The last three months have been quite eventful at Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA). We present these activities through our website and also in this newsletter. You will see that we have been able to organize regional activities with participation from Bangladesh, Malaysia, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. This was a major recommendation by members of our Advisory Council during the meeting held in December 2012. We will strive to organize regional events covering all Commonwealth countries in the region. Our efforts will also be to organize events in countries other than India in the months ahead to implement our current Three Year Plan (2012-15). One significant event during this period is the ICT Leadership in Higher Education, which was inaugurated on 24 February 2013 at Hyderabad by Dr. M.M. Pallam Raju, honourable Minister of Human Resource Development, Govt. of India. We are thankful to him for his kind gracious presence in the event and for addressing the participant Vice Chancellors.

We bring to you the regular features of the EduComm Asia with a difference. This time it is almost a thematic issue on Community Radio (CR), beginning with the guest column by Prof. Vinod Pavarala, a champion for the voice of the voiceless in the grassroots, who has shared his thoughts on the 10 years of continuous struggle in the CR movement in India. From the Commonwealth Asia perspective, the only other country having a policy on CR is Bangladesh.

Considering the importance of CR to empower citizens and its use in learning for development, having appropriate policy is a first step. Towards this, Dr. Pavarala has indicated the need for a holistic approach to issue license and improve coordination amongst ministries involved. In case study section, we present to you a success story of community informatics that also uses CR. The spotlight section presents one of the most important initiatives of AMARC – the Women’s International Network (WIN) that encourages women to participate actively in CR. The gender guidelines developed by the WIN is something that all CR stations and stakeholders engaged in the movement should adopt. We have tried to put together useful information in the sections such as Worth While Web and Book Reviews. In this issue, we have introduced a new section called Partner’s Page, where we will regularly bring out your experience of working with us. Thus, this is your page to contribute!

Our efforts to bring you the newsletter would be successful, if you find the contents interesting and useful. We do not see this as only a platform to tell about our work. It is also a platform to share ideas and information that are timely and relevant. Without your feedback and support, it would not be possible for us to keep the relevance of the newsletter. Therefore, we request you to send your feedback and suggestions to me. You can also reach us through our website that also gives link to our workshop presentations sharing site, video channel, and photos of various events. The website is our one-stop knowledge sharing platform that I recommend you to bookmark and visit regularly.

Dr. Sanjaya Mishra
Guest Column...

Ten Years of Community Radio in India: Towards New Solidarities

By Vinod Pavarala

It is 10 years since a putative community radio policy was announced by the Government of India in 2003, allowing ‘established educational institutions’ to apply for a license to broadcast over a limited-power FM frequency. It took three years after that initial announcement was made for the government to concede the right to community-based organizations, which were not any more seen as ‘a threat to the security and sovereignty’ of the nation. There was much excitement (if not actual radio stations) in the air as government luminaries like the then Information and Broadcasting Minister, Mr. Jaipal Reddy threw out numbers like a possible 4000-5000 community radio stations across the country. For a variety of reasons, not least because of intransigent bureaucratic procedures, we now have about 145 operational stations licensed under the policy, of which less than a third are those run by NGOs. This is indeed cause for cheer when compared to the time when state-owned All India Radio (AIR) held monopolistic sway over the airwaves. That the commercial cacophony on the radio dial today often makes you nostalgic for those ‘innocent’ days of ‘Bhule Bisre Geet’¹ and news sanitized for the naïve ears is a different matter!

However, contrast the community radio scenario in India with that of Thailand, where there are at least 6000 CR stations (started unlicensed, but now getting legalized) or with neighbouring Nepal with about 200 stations or with Colombia (violence-prone though it is) where there are close to 1000 stations or with the Democratic Republic of Congo which has over 250 community radio stations. According to a 11-nation survey in Africa, community radio grew at an astounding rate of about 1386 per cent between 2000 and 2006. So what is the problem in a democratic and open society such as India? For readers not in the loop on the Indian CR policy, a little bit of history is in order here.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of C R Stations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>India : 147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepal : 200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand : 6000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbia : 1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Republic : 250</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Brief History

The Supreme Court (SC) of India judgment of 1995 declaring airwaves as ‘public property’ to be used for ‘public good’ (in a case unrelated to community radio) set off an almost decade-long campaign for democratization of the airwaves, in what is certainly the most significant media policy reform movement driven by the civil society in the country. While the Bangalore Declaration of 1996 signed by activists, academics, and advocates of free speech and expression could be seen as the first statement of intent by the civil society in favour of opening up of the airwaves to communities, the Government of India went in a different direction interpreting the SC judgment, in a somewhat limited fashion, as having green-signalled de-monopolization of airwaves in favour of private, commercial players. What followed was the auction of FM frequencies to commercial bidders and the inauguration of the second tier of broadcasting in India, a process that has seen the unrestrained growth of this sector in the last 15 years. In July 2000, a number of civil society activists, community media practitioners, and academics met near Hyderabad and passed the Pastapur Initiative on Community Radio (named after the village in Medak district of Andhra Pradesh where poor, rural women had been eagerly waiting for a license to broadcast), articulating a systematic case, perhaps for the first time, for the creation of the third-tier of broadcasting in India to be called ‘community radio’. Universal access, diversity, equitable resource allocation, and empowerment of historically disadvantaged sections of society were the cornerstones of this demand. Among other things, the document suggested that “priority should be given in issuing of community broadcasting licenses to rural areas and other regions and communities that are least developed in terms of various socio-economic indicators, based on the fact that the least developed regions and communities of the country are also least served by media.” It was not until October 2008 that the first community-run radio station in the country, Sangham Radio went on air, by which time the door had been cracked open by campus community radio stations.

Policy Tangle

Today, many of us who have been part of

¹ Bhule Bisre Geet - long forgotten songs- a programme dedicated to old Bollywood melodies
this movement stand a bit exhausted, with a paradoxical feeling of having trekked far, yet seeing a longer, perhaps tougher journey ahead. The recent arbitrary five-fold hike in the annual spectrum fee\(^2\) payable by community radio stations is symptomatic of the twisted and tangled mass (mess?) called CR policy in the country. While the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting (MIB) is the front ministry driving the policy, with a fairly pro-active approach to issuing preliminary clearances, there are other Ministries, some less conspicuous than others, which seem to control the pace of this process. The Ministry of Communications & Information Technology holds the reins of spectrum and seems to deploy completely mysterious and mystifying processes to allocate spectrum. A government with an avowed pro-common man orientation has a Ministry that says the spectrum fee is agnostic of user and purpose. In other words, it makes no distinction between an industrialist whose demands on the spectrum have a purely profit motive and those of poor Kutchi\(^3\) woman for whom access to airwaves is about a choice between silence and voice. That the Ministry gave a temporary reprieve last month by holding back the fee at the earlier level only reinforces the image of an opaque governance mechanism.

The CR Actors

The quantitative comparison I gave at the beginning of this article was only to highlight the slow growth of community radio in India, but numbers alone are surely not an adequate measure of the quality and vibrancy of the sector. Educational institutions, including private colleges for whom commercial gain is more than a by-product of their primary activity, and agricultural universities and Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs – Agricultural Research Stations) for whom a community radio station is merely another tool to further their philosophy of extension (from the scientist to the ignorant farmer) far exceed the number of community based stations in the country today. From time to time one hears of stated intentions of state governments and eager district collectors to ‘start’ CR stations. If you add to this mix the pronouncements from time to time by various other ministries such as Panchayati Raj, Rural Development, and Health, one gets a sneaking suspicion of state attempts to appropriate and co-opt CR spaces through the backdoor. A recent Ernst & Young report on the FM radio sector in the country offers the preposterous recommendation that corporate organizations must be allowed to set up and run community radio stations as part of their ‘social responsibility’ activities. I suppose the admirable responsibility that the corporates have been displaying towards the development of our tribal communities in resource-rich regions gives us much hope!

