

Community Radio: Basics

A quick read for NGOs interested
in Community Radio



सत्यमेव जयते
Ministry of Information and Broadcasting
Government of India

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United Nations Children's Fund
73 Lodi Estate
New Delhi - 110003
Email: newdelhi@unicef.org
Website: www.unicef.in

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Contents



1. Introduction 1

- What is Community Radio
- The Community Radio Movement in India
- What Are the Principles Guiding Community Radio



2. Setting Up a CR Station 5

- Establishing a CR Station



3. CR Policy and Current Guidelines 11

- Basic Principles
- Eligibility Criteria
- Content Guidelines
- Guidelines for Funding and Sustenance
- A Step-by-Step Guide to Application Process
- By When Should You Expect to Get Your Broadcast License?



4. Basic Costs for Setting Up a CR Station 17

- Studio Set up and Acoustic Design
- Equipment
- Furniture
- Volunteer and Staff (Stipends and Salaries)
- Training and Capacity Building



5. Why Should You Invest in CR 21

- Enhanced Community Participation
- An Unmatched Local Media and Communication Tool
- A Shift In the Development Paradigm
- Community Voice and Social Accountability



6. Partnerships 25

- Local Entrepreneurs /Businessmen and Industry
- Local Administration and Government Programs
- Other Local NGOs
- Donor Agencies



7. Resources and Contacts 27

- Community Radio Forum
- Ministry of Information and Broadcasting
- Training Organizations

Annexure: Details of Functional Community Radio Stations in India 29



Community Radio in session: For the people, by the people

1

Introduction

What is Community Radio?

Many of us have grown up with All India Radio and its Medium Wave Channels. Then a more localized radio was available through the advent of FM radio and the opening up of the airwaves to commercial stations. However after much advocacy the airwaves truly became public property in November 2006 when the Government passed a new bill allowing Civil Society organizations to broadcast. This is what is today understood as community radio and if a station calls itself a community radio station then it should unequivocally be a station for the people, by the people and of the people.

A key feature of a community radio station is that it is LOCAL in every way – in its geographic reach, its language, the content of its programming and its management and ownership. Some of the other salient underpinnings of a community radio station would be that:

- It is a democratic set up which invites and encourages community participation.
- It is a low cost set up, run by locals of a community, generating information, stories and entertainment that are designed for the specific needs and interests of that particular community.
- It is a non profit initiative which works in the direction of accepting pluralism and diversity

within a community, thus fostering positive relationships.

- It builds a strong sense of identity and unity among community members who collectively raise concerns and take action to find solutions to their problems through this locally accessible media platform.

The CR Movement in India

The right for communities to own the airwaves came after a long struggle. A struggle by people who believed that voice was power and that in order to truly empower communities and citizens the media needs to be community owned and managed. The community radio movement in India was born from the invigorating and rights based 1995 judgment of the supreme court declaring airwaves to be public property. It has taken more than ten years of advocacy, campaigning, working with the Government and sometimes fighting it, to finally create a CR policy that takes the first few steps by allowing people the right to free speech that has been guaranteed by our constitution. A truly community owned community radio station can change the way development takes place in a community: with access to services, right to redress, a powerful local medium to raise their voice against injustice, to share culture and tradition and showcase talent.

However, this road has not yet reached its destination as many provisions in the policy are still restrictive and the gaps between the

philosophy of Community Media and the implementation of that philosophy at the grass root level still need to be bridged. Here is a short timeline to give you a glimpse of how CR has emerged in India:

- **February, 1995** – Supreme Court of India passes the historic judgment declaring ‘*airwaves as public property, to be regulated by a public authority in interest of the public and prevent invasion of their rights*’.
- **September 1996** – Bangalore based group VOICES – dedicated to communication campaigns, calls together broadcasters, policy planners, media professional and not-for-profit organization to discuss relevance of CR in India, and suitable policy measures. This leads to the signing of the Bangalore Declaration on Radio for Community Broadcasting. This declaration was instrumental in being a starting point for the movement for community radio.
- **July 2000** – UNESCO sponsored workshop in Hyderabad issued the *Pashtapur declaration on Community Radio*. The document became a significant landmark in that it urged the government to not let utilization of airwaves be limited to state-owned public and private commercial radio, but also have a third tier of broadcasting in the form of non-profit community radio.
- **December 2002** – The first Community Radio Policy is released, where the government allows well established educational institutions to locally set up radio stations and thus run these ‘campus’ stations across the country. However, the purpose of the movement remained defeated by yet again giving more to the already haves – the urban educated elite got yet another form of media and the grassroots communities were again left out.
- **May 2004** – Ceaseless campaigning for communities’ right to access airwaves resulted in a consultation called by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting with support from UNDP and UNESCO to design an “*Enabling Framework for Community Radio in India*”.
- **July 2004** – A revised Community Radio Policy is drafted based on the consultation.
- **November 2006** – Community Radio Policy is passed by Union Cabinet giving civil society organizations and not-for-profits the right to set up and run community radio stations.

