed 24 March 2018].

United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Report 2016.[23]

1.3.3 Interviews and Film Analysis

This research explores the connection between participatory film projects and women's empowerment by analysing three case studies using film analysis and online interviews as the methodology. This research relies mainly on Skype interviews and emails with people who were involved in the projects because of a lack of available documentation and difficult connections with participants. As the first two projects were one-off initiatives that took place years ago, most of the documentation and records are no longer available. Through communication with the organisations, interviews were arranged, mainly with project facilitators and other staff. It was generally not possible to have direct contact with participants because of a lack of Internet access. In the case of Shashat, two Skype interviews with two participants were conducted, as these women had moved to countries with better Internet connections and were still in touch with the organisation. This Skype and email interviewing method was especially useful in this research because it enabled access both to first-hand information about the participants and to facilitators' feedback, and it was not subject to geographical restrictions. The interviews present the process of

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[23] United Nations, *United Nations Development Programme: Human Development Reports* (United Nations, 2016) <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/developing-regions> [accessed 24 March 2018].

running participatory film projects and reflect the limitations encountered, enabling a more comprehensive understanding of such project. All the interviews and the information presented in this thesis are included with the full consent of the interviewees. However, the interviews with the participants, facilitators and organisations may not directly reflect the impact on the participants of each project. As most of the participants were not available for interview, the limited number of interviews carried out may extract limited perspectives with which to evaluate the impact on participants. Therefore, this study will use these interviews as supporting evidence, together with an analysis of the participants' films, to investigate the impact that participatory film projects have on their female participants and how they may achieve women's empowerment in general.

By using film analysis on the participants' films, it is possible to assess the effectiveness of the filmmaking training provided, as well as participants' creativity and their ability to engage audiences. By analysing these films alongside the traditional documentary theories and concepts suggested by scholars such as Nichols and Brian Winston, this methodology aims to discover similarities and differences between traditional documentary and participatory filmmaking that challenges the traditional concepts of the former, such as those of authorship, representation, ethics and the participatory mode of documentary. This thesis shows participatory

filmmaking to be different from Nichols' participatory mode of documentary: the latter features engagement between filmmakers and their subjects to reveal personal stories and perspectives,[24] while the former turns the subjects into filmmakers. A better understanding of participants' experiences and of how they use filmmaking as a tool to empower themselves is revealed through an investigation of the relationship between participatory film training projects for women in developing countries and women's empowerment.

Before going through the projects in detail, it is crucial to understand both what participatory filmmaking and women's empowerment are, and how the two are interconnected. This study will then analyse this relationship as evidenced by the case studies and consider how different project contexts create different levels of empowerment.

1.4 Defining Participatory Filmmaking

Bill Nichols defines his participatory mode of documentary as the filmmaker's participation, which is often an outside intervention in the community. It emphasises the interaction between the filmmaker and the subjects.[25] Such interaction is to a certain extent controlled by the filmmaker, who can decide what will be shown in the

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[24] Bill Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary*, 3th edn (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2017), p.156.
[25] Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary*, p.143.

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documentary. The participatory documentary thus mainly reflects the filmmaker's creativity and the representation of subjects who have no control over how they are portrayed. Expanding Nichols' definition of participatory filmmaking, the definition of 'participatory' this thesis works with refers to the subjects (the participants / social actors) taking part in and controlling the filmmaking process. It focuses on the subjects' own representation and depiction of themselves and their testimonies.

This thesis focuses on participatory filmmaking because it is a topic that has been discussed in scholarship and used to empower marginalised groups. Its concept and practice have been recognised in different contexts and projects and the analysis of the three projects in this research adds to this rich field of study. By comparing the three case studies, this research also hopes to shed light on the potential impact of participatory film projects on empowerment in the future. Participatory filmmaking has been used all over the world for different purposes, including advocacy, enabling participation in development projects and providing a therapeutic environment.[26] Matej Blazek and Petra Hraňová suggest that participatory filmmaking is different from documentary filmmaking in that its 'control over, and responsibility for, the process and product stays with participants rather than with filmmakers from outside

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[26] Nick Lunch and Chris Lunch, *Insights into Participatory Video: A Handbook for the Field* (Oxford: InsightShare, 2006), p.11
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BzJ4UscjhrFBNmlKY0NoV0ZxRkE/view> [accessed 19 December 2016].

the community'.[27] This means that participants who are not familiar with filmmaking take control of the content of the film and of how it is filmed, and are responsible for the final product.

Filmmakers or facilitators from outside the community play a supporting role, consisting of passing on skills and knowledge and providing mentoring. This concept of participatory filmmaking is important to this study, as I am looking at films made by local women participating in projects rather than by professional filmmakers. The films' messages are delivered by the participants. This means that participants use video as a tool to empower themselves, rather than the filmmakers empowering the participants. Giving women the capacity to make decisions and take actions is also highly relevant to the concept of women's empowerment.[28] Participants' authorship is a key feature of participatory filmmaking and has a considerable impact on women's empowerment. Women who have the power to take charge of their lives are regarded as self-empowered, and in the process of their empowering themselves their self-confidence is boosted.[29]

In 'Telling the Stories of South African Hindu Women: Participatory Video as a

[27] Matej Blazek and Petra Hraňová, 'Emerging Relationships and Diverse Motivations and Benefits in Participatory Video with Young People', *Children's Geographies* (2012), 10(2), 151–168 (p.153), <https://doi.org/10.1080/14733285.2012.667917> [accessed 30 March 2018].
[28] Andrea Cornwall, 'Women's Empowerment: What Works?', *Journal of International Development*, 28 (2016), 342-359 (p.345), <https://doi.org/10.1002/jid.3210> [accessed 25 November 2016].
[29] N. Ntshingila and others, 'Facilitation of Self-Empowerment of Women Living with Borderline Personality Disorder: A Concept Analysis', *Health SA Gesondheid*, 21 (2016), 437-443 (p.441), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hsag.2016.09.002> [accessed 3 August 2017].

Tool for Feminist Research', Subeshini Moodley gathers views on participatory video from different scholars. For example, K. Sadanandan Nair (1994) regards participatory video as a process that 'brings about transformation in communication competencies and social behaviours among those who engage in the process'.[30] Shirley White further elaborates on Nair's views, stating that participatory video is 'a consciousness-raising methodological tool that creates an awareness of social issues'.[31] From their points of view, participatory video can help raise participants' consciousness on social issues, change their behaviour and stimulate possible social actions for grassroots development. Moodley summarises White's argument on the possible use and influence of participatory video as:

> Offer[ing] possibilities for empowerment with women behind the camera; a potential voice to the voiceless; fostering positive changes in attitude and social behaviour such that people become agents of their own destinies and identities; documenting and sharing of realities, stories and experiences; the rescue of culture and heritage; the exposure of social injustice; the challenging of public stereotypes; the production of social texts with and by the people drawing on knowledge of local conditions, beliefs, cultures and customs, provided that a level of political will exists among the people.[32]

Although participatory filmmaking is often regarded as similar to documentary, the

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[30] Subeshini Moodley, 'Telling the Stories of South African Hindu Women: Participatory Video as a Tool for Feminist Research', *Agenda: Empowering Women for Gender Equity*, 22 (2008), 116-125 (p.122),
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10130950.2008.9674967> [accessed 11 November 2016].
[31] Ibid.
[32] Moodley, p.121.

above quotation indicates that it is not limited to a particular genre or theme but can

be used for different purposes and multiple functions that stimulate social change and

raise public awareness. Although participatory film projects can be carried out in

flexible ways for different purposes, the most important aspect is that they ensure the

authorship of the community and true participation.[33] According to Andrew Robinson,

the participatory approach is often used to address concerns regarding authentic

documentary materials by giving voice to participants.[34] Participatory film projects

can enable audiences to see the world from the perspective of participants who are

directly involved in the issues concerned, engaging them at a more personal and

emotive level while at the same time empowering participants.[35] The messages and

the way in which they are delivered by participants is one of the key focuses of this

study, because they come from participants' personal experience and are directly

shared with audiences. The emphasis on participants' authorship is a key element of

all three case studies in this thesis and it allows us to appreciate the difference made

by having participants as filmmakers.

Renuka Bery writes that 'participatory video is a special kind of storytelling that

ideally involves the community in telling a story through its own lens and being

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[33] Lunch and Lunch, p.11.
[34] Andrew Robinson, 'Giving Voice and Taking Pictures: Participatory Documentary and Visual Research', *People Place and Policy Online*, 5 (2011), 115-134 (p.119), <https://doi.org/10.3351/ppp.0005.0003.0001> [accessed 6 July 2017].
[35] Ibid., p.120.

empowered to retell and change it to create a community […] that matches one's own desired condition'.[36] Participatory video is special in that it passes the camera from the hands of a professional filmmaker who may or may not be part of the community to those of the community members, who can tell their stories through their own perspectives. According to White, participatory video serves as a tool for participants to understand personal and community needs by seeing themselves in relation to the community, thereby producing creativity and communication that favours social change.[37] Participants in participatory film projects often go from sharing and discussing the process to rethinking how their experiences are constructed by the community and using filmmaking as a tool to share their stories, experiences and feelings about social issues. Their ideas and creativity are not restrained, as they have complete control over the filmmaking process. Facilitated by professional filmmakers, participatory filmmaking provides women, as a marginalised group in society, with knowledge and with a decision-making capacity that enables them to speak for themselves through moving images. This study does not focus on the professional work of professional filmmakers but rather on that of local women in developing countries. As shown in the case studies, women use filmmaking as a tool to empower

[36] Renuka Bery, 'Participatory Video that Empowers' in *Participatory Video: Images that Transform and Empower,* ed. by Shirley A. White (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2003), pp.102-121 (p.102).
[37] Shirley A. White, 'Participatory Video: A Process that Transform the Self and the Other', in *Participatory Video: Images that Transform and Empower* (London: Sage Publication Ltd, 2003), pp.63-101 (p.64).

themselves, rather than their being empowered. They are no longer 'subjects' of others but take over ownership of their own representation and images in the film productions.[38]

Some organisations use participatory video in projects that empower specific groups or communities. For example, InsightShare, a UK/France-based community development organisation, has been using participatory video for community engagement and change since 1999.[39] In 2006, it published *Insights into Participatory Video: A Handbook for the Field*, to provide a practical guide for people interested in organising participatory video projects. It explains that participatory video is 'a set of techniques to involve a group or community in shaping and creating their own film'.[40] The participants' own voice is again emphasised and the process of participatory filmmaking is the key focus in achieving empowerment in a particular group or community. In this process, people are brought together, have discussions on issues and learn how to make films. They use video as a tool to call for action to tackle problems in their communities.[41] From the above, it can be seen that the nature and process of participatory filmmaking are interconnected and contribute to social change that makes a difference in participants' lives. In order to establish a more

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[38] Dudley, p.153.
[39] InsightShare, *About Us (*InsightShare, 2017) <http://insightshare.org/about/> [accessed 22 August 2017].
[40] Lunch and Lunch, p.10.
[41] Lunch and Lunch, p.10.

concrete connection between participatory film projects and women's empowerment, it is necessary to consider, alongside the meaning of women's empowerment, how the above definitions and benefits of participatory filmmaking are implemented in real case studies. The next section will provide a discussion of the different definitions of women's empowerment, which is important for analysing the impact of participatory filmmaking on women.

1.5 Defining Women's Empowerment

From the 1860s to 1920, first-wave feminism in European countries focused on women's suffrage and legal issues.[42] It sought legal gender equality, including women's voting and property rights. In the 1960s and 1970s, second-wave feminism sought to criticise the masculine point of view regarding social practice in society. For example, women fought on issues including equal wages, sexuality, domestic violence, reproductive rights and family roles.[43] Under the influence of feminism, women's empowerment seemed to be about fighting for women's rights. Later, in the 1980s, women's empowerment became a radical approach for transforming power relations

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[42] June Hannam, *Feminism*, 2nd edn (Florence: Taylor and Francis, 2017), p.5
<http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/bham/detail.action?docID=1710675> [accessed 20 January 2017].
[43] Estelle B. Freedman, *No Turning Back: The History of Feminism and the Future of Women* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2002), p.5.

between men and women.[44] Women's empowerment focused on the power to control

and distribute resources. In the 1990s, the concept of empowerment shifted to 'the

process of challenging existing power relations, and of gaining greater control over

the sources of power'.[45] The definition of women's empowerment, in other words,

varies across different periods and areas of studies. Andrea Cornwall and

Althea-Maria Rivas write about gender equality and the Millennium Development

Goals, which were established by the UN for the purpose of addressing basic human

rights and extreme poverty in the world.[46] Their article highlights an influential

definition of empowerment that was offered by the World Bank on the basis of

Kabeer's work:

> The process of enhancing the capacity of individuals or groups to
> make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and
> outcomes. Central to this process are actions which both build
> individual and collective assets, and improve the efficiency and
> fairness of the organizational and institutional context which govern
> the use of these assets.[47]

This definition emphasises the process of enhancing women's agency through giving

them the power to make decisions, which is one of the key elements of participatory

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[44] Andrea Cornwall and Althea-Maria Rivas, "From 'Gender Equality' and 'Women's Empowerment' to Global Justice: Reclaiming a Transformative Agenda for Gender and Development", *Third World Quarterly*, 36 (2015), 396-415 (p.404), <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2015.1013341> [accessed 25 November 2016].
[45] Rekha Datta and Judith F Kornberg, *Women in Developing Countries: Assessing Strategies for Empowerment* (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002), p.2.
[46] Cornwall and Rivas, pp.396-397.
[47] Cornwall and Rivas, p.406.

filmmaking. Empowering participants individually and collectively in the process helps

organisations and institutions to implement more efficient policies or actions, thus

creating social change. Later, in another journal article, Cornwall addresses how

women's empowerment has been developed and suggests definitions of empowerment

by gathering findings from several multi-country and multi-perspectival research

programmes on women's empowerment.[48] She introduces different programmes

related to five themes of empowerment:

- building consciousness

- engaging front-line intermediaries

- building collective power

- the power of relationships

- imagining women differently.[49]

These five themes can be used as guidelines for evaluating the level of women's

empowerment achieved in the participatory film projects I will be investigating in this

study. In the process of such projects, female participants' consciousness and networks

are built up via group discussions. The films they made in the process are collective

productions that speak on behalf of their communities. By being given complete power

to make filmmaking decisions, the participants experience a change in the power

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[48] Cornwall, p.345.
[49] Ibid., pp.347-355.

relationships between the facilitators and community members.

Another article, written by Maria Irma Bustamante-Gavino, Salma Rattani and Kausar Khan, explores Pakistani women's definition of women's empowerment. It quotes from the United Nations Population Information Network (1995) regarding five components of women's empowerment, including:

- women's sense of self-worth

- the right to have and to determine choices

- the right to have access to opportunities and resources

- the right to have the power to control their own lives, both within and outside the home

- the ability to influence the direction of social change to create a more just social and economic order, nationally and internationally.[50]

Similar to the five themes suggested by Cornwall, these five components emphasise building self-consciousness and giving power to women, but they appear to be more specific to women's rights. Both sets of components can be used to evaluate how women in participatory film projects are empowered. Indeed, in the case study that follows I will focus on the five components set out by the United Nations

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[50] Maria Irma Bustamante-Gavino, Salma Rattani and Kausar Khan, 'Women's Empowerment in Pakistan–Definitions and Enabling and Disenabling Factors: A Secondary Data Analysis', *Journal of Transcultural Nursing*, 22 (2011), 174-181 (pp.175-176), <https://doi.org/10.1177/1043659610395762> [accessed 25 November 2016].

Population Information Network to analyse how participatory filmmaking specifically

empowers women as individuals. In order to paint the bigger picture of the collective

impact of participatory filmmaking on women, some of the themes suggested by

Cornwall will be selected, including building consciousness, building collective

power and imagining women differently. These components will be applied to the

process of participatory film projects for women in developing countries to investigate

the effectiveness of such projects on women's empowerment.

1.6 The Relationship between Participatory Filmmaking and Women's Empowerment

Sinaria Abdel Jabbar and Haidar Ibrahim Zaza, quoting the United Nations High

Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), define women's empowerment as '[a] process

through which women […] in disadvantaged positions increase their access to

knowledge, resources, and decision-making power, and raise their awareness of

participation in their communities, in order to reach a level of control over their own

environment'.[51] This kind of participation is a key element of participatory film

projects that engage women as a disadvantaged community and encourage them to

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[51] Sinaria Abdel Jabbar and Haidar Ibrahim Zaza, 'Evaluating A Vocational Training Programme for Women Refugees at The Zaatari Camp in Jordan: Women Empowerment: A Journey and Not an Output', *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth*, 21 (2015), 304-319 (p.312), <https://doi.org/10.1080/02673843.2015.1077716> [accessed 17 November 2016].

use filmmaking as a tool for action in their communities. As White puts it, video power is a process of facilitating self-expression and interaction.[52] More than merely participating in the projects, women become more aware of their participation in their communities and of their interactions with other community members. Such a process resonates with the empowerment element mentioned. On the basis of the transcriptions of 35 interviews from a study by Rattani in 2006, Bustamante-Gavino, Rattani and Khan analyse how Pakistani women see women's empowerment and other influential factors.[53] Their analysis identifies women's empowerment as the ability of women to alter their social and economic development and fully participate in issues and decisions that affect their lives, through raising awareness of their rights and by other enabling tools for women to lead themselves, their communities and their country.[54] Participatory filmmaking involves a process of development of women's experiences and is, hence, of value to women's empowerment, which is why the connection between the two of them is the focus of this study.

Based on Kabeer's work, Jean Francis East and Susan J. Roll emphasise that empowering women involves their 'understanding their rights, analysing how their personal experiences are embedded in oppressive structures, experiencing themselves

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[52] White, 'Participatory Video: A Process that Transform the Self and the Other', p.65.
[53] Bustamante-Gavino, Rattani and Khan, p.176.
[54] Ibid.

as citizens of a community, and taking actions on behalf of themselves and others'.[55]

The above claim by East and Roll is particularly significant for women in developing

countries. By analysing the oppressive culture and environment that surrounds them,

women become more conscious of their rights and recognise the actions they need to

take in oppressive communities. As Laura Aguiar also puts it, taking part in filmmaking

process and screening the films publicly help participants 'validate the importance of

their life experiences'.[56] What participatory film projects do is to provide participants

with a platform to discuss and analyse their experiences and disadvantaged everyday

situations and, thus, realise their rights and be able to speak for themselves and others

through filmmaking. East and Roll also suggest that 'bringing women together in

circles or small group processes has been found to be a critical component of women's

empowerment'.[57] This is considered to be a constructive way of engaging women in

sharing their experiences. Women living in patriarchal environments often find it

difficult to express themselves in public. Grouping women who share similar

experiences together provides them with effective psychological support, for example,

in the form of being able to share their feelings and learn from one another's

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[55] Jean Francis East and Susan J. Roll, 'Women, Poverty, and Trauma: An Empowerment Practice Approach', *Social Work*, 60 (2015), 279-286 (p.280), <https://doi.org/10.1093/sw/swv030> [accessed 25 November 2016].
[56] Laura Aguiar, '"Many Sides, Many Truths": Collaborative Filmmaking in Transitional Northern Ireland' in *Ireland and Cinema*, ed. by Barry Monahan, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015) pp.117-126 (p.122).
[57] East and Roll, p.283.

experiences.[58] Small groups enable all participants to engage in discussions and to provide more feedback.[59] This also enables the facilitator or the filmmaker to interact with all the participants, forming a more less formal atmosphere. Such a process also enables the women to form their own community, which becomes a collective voice and a source of support for them.

Robinson suggests that participatory film projects also challenge traditional practices and aesthetics on the subjects of documentary.[60] In them, the participants are given the opportunity to access filmmaking equipment, take complete control over what to film and express their thoughts and concerns to the public through screenings. The creative process of filmmaking is also empowering in that women learn how to 'deconstruct and challenge [filmmaking] when editing, thereby developing their own creative capacity'.[61] When producing films, women go through the aesthetic experience of filmmaking, which contributes to the psychological or mental impacts on them. As my three case studies will show, participatory film projects enable illiterate women to use visual images instead of words to present their creative minds and ideas

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[58] J. P. Mundell and others, 'Support Group Processes: Perspectives From HIV-Infected Women in South Africa', *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 9 (2012), 173-187 (p.174), <https://doi.org/10.1080/14780887.2010.500350> [accessed 5 May 2017].

[59] Genie Tutors, *5 Benefits of Working in Small Groups* (Genie Tutors, 2016) <https://www.genietutors.co.uk/5-benefits-of-learning-in-small-groups/> [accessed 5 August 2017].

[60] Robinson, p.120.

[61] Armida de la Garza, 'Practice-based Film Education for Children: Teaching, and Learning for Creativity, Citizenship, and Participation', in *The Education of the Filmmaker in Africa, the Middle East, and the Americas*, ed. by Mette Hjort (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp.221-237 (p.222).

through constructing content and then filming and editing. Different from Nichols'

concept of participatory documentary, these case studies demonstrate participants'

control over the filmmaking process and thus challenge traditional participatory

documentary. Women who participate in these projects not only learn new skills and

knowledge but gain creative experience of filmmaking, which benefits their well-being.

Such differences will be further discussed in the following chapters.

In terms of affective gains, participatory creative engagement contributes to

boosting confidence and to a positive state of mind.[62] It also strengthens participants'

social communication and their relationships with others. By producing films as the

output of the projects, participants can also gain a sense of self-actualisation.[63] The

case studies showcased in this thesis indicate the potential for personal growth and for

creating new meanings in participants' lives. In the case of Shashat, for example, the

participants' films are screened at film festivals and this gives them a great sense of

satisfaction and the confidence to become filmmakers.

Empowerment is 'a process and as an outcome of that process'.[64] In what follows, in

my discussion of the relationship between participatory film projects and women's

empowerment, it is visible that women participants can be empowered indirectly – not

[62] Jenny Secker, Kirsten Heydinrych, Lyn Kent and Jo Keay, 'Why art? Exploring the contribution to mental well-being of the creative aspects and processes of visual art-making in an arts and mental health course', *Arts & Health*, 10(2017), 72-84, (p.80), <https://doi.org/10.1080/17533015.2017.1326389> [accessed 30 March 2018].
[63] Ibid.
[64] Datta and Kornberg, p.2.

merely through participating directly in the projects but by benefitting from their

outcomes. For example, public screenings of the films in local communities may

prompt public actions and even changes in policy that have an influence on the women

in their daily lives. The discussion of women's empowerment in this study will include

both personal and collective empowerment, exploring how women's personal growth

in the process leads to the empowerment of women in the community as a whole. To

further assess the impact of participatory filmmaking on women's empowerment, this

research will discuss and analyse three participatory filmmaking projects in three

developing countries, each of which provides insight into how participatory film

projects in different contexts contribute to different levels of women's empowerment.

1.7 Past Examples of Participatory Film Projects

Past examples of participatory film projects provide evidence of the effectiveness of

participatory filmmaking in the empowerment of women and other marginalised

groups whose voices are neglected by society. These examples provide insights and

inspiration for this research by illustrating theoretical concepts with real, practical

examples in different contexts within scholarship. These studies can also aid the

evaluation of the three projects selected for this study. Antonia Canosa, Erica Wilson

and Anne Graham focus on tourism research and explore how participatory filmmaking

enables children and young people, who have often been neglected, to voice their perspectives on tourism.[65] A group of children and young people aged between 10 and 24 participated in this one-year-long project, which includes interviews and focus groups carried out in Byron Shire, Australia. Funded by the Byron Youth Service, a local non-profit organisation, 14 young people were invited to be 'co-researchers' and to work on participatory films. Over six weeks, and mentored by a local artist and filmmaker, they made three short animation films as the final project products, to express their concerns about the development of tourism in Byron Shire. The films were made with the 'clay-motion' technique. They were entitled *Rubbish Run*, *Just One Piece* and *Alpacas Versus Bus*, displaying concern for the natural environment, wildlife and transport respectively.[66] The films were publicly screened, which enabled their ideas to reach a large group of audiences, including local community members, participants' families and local press.[67] The participatory filmmaking process empowered the young people by increasing their confidence and equipping them with skills.[68] Their contributions were acknowledged and their community status was enhanced through the positive media attention they received.[69] This case study shows

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[65] Antonia Canosa, Erica Wilson and Anne Graham, 'Empowering Young People through Participatory Film: A Postmethodological Approach', *Current Issues in Tourism* (2016), 1-14 (p.4), <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2016.1179270> [accessed 4 November 2016].
[66] Ibid, pp.7-8.
[67] Ibid, p.10.
[68] Ibid, p.4.
[69] Ibid.

how young people participating in a project can be empowered through both the filmmaking process itself and the output. Although the target participants in the above example were not women, a similar impact can be observed in the case studies in this thesis, in how the women build up collective power and gain confidence in the process, with their films being screened and used by organisations for advocacy in the community. The impact of this participatory film project in terms of the empowerment of teenagers serves as an example that can be extended to women in developing countries.

Through the project run by ActionAid in Nepal, women were empowered by their use of video to express themselves on the issue of climate change. This joint research project was launched in Bageshwori and Matehiya communities by the Institute of Development Studies and ActionAid Nepal in 2008.[70] ActionAid is a global movement of people working together to further human rights and defeat poverty for all. It believes that unequal power relations, including gender inequality, have led to poor living conditions and standards for the women in Nepal.[71] By using participatory video, women shared their thoughts about their current living conditions and took action accordingly.[72] The participants created storyboards based on the influence of climate

[70] Marion Khamis, Tamara Plush and Carmen Sepúlveda Zelaya, 'Women's Rights in Climate Change: Using Video as A Tool for Empowerment in Nepal', *Gender & Development*, 17 (2009), 125-135 (p.125), <https://doi.org/10.1080/13552070802697001> [accessed 14 October 2016].
[71] Khamis, Plush and Sepúlveda Zelaya, p.126.
[72] Ibid.

change after ActionAid had provided them with simple, affordable equipment and training. The videos were presented to communities, local government and different NGOs around the world, raising awareness of the problems and enabling the women's suggestions to be transformed into action.[73] For example, some women were worried about the decrease in crop production due to drought and some called for more training in farming techniques.[74] The effectiveness of both the project and the videos was evaluated through feedback from participants. The making of the videos raised women's consciousness about the problems they faced, as well as giving them the power to voice these problems.[75] Video as a visual tool has the potential to enable illiterate women to express what they want to tell the world.[76] It emphasises how moving images and the process of making them can foster the empowerment of women and raise their social status. The study presents a positive example of the particular benefits of participatory filmmaking for women in developing countries and provides insights that enable this thesis to elaborate further on the topic.

