

BERTY'S JOURNEY

Exploring Indigenous Knowledge in the Suid-Bokkeveld
a participatory film



FACILITATOR'S GUIDE



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The Indigenous Knowledge Series with Youth Participation

Introduction

Films in the Indigenous Knowledge (IK) collection

This guide has been compiled to accompany films in the IK series of films produced by CareTakers. This set of films addresses issues relating to traditional South African practices that have evolved over millennia as the basis for stewardship of the region's natural resources. For some of the productions we have also involved members of local rural youth communities to assist and contribute to the process from conception through production, to implementation of facilitated screenings in targeted communities. This is an exciting new growth path for the project, involving collaboration with NGOs, NPOs and CBOs known to, and trusted by the participating communities.

Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS)

Indigenous knowledge systems (IKSs) provide deep and unique insights into the natural world. They grow from observations and understandings collected and processed over time, and support decision making in the context of local conditions. Much of the content of an IKS has been passed down the generations of local or regional communities by word of mouth, being adapted and expanded as new insights are gained by practitioners – much the same process as global empirical science, but focussed specifically on local conditions and community needs. It is the finely tuned information that practitioners need to do things like treat endemic illnesses, feed local people, build dwellings, and avert disasters arising from catastrophes such as fires, floods and droughts.

IK is increasingly being recognised as an important and highly instructive element of global science owing to its refined understanding of the local world. It is in the field of medicinally useful plants used in local traditional practice where this cross-over has mostly occurred in recent decades. This is often driven on an exploitative basis by multi-national pharmaceutical companies without proper regard for intrinsic property rights, or the local holistic context. There are many other gems of knowledge lying hidden in IKSs that could assist with sustaining planet Earth if developed appropriately. But as global development progresses, local economies based on local natural resources and guided by IK are rapidly being undermined by the economic pressures of international consumerism. In a single generation, a wealth of IK can be corrupted and lost. CareTakers supports all calls and efforts to codify, preserve and maintain the implementation of IK in the interests of sustainability.

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The Film



BERTY'S JOURNEY

Exploring Indigenous Knowledge in the Suid-Bokkeveld

A participatory film project

With: Albert (Berty) Koopmann, Areefa Tietis, Danzel Januarie, Maria Kotze, Shannon Parring and Siyabonga Myeza

Length: 21 minutes 42 seconds

"This was the Khoisan's food in the veld – how they survived. If they could do it successfully, what is the problem with us?"

Barry Koopman

Synopsis

"I believe that every plant on Earth has a purpose", says Barry Koopman to his son Berty when asked about traditional use of plants found in the veld. Berty is one of six young people traversing the Suid-Bokkeveld to visit community elders and to learn about indigenous knowledge, some of it going back to times when Khoisan people lived entirely off the productivity of Nature. To capture this wisdom, the group has decided to make a film which they will be able to use in stimulating community discussion about the value of wisdom gathered over many generations. By the end of their road-trip they will have made some meaningful discoveries about their heritage, and articulated their hopes for the future.

Target audiences

Youth (in & out of school); Community members; Summer and winter schools; Senior citizens; Environmental justice groups; Public screenings at the olive center

Themes and Issues

Indigenous knowledge; Sustainable harvesting; Veld versus Pharmacy; Culture, heritage and identity; Youth and Elders; Nature conservation; Tourism

Questions for discussion:

- How did the film make you feel?
- Is traditional food necessarily healthy?
- Do you know any of the plants in the film? Have you used them?
- How do we make the use of wild plants sustainable?
- Do you think that the leaves of the sand olive really work better than a doctor's prescription?
- What is your understanding of traditional knowledge?
- How does it differ from indigenous knowledge?
- What can be done to prevent indigenous knowledge from dying out?
- How best can we, as people living in a modern technological world, benefit from indigenous knowledge?

Screening

Using the film

The library of CareTakers films is designed as a set of tools for discussion and debate, intended to be used in facilitated screening sessions. Film is a very powerful learning tool. The features of CareTakers films that make them suitable for this kind of work are:

- Each film tells a story about individuals and events. Stories are accessible to everyone, and evoke powerful emotions and responses.
- The narratives are related by the people involved in the stories, who express something of themselves — their passions, emotions, dreams, frustrations and sorrows. Through this they invite viewers to engage with them, and to think about what motivates them.
- The films pose questions, but do not give answers.
- Films are multimedia, engaging both aural and visual senses. The images and music evoke feelings, memories and associations.
- CareTakers films are short, allowing for simple narratives and focussed discussion.

These features enable the films to stimulate viewers to reflect on their own lives, and to think of ways to bring change that will help to address the concerns raised in the stories.

Preparation for the screening

It is important to prepare well before the screening. We suggest that you make yourself very familiar with the chosen film(s) before the screening. Consider the following questions:

Who is the audience?