And now in January 2012, there are only 37 operational community radio stations supported by NGOs. So we need more of you to take up this opportunity to assist your communities in gaining a voice. Later in this booklet we talk about the many benefits of starting your own CR station – so keep reading on!

What Are the Principles Guiding Community Radio?

The two fundamental principles that guide community radio are Public Access and Participation.

What Is Meant by Public Access?

Public access means that all members of the community must have access to the broadcast services provided by the station i.e. the content is produced for and reaches all the inhabitants of the local community. Access here also inherently means access to the language of programming. Additionally access would mean access to the station’s content production and broadcast centre itself. This means that the community radio station is making itself available to the community in all possible ways. If the station is fully accessible it opens the doors for participation.

Here are a few steps you can undertake to ensure that the community radio station that your NGO facilitates is publicly accessible:

1. When finalizing a place to establish the content production and broadcast building and infrastructure, ensure that it is geographically within walking or cycling distance from more than 50% of your community.

2. Ensure that the programs are produced in the local languages and dialects.
3. Ensure that the program content is relevant and responds to the immediate needs of the community.
4. Ensure that there is no red tape or bureaucratic formalities that restrict access to the recording studio spaces or meeting rooms of the station and that the station remains open at most times , on most days of the week.

What is Participation?

Participation implies that the local community participates in the day-to-day content creation and operation of the community radio station and is included in the discussion and decision making process of the station's activities.

The community is involved in defining the goals and objectives and thus the vision and mission of the Community Radio Station. They are the deciding body for the principles the station would abide by and how the management of the station would function.

The community also participates in electing issues on which content is to be produced, the kind of content to be produced, as well as the

programme scheduling for various target audiences and the programme durations. Hence the decisions of the producers/community reporters are informed by the preferences and decisions of the community.

In order to incorporate these two core principles, the community radio station needs to establish appropriate systems and mechanisms that enable community access, ownership and participation.

Here are some of the steps that your NGO can take when operating a community radio station to ensure that the principle of participation is adhered to:

1. Establish a regular process of community meetings to discuss everyday operational, content and other larger value related decisions of the community radio station.
2. Establish an ongoing training and capacity building process so that new members of the community can become reporters and producers with the community radio station.
3. Include regular announcements regarding the stations activities within the broadcast schedule as well as use other local media to inform community members regarding the station's activities.

Community members discuss content





Men in the community learn how to operate the station

2

Setting Up a CR Station

The first thing you must consider before setting up your CR station is the level of your current understanding and interaction with your local community. It is important to identify the geographical area and the community you want to work with and have community discussions to assess the communication needs within the community as well as the role a community radio can play in that area. As a second step, while you lodge your CR license application with the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting you need to prepare your infrastructure, acquire equipment and work with your community to build capacity of a set of community members to become reporters and program makers and broadcasters. A graphic to help you understand the process is on the next page.



Process of Establishing a Community Radio Station



Establishing a CR Station

Step I: Needs Assessment

A needs assessment is a simple research undertaken by the NGO applying for a community Radio license to establish the communication needs of its community. The idea behind the research is to focus on gaining a comprehensive understanding the kinds of programs the community would like to listen to and the enthusiasm the community has with regard to engaging with the production and management process of a community radio station in their locality. The needs assessment research should ideally have a quantitative as well as a qualitative component and must be designed to fill any gaps in the NGO's own knowledge about the community it intends to serve through the community radio station that it is proposing to establish.

Step II: Applying for CR License

There is a formal multi step process that has to be followed in order to apply for and receive a Community Radio License from the Information and Broadcasting Ministry, Government of India. The complete application process is explained later in this booklet.