The two case studies above show how different organisations select specific groups, such as youngsters and women, and specific social issues for participatory film projects that are shown to have an impact on the participants. On the basis of these two examples,

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[73] Khamis, Plush and Sepúlveda Zelaya, p.130.
[74] Ibid., p.129.
[75] Ibid., p.130.
[76] Ibid.

it seems that projects that focus on specific groups allow better evaluation of the impact on participants. Therefore, rather than looking at how participatory filmmaking is regarded as an empowering process in general, I will focus on participatory film training projects aimed at women in developing countries and consider the impact of such projects and how they can achieve women's empowerment. Women in developing countries are often regarded as having low social status and their voices are often neglected in male-dominated communities. With its three individual chapters on three different case studies, this research examines how participatory filmmaking projects target women in developing countries and empower them through filmmaking.

1.8 Overview of the Thesis

In the following chapter, I present the UNAIDS Participatory Film Project that was run by the Salamander Trust in Uganda, Africa between 2014 and 2015, in partnership with the Namibia Women's Health Network (NWHN) and Mama's Club Uganda. The project aimed to train women living with HIV to use filmmaking as a tool for advocacy and capacity building, with the women being responsible for the entire film production, with the help of a British filmmaker, Dominique Chadwick. Discussions and arguments regarding power dynamics between facilitator and participants, re-enactment, and ethical issues in Nichols' concept of participatory documentary will

be made in this chapter. The project focused on more than empowering local women; it considered outreach, fundraising, the long-term impact on international audiences and future advocacy. It raised the question of how NGOs' objectives influence the impact on participants and participatory film projects' ability to reach international audiences.

The third chapter investigates the Women's International Shared Experience (WISE) Project, which was initiated by Danielle Louise Spencer, with the support of the Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC), in 2010. The project targeted a number of countries including Pakistan, India and Thailand. To better compare it with the other two case studies, this study focuses on both the project in general and its 14-day workshop in Karachi, Pakistan. Addressing the problem of domestic abuse, the women participants produced a 10-minute documentary entitled *Half Face*. The chapter argues that the interviews used in the documentary challenge Nichol's participatory mode of documentary by having all testimonies from the local community. The project failed to evaluate the outcome because of insufficient funding, presenting more visible impacts on the facilitator than on the participants. This chapter discusses how colonial history and neo-colonialism lead to a lack of funding and how this influences the effectiveness of participatory film projects.

Last but not least, the fourth chapter focuses on Shashat's film training

programmes in Palestine. Founded by Alia Arasoughly in 2005, Shashat is an

independent cinema NGO focusing on women's cinema and on training women in

how to make films, which not only aims to build Palestinian women's filmmaking

capacity but to create sustainable social change through film culture.[77] Since 2008, its

Young Palestinian Women Filmmakers Incubator Program has been run with the aim

of empowering women filmmakers in Palestine by providing regular

training-mentoring-production programmes and helping them produce short films.[78]

The conceptual difference between participatory film projects and Nichols' concept of

participatory documentary is also discussed. Although Shashat's training programme

is not described as participatory, in practice it is similar to participatory filmmaking in

that participants go through a period of sharing/discussion and are then given the

freedom and power to control the filmmaking process. The programme has been

shown to have a significant impact on the women involved, demonstrating, therefore,

greater potential than the other two case studies.

Shashat's programme focuses on the Palestinian community of women,

emphasising a local and national goal of promoting women's cinema. The other two

projects are run by non-profit organisations from developed countries for local women

in developing countries, where women are regarded as having lower social status

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[77] Arasoughly, p.112.
[78] Shashat, *Biography* (n.d.) <http://www.shashat.org/en/article/1013/What-Is-Tomorrow> [accessed 28 November 2016].

compared with men and whose voices are neglected. In all three projects, women are given complete control over decisions regarding film production and the space for the creative process. The three projects are discussed in three different chapters, which will review the historical, cultural and social context of the selected countries along with the objectives of the selected organisations. The research focuses on analysing the process of the training provided by the three organisations, the films produced by the women and the impact on the women, on the basis of available documentation and information gathered through Skype interviews with participants and project coordinators. The effectiveness of the projects in achieving women's empowerment is assessed based on the definitions of women's empowerment mentioned above.

CHAPTER TWO

THE UNAIDS PARTICIPATORY FILM PROJECT:

EMPOWERING WOMEN LIVING WITH HIV IN UGANDA AND NAMIBIA

Participatory film projects are often used for empowerment and are run by a range of NGOs for multiple purposes. The roles and objectives of the particular NGO can shift the impact of a participatory film project beyond its participants. Sometimes a project's success in creating an enduring impact through empowering the participants is less clear without sufficient evaluation. In this chapter, I argue that the enduring benefits and effects of participatory film projects are, in fact, most evident among those, mainly from developed countries, who have easy access to the Internet as most of the resources and films produced during a project are available only online. This makes it difficult for local participants and community members to gain access to them but it does mean that the ability of participatory filmmaking to empower can be extended to the public and to future advocacy projects.

This chapter first explores the situation of HIV that is relevant to the participants' context, along with the details of the project and an understanding of its objectives and of how they have a limited enduring impact on the participants. By studying the films made by the participants, this chapter will examine the social context that is

related to the participants' experiences and how this is connected to women's leadership, and challenges Nichols' concept of participatory documentary regarding ethical encounter. Two documentaries made by Dominique Chadwick, the facilitator of the project, will also be analysed as they enable a greater understanding of the participants' films and of the power relations between Chadwick and the participants, which also contributes to a consideration of the question of how the women are empowered. Using information gathered from an interview with Makena Henguva, a staff member of the Namibia Women's Health Network (NWHN) who participated in the project, this chapter examines the level of women's empowerment that the project created. The women in the UNAIDS participatory film project are considered to have been empowered by their positive experiences therein, but I argue that the level of women's empowerment is diverted in this project and that the online status of the films and materials made by the participants suggests that the enduring impact lies with international Internet audiences who can access these materials, which are not accessible to the local community members. This method of distribution seems to result, in the long run, in a potential global impact rather than a local one.

2.1 HIV and AIDS in Uganda and Namibia

HIV and AIDS have been serious problems in Africa for a long time now. According

to statistics from UNAIDS, 36.7 million people in the world were living with HIV in 2015,[79] with 25.5 million of them in Africa and women accounting for more than half of the total.[80] For example, in 2015, out of 1,500,000 people living with HIV in Uganda, 790,000 (52.6%) were females aged 15 or above, and for Namibia the figures were 120,000 (57.1%) out of 210,000.[81] Such significant numbers reveal that there is a huge community of African women living with HIV and AIDS. It also suggests why there are so many NGOs dealing with HIV/AIDS in Africa and why the UNAIDS participatory film project specifically targeted women living with HIV in Uganda and Namibia.

2.2 The UNAIDS Participatory Film Project

The UNAIDS participatory film project was a film training and documentary project that ran from August 2014 to October 2015. It was funded by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and was run by Salamander Trust and the Social Films filmmaker, Dominique Chadwick, in collaboration with Mama's Club Uganda and NWHN in Namibia. All of the organisations involved focus on HIV, and the project specifically targets Ugandan and Namibian women living with the virus.

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[79] UNAIDS, *UNAIDS Fact Sheet November 2016* (2016), pp.1-3
<http://www.unaids.org/sites/default/files/media_asset/UNAIDS_FactSheet_en.pdf> [accessed 11 May 2017].
[80] Ibid.
[81] Ibid.

Salamander Trust is an organisation incorporated as a company limited by guarantees and as a British registered charity that aims to challenge and change public perspectives towards HIV.[82] Both collaborating organisations focus their work on supporting African women living with HIV. Mama's Club is a women's organisation founded in 2004 by women living with HIV. It supports young women with the virus by providing training in HIV prevention and psychological peer support throughout Uganda.[83]

Founded in 2008, NWHN is a community-based organisation that aims to empower women living with HIV and AIDS by providing them with skills, education and capacity building.[84] The two African organisations selected some of their members to participate in the project and offered their support in running the project in Uganda and Namibia. The collaboration between these organisations seems to be a key factor in the implementation of the project. However, UNAIDS' objective for the project is to use filmmaking as a tool to 'showcase the extraordinary grassroots leadership of women living with HIV in an effective response to gender-based violence and HIV in Africa'.[85] This implies that the leadership already exists and it is

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[82] Salamander Trust, *About Us – Salamander Trust* (Salamander Trust, 2017) <http://salamandertrust.net/about/> [accessed 7 May 2017].
[83] Ibid.
[84] Ibid.
[85] Salamander Trust, *UNAIDS Participatory Film Project – Salamander Trust* (Salamander Trust, 2016) <http://salamandertrust.net/project/capacity-building-leadership-gender-based-violence-participatory-film-project/#mamasclub> [accessed 6 May 2017].

merely being showcased by the films that are produced. 16 women members of Mama's Club were involved in the Uganda workshop and 36 women from NWHN's support groups were involved in the one in Namibia, all of whom were receiving medical treatment.[86] The project provides its participants with both positive experiences and empowerment, which will be analysed in the latter part of this chapter. However, its objective again poses the question of who the project beneficiaries are. By analysing the films and the project's impact on its female participants, this chapter demonstrates how the project is utilised for advocacy and for promoting the organisations, and what its effectiveness is in reinforcing the capacity of existing women leaders and fostering the empowerment of non-leader women.

Two filmmaking training workshops were held over two weeks and participants were divided into four groups in which they shared their own stories about the influence of HIV in their HIV and selected one of these to work on. With Chadwick as facilitator and trainer, they learnt about storyboarding and basic filmmaking techniques. They used 'Flip' video cameras and filmed with the help of local people as social actors. 'Flip' cameras are portable 'point and shoot' video cameras with built-in a microphone and automatic adjustment for exposure and focus.[87] They are

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[86] Ibid.
[87] Steve's Digicams, *What is a Flip Camera* (Steve's Digicams, 2018) <http://www.steves-digicams.com/knowledge-center/how-tos/buying-selling/what-is-a-flip-camera.html#b> [accessed 5 April 2018].

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extremely simple to use, so the participants did not need much technical training in how to operate the camera. By learning how to edit the films on laptops, the participants of both workshops were given complete control of the process and the products, including the message, content and dialogue of the films. Chadwick produced two documentaries, one about Mama's Club and one about NWHN. Short films based on personal testimonies were produced by participants, four in Uganda and five in Namibia, and this was followed by community screenings. The films made by the participants reveal the patriarchal culture and how HIV-positive women are perceived and treated in different ways in their communities in Uganda and Namibia. The analysis of the films below enables a better understanding of the participants' experiences as HIV-positive women living in Southern Africa and reveals how the films showcase the existing leadership among the women rather than empowering women who are not already members of the organisations.

2.3 Films Made by Participants

2.3.1 Issues Discussed in the Films

Participants produced four films in the Uganda workshop, entitled *Survivors*, *Let Her Decide*, *Growing Up* and *Keeping Hope*. Five films were produced in the Namibia workshop, entitled *On My Own Two Feet*, *Down with Corruption*, *Betrayed*, *Stop*

Abusing Widows and *Sticking Together*. All the films are around six to eight minutes long and are based on personal testimonies of the social norms and context of Uganda and Namibia. All the films present patriarchal culture and showcase women supporting one another in communities. They all start by addressing problems that HIV-positive women face and end by showing how their lives are improved with the help of other women, presenting female grassroots leadership.

Let Her Decide starts with a medium long shot of a conversation between parents and a school girl who walks into the frame from afar. She is asked to stop going to school because her family cannot afford her education. She walks up close to the camera and then walks out of the frame while her parents continue talking, giving the sense that she has no choice but to accept what her parents say and does not want to stay in the conversation. She is forced to marry a much older man whose first wife died of HIV. A medium close-up is used to depict her confrontation with her husband after she finds out that he has lied about his first marriage, which strengthens both the tension between them and her emotions. Her husband limits her social activities and her education. She later realises she has become HIV-positive and she suffers from domestic violence, which is followed by a cut-away shot that interrupts a beating scene and shows her seeking help from a counsellor. As Uganda is among the 23

poorest nations in the world,[88] girls are often forced to terminate their education and marry at a young age because of their families' financial difficulties. Ugandan and Namibian communities are mostly patriarchal; women have a lower status than men and are regarded as the 'property' of men and of their families.[89] Women are given limited freedom and decision-making power, as is shown in the film. This patriarchal environment has shaped the participants' experience and has also reinforced women's traditional roles, which include getting married, giving birth and taking care of their families. Women usually have unprotected sex after getting married as it is important for them to bear children.[90] They thus lose the chance of an education, resulting in low literacy levels and a weak economic status.

Another of the films, *Betrayed*, describes one participant's experience of being sterilised by a doctor without her consent because she is HIV-positive. The film starts with an extreme long shot of a village, followed by a cut-away shot into a house, where a family sits on the sofa, creating a sense of moving from the general to the specific. The woman explains to her husband that she cannot bear any more children because she has been sterilised. A cut-away shot shifts the scene to her husband

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[88] Sam Waswa, *Uganda Amongst World's 23 Poorest Nations – Report* (Chimpreports, 2015) <http://www.chimpreports.com/uganda-amongst-worlds-23-poorest-nations-report/> [accessed 22 August 2017].

[89] Janet E. Moon, 'Violence, Culture, and HIV/AIDS: Can Domestic Violence Laws Reduce African Women's Risk of HIV Infection?', *Syracuse Journal of International Law and Commerce*, 35 (2007), 123-157 (p.147), <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxyd.bham.ac.uk/docview/197148429?accountid=8630&rfr_id=info%3Axri%2Fsid%3Aprimo> [accessed 11 May 2017].

[90] Mundell and others, p.174.

abusing her, showing a dramatic change in his attitude towards her. Social

expectations of women can be seen as a contributing factor in why women miss out

on the opportunity to receive an education and in general lack decision-making power.

According to The State of the World's Children 2016 Report by the United Nations

International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), 40% of girls in Uganda and 7%

in Namibia are married before the age of 18.[91] Women have fewer opportunities to

access quality education and are given less decision-making power as a result of early

marriage.[92] They are expected to perform their traditional roles as wife and mother,

which renders then makes it difficult for them to change their situation of being

oppressed by both men and social norms. This is further exemplified by the

community experience portrayed in the participants' films. Limited education, limited

decision-making power and traditional women's roles seem to be the common themes,

revealing the patriarchal culture under which the women live. As mentioned

previously, the films were made to showcase grassroots women's leadership. Both

Betrayed and *Let Her Decide* highlight the fact that women community leaders take

local women to support groups and improve their lives. The strength and support of

the community is also shown in the other films made by the participants.

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[91] UNICEF, *The State of the World's Children 2016* (UNICEF, 2016)
<https://www.unicef.org/publications/files/UNICEF_SOWC_2016.pdf > [accessed 31 March 2018].
[92] The World Bank, Educating Girls, Ending Child Marriage (The World Bank, 2017)
<http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/immersive-story/2017/08/22/educating-girls-ending-child-marriag
e> [accessed 31 March 2018].

Apart from the pressures of social norms and patriarchal culture, women living with HIV often feel worried and desperate as they face chronic disease or early death.[93] They also face stigma from the community, as community members often have insufficient knowledge about HIV, which causes them psychological stress. In *On My Own Two Feet,* people in the community gossip about a woman's HIV status and even her own mother does not want to help. The participants use the films to show that HIV influences them both physically and mentally. Even though HIV is a serious problem in their communities, being HIV-positive is still stigmatised and not accepted. There are many different reasons for the prevalence of HIV in Uganda and Namibia, for example, inconsistent condom use among sex workers, poor sex education, certain sexual practices and gender-based violence. Polygamy is legal in Uganda and Namibia, which means that it is socially accepted for men to have more than one wife and multiple sex partners.[94] Although women are valued for their virginity and do not have sex before getting married, frequent unprotected sex with their husbands can foster HIV transmission.[95] Husbands travel for work and have sexual relationships with sex workers, or they marry several women one of whom is HIV-positive. Another possible cause is that people lie about their HIV infection. Although it is more probable that it is the husbands who transmit the virus to their

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[93] Mundell and others, p.174.
[94] Moon, p.148.
[95] Ibid., p.142.

wives, the wives are blamed. In some cases, like in *Sticking Together*, the husband or

the wife does not know they were born HIV-positive because their parents have never

told them. However, in all the participants' films the women are the ones who are

blamed by their partners for carrying the virus, in the sense that they are suspected of

lying about having had sex before marriage or having affairs. This suggests that social

norms and the limited knowledge about HIV restrain women and result in gender

inequality the community. These films become the collective voice of the participants

in addressing these issues and revealing the struggle of HIV-positive women through

participants' testimonies.

Another of the films, *Stop Abusing Widows*, starts with a long shot framing from

a high angle the fabric hanging in the village, giving audiences a sense of how their

living environment is like. A cut-away shot shifts from this village scene to a

participant being interviewed about her experience as a widow. It moves its audience

from the general (the living environment and the story's background) to the specific (a

participant's personal experience). The interviewee sits in a three-quarter pose and

does not look at the lens, which makes it seem as though she is talking to an

interviewer who does not appear in the frame. Audiences listen to the 'conversation'

and to a certain extent are involved in the interaction.

The participant's husband died of AIDS and left her with four daughters. A

dissolve is used to transit the scene to a medium long shot of her mother-in-law blaming her for the death of her son in front of one of her daughters, and then a track shot follows the child as she cries and walks away. The scene then transits back and forth between the interview and a re-enactment of the story she is telling with dissolves. It visualises the story told by the interviewee, enabling audiences to understand the story both verbally and visually. The husband's family believes that she bewitched him, and they intend to take the property away from her. In the final scene of the interview, the interviewee no longer sits in a three-quarter pose but looks straight into the camera as she talks about joining the support group. The scene gives a sense of speaking directly to the audiences, reinforcing the importance of support groups. The film addresses the social norm that women are considered responsible for bewitching their husbands, a belief that plays a powerful role in the taking away of their property and rights. This reveals how these communities' limited knowledge about HIV means that they place the responsibility on women. The films repeatedly emphasise the importance of the existing support groups and women's leadership for HIV-positive women. The pressure and stigma from their communities encourages women to join or form support groups to support one another and help women become financially independent or, in some cases, fix their relationships with their husbands.

In fact, this group of films presents two different attitudes that exist in these communities. In *Keeping Hope*, the woman seeks help from a peer support group, which assists her in maintaining herself by opening a store. She is able to live on her own without her husband and rejects his reconciliation attempts. In *Stop Abusing Widows*, the woman's neighbours help her and she starts a support group for widows. HIV-positive women are able to be independent from men and support one another in communities. These two films show the power of support groups and the strength of communities of women protecting one another, in contrast to *On My Own Two Feet*, which shows the community putting pressure on HIV-positive women. The communities' accepting and supportive attitude creates significant differences in the women's lives. In the films, the community support is portrayed mainly in the form of support groups. By telling their problems to a friend or a counsellor, the women are led to join support groups in which women can share similar experiences and support one another. However, the films portray personal testimonies of past experiences and the support groups provided by the organisations have already been developed. Although these films focus mainly on showcasing HIV-positive women's networks and mutual support within communities, they still have the potential to create new women's leadership by encouraging more women to participate in the future. However, information related to possible new leadership created by the project is

unavailable, which limits its assessment.

2.3.2 Re-enactment and Content in Participants' Films

All the films made by the participants promote the benefits of joining support groups

and deliver a positive, clear message that 'being HIV-positive is not the end of the

world'.[96] Building on the idea that the films showcase the existing women's leaders,

the target audience seems to be local community members who are also suffering

from HIV and gender-based violence. Henguva, a member of NWHN staff who also

participated in the project, points out that the participants chose the content of the

films based on what frequently happens in their community.[97] As the films are also

based on personal testimonies that are shaped by the social context of the

communities, the film content is considered to reflect the actual lives of women in

Uganda and Namibia. In this sense, the films can be considered documentaries.

The interactive (participatory) mode of documentary, according to Bill Nichols,

'stresses images of testimony or verbal exchange and images of demonstration'.[98]

However, these films do not contain any original footage or documentation. The

stories and experiences presented in them are scripted and filmed based on the

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[96] *Let Her Decide* [Vimeo video], Salamander Trust, 2015 <https://vimeo.com/123753216> [accessed 5 May 2017].
[97] See Appendix (i).
[98] Bill Nichols, *Representing Reality: Issues and Concepts in Documentary* (Bloomington, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991), p.44.

participants' personal stories, the authenticity of which it is impossible to confirm. This fiction-like presentation might confuse audiences in that they might think that they are not watching the participants' personal experiences but just scripted imaginary stories. Nichols makes a clear distinction between documentary and fiction in his book, *Representing Reality*. He displays a relatively negative opinion of the use of re-enactments in documentary, stating that re-enactment can lessen the credibility of the event by rupturing the bond between image and historical referent.[99] In this sense, re-enactment in documentary is the reconstruction of imaginary events based on historical fact for the purpose of making a film, resulting in a less authentic representation. In the case of the UNAIDS participatory film projects, participants who play the role of filmmakers have limited knowledge about filmmaking and actual documentation of their experiences simply does not exist. Re-enactment becomes the only possible way to demonstrate their stories. Does re-enactment in the films really eliminate the authenticity of the participants' experiences? Does it have any influence on the empowering process?

Steven N. Lipkin suggests in his book, *Real Emotional Logic: Film and Television Docudrama as Persuasive Practice*, that re-creation of actual events is a necessary mode of presentation and he presents the concept of 'docudrama' which

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[99] Nichols, *Representing Reality*, p.21.

uses 'narrative structure to advocate its view of its subject'.[100] The idea of 'docudrama' emphasises re-creation or re-enactment. Lipkin suggests that re-creation or re-enactment can invite audiences to see 'what might have really happened in much this way'.[101] Although the re-enactment in the participants' films is scripted and 'performed' by social actors from the community, the story background and the mises-en-scène reveal the cultural and social characteristics of the community. For example, social actors wear their own clothes as costumes and their daily activities and living environment are filmed. Sylvie Jasen argues that 'the use of non-professional performers often serves an authenticating function in a film by adding veracity and verisimilitude to its representation'.[102] Both participants and community members have no prior experience of acting or performing. Participants invite community members and engage themselves as social actors in the re-enactments, creating a sense of authenticity for the films. Even without original footage or recordings of the events described in the films, re-enactment in moving images provides accurate representation and engages audiences in the participants' experiences by recreating scenarios of their experiences as HIV-positive patients and of the influence of HIV.

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[100] Steven N. Lipkin, *Real Emotional Logic: Film and Television Docudrama as Persuasive Practice* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, c2002), pp.1-4.
[101] Ibid., p.4.
[102] Sylvie Jasen, 'Reenactment as Event in Contemporary Cinema' (PhD Thesis, Carleton University, 2011), p.1.

As Nichols describes, documentary, after all, is an act of representation that contains narratives, plots, characters and events just as fiction does.[103] The key to participatory film projects is that they give participants the opportunity to speak about and represent themselves through filmmaking, which empowers them through both the process and the output. Even if the films rely on re-enactment, this does not necessarily eliminate authenticity. Rather, the fact that the films are made by participants who live with the social issues portrayed and know their own experiences better than anyone else ensures appropriate representation. The use of re-enactment can avoid a stagnant story and demonstrate participants' testimonies.[104] Roxana Waterson suggests that testimonies in films can be regarded as transmitting memories that cannot be explained by words.[105] The film transits alternately between interviews and re-enactment, which serves as a moving illustration of the stories told and enables audiences to engage in the interviewees' subjective thoughts and memories both verbally and visually, reinforcing and giving authenticity to their testimonies. As the films are made with 'Flip' cameras, the quality of the moving images is somewhat shaky, which develops a sense of spontaneity and authenticity. Considering that many

[103] Nichols, *Representing Reality*, p.107.
[104] Susan Kouguell, *Reenactments in Documentary Films: Is There an Authentic Truth in Documentary?* (Script Magazine, 2015)
<http://www.scriptmag.com/features/reenactments-documentary-films-authentic-truth-documentary> [accessed 16 August 2017].
[105] Roxana Waterson, 'Trajectories of Memory: Documentary Film and the Transmission of Testimony', *History and Anthropology*, 18 (2007), 51-73 (p.65),
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02757200701218239> [accessed 15 August 2017].

community members do not have much knowledge about filmmaking, they might

demand less of the quality of the films. Having simple linear narratives with elements

of entertainment makes it more likely that target audiences will accept the films and

more easily understand the participants' experiences and messages. Re-enactment

enables participants to revisit their own memories and experiences, reinforcing their

consciousness of the particular social issues and problems and giving them the chance

to engage their audiences in both emotional and rational ways. Getting other

community members involved in the process can also foster their understanding of the

issues and become part of the process of reviewing social norms related to HIV in

women. The empowering process will be further discussed later in this chapter.

