

BRINGING VIDEO WITHIN EVERYONE'S REACH



A small crew of Honduran video artists is shooting a documentary about Jesus, a Tegucigalpa ice-cream

vendor. The crew is well-intentioned but inexperienced and compounds mistakes with clumsiness, compromising the impact of the documentary.

It is an ill wind that blows no good, however. The Honduran crew's experience became the starting point for a course aimed at individuals or groups who want to familiarize themselves with video or perfect their technique.

This is "Portable video production," a training kit consisting of three volumes and a video cassette with a running time of about 45 minutes. Designed for people in developing countries by Vidéo Tiers-Monde, a Montreal-based NGO, this educational tool is available in French, English, Spanish, and even Italian.

"The kit can be used in a variety of ways," explains Alain Ambrosi, president of Vidéo Tiers-Monde. "It can be a classroom tool in training seminars and also act as 'teacher' to those learning on their own."

The video document is clear, simple, and accessible. It takes the viewer point by point through the basic rules of producing an effective documentary. The student begins by watching the clumsy documentary about the ice-cream vendor produced by the Honduran crew.

The second part of the document follows the same crew, but this time they have decided to improve the impact of their message and start the documentary again from scratch. One by one, the basic rules are reviewed from the script to editing and sound track and with them the crew is able to produce a far superior story, which we see at the end. All through the second production the viewer is encouraged to refer to the manual in the kit, which explains in detail the rules that are outlined in the video.

Alain Ambrosi observes that "video is spreading like wildfire in the communities of the South.

Community groups use it as an educational tool, while some Indian



Video is spreading rapidly in the South as an education tool for schools and as a communication link between villages.

tribes use it as a means of communication between villages. In a political context, the camera can follow a visiting government representative closely without missing a word he says: you never know when that might be useful..."

Video is also becoming a powerful means of cultural dissemination and an alternative to official networks. Community television networks run directly by groups or communities are now developing.

The kit, therefore, meets a very real need, and more than 600 copies are already in circulation in several countries in Africa, Latin America, and even in the North. Educational institutions in Quebec and elsewhere in Canada have acquired it; the Italian version has been highly successful and a Swedish version is in the works.

When it was screened at Corpovision 1990, Montreal's first corporate video forum, "Portable video production" was the winner of the ADATE/Maurice Proulx prize, awarded to the training video that best achieves its educational objectives.

The kit sells for about \$250 in Northern countries and \$75 for orders from developing countries.

Louise Gendron, a journalist in Montreal, Canada.



In Europe: (French or Italian kit, PAL)

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