

National Consultation spurs new hopes for community radio in India

The recently held National Consultation on Community Radio in New Delhi provided the opportunity to not only feel a new energy bursting forth in the community radio movement, but also to showcase the freshness of approach and attitude of the Government of India to promote the community radio sector in the country.

A Community Radio Support Fund, which has been a long-standing suggestion of the Community Radio Forum of India (CRF), is now looking like a real possibility, with MIB officials indicating concrete steps towards setting up such a Fund. The Ministry is mulling the constitution of a representative committee that would lay out guidelines for establishing the Fund and also suggest ways in which the Fund could provide financial support to community radio stations and to those keen on setting up community radio stations.

The Ministry has also accepted, in principle, the suggestion of CRF made at the National Consultation for a review of the existing CR Policy. Such a review, it was felt, would not only address some of the anomalies in relation to campus and community radio stations, but also make the guidelines more facilitating and enabling rather than regulatory in their framework. Ministry officials are actively considering the setting up of a drafting committee for the purpose.

In a welcome gesture towards making the procedures for licensing less cumbersome, the MIB has already announced that it was dispensing with the need for submitting any project report along with the application. Following discussions at the National Consultation, the Directorate of Advertising and Visual Publicity (DAVP) has initiated the process for



From right - Supriya Sahu of MIB, Iskra Panevska of UNESCO, Sajan Vennyoor of CRF, Dr. HO Srivastava, WDF and Dr. R. Sreedher, CEMCA - at the National Consultation

empanelment of CR stations for release of government advertisements.

The National Consultation also provided a good opportunity for the CRF to interact with officials of other ministries such as Rural Development, Panchayat Raj, Health, and Women & Child Welfare to explore possibilities of their involvement in and support for the community radio sector.

The Ministry of Rural Development subsequently invited CRF representatives for a discussion at Krishi Bhavan where there was a frank exchange of views regarding the potential and limitations of CR for rural development. Few weeks after this meeting, CRF was also invited to make a presentation to district administrators and rural development officers from all over the country who had assembled at the National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD), Hyderabad.

At the Delhi gathering, CRF mem-

bers also held a planning meeting to chalk out modalities for capacity-building workshops around the country, with financial support from MIB. Since then CRF has organized two such workshops, one at Nagapattinam, TN (see report elsewhere in this issue of CR News) and the other in Bhuj (Kutch), Gujarat. At the time of writing, preparations were on for conducting two more workshops, in Mumbai and Delhi, respectively, for NGOs that have received their letters of intent (LoI) from MIB.

The Delhi capacity-building workshop will be held in conjunction with the annual meeting of CRF, where we expect to chart a detailed work plan for 2011-12 for the organization towards strengthening grassroots voices through awareness generation, capacity-building, networking and policy advocacy.

Vinod Pavarala, President, CRF - India

SPECIAL ISSUE: This third issue of CR News is an AMARC 10 and CR National Consultation Special. It showcases articles that highlight the objectives that AMARC10 set for the Community Radio Movement worldwide. The issue also draws your attention to the concerns that the National Consultation on Community Radio held in New Delhi underlined for the Community radio sector in India. There are articles that bring out the recommendations and discussions from some of the sessions at the national consultation, while a report by the CRF President sums up the way forward for community radio in India.

- Editorial Team

New AMARC President pitches for the Right to Communicate

AMARC 10 – the global general assembly of the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters – held in November 2010, was significant on several fronts. It culminated in a substantially new International Board and a new Executive Council. At the same time, AMARC 10 took place when new challenges confront the global community radio scene. Maria Pia Matta, who took over the reins of the President of AMARC, provides insights into these challenges and future directions.

The General Assembly (at La Plata, Argentina) was held in a context of celebration, given the significant progress achieved by the community radio movement in Argentina with the passing of a new Law on Audiovisual Communication Services (ACS). This law recognises community broadcasting as an equal stakeholder in the media system – a fundamental step forward and an example that other nations in the region and the world should heed.

We met for seven days in La Plata to discuss and reach agreements on shared pathways to move ahead with the democratisation of communications and the recognition of community radios worldwide. We concluded that through-out its 27 years, AMARC has accumulated

a considerable body of political activism in its efforts to democratise communications and empower communities that sustain community radios as they exercise their rights to communicate and to express themselves freely.

Peoples affected by the consequences of the global climate crisis have exercised their right to express themselves through radio. So have women who struggle for fair conditions in gender relations; disaster-hit population groups; workers in the north and south who demand decent work and fair wages; linguistic communities; indigenous peoples; and so many other territorial communities or interest groups all over the planet which use radio waves.

You may ask: “What do these multiple and diverse struggles have in common?” I believe that the common denominator is the issue of freedom. This is social freedom, which is invoked by women to make decisions regarding their own bodies and personal beliefs, by indigenous peoples to claim their ancestral lands, by workers to exercise their rights, by linguistic communities to speak their own languages, and by environmental movements who advocate caring for the planet as a priority over and above maximising corporate profits.



Maria Pia Matta

The conquest of this freedom is a call to states, societies and the international community. At the forefront of this struggle has been the right to communicate, to set up stations, to create content, to network, and to exchange. The course that AMARC has followed in recent years puts us in a position to demand the recognition of equal rights for social broadcasters (radio and audiovisual) within the media system.

Freedoms are values that underpin democratic societies. Today, the struggle takes place where freedom is being exercised. This is the case of radio and television broadcasting. The primacy and hegemony of economic freedom above and beyond that of peoples and communities has shaped the takeover of the media system by Big Capital. This is a global phenomenon, and responses must therefore also be global.

Technological change in the field of broadcasting does not of itself ensure quality or diversity in radio and television: the transformation may follow one path or another. The challenge we face is to use the opportunities offered by digital technology to tilt the balance towards the freedoms of the excluded.