2.3.3 Impact of the Techniques and Aesthetics Used

The films give clear messages that encourage women living with HIV and domestic

abuse to join support groups. Some of the films also include the use of interviews to

give authenticity to the experiences and provide verbal sharing. For example, *Survivor*

starts with the participant sitting at a three-quarter angle in a medium close-up frame,

recounting her personal experience of being HIV-positive. The scenes transit

alternately between the interview and the re-enactment of the woman's experiences by

using dissolves. She realised that she was HIV-positive after her father passed away

early because of the virus. She was forced to stop her education because her family

did not want to invest in her. This scene is followed by an unsteady track shot in

which she walks towards the camera, which is moving at the same pace, and has a

conversation about her HIV infection with her boyfriend. Most of the films start with

short interviews with the participants whose personal experiences are later re-created

in the films through re-enactment as demonstration. The interviewed participants all

sit in a three-quarter pose and do not look at the camera. The 'interviewer' is absent

from the screen, which creates the feeling that the interviewees are simply sharing

their stories instead of being formally interviewed. In some films, such as *Stop

Abusing Widows*, there are scenes in which the interviewees look straight at the lens,

giving a sense of their speaking directly to the participants. According to Nichols, this

form of interview can enable audiences to access the thoughts and memories of the

interviewees directly, as the audiences are 'in the position of subjective

engagement'.[106] The combination of interviews and re-enactment adds authenticity to

the films. With interviews, the audiences are watching not only staged stories, but

personal experiences. Audiences listen to the experiences shared by the interviewees

and watch the literal re-creation of the events they mention. The films made by the

participants illustrate both the issues faced by women living with HIV and the social

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[106] Nichols, *Representing Reality*, p.44.

context in Uganda and Namibia. Women in Africa and HIV are often represented in

the media as passive agents, incapable of taking action to improve their own lives.[107]

The women participants in the UNAIDS project present a positive image of women

living with HIV, showing their ability to improve their lives with the help of support

groups. Their films challenge the negative depiction of African women in mainstream

media and provide audiences with the participants' own perspectives of living with

HIV.

2.4 Empowering Women in the Project

2.4.1 Dynamics between Participants' Films and Chadwick's Films

To enable a greater understanding of the films made by the participants, I will look at

the two documentary films, *There Is Life After HIV* and *Stand Together*, made in the

Uganda and Namibia workshops about Mama's Club and NWHN respectively. Both

13-minute documentaries were filmed and directed by Chadwick, a professional

British filmmaker and the project facilitator. Although the focus of this research is not

professional documentary, the presence of these two documentaries serves as an

introduction to the films made by the participants. While not mentioning anything

about the UNAIDS participatory film project, the documentaries enable a better

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[107] Andrew Gibbs, 'Understandings of Gender and HIV in the South African Media', *AIDS Care*, 22 (2010), 1620-1628 (p.1621), < http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09540121.2010.490258 > [accessed 9 May 2017].

understanding of the participants' films by providing the background to HIV issues in

Uganda and Namibia. Chadwick's films can be regarded as social issue documentary

as they take up a public issue from a social perspective by recruiting individuals to

illustrate a perspective.[108] They use professional filmmaking techniques and a

professional camera, resulting in good quality professional filmmaking, and are

mainly constructed by interviewing staff and members of Mama's Club and NWHN

in different districts, which provides audiences with the background to HIV in Uganda

and Namibia. The documentaries first address statistics, problems and impacts

regarding Ugandan and Namibian women living with HIV, aptly capturing the

situation on the ground. For example, Ugandan and Namibian women suffer from

domestic violence, limited education and poor living standards. They highlight the

effectiveness of such groups and the importance of undergoing medical treatment. The

films not only enable audiences to know more about the work of the two African

NGOs, but also suggest the benefits of becoming a member of the organisations.

On Salamander Trust's website, the two documentaries are positioned above the

participants' films. This implies that they are expected to be watched first, as they

provide the necessary background information. As the participants' films share

personal testimonies of being HIV-positive and of how support groups improve

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[108] Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary,* p.186.

women's lives, they serve as extensions of Chadwick's documentaries and reinforce the effectiveness of support groups. They illustrate specific personal experiences against the general background provided in Chadwick's documentaries. Both Chadwick's documentaries and the participants' films were shown to the communities at local screenings, presenting a complementary relationship. All the films have been uploaded to Vimeo. Chadwick's documentaries have been viewed 555 times and there are a total of 1,516 views of all nine films made by the participants. The fact that the documentaries have been viewed about a third as often as the nine participants' films shows that they work not only to frame the participants' films but as professional filmmaking to attract and encourage a wider range of audiences to watch the participants' films online. The fact that the interviews in the documentaries are conducted mainly with professionals, including the organisations' managers and programme coordinators and a doctor lends professional credibility to the two films. Two aims can be seen in the production and the practice of the project. As the participants' films were screened locally, their target audiences are community members who are encouraged to join support groups, but Chadwick's documentaries seem to serve a different aim. Even though both the documentaries and the participants' films encourage HIV-positive community members to join support groups, the documentaries mainly seem to be targeting educated global audiences who

are not familiar with the situation of HIV in Africa. From the design on the website and the level of professionalism, it seems that the documentaries mainly target audiences who have access to the Internet rather than local communities and that they promote the two organisations with a view to obtaining public support and donations. In other words, the participants' films and Chadwick's documentaries target two different audiences to achieve wider coverage and publicity.

The relationship between Chadwick's documentaries and the participants' films also raises the question of how power was allocated between the facilitator and the participants, which is an essential question in any participatory film project. The distribution of power between Chadwick and the participants is somewhat complex. Chadwick, who is a professional filmmaker from Britain, has complete authority and agency when making the documentaries, but the authority lies with the participants in the films produced during the training. Participatory film training projects emphasise that the 'control over, and responsibility for, the process and product stays with participants rather than with filmmakers from outside the community'.[109] As participatory filmmaking is about giving participants the opportunity to represent themselves through filmmaking, it is crucial that they had complete control over the entire filmmaking process while Chadwick simply played the role of the facilitator

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[109] Canosa, Wilson and Graham, p.4.

who delivered filmmaking knowledge and skills to the participants, enabling them to use new skills to express themselves. The women's participation removes Chadwick's power as a filmmaker because the process is controlled by the participants.[110] These films were scripted, shot with 'Flip' video cameras and edited by the participants, who worked in groups and acted in their own films. This eliminates the inherent power imbalance of traditional documentary, in which participants are often the objects to be filmed.

However, the participants' films are not the only products of the project. As illustrated above, the professional documentaries made by Chadwick play a complementary role and are placed above the participants' films on the Salamander Trust website, where all the UNAIDS project material and information can be accessed. Such an arrangement seems to shift some of the focus from the participants' films to the professional documentaries. Moreover, Chadwick, as the facilitator, is constantly mentioned on the website and in the films but the names of the participants are only identified at the end of each film. Instead of being individually identified, the participants are identified as a group living with HIV and members of Mama's Club or NWHN. Although participants are regarded as the makers of the films they produced in the project, their new identity as filmmakers seems to be overlooked and

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[110] Lisa Bourke, 'Reflections on Doing Participatory Research in Health: Participation, Method and Power', *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 12 (2009), 457-474 (p.459), <https://doi.org/10.1080/13645570802373676> [accessed 5 May 2017].

generalised. This reintroduces the power of Chadwick, who is supposed to be an 'invisible' trainer, and undercuts the relinquishing of her power in the making of the participants' films.

Empowerment implies a change in power relations.[111] Although it shows a shift of attention away from the participants, the project's filmmaking process is regarded as empowering the participants as in it they were given the opportunity to make own decisions. This means that the decision-making power has shifted from Chadwick, who as a professional filmmaker often has 'complete' authorship in the filmmaking process, to the participants. As mentioned previously, the social context presented in the films reveals that women often lack the power of decision-making in their daily lives. In this sense, the participatory filmmaking approach can also challenge traditional documentary filmmaking through participants taking up the role of filmmakers. It may also be a possible solution for ethical issues in documentary.

2.4.2 Challenging Ethical Issues in Traditional Documentary

Ethical issues are often a significant concern in documentary filmmaking and are usually related to representation. Nichols writes that 'documentary filmmakers often take up the role of public representatives', and he sees them as speaking for the

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[111] Shirley A. White, 'Involving People in Participatory Process' in *Participatory Video: Images that Transform and Empower,* ed. by Shirley A. White (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2003), pp.33-62 (p.54).

interests of their subjects and of the agency that supports their filmmaking in his suggestion that participatory documentary features engagement between filmmakers and subjects.[112] Therefore, filmmakers are responsible for their subjects and for representing their subjects appropriately. However, one of the ethical issues in documentary, according to Brian Winston, is that there is often a dilemma between informed consent and a filmmaker's freedom of expression.[113] This means that social actors may be too conscious about their 'performance' with the filmmaker's presence when they are completely informed, which limits the documentary output. Filmmakers, therefore, may sacrifice the interests of their subjects by not informing them completely or by altering reality.

Nichols points out that traditional participatory documentary encounters ethical issues regarding both the filmmaking process and representation which can have unforeseen effects on the people who are represented in documentary.[114] Winston (as cited in Fomina, 2014) also argues that the consequences of representation are mainly imposed on the subjects in documentary. Filmmakers might record moments that the subjects might not wish to be shown.[115] This might result in misleading, false representation of the subjects, which then alters audiences' perspectives. In most cases,

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[112] Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary*, pp.30, 156.
[113] Varvara Fomina, 'Ethics of Documentary Filmmaking in Theory and Practice' (professional project, University of Missouri, 2014), p.8.
[114] Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary*, p.36.
[115] Fomina, p.2.

filmmakers come in as outsiders to film the subjects. They are not part of the community and are not involved in the particular social issues. Documentary, therefore, can be harmful to the subjects by making false representation.

Apart from giving the participants decision-making power, participatory filmmaking in the UNAIDS project makes the participants their own representatives, rather than Chadwick, who is neither African nor HIV-positive. This practice challenges Nichols' participatory mode of documentary. The participants who are supposed to be the subjects in traditional documentary filmmaking, are the people who are most familiar with their experience and their situation as HIV carriers. Giving them the opportunity to make all the decisions in filmmaking can eliminate any possible false, harmful representation of them as they speak about themselves on their own behalf. For example, AIDS/HIV-positive patients are often depicted in a negative and hopeless light but in their own films the participants reveal their unfortunate experiences and present themselves as positive, encouraging examples of how to overcome the difficulties of being HIV-positive. Some of them gain help from neighbours and some are able to bear HIV-negative babies. The overall representation is positive and offers audiences a different perspective about HIV-positive women in Africa, which challenges misleading media representations.

Those participants whose experiences are used in the films can decide how much

to reveal, ensuring their privacy. The participants work in groups with other community members, so the decisions made about the final representation are collective ones and the problem of obtaining consent can be avoided. Chadwick, as the facilitator, plays a particularly important role in supervising and teaching the participants about documentary and filmmaking techniques, so that the quality of the films can be guaranteed. Armida de la Garza suggests that participants can be empowered when they learn how to 'deconstruct and challenge [filmmaking] when editing, thereby developing their own creative capacity'.[116] The participants learn very basic filmmaking techniques and thus have very limited knowledge about film aesthetics. In this sense, they focus more on the content of the films, addressing issues and sharing experiences. The only equipment they were given were 'Flip' cameras, so their creative process of filmmaking concentrates on re-enactment and on using their surroundings for filmmaking, giving a sense of spontaneity and realism. They apply some editing techniques and cinematography such as long shots, track shots and dissolves. Even though they all learn the same techniques from Chadwick, there is still a slight aesthetic difference in the presentation of their films. Therefore, participatory filmmaking is empowering not only because it challenges the traditional

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[116] Armida de la Garza, 'Practice-based Film Education for Children: Teaching, and Learning for Creativity, Citizenship, and Participation', in *The Education of the Filmmaker in Africa, the Middle East, and the Americas*, ed. by Mette Hjort (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp.221-237 (p.222).

power relations between filmmakers and their subjects, but because it has the potential

to eliminate the ethical issues that exist in traditional documentary.

2.4.3 Empowerment as the Result and the Process

According to Cornwall, empowerment is the process of enhancing one's capacity to

make decisions and take actions.[117] Participants used filmmaking as a tool to engage

in decision-making and take actions accordingly. Local community members were

also invited to participate in the films. As Emilie Flower and Brigid McConville put it,

sharing the process of filmmaking with community members is an open-ended

process that allows for reflection, formulating solutions and actions.[118] With no rules

or restrictions, participants have full control over what they want to show to audiences,

and how. Community members were invited to participate in the films as social actors,

thus sharing the process of filming. Rekha Datta and Judith F. Kornberg note that

women's empowerment is also a process of women learning collaborative skills and

how to work in groups.[119] Working in groups and with community members enables

the women to reflect upon their thoughts and to discuss solutions with the latter

during filming. Involving other community members in the films also enables more

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[117] Cornwall, p.345.
[118] Emilie Flower and Brigid McConville, 'Diary of a Participatory Advocacy Film Project: Transforming Communication Initiatives into Living Campaigns', *Development in Practice*, 19 (2009), 933-937 (pp.934-935), <https://doi.org/10.1080/09614520903122428> [accessed 4 November 2016].
[119] Rekha Datta and Judith F. Kornberg, *Women in Developing Countries: Assessing Strategies for Empowerment* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002), p.4.

direct access to them and builds a wider connection with the community. The filmmaking process is a collaboration that provided the participants with a collective experience, forming a collective voice.

After the women had created and edited their films, they watched them and were asked to discuss what messages they wanted to present to the audiences through them.[120] The participants were also able to share this process verbally with other members at community screenings. Community screenings are integral to participatory film projects as they lead to larger audiences and create the feeling of an 'event'.[121] Community members and their families and friends participated in the community screenings, which brought the films to more community members, including those who had not been involved in the projects. With the facilitator's help in hosting the community screenings, the participants introduced their films and prompted a constructive discussion with the audiences. The viewing experience of being part of a facilitated screening can stimulate active responses.[122] Audiences can ask questions and participants can give immediate responses. By communicating with the participants in person in constructive discussions, the audiences grasped a better

[120] Salamander Trust, *Capacity Building for Leadership on Gender-Based Violence: A Participatory Project – Uganda* (PowerPoint presentation) (2016), <http://salamandertrust.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/SalT_Mamas_Club_Uganda_webinar_compressedFINAL.pptx.pdf> [accessed 5 May 2017].
[121] Julia Cain, 'Understanding Film and Video as Tools for Change: Applying participatory Video and Video Advocacy in South Africa' (PhD thesis, Stellenbosch University, 2009), p.93.
[122] Ibid., p.97.

understanding of the hardships that women face and of what they can do to assist one another in the community.[123]

Apart from sharing the filmmaking process with the community members and being given the power of decision-making, the participants are empowered through skills acquisition and collective support. Jabbar and Zaza suggest that one of the elements of women's empowerment is that women in disadvantaged positions get access to knowledge, resources and decision-making capacity.[124] Most women participants have never used a computer before, let alone engaged in filmmaking. Women were taught filmmaking techniques and how to use a computer for editing. This access to new knowledge and resources enabled the women to utilise new skills to express themselves. The sharing process before the training is similar to that employed in support groups, which provide a safe, comfortable environment for the participants to share their personal experience of being HIV-positive and topics related to, for example, gender-based violence, support groups themselves, corruption, discrimination and adherence. Women can listen to others who share similar experiences and gain the support they may lack from their family and friends.[125] The discussion between the women and the facilitator can also help develop critical

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[123] See Appendix (i).
[124] Jabbar and Zaza, p.312.
[125] Mundell and others, p.174.

thinking in the group.[126] In this process of sharing and discussion, the women rethink

their everyday lives and can question the denial of their rights society's discrimination

against HIV-positive women. Their voices are heard and they can benefit from others'

experiences.

The project participants started out as women living with HIV and ended up

having the confidence and ability to discuss HIV, gender-based violence and social

issues with community members.

> It was an insightful project and got to see that women stood
> together and found ways to encourage their partners and
> community at large to support one another.[127]

Although the participants' feedback is not available for analysis, Henguva, as a

witness of the project in Namibia, observed that the women became more confident

and used the films they made to encourage change in the community.[128] Such

immediate empowerment of the participants further strengthens the existing women's

leadership and supports the future development of grassroots leadership. The 'Flip'

cameras and 300 DVDs of the films were left with NWHN,[129] enabling the

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[126] A. Gibbs and others, '"Eh! I Felt I Was Sabotaged!": Facilitators' Understandings of Success in a Participatory HIV and IPV Prevention Intervention in Urban South Africa', *Health Education Research*, 30 (2015), 985-995 (p.986), <https://doi.org/10.1093/her/cyv059> [accessed 18 May 2017].

[127] See Appendix (i).

[128] See Appendix (i).

[129] Salamander Trust, *Capacity Building for Leadership on Gender-Based Violence: A Participatory Project- Namibia* (PowerPoint presentation) (2016), <http://salamandertrust.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/SalamanderNWHNNamibia_webinar_Final.pptx.pdf> [accessed 5 May 2017].

participants and the organisation to extend the participatory project by continuing to make films for advocacy and to train other community members.

The UNAIDS participatory film project provided positive experiences for the women involved, including boosting their confidence, skills acquisition and decision-making, but regarding how the films are used and where they are available, the long-term impact on the participants is less clear. In what follows, I will argue that there are limitations of this project for women's empowerment and that its enduring impact falls on the wide range of audiences.

2.5 Limitation on Empowerment

Salamander Trust's objective is to expand the project to the Internet and to international audiences. Although the entire participatory film project lasted for more than a year, the training workshops were held for only two weeks. Therefore, the training was very basic, making further development difficult. After the project, Salamander Trust not only exhibited the films on Vimeo and its own website, but also produced DVDs with accompanying booklets as an interactive training resource for workshops in both Uganda and Namibia. This enabled a wider audience to access the materials and provided a better understanding of the films and the project. However, it also led to questions about the accessibility of this online distribution. As mentioned

above, the two documentaries made by Chadwick seem to target audiences outside the

local communities. According to The World Bank's 2015 data, only 19.22% of

individuals in Uganda and 22.3% in Namibia use the Internet.[130] This means that

most people in Uganda and Namibia do not have access to the Internet and it is

difficult for them to access the materials online. The documentaries address the

situation of HIV in Uganda and Namibia and introduce the services provided by

Mama's Club and NWHN. The credibility of the documentaries is reinforced by the

support of interviews with professionals and because a professional British filmmaker

made them. To empower the women participants and the community as a whole, the

distribution of the films is supposed to focus on local communities. Although online

distribution can ensure larger audiences around the world and thus raise awareness of

the issue, it limits local distribution to audiences who can be empowered or can

benefit in other ways from the films.

As I have mentioned earlier, the documentaries seem to target audiences in

developed countries who can easily gain stable access to the Internet. According to

Salamander Trust website, the films made in the workshops are expected to be used

for initiating discussions on HIV and gender-based violence.[131] Webinars about the

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[130] The World Bank, *Individuals Using the Internet (% Of Population)* (The World Bank, 2015)
<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.NET.USER.ZS?end=2015&start=1990&view=chart> [accessed 24 June 2017].
[131] *UNAIDS Participatory Film Project – Salamander Trust.*

participatory film projects held in Uganda and Namibia were organised. However,

these are no longer available online because the partner organisation, Development

Connections, could not afford to continue to pay the subscription. [132] The

ever-shrinking funding and support from the project's partners explains the missing

documentation and why Salamander Trust focuses on displaying the resources on free

online platforms rather than on further development. Again, such a strategy requires

audiences to have access to the Internet. Although Salamander Trust has also

produced handbooks with DVDs that are available for sale online, the local

community members might not be able to afford them. Interestingly, it states clearly

on the website that donations are encouraged and that hard copies will be shared with

people who cannot access the Internet.[133] However, according to Alice Welbourn,

Founding Director of Salamander Trust, the online appeal does not work well because

there are only a few generous donors.[134] She points out that the most efficient way to

distribute the films is to give out the DVDs at conferences and to ask people to

distribute them in their communities.

[132] Alice Welbourn, email to author, 29 July 2017.
[133] *UNAIDS Participatory Film Project – Salamander Trust.*
[134] Welbourn, email to author, 12 March 2018.

2.6 The Role of NGOs

NGOs often play a role as resource-transfer agents.[135] Although it is not going as well as was planned, Salamander Trust can be seen to be aiming to redistribute resources from people who can afford them to people who cannot. This highlights the fact that the enduring effect of the participatory film project also focuses on the fundraising and outreach strategy. In this sense, it does not focus on the local communities but on online coverage of a wide range of audiences, enabling people from outside the community or from developed countries to understand the situation of HIV in Uganda and Namibia. Rather than being aimed at obtaining donations and funding, putting resources online and targeting a wider audience is, I believe, an approach that is related to the role and goals of the NGOs involved.

The Salamander Trust website emphasises that the films are expected to be 'used as a tool to help open up discussions about HIV, stigma, treatment and support, motherhood and gender-based violence, where they are most needed'.[136] Meanwhile, Salamander Trust describes itself as an organisation aiming to establish better understandings of issues related to HIV and to transform public perception towards HIV.[137] In this sense, the main purpose of the UNAIDS participatory film project is to

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[135] Ian Anderson, 'Global Action: International NGOs and Advocacy', in *NGOs as Advocates for Development in a Globalising World*, (New York: Routledge, 2007), pp.71-95 (p.72).
[136] *UNAIDS Participatory Film Project - Salamander Trust.*
[137] *About Us – Salamander Trust.*

produce community-made resources for future development and advocacy and

Salamander Trust has successfully achieved this goal. The films made by Chadwick

and the participants have showcased what Mama's Club and NWHN have been doing

for African women living with HIV. Having the potential to create new leadership,

they mainly show the journey that the women have been on and the process of

becoming women leaders. The project initiated discussions about HIV and the

women's experiences in local communities, by holding community screenings in the

districts the women participants were from, with five such screenings taking place in

Namibia.[138] However, information regarding their reception is unavailable due to the

lack of documentation and the difficulty in accessing local people.

   Providing online access to the project materials means that they can reach

audiences all around the world, thereby raising international awareness of the issue. In

fact, one of the films made in Namibia was used recently by STOPAIDS, a

membership network of organisations dealing with HIV/AIDS,[139] to present women's

perspective on the economic issues they face to the Department for International

Development (DFID) at a meeting in London.[140] This shows that a film produced

during the training project is being used for advocacy by other organisations.

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[138] See Appendix (i).
[139] STOPAIDS, *About*, (STOPAIDS, 2017) <https://stopaids.org.uk/about/> [accessed 18 August 2017].
[140] Welbourn, email to author, 5 July 2017.

UNAIDS, which is a member of the international United Nations Development Group, funded the participatory film project. According to Welbourn, the funder required them to use the films for advocacy in the local communities[141] but it is also understandable that products that are generated by international resources and funding should be available for an international public. The objective of Salamander Trust has been to extend the project to an international level. Instead of continuing the project itself and creating more women's leadership in the communities, the organisation makes the resources and films available to a broader public and encourages further advocacy in the long run.

2.7 Summary

To conclude, the UNAIDS participatory film project is empowering of its participants but its enduring effect or benefits appear to lie more with international audiences. As a project funded by an international organisation, it has proven its impact on women's empowerment through its collaboration between British and African NGOs. Women participants gain positive experiences from the training, including skills acquisition, decision-making power and confidence. They utilise filmmaking as a tool to address the issue of HIV in their communities and to deliver positive messages. Although the

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[141] Welbourn, email to author, 28 June 2017.

strategy of having the professional documentaries alongside the participants' films creates complex power relations between Chadwick and the women, it produces comprehensive resources for fundraising and outreaching. From the perspective of film studies, the practice of turning subjects into filmmakers in this project not only highlights the conceptual differences that exist with Nichols' participatory mode of documentary, but also challenges it regarding ethical issues and representation. By being given the role of filmmakers, the participants (the subjects) can take control of their own representation and be completely involved in the filmmaking process. This thus eliminates possible issues which will be elaborated further in the following two chapters.

The online status of the materials and films suggests that the level of women's empowerment is limited and that the long-term effect of the project falls on global audiences, as international audiences have easy and stable access to the Internet while most local community members have limited access. This case study of the UNAIDS participatory film project shows that the goals and role of NGOs have a direct influence on the enduring impact of the project on participants and future projects. It provides insight into how, via the Internet, the project can reach and benefit global audiences and organisations for future advocacy. It also raises the question of how to increase local communities' access to the resources and films and how to secure a

more long-term impact on the project participants. As mentioned above, a film from the Namibia workshop was used by another organisation but there is little information about how the resources have been used by the two grassroots organisations or taken up by other UNAIDS projects. This is actually very important in evaluating whether the project is beneficial to and empowering for the participants and their communities in the long-run. Is there any way of evaluating local reception? How are the resources used in the communities after the training project has finished? What more can NGOs do to raise awareness and increase the exposure of their work when organising participatory film training projects? These questions are important for future research on participatory film projects.

CHAPTER THREE

THE WISE PROJECT: AN INDIVIDUAL-INITIATED PROJECT ON

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN KARACHI

The UNAIDS participatory film project in the previous chapter is illustrative of

collaboration between NGOs. It shows how the objectives of NGOs can influence the

effectiveness of a project on empowerment. The project's long-term focus falls on

reaching international audiences and creating resources for advocacy. However,

participatory film projects are often run in developing countries by facilitators and

NGOs from developed countries. According to Homi Kharas, a persistent tension is

often found between the post-colonial desire for independence and the colonisers'

desires to bring their colonies into the neo-liberal world.[142] Foreign filmmakers and

facilitators from more developed countries might face difficulties in getting funding

from local organisations in developing countries because of national dynamics and

other legacies of colonial history. The enduring impact of the projects might not

actually be on the participants.

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[142] Homi Kharas, "Development Assistance", in *International Development: Ideas, Experience, and Prospects* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp.847-865 (p.849).

3.1 Chapter Overview

Most of the information that I draw upon about the project was obtained through a Skype interview with Spencer, the project director. The main reason for using the interview is that there are few additional resources available, apart from a training video and a newspaper article. This means that there might be limitations regarding the objectivity and accuracy of some of the information. The documentary is further analysed in this chapter to explore how the women who participated in this project expressed themselves through filmmaking and, with the help of the interview with Spencer, how the project empowered them.

In this chapter, I investigate the Women's International Shared Experience (WISE) Project which was initiated by a British facilitator, Danielle Louise Spencer, in partnership with the Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) in Hong Kong in 2009. I argue that the project empowered the participants but that, due to insufficient funding, no evaluation of this empowerment is available. The data analysis in this chapter focuses mainly on the impact on the facilitator. This project serves as a significant example in revealing the challenges faced by participatory film training projects and showing the emancipatory impact on the facilitator.