Step III: Establishing Infrastructure

A key step towards establishing a local community radio station is the process of selecting and investing in a physical space where the recording studio for the station can be established. This space can be donated by the local community and should ideally be located at the heart of the community that the radio station intends to serve. As part of the infrastructure a small room needs to be set up which is reasonably well insulated and acoustically treated so that it can be used as an audio recording space where community members can use microphones for recording programs. Investment in infrastructure also needs to include an investment in the computers and editing software required to produce and broadcast the radio programs. A secondary step to building the infrastructure is the acquiring of the transmitter and setting up the transmission tower. This can be done only after certain permissions (SACFA clearances) have been obtained from the government (refer to application process page no 12) and your application for a CR license has completed its first few stages of approval.

Using local resources for programming



Step IV: Capacity Building and Training

This step is possibly the most intensive preparation that needs to be made in the establishment of a community radio station, as this is your investment in human resource. A community radio station is nothing if there is no community that produces the programs. In order to train community members to become effective local communicators and program producers, the NGO must undertake a process of building skills for program production and broadcast within the local community. These could be the local farmers, housewives, and students, older community members who have more time. There are various volunteer models that have emerged over the years that allow community radio stations to keep a high level of local involvement in program production. This means the local community members are trained to ideate on program and program structure, speak on the microphone and record their voices, use the computers to edit the programs and operate the transmitter to broadcast programs in a timely

manner as per schedules that they organize and decide. Ideally to achieve a level of competence and confidence among community members to independently run their own radio station, an investment of at least a year of regular training and handholding is recommended. This training can be initiated and undertaken in partnership with organizations working on community media and communication for development or in partnership with other older community radio stations in order to learn from their experiences.

Step V: Trial Productions and Narrowcast

While the CR application progresses to its final stages, it is important that the CR station start engaging with the larger community and conduct listening sessions of the programs created by the station. This can be done through a scheduled process of organizing community meetings and playing the programs on a tape recorder. This process enables the community to provide feedback to the initial programs being produced by the CR station. This entire process of

Setting up infrastructure: Egg crates to insulate a room for recording





Capacity development: Hearing how to use the equipment

conducting listening sessions in the community is beneficial in two ways: One it allows the program producers at the community radio station to reflect on how the community is receiving their programs and get immediate feedback from their listening audiences; and second the community gets to know the community radio producers first hand, engage with the programs and get an opportunity to show their interest in participating in the activities of the CR station.

Step VI: Wireless Operating License

The Wireless operating License (WOL) is the final permission for you to start broadcasting. By the time you receive the WOL, you should have got all your broadcasting equipment including transmitters and towers installed and active. When you get the WOL you start your test broadcasts and fine-tune the broadcast processes at your station. As soon as your processes have been fine-tuned and time

schedules for broadcast of programs set and publicized to your community you can officially start your broadcasts.

The overall process from the time you start the work on establishing a CR station till your CR station has a regular two to three hour daily broadcast schedule, can take upto two years. This timeline depends on how quickly your license application gets processed with the various government departments (application process explained in detail below) and your own ability to have the studio set up, equipment procured and build local volunteer capacity to take charge of the station. Even after the station is up and running, it will take a lot of hard work to continue to produce new programs on a daily basis and increase the number of hours that you broadcast. However it will all pay off in the long run when your community's ability to raise important local issues and collaborate to solve its problems is well facilitated by a system of local communication that is all their own!



Community listens to broadcast

3

CR Policy and Current Guidelines

There is a comprehensive Community Radio Policy that guides the process of establishing a community radio station. The policy provides detailed guidelines on eligibility and process.

Here are some selected excerpts from the policy:

Basic Principles

An organization wanting to start a community radio station (CRS) must follow the following principles:

1. It should be registered in India as a 'non-profit' organization and should have proven record of at least three years of work with the local community.
2. It must be registered under the Societies Act or any other relevant Act.
3. The CRS to be operated by the NGO should be designed to serve a specific well-defined local community.
4. The NGO should have an ownership and management structure that is reflective of the community that the CRS seeks to serve.
5. Programmes for broadcast should be relevant to the educational, developmental, social and cultural needs of the community.

Eligibility Criteria

- I. Educational institutions including State Agricultural Universities, ICAR institutions and

Krishi Vigyan Kendra's are eligible to apply for a Community Radio License. Other than these, registered community based organizations and NGOs and other public trusts registered under the societies Act are also eligible. It is important to note that the registration of the organization must be atleast three years old at the time of application.

II. The following are not eligible to run a CRS:

- a) Individuals;
- b) Political Parties or their affiliate organizations – including students, women, trade unions and such other wings affiliated to these parties.
- c) Organizations operating with a motive to earn profit;
- d) Organizations expressly banned by the Union and State Governments.