In this phase, and in order to deepen and make more effective those political strategies that seek to integrate freedom of expression as a component of a global culture of democracy and full respect for human rights, AMARC needs to expand its work with international human rights bodies and establish strong partnerships in this field and with global networks, social movements, and civil society institutions and organisations.

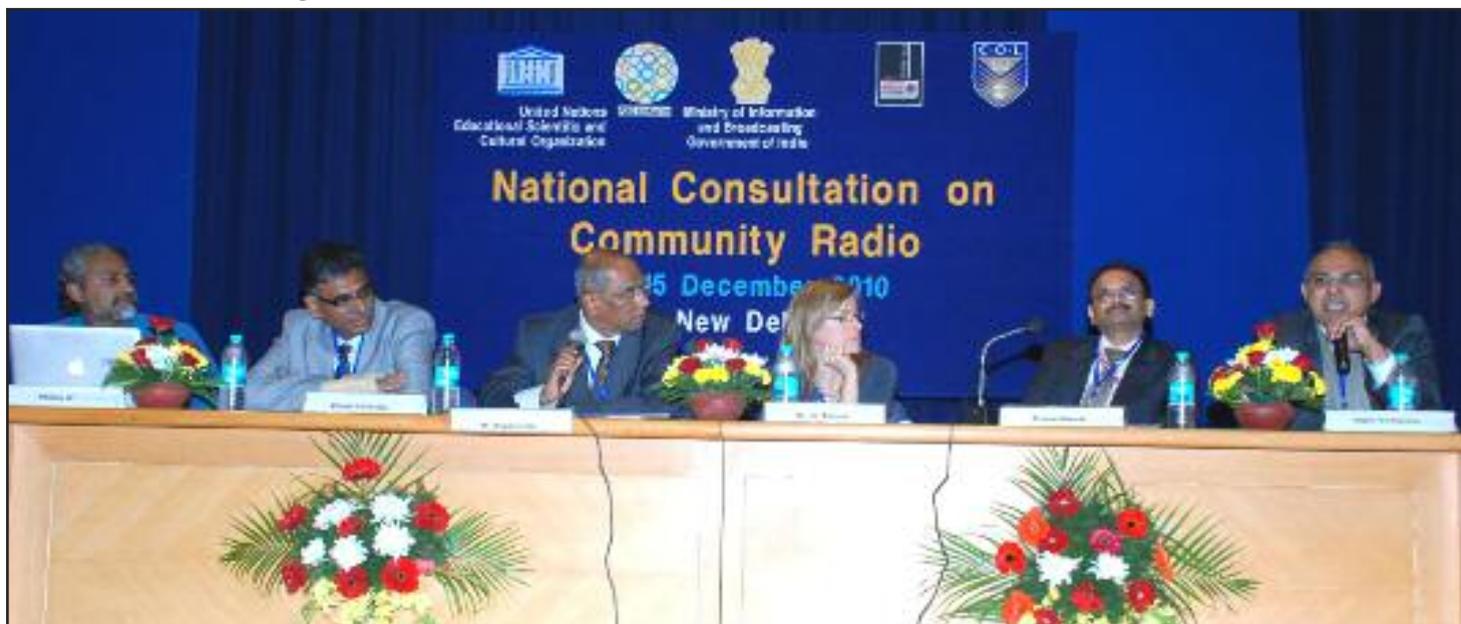
Thus, with all the urgency that the needs of the planet and its peoples demand, AMARC invites us to collectively build-up vigorous political action.



AMARC Solidarity Prize for Haitian community radios

NATIONAL CONSULTATION: POLICY SESSION

CRF seeks dedicated spectrum allocation for community-based stations



L to R: Stalin K., Video Volunteers; Prof. Vinod Pavarala, President, Community Radio Forum; Mr Wijayanand Jayaweera, Director, Division of Communication for Development, UNESCO; Dr. Jo Tacchi, Queensland University of Technology, Australia; Arvind Kumar, Joint Secretary, MI&B; Sajan Venniyoor, General Secretary, Community Radio Forum

The current policy on Community Radio (CR) in India announced in 2006 was an amendment of the earlier policy, and had gone beyond educational institutions to include community-based organisations (CBOs), State Agriculture Universities (SAUs), and Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) under its ambit. Now that this policy has been in operation for four years, there are enough accumulated experiences and evidence to suggest that certain aspects of the policy guidelines need to be reconsidered.

Spectrum allocation for CR

The rapidly diminishing spectrum for CR is a cause for concern. By the time the communities feel ready to plunge into this sector, it should not be that they are left with little or no spectrum.

It is therefore recommended:

1. The Government should prepare a comprehensive Spectrum Allocation Plan, if necessary by geographical zones, and reserve spectrum for CR both in rural and urban areas.

2. In such a plan, priority must be accorded to establishing community based radio stations. Campus-run and Farm radio stations should not be permitted to monopolise this reserved spectrum.

3. International experiences show the service provided by CR should not

be evaluated in terms justification of the cost of spectrum allocation, but in terms of the social value it represents.

Campus and community Operated radio stations

There is no doubt that in a country's overall broadcast environment, there is scope and a valid place for Campus Radio Stations, but it is problematic to confuse such stations with those run by CBOs. We, therefore, recommend the following for revising the policy:

a. Continuation of the Campus and Community Radio Stations under the same policy, with clear set of guidelines that identify their respective mandates, listening communities, and programming. This would involve that inclusion of development-related programming to be made optional for Campus Radio Stations.

b. The primary content guideline in the existing policy that programmes should be "of immediate relevance to the community" must be the guiding principle of any station licensed under this policy. And that programmes be made with local participation in both programme production and management structure.

c. Inclusion of radio stations run by SAUs and KVKs either under the Campus Radio Guidelines or creation of a separate sub-category to be called Farm Radio.