Conflict over News

The Ministry of Home Affairs, with its hawkish approach to security matters, decides that millions of people, for the sole crime of living in so-called ‘troubled areas’ of the country, are deprived of an opportunity to articulate their concerns. Pointing out the anomaly of the entire northeast region of the country having no more than two community radio stations, Patricia Mukhimi, the editor of Shillong Times, made the case at a recent CR conference in Delhi that it is precisely in such areas that people need access to democratic channels to voice their concerns and to mobilize young people to work for peace. Applications for CR licenses from this region as well as from the states of Jharkhand and Chattisgarh, facing Maoist violence, are not getting the government’s nod. One sees a similar attitude towards the demand for the right to broadcast news on community radio. At the last CR Sammelan, the annual get-together of CR stations organized by the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, the Minister as well as the Secretary ruled out news on community radio in the near future. The latter, offered news content from All India Radio to CR stations. Remember, this is supposed to be the much-vaunted third sector, autonomous of the state and the market!

NGO-ization of CR

Even as we hesitantly join in the 10\(^{th}\) anniversary celebrations, one cannot but notice some of the other aberrations that have crept into the movement. Ten years ago, facing a suspicious and reluctant government, the community radio movement strategically projected the argument for CR within the development paradigm, something with which the state could identify, given its own post-independence history of mobilizing mass media for ‘national development’. It is increasingly becoming apparent that this has become a trap. Well-endowed NGOs and well-meaning donor agencies have upped the ante for smaller groups struggling to put out a few hours of original programming a day. Content is often closely tied to the programmatic agendas of NGOs, and the imperative of

\(^2\) This has been reverted vide Order No-P-1101/403/2012-PP(Pt-II) dated 12.02.2013

\(^3\) Belonging to the region Kutch, Gujarat in western India
putting together a ‘fixed-point-chart’ of more and more hours of daily broadcast forces many stations to a stultifying adoption of standardized genres and formats. Often this is all done in the name of ‘capacity-building’ workshops. The development of a small core of professionalized station staff tends to alienate the community from the station and inhibits wider participation, reproducing the same ‘pedagogical approach’ to ‘educating the masses’. The question I ask myself these days as I travel to CR stations in different parts of the country is whether the ‘NGO-ization’ of community radio is blunting the radical edge of a people-controlled medium by completely depoliticizing issues of development and social change. I have lately been arguing for locating the community radio movement, beyond the development framework, within a communication rights paradigm.

The Sustainability Conundrum

While no one who has even cursory knowledge of the working of a CR station can deny the critical importance of funding, excessive focus on financial sustainability (through, for example, government advertising) without adequate immersion in the basic philosophy of community radio can be hugely self-limiting. The Community Radio Forum of India has built a systematic case for public funding of community radio in the country through an independently administered Fund on the lines of many other countries with more robust CR sectors. However, the government is reluctant to go on this path and is instead formulating a ‘scheme’ to disburse funds through the Ministry of I&B. Everything depends on how the scheme is administered, but there is real danger of it reducing functional and potential community radio stations into supplicants for state largesse (the maa-baap sarkar⁴).

Community participation, along with a genuine feeling of ownership (not necessarily in the legal sense), sustainable programming and staffing plans, and a diversity of small funding sources (rather than one or two ‘big’ funders) are the key to any independent, effective, and responsive community radio station.

New Solidarities

Looking back dispassionately at a decade of community radio in India, one cannot but get away from the picture of a policy in disarray – bad ideas and half-knowledge driving away good intentions. It is high time we had an integrated policy on community radio, with the government speaking in one voice in favour of the poor and the deprived getting the right of access to the airwaves, rather than different Ministries speaking in multiple tongues and pulling the sector in different directions. To the movement itself, I would suggest self-reflectively that we need to build new solidarities with other movements in the country that are struggling to secure people’s right to information, food security, common property resources, and the rights of those truly marginalized groups such as the disabled, dalits and tribals, women and sexual minorities. This resolve, at the beginning of the second decade of community radio in the country, may yet lead to genuine democratization of the media landscape in India.

Vinod Pavarala is Professor of Communication and UNESCO Chair on Community Media at University of Hyderabad. He has been associated with the community radio movement for over a decade and was the Founder-President of the Community Radio Forum of India. He is the co-author (along with Kanchan K. Malik) of Other Voices: the struggle for community radio in India, Sage: 2007).

Email: cmchair.uoh@gmail.com

The views expressed in this article are that of the author. CEMCA/COL does not necessarily endorse the views expressed by the author in the Guest Column.

New Appointments

Prof. M. Aslam has joined as Vice Chancellor of the world’s largest Open University – the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU). Dr. Aslam is Professor of Rural Development at the School of Continuing Education in the University since 1992 and has served as Director, National Centre for Innovations in Distance Education (NCIDE); Director of the School; and also as Vice Chancellor of the University from October, 2011 to July, 2012. Dr. Aslam has served as expert consultant to several international agencies and as visiting faculty to 16 institutions in India and abroad. We congratulate Prof. Aslam for his appointment.

We also congratulate the following Vice Chancellors for their appointment:

- Dr. (Tmt). Chandrakantha Jeyabalan, Tamil Nadu Open University, Chennai
- Prof. Vinay Kumar Pathak, Vardhaman Mahaveer Open University, Kota
- Prof. M.G. Krishnan, Karnataka State Open University, Mysore
- Prof. Subhash Dhuliyia, Uttarakhand Open University, Haldwani

⁴ Maa-Baap sarkar, literally ‘mother-father government’, is an expression commonly used in northern India, to refer derogatorily to a patron-client relationship between the government and the citizens.
AMARC-WIN Asia Pacific: A journey towards Gender Equality

By Bianca Miglioretto

Twenty three years ago, a group of women at the third AMARC World Conference in Dublin felt the need to push for stronger and more equal women’s participation within the emerging community radio movement. They formed the Women’s International Network (WIN) within AMARC. What started with a group of women at AMARC in 1990 has now developed into a global network with active sections in the Americas, Africa, Europe and Asia Pacific, with its members continuously working towards active participation of women in the structure of AMARC.

AMARC is composed of four regional chapters, each with its own women’s international network. These chapters likewise have their own board, with one to two seats reserved for the vice president/s of their corresponding women’s international network. Having these seats reserved for WIN representatives ensures that a gender perspective is mainstreamed into the leadership of all regional sections of AMARC, as well as into its governance at the global level. This mechanism also ensures that the stronger participation of women in the community radio sector is included in the AMARC agenda.

AMARC-WIN Asia Pacific (AP) is the youngest among the regional AMARC-WIN sections, as it was officially launched at the first AMARC Asia Pacific Conference in November 2005 in Jakarta, Indonesia. Though women community radio practitioners in the Asia Pacific region benefitted from the struggles led by their sisters in other parts of the world in earlier years, and while they did not have to fight for their space, there were no active discussions as to why there was a need to organise women in community radio in a separate network. There was also no talk about why it was necessary to empower women and incorporate a gender perspective in community radio stations. Some AMARC members simply did not understand the rationale behind WIN, but did not dare to question what was a standard in other – older – AMARC sections. This glaring reality reflects a need to continuously educate men and women regarding the importance for women’s spaces in progressive movements.

A survey: Where are the women in community radio in Asia Pacific?

Given the undisputed start of AMARC-WIN Asia Pacific (AP) in November 2005 with the support of the AMARC International and the AMARC AP regional office, the first task was to identify women in community radio who were interested in forming the network, as out of the 150 participants of the first AMARC AP conference only 37 were women. In 2006 AMARC-WIN AP, in partnership with Isis International, conducted a survey among its member stations and networks on the situation and needs of women in community radio in the region. Though responses were not overwhelming, with only 27 responses from 12 countries, it was an important starting point.

Results from the survey show that there is no significant difference in the proportion between males and females in terms of staffing community radio. However, examining the results with a gender lens, a different picture can be gleaned. In terms of leadership and technical positions in radio stations surveyed, it can be seen that women make up only 28% of leadership positions. While this is comparatively better than in mainstream media where women occupy only 20% of leadership positions, it is evident that women continue to be marginalised in decision-making in the community radio sector.

Most important changes the women community radio broadcasters want in their radio stations:

- To increase women’s access to leadership, decision-making and management;
Where are women in community radio in Asia Pacific?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POSITION</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>WOMEN</th>
<th>IN%</th>
<th>MEN</th>
<th>IN%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall staff</td>
<td>291</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership positions</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Staff</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Staff</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Producers</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteers</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To increase access to all aspects of radio production, especially technical tasks; and

To have more gender-sensitive and feminist programs and perspectives in the radio station.

The most important training needs that the women broadcasters mentioned are:

- Production and technical skills including ICT;
- Gender and feminist perspectives in community radio programming;
- Journalistic skills (e.g., interviewing, script writing, anchoring, reporting); and
- Management, administration, sharing of decision-making.