Different viewers experience each film differently. An eight-year-old school child will see things quite differently from a 40-year-old botanist, and a group of young interns will have a very different set of ideas about changing the world than a cohort of mid-career municipal managers looking for new methods in biodiversity management. So think about:

- What is their education level, their primary language, their age, interests and concerns?
- How big is the group? Will you need to break into smaller groups to allow better participation? Will people feel comfortable and confident in expressing their views? How can you maximise participation?
- What kind of experience might they have had of the issues raised in the film?
- How might these issues affect their lives, directly or indirectly?

Screening

What do you hope to gain?

Think about:

- Why are you showing this film to this group?
- What understanding or insight do you hope this group will gain from seeing this film?
- What questions should you focus on to guide them to this understanding?

While this preparation is most valuable, the audience's response to the films may surprise you. You need to be flexible enough to recognise and follow interesting developments in the discussion, even if these are unexpected.

Is the equipment working properly and am I prepared for the unexpected?

Do a trial run to make sure that all the equipment is working properly, that the projected image is clear, and that the sound is of good quality with sufficient volume to reach the whole group with ease. Consider back-up plans.

At the screening

Introductions

Introduce yourself, and find out something about the group by asking about their interests and expectations. If it's a small group you might manage individual introductions. Then introduce the film. Give its title; when, where and by whom it was made; and a brief outline of the story. Adapt this to your audience.

Screen the film

Make sure that the audience is comfortable, and can see the screen and hear the sound clearly. Allow the film to run right to the final credit. This allows the audience time to wind down and reflect before re-engaging with the group. It also gives them insight into how the story was constructed and captured. After the film, give viewers a short break to stretch or to visit the toilet, or to allow fresh air into the venue. This will also give you a chance to move the chairs into a more informal arrangement (such as a circle) for the discussion.

Use the Action Learning Cycle

The Action Learning Cycle is an effective method that enables people to reflect on the direct experience of watching the film, and to learn from it. Listed overleaf, and summarised in the diagram, are four key steps that will encourage discussion about the range of topics that the film touches on. Sometimes a viewer will perceive a totally novel insight, so watch out for these.

Action Learning Cycle

STEP 1. Direct experience – Watching the film

The audience watches the film together as a group. Run it right to the end of the credits.

STEP 2. Reflection on the film

Invite spontaneous responses from the participants. Have them discuss this, either in plenary, or if it's a large group, arrange people in smaller buzz groups.

Examples of questions they might consider to stimulate discussion:

- What do you think this film is about?
- How do you feel about the characters in the film?

STEP 3. Looking at the bigger picture

Establish the viewers' comprehension of the film, especially with a young or second language audience. Guiding questions might be:

- Where is the story filmed?
- What are the people doing in the film? Why?
- What do you think are the main messages of the film?

How does this link to our own lives?

- How is this place similar to, or different from where you live?
- Do you know these animals/plants?
- Do you face similar or different issues in your own work or community?

What can we learn from this film? Explore questions raised in earlier discussions. This stage may include discussion in buzz groups, small groups, plenary, and/or individual reflections.

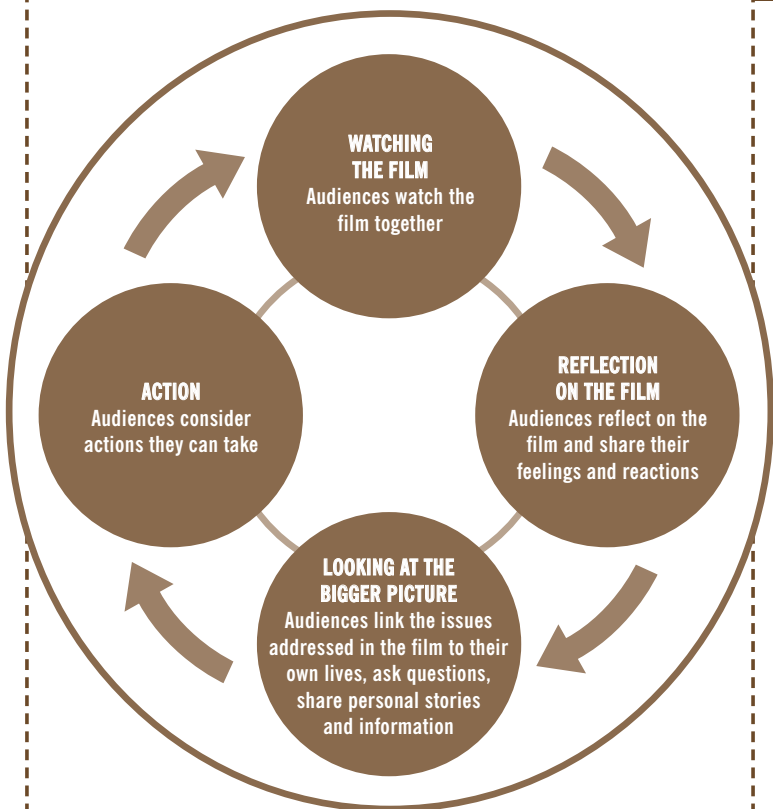
- What threats to biodiversity are raised in the film?
- Does this film reflect an effective way of dealing with an issue?
- How does the storyteller's personality and values influence the way she/he approaches the work?