Licensing processes and procedures

From the experience of applicants for a CR license in the last four years, we recommend the following:

1) Streamlining of licensing procedures at WPC wing of the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology. A separate CR Cell, on the lines of the one at MIB, may be set up at WPC for better coordination. Online application procedures for such things as SACFA clearance must be simplified.

2) Creating of transparent procedures for tracking the status of applications. Organizations whose applications are not being considered favourably should be informed at the earliest because of the considerable social and financial investments that go into the preparations for the launching of a CR station.

3) Licensing of CR stations in relatively deprived areas should be given priority on the basis of their developmental needs and not rejected on the grounds of extremism or terrorism.

It is also recommended that the prohibition on broadcasting of news and current affairs on CR stations must be lifted immediately.

**Vinod Pavarala
Stalin K.
Sajan Venniyoor**

EDITORIAL

Community Radio activity on the rise

Looking back over the past quarter, the CR front has packed a fair amount of action both at home and abroad. In November the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters held its tenth global assembly at La Plata, Argentina. A month later, New Delhi took centre stage as UNESCO in partnership with the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB), Government of India, the Community Radio Forum (CRF), and the Ford Foundation, convened the 3rd National Consultation on Community Radio from 13 to 15 December 2010. By the time this issue of CR News is out in print, the CRF would have completed four regional workshops in Nagapattinam, Bhuj, Mumbai and Delhi in partnership with MIB.

It is not just the hectic turn of events that characterize their importance, but the implications and questions that they throw up which we need to reckon with. AMARC 10 came at a point when the co-relation between community media and freedom of expression is increasingly important for development and good governance. The National Consultation highlighted key areas critical to promote a dynamic community radio climate in the country. Issues like spectrum equity, community radio fund, new technology, management and ownership assume added significance as move onto the phase of consolidation and growth of community radio in India.

Many of these questions were reiterated as the CRF-MIB workshops got underway during the first quarter of 2011. The good news for us lies in reading between the lines. Even as we grapple with possible answers, the new partnerships and discussions with government, multi-lateral and development agencies usher in new hope and augur well for deepening CR in the country. All these events along with their opportunities and challenges are discussed in more detail in this issue. As always, we look forward to your feedback. Happy reading!

Ashish Sen

‘Diversity is the strength of Asia-Pacific region’

Sharon Bhagwan Rolls, Executive Director, FemLINKPACIFIC remembers why AMARC 10 brought the Asia-Pacific region closer and what this means for community radio in the region



Sharon (left, kneeling) with AMARC WIN members

Since my attendance at the AMARC Conference in 2003 in Kathmandu, FemLINKPACIFIC has not only gone on to develop Fiji and the Pacific's first mobile women's community radio station, but has also been active in AMARC Asia Pacific, which has resulted in our region emerging as an influential and dynamic member of AMARC. Asia Pacific is one of the most diverse regions – politically, economically and a region where indigenous rights and political independence remains a daily struggle for many.

Our region enjoys a rich history of community radio – as in Australia. It has witnessed a prolific growth of community radio stations in Nepal, and has the Pacific Islands only mobile women's community radio station. We are also surfing the new wave of community radio as you have heard – from countries recognised as major global powers such as China and India, to small island developing states.

The Asia Pacific region in La Plata stood united, committed to the principles of inclusion, access and equity in technology and regulatory frameworks because we know how critical it is to ensure a broader acceptance and understanding of communication rights in a growing globalized media environment as key to ensuring gender social justice.

Asia Pacific, we said, is committed to “Ensuring Continuity through Change” by bringing the experiences from the grassroots to the policy table. Our consolidated position, including contesting the elections for the position of Vice President, was an opportunity to collectively articulate and echo our recognition of the need for AMARC to build on the contribution of the LAC region in the development of the 14 principles of community radio; assist in moving the commitments to communication rights, human rights, peace and security, especially in regions where there are no regional human rights institutions; amplifying the voice of AMARC to denounce all forms of violence especially to ensure the safety and security of community media practitioners and community radio stations.

The AMARC Conference was a platform to share our realities, which we share with many of the other regions, and to highlight the distinctive partnership we have in the Pacific Island region.

In particular, these include strong and vibrant connections to international partners including the United Nations and global civil society/social movement partners like the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict and Global Women's Media Networks.

In the coming months, the consolidation of these partnerships will be a vital way to ensure that the global community radio movement led by AMARC will demonstrate why and how community radio can indeed amplify the call for good governance, social and gender justice, peace and security and human rights for all.

This will certainly also pave the way for AMARC Asia Pacific to be an active participant in the global governance structure of AMARC in not too distant future.

Visit: www.femlinkpacific.org.fj

NATIONAL CONSULTATION: TECHNOLOGY SESSION

CR groups urge WPC wing of DoT to be more transparent



Technology discussions carry on over dinner – From left: N Ramakrishnan, Stalin K., Hemant Babu, Sevanti Ninan, Sunit Tandon, Ram Bhat

Sixteen years after the famous 1995 Supreme Court judgment declaring airwaves as public property and four years after the CR policy was implemented, a little over 80 CRs, including CBOs, educational institutions & KVKs have obtained licenses. What technological hurdles do CBOs face in setting up CRs?

Once a CBO applies for setting up of a CR, the application needs to be cleared by relevant ministries and only after allocation of frequency is a LoI (Letter of Intent) issued.

Once a LoI is issued, the applicant needs to apply online for SACFA (Standing Advisory Committee for Frequency Allocation) clearance before approaching I&B Ministry to sign the GoPA. Once the Grant of Permission Agreement (GoPA) is signed, the applicant is again required to approach the Wireless Planning & Coordination (WPC) Wing of the Ministry of Communications & IT for a WOL (Wireless Operating License).

The Technology session at the National Consultation discussed the issue threadbare and laid down the following recommendations:

Recommendations:

- Online filling of the SACFA & WOL applications should be made optional.
- Alternatively the CR online application needs to be separated from those of other wireless licenses.
- The WPC wing should set up an effective mechanism to provide quick feed-

back to the applicants on their applications & relevant documents.