Content Guidelines

- i) The programmes should be of immediate relevance to the community. The emphasis should be on development issues including agricultural, health, educational, environmental, social, community empowerment and cultural. The programming should also reflect the special interests and needs of the local community.
- ii) At least 50% of the programs should be generated with the participation of the local community, for which the station has been set up.

- iii) Programmes should be in the local language and dialect(s).
- iv) The NGO/CR station must adhere to the Programme and Advertising Code as prescribed for All India Radio.
- v) The NGO/CR station must preserve all programmes broadcast by the CRS for three months from the date of broadcast.
- vi) The CR station must not broadcast any program, which relates to news and current affairs and is otherwise political in nature.
- vii) The NGO/CR station should ensure that nothing is included in the programmes broadcast which:
 - Offends good taste or decency;
 - Contains criticism of friendly countries;
 - Contains attack on religions communities through any kind of words/speech that is contemptuous of religious groups or which either promotes or result in promoting communal discontent or disharmony;
 - Contains anything obscene, defamatory, deliberate, false and suggestive innuendoes and half truths;
 - Is likely to encourage or incite violence or contains anything against maintenance of law and order or which promotes anti-national attitudes;
 - Contains anything amounting to contempt of court or anything affecting the integrity of the Nation;
 - Contains aspersions against the dignity of the President/Vice President and the Judiciary;
 - Criticizes, maligns or slanders any individual person or group;
 - Encourages superstition or blind belief;
 - Denigrates women or children;
 - Presents or suggests as desirable the use of drugs including alcohol, narcotics and tobacco;
 - Stereotypes, incites, vilifies or perpetuates hatred against or attempts to demean any person or group on the basis of ethnicity,

nationality, race, gender, sexual preference, religion, age or physical or mental disability.

- viii) The NGOs must ensure that due care is taken with respect to religious programmes produced by the CR station with a view to avoid:

- Exploitation of religious susceptibilities; and
- Committing offence to the religious views and beliefs of those belonging to a particular religion or religious denomination.

On not following these principles, the CR Stations are liable to punitive action. Details of punitive action are also provided in the policy.

Guidelines for Funding and sustenance

1. NGOs can seek funding from multilateral aid agencies and in case foreign funding is sought the NGO must ensure that it has requisite FCRA clearances. under Foreign Contribution Regulation Act, 1976.
2. Transmission of sponsored programmes is not permitted except programmes sponsored by Central & State Governments and other development organizations with the purpose of broadcasting public interest information.
3. Limited advertising and announcements relating to local events, local businesses, services and employment opportunities is allowed. The maximum duration of such limited advertising is restricted to 5 minutes per hour of broadcast.
4. DAVP is currently offering one rupee for every one second of advertising. The CR stations must register at the DAVP site http://www.davp.nic.in/FRESH_CR%5Cem_rc_agn_fresh.aspx to become eligible to receive government advertisements that they can then broadcast on their stations as per the DAVP fee structure.
5. Revenue generated from advertisement and announcements can be utilized to cover operational expenses and capital

expenditure of the CRS. After meeting the full financial needs of the CRS, any surplus funds may, with prior written permission of the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, be ploughed into the primary activity of the organization.

The complete CR policy along with application forms, is available at:

<http://www.mib.nic.in/ShowContent.aspx?uid1=0&uid2=51&uid3=127&uid4=0&uid5=0&uid6=0&uid7=0>

It is important to note that there is continuing discussion with the Ministry of I & B to further revise the policy provisions and the new provisions may facilitate the easy roll out and sustainability of CR stations across the country. If you apply for and establish a CR station please keep tuned into the new developments regarding the policy.

By When Should You Expect to Get Your Broadcast License?

There is no definite answer to this question! The average time in which one should be expecting to get their license can range from 18 months to 22 months. While some organizations take lesser time to get their licenses some licenses take much longer. The timeline depends on how well your paperwork has been put together, and given your geographical location and past work how little cause the Ministry of Home Affairs has to object to your application. There are also delays at some of the departments for example the department of telecommunication, and while CR enthusiasts and advocates are working with the Ministry of I&B to smooth the process and make it more expedient for NGOs to get their CR licenses, it still takes at least a year from start to finish.

It may therefore be advisable to plan for this timeline and use it effectively to build your local capacity and be prepared in every way to begin long hours of broadcast when the license comes. You may start creating a bank of content so that you can start broadcasting longer hours, you can build a cadre of trained reporters and producers from the local community, you can establish partnerships and support networks that will help support your ongoing costs.