The participatory film training project involved four cities in four countries: Karachi in Pakistan, Jakarta in Indonesia, Mae Sot in Thailand and Kandy in Sri

Lanka. All of the workshops in these four cities focused on gender-based violence but the topics were different. Karachi in Pakistan has been selected as the focus of this chapter for a number of reasons. One reason is that the topic of the workshop is specified as domestic violence against women, which is prevalent in most male-dominated societies. Another reason is that this was the first of the project locations and thus is illustrative of the original project practice, enabling a better understanding of how the project started and initially worked. The project was initiated by an individual rather than an NGO, which brings with it funding limitations and different levels of empowerment. Although it was a small project with limited funding, it appears to have empowered its female participants. However, no evaluation of the project was carried out, so the level of empowerment of women among the participants and the community cannot be clearly discerned. Insufficient funding is a major problem in many similar projects. The funding raised is often enough to set up projects but not to assess their impact on a personal and a community level, and thus the more long-term impact on the facilitator is assessed rather than the impact on participants.

In what follows, I first briefly explore the Pakistani context to establish the possible reasons why the participants chose domestic violence as the topic of the film and why this participatory project did not receive enough funding. I then examine the

WISE project and the partnering organisations in detail in order to understand how the

project was started by Spencer and the limitations she encountered in the process. The

documentary, *Half Face*, produced by women in the workshop, will be analysed and

the impact of the project on women's empowerment will be discussed. In considering

the limitations of the project, this chapter will further analyse how Pakistan's colonial

history plays a particular role in the running of the WISE project and how this affords

an important perspective on the facilitator's role and the project's enduring impact.

3.2 Historical, Social and Cultural Context of Pakistan

To analyse the film made by the participants and to understand the limitation of the

project, it is essential to explore the social context and a brief history of Pakistan. The

majority of Pakistanis are Muslim by religion. Islam has often been criticised for its

violations of women's rights.[143] Maliha Gull Tarar and Venkat Pulla claim that

Pakistani women 'are living in a male dominated society and culture that recognizes

them as inferior in relation to men'.[144] In the Global Gender Gap Report, Pakistan is

ranked 135 out of 136 countries with the worst gender disparities.[145] Based on the

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[143] Fariyal F. Fikree, Junaid A. Razzak and Jill Durocher, 'Attitudes of Pakistani Men to Domestic Violence: A Study from Karachi, Pakistan', *The Journal of Men's Health & Gender*, 2 (2005), 49-58 (p.49), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jmhg.2005.01.004> [accessed 26 March 2017].
[144] Maliha Gull Tarar and Venkat Pulla, 'Patriarchy, Gender Violence and Poverty amongst Pakistani Women: A Social Work Inquiry', *International Journal of Social Work and Human Services Practice*, 2 (2014), 56-63 (p.56), <http://www.hrpub.org/download/20140405/IJRH8-19200116.pdf > [accessed 30 March 2017].
[145] Rubeena Zakar, Muhammad Z. Zakar and Safdar Abbas, 'Domestic Violence Against Rural Women

2015 statistics report of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural

Organization (UNESCO), the literacy rate in Pakistan among those aged 15 and over

is 56.44%, with the figures for men and women being 69.57% and 42.73%

respectively.[146] These statistics show that the literacy rate among women is lower

than the overall rate. This further suggests that limited access to education suppresses

Pakistani women's voice in a male-dominated society in a way that means they find it

hard to express themselves, enjoy the same opportunities as men and engage in

community development.[147] In this sense, moving images become an efficient tool

for them to present their ideas and thoughts.

In an Islamic society such as Pakistan, women typically fulfil traditional roles as

wives and have been found to be prone to violence from men.[148] Women are given

limited power and control in both families and society. Domestic violence is an

increasingly important issue for women in Pakistan.[149] A study conducted in Karachi

about the attitude of Pakistani men towards violence against women shows that

domestic violence is recognised as a problem by 74.4% of men but that it is largely

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in Pakistan: An Issue of Health and Human Rights', *Journal of Family Violence*, 31 (2015), 15-25
(p.16), <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10896-015-9742-6> [accessed 15 March 2017].
[146] UNESCO UIS, *Pakistan* (UNESCO UIS, 2017) <http://uis.unesco.org/en/country/PK> [accessed
26 March 2017].
[147] Ghazala Noureen and Riffat-un-Nisa Awan, 'Women's Education in Pakistan: Hidden Fences on
Open Frontiers', *Asian Social Science*, 7 (2011), 79-87 (p.81), <https://doi.org/10.5539/ass.v7n2p79>
[accessed 8 July 2017].
[148] World Trade Press, *Pakistan Women in Culture, Business & Travel* (Petaluma: World Trade Press,
2010), p. 1, in *ProQuest Ebook Central*
<http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/bham/detail.action?docID=536164> [accessed 15 March 2017].
[149] Fikree, Razzak and Durocher, p.50.

tolerated by 88.6% of members of Pakistani society.[150] This suggests that Pakistanis

allow domestic violence against women to take place, even though they know it is a

social problem. This situation is highly relevant to the WISE project in Karachi, as the

participants chose domestic violence as the topic of the participatory film. It is

because of this social context, specifically the 'tolerance' of violence against women

in Pakistan, that this project was selected as one of my case studies. This social

context is also reflected in the film made collectively by the participants, illustrating

its influence on the women's lives.

From a historical perspective, Pakistan was under British colonial rule from the

early 17th century until it gained independence in 1947. In 1956, Pakistan became a

federal republic – the Islamic Republic of Pakistan – and adopted its first

constitution.[151] Martin Sōkefeld notes that some colonised societies and their

colonisers remain under the influence of the colonial history.[152] Although it has been

a long time since the British colonial period, Pakistan is still considered to be under

the influence of British colonialism. For example, the bureaucracy in Pakistan is still

based on the policies developed by Britain.[153] In fact, Pakistan still has a close

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[150] Fikree, Razzak and Durocher, p.50.
[151] The Commonwealth, *Pakistan: History* (The Commonwealth, 2017)
<http://thecommonwealth.org/our-member-countries/pakistan/history> [accessed 26 March 2017].
[152] Martin Sōkefeld, 'From Colonialism to Postcolonial Colonialism: Changing Modes of Domination
in The Northern Areas of Pakistan', *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 64 (2005), 939-973 (p.939)
<https://doi.org/10.1017/s0021911805002287> [accessed 28 August 2017].
[153] The Express Tribune, *Urdu Still under the Influence of Colonialism* (The Express Tribune, 2013)
<https://tribune.com.pk/story/543314/urdu-still-under-the-influence-of-colonialism/> [accessed 12

partnership with Britain in term of trade and education.[154] In this sense, Pakistan can

be regarded as both post-colonial and neo-colonial in that it is still economically and

culturally dependent on Britain.[155] Such neo-colonial concerns might suggest why

limited resources and funding are available from local organisations in Pakistan for

this kind of participatory film project, especially as one that is run by a British

facilitator. This will be discussed further in the latter part of the chapter.

3.3 Women's International Shared Experience Project (WISE)

Initiated in 2009, the Women's International Shared Experience Project (WISE) aims

to use filmmaking as a tool to facilitate changes in communities and give women in

developing countries the opportunity to express themselves. Danielle Louise Spencer,

the British project director, has worked in Hong Kong, Los Angeles and the United

Kingdom and has a background in media studies.[156] Inspired by her experience of

working with female refugees in a Christian Action refugee centre and of directing

The Vagina Monologues in Hong Kong from 2007 to 2009, she became interested in

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April 2017].
[154] Telegraph, *Britain and Pakistan Have 'Unbreakable' Relationship, Insist Cameron and Zardari*, (Telegraph, 2010) <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/pakistan/7930171/Britain-and-Pakistan-have-unbreakable-relationship-insist-Cameron-and-Zardari.html> [accessed 25 August 2017].
[155] Ania Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* (London: Routledge, 2004), p.7.
[156] CRED Communications Ltd, *Hong Kong Charity to Use Social Media to Raise Awareness of Women Affected by Poverty in Asia* (CRED Communications Ltd, 2010) <https://www.newswire.com/hong-kong-charity-to-use-social/36600> [accessed 14 March 2017].

participatory projects addressing gender-based violence.[157] To obtain support and funding, she contacted the Asian Human Rights Commission and explained her idea for the project.[158] Founded in 1984, the AHRC is an independent, non-governmental organisation which 'seeks to promote greater awareness and realisation of human rights in the Asian region, and to mobilise Asian and international public opinion to obtain relief and redress for the victims of human rights violations'.[159] The AHRC connected Spencer with a community-based organisation, Network for Women's Rights, an NGO founded in 2006 in Pakistan that aims to create a women-friendly society based on social justice.[160]

At a fundraising event, $100,000 Hong Kong dollars was raised, and computers and video cameras were donated by the public. The project planning took nine months and then participatory film training workshops were held in four countries over three months – in Karachi in Pakistan, Jakarta in Indonesia, Mae Sot in Thailand and Kandy in Sri Lanka. The subject of the workshop was different in each country, covering domestic violence, sex work and HIV/AIDS, trafficking and negative attitudes towards war widows. The subjects were decided by the groups of women and not by

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[157] Danielle Louise Spencer, interviewed by author, Skype, 7 November 2016.
[158] Ibid.
[159] Asian Human Rights Commission, *About Us* (Asian Human Rights Commission, n.d.) <http://www.humanrights.asia/about> [accessed 14 March 2017].
[160] Network for Women's Rights, 'About' [Facebook page], n.d. <https://www.facebook.com/pg/NetworkForWomensRights/about/?ref=page_internal> [accessed 24 August 2017].

Spencer, implying that there was a transfer of decision-making power and a focus on the participants.

3.3.1 The Workshop in Karachi

The two-week workshop in Karachi was provided for nine local women who had been working with the Network for Women's Rights, WISE's community-based organisation, and suffered domestic violence or harassment, including physical, mental or sexual abuse. The women participants were assigned to Spencer by the NGO. A training video, which is available on YouTube alongside the film that was produced, was made to record the training process and provide a brief understanding of how the project worked. As stated in the video, the workshop was run for economically and socially oppressed women.[161] All the participants could speak only Urdu and some of them had never used a computer before or were even illiterate, which made communication more difficult. Before starting the film training, Spencer spent two days building up a trusting relationship with the women. She also facilitated interactions that allowed the women to get to know each other better through the use of games and activities. The group also shared their personal experiences of and views on domestic violence. Due to the language barrier, Spencer communicated with the

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[161] *WISE project - Day One in Karachi...* [YouTube video], Danielle Louise Spencer, 15 July 2010, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gg5bCt4pCgY> [accessed 27 March 2017].

women and taught them basic filmmaking and computer skills with the help of a translator. In the remaining twelve days of the workshop, the participants learnt interview techniques, technical skills, storyboarding, filming and editing. They had complete control over the film content and edited the film with Spencer's assistance. As well as the video that records and describes the training process, a 10-minute documentary, *Half Face*, was produced in the workshop. It is a collaborative film made by the nine participants. The training project ended with a public screening in the community to raise awareness of domestic violence against Pakistani women. The documentary was later broadcast through Spencer's YouTube account and shared on different social media platforms globally. As there was no evaluation of the participants' feedback, the documentary as the final output is significant for analysing the participants' reflection and the level of empowerment achieved by the project.

3.4 The Participants' Film, *Half Face*

Half Face was created, filmed and edited collaboratively by the nine women participants. The filming techniques used are basic: for example, close-ups and zoom-ins. The film was mainly constructed by interviewing locals about their views on domestic violence. It includes different kinds of still images related to domestic violence against women, including hand-drawings by the women, pictures from books

and posters. The still images are placed between the interviews so that they are aligned with the interview content and help demonstrate the participants' messages. Rather than creating a fictional story, the women chose to express their views and deliver their messages through a documentary, which addresses the situation of Pakistani women in a more realistic way, making the film reach audiences very directly.

The film starts with an introduction stating that it has been made by local women during a two-week participatory training workshop, emphasising what the women have learnt even though some of them are illiterate. This helps the audience know how the film was made and to realise that they too can make films. With a participant as a voice-over narrator, the film states the fact that 80% of women in Pakistan are victims of domestic violence and that their domestic work is not recognised. It introduces the film's narrative on domestic violence against women and emphasises the reason for choosing this the topic.[162] The film presents different perspectives on domestic violence against women by including interviews not only with local women but with men and representatives of local organisations. The documentary is a combination of the expository and the participatory mode of documentary which respectively emphasise verbal commentary by using narrators or social actors (the

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[162] *WISE Karachi 'Half-Face' Documentary Part 1* [YouTube video], Danielle Louise Spencer, 29 July 2010 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cr6vRR8Y-oo> [accessed 27 March 2017].

interviewees) and engage with individuals directly through interviews.[163] Instead of

using a narrator, the film points its audiences to the problem of domestic violence

directly through the interviewees who are regarded as social actors contributing to the

exposition of the film. The film is made mainly with synchronised sound and images,

which coordinate the issue of domestic violence against women both visually and

aurally, strengthening the realism.[164] Different interview styles are utilised in the film,

showing different interactions between participants and social actors in order to

involve the audiences effectively. With the help of these different styles, the audience

can gain access to the views of the project participants, other community members

and experienced members of staff of a range of organisations. They can align

themselves with the women's experiences as the same time as rethinking gender

inequality critically.

3.4.1 Interviews and Techniques Used in the Film

After introducing the background to the issue, the film captures a drawing by a

participant with the writing 'to beat your wife is not the right of husband. It is just

violence'. Then the scene dissolves into an indoor interview with a woman who

shares her personal experience of being abused by her husband. The interviewer (a

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[163] Bill Nichols, *Ideology and the Image* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981), pp.33,172.
[164] Ibid., p.199.

participant in the project) is neither seen nor heard. Interviews showing only the interviewee in the frame can enable audiences to be subjectively engaged with the interviewee, achieving a more immediate address by the subject.[165] In this sense, audiences can acknowledge the interviewee's emotions and thoughts directly, especially when the interviewee is looking at the camera. This is the most common style of interview in this film and it creates a sense of direct conversation between interviewees and audiences, delivering their experiences more effectively. The interviewed woman shares her experience in order to discourage compromise on domestic violence.

> […] when I told my husband about my pregnancy, my husband asked me to abort the child and he did not want the baby. When I did not agree with him – he and his sister severely beat me and I lost my baby. After one week, I went to court against the atrocities he had performed against me, they wanted to compromise. They asked "why are you here?" in the court because they wanted to compromise. I said "After such a severe beating by you, how can I compromise with you?"[166]

What then follows is a theatrical scene of a man beating his wife. The wife allows him to beat her; she does not resist. This is the only staged scene in the film and it can be regarded as an example of where a documentary incorporates a fictional element.

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[165] Nichols, *Representing Reality*, p.54.
[166] *WISE Karachi 'Half-Face' Documentary Part 1*, [YouTube video], Danielle Louise Spencer, 29 July 2010 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cr6vRR8Y-oo> [accessed 27 March 2017].

According to Nichols, re-enactments presented as fictional confirmation give credibility to what is alleged.[167] Through the staged scene, the women re-enact an everyday example of how men mistreat women at home, giving the audiences a clearer idea of domestic violence in Pakistan. Close-ups are used throughout the film, showing that the participants have learnt about basic filming techniques and have successfully applied them. The beating scene presents the passive attitude lead an abused woman, in contrast to that of the interviewed woman who takes action in court against domestic violence. This contrast portrays two different attitudes of Pakistani women and delivers the message that women can have a choice in the actions they take against domestic violence.

As the interviews are conducted with random community members, most of them take place outdoors, with the exception of those with experts from the organisations involved. A man is interviewed on the street and is asked whether men have the right to beat women. He thinks men should treat women with love and care but that they have the right to execute violence on disobedient women. In another interview, a man suggests that Pakistani women should not be given the same freedom as European women.[168] The ordering of their responses reflects the attitude of Pakistani men towards Pakistani women and these socially constructed beliefs lead to

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[167] Nichols, *Representing Reality*, p.21.
[168] *WISE Karachi 'Half-Face' Documentary Part 1.*

domestic violence. These two interviews are conducted in such a way that the voice of

the interviewer(s) is heard without their visible presence and the interviewees are

filmed in close-up shots of their heads and faces. The synchronous voice of the

interviewer allows her to address her personal point of view to the audiences.[169] In

the film, the interviewers challenge what the men say and audiences can receive

information and ideas from both the interviewers and the interviewees. This further

emphasises how the interviewer has control over the filmmaking and interview

process. Such hierarchical interactions with men in the interviews imply that women

are able to challenge and change gender dynamics through filmmaking and interviews,

demonstrating resistance to domestic violence. However, when asked whether

domestic violence against women is normal, one female interviewee gives a different

kind of answer, which conveys a sense of victimisation and resignation:

> Yes, it is and it happens too much. They just beat us. It is just
> because it is my fate. Why, why should this happen? But women
> are helpless. We are helpless, so the men beat us. Because we are
> illiterate – if we are educated, we could just say 'Shut up' just like
> the educated women do. But if we say shut up now, they'd cut our
> throats.[170]

This interview starts without the visible presence of the interviewer but later both the

interviewer and interviewee are visible in the frame. This form of interview creates a

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[169] Nichols, *Representing Reality*, p.54.
[170] *WISE Karachi 'Half-Face' Documentary Part 1*.

sense of spontaneity and a more interactive conversation, which also involves the audiences in such a way that they are in the same space as the participants and are participating in the dialogue. This interaction also indicates a hierarchy of control, as the interviewer controls the conversation and the interviewee is framed as the primary material, creating a non-reciprocal relationship between them.[171] This suggests that, through the interviews, the participants gain power of control over community members of a similar social status to their own, reinforcing their role as filmmakers.

The interviews with the men and women on the street articulate two different perspectives that exist in the community. The men believe that they have the right to subject women to violence and the women believe that they have no choice but to accept. These social norms and values are constructed by Islamic society and are a key cause of the domestic violence in Pakistan. They are revealed through the interviews in the film, reflecting the gender dynamics between men and women in Pakistan. Although the film is formed of separate interviews with different people in the community, the selection of content clearly seems to favour women's experiences, in that all the information and opinions address and support the fact that Pakistani women suffer from domestic violence and inequality. Especially for Pakistani female audiences in similar situations, the film resonates with their own experiences. The

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[171] Nichols, *Representing Reality*, p.52.

audience members are thus able to understand the oppressive situation the women

find themselves in and to align themselves with them emotionally.[172]

Shifting from the power relations between men and women, the film further

specifies the oppression of women in a wider context, addressing how women's

financial contributions to society go unrecognised. Two female interviewees provide

the following testimonies in the film:

> I leave my home at 6am and work at home with the kids and the
> milking then I go into the field and for this I am paid 200rps
> [USD 2.33] and then I get home I work inside the home looking
> after my family.[173]
>
> I work the whole day and cannot get enough money to support
> my family and provide food to the kids. [...] We are becoming
> poorer. In this situation, how can we send our kids to school?[174]

Without showing the presence of the interviewer and her voice, women are

interviewed about their working conditions and treatment. These testimonies show

how women are underpaid for their work and how the money they receive is not

enough to maintain them and their families, not to mention to send their children to

school. Several women interviewed in the film express their frustration towards the

government, who do not take enough action to protect women. Another woman thinks

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[172] Nichols, *Ideology and the Image*, p.201.
[173] *WISE Karachi 'Half-Face' Documentary Part 2*, [YouTube video], Danielle Louise Spencer, 30 July 2010 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cr6vRR8Y-oo> [accessed 27 March 2017].
[174] Ibid.

that the government do nothing to help women suffering from domestic violence. In this sense, the film criticises the government for its poor policies and insufficient action regarding women's rights and lives.

The film also includes experts, who give credible and thorough overviews of how women are mistreated. A male representative of the Malir Bar Association, a legal organisation in Malir town in Karachi, suggests that most labouring or manual work is done by women but that they are not protected by the labour law, even though it states that both genders have equal rights.[175] His statement echoes the earlier interviews with the women who complain about the government. Two interviews with both male and female representatives of the Pakistan Institute of Labour Education and Research (PILER) further demonstrate the fact that women are exploited and not protected by the law. This is important, as it shows that Pakistani women not only face domestic violence from men but inequality in the community in general, which emphasises the need for women's empowerment. With the press and other media invited to the community screening, the documentary become an efficient tool for advocacy. For example, one woman in the film mentions that the Domestic Violence Bill, which was finally approved in 2016,[176] should be passed in order to help

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[175] *WISE Karachi 'Half-Face' Documentary Part 2*.
[176] Siobhan Fenton, *Anti-Domestic Violence Law to Protect Women is Un-Islamic, Pakistani Advisory Group Rules* (The Independent, 2016)
<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/bill-protecting-women-against-domestic-violence-is-un-islamic-pakistani-advisory-group-rules-a6911161.html> [accessed 27 March 2017].

Pakistani women.

Documentary relies heavily on spoken commentary, and the recounting of an issue by a commentator provides a sense of truthfulness.[177] Without much in the way of film aesthetics, the participants use a large number of interviews to provide their audiences with factual information and to engage them in a more rational way. The film seems to make the audiences acknowledge the issues and to encourage them to think critically about these from different perspectives. Nichols further notes that in interviews individuals can contribute specific knowledge, which is crucial to rhetorical credibility.[178] The names of the PILE representatives are acknowledged in the interviews. Their comments on the women's situation and on governmental policies become significant and serve to support the women's words. Their identities and knowledge increase the credibility of the film and of the message delivered, reinforcing the call for the government and local communities to take action.

Interviews in participatory filmmaking projects such as the WISE one also challenge Nichols' participatory mode of documentary to a certain extent. In traditional participatory documentary, interviews are the most common form of engagement between filmmaker and subjects.[179] Through interviews, filmmaker get involved in the films together with the subjects and social actors, 'participating' in the

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[177] Nichols, *Representing Reality*, p.21.
[178] Ibid., p.53.
[179] Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary*, p.146.

conversation. However, the filmmaker in Nichols' concept of participatory documentary is often from outside of the subjects' community and their voices also serves as a testimony through interviews.[180] In the case of the WISE project, participants use a large number of interviews to reveal and address the issues related to women's rights. The participants themselves are the subjects who live with the problems and challenges. The participants' interviews with other social actors are not only regarded as interactions between filmmaker and subjects but as local conversations within the community. The testimonies and the confessions that audiences are presented with by the film all come from the community itself. This difference from Nichols' participatory documentary further helps with the avoidance of ethical issues and at the same time ensures that all the materials and testimonies revealed through interviews come from the community.

3.4.2 Other Aesthetics Used in the Film

The end of the film presents the sentence, 'Let's find out their right', with Pakistani background music and four women walking with their backs to the camera (See Figures 3.1 and 3.2).

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[180] Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary*, p.145.

Figure 3.1 'Let's find out their right'

Figure 3.2 Women walking with their backs to the camera.

The film thus presents an open ending, which offers a resolute and positive attitude regarding women's rights without providing solutions to the problems. It provides space for, and encourages audiences to think about, the opinions shared in the film and what women's rights are. The ending of the film also displays hand-drawings by the women with clearly written messages, including, 'stop violence against women' and 'to beat your wife is not the right of husband' (Figures 3.3 and 3.4).
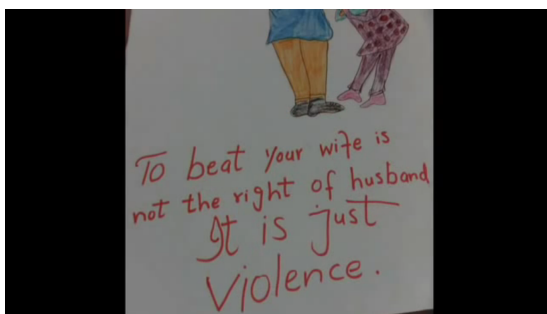

Figure 3.3 Drawing by a participant, with the words, 'To beat your wife is not the right of husband. It is just violence'.
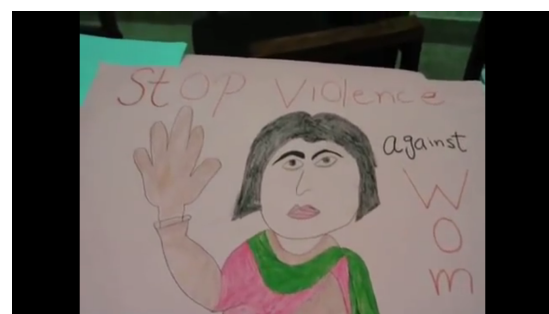

Figure 3.4 Drawing by a participant, with the words, 'Stop violence against women'.

The women were taught the English alphabet before they made the film. Apart

from helping the women to learn a new language, a key reason for using English in

the drawings and subtitles was, I believe, to target international audiences. The

documentary was uploaded to internationally accessible sites on the Internet,

including to YouTube. To ensure that the documentary could be clearly understood by

audiences from other countries, Spencer helped the women participants to

communicate with international audiences by teaching them a universal language.

This approach implies that the project aimed to target both local and international

audiences. Showing the hand-drawings in the documentary also serves another

function. Defined by John Grierson, documentary is a 'creative treatment of actuality'

which can be understood as the use of artistic creativity to portray reality.[181] The

women drew themselves crying or being beaten by men, illustrating their actual

personal experiences. Combining the documentary with the participants'

hand-drawings strengthens the creative input and reinforces the authenticity of both

the issue and the participants' experience. According to Robinson, participant imagery,

for example drawings and photographs, with handwritten text can directly personalise

an issue and engage audiences.[182] With the help of the drawings, the film moves from

being a general overview of domestic violence to something more personal, delivering

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[181] Susan Kerrigan and Phillip McIntyre, 'The "Creative Treatment of Actuality": Rationalizing and Reconceptualizing the Notion of Creativity for Documentary Practice', *Journal of Media Practice*, 11 (2010), 111-130 (p.111), <https://doi.org/10.1386/jmpr.11.2.111_1> [accessed 7 July 2017].
[182] Robinson, p.116.

a very clear narrative of empowerment and activism. The final scenes again reinforce

the message encouraging women to free themselves from domestic violence and give

them a collective voice with which to express their desire for their human rights. In a

journal article about a participatory filmmaking campaign, Flower and McConville

suggest that participatory filmmaking is a sharing process with community members

that enables participants to reflect and to take actions on social issues.[183] The women

in the WISE project involved people in the community as social actors through

interviews and the film then served as a collective sharing process for the community.

