

MIB sets up CRSF Working Group

A Working Group has been set up by the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting (MIB) to suggest a framework for establishing a Community Radio Support Fund (CRSF). The group started its deliberations in the second week of July. Headed by Director (Broadcasting) of MIB, Ms. Supriya Sahu, the group includes representatives of the Community Radio Forum (CRF), CEMCA, social sector ministries, UNESCO, UNICEF, besides managers of a few operating community radio stations and other CR experts.

It may be recalled that a CRF Working Paper on Sustainability of CR presented at the National Consultation in December last year made a strong case for such a Fund, citing similar funding models in other countries and underlin-

ing the need for public expenditure for setting up and supporting a critical social infrastructure.

The Ministry has acted on the suggestion within six months and expressed a seriousness of intent to provide substantial allocations in the 12th Five Year Plan funds for community radio. A Concept Note circulated by the Ministry argues for an apex funding agency that pools grants from a variety of government ministries and other donors for providing funds for infrastructure, operation, programming, and development of community radio stations in India.

Among other things, the Working Group has been mandated to provide a detailed inventory of activities that can be funded, suggest eligibility conditions for

applying for grants, frame procedures for application, and identify funding sources for the Community Radio Support Fund.

The CRF has presented a Working Paper on the Support Fund at the recent meeting (see excerpts on page 11 in this issue of CR News). It urges the government to adopt mechanisms for state support to the community radio sector with a view to expand and improve access of the marginalised to media.

The CRF has suggested the setting up of an independent and autonomous body that would function with the principles of transparency, accountability, and facilitate an enabling environment for community radio in the country.

A CR News Report

Haiti meet backs CR's role in disaster management



Ashish Sen (R) at Haiti with Rosamund Brown, media activist from Jamaica

Think of Haiti, and the associations that invariably come to mind are disaster, poverty and indebtedness. Even a sketchy knowledge of the country's history would highlight these troubling characteristics. Less well known, but of substantial significance in dealing with the country's tryst with disaster management is the role of community radio.

A year and a half after the 2010

massive earthquake where it was estimated that "one third of the country's nine-million population were affected," reconstruction work appeared to have a long way to go. An assessment carried out by the International Media Support Group subsequent to the earthquake had emphasized the need to bridge the gap between the humanitarian organizations and the local media community to ensure that vital information reached the people of Haiti.

The group noted, "Engaging the Haitian media in the production of humanitarian information is key at this point in time in order to maximize the dissemination of factual and life saving humanitarian information. It will provide scores of Haitian journalists with the opportunity to start working again and to generate a much-needed flow of information."

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'For once, we win!'

US Congress passes Local Community Radio Act

In the last days of December, 2010, the United States Senate passed the Local Community Radio Act. This was the culmination of ten years of campaigning by the communication activists for an opportunity to put new radio stations on the dial.

Community Radio in the United States

The Community Radio sector in the United States can be a mystery to those in the rest of the world. This is partially because AMARC (World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters) has historically not been active in the US, and community radio stations are represented by the National Federation of Community Broadcasters and Prometheus Radio Project. The US context is specific in several ways:

1. The awarding of licenses is done strictly by technical criteria, not by content. The First Amendment to our Constitution guarantees freedom of speech, which is interpreted to mean that owners of radio stations can say anything they want, as long as material is not pornographic and does not use curse words.

2. Radio stations that have been licensed are guaranteed a certain distance of coverage, where no other stations can operate on that channel or the adjacent channels. Unlicensed operations are rapidly shut down when radio station corporations make complaints. Occasionally the station owners do not notice unlicensed operations, and these pirates can stay on for years in certain circumstances, but more often they are shut down within months of going on the air.

3. Radio is federally regulated and local authorities have no power over it.

4. The FM band in major cities cannot accommodate any new full power stations – they were all distributed by the 1980s. However, low power stations had not been distributed for many years, so there are actually a number of channels at a low power that can be distributed that will serve a neighborhood in a big city without



Pete Tridish

eating into the coverage promised to the existing full power station.

5. In the United States, about 200 full power community stations already exist in some major cities, but there have not been new opportunities for full power stations in many years for either commercial or non-commercial stations.

"Low Power" to the People!