Action Research: Turning the results of the survey into concrete actions

In December 2007, a meeting of thirty women community radio broadcasters took place during the Global Knowledge Conference in Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia. This meeting gave birth to the idea of developing a gender policy for community radio. The meeting, aside from having been able to conceptualise such an initiative, also empowered members of WIN AP as they began to take responsibility for WIN Asia Pacific. They actively contributed their ideas, shared their experiences and voiced their opinions and demands.

On the other hand in response to the training needs, Isis International and the AMARC AP regional office worked hard to organise interactive women’s training workshops and has since 2008 organised five such workshops in Southeast Asia, and South Asia. The participants were trainees, resource persons and trainers at the same time, making use of the skills and experiences of the different women community radio broadcasters.

GP4CR – Gender Policy for Community Radio

The GP4CR contains six sections which provide ways and means to achieve the goal of equal participation of women and men in community radio. The sections are: Women’s Access to Airwaves; Women’s representation on air; Special Needs of Minority Women; Women’s representation at all levels of station management; Use of Appropriate Technology and Funding and Capacity Building for Women. The GP4CR was approved by the AMARC International General Assembly in Argentina in 2010. It has been translated into 23 local languages by volunteers of AMARC-WIN Asia Pacific. “In China, there is no community radio yet but this policy is very useful for the government radio stations at national, provincial and local levels and for the NGOs who broadcast on the internet. This is why I am happy to translate it into Chinese.” Cai Yiping

Download the GP4CR
http://tinyurl.com/c4cucd4

Second AMARC AP conference: A leap forward?

Women’s participation higher by 10% - ONLY!

While there has been an increase in the number of women participating the AMARC AP conference, it has not been very significant. From 37 out of 150 in 2001 to 88 out of 250 in 2010, there had only been a 10% increase in women’s participation. Though this is progress that must be acknowledged, for me, as the regional WIN Vice-President on the board, it was a rather disappointing result.

While we have worked hard in ensuring the equal participation of men and women in most AMARC AP activities and in several other spaces such as the Global Knowledge Conference and World Social Forum, and have garnered the support of the AMARC Executive Board and regional office, there is still a lot of work to be done.

Challenges for WIN Asia Pacific in the future

The last seven years of organising the AMARC-WIN in Asia Pacific have shown that within the movement there is an aspiration for women’s empowerment in and through community radio. However, much of the time individual radio stations do not give women the same opportunities to develop as men. Moreover, men in leadership positions are often unwilling to share their power. They...
have not yet realised the great potential of the full participation of women and the inclusion of women’s issues in the broadcast programmes for their station.

Therefore, the implementation of the Gender Policy for Community Radio in the individual stations is of utmost importance. So far what we have is a promising document but we need to develop instruments for its concrete implementation, which include tools for needs assessment, implementation plans and impact evaluation. Further we need to continue the capacity building for women in radio management because the women need to be prepared to take up leadership positions so that they are able to proactively contribute to the radio station. More training and exchange in technical production and feminist content development are requested by WIN members. Last but not least, we need to invest more efforts and clear strategies to the equal participation of women and men in our movement. Gender equality must not remain a goal that we hope to achieve in the distant future, but should be something we are practicing Right Now!

Bianca Miglioretto is Vice President AMARC-WIN AP and can be reached at bianca@tinig.ch

Gender Policy for Community Radio (Excerpts)

Women’s equality and the important role of women in every field of human endeavor have been acknowledged by international instruments, national constitutions and societies across the globe. The rights of all people, regardless of gender, sexuality, race, religion, have been acknowledged under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Further, governments have acknowledged the rights of women under the Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)...

1. Access of women in radio waves
2. Representation of women in radio waves
3. Special representation of minority women
4. Representation if women at all levels of station management
5. Use of appropriate technology
6. Financing and skill development for women in Radio

Read full document at: http://tinyurl.com/d6asqem

Internship Available

CEMCA offers internship to graduate and post-graduate students to gain work experience in the area of CEMCA’s field of competence and enhance their academic knowledge through practical work assignments. Internships are available for 2-6 six months, and should be part of the learning and development plan of the candidate. For details visit Knowledge Management page at CEMCA Website.
Worth While Web

We bring you here useful information and links for community media practitioners.

All the links were active at the time of going to the press.

1. **A guide for people interested in presenting on the radio:** [http://www.radiopresenting.com/](http://www.radiopresenting.com/)

2. **Community Radio Toolkit- Supported by OFCOM, UK:** [http://www.communityradiotoolkit.net/](http://www.communityradiotoolkit.net/)


4. **AMARC international NGO serving community radio movement with members and associates in 110 countries:** [http://www2.amarc.org/](http://www2.amarc.org/)

5. **Audio content and resource exchange platform - EK duniya anEK awaaz One world, many voices:** [http://edaa.in/](http://edaa.in/)

6. **International NGO with a mission is to empower local media worldwide:** [http://internews.org/](http://internews.org/)


9. **A community radio facilitation centre set-up by CEMCA:** [http://ccfcindia.net](http://ccfcindia.net)

10. **Creative commons that include a repository of sites that permit downloads:** [http://creativecommons.org/videos](http://creativecommons.org/videos)


13. **Independent regulator and competition authority for the UK communications industries:** [http://www.ofcom.org.uk/](http://www.ofcom.org.uk/)


15. **MARAA - A media and arts collective:** [http://maraa.in/](http://maraa.in/)

16. **Manch - A platform that enables community media practitioners across regions to share, collaborate and learn from each other:** [http://manch.net.in/adda/](http://manch.net.in/adda/)

17. **Broadcast Engineering Consultants India Limited (BECIL) –provides a range of services for community radio:** [http://www.becil.com/](http://www.becil.com/)

18. **Nomad India - Communication technology services:** [http://www.nomadindia.net/](http://www.nomadindia.net/)
Three Community Radio Consultation Workshops Organised

On behalf of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Govt. of India, CEMCA organised three consultation workshops in Northern India to create awareness about Community Radio (CR). The first workshop was held at Orchha, Madhya Pradesh from 26-28 December 2012, the second at Agra, Uttar Pradesh from 10-12 January 2013, and the third at Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh from 16-18 March 2013.

At each location, about 40 participants from the neighbouring states, comprising potential applicants as well as Letter of Intent (LOI) holders, mostly from civil society based organisations and a few educational and agricultural institutions in the regions were invited to attend the workshops. The states covered were Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh. Over three days, participants interacted with Ministry officials, CR practitioners and experts gaining insights of CR policy, licensing procedures, technical requirements as well as funding and sustainability opportunities for setting up and running a community radio station. A demonstration of transmission arranged by Broadcast Engineers Consultants India Limited (BECIL) followed up with a visit to a local CRS - Radio Bundelkhnad in Orchha, Aap ki Awaz in Agra and Tashi Delak at Dharamshala gave participants real feel of a CRS in action. The workshops concluded with over half of the participants giving their Expression of Interest (EOI) in applying for a CR licence.

http://tinyurl.com/czhmq9f
http://tinyurl.com/d7smv4e
http://tinyurl.com/cqy9r75

Quality Guidelines for Open Educational Resources

Experts from the Asian region discussed and debated the necessity, usefulness, and relevance of the draft criteria and guidelines for Open Educational Resources (OER) in a three day regional consultation workshop held at the Maulana Azad National Urdu University (MANUU) campus at Hyderabad from 13-15 March 2013 during the second World Open Education Week (11-15 March 2013) which brought together participants from the Commonwealth Asia, including India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Malaysia. The workshop hosted a mix of keynote presentation, paper presentations and group discussions on quality criteria for OER developed and facilitated by Prof. Paul Kawachi, Professor of Instructional Design, and Editor of the Asian Journal of Distance Education.

Inaugurating the three day consultation workshop, Prof. Mohammad Miyan, Vice Chancellor of MANUU emphasized the need for quality learning materials that are the backbone of distance education. He urged the faculty of MANUU to look into the OER movement critically and embrace the best practices. Prof. V.S. Prasad, Guest of Honour, emphasized that the quality guidelines should be useful to all the three stakeholders of OER - teachers, students and institutions. Tan Sri Prof. Gajaraja Dhanarajan, Former President and CEO of the Commonwealth of Learning, delivered the keynote address highlighting the quality concerns in higher education system the world over. He discussed the quality criteria stipulated by international and regional agencies, and linked that the quality of OER should be within the international frameworks acceptable to the community.