- Besides simplifying the application process, the WPC should set up a dedicated wing to process CR applications.

- The ministry should provide concessions for higher transmitter power in difficult terrains. It could also consider provision of repeaters in extreme conditions.

- The current duty structures need to be reviewed to make it more enabling for CR stations. Given the absence of indigenous manufacturers of electronic equipment there are no options besides waiving existing duties and taxes for CR applicants to bring down the prices. Same is the case with acoustic treatment imports.

- A simple certification process should be put in place with checks and balances in place for agencies wanting to access transmitter kits from abroad. More agencies should be allowed to manufacture transmitters to decrease their costs.

- Circular broadcast polarisation should be allowed for CRs being set up by CBOs and educational institutions too under the CR Policy.

- CBOs should explore the option of integrating mobile telephony into their radio stations to provide for increased interaction & effectiveness in terms of programming.

- There is also an urgent need to start a maintenance and technology infrastructure upgrade skill building network, where CRSs can share notes on simple

where CRSs can share notes on simple fixes, rate equipment for durability and performance - and perhaps even share repair-capable manpower.

- There is also a need to create a platform for exchange of success stories, day-to-day experiences so that other CRs can learn from them.

- Government & donor agencies could look at setting up a grant for Research and Development on cost effective technologies. Similarly, there is also need for a grant for capacity-sharing, particularly in terms of technology inputs, maintenance, servicing and repairs of CR equipment.

**N. Ramkrishnan
Hemant Babu
Aaditeswar Seth
Vasuki Belavadi**

Online DAVP empanelment for CRs now operational

The Directorate of Advertising and Visual Publicity (DAVP) has issued guidelines for the empanelment of Community Radio Stations. The terms and conditions have been uploaded on its website (<http://www.davp.nic.in/>). The empanelment procedures can be found at http://www.davp.nic.in/crs_empanel.htm.

CR stations that have completed three months of broadcasting can register on the website. The CR station will be issued a username and password by DAVP. Detailed guidelines for empanelment can be found at http://davp.nic.in/writereaddata/announce/G_of_CRs.pdf.

DAVP will consider CR stations for which government advertisements can be released. The rates fixed now is One Rupee per second.

**Source:
Ministry of
Information & Broadcasting**



Frieda Werden, CJSF Burnaby, Canada

I am the series producer of the Women's International News Gathering Service (WINGS) which is a weekly radio programme by and about women around the world. I've been co-producing and distributing this since 1986. I first entered CR in the US in 1973 at a station in Austin, Texas and then I worked for the NPR (National

Public Radio) and also at the training facility in San Francisco and there I co-founded WINGS which has been my primary radio obsession. I love to be in contact with women all over the world who produce radio programmes and to work with them to distribute their programmes to CR stations in other countries. In 2002, I began to work for a campus and community radio station - CJSF in British Columbia. This gave me an opportunity to work with young people encouraging them to be part of CR stations and teaching them that it is not just about saying what they think, but about going out and making connections with other people and getting their voices on air. The campus station must include volunteers from the surrounding communities.

There is no standard for what a CR station is or should be. We're not all alike. We come together as existing stations to dialogue, to see what we have in common and to promote our cause. Every station has to deal with its own environment and adapt to that. At AMARC meeting it's like coming to a family - you get to pick at each other's politics, but you still are a family. For me, it is important that it is participatory and community gets a voice - all other things can be debated.



Maica Lagman, Rainbow Rights, Philippines

I am from the Rainbow Rights Project. Our organization is a legal think tank that advocates equal rights for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) - we do this through lobbying for legislation and also through specific and mass based information and education campaigns. We use CR as a tool to inform people. The

name of our radio show is Rainbow Radio Pilipinas. It is broadcast on mainstream AM radio station at DWBL 1242 khz and we had to pay for the slot as LGBTs do not have a space in media in the Philippines. We are fortunate that the Global Fund for Women has given us support to create the radio show. We have no legislation that ensures that LGBTs get to exercise their equal rights. One of the main reasons why people behave negatively towards LGBTs is because they have these ideas - stereotypes of LGBTs which were fed to them by media through the misrepresentation and underrepresentation of LGBTs. So, we thought, why not use the same media to combat stereotypes and project positive and uplifting images of LGBTs. LGBTs are a diverse community and it is not possible to include the whole spectrum, but we manage to get participation by involving organizations working with LGBTs. They are our allies in the planning the content of the show and we ensure that stories are told by the communities themselves. We do encounter problems as many are hesitant to participate given the stigma attached to being LGBT. There has been consistent volunteering for the show in content planning but only through email and website as that provides anonymity. Maybe internet is the better medium for a community of interest like ours. The aim to convey that there is no need to be ashamed if we are LGBT; we are responsible, productive

'We're d but we're

AMARC 10 participants shed light on their involvement their ideas about its diverse nature and practice La Plata, Argentina

citizens of the country and should be able to express our gender identity.



Basanti Shahi, SIDC, Nepal

I work for Radio Kailash 103.4 MHz (50 watts) as the station manager. Our radio is in Simkot district and we have 12 men and women reporters to make programmes, gather local news (particularly from block and district development committees) and run the station. This area does not get signals from any other radio station, not even Radio Nepal and there-

fore its primary function is to disseminate news and information from different parts of Nepal along with local news. We also subscribe to and play the BBC world service programmes. The radio broadcasts programmes for all communities in the coverage area - on issues like health, women's concerns, agriculture, development, etc. The license for this radio is in the name of Snow-Land Integrated Development Centre (SIDC) of which I am the president. The station has a management committee which comprises representatives from all communities and parties of the district. My vision for CR is that it should create awareness, bring people of all castes in the community together, and build harmony.