Recording local events



1 CRS Application

Submitted by: NGO
To: CRS Cell, Ministry of
Information & Broadcasting,
Govt. of India
(MoIB, Gol)

2 Clearance from ministries and security check

By: Various ministries
of Govt. of India, incl.
Civil Aviation, Defence,
Home Affairs,
Communication

A Step-by-Step Guide to Application Process

7 Application for SACFA Clearance & Frequency Allocation

By: YOU (within 1 month of date of Lol
issue)
To: SACFA Wing, WPC,
Min. of Communication & Information
Technology (MoCIT), Govt. of India

The application process is a long one and involves several ministries and Government departments. This section provides a step-by-step guide to the formalities and procedures involved in applying for license to set up a community radio station

10 Issue of GoPA

By: MoIB, Gol
To: NGO
(Sign this within
1 month of issue)

11 Application for Wireless Operating License (WoL)

By: NGO
To: WPC, DoT,
MoCIT

3 Presentation to Screening Committee

By: NGO
To: Panel of govt. and civil society representatives at MoIB offices in New Delhi

4 Issue of Letter of Intent (LoI)

By: MoIB, Gol
To: NGO
(Will reach by post)

5 Application for Frequency Allocation

By: NGO (within 1 month of date of LoI issue)
To: Wireless Planning & Coordination Wing (WPC), Dept. of Telecommunication (DoT), Min. of Communication & Information Technology (MoCIT), Govt. of India

6 Issue of Frequency

By: WPC
To: NGO
(Will reach you by post)

8 SACFA Clearance

By: SACFA Wing, DoT, Gol
To: NGO
(Will reach by post)

9 Application for Grant of Permission Agreement (GoPA)

By: NGO
To: MoIB
(With Frequency in hand)

12 Issue of WoL

By: WPC, DoT, MoCIT
To: NGO
(Will be sent by post)

13 Commencement of CRS operations

(Within 3 months of signing of GoPA)



Using the voice of the community

4

Basic Costs for Setting Up a CR Station

A community radio station can be low cost, medium costs and high cost. Depending on the resources you have at your disposal you will need to decide what kind of investment you would like to make in the CR station. Apart from the initial cost of establishing a CR station there is ongoing running costs as well, which, given the policy, can be covered through advertisements and sponsorships. CR stations have also evolved strategies for garnering local support through sponsorship, advertisements and memberships. These have to be in keeping with ethical guidelines that each CR stations must develop together with its local community. Various resources and resource organizations (listed at the end of this booklet) can help you think through some of the sustainability plans. For a complete guide to cost variants and possible packages you may refer to “CR: A user’s guide to technology”. The guide is accessible on the following link –

http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL_ID=25738&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

Given below is a rough guide and estimates to costs that you can use to plan your budget for establishing a CR station.

Studio Set up and Acoustic Design

If you renovate an existing building the costs will be very different than if you construct a new

structure from scratch. Keeping those costs aside, the work required to prepare the studio walls so that they do not reflect sound, echo or reverberate and so that the recording room is fairly sound proof, can cost you anywhere between Rs. 70,000 to Rs. 5 lakhs.

Equipment

The equipment includes the Transmitter, tower and Antenna, field recording equipment and microphones, studio recording and play back equipment, computers for editing, mixer, phone-in console and play-out and archiving automation systems. These can cost you anywhere between Rs.8 lakhs to Rs. 50 lakhs.

Furniture

These will include tables and chairs, cupboards and shelves etc and the total cost depends on whether you get these made locally or get modular furniture. Nominally the furniture for your CR station can cost you in the range of Rs. 40,000 to Rs. 2 Lakhs.

Volunteer and Staff: Stipends and Salaries

You will need to provide some incentives to the volunteers and local community trainees you take on to become the reporters and volunteers at your CR stations. These could be in the form of monthly stipends, travel allowances or salaries.

You will need to pay these during the training period and even before your station is broadcasting and able to generate revenue. Depending on how many people you include as reporters and producers and as volunteers this cost could range from Rs. 35,000 per month to Rs. 70,000 per month.

Training and Capacity Building

It is important that community members taking on the onus of the everyday management and program production at the local CR station are sufficiently trained in the task they have to do. Your NGO may decide to bring on board trained media personnel to run your station but that goes against the basic principle and ethos of a local community radio station. If indeed the local community is in-charge of the station as it should and can be, then it is important to invest in

building the capacity of a sustainable local cohort who can then further train other members.

