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Producing Dubbed-Language Videos to Reach Audiences Across Cultures

Abstract

Extension educators are increasingly using social media for outreach and information delivery. But are the Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube channels of the world reaching across cultures to non-English speakers, recently resettled refugees or immigrants, migrant workers, or other underserved Extension audiences? After producing and screening over a dozen educational videos dubbed into various languages, we have found videos to be empowering educational tools for engaging nontraditional audiences, especially when screened offline in public workshops. This article outlines techniques for using videos to specifically target historically underserved audiences and non-English speakers by integrating culturally important themes and language voice-overs.

Keywords: [dubbed-language videos](#), [social media](#), [across cultures](#), [video production](#)

Ben Waterman

New Farmer Program
Coordinator
University of Vermont
Extension Center for
Sustainable
Agriculture
Burlington, Vermont
Ben.waterman@uvm.edu

Alisha Laramee

Director, New Farms
for New Americans
Program
Association of Africans
Living in Vermont
Burlington, Vermont
alaramée@aalv-vt.org

Background

In Chittenden County, Vermont, the population of foreign-born immigrants has recently soared. The immigrant population has surged 34.7%, compared to overall population growth of 5.8% (Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity, n.d.). Extension offerings on such topics as food security, enterprise development, and youth development are highly relevant to recent arrivals. However, many immigrants have difficulty accessing these programs due to language, social, and cultural barriers.

In 2016, University of Vermont (UVM) Extension produced 12 outreach and education videos as a unique approach to information dissemination. Produced with help from the community-based organization Association of Africans Living in Vermont (AALV), the series, "Helping New American Farmers"

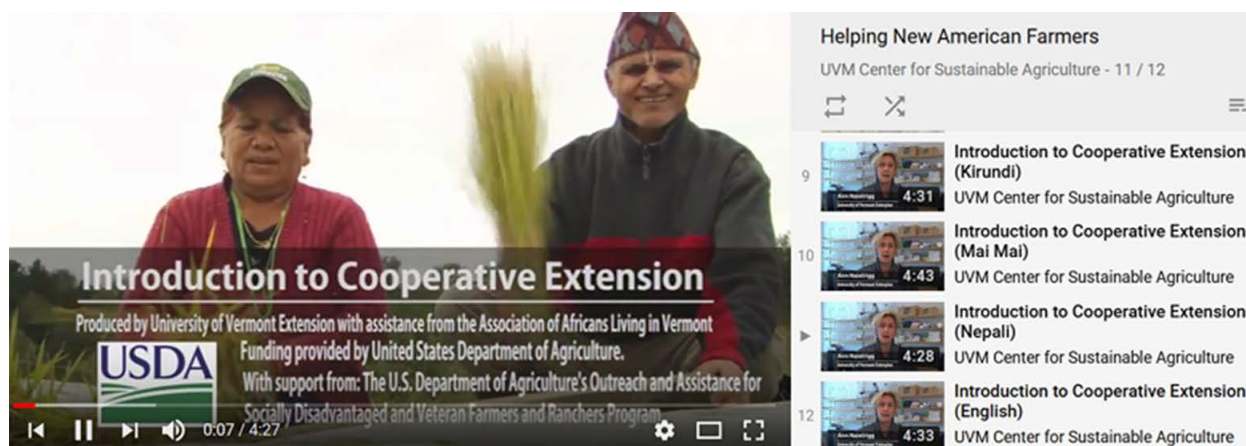
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MFX0zwt5Cu8&list=PL7TYEW-aB6ckW-abZCAOJI2HxCo3I0wO>), (University of Vermont [UVM] Center for Sustainable Agriculture, 2016) built on the "AALV Videos" collection (https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCH4Z_4p7ZbgIuJSXA0hyQWg) (Association of Africans Living in Vermont,

2016) and included videos in the Nepali, Mai Mai, and Kirundi languages.

UVM posted the videos to YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zsWu6aAZEoA&list=PL7TYEW-aB6cIkW-abZCAOJI2HxCo3I0wO&index=13&t=7s>) (Figure 1) and screened them at workshops.

Figure 1.

Screenshot from the "Helping New American Farmers" YouTube Channel



Created in collaboration with recent arrivals and featuring actors from immigrant communities, the videos

- improved engagement of recently arrived immigrant audiences with UVM Extension and partners,
- were an effective delivery method for educational content adapted to diverse participants, and
- were universally well received as culturally appropriate alternatives to conventional outreach and education media, such as Internet or print curricula and fact sheets.

Why Dubbed-Language Videos?

Educational videos embedded in social media can be a primary medium for delivering timely information to Extension audiences (Kinsey & Henneman, 2011). Various publications help educators with the nuts and bolts of production of educational videos (Case & Hino, 2010; Epley, 2014) and ways to evaluate viewings of videos posted online (Kinsey, 2012).