Ursula Ruedenberg, Pacifica Affiliates Coordinator, USA

I am from New York City and work with the Pacifica Radio Network (PRN) as the Affiliates coordinator. PNR is a national organization and has radio stations in the five metropolitan areas in the US and 160 affiliates throughout the country of independent stations and internet stations. My work is as a network weaver between all these sta-

tions. I bring new people into the network, do outreach, provide services to stations in the network, and serve as a liaison among people trying to find each other. I try to construct a healthy ecosystem within the world we are slowly building so that there is diversity, variety and opportunities to make it the richest and most productive network. We acknowledge that non-profit sector has a broadcast presence in the US system and that frequencies/dial should go to CR and not to the aggressive religious organizations. In CR, news and information must be local;

ifferent, e family'

ovement with community radio (CR) and narrate
ces in conversation with **Kanchan K. Malik** in
a, November 2011

the barrier between the radio station and community should not exist as this is not run by a media group but by community centres and respects the spirit of participation. It must promote media democracy and be a place where community members can walk in and get on air.

David Meltzer, CBAA, Australia

CR sector in Australia is quite mature and conservative in a lot of ways but very diverse – there are a hundred indigenous stations, a hundred multi-lingual station and hundreds of others. Because of the maturity of the sector, a vast majority of these stations are self-sustaining. Government and donor funding represent less than 20% of the funding and the rest is largely from community-support. The essence of a CR is to enable community participation and the better attached CRs are to their community, the more sustainable they will be. There is always a tendency for power and control in all organizations. When you develop a station that has principles of access and participation, everyone must be allowed to speak. Sustainability is dependent on the ability to connect with the community and the stations that don't do that are not real. There is a diverse range of stations all over the world – but AMARC should address the struggling stations to be sustainable. Getting back to the basics of sustainability is essential because you cannot make a difference if you are not operational.



Iman Abdurrahman, Secretary General of Community Radio Association of Indonesia, Indonesia

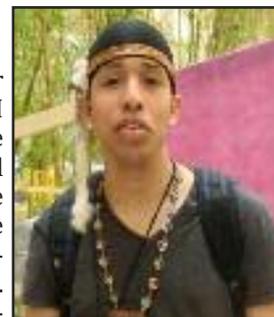
My organization, Combine Resource Institution (CRI), worked for advocacy of the Broadcast Bill. Government acknowledged community broadcasting in 2000, but allowed only 50 watts with a coverage area of 2.5 km. Indonesia is a country of 100 islands; most people live in villages and 2.5 km is not enough as it covers only a small village. CRI has facilitated organizations to develop their stations – not only technical thing, but also how to how to mobilize the community bring together a council. CR is 70% about community development and 30% is media. We also



focus on CR and Disaster Management (Indonesia is most prone to volcanic eruptions) and to spread awareness about preparedness. There are several other roles CR plays in Indonesia They monitor public services. To ensure transparency of village chairman – they record the promises of candidates and broadcast when they campaign again for votes. CR also deals with promoting local business activity like maintaining livestock and connects local and rural people. In a slum area in Jakarta, a CR station intervened when government was trying to move them and acted as a mediator and bridge to bring about mutual understanding. CR must involve the community concerned – all stakeholders, even religious leader and local government to come up with appropriate solutions.

Jerome Edge, WMNF, PNB Affiliates, Tampa, USA

I am a Swinomish and Upper Skagit tribal member, and I produce/host the programme Massive Mix for the KSVR 91.7FM Radio located near Mount Vernon, Washington. I see the role of CR as crucial in giving the voice of the people back to them without that corporate monetary interest. My programme is a hip hop-cum-public affairs news programme. We play music – local, underground, and mainstream – and we also provide different topics and viewpoints to young people to become immersed in thinking, concepts that they won't get from listening to mainstream media, so, opening their minds to new ways of thinking. My audience is young people, but we are not necessarily geared towards a specific demographic – it is something all can enjoy.



Mary Carling, Sagada CR, Philippines

I am from Sagada located in the northern part of the country. It is a mountain region. I come from a community of indigenous peoples. I am the station manager of a radio that is soon to be launched to serve the municipality of Sagada. It is a CR that includes every sect or group or individual who would like to have programme in the radio. Our radio is different from the other existing radios in a way it's a voice of the indigenous people – this is the voice of all sectors in the indigenous community – women youth, children, our elders and all institutions including the local government. We have included the local government for issues of transparency. A good community must be a forum to spur development; development that comes from the villages, not town-centred point of view of development. So this radio station serves to reach out to the far flung villages to give voice to the far away farmers and all sectors to put them at the centre of stage for all forms of development. Also, this radio station wants to be the facilitator of the transmission of traditional knowledge, of our oral literature, and this radio is an appropriate technology especially where we have this oral tradition, where knowledge is transferred from generation to generation. So, in order to bridge the gap between the older and younger generation, and for the continuity of tradition, of our history, of our language and of literature, this CR will be a big medium. In our country, the government still have to appreciate what CR is all about. We have to go through applying for a license like any other commercial station, and we were lucky to have got it.



All pictures by the author

First CRF-MIB participatory capacity sharing workshop held in Nagapattinam



Workshop involves participants in group exercises

If 2010 closed with a big bang for Community Radio thanks to the December New Delhi Consultation, 2011 began with more good news. The first of the CRF-MIB capacity building workshops kicked off a quarter that promised lots of action.

Nestled in the midst of Nagapattinam District, Tamil Nadu, Vailankanni may be small, but it is far from being sleepy. Every weekend, the sounds, lights, and action focus on pilgrims who throng the shrine of the Virgin Mary and Infant Jesus. Between January 28th and January 30th, however, it was Community Radio that took centre stage. More than 33 community radio representatives from operational Community Radio stations as well as community based organizations participated in the workshop which was hosted by the Kalanjiam Samuga Vanoli and DHAN Foundation in Nagapattinam District.