In the mid 90s, activists in social movements became increasingly angry about the consolidation of media ownership.

Traditional protections against concentration of power in media were eliminated, and activists responded to the narrow range of debate in corporate media by starting pirate radio stations.

After a famous court case involving Free Radio Berkeley in California, the authority of the Communications regulator (FCC) was temporarily thrown into question and from 1993 to 1997 there were close to a thousand pirate radio stations that operated with impunity.

This ended in 1997 when the courts ruled in favor of the FCC, but the movement had grown to such a size that the FCC had to make actions to accommodate the new demand for community radio.

In 2000, the agency created a new form of low power FM (LPFM) radio licenses to make use of some of the unused channels that could not fit a full power station without encroaching on an existing commercial broadcaster, but could fit a small station.

The Empire Strikes Back

After the FCC started to grant licenses, the commercial stations struck back. Though LPFMs would not cause signal interference inside the protected radius, commercial stations were accustomed to being heard far outside of where they were legally allowed. They persuaded the Congress, in a sneaky bill in December of 2000 called the Radio Broadcast Preservation Act, to overrule the FCC and limit the new LPFM stations to very rural communities. For the past ten years, all growth in community radio has been in rural areas in the US. Activists have fought for many years to repeal the Radio Broadcast Preservation Act and allow new stations in major cities.

Stop making LPFM jump through hoops!

Activists mobilized people from all over the country to contact Congress. Since much of Congress is conservative, we found churches that wanted radio stations, and encouraged them to persuade their Congress members. Due to the First Amendment, the FCC will not distinguish between church radio and community radio. Since churches will end up receiving some of the stations, we decided that despite our opposite political orientation, we might as well mobilize churches to act in our common interest. It was easy for us to find liberal support, but with conservatives we needed to be very cautious and careful about whom we got to call their member of Congress, so that the Congress person would think that most of the benefit of the service would go to churches. We also mobilized officials responsible for disaster management, arguing that these small new stations would help in emergencies in ways that large, remotely owned corporate radio stations would not.

The community radio movement in the US is small and the country is very large so it is hard to get people to travel for demonstrations. However, we organized a number of very successful publicity stunts where we used humor to get sympathetic press coverage of the issue.

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US Congress passes Local Community Radio Act

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The commercial broadcasters were using their political influence to stop our bill, persuading a handful of Senators to use secret procedural tricks in the Senate to stop us, even though the vast majority of Senators and Congress were by now sympathetic to our bi-partisan bill.

Our culminating action played on two sayings in English: the broadcasters are "Making Democracy into a Circus," which means that they are delegitimizing the system by undermining the proper decision-making rules with their secret procedural tricks.

Another saying we have is "Jumping through Hoops," like the lion in the circus - by that we mean being forced to do unnecessary things for other people's cruel amusement. So we organized a protest in front of the commercial broadcasters headquarters, with dozens of people dressed for circus and hula hooping, with signs that said "Stop Making Community Radio Jump through Hoops!" We also did the same thing in front of the commercial broadcasters

Christmas party, and threatened that we would do the same in front of commercial stations around the country. Two days later, the NAB relented and came back to the negotiating table, and agreed to let the LPFM bill pass.

In part, our success came from the fact that the broadcasters, at that very same moment, were being accused of negotiating in bad faith with the Cable industry and the Music industry, so they gave in to us on this issue because we were damaging their reputation that they needed for negotiations of much more financial significance.

A new wave of Community Radio

The impact of the Local Community Radio Act will be pretty large - not like the scale of new communications law of Argentina, but pretty good considering the extremely centrist United States political system we had to work in. Most US cities will get at least 3- 8 new radio channels. Activists are planning a large outreach campaign to civil rights groups, environmental organizations, immigrants groups, and progressives of all types.

There will be many applicants for these channels, and the competition will be hard. We are especially worried about some of the churches. We are now fighting to make sure that the final rules as written by the FCC include a requirement that the stations have locally produced content. While the First Amendment forbids the FCC to favor left versus right, or community versus church, the FCC can mandate that these small stations produce their own content.

In fact, one of the guiding principles of the FCC is to promote local diversity. Since most church stations just take programming down from a network satellite and do not do their own volunteer production, we believe we will end up getting more stations and having more impact than the churches, if this rule is in place. Now that we are done with the dysfunctional US political system, the real fun begins with helping groups get licenses, and building new radio stations to broaden culture and debate!