There are several organizations in the country that provide this kind of handholding, training and capacity building support. Additionally you can contact other broadcasting CR stations and invite their teams to come to your station for workshops and learning sessions. The training module and plans you adopt can be varied. Ultimate aim is to equip a team of local community members to regularly produce, broadcast and run a community radio station.

Training should ideally include helping the CR teams understand the value of a local CR station, be able to look at local issues and convert them into interesting and entertaining programs, be able to effectively engage the local community in participating and sharing their talent and culture, learn the technology and operation of all the equipment, understand the process of broadcast scheduling, gain management skills and skills for resource mobilization, enable the

Mobilizing the community





Training members

CR station to develop a self assessment process and methodology in order to improve on their work as they grow.

Depending on the kind of capacity building or methodology your NGO decides to follow, the cost and time frame for this could vary from a short training program of 3-6 months costing 5-8 lakhs to a long term handholding and capacity building partnership for over a year that may be more expensive.

There is an operational cost for the CR station once it starts broadcasting and based on estimates provided by stations already broadcasting around the country the Average Monthly Operational Costs is approximately Rs 90,000 to Rs. 3 lakhs.

Calculating the lower figures for all line items given above it is possible to set up your CR station in under 15 lakh Indian Rupees.



CR member creating content

5

Why Should You Invest in CR?

Enhanced Community Participation

As a development practitioner and as an NGO one of your struggles would always have been to keep your community involved, engaged and responsive to the development initiatives you undertake. Many times you may have struggled to get feedback from your community or called them to action and found no response but did not quite understand what their misgivings were. Community radio is an investment in community participation and involvement. It allows you to open a channel of communication with your community enabling the community to voice their concern and you the ability to fine tune your development work to respond better to the aspirations being articulated. One of the key underlined characteristics of community radio is its ability to give voice to the community and thereby enhance the participation of the community in controlling as well as using media as an effective communication tool to express their concerns and opinions. In this way, community radio becomes an ideal mechanism for organizations functioning at the grassroots level to work in partnership with the community. It provides an accessible platform to collectively discuss local issues as well as engage the local community in

important debates that have a potential to impact their everyday life. The station can become a critical facilitator to help communities come together and collaboratively find solutions.

For example *Gurgaon Ki Awaaz* community radio station facilitated by TRF and based in the National Capital Region of Gurgaon, has a regular program called 'Gurgaon Live' from 10:30 am for about an hour everyday. The program is designed to engage with the local community on a wide variety of local issues. Over the past year the CR station has started conversations on issues around water wastage, lack of civic amenities including public toilets, garbage and communities own poor practices around garbage disposal. The program invariably receives back-to-back calls from listeners who are eager to put their point across, whether it is to share possible solutions or demand for services from the local authorities. The station has also made an effort to network with the local authorities and senior government officials are connected to the live program via telephone and invited to respond to the several suggestions or demands made by the community with respect to the particular issue being raised. A sustained effort of this kind enables the CR station and the NGO build a strong partnership with its community creating a culture of participation that lays the foundations for and is the precursor of social change.

An Unmatched Local Media and Communication Tool

Many of the development programs you undertake as an NGO may have a Behaviour Change or IEC component where you invest in printing pamphlets or booklets or posters or in undertaking folk forms for message dissemination. It has long been established that radio is an impactful communication tool allowing access to people in low income groups and allowing women and men to attend to their regular work while continuing to listen to content as opposed to engaging with print or television which have their limitations in rural or remote settings for lack of electricity and low literacy levels. A community radio station thus becomes a strong local media enabling communities to access development messaging for change in local languages and dialects. For example the *Kutch Mahila Vikas Samitis's Radio Ujjas* based in Kutchh Gujarat, produced and broadcast its first radio program series called *Kunjai Painje Kutchh ji*. Through the use of dramatic characters and motifs representative of the local culture, the radio program raised issues around women's leadership and governance, girl's right to education, female foeticide, harassment of brides for dowry etc. The programs were in the local language and enabled the local community to feel an ownership around the discussion of the important issues thereby creating an enabling environment for action.