Through interacting with community members, the women used filmmaking as a tool

to reflect how Pakistani society mistreats women and what the community think about

the situation, while at the same time calling for action to be taken to improve the lives

of Pakistani women.

3.5 Women's Empowerment and Limitation

To understand how much this project contributes to women's empowerment, it is

crucial to analyse both the film and the training process. The film, as the final product

of the project, could be considered empowering to the participants because it serves as

a medium for raising public awareness of domestic violence against women and as a

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[183] Flower and McConville, pp.934-935.

platform for the nine participants to express their thoughts on the issues. East and Roll suggest that to achieve women's empowerment it is important to 'increase their capacity to exercise choice by understanding their rights, analysing how their personal experiences are embedded in oppressive structures, experiencing themselves as citizens of a community, and taking actions on behalf of themselves and others'.[184] In the process of filmmaking, the women understand that they have the right to challenge social norms and to make a film that advocates for themselves and other women. More importantly, the film delivers a message of gender equality and women's rights. This message is clearly articulated at the end of the film, which shows a poster of women protesting and a woman freeing herself from handcuffs, encouraging female audiences to resist domestic violence and urging concerns from other sectors of society. To further discuss how the making of the film and the WISE project itself could be seen to provide a certain level of women's empowerment, a Skype interview with Spencer, who witnessed the change in both the participants and herself, has been conducted for analysis.

Although the film produced by the participants, in serving as a collective voice, is empowering, the training process also provided a positive experience for the women. First, the women had complete control over what to film and how to film it.

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[184] East and Roll, p.280.

Bustamante-Gavino, Rattani and Khan suggest that Pakistani women's definition of women's empowerment includes the right to determine choices and to have control over their lives.[185] Spencer emphasised in the Skype interview that she only provided the workshop and some assistance with editing and that the women participants themselves were the writers and directors of the final product.[186] They decided what to put in the film, its design and other aspects of the filmmaking. In the sharing section of the training project, they came to understand their rights in society and they analysed how the oppressive structure of society shaped their experiences of domestic violence. They thus decided on domestic violence as the topic of the film. They chose to interact with local people to show how women are oppressed in society rather than using their personal experiences. In contrast to their oppression within a male-dominated society, they were given the power to make decisions during the entire filmmaking process, speaking on behalf of other women.

Before taking part in the participatory training workshop, the nine women, who had been working with and were put forward by the community organisations involved, were individual victims of domestic violence with no collective voice. East and Roll suggest that bringing women together in small groups is essential for

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[185] Bustamante-Gavino, Rattani and Khan, pp.175-176.
[186] Spencer, interviewed by author, Skype, 7 November 2016.

women's empowerment.[187] The WISE project brought these women together, established relationships between them and provided the space for them to share their personal experiences with one another. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, some of the participants were illiterate and some had never used a computer. The WISE project empowered them by equipping them not only with knowledge of basic filmmaking and equipment but with interview techniques and access to the Internet. Skills acquisition, which is defined as the ability to learn both intellectual and manual skills, is regarded as an important element of women's empowerment, as it is one way of helping individuals develop personal or collective power.[188] The women were also taught the English alphabet and how to use social media. As they were working as a group, the learning process involved both individual growth and collective development. The process of gaining access to resources and acquiring new knowledge can boost participants' confidence and broaden their horizons, enhancing their capacity to express themselves and for others.

During the training, the women also presented their ideas by showing their drawings to the group, which built their confidence through presentation skills.[189]

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[187] East and Roll, p.283.

[188] Emmanuel M. Ikegwu and others, 'Human Empowerment through Skills Acquisition: Issues, Impacts and Consequences - A Non-Parametric View', *Journal of Poverty, Investment and Development*, 5 (2014), 94-101 (pp.94-95), <http://hdl.voced.edu.au/10707/301672> [accessed 11 April 2017].

[189] *Karachi Week 2 – WISE* [YouTube video], Danielle Louise Spencer, 23 July 2010, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=np3ekERtw-Y> [accessed 27 March 2017].

Spencer observed that the women could not even make eye contact with her at the beginning.[190] Later, in the film, the women questioned a man when he responded that it was men's right to beat disobedient women. It is apparent that the women became more confident about interacting with different people, including interviewing men on the streets, during the film training process:

> It's less about the product generated. It's more about the process and empowerments. They did influence a group, a huge group. There were 150 people in this room [in the community screening]. We played that video and facilitated the discussion group and that was the end of the two-week training. At the beginning, a lot of them couldn't have done that. There was no way that they could have done that so it gave…I think it gave them a bit of confidence. That's very important and actually the entire point of the project.[191]

Spencer described the training project as an empowerment process because it gave the women an opportunity to prove to their male family members that they could achieve something.[192] As with other participatory projects, a screening in the community was arranged, and locals, including family members of the nine women, gathered in a room to watch the film and take part in a facilitated discussion. The women presented their film and took questions from the audience after the screening. The United Nations Population Information Network (1995) indicates that women are empowered

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[190] Samia Saleem, *'Half Face' Brings 9 Women Full Circle* (The Express Tribune, 2010) <https://tribune.com.pk/story/31412/%E2%80%98half-face%E2%80%99-brings-9-women-full-circle/#comment-43417> [accessed 14 March 2017].
[191] Spencer, interviewed by author, Skype, 7 November 2016.
[192] Ibid.

when their sense of self-worth is raised and their ability to influence the direction of social change is strengthened.[193] Going from being unable to make eye contact with strangers to being confident enough to facilitate a discussion with more than one hundred people, is without doubt evidence of a change in their level of confidence. They were transformed from victims of domestic violence into filmmakers who used filmmaking as a tool to address domestic violence as a social issue and suggested that the Domestic Violence Bill should be passed to protect women. The film's introduction states that 'all of the women arrived as victims, all left as empowered filmmakers';[194] indeed, their new identity as filmmakers increased their sense of self-worth and their ability to contribute to change in their community, achieving women's empowerment. After the training project, one participant told Spencer that she was inspired to go back to school, even though she suffered from harassment by the boys, and that she believed that she could make a change if she became educated.[195]

Two participants commented, in an online newspaper article, that they became more confident after the participatory training project:

> We all managed to make a documentary in which we have talked to women about their issues, we also talked to men about their views on violence against women and we interviewed experts to get their

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[193] Bustamante-Gavino, Rattani and Khan, pp.175-176.
[194] *WISE Karachi 'Half-Face' Documentary Part 1*.
[195] Spencer, interviewed by author, Skype, 7 November 2016.

opinions. And we did everything on our own from using the camera
to selecting the issues and the interview questions.[196] – Shabana

We went where even the media has not gone. We believe that our
voice will be stronger now.[197] – Rehana

After the workshop, the participants were given a USB stick with the documentary on it and some computers and cameras were left with them.[198] There is no information available about whether they used the equipment after the project. They could have continued to make films or videos to raise awareness about other issues related to women in communities. They could also have made effective use of social media to express themselves. From the above feedback from the participants, it appears that the WISE project provided them with positive experiences.

However, there is a problem of invisibility. The names of the social actors (interviewees) are not acknowledged in the film. This is somewhat understandable, as they were random and passive participants in it but the project participants themselves, the women who made the film, are not identified either. Although this was possibly a collective decision to ensure participants' safety, all of their faces are shown in the training video and some of them in the documentary. Except for Shabana and Rehana who were mentioned in the online newspaper article, the names of other participants

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[196] Saleem, *'Half Face' Brings 9 Women Full Circle.*
[197] Ibid.
[198] Ibid.

are not acknowledged in any available form. They are identified as 'female trainees' in the film's credits. Such invisibility or 'collective' identity not only means that I am unable to use the participants' names in this research but also, to a certain extent, shifts the attention from the participants to the project itself, and to Spencer whose name is acknowledged individually.

3.6 Impact on the Facilitator

This thesis considers the enduring impacts of the project on Spencer. There is, in fact, evidence showing that the enduring impact on Spencer seems to be more assessable. As mentioned previously, participatory film projects can have a lasting effect on the facilitator. Cornwall and Cecilia Sardenberg suggest that feminist participatory research projects are empowering in that they emphasise self-actualisation and collective consciousness and actions.[199] This means that everyone involved in such a project gains a more mature understanding of social issues.

Spencer, a well-educated British woman, fundraised in Hong Kong and went to Karachi to run the participatory film training project there. She utilised resources from developed countries with women in a developing country and gave them complete control over the filmmaking process, transferring the power to them. Participation in a

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[199] Andrea Cornwall and Cecilia Sardenberg, 'Participatory Pathways: Researching Women's Empowerment in Salvador, Brazil', *Women's Studies International Forum*, 45 (2014), 72–80 (p.74), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2014.01.006> [accessed 25 November 2016].

project can be understood as the facilitator engaging with the community and the

community members becoming collaborators rather than objects of the project, as

Martinez Dominguez suggests.[200] As the project director and facilitator, Spencer

participated in the sharing section with the women and established a relationship with

them, becoming part of the collective experience in the community. The participants

were given complete control over the filmmaking and eventually collaborated with

Spencer to complete the project. This experience in Karachi had an emancipatory

impact on Spencer. A successful participatory or emancipatory project can enhance

the role of the facilitator's profession and make efficient use of his or her professional

skills in carrying out such a project:[201]

> It certainly had an impact on me actually. I didn't expect it had such
> a huge effect on me. It changed my career. It changed the course of
> my life and it changed what I wanted to do, what I was passionate
> about. It has a long-term effect on me for sure. It has some effects
> on the women as well.[202]

By participating in the project and understanding the situation of women's in Karachi,

Spencer became more determined to develop her career in participatory projects based

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[200] María Teresa Martínez Domínguez, 'Building Bridges: Participatory and Emancipatory Methodologies with Indigenous Communities Affected by the Oil Industry', *Enquire*, 1 (2008), 4-22 (p.12), <https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/sociology/documents/enquire/volume-1-issue-1-dominguez.pdf> [accessed 21 April 2017].
[201] Debbie Kramer-Roy, 'Using Participatory and Creative Methods to Facilitate Emancipatory Research with People Facing Multiple Disadvantage: A Role for Health and Care Professionals', *Disability & Society*, 30 (2015), 1207-1224 (p.1208), <https://doi.org/10.1080/09687599.2015.1090955> [accessed 21 April 2017].
[202] Spencer, interviewed by author, Skype, 7 November 2016.

on her background in media studies and her knowledge about filmmaking. However, in participatory film projects, the participants are the ones who are supposed to benefit most. In order to ascertain these benefits, projects are increasingly concerned with, and required to carry out, impact evaluation processes. In the case of the WISE project, there was no follow-up or evaluation of the impact on the participants, which resulted in insufficient information about whether the women participants had been influenced by the project. The lasting effect on the career of the facilitator therefore becomes more assessable. The reason behind this is related to the insufficient funding and support that was available from local NGOs and, more specifically, the neo-colonial relationship between the UK and Pakistan, and in the rest of the chapter I turn my attention to these issues.

3.7 Possible Reasons for the Limitations

Spencer, as the individual who initiated the project, fundraised for it, but only $100,000 Hong Kong dollars (about $12,820 US dollars) was available across the four countries.[203] She admitted that there was not enough funding for evaluation and follow-up:

> I think that there would be many really beneficial projects for a lot
> of women. I am happy to be able to continue it. But because I

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[203] Spencer, interviewed by author, Skype, 7 November 2016.

wasn't from Asia, a lot of organisations wouldn't fund me.[204]

This suggests that fundraising is one of the project's limitations. Spencer emphasised

the difficulties of getting funding from Asian organisations in both Hong Kong and

Karachi, and even in the other three target countries, because she was not an Asian. As

Pakistan was once a British colony, neo-colonial dynamics could be a reason why

Spencer did not obtain any funding from local organisations. Ania Loomba suggests

that European colonialism produced economic imbalances in the colonised nations

because of the growth of European capitalism.[205] According to Stanley L. Engerman

and Kenneth Lee Sokoloff, inequality in wealth, human capital and political power

leads to a change in economic development patterns in a post-colonial state.[206] This

means that the economy of Pakistan as a post-colonial state was damaged after

colonialism. During the process of decolonisation, a post-colonial state prioritises

having ultimate control over the voice and labour of the nation. Nowadays, the

partnership with the British government focuses heavily on supporting Pakistan in

issues relating to trade, education and poverty.[207] Post-colonial Pakistan has used its

available resources and funding to deal with the social and economic imbalance. The

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[204] Spencer, interviewed by author, Skype, 7 November 2016.
[205] Loomba, p.4.
[206] Stanley L. Engerman and Kenneth Lee Sokoloff, 'Factor Endowments, Inequality, and Paths of Development among New World Economies', *Economía*, 3 (2002), 41-109 (p.34), <https://doi.org/10.1353/eco.2002.0013> [accessed 20 July 2017].
[207] William Hague, *Britain's Relationship with Pakistan is Here to Stay* (gov.uk, 2011) <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/britains-relationship-with-pakistan-is-here-to-stay> [accessed 25 August 2017].

country's colonial history has also created resistance in the local community, which is apprehensive about foreign intervention. Local organisations may prioritise supporting local leaders over foreign facilitators. As mentioned above, the AHRC did not provide Spencer with any funding; it only offered her a fundraising partnership. Spencer also sought partnership or funding from local NGOs in Karachi but there was no positive response because she was not a Pakistani. As Spencer is a well-educated British woman, she was possibly perceived as an outsider with a Western agenda for running a project with sufficient resources. Local people who manage the flow of money and resources are often wary of giving these to a British facilitator rather than a local one. It would be suggested that this situation had an impact on Spencer's ability to get funding or enough support from local organisations.

Having been ruled by the British for more than 100 years and inheriting their colonial influence, it was difficult for Pakistan to change its national identity.[208] Pakistan has retained the same class structure and the same civil service administration.[209] This means that Pakistan still today reflects features of the colonial period, including in its military, policies, economy and education. As Kharas puts it, the politics of development assistance to developing countries are rooted in the history

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[208] Amjad Ali Siyal, *Colonial Influence on Pakistan* (Pakistan Observer, 2016) <http://pakobserver.net/colonial-influence-on-pakistan/> [accessed 12 April 2017].

[209] Abid Ghafoor Chuadhry and Hafeez Ur Rahman Chaudhry, 'Development Chronicle of Pakistan: A Case of Colonial Legacy', *FWU Journal of Social Sciences*, 6 (2012), 48-56 (p.54), <http://sbbwu.edu.pk/journal/SUMMER-2012-vol-6-No-1/Paper%207.pdf> [accessed 25 April 2017].

of colonialism.[210] This specific history of British colonialisation has made Pakistan one of the UK government's top priorities for development. The official UK government website lists 21 international development funds that are available from the Department for International Development (DFID) for organisations to run projects in Pakistan.[211]

NGOs and other organisations seeking funding from or partnership with DFID are required to show how they contribute to the British government's targets and priorities.[212] As mentioned above, the British government focuses on assisting Pakistan in the areas of education, trade and poverty, thus forming a neo-colonial relationship. Spencer, as an individual, is not qualified to apply for funding from DFID, meaning that she cannot get funding from the British government. This further illustrates both Britain's agenda in providing aid to Pakistan and Spencer's inability to get funding for participatory film projects even from her home country. Resources and financial aid from Britain can be regarded as building a relationship between Britain and Pakistan while at the same time preventing Pakistan from becoming fully independent from British neo-colonialism. The lack of available partnerships with local NGOs, and of funding and resources from both British and local organisations,

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[210] Kharas, p.847.
[211] Gov.uk, *International Development Funding - Pakistan* (Gov.uk, 2017) <https://www.gov.uk/international-development-funding?location%5B%5D=pakistan> [accessed 8 July 2017].
[212] Robert Pinkney, *NGOs, Africa and the Global Order* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p.172.

made it difficult for there to be any evaluation or further development after the end of

the WISE project. The project thus failed to be sustainable and was not very effective

in showing a lasting impact on local participants.

3.8 Summary

This chapter has suggested that evaluation and follow-up are crucial for assessing the

extent of empowerment of women in participatory film projects and that they should

be prioritised alongside other goals. The case of the WISE project illustrates that

insufficient evaluation of the impact on participants limits access to information about

a project's effectiveness. This research shows the project to have had a more

perceivable and lasting impact on the facilitator. Living in an Islamic society,

Pakistani women are in underprivileged positions and are prone to experiencing

violence. Against this social context, the film – made by the participants – addresses

the issue of domestic violence against women, calling for action to be taken in favour

of women in society. The WISE project can be considered an empowering experience

for women as it provides them with a platform to showcase their skills in filmmaking.

The project also gives Pakistani women a collective voice in the community. Their

efforts and contributions were presented through the screening of the film. From a

film studies perspective, the interviews in the participants' film challenge Nichols'

concept of participatory documentary in the sense that they are conducted within the community and both participants (filmmakers) and interviewees are from the same community and face common problems. The interaction in the interviews reveals a perspective that is more objective than personal. What audiences observe comes completely from the community itself.

Although no evaluation was conducted after the project, verbal feedback from participants and observations by Spencer show that the women gained confidence and understood more about women's rights during and after the training workshop. As well as the language barrier and the cultural differences, obtaining funding and support from NGOs is often a challenge for individual foreign filmmakers and facilitators wishing to run projects in developing countries. In this project, post-colonial resistance and the political dynamics between the British and the Pakistanis worked against Spencer as a British person trying to procure funding from Pakistani and other Asian organisations. Hence, the WISE project not only presents a significant example of how one individual can initiate participatory film training projects by seeking partnerships with NGOs, but also indicates the importance of evaluation, which is often required for obtaining funding. For example, most DFID funding requires reports showing that a project has delivered results and represents

good value for money.[213] If proper follow-up had been conducted, the WISE project

would have benefitted from this perhaps becoming a more sustainable project, and

achieving a greater impact on women's empowerment. In the next chapter, I explore

Shashat as the third case study to illustrate how an NGO with a long-term vision and

goals for development provides sustainable film training for women that has a notable

impact on the participants.

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[213] Gov.uk, *International Development Funding* (Gov.uk, 2017)
<https://www.gov.uk/international-development-funding> [accessed 24 August 2017].

CHAPTER FOUR

SHASHAT IN PALESTINE:

LONG-TERM IMPACT OF FILM TRAINING ON WOMEN

> The long-term developmental objective of our training/production programmes for young women filmmakers was to create social change through culture, so that women become producers of Palestinian culture.[214]

Participatory film projects are designed to have a positive impact on participants, who are often empowered in the process. The previous chapters have already demonstrated that the objectives and goals of organisations organising participatory projects are an essential factor in how much the participants benefit from such projects. In this chapter, Shashat, an independent Palestinian cinema NGO that focuses on Palestinian women, will be used as a case study to illustrate the significant life-long impact on participants that can be achieved through well-developed filmmaking training programmes. Although Shashat does not call its training programmes participatory, their approach appears to be very similar to that of participatory film projects. With Shashat as an example, I will argue that well-developed participatory film projects with focused objectives result in substantial long-term empowerment for women.

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[214] Arasoughly, p.112.

Shashat's specific focus on women's cinema and the fact that it provides participants with Palestinian-to-Palestinian training appear to be the reasons why its programmes successfully change the women in the long term.

Before investigating the programmes run by Shashat, it is crucial to understand the social and historical context of Palestine, as this is highly relevant to how the organisation works and to the content of most of the films made by the participants. Palestine operates under complex political and politicised conditions. According to Hamid Dabashi, Palestinian Cinema is defined as 'the mutation of repressed anger into an aestheticized violence'.[215] Due to the Arab-Israeli conflict, Palestinian Cinema is thought to be unique in how it expresses anger at the loss of national identity and historical trauma both visually and aesthetically. Shashat is influenced by Palestinian Cinema in that many of its films incorporate issues related to the Israeli occupation and Palestinian identity. As Edward Said puts it, Palestinian cinema provides a visual articulation against the invisibility and stereotypes of Palestinians.[216] Shashat focuses on women and many of its productions also involve women resisting social norms and the occupation, with the aim of creating a change in women's identity and representation in television and film.

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[215] Hamid Dabashi, 'Introduction', in *Dream of a Nation* ed. by Hamid Dabashi (London: Verso, 2006), pp.7-22 (p.11).
[216] Edward W. Said, "Preface", in *Dream of a Nation*, ed. by Hamid Dabashi (London: Verso, 2006), pp.1-5 (p.3).

4.1 Overview of the Chapter

In this chapter, I explore the social, cultural and historical context of Palestine that has shaped most of Shashat's films, enabling a better understanding of the content of the films and the issues concerned. I will also look in detail at Shashat and its training programmes in order to understand the organisation's objectives and operation, both of which are important in evaluating the effectiveness of women's empowerment and then follow this with an analysis of the films made during the programme. The first half of the film analysis will focus on films about the occupation and the second part will focus on women, as both these topics are related to resistance and appear most often in the participants' films. The women use filmmaking as a tool to express their opinions on these issues and to achieve empowerment.

As Shashat has been running the Young Palestinian Women Filmmakers Incubator Program since 2008, it is impossible to analyse the many short films that have been made. The programme in 2016 was the latest programme completed before this research started. To explore the issues and features that are of concern to Palestinian women filmmakers and how these women express themselves in their films, I will focus on some of the films made in the programme in 2016, alongside past productions related to social and political issues and Palestinian women. I do this because it illustrates how certain issues have been of continued concern to the women

over the years and how Shashat's productions have developed. This also further

argues the conceptual difference between participatory film projects and participatory

documentary suggested by Nichols. Two separate interviews with two Shashat

filmmakers, Dara Khader and Liali Kilani, are examined. These women were selected

because they joined Shashat when it ran its first programme and were also the only

participants available for interview. With the help of Shashat's official work-impact

document and emails with Alia Arasoughly, the organisation's founder, this chapter

explores the process of the programmes and further analyse their impact on women's

empowerment to suggest that Shashat's commitment to women's cinema has a

life-long impact on the participants.

4.2 Social and Historical Context of Palestine

To investigate Shashat's operation and objectives, it is crucial to have a basic

understanding of Palestinian history and Palestinian cinema. Since the United Nations

General Assembly voted for the partition of Palestine into two independent states, one

Jewish and one Arab, in 1947, the conflict between Palestine and Israel has never

stopped.[217] In the 1948 Arab-Israeli war, the Zionists forced 700,000 Palestinians to

leave their land and live as refugees.[218] As well as the long history of violent

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[217] Efraim Karsh, *Palestine Betrayed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), p.1.
[218] Colleen Jankovic, 'Cinematic Occupation: Intelligibility, Queerness, and Palestine' (PhD Thesis,

religion-based disputes between Arab and Jewish society, the control of the land has also been central to the conflict. After the 1948 war, areas where Palestinian Arabs were living and also the international zone of Jerusalem were occupied by Israel. Later, since the Six-Day War in 1967, the West Bank has been under Israeli military occupation and a blockade has been maintained in Gaza for security reasons.[219] Since the announcement in 1993 of a set of agreements between Israel and Palestine known as the Oslo Accords, which allowed for a fully functioning media, cultural productions and activities have become more restricted and mainly concentrated in central Ramallah and Jerusalem.[220] Right up to the present day, people in Palestine are constrained by checkpoints and walls, losing freedom, identity and land. This historical trauma plays an important role in Palestinian culture, especially in Palestinian cinema, which emphasises national identity struggles and resistance.[221]

In addition to this traumatic history, the social context contributes to the content of Shashat's films and to why Shashat focuses on women. According to Cheryl Rubenberg, the majority of Palestinians are Muslim and the identity of Palestinians can be thought of as a collective rather than an individual one, meaning that an individual's behaviour represents a family or a group in Palestinian society.[222] The

University of Pittsburgh, 2012), p.1.

[219] Jankovic, p.1.

[220] Arasoughly, p.101.

[221] Dabashi, p.11.

[222] Cheryl A. Rubenberg, *Palestinian women: Patriarchy and Resistance in the West Bank* (Boulder:

fact that honour is not an attribute of an individual but of the whole family in Palestinian society reinforces gender inequality in the family and honour killings are allowed.[223] The behaviours of an individual are connected to the family group and are, therefore, restricted to a certain extent by the expected collective sense of identity. In Palestine, 'patriarchy originates in the family and is reflected and reinforced in every social institution'.[224] Living in a patriarchal society, Palestinian women are given less power than men. Gender inequality in Palestine is reinforced by the patriarchal Arab family structure.[225] Women's roles as obedient wives and mothers and their responsibilities are controlled and determined by the men in the family.[226] Palestinian women are given less power than men to make decisions in the family and even for themselves, with, for example, forced marriages being possible. Women's behaviours and possibilities are limited because of the fear of social judgment and punishment.[227]

This brief outline of the history and social context of Palestine enables us to better understand the situation of Palestinian women in society and to analyse the films made by the participants, thus providing insights into Shashat's work.

Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001), p.33.

[223] Rubenberg, p.43.

[224] Ibid., p.33.

[225] Orna Cohen and Ronit D. Leichtentritt, 'Invisible Palestinian Women', *International Sociology*, 25 (2010), 539-559 (p.540), <https://doi.org/10.1177/0268580910370219> [accessed 14 July 2017].

[226] Najah Manasra, 'Palestinian Women: Between Tradition and Revolution', in *Palestinian Women: Identity and Experience*, ed. by Ebba Augustin (London: Zed Books Ltd, 1993), pp.7-21 (p.16).

[227] Rubenberg, p.44.