We encourage Extension educators to take video production a step further: To engage historically underserved, nontraditional audiences, integrate culturally important themes and dubbed-language voice-overs. Non-English speakers, such as recently resettled refugees, might regard Extension programming as relevant but inaccessible due to language and cultural barriers. Dubbed-language videos can break through these barriers and increase the accessibility of educational programs.

There are three basic approaches to producing a video as part of programming to reach non-English speakers, and the determination of which to use can be based on budget and quality expectations. The simplest approach involves inserting audio into a photo-rich PowerPoint presentation and saving it as a video (Kinsey, 2012). For example, UVM Extension conveyed important concepts in the Nepali language about tomato pests and diseases using this method (UVM Center for Sustainable Agriculture, 2018). An intermediate approach involves borrowing

equipment, studio space, and airtime from a local public access television provider (Federal Communications Commission, n.d.). Finally, if a substantial budget is available (we budgeted \$1,500 per minute of video), hire a professional videographer to shoot the video and add voice-overs.

Unique Aspects of Dubbed-Language Videos—Dramatization and Documentary

A dramatization-style video involves individuals' acting out simple scripts to cover important educational concepts. For example, in one video, UVM Extension's Across the Fence media team filmed a segment in which actor Richard Ngunga and U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service representative Danny Peet talk about conservation planning (Figure 2). Educators across the world have used skits, dramatizations, music, poetry, and other performance art for community and economic development (Stupples & Teaiwa, 2017). Role playing is a universal mode of communication, and themes, regardless of their complexity, can be introduced in a fun, objective, and engaging manner to audiences of all educational backgrounds.

Figure 2.

Dramatization-Style Video Production



A documentary-style video involves using experts and other reputable figures to cite facts and opinions. For example, in another video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MFX0zwt5Cu8&list=PL7TYEW-aB6clkW-abZCAOJI2HxCo310wO&index=1>), farmer Maria Kamikazi speaks about basic marketing concepts (Figure 3). The two methods of video production can be equally compelling for the viewer.

Figure 3.

Screenshot from Documentary-Style Video Featuring Farmer Maria Kamikazi



Recruiting Actors and Subjects from Underserved Communities

We have observed that the more community-based actors and sources of information that can be woven into videos, the more audiences will accept the information as credible and worthwhile to pursue. Additionally, working with actors across cultures gives educators invaluable insights into the cultural norms of targeted audiences and ways video content can be adapted to better serve community needs. Scheduling translators and budgeting for cross-cultural communications can be logistically challenging, but we have seen such efforts result in stronger relationships and greater credibility with our clientele.

Dubbing of Non-English Languages

Language dubbing typically starts with a rough cut of the English video. Our process involved the following steps:

1. Film the initial video with the English dialogue delivered slowly and deliberately.
2. Create the English transcription using a free web app. We used OTranscribe and Google Docs voice recognition to transcribe the videos and noted time markers for each line.
3. Hire a language translator to transcribe a dubbed-language script.
4. Record audio tracks of voice actors speaking the non-English script, conducting several takes as needed to get the best articulation in the correct time slots (Figure 4). Slow, simple, and deliberate English dialogue is key to allowing voice actors to calmly and effectively voice their languages.
5. Edit the voice-over audio into the final video. Options are to use free, widely available software such as iMovie or Movie Maker or to hire a professional videographer to do this task.

Figure 4.

Voice-over Actors Recording a Swahili Script



Screening Videos Offline

We have observed that many non-English speaking Extension audiences, especially older individuals, do not rely on the Internet, are not accustomed to accessing information online or via social media, and prefer to gather in person. Educational and outreach videos should be coupled with a strategy for deploying or screening them publicly offline. Group viewings can enable empowering conversations as stakeholders affirm techniques, discuss challenges, and gather feedback (Figure 5). Despite posting and promoting our videos on various social media sites, we have had almost as many views in person as we have had online to date, and we have brought about more meaningful engagement and follow-up from the in-person screenings.

Figure 5.

A Discussion Following the Screening of a Dubbed-Language Video



Conclusion

We have found dubbed-language videos to be powerful catalysts for increasing historically underserved audiences' participation in our agricultural programs. The videos have helped make educational content approachable from the outset of our communications. Farmers who participated in video screening workshops

followed up directly about video content. Some enrolled in U.S. Department of Agriculture programs to improve financial and environmental sustainability, and others contacted Extension specialists for timely information on production issues or took concrete steps to improve marketing. Collaborating directly with resettled refugee actors, advisors, and interpreters on video production has been one of the surest ways for us to engage diverse audiences in a culturally appropriate manner.

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