A Shift in the Development Paradigm

Social development and social change are difficult to achieve without local participation. Similarly mass media approaches make it difficult to customize development content for local contexts in local dialects and languages. These barriers have hamstrung development communication approaches for many years. With community radio you are able to fulfill several of the well known axioms of development work –

enable communities to participate; democratize knowledge and information by making it available in the local language, create messaging and content in local dialects and languages making it relevant to the contexts of the local people; accurately collect community feedback on a regular basis; involve communities at every stage of decision making when designing a program for the local area and above all providing the community with a voice – the most empowering tool in a free society. As an example the program line up of the *Lalit Lokvaani* Radio station in Lalitpur, Madhya Pradesh, represents how informed members of the community are brought together to provide information to the community at large. Through their programs like *Pashu Palan* – a program on animal husbandry where the local farmers provide advise on various aspects of raising animals well, *Khet Khaliyaan* – an agricultural show that features farmers who may have innovated or found local solutions to crop problems, *Nirogi Kaya* – a program providing medical advise to villagers through questions and answer sessions with a local medical practitioner. The CR station now receives hundreds of letters and calls from its listeners and uses this feedback to inform the programs further.

The community radio station if managed well and dovetailed with your other activities as a not for profit development organization can enable you to manifest the principles of decentralization, democratization and local ownership in your work.

The community radio station when managed in keeping with the key tenets of participation and local ownership will help foster diversity, promote horizontal communication across the community and enable a shift in the development paradigm allowing community members to move from being mere recipients to becoming change makers.

Community Voice and Social Accountability

While the voices from the communities at the grassroots level themselves are ignored in many matters concerning them, there are communities

or groups within the communities i.e. women, youth or linguistic communities whose voices are further ignored and marginalised. Community radio seeks to include these communities thus promoting equitable development.

When community voice is empowered through community radio, it enables a mechanism of enforcing accountability in the local area. Through CR people can be informed of their rights and will be able to question authorities when these rights are violated or appropriate dues not given under a variety of government welfare schemes. The CR station can play a non-partisan role in social audits of development programs as well as keep a check on how politicians and locally elected leaders deliver on the promises made during elections. Overall an

empowered local media is able to help communities keep vigil and watch out for its own interests as well as gain a sense of community responsibility and collective strength. For example, even before formally being on air as a community radio station, the *Mandakini Ki Awaaz* radio team, based in Rudraprayag in Uttarakhand, started the process of recording Panchayat and Gram Sabha meetings. These recordings were then played back in villages in small group meetings to share the information around decisions being made by the local governance bodies. This process resulted in uncovering instances of corruption in the local panchayat as well as created a more informed community that was able to demand the implementation of programs as per the local development plans.

Community Radio Studio





Highlighting local livelihood options

6

Partnerships

In order to sustain the community radio station it will be imperative to foster a wide range of partnerships. These are not partnership with the direct listening/beneficiary community or audience but a larger cohort of interested stakeholders that due to their interest in the growth of the local area will be willing contributors to the community radio station. These institutions or bodies may not be directly involved in managing or producing programs for the community radio station, however, creating room for their participation and involvement could help the CR station in the long run.

The following are some key stakeholders you may consider partnerships with for the long-term sustainability and effectiveness of your CR station:

Local Entrepreneurs Businessmen and Industry

Community radio is a not for profit setup. However, for profit companies such as businesses, industries and other entrepreneurs who conduct their activities in the local region of the community station can definitely participate in the activities of the community radio station. The community radio station could be a platform for advertising their business/ product or putting out calls for job opportunities. This would ensure that you provide a vehicle for them to reach a larger population in a cost effective manner. This participation would be a mutually beneficial

exercise for both, the business/ company and the community radio station. However there is a caveat to this partnership – the policy guidelines provide a certain numbers of hours of advertisement and certain kinds of sponsorship. Your own ethical guidelines will also have to guide the process of selecting who in this stakeholder group you invite to become a partner.

Local Administration and Government Programs

While the community radio station is not to be used as a tool for political propoganda, it can definitely be used as a medium to communicate government schemes and services, advertise government events and development programs and welfare schemes. The CR station should actively solicit the partnership of the local district administration in order to allow the community access to the local leaders and enable the leaders to respond to the community on pertinent questions. Local authorities are always scarce on media resources and the CR stations ability to reach out to the entire local populace will enable it to become a chosen vehicle for giving out details of new schemes along with application norms and procedures, announcing where the voting booths are located during elections or other activities being organized by the local authorities such as public meetings, health camps, immunization melas etc.

Other Local NGOs

You should try and approach other NGOs and development organizations that have a program in your area to involve them in utilizing the reach and participatory potential of the CR station. Other local NGOs may be willing to collaborate with the CR stations to further their activities within the community, support programs and content on issues that they work on as well as initiate joint programs that involve media activities run by the CR station. Partner NGOs can use the CR station to make announcements regarding events they are organizing such as Microfinance meetings, vocational training activities or any other activities that require greater community participation. The CR station

could fulfill the role of spreading information and awareness and building a larger cohort of community participants for partner NGOs.