4.3 About Shashat

4.3.1 Shashat's Objectives and Goals

Founded by Alia Arasoughly in 2005 and based in Ramallah, Shashat is a formally

registered, independent Palestinian cinema NGO that trains women in how to make

films.[228] It is licensed by the Palestinian Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of

Culture.[229] By providing film training specifically for women, Shashat aims not only

to draw attention to women's representation in films and build the capacity of

Palestinian filmmaking by women, but to create sustainable social change through

film culture.[230] In order to reach under-represented communities, Shashat has created

partnerships and collaborations with universities, more than a hundred organisations,

and refugee camps in the West Bank, Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip.[231]

Shashat focuses its activities in four areas, including the Annual Women's Film

Festival, the capacity building of Palestinian women filmmakers, a year-long

screening and discussion Programme called 'Films for Everyone' and cultural

outreach.[232] These four areas of work are tightly connected with one another and

provide a comprehensive experience and opportunity for women. Shashat's film

training programmes are provided for women and screenings of their films are

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[228] Arasoughly, p.101.
[229] Ibid.
[230] Ibid., p.112.
[231] Shashat, *Biography* (n.d.) <http://www.shashat.org/en/article/1023/Bio> [accessed 20 October 2016].
[232] Arasoughly, p.102.

guaranteed through screening programmes and film festivals. Women are also given

opportunities to meet filmmakers from all over the world. Shashat not only promotes

filmmaking by women in Palestine but establishes Palestinian women's cinema on the

international horizon. Shashat received the Palestinian Ministry of Culture's Award

for Excellence in Cinema in 2010, gaining recognition for its efforts and its impact on

women's cinema.[233]

4.3.2 The Young Palestinian Women Filmmakers Incubator Program

Shashat emphasises the importance of providing Palestinian-to-Palestinian training for

its women participants.[234] It became aware of the problems of having foreign

filmmakers as trainers during the projects it ran between 2005 and 2007, and

Palestinian filmmakers have been invited to be the trainers ever since Shashat

launched its first training-mentoring-production programme, the Young Palestinian

Women Filmmakers Incubator Program, in 2008.[235] The 2008 programme was

mainly funded by the Goethe Institute Ramallah with additional funds from Goteborg

International Film, and provided practical training for six female university students

who were recommended by universities and selected by Shashat through

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[233] Arasoughly, p.101.
[234] Ibid., p.112.
[235] Ibid.

interviews.[236]

The programmes are usually held in the summer over a period of four months. Participants can continue interacting with the filmmakers after the end of the training and the films they make are screened through a year-long screening-discussion programme. With the objective of establishing Palestinian women's cinema and changing the cultural representation of women, Shashat organises regular training-mentoring-production programmes with different themes and at different levels, including beginner, intermediate and advanced.[237] Although these training programmes are not called participatory filmmaking projects, the training processes are similar. As InsightShare puts it, participatory film involves a group or community using a set of techniques to create their own films.[238] The participants in Shashat's programmes are all women and they are given the power to control the filmmaking process. The training starts with a brainstorming section and a discussion, during which the women share experiences and ideas in a group. After being given a particular theme, they receive comprehensive training in filmmaking, including writing scripts, operating equipment and editing.

After the training, Shashat organises screenings of the films in the community and encourages discussion between the participants and community members. The

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[236] Arasoughly, p.116.
[237] Ibid., p.103.
[238] Lunch and Lunch, p.10.

training programmes have benefitted from the transnational networks that Shashat has been building with universities, organisations and filmmakers, from Palestine and overseas. These programmes not only equip young women with professional knowledge and technical skills, they also help the women to develop their ideas and express themselves and do not end after the training period. After the films have been produced, Shashat dedicates its efforts to screening them in villages and cities and enabling a wide access to different film festivals, which gives the women the opportunity to share their thoughts with local people and filmmakers around the world.

Shashat has different themes for its training programmes every year, resulting in a wide range of film content. For instance, the 2008 programme, 'Confession', was about discovering what kind of life young Palestinian women live, including issues of sexuality, and interactions with family and society.[239] Most films produced by the trained women are related to women's resistance to social norms or the Israeli occupation. As mentioned earlier, this chapter will focus on some of the latest films, those made during the 2016 programme, alongside past productions related to social and political issues and Palestinian women. The films highlight the influence of Palestinian Cinema and the social context of Palestine on the participants. As this

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[239] Arasoughly, p.116.

research is about the relationship between participatory filmmaking and women's empowerment, its focus is on the content of the films rather than on their aesthetic quality. Based on Skype interviews with two Shashat-trained filmmakers, Dara Khader and Liali Kilani, who have been with the organisation since the first training programmes in 2008 and were the only filmmakers available for interview, the impact of Shashat's training on women's empowerment is inspected further.

4.4 Shashat's Productions

4.4.1 Films Related to the Occupation in 2016

The theme of the 2016 training programme was 'What is Tomorrow', the aim of which was to record Palestinian life and encourage young people to think about the future.[240] Three films were made by three women filmmakers in the programme, entitled *A Very Hot Summer*, *Graffiti* and *Mawtini*. *A Very Hot Summer* (2016), directed by Areej Abu Eid, is a documentary about Eid's personal experience during the Gaza War in 2014.[241] The film is scripted and narrated by Eid, who describes what it was like living without electricity and water during war time. The film starts with a slow motion shot of empty plastic bottles dropping on the floor and fades out to the title screen, where it mentions that there is no water, and empty water bottles on

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[240] See Appendix (ii).
[241] See Appendix (iii).

the ground are captured in slow motion (Figures 4.1 and 4.2). Many extreme close-up shots and rack focuses are used to capture the surroundings, which resemble a hot environment (Figures 4.3 and 4.4). The voice-over by Eid cuts in and describes the water and electricity shortage, alongside cut-away shots and footage of bombing illustrating how people are suffering because of the Gaza War.
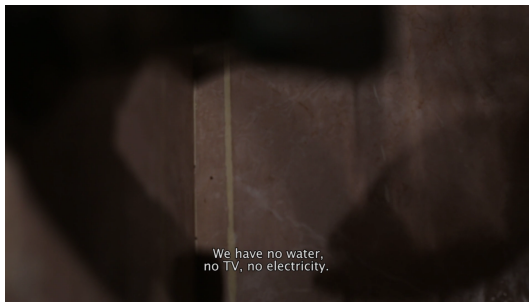
Figure 4.1 Shadow of water dripping from a tap.

Figure 4.2 Water bottles on the ground.

Figure 4.3 Rack focus of the surroundings.
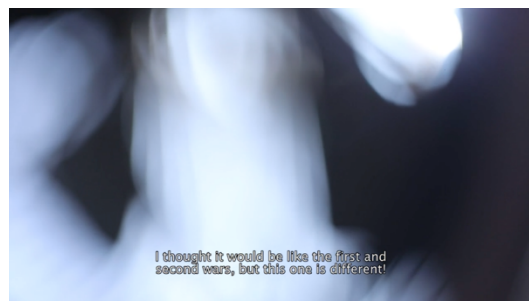
Figure 4.4 Rack focus of a fan.

The film also uses a large number of cut-away shots of bombing, alternating between day and night to indicate the never-ending war, and many extreme close-up shots of the surroundings and of people's body parts change at a fast pace to express the tense environment and nervousness. (Figures 4.5 and 4.6).

Figure 4.5 Close-up of Eid's eye.

Figure 4.6 Extreme close-up of tapping fingers, symbolising a long waiting time.

Then Eid moves from talking about the Gaza War to her own family, indicating a shift from the general to the specific in the telling of a very personal story related to the war. A sudden cut-away shot to a black screen implies that she was bombed and lost her vision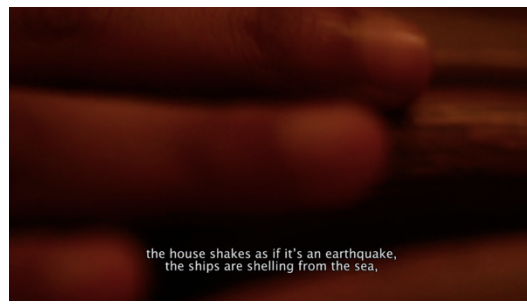, and this is followed by blurred shots representing her vision after the bombing. The film uses both black and white and coloured shots to indicate Eid moving in and out of consciousness, as described by her voice-over. It gives audiences the sense that they themselves are experiencing the bombing. The way in which Eid uses the extreme close-up shots and the rack focus gives the film a sense of aesthetics and indirectness, which provides audiences with an imaginary space in which they can place themselves into Eid's vision.

As Eid describes the indoor environment and the situations during the war, the moving images act as a visual illustration of her narrative, enabling a better interpretation of her story. Real archival footage of the Gaza War, showing bombings and buildings collapsing, is used in the film, as is footage of how people suffered

physically and mentally. The emotion in Eid's voice-over changes according to the narrative. From describing how people in general suffered in the war, she shifts the focus to her elder sister who believed the war would end on her birthday but was eventually killed by the bombs. Images of her sister and are juxtaposed with war footage, which introduces her sister and at the same time makes a contrast between a joyful girl and the cruelty of war. Eid grieves for her sister and expresses her depression and her anger with wars and conflicts in the film. Asking what tomorrow is at the end of the film enables audiences to rethink the Palestinian political situation and the difficult times in which Palestinians are living.

Graffiti (2016), directed by Fidaa Nasr, is a film based on anonymous graffiti on a wall in Hebron. The film starts with wide long shots of the city. It zooms in closer into the city with every cut-away shot and stops at a graffitied wall. It takes the audiences closer to the city, step by step. The voice-over of Nasr reads out the words that are written on the wall, bringing out her message by using a love story. Photographs of a man and a woman from childhood to adulthood are shown, alternated with scenes of their bedroom, their families and words on a wall. As the emotion of the voice-over changes to a more depressing tone, audiences are drawn into an emotional register. Such shared subjectivity is reinforced by the life span stills. Footage of occupation, protest, shooting and dead bodies are used in the film,

suggesting reasons why this couple have passed away. Nasr uses original footage to reveal the horrifying political situation and the fact that Palestinians live under occupation with the fear of losing their loved ones. There is dialogue with diegetic sounds and the narrative that is developed is based on a piece of graffiti. Nasr expresses her helplessness and depression regarding the occupation and sees no hope for 'tomorrow'. By showing two individuals and their families, both these films involve genuine experiences and people, which lends them authenticity and realism. The use of media footage reflects the historical realities of Israel's occupation of Palestine and the Palestinian's consequent suffering, further emphasising realism and revealing the state of occupation.

Alongside criticism of the political situation and the occupation, the identity of Palestinians has also been a concern in Palestinian films. *Mawtini* (2016) is a documentary directed by Nagham Kilani and filmed in two communities, Balata Refugee Camp and Nablus Old City. It starts with music and an aerial view of both communities, followed by individual interviews with three local residents of each location. The interviews all start with the voice-over of the social actors (interviewees) and alternately show their presence within the frame. According to Nichols, the complete absence of the filmmaker from the film enables social actors to 'speak for themselves' and provides audiences with more direct access to the memories and

stories they share.[242] Instead of receiving information from the filmmaker, audiences

listen to personal stories spoken by interviewees, which creates direct communication

between the interviewees and the audience. Tracking shots moving sideways and from

the back at the same speed as the interviewees allow audiences to be guided by the

interviewees, and not the filmmaker, into the camp and the city while listening to their

stories. These shots also give audiences a stronger sense of being there and allow

them to discover the daily life of the residents and another side of the camp. Footage

of people in Nablus carrying weapons and protesting against the occupation is

inserted into the film and shows a representation different from that of the peaceful,

harmonious life depicted earlier in the film. The film reveals both the social actors'

attachment to their home and a different perspective of Balata Refugee Camp and

Nablus Old City. More importantly, the film appears to speak to the realities of

Palestinian identity, by showing the collective experience rather than the individual

one. The collective identity described in this film disconnects from the violent and

patriarchal stereotype and is grounded in anti-stereotypical elements of pride and love.

Balata Refugee Camp and Nablus Old City are often known as being poor and violent,

as can be seen in the footage, but the social actors still express their love for their

home. They are proud to be part of where they live, and they stay in the refugee camp

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[242] Nichols, *Representing Reality*, p.54.

even when they have the opportunity to leave. Their identities are defined by their attachment to their home city and also by the film, which shows them introducing themselves in the interviews.

4.4.2 Past Films Related to the Occupation

There are also films from past training programmes that relate to the historical trauma and the occupation. *Ni'lin My Heart*, directed by Salam Kanaan in 2009, addresses the anger and frustration of Palestinians in the face of the Israeli occupation. This documentary films people in a village making aluminium bombs and throwing them at a military wall built in Ni'lin by the Israeli government. The shooting was carried out outdoors and the conversations among the bomb makers were recorded. Without using much of an aesthetic element, this six-minute film uses a simple linear narrative to express both the eagerness and the frustration of Palestinians struggling for their freedom and fighting for their rights. In the same year, Kanaan made another film, *Jerusalem, A Dream Not Yet Realized* (2009), about how she uploaded to the Internet videos and photos of Israeli soldiers executing their military power and her father was arrested as a result. With the green card that allows her access only to the West Bank, she finds her dream of going to Jerusalem unachievable. By combining footage and her own videos, Kanaan applies the anger she feels about a personal experience to a

national issue related to the occupation. Another documentary related to the occupation, *On the Ground* (2009), about a railway and a wall built by the Israeli government, was made by Omaima Hamouri. Instead of putting herself on the screen, Hamouri turns herself into the narrator who talks about how Israel is changing the environment of Palestine and how Palestinians have no choice but to tolerate the occupation and to suppress their desperation and anger. The influence of the Israeli occupation and Palestinian history is shown in the films made by the women.

The films related to the political issues are fairly traumatic and negative. However, *Girls and the Sea* (2010), directed by Taghreed Al-Azza, articulates the restrictions and constraints faced by Palestinian women and criticises the Israeli occupation in a humorous way. This fiction film is about how three young women react after they fail to go to the beach. The film starts with successive cut-away shots between three young women doing different things related to going to the beach, introducing the main characters of the film. Some filmmaking techniques are then used to create contrasts. We hear the off-screen sound of a girl's parents saying that she is not allowed to go out, which depicts her lack of decision-making power under social norms, but then the film moves to a close-up shot of the girl's facial expression when she is talking to her friend on the phone and decides to go out without permission. This emphasises and depicts a shift in the girl's emotional struggle and

her determination to resist. When the girls realise that they cannot get through the checkpoint, the film uses reverse shots and eye-line match shots among the girls to show that they are looking at one another and having the same idea of sunbathing by an inflatable pool. It implies a sense of collective decision and power. The film ends with an extreme long shot that includes both the checkpoint and the girls enjoying sunbathing on a nearby slope, presenting a playful contrast between their resistance and the occupation.

Girls and the Sea is an entertaining short film, and it is highly representative in that it brings out the strong resistance of women pursuing what they want regardless of the constraints they face. In the story, the parents of one of the girls do not allow her to go out alone because she is a girl, but she chooses to resist in the end. The girls cannot pass through the occupation checkpoint but they create their own pool nearby and enjoy sunbathing. The film shows both resistance to social constraints on women and Palestinian resistance against a larger context of the occupation. This concept of resistance is particularly important and common in Shashat's work.

Many short films produced in Shashat's training programmes are related to criticism of the Israeli occupation. The films outlined above illustrate not only the social-historical context of the occupation but how Palestinian women are actively aware of and engaged in political issues. Using filmmaking as a tool to express

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themselves, the women trained by Shashat address and discuss issues related to Palestinian identity, resistance and the traumatic experience of living under occupation, which are highly relevant to Palestinian Cinema as mentioned above. As well as focusing on identity problems and national resistance in general, the films also focus on women's identity and resistance in particular. Most films produced during Shashat's training programmes are related to women's issues, including social expectations, marriage and sexual harassment. In what follows, films related to these issues will be explored from the perspective of how Palestinian women see themselves in society and what messages they want to deliver to their audiences through their films.

4.4.3 Films Related to Women's Resistance

Palestinian women live in a male-dominated society. They are usually bound and limited by social norms and expectations. *Remote Control* (2008), directed by Dara Khader, and *If You Say Yes or Say No* (2008), directed by Liali Kilani, are films that emerged from Shashat's first programme. They reveal a beginner's level of training, being shot at home using simple techniques. Both films illustrate how Palestinian women go through struggles with and are controlled by their male family members and partners when pursuing their desires, such as studying abroad and dancing freely

at home. By showing the interaction between them, with or without dialogue, the films portray male domination of women and encourage women to make their own decisions and resist this domination.

Alaa Desoki and Areej Abu Eid, two Shashat filmmakers, collaborated on *Manshar Ghaseelo* (2013), which raises a similar issue concerning women. By alternating between animation and live footage, the film illustrates verbal sexual abuse and the male gaze against Palestinian women regardless of how covered up they are. The animation illustrates the verbal harassment by men and the live footage shows a woman struggling with what to wear. The difficulty of finding actors or of filming actual harassment is considerable. Therefore, the use of animation gives the filmmaker more control over how harassment is presented and makes it easier for audiences to accept and to listen when talking about such a sensitive issue.[243] The aesthetic value of animation is also thought to provide a stronger visual style, which makes the film more entertaining to watch.[244] Desoki and Eid create a contrast between men verbally harassing women in animation and a woman being silent in live footage, reflecting the reality that Palestinian women are oppressed by both men and

[243] Beige Adams, *When Docs Get Graphic: Animation Meets Actuality* (International Documentary Association, 2009)
<http://www.documentary.org/magazine/when-docs-get-graphic-animation-meets-actuality> [accessed 22 July 2017].
[244] Paula Bernstein, *New Documentaries Use Animation to Bring Nonfiction Stories to Life* (Filmmaker Magazine, 2016)
<http://filmmakermagazine.com/98922-new-documentaries-animation-bring-nonfiction-stories-to-life/#.WXMrC4TyvIU> [accessed 22 July 2017].

social norms.

In addition to the problems of dealing with social expectations before getting married, marriage is also an important issue in Palestinian women's lives, and the women participants share their views on it through filmmaking. Directed by Zeina Ramadan, *Hush* (2013) stresses the topic of marriage by filming a woman suffering from social pressure that defines the "perfect women" as one who is married and has children and no education. A large number of close-ups shots are used to show the woman's facial expressions, emphasising the fear and anxiety experienced by living under this social expectation. This enables audiences to feel the emotion of the scene more vividly. Sometimes, just discussing women's rights and issues can be a very sensitive topic among Palestinians. Directed by Omaima Hamouri in cooperation with Michael Krotkiewski in a Palestinian-Swedish collaboration, *The Sister and Her Brother* (2010) is a documentary recording a conversation between 22-year-old Hamouri and her brother in their home. In the conversation they discuss, for example, whether it is appropriate or acceptable for a girl to date a boy if she is not going to marry him and whether the same standards of marriage are applied to men. The answers appear to be that there are double-standards for men and women. The film alternates between moments of intimacy between the brother and sister filmed in black and white and the discussion between them which is in colour. More than

experimenting with aesthetics, the black-and-white scenes provide a subtle impression

and they contrast with the coloured scenes of aggressive discussion, giving the sense

that social norms are prioritised over women's freedom no matter how close a woman

is to her family.

In *White Dress (2012)*, a fiction film, a 12-year-old girl plays the role of the

narrator, who concludes that only married women are loved by everyone. This kind of

conditional love that she has experienced in her family leads to her decision to

become a married woman in the future. Hamouri, the director, organises the film

around point-of-view and tracking shots, leading the audience to see the world from

the character's perspective, to see what they see and feel what they feel. This film

criticises this deeply-embedded and pervasive norm, which seriously limits the

possibilities of Palestinian women. Marriage in Palestinian society seems to be a

necessary phase of a woman's life. Women who fail to get married are regarded as a

source of shame and misfortune to their families.

Among all the films related to women's issues, only one film covers the topic of

sexual harassment. Ghada Terawi, director of *Golden Pomegranate Seeds* (2009),

combines interviews and animation to articulate a key message, namely that women

should not remain silent when they encounter sexual harassment. Starting with

filming the storyteller, the film uses animation to tell a folk story called 'Golden

Pomegranate Seeds', which is about a girl who suffers from nightmares and misfortune through keeping silent. Point-of-view shots are used when the girl's escape is being described, giving a sense of moving with the character, of the animation being merged with the live action. The use of animation enables the filmmaker to re-enact the story and present it visually to the audiences, leading to a better understanding of it (Figure 4.7). At the same time, it serves as a 'softer' approach to not just sensitive subjects but also traumatic experience, bringing audiences closer to traumatic experience from a necessary emotional distance.[245] Audiences are more willing to take in animated images and to open themselves up through them to the emotional and personal experiences illustrated in the film.[246] Although the silhouette effect is used to conceal the victims' identities, the interviews without the presence of the filmmaker still allow audiences to engage with the experiences of the victims more directly (Figure 4.8).[247]

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[245] Manuel Betancourt, *The Power of Animation in Documentaries: Keith Maitland's Tower and Other Docs Pose New Questions about Nonfiction Filmmaking* (Pastemagazine, 2016) <https://www.pastemagazine.com/articles/2016/10/the-power-of-animation-in-documentaries.html> [accessed 23 August 2017].
[246] Betancourt, *The Power of Animation in Documentaries: Keith Maitland's Tower and Other Docs Pose New Questions about Nonfiction Filmmaking.*
[247] Nichols, *Representing Reality*, p.54.

Figure 4.7 Animation in *Golden Pomegranate Seeds* (2009).

Figure 4.8 An interview with a victim using the silhouette effect to conceal her identity.

The animation, which is accompanied by a voice-over by the storyteller, is alternated with interviews with female victims who share their personal experience of being sexually harassed by relatives and even fathers. This juxtaposition seems to use the girl in the animation to identify and represent all the invisible interviewees, enabling audiences to connect the fictional story with reality. The personal experiences shared by the victims illustrate the fact that Palestinian women suffer from forced marriages and sexual harassment but at the same time they encourage women to be brave and to speak up in the face of these experiences.

4.4.4 Development of Film Techniques and Aesthetics in Shashat's Films

Palestinian women are aware of issues related to Palestinian identity and the Israeli occupation but their specific focus on depicting women's issues in their films shows the greater importance they place on women's empowerment. In terms of the aesthetic quality of the films and the techniques used, a positive development can be seen from

2008 to 2016. The films from the first few years of the programme focus mainly on simple, linear narratives, with limited aesthetics and techniques such as very basic cut-away shots and track shots. Many of them use original footage as support for the narratives. The more recent the films, the greater the range of techniques found in them, with participants using more techniques to symbolise or resemble their content. For example, in *A Very Hot Summer* (2016), Eid uses blurred shots to resemble the character's blurred vision and different coloured shots to resemble changes in consciousness. This places audiences in a position where they see what she sees. Some films play with depth of focus and a wider variety of presentation, such as animation and interviews, can also be found. This shows that the participants are applying and combining more film aesthetics and techniques in their presentation. Moreover, most of the film aesthetics and techniques used by the participants seem to have the aim of engaging audiences emotionally. Extreme close-ups and use of footage create a sense of 'being there' and enable closer observation of the depicted environment, while point-of view shots allow audiences to see the world from the character's perspective. Interviews and social actors speaking for themselves enable direct communication with audiences. These techniques give the women participants the ability to engage audiences more emotionally and visually and therefore to further reinforce the messages they want to deliver and to facilitate audiences' understanding

of the issues.

Another line of thought on the participants' creativity demonstrates the conceptual difference between participatory film projects and Nichols' participatory mode of documentary. In both concepts, 'participatory' refers to engagement and involvement, but the subjects are different. In Nichols' participatory mode of documentary, it refers to the filmmaker's participation, which is often an outside intervention in the community. It emphasises the interaction between the filmmaker and the subjects, providing both the subjects' and filmmaker's testimonies.[248] Such interaction is to a certain extent controlled by the filmmaker, who can decide what will be shown in the documentary. The participatory documentary thus mainly reflects the filmmaker's creativity and the representation of subjects who have no control over how they are portrayed. However, in participatory film projects, 'participatory' refers to the subjects (the participants / social actors) taking part in the filmmaking process. They are given the opportunity to make decisions and take control of the filmmaking process. As mentioned in the chapter one, participatory filmmaking is different from traditional documentary in that its 'control over, and responsibility for, the process and product stays with participants rather than with filmmakers from outside the community'.[249] Such films therefore directly showcase the subjects' own perspectives

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[248] Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary*, p.143.
[249] Blazek and Hraňová, p.153.

and creativity without any articulation by the filmmaker, who only provides their training. The concept of participatory film projects challenges Nichols' participatory mode of documentary by representing the world and revealing perspectives directly through the subjects (the participants) themselves. As audiences, we are able to connect with the subjects instantly through the films they make. In Shashat's case, the aesthetics and techniques used by the participants in their films demonstrate their creativity and perspectives. The observable changes of presentation show that the participants' ability to engage audiences has been strengthened.

The development of Shashat's production over the years makes a lot of sense because the participants have worked with the organisation and taken part in its programmes for years. They become more mature as filmmakers and accumulate filmmaking knowledge every time they participate in Shashat's training. Such continuous training enables the stable development of Shashat's productions by the participants and shows that Shashat has built up collaborative networks to get more funding and resources for the women and for the long-term development of its programmes. This development gives Shashat the capacity to provide different stages of training, which enables participants' productions to become more and more professional. In what follows, Shashat's impact will be examined with the help of the organisation's official work-impact document, and the influence of its training

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programmes on women's empowerment will be analysed with the support of Skype interviews with two Shashat filmmakers.

4.5 Shashat's Impact and its Empowerment of Women

4.5.1 Local and National Impact

To ensure the effectiveness of its work, Shashat has been measuring and evaluating the local and national impact of its work and activities, site and audience evaluations from every screening.[250] Shashat mainly provides training for female university students and since 2006 has hosted an annual women's film festival in partnership with eight Palestinian universities.[251]

According to Shashat's work-impact document, thousands of young people are able to access Shashat's productions and see how filmmaking plays a role in constructing cultural and social development. More importantly, female university students can be inspired to engage in filmmaking or other cultural productions. Shashat receives positive feedback from students who have participated in its festivals every year. University professors request copies of Shashat's films and integrate them into their academic curricula.[252] This suggests that films made by the women in the training programmes are valuable for education and relevant to students in their

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[250] See Appendix (iv).
[251] See Appendix (iv).
[252] See Appendix (iv).

