**THE USE OF STORIES TO UNDERSTAND MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH REALITIES: FEASIBILITY AND APPLICABILITY OF DIGITAL STORYTELLING IN LAKE ZONE, TANZANIA**

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**BACKGROUND**

Digital storytelling (DST) is a participant-led video creation process that explores a storyteller’s lived experiences.

Globally, DST has potential as a research and dissemination tool because it can capture deeply personal experiences of marginalized community members, and allows the participant to guide the messaging of a story, resulting in products with emotional impact that represent authentic experiences.

Most reports on DST reflect experiences in high-income countries with specific logistical and technological capabilities. There is a gap in understanding DST feasibility and applicability in low-income countries including Tanzania.

**OBJECTIVE**

To report storyteller and facilitator reflections from a DST pilot conducted in Mwanza, Tanzania.

**METHODS**

Using convenience sampling, three Tanzanian women were recruited for the pilot. All women were involved in a maternal and child health initiative in Mwanza Region. Each storyteller created one personal, digital story during four sessions technically supported by a Canadian DST facilitator.

Participants and the facilitator shared their experiences to identify themes related to feasibility and applicability.

**RESULTS**

Storytellers described the DST process as useful, meaningful, and transformative. Compared to traditional qualitative research and dissemination methods, like interviews or documentary video, DST allowed storytellers to characterize their experiences in their own words and voices. Continuous storyteller involvement facilitated a sense of ownership and empowerment when viewing the final product. DST allowed participants to assign meaning to past life events and reflect deeply on how their experiences have shaped their paths. However, there were moderate challenges involved in DST in this context.

**CONCLUSION**

Participants identified additional, anticipated challenges to DST if conducted in rural communities. Rural populations primarily speak Sukuma language and have limited literacy, and there may be potential to stigmatize less-empowered women who share controversial stories.

**REFERENCES & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

2. Cunsolo W. Give storyteller a copy of final video.
3. Mtoto K. Present DST background material.
4. Compile and review video.