In the inaugural session, Prof. K.R. Iqbal Ahmed, Director of the Directorate of
Distance Education, MANUU welcomed the guests, while Dr. Sanjaya Mishra, Director, CEMCA proposed a vote of thanks.

http://tinyurl.com/cmrvh46

**ICT integrated Teacher Education Workshop**

World Open Education week, March 11-15, 2013 was marked by the opening of first “ICT Integrated Teacher Education” workshop by Dr. Sanjaya Mishra, Director, CEMCA. Organized in partnership with DEP-SSA (Distance Education Programme- Sarva Siksha Abhiyan), IGNOU and IT for Change at IUC Multimedia Lab at IGNOU, New Delhi, the workshop focussed on developing ICT skills amongst teacher educators of District Institute of Education & Training (DIET) from northern India.

While opening the workshop, Dr. Sanjaya Mishra, stressed on three aspects - ICT integration, resource generation and participation in Community of Practice (CoP) as a combined strategy for developing a framework for continuous professional development of teacher educators. He also highlighted Commonwealth of Learning (COL) support for creation of strong open educational resource platform, including the Open Resources for English Language Teaching.

Elementary Teacher Educators from Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhhand, Punjab and Haryana were welcomed by Prof. C.B. Sharma, DEP-SSA, IGNOU and his team by inviting them to become Master Trainers in the pursuit of creating a broad base of teachers integrating ICT at the district level.

Mr. Vikram Sahay, Joint Secretary, School Education, MHRD brought the reality of ICT while speaking to the participants from his office via Skype/phone. A number of audio, visual and social softwares were demonstrated by the resource persons. The participants practised and participated in the Teacher-Network forum actively.

Seventeen participants from DIETs were initiated as Master Trainers in ICT integration through CEMCA Teacher-Network platform developed by ITforChange with the support of CEMCA.

http://www.teacher-network.in
http://tinyurl.com/cmhmalf

**Community Women Broadcasters’ Master Training**

Building capacities of community women broadcasters and developing leadership skills among them was the theme of the recently concluded CEMCA’s Community Women Broadcasters’ Master Training held at Sohna, Haryana from March 6-9, 2013.

Six community radio stations (CRS) participated in the event - namely, Radio Dhadkan (Shivpuri); Voice of Azamgarh (Azamgarh); CMS Radio (Lucknow); Tashi Delek (Dharamshala); Alfase’ Mewat and Radio Mewat (Mewat). From each CRS, a team of three comprising a station representative and two community women were selected for the training.

One of the high points of the workshop was a visit to Alfase’e Mewat Community Radio Station on March 08, International Women’s Day to participate in their celebrations. One representative from each CRS also got an opportunity to speak before a large community gathering.

http://tinyurl.com/cxthfom
Maximize Use of Technology to Enhance Quality of Education

Inaugurating the maiden ICT Leadership in Higher Education event held from February 24-26, 2013 at Hyderabad, the Honourable Minister for Human Resource Development, Government of India, Dr. M.M. Pallam Raju called upon the participating Vice Chancellors to maximize the use of technology to enhance quality of education. He emphasized that ICT is a leveller between rural-urban divide and between the poor and the rich. The challenge remains in preparing the first generation learners to use technology optimally for learning, he added. The event was collaboratively organised by CEMCA, Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), the British Council in India, and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University. In his keynote address by Prof. Arun Nigavekar, set the tone of the discussions to follow, and highlighted the range of issues before the senior leaders in Indian institutions. While emphasizing the need for creating enlightened leaders in Indian universities, he emphasized the role of teachers in the ecosystem of ICT integration in teaching, learning, research and administrative activities of the university.

The three day meet was attended by 39 participants including 20 senior leaders and Vice Chancellors of Indian Universities. ICT experts from India and abroad, including five experts from the UK participated in the event sharing their experiences in various areas of ICT in education, especially in the areas of ICT policy, eLearning strategy development, and use of Open Educational Resources. Besides interacting with the experts based on the presentations, the participants engaged in peer group discussions to share best practices and lessons learnt to outline actions that should be taken by every higher education institutions to effectively use ICTs in teaching and learning. The participants also discussed a draft institutional policy on Open Educational Resources developed by CEMCA and offered comments to improve the policy template.

Open Educational Resources and Open Licensing Policies in the Indian Context

In association with Creative Commons, CEMCA organized a workshop on “Open Educational Resources and Open Licensing Policies in the Indian Context” on 22 February 2013 at the India International Centre, New Delhi. Mr. Anant Kumar Singh, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), Government of India inaugurated the event, while Dr. P. Prakash, Vice Chancellor, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University was the Guest of honour. Ms. Catherine Casserly, CEO of Creative Commons presided over the inaugural session. Welcoming CEMCA’s initiative Mr. Singh, who is also the Govt of India nominee to the Advisory Council of CEMCA and focal point of COL in India, emphasized that from a philosophical viewpoint, all educational resources should be available and accessible to all freely beyond national boundaries. Dr. Prakash emphasized that improving access to quality learning resources as OER provides increased opportunities for the learners to learn from diverse learning materials. Ms. Catherine Casserly while giving an overview of the importance of open licensing emphasized the Creative Commons approach that reduces the ‘permission request’ process to produce educational materials. Besides presentation by the Creative Commons team to orient about the various types of licenses, five institutional experiences on use of OER were also presented by five participants — National Institute of Open Schooling (Dr. S.S. Jena, Chairman), Acharya Narendra Dev College (Dr. Savitri Singh, Principal), Indira Gandhi National Open University (Prof. Uma Kanjilal), National Programme on Technology Enhanced Learning (Prof.
Kushal Sen, IITD), and Pratham Books (Mr. Gautham John). In all 27 participants from different sectors participated in the event. Dr. Sanjaya Mishra, Director, CEMCA facilitated the discussions and presentations. During the discussions, Ms. Jessica Coates and Jane Hornibrooks of Creative Commons team provided answers to different legal questions, and responded to scenarios presented to them. Participants in the workshop recommended steps to be taken to OER.

http://tinyurl.com/bldbtbn

Seminar Recommendations at:
http://tinyurl.com/c2vpsd8

Capacity Building Workshop for Virtual Open Schooling

A three day Technical workshop was organized by National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) with support of CEMCA at the IUC-TEFED Multimedia Lab of the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), New Delhi from 11-13 February, 2013. The objective of the workshop was to sensitize the academic staff of NIOS and other State Open Schools towards the use of online technologies and the emerging technologies to be used in the planned Virtual Open Schooling platform. The feasibility study of Virtual Open Schooling in India was also released during the workshop. The feasibility report emphasizes integration of existing technologies at NIOS and building an open platform to provide open courses and didactic learning through a suitable Learning Management System (LMS).

Working on the recommendations of the feasibility report, the workshop was designed to provide skill training on the use of MediaWiki & Moodle LMS available with the NIOS. Staff of NIOS and representatives of State Open Schools (Karnataka, Rajasthan, Assam, Gujarat, Jammu & Kashmir, Tamil Nadu, Kerala) participated in the workshop.

http://tinyurl.com/cv26rzn

Capacity Building for OER-based e-Learning

Twenty-seven participants from eight institutions in the Asian Commonwealth region participated in the 1st workshop on OER-based eLearning from 29 January to 1 February 2013 at magnificent 12-storey Albukhary tower building of the Wawasan Open University (WOU), Penang, Malaysia. Inaugurating the workshop, Tan Sri Dato’ Professor Gajaraja Dhanarajan, Chairman, Board of Governors of Wawasan Open University appreciated the support of CEMCA in strengthening institutional capacities in the region, and specially thanked for choosing WOU as the venue for the workshop.

The workshop facilitated by Dr. Som Naidu, a leading scholar in learning technology and distance education, enabled participants to discuss issues surrounding OER, open licenses, teaching and learning issues, and finding and
selecting OERs. Participants through group work developed a set of five learning outcomes essential to integrate OER in teaching and learning, especially in eLearning scenario. The content developed shall be used for launching of the Online Professional Development Certificate in OER-based eLearning.

