



SHARING OF LOCAL STORIES: RAOEN INTERVIEW GUIDELINES

INTRODUCTION

RAOEN hopes to share stories of hope, identity, vulnerability, and action as basis for people to come together and collaborate. To do this, we need a network of people willing to humbly share and listen to stories and strengthen the interconnections that are present across the biomes in Oceania and Asia. It is in this process of sharing and listening to stories that we foster a new kind of solidarity in the care for peoples, oceans, and forests. This document lays out the practical steps in forming, capturing, and sharing local stories.

In looking for some inspiration and examples, you may look at the reflection videos from some of the speakers during the RAOEN virtual launch (<https://www.raoen.org/2020/12/01/reflection/>). These are videos that clearly convey messages of hope and call for solidarity.

- *Sr. Makareta Takahia Tawaroa* in Aotearoa New Zealand shared about the personhood of the *Whanganui River and cultural identity*. She talked about the river as a *taonga – a gift of creation*
- *Rosalyn Kayah*, spoke of the **vulnerabilities** of displaced peoples in Myanmar
- *Yeni Kristanti* shared about the role the local Church played in **providing life-saving information** to the Asmat people in West Papua at the on-set of the COVID outbreak.
- *Somnuek Sriphornphunsawat* in Thailand presented about his work with other youth in advancing **organic agriculture** towards a more sustainable food system
- *Joe Moeono – Kolio* from Samoa talked about the critical role Indigenous Peoples play in **building sustainable societies**

CAPTURING THE STORIES

There are two ways to do this, one is writing a story and the second is by phone video. The main reference for the following content is the ***Ecojesuit Workbook on Effective Collaboration*** (January 2020), you may access the full document at: <https://www.ecojesuit.com/download-the-ecojesuit-workbook-on-effective-collaboration/>

A. Writing articles, reflections, or essays

1. Translations – the articles are shared in the different RAOEN platforms in English. However, if the interviewee cannot write in English, the interviewer may help in facilitating the translation or may look for a volunteer who can help with the translation.
2. Photos - to accompany each story, photos with a resolution between 300kb-1MB are requested, with the main photo in landscape orientation. A caption and photo credit must also be provided
3. Format - in terms of length, the ideal number of words is 700 to 1500 for each story.



B. Video stories videos are an effective way to communicate, especially in the context of a global network where people cannot always physically gather and witness narratives in different parts of the world. While there is no question that writing, for the longest time, has been able to bring us together, visual storytelling has a unique way of evoking certain emotions and giving an experience that written accounts do not always have to power to do.

Shooting a video using a phone camera

With phone cameras, one doesn't have to undergo professional training or own advanced equipment to create video content. However, it is of course still important to ensure high quality of videos to avoid technicalities from getting in the way of communication. The following are simple tips you can follow when taking interview videos using phone cameras.

1. Choosing a background

The background can communicate as much as the person speaking, if chosen correctly. Avoid shooting against a plain background that does not add anything to the context, unless you have no control over it. If the subject is talking about ecology, an outdoor location might be better as opposed to an office. If they are speaking in the context of an important event, it would be smart to capture the event poster in the background to communicate it without having the subject spell it out.

Consider the lighting when choosing a location: not too dark that the video becomes grainy or difficult to view, and not too bright that the interviewee is squinting or the color is entirely washed off the video. If possible, shoot during times of the day when the lighting is best (a few hours after sunrise or a few hours before sunset), or pick a well-lit room for the interview.



2. Framing

In positioning your subject in relation to other elements in a shot, keep in mind the rule of thirds. Mentally divide the frame with two horizontal lines and two vertical lines and place your most important subject where the lines intersect. This creates a balanced composition that is pleasing to the eye and allows you to make creative use of the negative space (i.e., using a background that provides context). It is best to use a



tripod or any stable surface to hold your camera so the shot will not be shaky. We also recommend having the interviewee sit down during the interview, so they are more relaxed and also to avoid swaying or too much movement that could be distracting.

Position the interviewee's face at the intersection of the imaginary lines to create a balanced composition. Most smart phones today have these gridlines as a built-in feature.



3. Capture the surroundings

A video comes alive with interesting imagery. Aside from shooting the actual interview, capture the surroundings so you can layer the visuals and make it more dynamic. Footages of the surroundings help establish the setting and take the viewer there. Take note of things you want to highlight in what the interviewee is saying and later on shoot images that can complement what is said. If the interviewee is talking about an eco-education initiative in their province, capture the actual activity so the viewers can see it instead of just a person talking about it.

4. Shot size

For an interview, the standard shot size is the medium close up, or capturing the interviewee from the chest to the top of their head, leaving enough space above their head (headroom). This focuses the attention on the subject while still showing the surroundings. If the interviewee is making hand gestures to emphasize their points, you can shift to a medium/ mid shot, which is slightly wider than the medium close up, to show their movements. Close-up shots may also be used to highlight strong emotions or major points from the interviewee.



From left to right:
Mid shot (MS)
medium close-up (MSU), close-up (CU)

5. Recording Audio

The sound is as important as the image when communicating through video. When shooting an interview, choose a quiet location to make sure the interviewee's voice is clear and audible, and to avoid unnecessary sounds interrupting them when speaking. You may pause in the middle of the interview to wait for sudden loud sounds in the background to stop (e.g., people passing by, bell tolling, etc) if necessary. For safety, do a trial recording in your chosen location before doing the actual shoot to check if



the sound registers well. It would be helpful to use a clip-on microphone, if available, to record a clean audio of the interviewee's voice.

FORMING THE STORIES

In prompting the interviewee, there are five things to remember: but feel free to add questions that you feel will help capture elements of the stories that need to be highlighted.

1. Introduction (name, age, affiliation, cultural and community background) (0.5 min)
2. Activities or efforts you are involved in (0.5 min)
3. Share a little bit of your context (1 min)
4. Discuss the challenges or concerns you and your community are facing (1 min)
5. Share about the responses you are doing in relation to these challenges or concerns (1min)

Ideal duration for the video is 3 *minutes*. Interviewee may also write down their answers beforehand if they feel more comfortable with that, but it is ideal to have them share their thoughts impromptu to avoid a 'robotic' conversation/ sharing during the interview. It is crucial to capture the emotions of the interviewee as they convey their message.

CASCADING THE STORIES

1. You may share the written article and video with the RAOEN team. Further editing can be worked out should it be necessary for grammar or structural finalization (not to alter the message) or in the case of videos, to insert necessary translations and other technical editing.
2. Once finalized, these stories are shared through the RAOEN website and social media accounts but partners are encouraged to cascade the stories in their own platforms, hoping it would inspire further dialogue, conversations, and collaborations.