

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Anti-poverty Measures – Ask the Experts!**

Startling video testimony made by rural people living in poverty is being broadcast on the **Community Channel from 1<sup>st</sup> November 2008**. Part of a joint research project by The Rural Media Company and the School for Policy Studies at Bristol University, Show & Tell brings unfamiliar voices to the TV screen and exposes the hardship and stigma of surviving on a low income in the countryside.

“People don’t understand the hidden costs of living in a rural area. We are marginalized”, says Emma, a lone parent and one of the contributors. “The dentist is in Hereford. We can get a bus there, but it takes an hour and costs £3 each way. That’s £10 just to get there and back for me and my child.”

The Rural Media Company provided simple, light-weight video cameras and the necessary guidance and support to record personal testimonies. People speak of having nowhere to live, abandoning A-levels for lack of money, of being unable to work because they cannot afford a car, of living without a phone, a TV, a computer, even hot water.

The word “poverty” itself is part of the problem. Contributors considered it inherently damaging and isolating, because it came to signify personal inadequacy and failure and made their situation worse. Yet the video consultation process itself was empowering. In follow-up interviews, contributors’ self confidence was boosted by seeing themselves on screen, describing their experiences, and this has helped to break a debilitating cycle.

“It was great to be asked my opinion on a subject that obviously related very much to my situation. And I’m glad I did it because these are matters that need to be talked about.” Said Craig, a young unemployed man.

There are important messages here for policy makers and service providers. The findings suggest a case for greater self-advocacy for those on low incomes in isolated rural areas. People experiencing poverty want to have their say on the obstacles and barriers they face as a result of their financial circumstances. And the policy and service delivery agencies need to do more to involve the real experts in the developing anti-poverty measures.

## **Release ends**

## **Note to Editors**

- For further press information please contact: Kerry Thorpe on 020 7217 3742 or [kerryt@mediatrust.org](mailto:kerryt@mediatrust.org) or Penny Crook on 020 7217 3743 or [pennyc@mediatrust.org](mailto:pennyc@mediatrust.org)
- For latest facts and figures about the English countryside visit the Commission for Rural Communities website'  
[www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk/projects/stateofthecountryside2008/overview](http://www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk/projects/stateofthecountryside2008/overview)
- **Community Channel** broadcasts 24 hours a day on Sky 539, Virgin TV 233 and from 6am to 9am on Freeview 87. Community Channel is a Media Trust initiative.  
[www.communitychannel.org](http://www.communitychannel.org)
- **Media Trust** works in partnership with the media industry to build effective communications for the charity and voluntary sectors.  
[www.mediatrust.org](http://www.mediatrust.org)
- **The Rural Media Company** works throughout the UK. It combines community and informal education, training and advocacy with the professional skills of the media industry.
- The **Show and Tell** project was funded by the **Big Lottery Fund**.

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