Inaugurated by Dr B P Sanjay, Vice-Chancellor of Tamil Nadu Central University and one of the earliest advocates of Community Radio in the country, the three day workshop focused on license application process; technical skills; sustainability challenges; research and documentation; and management and ownership issues.

In his introductory remarks, Sri Inderjeet Grewal, Assistant Director, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, brought the participants up to speed on

the status of community radio stations in the country. "Out of 825 applications received for Community Radios, 263 organizations have been issued letter of intent and 103 stations are operational at the ground. Tamil Nadu alone has 20 Community Radio Stations."

The focus of the workshop was: "Seeing, Believing, and Hands on Learning." After inputs on the history and evolution of community radio in the country, participants got a firsthand account how to tackle opportunities and challenges

confronting community radio through community interactions in the field and discussions at Kalanjiam community radio station. As they met with community reporters, volunteers, and members of the radio station's management committee on site, participants were also explained about issues that related to the application process, studio dynamics and equipment costs.

The latter half of the workshop was dedicated to technical skills, especially recording and editing, with hands on training being provided in both areas. Participants were also provided insights into new technology. This included a practical explanation of GRINS radio automation software and attendant issues linked to programme scheduling, inbuilt telephony, internet streaming and content management

Finally, the workshop stressed the importance of networking and the role of the community radio forum in moving forward. Facilitated by representatives of the Kalanjiam Community Radio, the resource persons also included P Krishnamurthi (Dhan Foundation), Naghuveer Prakash (Kalanjiam Community Radio), Ramnath Bhat (CRF and MARAA,) Vasuki Belavadi (CRF and University of Hyderabad) Karan Minz (CRF) and Ashish Sen (CRF and AMARC).

From Nagapattinam, the workshop yatra moves to Kutch, Mumbai and finally to Delhi.

Ashish Sen



Prof. B. P Sanjay (2nd from right) inaugurates CRF-MIB CR workshop at Nagapattinam. Also from right: Ashish Sen, President AMARC Asia-Pacific; Inderjeet Grewal, CRS cell, MIB and Naguveer Prakash, Kalanjiam Radio

NATIONAL CONSULTATION: CAPACITY BUILDING SESSION

Create opportunities for peer-to-peer knowledge sharing: CRF

As of today, there are close to 100 community radio stations on air, a mix of educational institutions, agricultural centres, as well as NGOs. Over the coming years, it is expected that the growth of this sector will be exponential and will reach out to many more marginalized communities. It is in this context that knowledge-sharing and capacity-building become extremely important concepts.

Knowledge-Sharing

One of the growing areas of focus has been the understanding that the evolutionary process of building an informed society can be accelerated by enabling a process of creating a system of using information and enhancing it with experience which enable it to become a "knowledge" component. Radio plays a crucial role in rural communities and can become a store house of information which can house knowledge repositories for communities to tap into.

Within the community radio sector, there are multiple domains of knowledge which are being produced and shared at specific levels. These are:

Media policy – What is the basis of the community radio policy, where is it stemming from, how does it connect to our constitutional rights, and so on;

Technical information – What is the technology through which community radio works, what equipment is required, what technology is relevant, and so on;

Content Development – What are the various methods through which content can be developed, how can these methods be inclusive in terms of participation and ownership, practical ways of using air-time allocated to radio stations, themes for which community radio can be used as a tool, and so on;

Research and Evaluation – How is community radio being used, which sections of communities are benefiting from this technology, how is it empowering, how is it documenting local cultures and knowledge streams, how is it being used as an educational tool, what are the methods of evaluating impact, and so on;

All these streams of knowledge

systems are being simultaneously produced and shared at various levels. The urgent priority in this field is collation – various stakeholders need to put in a process of systematically collating their experiences and ideas, and make them available in an open and accessible way.

Capacity - Building

From the experience of both existing CR practitioners as well as potential applicants, capacity- building is an area which needs urgent support. Demand has by far outstripped supply in this area. The broad areas under which capacity-building needs to be undertaken are:

Policy literacy – Many institutions are not aware that such a policy even exists. Even some of them who know are sometimes not clear in terms of what is a framework for this policy, either in terms of communications for development or freedom of speech and expression.

Technology – Community Radio implies usage of specific audio and transmission equipment. Most often, the equipment is outsourced through various consultants or institutions. This means that communities who will subsequently use this equipment do not have an intrinsic understanding of the technology they use on a day-to-day basis. There is a lack of good training modules where communities on the field can familiarize themselves with radio-related technologies, both conceptually and practically.

Production – Community Radio stations need to have basic production skills both in the studio and in the field to be able to develop content effectively on a daily basis. Further, an emphasis on live and interactive programming (integrated with mobile phone and internet tools) needs to be given in capacity-building programmes.

Management – The policy specifically states that the CRS should have a management structure which is reflective of the community which it seeks to serve. The training programmes need to be more explicit about how to constitute a management committee, how to develop its mandate, charter and rules and regulations, so as to ensure a management body which is accountable, transpar-

ent and also reflective of the community it seeks to serve.

Sustainability – Capacity-building programmes also need to focus on aspects of sustainability, so that community radio stations can look at the issue holistically from an early stage.

Finally, we rarely acknowledge community radio stations themselves as capable trainers. More opportunities need to be given to community radio stations to train their peers at a regional or local level.

Policy Recommendations

1. Community Radio practitioners at the grassroots level should be recognized and encouraged as capable trainers. Peer to peer capacity sharing workshops need to be subsidized by government support, so that practitioners are further equipped as trainers.

2. Knowledge sharing should be encouraged and promoted not only in English but also in regional languages.

3. An open repository of community radio content should be maintained by the relevant government agency, which can demonstrate the possibilities of knowledge sharing through community radio.

4. Community based as well as external models for monitoring and evaluation of community radio in an Indian context need to be developed, collated, documented and shared amongst practitioners through various mechanisms such as workshops, conferences, consultations and seminars.