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presentation of women's voices on social issues through creative productions. Apart from targeting young people in universities, Shashat also screens the films in 'more remote and disenfranchised communities', including refugee camps and small local villages that lack cultural activities.[253] Audiences in these communities have found that the films reflect their lives and deliver messages in an emotive way.[254] Shashat's exhibition strategy is to reach audiences made up of different genders, ages and educational backgrounds. The topics covered in the films reflect reality and people feel connected to the films. As well as university faculty members, Shashat also receives requests for its films from local communities and organisations on a daily basis.[255] This underscores how films made by the women trained by Shashat are useful and influential in educating the public and provoking social discussions.

On a national level, Shashat has reached a number of new audiences through its annual women's film festival. For example, in 2013, 7,000 people of different ages and genders participated in the 9th festival and the discussions therein of the films produced in the training programmes.[256] Some of these discussions are filmed and then broadcast by Shashat on Palestine TV and the Palestine Satellite Channel, enabling an audience of 100,000 to get access to them during prime time.[257] Palestine

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[253] See Appendix (iv).
[254] See Appendix (iv).
[255] See Appendix (iv).
[256] See Appendix (iv).
[257] See Appendix (iv).

TV has received phone calls from audiences commenting on the discussions.[258] From the above impacts measured by Shashat, it is clear that the films made in the training programmes are reflective and are relevant to Palestinian lives and the collective social experience. Shashat not only provides participatory film training to women but also guarantees exposure of the films they produce, bringing both their films and ideas to a wide range of audiences. The wide coverage of audiences and networks suggests that there is a significant difference this project and those in the other case studies. Through Shashat's films, its festival and its public screening strategy, the group of women empowered is far larger than just those involved in the filmmaking.

After the screenings, discussions on the topic of women's lives in Palestine take place between men and women in the communities and even family members are affected by the delivery of the films' messages.[259] The distribution of the films and the positive responses received from different parties, especially female audiences, gives recognition to the women filmmakers who feel that their voices are being heard, thus boosting their confidence. More than just screening the films to the public, Shashat ensures wide coverage of its productions and makes effective use of the films to stimulate discussion and encourage changes in social values and women's issues.

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[258] See Appendix (iv).
[259] See Appendix (iv).

4.5.2 Impact on Individual Women Participants

In order to further understand how Shashat's participatory training practice contributes to women's empowerment, Skype interviews with two Shashat filmmakers, Dara Khader and Liali Kilani, were conducted. The interviews were carried out in English, which is the interviewees' second language, and thus contain various errors, which I have not corrected because I wanted to present their opinions in their own words. Khader and Kilani first joined Shashat through the first training programme, 'Confession', in 2008. The level of women's empowerment achieved by the organisation's participatory training programmes is evaluated on the basis of their experiences of and reflections about Shashat.

Shashat targets young women for its training programmes, reaching them in different ways. For its first training programme in 2008, Shashat called for mainly university students to participate. Kilani, who was studying computer science, joined the programme because she was encouraged to do so by her mother.[260] Khader was studying engineering and joined Shashat through being nominated by the Goethe Institute. Objections from families often hinder participation.[261] Having considered the obstacles faced by the women, Shashat helps convince their families to let them join the programme. As Khader described: '[…] Shashat met my parents, and Dr Alia

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[260] Liali Kilani, interviewed by author, Skype, 3 December 2014.
[261] Arasoughly, p.117.

explained to them everything about Shashat, from that moment they both trusted each other [...]'.[262] As the women have to pass through checkpoints to attend Shashat's training, family support becomes essential to their participation. A mutually trusting relationship is required in the social context and political environment that exists in Palestine. Such a relationship allows women to continue their participation in future training and programmes.

The participatory training provided by Shashat is comprehensive, ranging from brainstorming to filming and editing. The young women participants are gathered together and they have discussions about the issues or stories they would like to film. They are taught how to write scripts and how to shoot with a camera by Palestinian filmmakers.

> Kilani: At first, they teach me how to writing script. Actually at the beginning, they teach us brainstorming – think about what we want to talk about and what the ideas that we want to send to people. Then a camera man came for two days and he showed us how to hold a camera and how to shoot. And then we did editing.[263]

> Khader: the basics and the foundation for filmmaking, through our trainings and participation in many activities such as workshops, training and festivals. Usually a training project lasts for five years and provides different levels of training. The first level is professional training such as writing script and holding camera.[264]

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[262] Dara Khader, interviewed by author, Skype, 25 November 2014.
[263] Kilani, interviewed by author, Skype, 3 December 2014.
[264] Khader, interviewed by author, Skype, 25 November 2014.

In my email communication with Arasoughly, she mentioned that having men as technical trainers was inevitable for the first few years as it was difficult to find female trainers who knew how to use filming equipment.[265] This again reveals the fact that Palestinian women receive fewer opportunities than men to learn technical filmmaking skills. The United Nations Population Information Network (1995) suggests five components of women's empowerment, including a sense of self-worth, the right to have access to opportunities and resources and the right to have the power to control their own lives.[266] Shashat empowers young women by enabling them to access new knowledge and skills in a way comparable to men. The women realise that they are able to do what men can do and they are valued in their communities, which may build their sense of self-worth. More importantly, the women have complete power to decide what to film and how to make their films. In Palestine, women are often repressed and not given the authority to make decisions due to the male-dominated culture. During the brainstorming process, they come to understand their rights in society, and they rethink and challenge social norms. The women are empowered by being given the right to make decisions during the training, which builds their confidence by proving that they are comparable to men.

> Khader: Through our films, we are freely to choose what type of
> films we want, and what we want to talk about. We can prove that

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[265] Alia Arasoughly, email to author, 16 March 2017.
[266] Bustamante-Gavino, Rattani and Khan, pp.175-176.

women can do what men do. We can also hold camera and make great films.[267]

Kilani: It actually also offers training to male but mainly the girl who stay because they have no place to go other than Shashat. The boys can go to other places. Look, there are organisations that do films but usually when you do shooting, only boys are holding the equipment and the girls are just looking. But in Shashat, they mainly focus on the girls.[268]

Shashat provides women-focused training that offers a rare opportunity for women because it is difficult for them to get close to filming equipment in programmes run by other organisations and universities. In fact, universities in Palestine only have programmes related to media in general.[269] In 2017, Gaza University launched the first film studies programme in Palestine.[270] Young people, especially women, have very limited access to filmmaking. Hence, Shashat's training is not only about delivering knowledge and skills to women, but about forming a female community and fostering the cultural development of filmmaking in Palestine.

The fact that Shashat focuses on women means a lot to Khader and Kilani. Both described how women are often not given the right to do what they like and to express their ideas. As Khader emphasised: '[…] the existence of the man means he will be

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[267] Khader, interviewed by author, Skype, 25 November 2014.
[268] Kilani, interviewed by author, Skype, 3 December 2014.
[269] Arasoughly, p.113.
[270] Ahmad Abu Amer, *Gaza University to Launch First Film Major in Palestine* (Al-Monitor, 2016) <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/10/gaza-university-film-studies-major-students.html > [accessed 22 July 2017].

the controller. That's the problem of the 70% of the men in our countries'.[271] Most

women, including well-educated ones, are also expected to stay at home after getting

married.

> Khader: This is very important, in a country they have few chances
> for woman especially in this field. Since Shashat focuses on women
> and women in Palestine do not have the right to talk about what they
> want, I trust it more and have more confidence towards it.[272]

> Kilani: After I joined Shashat, I thought it is like a family. At the
> beginning, we went to Shashat and met Alia. She told us to express
> our feelings. […] So we were talking like a family. Everyone
> expressed herself. After that, we came up some ideas.[273]

East and Roll suggest that 'bringing women together in circles or small group

processes has been found to be a critical component of women's empowerment'.[274]

The women in Shashat's programmes have discussions in a small group. As all the

participants are women, they feel comfortable to share their experiences and build

trust in one another. More than offering participatory film training programmes,

Shashat has created a community among the young women and this makes them feel

connected and engaged. Filmmaking becomes a way for them to contribute to their

communities. During the participatory filmmaking process, the women are supported

by Shashat and by one another. For example, Kilani's sister acted in Khader's film

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[271] Khader, interviewed by author, Skype, 25 November 2014.
[272] Ibid.
[273] Kilani, interviewed by author, Skype, 3 December 2014.
[274] East and Roll, p.283.

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because Khader could not find an actress. In this sense, although the women make

their own individual films, they in fact support one another to overcome challenges.

They collaborate in the process and build their collective power within the Shashat

community, which makes them more aware of gender inequality. This is one of the

reasons why most of the films produced by the women participants are related to

women's issues and encourage women to take control of their own lives. The process

of building collective power is considered empowering to women.[275]

> Kilani: However, in Shashat, you have to do everything on time.
> Otherwise, you will lose Shashat. They push me to be more
> organised like finishing everything on time. If I want to say
> something, I really need to prepare for that. For example, if I want to
> talk about my films, they will ask me like why you are doing this.[276]

Although the women are given the freedom and opportunity to make films in

their own ways, Shashat monitors the training. As the training is comprehensive, the

women are expected to learn about all the procedures involved in filmmaking,

including writing the script, filming and editing. Instead of doing everything by

themselves, the women, as directors, work with a small film crew and take on

leadership roles in the production alongside Arasoughly, who is listed as producer in

all the films. In this sense, the women are responsible not only for themselves but for

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[275] Cornwall, pp.347-355.
[276] Kilani, interviewed by author, Skype, 3 December 2014.

the team they are working with. Robinson suggests that sometimes in a participatory project it is essential for facilitators to be in control of the technical and aesthetic quality of the final outputs in order to making the works engaging and ensure their acceptance when on public display.[277] Shashat's objective is not only women's empowerment but the development of women's cinema, which requires professional good-quality productions. Arasoughly thus plays the role of supervisor, to ensure the quality of the films. The women are required to submit their works to deadlines, thus learning how to manage their time.[278] Complete freedom to decide what to film is given to the women, but at the same time they have the responsibility of explaining why they want to make their films in certain ways. Therefore, Shashat teaches them not only the techniques and skills of filmmaking but also the importance of being responsible for the training programme and for films that will be screened in front of thousands of people. This strengthens the participants' commitment to both filmmaking and to Shashat, which has a long-term influence on their journey to becoming professional filmmakers and on the development of Shashat.

> Khader: I got to know who I am who I want to be. It makes me feel stronger to speak, to express what we want, to not fear the society as long as we do the right things, to be more organised in our life because of the precise procedures that Shashat always considers in

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[277] Robinson, p.128.
[278] Kilani, interviewed by author, Skype, 3 December 2014.

its work.[279]

> Kilani: If now you ask people in Palestine, they will know our name as Shashat show the films in some film festivals. The films are screened in every city and sometimes village in Palestine. They screened the films one to three times in the city. Now if I walk around in my city, people will come to me and say they have watched my films. It is really nice that people know about you and your films. They like your ideas and this is the most important thing to Shashat.[280]

The screening and exhibition of their films at film festivals and in local communities also contributes to women's empowerment. The women are required to explain their works and ideas in front of both male and female audiences, thereby engaging in social discussions and experiencing themselves as part of the communities. During this sharing process, their contribution and works are recognised. In contrast to the projects mentioned in previous chapters, Shashat identifies its women participants individually and the extensive screenings help reinforce their identity as filmmakers. Having been given the identity of filmmaker, as seen in their responses above, the women are more confident to express themselves in public and feel that they have the power to make changes in the social and cultural development of Palestine. Apart from local screenings, Shashat runs several cross-cultural exchange programmes, which provide the women with opportunities to travel to

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[279] Khader, interviewed by author, Skype, 25 November 2014.
[280] Kilani, interviewed by author, Skype, 3 December 2014.

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countries such as Sweden and share their cultures and experiences with young foreign filmmakers.[281] These international exchanges broaden their horizons and enable them to represent Palestine through filmmaking. The training programmes run by Shashat take women from the local to the international level, further increasing their confidence and sense of self-worth.

> Kilani: Films help you express yourself and it makes you more open. They change your personality as I can think about everything I want and there is no limit. Every time when you talk about your films to other people and people ask questions about your films, I feel more confident. I hide nothing inside and I can say anything I want. It makes me more confident and happy what I am doing.[282]

> Khader: […] Shashat was the main thing that changed me a lot, from many sides, personal side and social side. […] I didn't know what I want to do before Shashat but now I am more confident and always happy than my friends. Although I am an engineer, I really want to go back to Shashat as a part-time filmmaker.[283]

Both Khader and Kilani acknowledge that they experienced personal change after joining the programmes. Their educational backgrounds are not related to filmmaking. They have become more confident by acquiring new skills that have enabled them to express themselves through filmmaking. The practice of Shashat's training provides a platform for them to reconstruct the culture in their communities

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[281] Arasoughly, p.119.
[282] Kilani, interviewed by author, Skype, 3 December 2014.
[283] Khader, interviewed by author, Skype, 25 November 2014.

and ensures that their efforts are recognised. There are examples of participants, including Kilani and Hamouri, receiving master's scholarships to the Red Sea Institute of Cinematic Arts (RSICA) through Shashat, after the training programmes.[284] This shows that Shashat not only inspires women to make films but helps them further their career choices related to filmmaking, creating an enduring impact on their lives. The women experience changes in their personalities and in the way they interact with others. As Kabeer puts it, women's empowerment involves the process of women recognising their experiences under oppressive social norms and taking actions accordingly to change their lives.[285] The films made by the women and their desire to continue filmmaking show that they have become more aware of how women are treated in their communities and of the need for to take action to achieve gender equality. Khader and Kilani acknowledge their identity as filmmakers and feel empowered to express their political and social views without fear. They would both like to go back to Shashat and continue to produce films related to women and the occupation. Shashat empowers them by making them realise their ability to make a difference in society for themselves, for Palestinian women and for Palestine.

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[284] Arasoughly, pp.118, 121.
[285] Kabeer, pp.216-232.

4.6 Reason for Shashat's Success

The success of Shashat's training programmes, in my opinion, is built on the organisation's commitment to Palestinian women and to filmmaking. Participatory film training projects in developing countries are often run by facilitators or NGOs from foreign countries, as the previous two chapters discuss. Due to issues related to funding or political situations, the training provided in these projects is usually held over a period of two weeks and there is no continuous development. Having trainers from another country can also create misunderstandings and problems, such as 'Orientalism', which compromise the effectiveness of the programmes.[286] In the case of Shashat, programmes are generally held over a period of four months, which enables a more in-depth training experience. It also allows for continuous participation as Shashat provides training at a sequence of levels, indicating the participants' filmmaking journey. Learning from its own experience, Shashat acknowledges the shortcomings of having foreign filmmakers as trainers and focuses on Palestinian-to-Palestinian training, which causes fewer problems for its programmes and leads to a stronger local network. This is also another key element of Shashat's success. Khader expresses her appreciation of having Palestinian trainers, who set an example of how to become a filmmaker in the country.[287] This also

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[286] Arasoughly, pp.107-110.
[287] Dara Khader, interviewed by author, email, 18 May 2018.

enables her to undergo training without language barriers and to have trainers who understand the culture and the challenges that Palestinian women face.[288] Therefore, having Palestinian filmmakers as trainers not only enables a more efficient training process but empowers the women by showing them that it is possible to become filmmakers in Palestine, encouraging them to do so in the long run. Apart from its continuous commitment to filmmaking, Shashat's insistence on Palestinian-to-Palestinian training is another aspect in which it differs from the other two projects, whose impacts on participants are less visible. Khader's feedback serves as evidence of the positive influence of having local filmmakers as trainers.

Although Shashat focuses on a local-oriented approach, it does not eliminate cooperation and partnerships with overseas organisations that help promote the women's films to a wider range of audiences and enable cultural exchange. As mentioned above, the women work with a crew and Arasoughly is the producer of their films. This approach is slightly different from that of general participatory film projects in which participants do all the work themselves, but it is more equivalent to professional filmmaking in the industry. It implements Shashat's objective of focusing on filmmaking and safeguards its films by assuring their quality. Rather than simply building their consciousness, Shashat makes use of the participants' existing

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[288] Khader, interviewed by author, email, 18 May 2018.

consciousness of the complex political environment to increase the level of professionalism of their productions. The work impact of Shashat and the above testimonies of two Shashat-trained filmmakers suggest that, more than providing Palestinian women with positive experiences through training, Shashat helps women create a new identity as professional filmmakers, which leads to a lasting impact on their careers and, most importantly, educates women to engage in what is considered a male-dominated industry.

4.7 Summary

Clearly, this chapter has provided an example of the visible impact of participatory film projects on women who become filmmakers and go on to have a career in this field. Founded in a male-dominated, politically unstable society, Shashat is a remarkable example of the use of filmmaking as a tool to empower women. As Bustamante-Gavino, Rattani, and Khan put it, women are empowered when they fully participate in issues and decisions that make a difference in their lives.[289] Shashat increases women's confidence and engages them in local and international activities, thus widening their horizons. Using a similar approach to that of a participatory film project, Shashat enables women to use filmmaking as a tool through which to engage

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[289] Bustamante-Gavino, Rattani and Khan, p.176.

with social issues and rethink their personal experiences in society. Participatory film projects such as Shashat's programmes represent a conceptual challenge to Nichols' participatory mode of documentary by having the participants make films rather than an established filmmaker. This enables a more direct delivery of perspectives and representation of the subjects to audiences, as well as showcasing participants' creative capacity to engage audiences.

Most importantly, Shashat enhances women's agency to transform themselves into filmmakers, making a difference in their careers and lives. Through intensive public screenings and discussions, Shashat seeks to have an impact on the wider community in Palestine and to use its films as a catalyst for discussing difficult issues in both the West Bank and Gaza. With focused objectives and a clear understanding of the complex political environment in Palestine, Shashat runs comprehensive film training programmes that particularly target Palestinian women, pointing to the greater potential of participatory film projects and providing insights for future projects.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

The use of participatory video/film projects for advocacy and empowerment has become more common with the availability of handheld filming technologies and the Internet, but it has received insufficient attention in research and the literature. This thesis has discussed the effectiveness of participatory film training projects on women's empowerment in developing countries. Three case studies were analysed in three individual chapters to explore how participatory film projects relate to women's empowerment and result in impacts on participants, facilitators and even Internet users.

This thesis has investigated the UNAIDS Participatory Film Project run by Salamander Trust in collaboration with NWHN in Namibia and Mama's Club Uganda, the Women's International Shared Experience (WISE) Project run by the Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) in Karachi, Pakistan and the Young Palestinian Women Filmmakers Incubator Program by Shashat in Palestine. All three chapters have suggested that participatory film projects for women are effective in providing women with positive, empowering experiences. They have also illustrated the impact of these projects on the facilitator and their efficiency in reaching international

audiences. However, the different context of each case study shows different degrees of women's empowerment. This research aims to reveal the effectiveness of participatory filmmaking in enhancing women's agency. In mentioning the possible limitations of the case studies, this thesis in no way minimises the efficacy of the projects. Limitations are identified because they shed light on how to run effective participatory film projects in the future.

From the case studies analysed here, it seems that women are oppressed and controlled in male-dominated cultures. As White puts it, participatory video enables these women to see themselves in relation to their communities, to understand their needs and create social change through filmmaking.[290] When key elements of women's empowerment involve building their awareness of their self-worth, giving them decision-making power and their gaining new skills and knowledge,[291] both the process and the final products of the projects can be regarded as empowering. During the projects, discussions among the women participants about their concerns and personal experiences raise their consciousness of their situation in society. More than acquiring new knowledge and skills, they are given decision-making power and can therefore control the content, the process and, most importantly, the messages of the films. Through participatory filmmaking, the women are provided with a platform for

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[290] White, p.64.
[291] Bustamante-Gavino, Rattani and Khan, pp.175-176.

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their 'unheard' voice and a tool with which to speak for themselves and on behalf of other women in their communities. Community screenings enable the messages to be delivered to community members. Women are empowered by the way in which the films form a collective voice for the participants and enable them to portray themselves in their own films. By raising public awareness through community screenings, the films made by the participants call for social change. The case studies provide evidence that participatory filmmaking is empowering to the women participants in terms of positive experiences.

However, a crucial issue emerges from the case studies, which is that the objectives and actions of the NGOs involved have an influence on the degree of women's empowerment achieved. Salamander Trust, which ran the UNAIDS participatory film project, stated its objective as that of developing the understanding of HIV issues and it has uploaded most of project resources and information to the Internet. More than empowering the participants, it focuses on reaching a wide range of audiences to achieve outreach and fundraising. With the evidence of the films from the project being used for advocacy by another organisation, it represents a successful example of encouraging further use of the resources created by a project. The WISE participatory film project, on the other hand, was run by Spencer, who sought partnerships with NGOs. From the interview with Spencer, it appears that the process

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of filmmaking in some way empowered the participants, even though the project

failed to evaluate the impact on the participants because of insufficient funding.

Without enough support from the NGOs involved, the level of women's

empowerment was hard to measure. Despite these limitations, the WISE project

shows that participatory film projects can also be beneficial to the facilitator, thus

extending the role of this kind of project.

Compared with the other two case studies, Shashat appears to be more successful

in empowering women through filmmaking. The organisation effectively evaluates its

training programmes, which have a clear and well-developed focus on women and

Palestinian Cinema. Its recurring local-to-local programmes provide continuous

training for the participants and develop a coherent network between organisation and

participants. It creates a positive, long-term impact on its participants through their

continuous participation and career development in filmmaking. Among the chosen

case studies, it shows that the role of NGOs is crucial for effective women's

empowerment and determines the life-changing impact of participatory film projects.

The limitation of this study appears to be insufficient first-hand information. The

study has managed to collect first-hand information via four Skype interviews with

organisers and participants of the three projects. However, this is not enough to make

a comprehensive, accurate measurement of women's empowerment. As the projects

were run in developing countries where participants have very limited or unstable access to the Internet, it was difficult to communicate with the participants online. Feedback from participants therefore become inaccessible. Another limitation is that most of the documents and records are no longer available, especially those of the UNAIDS and WISE projects. In the case of the WISE project, there is no available information and no documents containing participants' feedback. Such limitations hinder an analysis of the impact that is achieved on the participants but they provide insights into the concept of effective participatory film projects.

This thesis has demonstrated a positive connection between participatory filmmaking and women's empowerment by analysing three case studies. The way in which Shashat runs its training programmes is inspiring and can help in the organisation of future effective participatory film projects in developing countries and research on participatory filmmaking. In the other two case studies, it can be seen that having a foreign filmmaker or facilitator can create complex power dynamics and that language barriers between the facilitator and participants can hinder communication. Shashat shows that local-to-local training for women not only enables more efficient communication and eliminates such power complexity, but also creates a continuous network and filmmaking community for both participants and local filmmakers. In contrast to a single separate project, Shashat's continuous training programmes create

a long-term impact on their participants, as they develop their skills and knowledge of filmmaking in the long run. More than raising their consciousness through filmmaking, continuous projects with different levels of training enable participants to change their careers and become filmmakers, thus creating a more enduring impact on their lives.

After years of development, Shashat now has a very specific focus on women and Palestinian Cinema, which make it successful in empowering Palestinian women through professional film productions. To maximise the positive impact of participatory filmmaking on women's empowerment, NGOs or other organisations that intend to run participatory film projects should consider local-to-local training. Moreover, the resources and the films produced in the projects should be more accessible to local community members, especially the women participants, in order to ensure that they benefit most from the projects by, for example, organising regular public screenings in communities. Local organisations can make efficient use of existing resources when they start local-to-local training. Women who have participated in previous training projects can teach other local women how to make films. In this sense, the participants can revise what they have learnt and pass their knowledge on to other community members, continuing the participatory project locally. This can also facilitate future use of the films and resources within the

communities.

Proper evaluation of the impact of participatory film projects on participants is essential for improvement and recognising the effectiveness of the projects. Evaluating the projects also enables future applications to be made for funding, which is essential for continuing the work. For one-off projects, the grants or funding might be better spent on more public screenings or projects than on collecting data. Without follow-up and feedback from participants, it is impossible to accurately measure the level of empowerment and to develop the projects further in the future. This suggests that some projects are one-offs and some have the ambition of carrying out much longer-term actions. This again raises the question of what NGOs aim to achieve through participatory film projects. From the results of this research, it can be seen that continuous film projects with long-term goals are often run by NGOs that actively use filmmaking in their projects, for example, InsightShare and Shashat. These organisations regard filmmaking as a key element of their projects. Their objectives and focus seem to be more capable of creating long-term impacts on their participants and developing more sustainable projects, building up archives and resources for the communities.

Shashat has provided an insight into the potential development of participatory film projects. The UNAIDS and WISE projects, on the other hand, demonstrate the

possibility of extending participatory film projects beyond empowering participants.

The inspiring work and impact of these three projects are recognised and appreciated

in this research. They highlight the importance of participatory filmmaking not only

as a means of empowering women to resist demeaning and otherwise oppressive

social representations and norms, but as a respectful tool with which achieve other

goals, such as promoting organisations and raising public awareness of social issues.

This research can be an inspiration to people who are not familiar with participatory

filmmaking around the world, prompting them to study or carry out research on

practice-based film training and its potential benefits for women. There is a

considerable body of research relating to participatory filmmaking but it is scattered

across different fields. Much research remains to be done, particularly on evaluating

the impact of participatory filmmaking on the participants.

These three case studies also provide inspiration for future research in the field of

film studies. The participatory film projects demonstrate a conceptual difference from

Nichols' participatory mode of documentary. 'Participatory' in these projects

emphasises the participation of the subjects (participants) in making decisions in

filmmaking rather than the filmmaker's involvement in interviews with the subjects.

These projects challenge Nichols' theory, as they reveal the subjects' stories and

perspectives more efficiently and resolve ethical issues that exist in traditional

participatory documentary. Interactions between the subjects provide their own testimonies. The participants' films provide audiences with more direct access to their situations and stories by having the participants speak for themselves through filmmaking. As pointed out by Nichols himself, documentary filmmakers play the role of public representatives and speak for the interests of others, but the participatory mode can create ethical problems, including deception, manipulation and distortion in the filmmaking process.[292] Participatory film projects enable the subjects to represent themselves, to a large extent avoiding possible ethical issues between filmmaker and subjects. The concept and approach of participatory film projects not only challenge Nichols' theory but add new perspectives and more possibilities to participatory documentary, which is worthy of discussion in future research.