Donor Agencies

The Community Radio Policy allows multilateral funding agencies to support community radio. For getting funds from outside the country you will need FCRA registration for receiving any foreign grants. It will be useful to partner with UN organizations like UNESCO, UNICEF and UNDP and participate in any community radio related consultations that they organize to keep yourselves updated with the latest developments regarding support for community radio initiatives and capacity building programs initiated in partnership with donor organizations.

Developing content that matters



7

Resources and Contacts

Community Radio Forum

Address:

D-302, 2nd Floor, Defence Colony
New Delhi – 110 024
Phone Number - 011-45048794

Coordinator of the CRF:

Mr. Karan Minz,

Contact: coordinator@crindia.org
General Secretary of the CRF:

Mr. Sajan Venniyoor,

Contact: venniyoor@gmail.com

Ministry of Information and Broadcasting

1. CRS Cell

Address:

Room 116, A-Wing, Shastri Bhavan
New Delhi-110001
Phone Number – 011 – 23385021
Email – crscell-moib@nic.in

2. Wireless Planning Commission (WPC)

Contact: **Mr. Nathan**

Phone Number – 011- 23739345/ 23036508

Contact: **Mr. Chandrasekharan**

Phone Number– 011- 23755440/ 23036950

3. For SACFA related matters

Contact: **Shri Gulab Chand (DWA)**

Phone Number – 011- 23372174/ 23036391

4. For Frequency and WOL related matters

Contact: **Ms. Neeraja**

Phone Number – 011- 23036896/ 23036195/
23372182

Training Organizations

S.No.	Organization	Address	Phone no./ Email
1	Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA)	13/14, Sarv Priya Vihar New Delhi-110016	Phone: +91-11-2653 7146, 2653 7148 Email: rsreedher@col.org/ admin.cemca@col.org
2	DRISHTI, Ahmedabad, Gujarat	4th Floor, Ministry Chambers, Nr. Cama Hotel, Vidyagauri Nilkanth Marg, Khanpur, Ahmedabad-380001, India	Phone: +91-79-25601660, +91-79-25601855 Email: drishtiad1@gmail.com
3	Maraa, Bangalore, Karnataka	II Floor, No. 3, 4th Cross, Michaelpalya 2nd Stage, Bangalore-560075, Karnataka, India	Phone: (+91) 80 252 978 43 Email: info@maraa.in
4	Ideosync Media Combine, Delhi NCR, Harayana	177, Ashoka Enclave III, Sector 35, Faridabad Harayana-121003	Phone: 0129 – 4064883/ 4065883 Email: info@ideosyncmedia.org
5	One World South Asia, New Delhi	C-5, Shaheed Jeet Singh Marg, Qutab Institutional Area Delhi-110016	Phone: 011- 41689000/ 41689001 Email: owsa@oneworld.net

You may refer to other resources on setting up a community radio stations for any additional information you may require. Links are given below for your reference:

1. UNESCO Community Radio Handbook –
http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL_ID=1949&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html
2. How to do Community Radio: A primer for community radio operators –by Louis Tabing
<http://www.communicationforsocialchange.org/publications-resources?itemid=24>

CR member speaks to the elderly in the community



Annexure: Details of Functional Community Radio Stations in India

Total No. of functional community radio stations in India (in the year 2009) = **64**

Total No. of functional community radio stations in India (2010) = **103**

Status of Community Radio Stations in India

License holding institution/ Organization	Non Governmental Organization (NGO)	Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK)	Educational Institutions	SAU
State				
Andhra Pradesh	3	-	2	-
Assam	-	-	1	-
Bihar	2	-	1	-
Chandigarh	-	-	2	-
Chhatisgarh	-	-	-	1
Delhi NCR	1	-	5	-
Gujarat	1	-	2	-
Harayana	2	-	3	-
Himachal	-	-	2	-
Jharkhand	-	-	1	-
Karnataka	2	-	6	1
Kerala	1	-	3	-
Madhya Pradesh	3	-	1	-
Maharashtra	4	2	4	-
Orissa	1	-	-	-
Pondicherry	-	-	3	-
Punjab	-	-	1	-
Rajasthan	-	-	5	-
Uttar Pradesh	3	-	9	1
Tamil Nadu	3	-	16	1
Uttrakhand	1	-	1	-
West Bengal	-	-	2	-



CR listening session for women & children





unicef 

unite for children

United Nations Children's Fund

UNICEF House,
73 Lodi Estate
New Delhi - 110003
India

www.unicef.in