This activity is part of three year plan of CEMCA to develop institutional capacities in the region and assist training of 500 teachers in the region to use OER-based eLearning. Besides teachers form WOU, teachers form Allama Iqbal Open University, Pakistan, Asia eUniversity, Malaysia, Open University of Malaysia, Open University of Sri Lanka, Indira Gandhi National Open University, National Institute of Open Schooling (India) and KK Handique State Open University, India participated in the workshop.

During the inaugural session of the workshop, Vice Chancellor Dato’ Professor Ho Chin Chaye (WOU) and Dr. Sanjaya Mishra, Director, CEMCA signed MoU to continue working in this area and release the materials developed as OER. While WOU may develop an online course for OER-based eLearning, CEMCA will also use the material to lunch an open course for capacity building on a regular interval using an appropriate eLearning platform.

Developing Sustainable Models of Community Radio

One of the biggest challenges facing Community Radio Stations (CRS) is sustainability. As part of its efforts to encourage good practices in community radio, CEMCA is working closely with selected CRS to help develop a blueprint for sustainable CR operation. The first part of this activity was initiated with Radio Deccan, run and operated by Abid Ali Trust, Hyderabad from 10-12 December 2012. During the workshop, CEMCA along with a mentor consultant Ms. Pinky Chandran, from Radio Active CRS, conducted a baseline study and held in-depth discussions with senior management of Radio Deccan, staff and volunteers. A SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis was conducted and the team came up with both short and long term action plans to improve all aspects of sustainability.

http://tinyurl.com/cmwk59j

Scholarship for PGDEL Students

As a step towards enhancing the knowledge-base of women teachers, CEMCA has offered ten scholarships by way of reimbursing the fee of Post Graduate Diploma in eLearning (PGDEL) programme of Indira Gandhi National Open University.

The recipients of the Scholarship for 2013 are:

1. Dr. Mamta Srivastava, NIOS, Noida.
2. Dr. Sachi Shah, IGNOU, New Delhi.
3. Dr. Mallika Banerjee, IGNOU, New Delhi.
4. Dr. Lakshmi Gade, Dr. BRAOU, Hyderabad.

5. Dr. Shika Rai, IGNOU, New Delhi.
6. Dr. Anjuli Suhane, IGNOU, New Delhi.
7. Dr. S.P.Denisia, Alagappa University, Tamil Nadu.
8. Dr. H.K. Haseena, Kuvempu University, Karnataka.
10. Dr. Manjari Agarwal, Uttarakhand Open University.

CEMCA Awards

Ms. Meciya received the CEMCA Award and certificate of appreciation for having topped in BCA Programme of Tamil Nadu Open University from his Excellency Dr. K. Rosaiah, Governor of Tamil Nadu in the 6th Convocation held on March 12, 2013.

Two women students from Tamil Nadu Teachers Education University, Chennai received CEMCA Award in the 3rd Convocation of the University held on December 30, 2012. Ms. M. Ramya for B.Ed. programme and Ms. S. Kalaiselvi for M.Ed. programme received a cash award and a certificate of appreciation each.

Ms. Juliana Binti Ngahdirn received CEMCA Award and a certificate of appreciation for having been adjudged the best student of Bachelor programme in Information Technology (Honours) of Open University of Malaysia (OUM). She received the Award from the President of COL during the convocation of OUM.
Case Study

A new bottom-up architecture for development: Case studies in community informatics

By Anita Gurumurthy, Krittika Vishwanath, Nandini C and Madhavi Jha

Introduction

Unlike the mainstream approach that views information and communication technologies (ICTs) only as ‘tools for development’, at IT for Change (ITfC), we have adopted a different lens. We believe that the rapid diffusion of ICTs leads to a coming together of the technical and the social in a manner that is co-constitutive, and fundamentally transformative of our immediate reality. The very architecture and methodology of development must therefore adapt itself to this newly emerging socio-technological paradigm. It must also recognise the ways in which the realms of information and communication can be altered, allowing for power shifts in favour of the marginalised. Hence, we focus on the contextual embedding of ICTs and the grounded analysis of the possibilities that ICTs offer for social change, in a situated manner. In other words, we follow a community informatics approach in our work, exploring the potential of ICTs for development interventions, especially in the areas of governance, gender and education.

In this paper, we discuss lessons on developing an appropriate ethos for an effective community informatics practice using of our experiences with three projects: Mahiti Manthana, Kishori Chitrapatna and Teachers’ Communities of Learning.

Mahiti Manthana: Community informatics for empowering women’s collectives

The Mahiti Manthana project is an initiative of ITfC started in the year 2005 with funding from United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) that attempts to use a three-pronged ICT strategy using community radio, community video and telecentres, for strengthening the empowerment processes among grassroots women. We work with members of women’s collectives (locally known as sanghas) at the village level, initiated under the Mahila Samakhya programme of the Government of India, in three blocks of Mysore district. Mahila Samakhya is a pan-Indian governmental programme that works with the aim of ‘education for empowerment’ through a collectivisation strategy that mainly focuses on rural women, especially those belonging to economically and socially disadvantaged sections.

So, how have we tried to support the Mahila Samakhya initiative in a way that its core objectives are supported by a community informatics architecture?

Building a rich informatics culture

While designing Mahiti Manthana, Prakriye, the field unit of ITfC tried to think of a strategy that could tackle the dependency of sangha learning processes and mobilisation on the physical presence of the programmatic staff of Mahila Samakhya. One of the goals of the partnership was to give impetus to the ongoing collectivisation efforts that encouraged sangha women’s initiative. We felt that this could be developed as a space for citizenship pedagogy, and as a local knowledge institution that supported women and the marginalised in the community. This was also in keeping with Mahila Samakhya’s own vision. The cornerstone of our strategy therefore has been in the building of a new culture - a rich community informatics culture - based on three digitally enabled components. First is a weekly radio broadcast that is the sangha women’s own voice in the local public sphere, called Kelu Sakhi (Listen, my friend). The second is an on-demand as well as push-based video system for information that women seek to share inspirational

Using ICTs innovatively, we have sought to:

1. Work with sangha women in creating community radio programmes and community videos, to enhance peer learning processes.
2. Enable Mahila Samakhya programmatic staff to harness the potential of ICTs in strengthening the information and communication processes between staff and sangha women, and among sangha women themselves.
3. Support the creation of sangha managed ICT enabled information centres at the village level to help sangha women overcome systemic impediments to the access, use and appropriation of information.

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1. Mahiti Manthana can be translated as ‘informational churn’.
biographies of sangha women, as well as to open up debates on gender and patriarchy. The third component is a village based telecentre model for public information access called the Namma Mahiti Kendra (Our Information Centre). It is run by sangha women in select villages through a young information intermediary, sakhi (friend), trained by the women and the Prakriye team. The sakhi addresses the information needs of the village community and tackles institutional non-transparency and apathy, through a continued dialogue with government departments at the block level.

Project impact: “I have learnt to use computers, handle cameras ... Now I feel I can learn anything I set my mind to”

Mahiti Manthana has had a significant impact in the following areas, as confirmed by a recent evaluation study we conducted:

1. In the villages where the sangha women have taken to discussions based on radio broadcasts and to collective video-viewing, developing a new culture of questioning and seeking information through digital means, a move towards greater sangha autonomy and lesser dependency of sanghas for their information needs on the programmatic staff of Mahila Samakhya is perceptible.

2. It is evident that access to and effective use of ICTs, in contextually meaningful ways, leads to a greater sense of empowerment. We saw illiterate sangha women grow in their self esteem through their experiences of handling ICTs, using digital learning resources to conduct meetings, and confidently innovate around peer learning processes, without the presence of external facilitators.

3. The Namma Mahiti Kendras (Village Information Centres) have been symbolic of a new equation in the community; they have improved women’s bargaining power in their village communities and enhanced the community standing of sanghas.

4. The proximity of the governance system to the sanghas enabled through the project and a transformation in the local culture towards an entitlements-based access to public information has, to some extent, displaced traditional information gatekeepers.

Challenges and the way ahead

At present, we are trying to hand over total ownership of the project components to Mahila Samakhya Mysore. This is bound to take time given that Mahila Samakhya, through its own programme activities as a funded government project, has multiple priorities. New projects, even with demonstrated long term benefits, may be caught in the tension between routine implementation and the learning demands of a shift to new approaches.