For future research based on similar case studies, participation and observation in participatory film projects are crucial for obtaining first-hand information. Apart from representations and other topics that have already been widely discussed, participatory filmmaking can also be regarded as an alternative perspective for studying women's voice in films. Participatory film can be considered a form of amateur filmmaking.[293] Katherine Brickell and Bradley L. Garrett suggest that amateur women filmmakers

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[292] Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary*, p.30, 140.
[293] Katherine Brickell and Bradley L. Garrett, 'Geography, Film and Exploration: Women and Amateur Filmmaking in The Himalayas', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 38 (2012), 7-11 (p.8), <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-5661.2012.00505.x> [accessed 30 September 2016].

have the patience and attention to detail that good filmmakers need.[294] Considering the rapid change in filming technologies and online social platforms, archive participatory films can be used to analyse how amateur women filmmakers and ordinary women in developing countries use filmmaking to challenge misleading representation, raise awareness of social issues in communities, fight for women's rights and, most importantly, demand social change to create a better world for women.

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[294] David Buckingham, Maria Pini and Rebekah Willett, '"Take Back the Tube!": The Discursive Construction of Amateur Film and Video Making', *Journal of Media Practice*, 8 (2007), 183-201 (p.192), <https://doi.org/10.1386/jmpr.8.2.183_1> [accessed 21 August 2017].

APPENDIX (i)

Press Release (For immediate release), Ramallah, Palestine

"What's Tomorrow"

Shashat's 10th Women Festival in Palestine

90 screenings and discussions in 17 cities, 2 refugee camps & one school in collaboration
with 8 universities and 14 organizations & one satellite TV programs

Shashat "Women's Film Festival in Palestine" launches its 10th edition within the cinematic initiative "What's Tomorrow." The festival will take place from November 12 until December 11, 2016 in 17 cities, 2 refugee camps and one school, in collaboration with 8 universities and 14 organizations in the West Bank and Gaza Strip in its 90 screenings of 4 films by young women filmmakers. There will be two Openings on Saturday November 12 - one in the Gaza Strip at Rashad Shawwa Auditorium at 12 noon, and the other at Ramallah Cultural Palace at 6 p.m. The festival bridges geographic and political barriers through its shared cinematic vision.

Shashat's 10th Women's Film Festival is part of the "What's Tomorrow" initiative which received funding from the European Endowment for Democracy EED, National Endowment for Democracy NED, and CFD a Swiss feminist peace organization.

"What's Tomorrow" is a cinematic initiative which builds on Shashat's mission of supporting the creativity of young Palestinian women filmmakers, especially from peripheral areas, by providing opportunities for them to produce Palestinian culture and express the diverse worlds of Palestinian reality. The 10th festival is a continuation of Shashat's commitment to providing film activities throughout Palestine in the belief that culture is a human right, and building synergy between cultural organizations and community organizations working in villages, towns, cities,

refugee camps and universities throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip. This can contribute towards a robust and dynamic civil society expressing the full richness of the diversity of Palestinian life.

"What's Tomorrow" captures and documents this special moment in Palestinian life as it poses questions to the whole society, especially to youth, as expressed through the eyes of young Palestinian women filmmakers – Do you think of tomorrow? Have you dreamt of a tomorrow which seems impossible to attain, or one that is within grasp but you cannot reach it? What do these tomorrows look like? Do you think there is no tomorrow, just this long day of futility, sorrow, and despair? Can we make our tomorrow? How? Is this tomorrow personal or communal?

These questionings are expressed in four films from Gaza, Hebron, the Bedouin Wadi Abu Hindi, and Nablus – sites full of significance and possibilities. The four films in each site will be discussed by one person in order to carry the themes and discussions from one screening to the next. All four films were made by Palestinian film professionals in all stages. This fulfills Shashat's objective of bringing Palestinian cinema to all communities in Palestine. Also introducing different Palestinian communities to the world of cinema and using films as a tool for social change and development.

A very hot summer, 16:42 mins., 2016, by Areej Abu Eid, is based on the personal experience of the filmmaker during the Gaza war of 2014. The filmmaker tells us, "It's Ramadan…a very hot summer…with no electricity and no fan…We thought it would be like the 1st and 2nd wars, but this one is different!

It's madness all day and all night long. ..We sleep a little here and there when the shelling stops…It is unbearably hot, as if hell opened its doors.

Heat, fires and death...The sky is crimson red all night long as if with fireworks, like a scene from a horror movie but we are in it…"

While in *Graffiti,* 16:05 mins., 2016, by Fidaa Nasr writes about an anonymous graffiti she found on a wall in Hebron which tells of love…love in the time of death;

"There are words locked in our heart…and are not free to cross our lips…we are driven to write them anywhere,

even on a wall…"

In *Salha,* 13:09 mins., 2016, Lana Hijazi and Yousef Atwa, take us to Wadi Abu Hindi to meet the young Bedouin girl Salha Hamadeen who won in 2012 the "Hans Christian Anderson International Prize" for her children story "Hantoush." In

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"Hantoush" she tells how she imagined escaping her dismal and stark reality in Wadi Abu Hindi by imagining that her young sheep, Hantoush, grows wings.   Both of them fly to Madrid to meet Lionel Messi, the famous soccer player, who asks Salha to stay in Madrid.   But according to Salha, she wonders who will then take care of the sheep and make the cheese, the source of their livelihood, as her father is in prison?

Director Nagham Kilani approaches the very complex subject of identities in *Mawtini,* 22:46 mins. 2016. "I grow up in one of the oldest and most beautiful cities in the West Bank - Nablus, and this is the story of two of its communities - Balata Refugee Camp and Nablus Old City."   She shot during Eid Al-Futr, with Nablus joyfully decorated. She wonders if it will be a city for all of its inhabitants as well after the Eid, or will it breakdown into little "homelands" and "identities," which are called by different names, "refugee," "Old City inhabitant," "peasant," etc.   "All that is left for us is to add these names to our Israeli IDs with their different colors of green, blue and orange…"

The initiative also includes the production of one satellite program which will have excerpts from the university and community discussions, as well as interviews on the street on the issues discussed in the films in order to make them available to the wider general public.

Shashat Director General, Alia Arasoughly, who supervised the production of the films had this to say on the importance of this edition of Shashat's 10th Women's Film Festival, "This festival is significant not just for women's cinema but for all of film culture in Palestine, for this festival is the longest running film festival in Palestine and also the longest running women's film festival in the Arab World."

Board Vice-President Dr. Abdel-Nasser Annajjar commented on the theme of the 10th festival, "What's Tomorrow," "It is imperative to provide responsible frameworks for Palestinian youth to express seriously their anxiety, despair, fears, aspirations and hopes for their tomorrow in a safe and constructive setting of their local universities and community organizations."

Shashat is a cinema NGO in Palestine whose focus, since its founding in 2005, is on women's cinema and the social and cultural implications of women's representations. Shashat also aims at building the capacity of young Palestinian women filmmakers so that they are the producers of Palestinian cinematic culture.   Shashat received the Palestinian Ministry of Culture "Award for Excellence in Cinema" in 2010.

For more information please contact Media Consultant, Munia Dweik at +972 (0)598 914 009. media@shashat.org

A very hot summer, *16:42 mins., 2016*

Director and Script: Areej Abu Eid
Producer: Alia Arasoughly
A Production of "Shashat Women Cinema"
Crew: Director of Photography: Motaz Alaaraj; Editor: Mahmoud Abu Ghalwa; Score, Sound Effects & Mix: Jber Alhaj.

The film is based on the personal experience of the filmmaker during the Gaza war of 2014.

"It's Ramadan…a very hot summer…with no electricity and no fan…We thought it would be like the 1st and 2nd wars, but this one is different!

It's madness all day and all night long. ..We sleep a little here and there when the shelling stops…It is unbearably hot, as if hell opened its doors.

Heat, fires and death...The sky is crimson red all night long as if with fireworks, like a scene from a horror movie but we are in it…"

https://vimeo.com/183111516
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ze46gj5Mhu4

Graffiti, *16:05 mins., 2016*

Director: Fidaa Nasr
Producer: Alia Arasoughly
A Production of "Shashat Women Cinema"
Crew: Director of Photography: Suleiman Mu`allem; Sound: Mahmoud Khallaf; Graffiti: Ahmad Awlad Muhammad; Score: Jber Alhaj; Editor & Mix: Yousef Atwa.
An anonymous graffiti on a wall in Hebron tells of love…love in the time of death.

"There are words locked in our heart…and are not free to cross our lips…we are driven to write them anywhere, even on a wall…

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I am a young woman filmmaker, and a journalist who covers the news…

  I am now hesitant to plan my own future, I feel I will not have a tomorrow, in a second, a soldier could put his finger on the trigger and shoot, and I will end-up like them too…"

https://vimeo.com/184972725
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=blsRzHUapZY

Salha, 13:09 mins., 2016

Director: Lana Hijazi & Yousef Atwa
Producer: Alia Arasoughly
A Production of "Shashat Women Cinema"
Crew: Director of Photography: Ibrahim Yaghi; Sound: Yousef Atwa;
Editor & Mix: Yousef Atwa.

Salha, is a film about the Bedouin girl Salha Hamadeen who won in 2012 the "Hans Christian Anderson International Prize" for her imaginative story "Hantoush." "Hantoush" tells of how she wanted to escape her dismal and stark reality in Wadi Abu Hindi.   She imagines that her young sheep, Hantoush, grows wings, and both of them fly to Madrid to meet Lionel Messi, the famous soccer player. Messi asks Salha to stay in Madrid, but according to her story, she refuses, for who will take care of the sheep and make cheese, the source of their livelihood, as her father is in prison.

Salha's children's story presents a powerful sense of agency and determination to intervene as an individual and collectively in her dismal reality and attempt to change her tomorrow.

https://vimeo.com/189116680
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VLu8r7ZSXbg&feature=youtu.be

Mawtini, 22:46 mins., 2016

Director: Nagham Kilani
Producer: Alia Arasoughly
A Production of "Shashat Women Cinema"
Crew: Director of Photography: Ibrahim Yaghi; Sound: Yousef Atwa;
Score: Murad Swaiti; Editor & Mix: Yousef Atwa.

I grow up in one of the oldest and most beautiful cities in the West Bank, Nablus. This is the story of two of its communities - Balata Refugee Camp and Nablus Old City.

It is Eid Al-Fitr, after the holy month of Ramadan, a time of giving, forgiveness, and mercy. Nablus is joyfully decorated for everyone during the Eid.   Will it be a city for all of its inhabitants as well after the Eid? Or will it breakdown into little "homelands" and "identities," which are getting smaller and smaller by the day, and which we have come to call by different names, "refugee," "Old City inhabitant," "peasant," etc.   All that is left for us is to add these names to our Israeli IDs with their different colours of green, blue and orange…divisions have seeped into us like water breaking us up into "small homelands" of clans, families and neighbourhoods.

https://vimeo.com/189124592

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mayH-t5RBgw

SHASHAT Women Cinema

Shashat is an independent cinema NGO in Palestine formally registered with the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Culture, whose focus is on women's cinema and the social and cultural implications of women's representations. Shashat also aims at building the capacity of the Palestinian filmmaking sector, especially women filmmakers. *Shashat*, which means "screens" in Arabic, was founded in 2005 in order to provide sustainability and continuity to these objectives.   **Shashat received the Palestinian Ministry of Culture "Award for Excellence in Cinema" in 2010.   Its Director, Dr. Alia Arasoughly, received the Palestinian Ministry of Culture "Outstanding Cultural Woman Leader Award" in 2012.**

For us at Shashat we have always measured our impact as to how effective we are locally and nationally in Palestine, and what international recognition we have received for our films has been a welcome addition.   But the priority of our work has been to make a difference in Palestine, *to have culture be a deep-impact agent for social change*.   We have sought to have women play a central role as cultural producers in Palestine and for their works to be in center stage and not in the margins. We have succeeded in making women's cinema accepted and valued on the grassroots level throughout Palestine, an achievement that no Arab women film festival has succeeded in doing, let alone European women film festivals.   The major other Arab women film festival, Sale International Women Film Festival, in Morocco, honored Shashat in 2009 for this marked achievement.

Culture and media play a transforming role and serve as an interventionary agent in changing cultural attitudes about women. Women's access to self-expression, creativity and decision-making in the cultural field are acknowledged essential components of democratic development promoting equity, growth and dignity for all citizens, men and women alike. This has been clearly outlined in the Millennium Development Goals.

The cultural products, films, of our women filmmakers, trained all of them by Shashat, have been for the last nine years a centerpiece in local communities cultural and gender activities throughout universities, cities, towns and refugee camps in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.   *We have prioritized our outreach in video training,*

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production, dissemination and exhibition to sites outside the center and in culturally-poor areas in order to make a cumulative cultural and social difference in values and mores regarding women. Our training and production programs for young women from these areas made it possible for them to tell relevant and credible stories of all of Palestine, and not of middle-class western educated women only. Also, through our annual women's film festival tour and our year-long "Films for All" we presented these relevant stories of women's lives and experiences to their communities and engaged them in screenings and discussion of these films in order for the films to have further and wide spread communal influence, as judged by repeated requests for our films.

The success of Shashat can also be measured by the fact that we have been able to set-up an ongoing partnership since 2006 with 8 Palestinian universities to host our annual women's film festival each fall during the first semester of the academic year. We have reached thousands of youth with our annual editions of our women's film festival and engaged them and their faculty members in looking closely both at how culture is (re)produced and also the role that culture plays in all areas of social and economic development especially as pertaining to women. No other cultural organization in Palestine has been able to strike this strategic and long-term partnership with the major Palestinian universities. Students in the hundreds fill university auditoriums and work as volunteers for the festival. If universities thought we were not reaching their student bodies with relevant and serious activities which their students want to partake in they would not have continued this partnership with us for eight years. When we go through audience evaluations, we encounter comments from students such as: I participated in your festival since my first year at university; or, I look forward to your festival every year, etc.

Professors carry the films and the discussions further and integrate them into their academic curriculum, and we receive throughout the year requests from faculty members for the use of other Shashat films in their classes.

In addition to reaching youth we value that we have entered into more remote and disenfranchised communities and reached sectors of these communities who will never go to a gender workshop and think that feminism is a dirty and sacrilegious word. With the national Palestinian feminist movement seen as an educated elite distant from the grassroots, local communities in villages, towns and refugee camps come to see our films which they consider as social events in these culturally poor areas as culture is mostly centralized in the middle of Palestine. They feel that our

films, made by women just like those in their communities, speak to them in a relevant and emotive way, and this collapses the distance which they may feel from the more daring messages of these films.   They 'recognize' these films and they see them as credible expressions of their own lives. We have screened our films over the last nine years in collaboration with over 100 cultural and community based organization, municipalities, governorates and village councils.   We have seen (as we sometimes film the discussions for our TV programs), older women, makhateer (village leaders), young men and women housewives engage with each other in vibrant and heated discussions as they talk of women's lives in their communities, affecting their daughters, sisters and wives based on the impact of our films.   This brings the messages of our films up-close as 'talking of their own lived lives,' rather than as 'NGO slogans or position papers,' but as things they experience daily.

Our success is that we receive requests for our films practically on a daily basis from communities in towns, villages and refugee camps and from organizations we sometimes have never heard of before who are working locally on a small scale in their communities.

We measure our impact by discussant, site and audience evaluations from every screening we have, and sometimes what audiences share with us are heart-rending of abuse, dreams and hopes brought-up emotively by the films.   This is how we know that we are on the right track. The 2-year EU-funded gender project "I am a Woman" evolved as the result of anonymous statements by women in our audience evaluations of what they encounter daily and their need to have these issues discussed publicly. We hear diverse voices and provide a safe and non-threatening framework for vibrant discussions within communities encouraging them to speak freely about the films and what they evoke for them because they are touched and recognize themselves in these films.

Shashat has always been committed in all of our activities to the integration of the creative, developmental and educational implications of cinema in general and women's representations in particular in order to affect social and cultural change in Palestine.   This is the vision and mandate which underlies Shashat's activities and programs since its founding.

We reached nearly 7,000 people directly face-to-face in our 9th film festival in 2013. This means over seven thousand people throughout Palestine - youth of both sexes, women, men saw our women's films and engaged in vibrant discussions of them.

This inclusive integration of women's lives and perspectives on the community level is possible through film and not through lectures or pamphlets.

By filming some of the discussions of the films in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip we have sought to create a national dialogue about the issues of our films by broadcasting them on Palestine TV\Palestine Satellite Channel.   We have been able to reach over 100,000 people as our programs are broadcast on prime time.   People have called Palestine TV commenting on the programs and the vibrancy and dynamism of the discussions.   Palestine TV has even received calls from the Palestinian diaspora in the Emirates and in Lebanon commenting on these programs.

Our belief is that cultural products have to be relevant to people's experiences for them to become a credible actor in the change of the values and emotional fabric of society.   Culture which 'parachutes' from outside and which speaks to the elite is not able to affect long-term impact and deep-rooted social change and transformation in people, who are the dynamo of development.

Shashat works in the following areas of Activity:

I.   **Annual Women's Film Festival**
        This is the longest running film festival in Palestine and the longest running women's film festival in the Arab world, with the 9th edition in 2013. The festival has two launches one in Ramallah and one in Gaza in order to bridge political divisions and geographic fragmentation through cinema.

II.   **Filmmaker Capacity Building**
Training\production programs, whereby 77 short films were produced ranging from fiction to documentary for both professional and young women filmmakers from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.   Our 9th festival, in 2013, had two major openings, one in Ramallah's Cultural Palace and one in Rashad Shawwa Auditorium in Gaza, before going on a national tour of 163 screenings\discussions in collaboration with 7 universities, 7 refugee camps and 23 cultural and community organizations in seventeen cities and towns in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.   It included two filmmaker roundtables, as well as three TV programs broadcast nationally on prime-time.

II.   **"Films for Everyone"**

- In the belief that "culture is a human right," Shashat has held over 2000 screenings\discussions in the last nine years, primarily of women's cinema, in partnership with 8 Palestinian universities and colleges, and more than 100 community organizations and local authorities in towns, villages and refugee camps throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip.
- Shashat has produced 12 (one hour) satellite TV programs of discussions of its films in both in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in order to make the films and their discussion available to a wide Palestinian public, and provide a national forum for 'conversation' about the films.

IV. Cinema cultural Outreach

a. Library: Shashat has founded three de-centralized specialized film libraries in three different sites in the West Bank to address the lack of mobility in Palestine.

b. Research and Publications:
Eye on Palestinian Women's Cinema.   2013.
Palestinian Women Filmmakers – Conditions of Production, Strategies of (Re)presentation. In progress.

Regional and International participation of our films

1. UNRWA request (2010) for 50 DVDs of the 4-film Masarat collection to use the film *Golden Pomegranate Seeds* by Ghada Terawi to distribute to their women centers throughout the Arab world.
2. Drac Magic – Barcelona (2010) hosting all 4 directors of Masarat and showing their films.
3. Tempo Film Festival in Stockholm (2010) showing the 4-film collection *Crossroads*, with films by Layali Kilani, Dara Khader and Omaima Hamouri and hosting the filmmakers.
4. Nordic Youth International Film Festival hosting two young women filmmakers and their films Dara Khader, *It's a Tough Life* and Layali Kilani *If they Take it.*
5. Boston Palestine Film Festival showing Reham Ghazali's *Madleen*.
6. Houston Palestine Film Festival showing Alaa Desoki and Athar Jadili's *Sardine and Pepper.*
7. Algerian Ministry of Culture, "Committed Cinema Film Festival -2011" showing all six of the Gaza films of "I am a Woman."

8. Tromso International Film Festival (2013) hosting two young filmmakers, Reham Ghazali and Rana Mattar, and all seven of the "I am a Woman" films of 2012.

9. Nordic Youth International Film Festival (2012) hosting three young women filmmakers and their films, Reham Ghazali, *Madleen,* Areej Abu Eid, *Kamkamah,* Rana Mattar, *Portrait.*

10. London Palestine Film Festival, hosting 7 of Shashat films in a special evening called "Spring of Young Palestinian women filmmakers," opened by Palestinian Ambassador in the UK, Manual Hassassian in which Shashat director spoke of Shashat's work.

11. Exeter University, Palestine Studies Dept. (Ilan Pappe) hosting the same series in its conference, "Culture of Resistance in Palestine" (2012) with a talk by Shashat director on changing gender portrayals through film.

12. Linagan University – Hong Kong (2012) showing the same series in its international conference "Educating the filmmaker world wide."   Paper on Shashat's innovative training\production program was published in the Palgrave Press 2-volume publication on the proceedings of the conference. Book distributed by Amazon.

13. UN Women–Nairobi (2011), and UN Women-Amman (2012) showing *Golden Pomegranate Seeds* by Ghada Terawi for Day against violence against women.

14. Algerian Ministry of Culture Award, "Committed Cinema Film Festival - 2012" for Shashat for its video training and production work in Gaza training young women filmmakers, showing all 10 of the "I am a Woman" 2012 collection, and hosting the Senior trainer, Abdel-Salam Shehadeh.

15. Malmo Arab Film Festival (2012) showing and hosting the filmmakers Layali Kilani *If they Take it* and Omaima Hamouri's *White Dress.*

16. UNESCO (2013) on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian people devoting it to Palestinian women and featuring 3 Shashat films, *Golden Pomegranate Seeds* and hosting its director Ghada Terawi, *Sardines and Pepper* by Alaa Desoki and Athar Jadili, and *My Children…my love*, by Fadya Salah-Aldeen.   Attended by over 700 people.

17. Arab Film Festival in the Netherlands (2013) "Women Making a Difference" showing Fadya Salah-Aldeen's *This is the Law!*

18. Malmo Arab Film Festival (2013) showing and hosting filmmaker Taghreed El-Azza's *Engagement Ring.*

19. Cineffable Film Festival – Paris (2013), showing Taghreed Azza's *Engagement Ring*, Areej Abu Eid's *Separation*, and Reham Ghazali's *Madleen*.

20. Ciné-Palestine, Dans Les Pas De Cinéastes – Toulouse (2013) showing and hosting Omaima Hamouri and her films *The Sister and her brother,* and *Wedding Dress,* also showing Gina Asfour's *The Fig and the Olive.*

21. Bassamat Film Festival –Morocco (2014) showing and hosting Taghreed El-Azza's *Engagement Ring.*

22. BBC purchase (2014) of *Golden Pomegranate Seeds* by Ghada Terawi.

23. European Film Festival-Algeria (2014), showing Taghreed El-Azza's *Engagement Ring.*

24. Goldsmith University (2014) as part of the Jean Mohr and Edward Said "After the Last Sky" exhibition showing Zeina Ramadan's *Hush,* Reham Ghazali's *Out of Frame,* Gina Asfour's *The Fig & Olive,* and Taghreed El-Azza's *Girls & Sea.*

25. *My Children…my love*, by Fadya Salah-Aldeen wins the Made in MED film festival award (2014) and film and filmmaker to be in the Cannes International Film Festival.

26. *Manshar Ghaseelo,* directed by Alaa Desoki and Areej Abu Eid makes finalist for audience prize in Made in Med film festival (pending voting for prize).

27. *HUSH!* directed by Zeina Ramadan selected for official competition at Dubrovnik Film Festival (2014).

28. *Manshar Ghaseelo,* directed by Alaa Desoki and Areej Abu Eid shown at Malmo Arab Film Festival in Sweden (2014).

29. *NG|Kooz*, directed by Reham Ghazali, shown at Naples Human Right Film Festival, (2014).

APPENDIX (v)

Interviews questions with Shashat's filmmakers, Dara Khader and Liali Kilani:

1. How did Shashat reach you?

2. How long have you been working with Shashat?

3. Were there any obstacles to your becoming involved with Shashat?

4. What training has Shashat provided for you?

5. Shashat delivers film training specially for women. How would you describe the nature of that training? What is the place of the film that you made with Shashat in that making process? Is Shashat training project-based? If so, how does the project get developed?

6. Have Shashat and filmmaking changed you in any way? If yes, how?

7. What are Shashat's impacts on you, other women and even the society?

8. Shashat's training is especially for women. Is this important to you?

9. How do you see yourself as a filmmaker? Do you see yourself as a filmmaker or as a female filmmaker?

10. What are the social expectations on women in Palestine? How do you feel about it?

11. How does filmmaking enable you to express yourself and resist social expectations?

12. Will you make any film in the future? If yes, what issues or topics will you film about?

13. (only with Dara Khader through email) Alia has pointed out the importance of having Palestinian filmmakers to teach in the programme instead of foreign filmmakers. Do you think it make a difference to you? What do you think about that?

14. (only with Dara Khader through email) Do you still make films or short videos? Or are you doing some something related to Shashat and filmmaking? Do you still keep in touch with other women who went through the Shashat training with you? If so, how are they doing?

APPENDIX (vi)

With Danielle Louise Spencer (project coordinator of WISE)

Questions asked:

1. How did the project start? Initiated by two organizations?

2. Is the project funded by the initiated organizations? Any other sources of funding?

3. What is the title of the project in Karachi? (The WISE women of Karachi?)

4. Is it just a one-year project? In 2010?

5. Where else does the project take place?

6. I know it is a 14-day film training workshop in Karachi. Was it the only workshop? Was the activity different in different countries the project cover?

7. How did the project start? Any specific purposes? Initiated by Asian Human Right Commission (AHRC)/ Asian Legal Resource Centre (ALRC)?

8. What is the objectives of the project?

9. Who is involved in the project? (local women, filmmaker, community facilitator…)

10. How did you select the local women? Any criteria or process? (who have been raped, sexually assaulted or domestically abused) How did you reach those women?

11. What is the process or steps of the 14-day workshop?

12. What are the impacts of the workshop on the women and even the community? How were the impacts evaluated?

13. Are there any documents and materials available? Or contact with any participants?

14. As a project coordinator, how did you feel about the project?

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