Pete Tridish
Prometheus Radio Project

First AMARC Caribbean Conference

held at Haiti

(Continued from page 1)

The facts, however, had presented a starkly contrasting picture. As activists explained to some of us from the AMARC (World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters) team who visited Haiti in May 2011, community radio was one the few effective mechanisms of information flow that worked as a life lung during the crisis.

Apart from timely information and dispelling rumors, the community radio stations themselves (those that were not destroyed or damaged) provided shelters to displaced communities.

As a follow up to the disaster mitigation efforts, AMARC supported a regional conference in Port-au-prince, Haiti, from the 4th to the 6th of May, entitled "Communication, Vulnerability, Emergencies and Climate Change: The Role of Community Radio".

More than 100 participants from NGOs, government and community radio

advocates mainly from the Caribbean and Latin American region participated in the deliberations.

A substantial part of the conference showcased experiences of communities (both within and outside in the Caribbean region) that had used community radio in the areas of disaster preparedness and humanitarian response, including food security.

The participants also exchanged experiences in strengthening the capacities of community radio in awareness raising and information broadcasting.

Haiti's experience has implications for all of us, given the increasing frequency with which natural disasters have occurred the world over.

In fact, at least two pointers that were articulated at Haiti resonated with recommendations that Dhan Foundation

and Kalanjiam Vanoli had endorsed earlier this year at a National Level Consultation in New Delhi:

- Expedite the licensing process for setting up community radios that are promoted in disaster prone / affected regions.
- Facilitate institutionalized linkages between the community radio stations and mainstream agencies involved in early warning systems at national, state and district level to provide legitimate and localized information on disasters.

Ashish Sen
President, AMARC Asia-Pacific



EDITORIAL

Diversity: The essence of CR

There is no denying that community radio (CR) locates its quintessence in democratization of media with a view to empower the marginalised sections of society. It, simply put, gives a voice to the unheard and the disenfranchised. This necessarily conjures up images of community radio as being a tool for development or social change, which it is, essentially. However, limiting the notion or roles of community radio stations to different facets of development only, is tantamount to an exceedingly narrow vision for such a versatile medium.

While endorsing the belief that community radio privileges the little-known, nameless, undiscovered, and unsung, this medium can do much more than just social change or disaster management, which may be enormously desirable roles to engage in but are not meant to be the solitary preoccupation of a CR station or a validation for its existence. CR stations can be the conduit for creative expressions of local culture as well as a repository and purveyor of cultural diversity. Local talent, vanishing folklore, forgotten folk songs, disappearing or new music, dying sport, unfamiliar radio formats – everything is waiting there to be given a fresh new spin and a platform by community radio.

If we look at the multiplicity of community radio stations internationally, there may be few that resemble each other. Each one is unique in its location, community, purpose, size, programming, ownership, management, infrastructure, funding, wattage, and coverage. But all add to the diverse and vibrant community radio mediascape of the world characterised by horizontal access and participation of people.

In India too, let a hundred (thousand) flowers bloom to encourage wide-ranging ideas and well-intentioned initiatives. Let one type not toe the line of another or be burdened by lofty ideals that may not have any resonance with the community that we serve. Diversity and multiplicity is the essence of community radio. Let us not put them into standardized moulds and make them all sound the same as do the mainstream commercial media.

It is also hoped that the much-awaited community radio support fund being instituted to promote CR in India by the Government of India would keep the spirit of diversity alive through the administration of this fund.

Kanchan K. Malik

TECHNOLOGY UPDATE

Mobile telephony options make CR exciting

Community Radio, today, cannot only widen its scope but also deepen its engagement with its communities by taking advantage of convergence in technologies, both from a hardware and software point of view. Some of the possibilities are:

Gramin Radio Inter Networking System (GRINS)

GRINS was designed by Gram Vaani in New Delhi. It is useful open source software, which enables community radio stations to not only stream content but also develop innovative programming wherein the radio station can host audio based bulletin boards, opinion polls etc. The software also enables SMS based distribution of content and indigenously created Interactive Voice Response (IVR) menus for people to access on-demand content through the mobile phone. See:

<http://gramvaani.org/community-radio/>

Rapid SMS

Created by UNICEF's Innovations and Development team and the Millennium Village Project at Columbia Univer-

sity, Rapid SMS is a free and open source framework for dynamic data collection, logistics coordination and communication, leveraging basic SMS technology. Rapid SMS thus is not tailor made for community radio stations, but instead leverages mobile phone related technologies which can be used intelligently by radio stations. Analysing case studies will give you a much better idea of how you can use it in your context. See:

<http://www.rapidsms.org/>

Frontline SMS

Conceptualised by Ken Banks, this free and open source software was built to empower small NGOs. It turns a laptop connected to a mobile phone, into a central communications hub. The program allows users to send and receive text messages with groups of people through mobile phones. It does not require an internet connection and all data lives on your computer and not on someone else's server. You can send messages to individuals or large groups and reply individually, which is always useful for fieldwork and surveys. Community Radio stations can easily integrate this with

their programming wherein they can send a selected group of listeners messages before or after a radio program in order to assess their programming better. The software could also be useful as a part of some preliminary research for a radio program. See: <http://www.frontlinesms.com/>

Apart from these 3 options, there are lots of other options which have not been discussed here for lack of space. The critical aspect here is not to get stuck in deciding which software is suitable for your radio station. The best way to start is to map what specific needs your station has with respect to your infrastructure, your programming, and your listeners' needs. Based on this data, you can find suitable software which will fit the needs of your radio station or can be easily customised as per convenience. As technology, particularly in the area of mobile telephony, advances rapidly, community radio stations can look forward to more exciting options which can enhance listenership.

Ram Bhat
Maraa

CRF adopts AMARC Gender Policy



Prachi, Radio Reporter, Bundelkhand wants more women to participate; have voice on radio

The Community Radio Forum of India adopted the Gender Policy promulgated by AMARC (World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters) in its annual general body meeting held in New Delhi on March 11, 2011.

The Gender Policy document of AMARC is available on the internet:

- http://www.amarc.org/documents/Gender_Policy/GP4CR_English.pdf and
- http://www.amarc.org/index.php?p=Gender_Policy_entrance_page.

The preamble of the AMARC Gender Policy for Community Radio Policy states among other things that, "Community radio has an obligation to redress the imbalance; facilitate women's involvement at all levels of decision-making and programming; ensure that women's voices and concerns are part of the daily news agenda; ensure that women are portrayed positively as active members of society; and support women acquire the technical skills and confidence to control their communications."

The policy is divided into six sections. Section one relates to 'Women's access to the airwaves'. Culturally, women have a disadvantageous position and it

makes access to the airwaves difficult for them. Efforts must be made "towards training for women, allowing women space to produce programmes; and ensuring a supportive, secure environment in and around the station." This will encourage them to can make their own programs about "political and social issues and entertainment, and also to have programmes that deal with women's issues."

Section two of the policy refers to 'Women's representation on air' and provides that all people, regardless of gender, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, etc are treated with respect and dignity in all aspects of the content broadcast on the station. Stereotypical portrayal of women must be avoided and men or women must not be objectified in the programs. Also women's perspective on all subjects and issues must be given priority.

"The special needs of minority women' are discussed in Section three of the policy which emphasizes recognition of diversity among women and the need to give equal opportunity to "differently-abled women, women from minority, ethnic, caste or indigenous backgrounds and women from sexual minorities, such as lesbians and transgenders."

The policy further highlights the significance of enhancing 'Women's representation at all levels of station manage-

ment' particularly in areas of decision-making and technical skills. "Women's participation cannot be measured by the number of women involved in the station. Women must be represented in the production, ownership and decision-making bodies of the station to ensure that women are able to engage meaningfully with policy processes, which could include culturally sensitive supportive environment."

This leads the policy to its next two sections – five and six – that speak of 'The use of appropriate technology' and 'Funding and capacity-building for women's radio' respectively. The gendered digital divide tends to exclude women from use of technology.

Capacity-building is seen by the policy as a key component for achieving gender parity. The sixth section also stresses the need to impart gender sensitivity training at the radio station "to enable men and women to recognise patriarchal behaviour and discriminatory portrayals; and eventually develop egalitarian gender relations, and non-discriminatory and gender fair reporting."