Kishori Chitrapata: Using a community informatics approach to empower out-of-school adolescent girls

Drawing on our experiences in the Mahiti Manthana project, ITfC, in partnership with Mahila Samakhya Karnataka, UNICEF and Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, launched the Kishori Chitrapata project in July 2009. The project works with around 75 adolescent girls in two village hubs - Attiguppe and Hosavaranchi and the Mahila Shikshana Kendra (Women’s Education Centre) in Hunsur block of Mysore district in India.

Kishori Chitrapata addresses the learning needs of out-of-school adolescent girls through innovative uses of photography, video, radio and computing technologies. The project has adopted a social constructivist approach to learning; and girls are encouraged, individually and collectively, to explore, question and redefine their social and cultural universe through these technologies.

Taking advantage of the ease of use and sharing enabled by the digital camera and...
video technologies, Kishori Chitra pata has created opportunities among young girls for creative expression, building a spirit of enquiry and teamwork. The curriculum has interwoven social themes and as well as topics for technical learning.

The pedagogy has been largely experimental and experiential, integrating technical and social components. Training videos, activities and games have supplemented theoretical sessions and this has helped the training to be vibrant and interesting. The project has been sensitive to the diverse backgrounds and capacities of the adolescent girls, helping them in their unique journeys of learning and, possibly, empowerment.

The project, through localised examples to explain technical words, and by allowing the learners to come up with their own terminologies, has demystified jargon, ensuring technology does not become intimidating.

5. Using simple examples to illustrate a technical concept seemed to work. eg: lens is like the eye, frame is like a tviri (the boundary of a field)


7. Both are part of the Department of Education, Government of Karnataka.

As the mobility of adolescent girls is highly restricted, and their interactions limited to their own household members and neighbours, their participation in the project was not easy. Girls therefore often dropped out from the training citing reasons like early marriage, intimidation from brothers, care-taking responsibilities at home and so on. Caste barriers were also a severe obstacle to building a sense of collective identity among the adolescent girls who participated in the project.

**Challenges and the way ahead**

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**Teachers’ Communities of Learning: The importance of peer learning networks**

Based on previous research, ITIC, along with the Department of State Research Education and Training, (DSERT), Policy Planning Unit (PPU) and Development Focus, an NGO in Bengaluru, designed and implemented a ‘Teachers’ Communities of Learning’ (TCoL) project in 20 schools in 3 blocks of Bengaluru district, during 2010-11.

This pilot project aimed at creating an online community of teachers to enable them to network, share resources, seek assistance and voice their opinions on a
range of issues from day-to-day school transactions to the education policy. The purpose was to establish the advantages of peer networking over working in isolation. Another objective was to help teachers understand ways of effectively integrating ICTs into their regular classroom transactions and enhance the quality of the teaching-learning process, by making the lessons more engaging and connected to real life. The larger vision of the project has been to support the professional development of teachers, by helping them see themselves as active contributors to the overall renewal of the public school system.

The initial set of schools for this pilot was chosen after school visits, a baseline research on the availability of computers in the school, as well as the interest of teachers and the principal to participate in the project. The programme was voluntary (an exception within the public education system, where trainings are often ‘compulsory’), and teachers participated only if they were keen to do so. The officials from the education department were involved in the design and curriculum of the programme and also constantly gave their inputs throughout the project.

Workshops on Maths, Science and Language educational tools were conducted for the teachers, and brainstorming sessions were held to help them find ways to integrate these into their teaching-learning processes. In the workshops, conceptual and pedagogical issues were also discussed. Subject resource groups were formed from which some mentors emerged to support other teachers in their learning process.

Trainings on using email, email lists, blogs and discussion forums for networking were also held.

A web-portal and an email list, were created for the teachers to communicate with one another. Discussions on developments in the State’s policy framework that would impact the educational system were also conducted through these workshops. Relevant academic articles on teaching-learning processes were read and presented by the teachers. Participatory and dialogic communication was encouraged in these workshops.

**Project impact – “I see ourselves transformed into a community of educators who have taken responsibility for their own professional development”**

The voluntary nature of the project brought in interested and committed teachers, who contributed not only through their participation in workshops and online forums, but also through their inputs and suggestions towards enhancing this community of learning. Feedback was taken at each workshop and implemented as far as possible in the next. Teachers also asked for a few additional workshops which were not part of our initial project plan; for example, on hardware and troubleshooting and on using the camera as a teaching-learning material. The teachers also started giving us suggestions on the design of workshops, both in terms of curriculum and frequency.

As these workshops were held regularly, teachers started to develop a working relationship with one another. The participatory nature of the workshops helped in creating a tacit norm requiring all teachers to voice their opinions in a professional manner. They collaborated with one another to create lesson plans and activities, which were also peer reviewed. Such regular interaction promoted trust, shaping the beginnings of a sense of community.

Overall, this pilot project not only focussed on building the academic skills of the teachers by using ICTs, but also allowed them to examine the complexity of the education system and their own position in it.

**Challenges and the way ahead**

A significant challenge of this project has been the lack of a culture of ongoing communication among government school teachers. It is not enough for teachers to interact only in workshop spaces. Horizontal communication needs to be an everyday affair. Time and resource constraints do not allow for regular physical meetings, and so opening up the digital world offers alternatives for community building.

Many of the teachers did not even have an email id at the beginning of the project. Although teachers had been trained extensively on how to email and use the web-portal, they have not used these platforms much. According to them, one of the reasons they do not use the Internet often is because they do not have access to ICT content and applications that are meaningful to them. Sometimes, lack of time is a genuine concern. (Most of them are women and have multiple work burdens).

Very few of the schools, which were part of the project, have Internet access. Further, the apathy of the public education system towards technology is another factor that has prevented teachers from coming online. Taking into account some of these challenges, ITIC is continuing this pilot in the existing blocks, bringing in more teachers into the ‘community of learning’ and further, building the skills of existing members.

**Conclusion**

The three projects described here show us how digital technologies in their social applications redefine communities, and
open up new pathways in the local development process. Through a community informatics approach, we have learnt some lessons across the projects:

1. ICTs facilitate dialogue and horizontal networking among geographically dispersed groups that share life experiences, sometimes even providing the necessary scaffolding to build a wider social movement.

2. Going beyond the written word as the primary mode of communication, ICTs bring new voices and visibilities. This not only creates a facilitative climate for peer learning processes among non-literate groups, but also opens up spaces for subversion and political action.

3. Sustained engagement with locally meaningful ICT-enabled practices can sow the seeds for a new form and culture of development. This frontier is emergent and needs to be explored and understood better.

All the projects also indicate that community informatics, as a transformative development methodology, needs to be firmly embedded in a commitment to collectivities and social justice.

The team of authors work with IT for Change), an India-based NGO engaged in policy research and advocacy on ICTD and can be reached at itfc@iforchange.net.

Anita Gurumurthy is a founding member and Executive Director of IT for Change. She can be reached at anita@iforchange.net

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**PCF7: Empowerment & Transformation**

The theme of COL’s Seventh Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning (PCF7, 2 – 6 December 2013 in Abuja, Nigeria) is *Open Learning for Development: Towards Empowerment and Transformation*. PCF7’s co-host, the Federal Ministry of Education, Nigeria, and the lead partner institution, the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) are working to make the conference fruitful within the context of development in Africa. Abstracts of papers and proposals for various formats of PCF7 participation are invited under one of PCF7’s five themes:

1. Girls’ and Women’s Education
2. Skills Development
3. Promoting Open Educational Resources (OER)
4. Innovation and Technology
5. Institutional Development

**Dates to remember**

- 30 April 2013 – Deadline for abstracts and proposals
- 31 May 2013 – Notification of acceptance of abstracts proposals with feedback
- 31 July 2013 – Last date for submission of full papers
- 31 August 2013 – Notification of acceptance of full papers

**Excellence in Distance Education Awards**

Continuing the tradition of recognising and honouring excellence in open, distance and technology enhanced education through awards, during the Seventh Pan-Commonwealth Forum (PCF7) four categories of awards designed to recognise excellence will be presented for recognition: at the institutional level; in the development of learning materials; in student accomplishment; and award for a lifetime achievement in and contribution to open and distance learning.