Action Learning Cycle

STEP 4. Action - The way forward

How can we use this knowledge to develop or grow? Explore how the issues raised in the films and discussions may be taken into the lives of the audience.

- What can you and your community do to make others aware of these or similar issues?
- How can you as a conservator take the lessons or issues raised to guide your own actions?
- How can you personally enrich your life with the story you've just seen?



Facilitation

The role of the facilitator

- The role of the facilitator is to guide the learning process without dominating it.
- He/she needs to create an environment where the participants feel confident and able to voice their opinions and/or ask for more information.
- The facilitator needs to build on the knowledge and experience of the audience and respect and acknowledge audience contributions.
- He/she should provide information where required to address misconceptions and encourage audiences to come up with their own conclusions.

Qualities of a good facilitator

- **Attitudes that are:** Friendly and welcoming; Viewing self and participants as equals; Committed to participatory learning; Respectful and non-discriminatory of others, regardless of differences; Welcoming of all contributions; Accepting and non-judgmental; Self-aware and honest
- **Skills:** Good planning and organisation; Encouraging and valuing participation; Good communication, active listening and constructive feedback; Dealing with conflict and emotion, remaining neutral; Summarising and keeping discussions on track; Time management; Clarifying objectives and agreements
- **Knowledge about:** Biodiversity: its value, status and care; The community audience that will watch the film; CareTakers films and how to use them; Facilitated screening method

Methods of reflection

The questions raised may be discussed in different ways. Below are some ways to conduct reflections – choose methods that are suitable for your audience and your intentions. You may also use different methods for different sets of questions.

Discussion in plenary

A plenary discussion allows all members of the audience to share and listen to others. However, in a big group, this may mean that only a few people get to speak.

Silent dialogue

This can be used to encourage personal reactions to the film which are not influenced by others. Ask viewers to write a few words expressing their immediate feelings about the film on card/ posters to be put up for everybody to read.

Buzz groups or pairs

Viewers can share their reactions with their neighbours in 'buzz groups'. This gives everyone a chance to express his or her reactions and feelings.

Small groups

If the audience consists of a large group, divide them into smaller groups. This

allows more people to participate in the discussion, and encourages those who are intimidated by a big group. Each group should choose someone to report back to the plenary, and rotate this role if there is more than one group discussion.

Checklist for setting up a screening

- Book the venue in advance, and familiarize yourself with the space
- Make sure that the room is large enough to accommodate the expected audience
- If there are windows without blinds or curtains, you will need to cover them with black plastic or cardboard
- Check the power points and test your screening equipment beforehand to make sure that it is working properly (i.e. television/data projector, DVD player, computer, amplifier, speakers and screen)
- View the film before you screen it
- Arrive at the venue early to set up the equipment
- If you are using a video projector and screen, position the speakers on stands to provide clear sound across the venue
- Arrange the chairs so that everyone can see the screen and participate in the discussion

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

This project is part of a living programme to grow the way in which we think and talk about biodiversity as it affects people's lives. We are always looking for ways to expand the practice and to improve the project – to make more films with greater impact; to provide more effective support resources (such as this manual); and to reach more people.

Systematic and thorough monitoring and evaluation of the facilitated screenings provides us with the following critical information:

- How films have been used and by which organizations
- How many facilitated screenings have been conducted
- How audiences have reacted to the films
- Strong and weak points of the material
- Issues that prompted the most discussion
- Questions that were valuable in stimulating debate

At the same time, monitoring and evaluation will provide you as the facilitator with valuable guidelines on how to make your own screening processes more effective. It will also help to highlight issues requiring further exploration with your target group. M&E is therefore an essential aspect of the facilitated screening methodology, and if possible facilitators should document every film screening.

Data Collection

There are two templates for basic data collection:

- (1) the Facilitated Screening Report and
- (2) the Audience Response Questionnaire, both available for download from the CareTakers website, www.caretakers.co.za.

These templates may be used to gather information, both for the CareTakers project, and for your own M&E needs.

They cover issues such as the date, venue and location of the screening; the films used; audience composition; the main issues discussed; and significant audience reactions.

Please use these forms and return them with any other comments you have, to either of the following addresses:

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to all involved in making this film possible

Guide compiled by
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Design and layout by
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Still photos by
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Published by
STEPS - CareTakers

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CareTakers

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Funded by
NLDTF



with additional funding from
STEPS

and supported by



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