5. Policy literacy, research and documentation are areas of emphasis for capacity building.

6. Live programming should be emphasized within production skills.

7. Technology related capacity building needs to empower community members to make technological choices which are locally relevant and sustainable.

8. Legal specificities need to be outlined and built into the policy to enable communities to realize ownership and management of their community radio stations.

Ekta Mittal
Rajen Varada
Ram Bhat

AMARC 10 adopts La Plata Declaration; endorses freedom of expression

Suman Basnet, Regional Coordinator, AMARC Asia-Pacific, shares his thoughts on AMARC 10 and going forward.

The AMARC 10 World Conference was the first AMARC global conference to be held in South America, where community radio was first established in the world some 60 years ago. Argentinean members of AMARC came together with other media and journalists' groups in the country to host the conference. The Conference was attended by up to 512 community radio representatives and stakeholders from 89 countries from Africa, Asia-Pacific, Europe, Latin-America, North America and MENA regions.

The week-long Conference was organized around the following themes: Communications for a better world, Recovering memories, building futures; Communication rights are human rights; Reinforcing community radio social impact; Community radio actions and strategies and ended with a day dedicated to networking and solidarity, social and cultural events. It combined panel sessions with open inter-active sessions and policy definition plenary sessions; capacity building interactive workshops and parallel workshops organised with partners in order to develop capacity and knowledge on specific topics.

The conference allowed community radio practitioners and stakeholders to achieve the following important results:

1. Clarify the situation of community

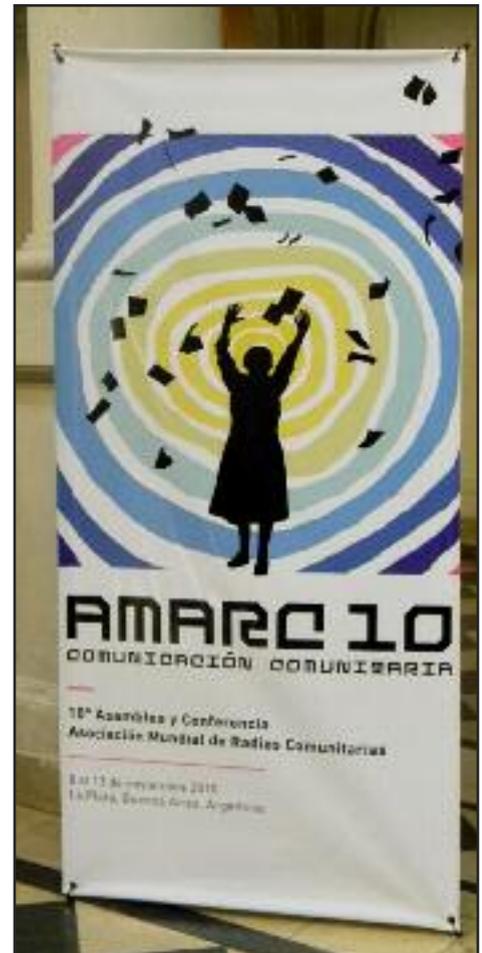
radio and confirm the existence of a worldwide communication rights oriented network and explore strategies to increase the legal recognition of community radio as a crucial development tool and democratic mechanism ensuring media pluralism;

2. Exchanges best practices and explore strategies to increase the social impact of community radio, among others in

- the reduction of poverty and seeking development objectives;
- ensuring gender equality and women rights;
- defence of children rights, indigenous peoples; minority languages;
- confronting new challenges due to natural or man-made disasters;
- ensuring conflict resolution and democracy building;

3. Exchanges of best practices leading to strategies to reinforce the sustainability of community radio through content development and capacity building strategies to ensure appropriate use of new technologies and social media, engaging with civil society, multilateral and government stakeholders at local/national/international levels;

The conference adopted the La Plata Declaration of Community Radio Broadcasters, elected the members of the international board of directors of AMARC and gave the 6th AMARC Solidar-



AMARC 10



AMARC 10 Session in Progress

ity Prize to the Haitian community radios in recognition for their role in supporting the Haitian population following the earthquake in January 2010.

The AMARC 10 conference also adopted the strategic lines of action of the AMARC global network for 2011-2014 by building on the rich exchanges, content and debates in plenary, seminars and workshops. The new president of AMARC, Maria Pia Matta indicated that challenges ahead are to deepen the social impact of community radios to confront the world challenges of the 21st century; to increase sustainability of community radios and; to express solidarity with journalists persecuted and advocate for the establishment and further recognition of community radios in order to increase pluralism of the media.

Fifty three (47% women, 53% men) community radio broadcasters stakeholders and activists attended the AMARC 10 from the Asia Pacific region.

(Continued on Page 11)

NATIONAL CONSULTATION: SUSTAINABILITY SESSION

How to make CR sustainable?

The experiences of operational grassroots community radio stations (which were markedly absent in 2007) are a testimony that today CR has also to grapple with changing development priorities and shrinkages in the overall funding climate; the challenges of digital versus analogue; and vulnerabilities of 'NGOisation'.

The following concerns ought to be addressed to ensure sustainability of a CR initiative:

Human and Social Sustainability

The 2006 Guidelines for Community Radio were inspired by the goal of community radio as a platform to promote the "voice of the voiceless." While revenue generation (discussed in the financial sustainability component of this paper) is an important factor towards ensuring sustainability, community radio

station applicants and license holders need to adequately demonstrate the correlation between the station and the local community. This cannot be restricted to just representation in programme and management committees which could be vulnerable to tokenism, but find expression in the daily rhythm life of the community radio station.

Programme Sustainability

The credibility of a community radio station is not merely dependent on content generation, but the process of content generation. While the content regulation and monitoring guidelines emphasize that the "programmes should be of immediate relevance to the community", it needs to also provide/suggest mechanisms that can promote and strengthen programme sustainability.