[http://tinyurl.com/cqfj7hn](http://tinyurl.com/cqfj7hn)
Regional Round Up

Celebrating a decade of Community Radio in India

For the third consecutive year, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB), Government of India, brought together functional community radio stations to meet, share their experiences and take stock of the progress made. Organized by OneWorld Foundation India on behalf of Ministry, the three-day meeting was attended by 118 operational stations, 25 GOPA (Grant of Permission Agreement) holders, Government officials, international and national donors, and experts. A pre-conference high spot was a first ever Twitter conference held by MIB a day before the event.

In various thematic sessions, participants deliberated over issues of community ownership, participatory processes, lessons learnt from the ground, role of community radio in influencing change for inclusive growth, self regulation and code of ethics, resource crunch faced by CRS and technological value to CRS.

The Sammelan (Convention) highlights included presentations by three international community radio experts from Kenya, Senegal and Phillipines and special addresses by high ranking officials of MIB including Ms.Supriya Sahu, Joint Secretary, Mr. Uday Kumar Verma, Secretary, MIB and the honourable Minister for Information and Broadcasting Mr. Manish Tiwari, who also gave away the National Community Radio Awards to 10 CRS across five categories.

National Community Radio Award Winners

Most Creative/ Innovative Programme Content Category
1. First Prize: Radio Mewat, Nuh, Haryana Apki Police Apke Sath
2. Second Prize: Radio Benziger, Kollam, Kerala Jana Shabdam
3. Third Prize: SSM Community Radio, Namakkal, Tamil Nadu Thaimaiea Thayangathey

Sustainability Model Category
1. First Prize: Radio Mattoli, Wayanad, Kerala

Promoting Local Culture Category
1. First Prize: Kisan Vani, Sironj, Madhya Pradesh Hamare Kalakar
2. Second Prize: Neladani CR, Bengaluru, Karnataka Janapadaloka
3. Third Prize: CMS Radio, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh Community ka Kamaal: Ekta - Ramleela

Community Engagement Category
1. First Prize: Radio Media Village, Kottayam, Kerala Thanal
2. Second Prize: Community Radio, Ahmedabad, Gujarat Right to Information
3. Third Prize: CMS Radio, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh Janhit Mein Jari – Raushan Hua Jahaan

CEMCA congratulates all the award winners.

Voices for Change and Peace: Taking Stock of Community Radio in South Asia

Over 60 community radio advocates, radio broadcasters, media academics, civil society groups, journalists, social activists and government representatives from South Asia (India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Maldives and Bhutan) gathered in Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) Campus, New Delhi from 17-18 January 2013 to articulate and review media mechanisms to promote a just and humane world through communications and specifically through community radio (CR). The deliberations were organized by AMARC Asia Pacific and the UNESCO Chair on Community Media (University of Hyderabad) in collaboration with UNESCO, International Media Support, Community
Radio Forum of India and the Indian Academy of Self Employed Women.

The group articulated several concerns that make the emergence and sustenance of a third-tier of community broadcasting (apart from public and commercial sectors) in the South Asian region a challenging task. Problems such as restrictive policy frameworks, inadequate allocation of spectrum for communities, and the lack of a sustainable support system are among the issues that need to be addressed urgently for genuine democratization of media spaces in South Asia. Apprehensions over security arising out of the activities of a variety of non-state actors in South Asia have also contributed to a somewhat hesitant opening up of airwaves in certain areas.

The two-day seminar took stock of South Asian experiences with community radio, including the strong potential of the medium for social change and promotion of peace in the region. After intense deliberations, the group formalized four critical areas for reform. These included policy, sustainability, technology, and knowledge & capacity-sharing an came up with detailed recommendations in the areas of Policy, Sustainability, Technology; and Knowledge and Capacity sharing for Community Radio Stations. Dr. Sanjaya Mishra, Director (CEMCA) made a brief presentation in the seminar and emphasised the need for clear policy formulation and development of self-regulatory frameworks for CR.

Source: Unpublished Seminar Report

**Regulation and Licensing in the International Perspectives**

A one day international consultation on “Regulation and Licensing: International Perspectives” was organised on February 8, 2013, supported by Ford Foundation. The consultation provided an opportunity to look at legislations and practices from various countries and deliberated on ways to incorporate the better ones into India’s community radio regulatory framework. Presided over by Ms. Supriya Sahu, Joint Secretary (MIB) the consultation brought three international experts - Grace Githagia who is closely associated with the media, empowerment and democracy in East Africa (MEDIEA) research programme, Alymana Bathily with over 17 years of experience in the field of media and communication, and Lucio Tabing, author of UNESCO’s How to do Community Radio, besides several other publications. The experts shared their experiences about the regulation and licensing in community radio in their countries. Dr. Ravina Aggarwal provided the perspectives of Ford Foundation’s engagement in this domain from an Freedom of Expression and Rights Perspective. The recommendations from the consultation also fed into the deliberations of the Third Community Radio Sammelan held at New Delhi from February 9-11, 2013.

**Two New Community Radio Stations come up in Bangladesh**

Bangladesh has granted licences to two more stations located in the cyclone prone remote Char Island coastal region, bringing the total number of community radios stations in the country to sixteen. Coastal Association for Social Transformation Trust (COAST) at Bhola (http://www.coastbd.org) and Dwip Unnauan Songstha (DUS) at Hatia (http://dusbgladesh.org) have been granted approval as a special consideration to disseminate information and education to enhance people’s skill to combat disasters. DUS has also received funding support from Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

Besides India, Bangladesh is the only other country in the region to have a formal community radio policy. When the policy was first announced in the year 2008, around 450 interested organisations came forward, of which about 178 actually submitted their applications. However, only fourteen licences were granted at that time. With COAST and DUS joining in, the number of CRS in Bangladesh stands at sixteen, as of now.

**Reviving the Spirit of Community Radio in Sri Lanka**

Sri Lanka Development Journalist Forum (SDJF) and its apex body – Sri Lanka Community Radio Forum (SLCRF) are organizing three-day national conference on the role of broadcasting on democratization in August, 2013. The thrust of the discussion is around media policy reforms.

Even though there were many successful examples of community-based programming, that was aired on the public radio - Sri Lankan Broadcasting Corporation (SLBC) in the 80s and the 90s, currently there is not much activity. While the commercial FM broadcasting sector has grown, community radio is yet to take root. Currently there is no policy for CR and SDJF expects over a hundred media practitioners and stake-holders to participate in the forum and raise the demand for community radio as a way to heal the post conflict nation. Further updates on the event can be obtained from the website http://www.idjf.org

*Inputs from M.C. Rasmin, CEO/Director, SDJF*
Open Universities: India’s Answers to Challenges in Higher Education


By Nayantara Padhi

Open University system can be considered now as one of the greatest educational achievements of the 20th century and the most suited educational system for the post-modern society. Open Universities (OUs) have the potential to provide higher education to the masses through the wide choice of disciplines they offer. With an emphasis on use of technology, self-learning materials in multi-media formats and flexibility with regard to entry and exit, age and combination of subjects, they are certainly the solution to challenges faced in the educational sector today.

In this book, the growth of OUs in India over the past three decades has been presented. It has explored the quantum and quality of contribution made by the Indian OUs in increasing the enrolment ratio, providing flexibility and variety in course selection and professional development and the measures needed to consolidate and strengthen the system have been discussed. It consists of seven chapters. Chapter One gives an in-depth insight into the historical developments of OUs across the globe. The evolution of Indian OUs has been presented in the light of initiatives taken by Government of India till late 2011. Chapter Two is the best outcome of the research carried out by the author. It gives the complete statistical figures of Indian OUs in terms of total enrolment in higher education: in conventional and OUs, growth of enrolment in OUs from 1983 to 2010, profile of learners in OUs, number of academic programmes offered by OUs, state wise enrolment of OUs, pattern of enrolment, total number of degrees awarded by OUs. This chapter gives new directions for research in OUs. Chapter Three covers the delivery of programmes and the process of evaluation in OUs. It has also provided the Distance Education Council (DEC) norms for delivering programmes and courses through distance mode. It has highlighted the importance of two-way communication in open and distance learning (ODL) and role of information and communication technology (ICT) in effective delivery of the

programmes. Chapter Four gives the financing and funding patterns of OUs in India. It has covered various schemes and practices that are available for OUs. Chapter Five presents a quite unexplored area in Indian OUs i.e. research. It has covered areas like projects undertaken, doctoral theses, publications etc. It provides an insight into the possible avenues for research in ODL. Chapter Six analyses a very critical component of higher education i.e. assessment and accreditation of ODL system followed world wide. In Indian context, it has discussed the role of DEC in assessment and accreditation of Indian OUs. The outcome of the entire research work carried out by the author is presented in the Chapter Seven. It gives the vision, strategy and the new Models for OUs.

To conclude, this book follows a systematic approach in terms of all the vital facets of OUs. This book will be of great use to the policymakers and researchers in the area of ODL due to the following uniqueness:

- Delineates how distance learning system can be the panacea for India’s educational deficiencies;
- Explains how this system can leverage its inherent flexibility and technology to address the challenges faced by the education sector;
- Examines the system’s ability to reach the masses; and
- Draws a roadmap for the future strategy of open universities.

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Community Radio in the Twenty-First Century


By Kanchan K. Malik

Janey Gordon has put together a book with in-depth write-ups by academics and practitioners of community radio who have spent significant chunks of their lives as activists pursuing their common passion for ‘this third tier of broadcasting, which is neither commercial nor state run.’

Janey Gordon was herself a professional broadcaster with the BBC before she took up teaching and research in areas of community radio, mobile phones and media pedagogy at the University of Bedfordshire. She also manages the University’s community radio station – Radio LaB 97.1fm. Incidentally, the University of Bedfordshire is hosting the international radio event of the year – The Radio Conference ‘for all radio thinkers and doers’ – Radio 2013.

The three sections of the book present international perspectives on history, theory and practice of community radio around the world.

The first set of articles map the histories of the ferment for community radio legislation in countries such as the UK, the US, Philippines, Uruguay and Bangladesh. Peter Lewis navigates the reader through the vicious circle of obstacles that the campaign in the UK, carried on over a quarter of a century, had to overcome before community radio was provided legitimacy in 2002. Brandy Doyle accounts how it took a hula hoop event with signs that read ‘Community radio now!’ to finally take on the commercial radio lobby in the US and push for low-powered community radio.

Philippines is a unique case where community radio is treated as a commercial enterprise, writes Lisa Brooten and vividly describes the threats faced by community stations in a country known to have pioneered community radio development in Southeast Asia. Evan Light narrates how community radio is no longer a clandestine activity in Uruguay and is increasingly visible and vocal. Shameem Reza takes us through the debates among CR lobbyists calling for revisions in the community radio policy which was passed by the government of Bangladesh in 2008.

The final chapter in section one of the book is written by Janey Gordon in which she argues that members of the public are utilising community radio and other new media technologies such as mobile telephony to reclaim the electromagnetic spectrum for public good and seeking to promote civic engagement, debate, activism and sharing of cultural products.

The second section of the book explores the theoretical contexts which render community radio and its role amenable to analysis. The authors Kerrie Foxwell, Donald Browne, Susan Forde & Michael Meadows, Nick Rubin, and Michael Hunts-berger problematize concepts such as ‘community mass media’, ‘community’, ‘citizens’, ‘music-based alternative media’ and ‘public service’ and theorize about their applicability in the discursive construction of community radio.

The authors in the concluding section dwell on the practice of Community Radio and present some insightful case studies from across the globe. Mary Traynor focuses on the tenability and sustainability of community radio in Laos and China where ‘the imperatives of government are not democratic’. The possible consequences of the much debated Hungarian media legislation of 2011 for community radio in the country are featured in the chapter by Gabriella Velics.

Kennedy Javuru analyses community radio in three East African coun-tries: Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania by asking a rhetorical question: For or By the Community? The case study from South Africa by Last Moyo outlines the important role community radio plays in cultural citizenship of ethnic minorities.

Caroline Mitchell’s chapter on capacity building for community radio and the chapter on audience analysis by Emma Ward, Tom Buckham and Lawrie Hallett provide examples of new approaches and methods that may be adopted by community radio stations for greater community connectedness. In the concluding chapter of the book, Janey Gordon discusses educational stations which cater to listeners wider than the students on their own campuses.

This book of edited chapters celebrates the emergence and expansion of community radio globally as a medium that has the potential to invigorate communities and promote democracy by ‘providing social capital, social worth and ultimately social gain to that community’. The book also documents issues that have proved to be contentious in the growth of community radio sector and must be addressed. Although there is no chapter that directly deals with the Indian scenario or case study, but there is a lot to be learnt from the richness and diversity of experiences, examples and discourses on community radio contained in the book.

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Forthcoming Events

The Unisa Cambridge International Conference on Open and Distance eLearning 2013

The University of South Africa in association with Cambridge Distance Education and the Commonwealth of Learning presents The Unisa Cambridge International Conference on Open and Distance eLearning from 30 September - 3 October 2013 - Spier Estate - Cape Town - South Africa.

For more information, contact:
Genevieve James
Tel: +27124296948
Email: pdrconf@gmail.com

27th Annual Conference of the Asian Association of Open Universities

Conference Theme: Leveraging the Power of Open and Distance Education for Building a Divergent World - Today’s Solutions and Tomorrow’s Vision

01-03 October 2013, Islamabad, Pakistan.

For more information, contact:
AAOU 2013 Conference Secretariat
Room-8, Block-7,
Allama Iqbal Open University,
Islamabad, Pakistan.
Email:aaou2013@aiou.edu.pk
Web site: http://overseas.aiou.edu.pk/aaou.asp

63rd Annual Conference of International Council for Education Media

ICEM 2013 1-4 October 2013, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

Organized by the Nanyang Technological University, in collaboration with the International Council for Educational Media, the conference theme ‘we-Learning: Content, Community and Collaboration’ recognises the pervasive and rapid changes post the advent of Web 2.0 that are taking place in education and society and having a profound impact on both. It explores the paradigm shift from e-Learning to we-Learning and the broad consequences for education in a changed world. The 8th International LAMS (Learning Activity Management System) and Learning Design conference will also be held as part of ICEM 2013.

For more information:
Website: http://icem2013.ntu.edu.sg/
Partner’s Page

Making Radio Lively - Mann Deshi Tarang Vahini

By Chetna Sinha and Shivaji Yadav

Mann Deshi Tarang Vahini (MDTV) got their community radio license in 2009 and started broadcast in May 2010 with a programmatic focus in four areas – women, children, farmers and health. The radio team had limited training in broadcasting and most of the programmes were in the form of interviews and narrations. The challenge before the radio team was to make the programmes more varied, interesting and participatory by involving the community.

Today three years down the line, MDTV has set-up a radio club with teachers, students, women, farmers and others who contribute to programmes; increased its listener base through outreach activities and broadcasts a wide variety of interesting programmes.

A New Approach to Content Development

Partnership with CEMCA was turning point for MDTV that breathed life into the radio programmes. In the first training workshop held by CEMCA in August 2011, the MDTV radio team got its first exposure to making programmes in a systematic and collaborative way that would enable communities to use radio for their own learning and development. For the first time, the radio team worked together with women from the community, local health workers, doctors and other experts to identify local health issues and explored how to develop content for a learning programme and add value to the learning with outreach activities.

Exploring Programme Formats

CEMCA’s content development training was followed up with production training where trainers from two operating community radio stations in Maharashtra – FTII CRS and Vasundhara Vahini from Baramati, provided a week-long hands-on training to the radio team and community women on making programmes in different formats and combining them interestingly into a magazine format.

A Series of 70 Programmes for Better Health

Armed with training inputs from CEMCA, MDTV developed a series of 70 learning programmes on various health issues that were identified collectively by the team that included safe drinking water; healthy and balanced diets, special diets for pregnant women, cleanliness and general hygiene, common infections and diseases, tuberculosis among others. The basic approach imparted by CEMCA training was used in developing programme content by asking a set of questions:

- What is the problem? (collaboratively identifying an issue of local concern)
- What is causing the problem (identifying negative behaviour associated with the problem)
- What are the consequences (Listing the negative behaviours associated with the problem)
- What should people do about it (positive behaviour that is advocated)
- What would be the results of it? (communicating positive benefits form such actions)

Doctors, nurses, health workers from the local health centres, teachers as well as school children contributed both to programme content and outreach activities like essay competitions in schools, poster exhibitions and public discussions and talks.

A small feedback study conducted among listeners and stake-holders revealed the high level of interest and listenership in the community.

Into its third year of broadcasting MDTV has indeed come a long way both in terms of its programme quantity and quality. MDTV gratefully acknowledge the contribution made by CEMCA in making MDTV community radio vibrant and lively.

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