Technology Sustainability

The issue of technology sustainability has been substantially discussed in a separate paper. However, it is important for this paper to reiterate that community radio stations are characterized by low-cost infrastructure and equipment. This needs to be adequately reflected and emphasized in the guidelines.

Financial Sustainability

An adequate financial base is vital to enable both the survival and the growth of a community radio station. The experiences of a few grassroots community radios demonstrate the power of self-sustainability mechanisms which are rooted in community ownership structures.

(Continued on Page 10)

Communication for a better world

(Continued from Page 10)

They participated in the numerous plenary sessions, workshops and seminars as panellists and commentators.

The Asia Pacific region is young when compared to the Latin American and African region of AMARC but one that is dynamic and diverse. We learnt much from the experience and shared our knowledge with the wider network. AMARC 10 was about renewing friendship, building networks and strengthening the global movement of community radios.

Frank La Rue, Special UN Rapporteur adds:

The participants adopted the La Plata Declaration of Community Radio Broadcasters. La Plata Declaration of Community Radio Broadcasters highlighted that freedom of expression is a fundamental right to ensure other freedoms established in international human rights instruments. They stressed that community radio projects share the objective of transforming inequalities, being based on social, economic, gender, and sexual orientation, ethnic, cultural or generation relations.

The Declaration called upon States and Governments among others:

- To establish legal frameworks that



Open radio for AMARC 10 participants

guarantees the right to information, freedom of expression and to communication.

- To recognize community media without any kind of discrimination.

- To ensure the plurality and diversity of media, as well as the de-concentration of its property.

- To implement public policies that promote and strengthen community radio taking into account the principles to ensure diversity and plurality in audiovisual and broadcast services proposed by AMARC to guide the elaboration of these

legal frameworks and public policies.

- The recognition of the UN Convention for the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, the Platform for Action, of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, on Women, Peace and Security.

- To stop threats, assassinations and attacks against community media and to ensure conflict resolution and peace building.

Pictures by Kanchan K. Malik

CRF supports creation of national CR Fund

(Continued from Page 11)

However, self-sustainability by itself is unlikely to completely address the issue of financial sustainability. The communities and the NGOs that work with them are unlikely to have the requisite financial resources to meet the infrastructural and support costs of setting up a community radio station. It is in this context that the relevance of community radio subsidy fund assumes significance.

In order to facilitate an enabling environment for community radio and ensure its sustainability, the following recommendations for the policy guidelines, as well as suggestions for NGOs and CBOs were articulated by the members of CRF.

Policy Recommendations to the Government

- The guidelines explicitly encourage and emphasize the importance of low cost and appropriate technology options in setting up community radio stations.

- The creation of a community radio support fund where a percentage of the earnings of private FM radio could be channelized to subsidize the infrastructure and capacity building costs of community radio stations. In this context, the policy guidelines could also revisit the Amit Mitra Committee recommendations of 2004.

- Sponsored programmes should not be restricted to Government sponsorship, but also include support from development agencies and other organizations that are committed to broadcast public interest information.

- The government should expedite empanelment of all CR Stations for DAVP advertisement support.

Guidelines for CBOs

- Community Radio Stations should not only have an ownership and management structure that is reflective of the community it seeks to serve, but the structure should also demonstrate its co-relation with the local community life and devel-

opment.

- Regular/Annual community audits should be held where the community measures the credibility of the station in terms of community content, participation and impact.

- A training cascade where more and more community members are trained by the initial pool of trainees goes a long way in ensuring sustained programming.

- The training programme design should incorporate an appropriate mix of formats and dissemination mechanisms that will promote community participation and programme sustainability.

- Community Radio Stations should explore the viability of web-based exchange portals promoting content-sharing. Such a mechanism could be coordinated by a representative association like the Community Radio Forum.

Arti Jaiman
Stalin K.
Ashish Sen

CR News Team

SUPPORTED BY:

UNESCO, New Delhi

PRODUCED BY:

Department of Communication, Sarojini Naidu School of Arts and Communication, University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad

EDITORIAL TEAM:

Editor: Ashish Sen (Trustee of VOICES, Bangalore and President, AMARC Asia-Pacific)

Associate Editor: Kanchan K. Malik (University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad)

Design and Production: Vasuki Belavadi, Taijrani Rampersaud (University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad)

ADVISORY BOARD:

Iskra Panevska (UNESCO, Delhi)

Vinod Pavarala (University of Hyderabad and President, Community Radio Forum of India)

Frederick Noronha (Independent Journalist, Goa)

Anita Gurumurthy (ITforChange, Bangalore)

Anujaa Shukla (Radio Bundelkhand, TARAgam Orchha, MP)

Nikhil Dey (Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan, Rajasthan)



Call for Contributions

The editorial team seeks contributions by way of news reports, features, announcements and opinions on recent community radio activities in your organization/region/nation.

Voices/Stories from the field, including interviews with community members (listeners and producers) are especially welcome.

Contributions should be in English, restricted to 300 words for news/event and 450-500 words for opinion pieces and features, and typed double spaced. Contributions may preferably be accompanied by photographs/illustrations. Contact address and details of authors/organization should accompany the contributions.

The last date for submissions is **March 20, 2011**.

Electronic submission of contributions is recommended. Please email your articles/reports/features to: **crnews2010@gmail.com**.

If you are unable to email, you can also send your typed articles/reports/features to:

Dr. Kanchan K. Malik
Department of Communication
Sarojini Naidu School
of Arts & Communication
University of Hyderabad
Gachibowli
Hyderabad 500046

The final selection of contributions will be determined by the editorial team.

www.communityradioindia.org

Send in Updates

Community Radio Stations that are already in operation are requested to please send in:

- Contact updates
- Website URLs
- An MP3 file of their Station Signature Tune

This is also an invitation to subscribe to the free quarterly newsletter CR NEWS. Please mail in your updates to **commradioindia@gmail.com**.