Kanchan K. Malik
Associate Editor, *CR News*



Unheard voices - Women gather to discuss local issues in Babai village (UP)

FIRST PERSON ACCOUNT

'Barnraising' Low Power FM in the US



(L to R) Pete Tridish, Vinod Pavarala, Vanessa Graber, Monroe Price and Ana Martina Rivas

Over the years, **Pete Tridish** (pronounced "Petri Dish", a pirate name he has taken on in the mid-1990s) has been a carpenter, an environmental educator, a solar energy system installer, a squatter, a homeless shelter volunteer and an activist in many social movements since the age of 16. He was a member of the founding collective of *Radio Mutiny*, a short-lived pirate radio station in Philadelphia, and a founder of the *Prometheus Radio Project*. *Prometheus* has been the leading advocate for low power FM (LPFM) radio since 1998, and for ten years led a coalition to expand LPFM, succeeding with the recent passage of the Local Community Radio Act by the Obama administration.

Vanessa Graber studied communication and journalism at University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill and did research on international media development in a variety of places, including Costa Rica, Austria, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Croatia. With experience in broadcasting and research, she is currently the Director of Community Radio at *Prometheus*.

Ana Martina Rivas works with *Flojos Vivos* and *Medios Caminantes*, which is focused on building a Spanish-language community media network and creating a network of solidarity between immigrants in the US and social movements in Latin

America.

This May I spent an enjoyable and very educative couple of hours with these three community media activists at University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School for Communication in Philadelphia.

Monroe Price, the internationally renowned expert on communication and media policy and the director of the Center for Global Communication Studies (CGCS) at the Annenberg School was kind enough to arrange a meeting between us because he felt that a conversation between us would help enhance understanding of the community radio movement in our respective countries.

While I spent some time sharing with them information about the state of community radio movement in India and our struggle to democratize the airwaves, I came away from the meeting with valuable knowledge about the situation in the US. While the US has a long history of community radio, it was only in 2000 that the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) permitted low power FM (LPFM) radio service in the country. But under the pressure of the commercial broadcasting lobby, the policy had placed restrictions on the LPFM spectrum by confining such radio stations to every fourth frequency

instead of every third on the dial.

Called Third Adjacency restrictions, the FCC had justified them on the grounds that these small, 100W stations allegedly interfered with the signals of large commercial stations.

The sustained grassroots campaign and legal battles led by groups such as *Prometheus Radio Project* for about a decade has now resulted in the new Local Community Radio Act passed in January 2011.

This has opened the airwaves for hundreds of new low power radio stations across the country, bringing community radio to urban areas for the first time. (For more on the struggle for community radio in the US, read the article written by Pete Tridish - page 2).

Currently, there is only one LPFM station in the top 50 largest media markets, which reach 160 million Americans. It repeals the earlier restrictions by allowing LPFMs on third adjacent channels across the US.

If you thought the cumbersome licensing procedures in India are a cause for the slow growth of the community radio sector, wait till you hear about the process in the US. The FCC allocates non-commercial radio licenses only during filing windows that last not more than 5-7 days.

If a group wants to apply for a radio license, they need to have all their documents ready to go so that they can submit it during this filing window. When there is no licensing window there is no way to apply for a station. With the passage of the new radio act, the expectation is that the FCC will soon open a filing window for LPFM.

Like the community radio movement in India, *Prometheus* is involved in building people's capacities to set up and manage community radio stations.

However, the 'barnraisings' it has been organizing are something unique and exciting. Conceived on the lines of the Amish barnraising tradition, *Prometheus* holds radio barnraisings where they work with communities to build an entire radio station.

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VOICES FROM THE FIELD

Mann Deshi Tarang: A creative outlet for local talent



Mann Deshi Tarang, FM 90.4 MHz, is the community radio operated under the aegis of an NGO Mann Deshi Foundation, Mhaswad, in Satara district located in the western part of Maharashtra.

Chetna Gala Sinha is the founder and chairperson of the foundation. The foundation works for the empowerment of the community, especially women.

The community radio station Mann Deshi Tarang was started on November 17, 2008. It covers the radius area of 20 km, in which around 70 villages are included.

The main objective of this CR station is to promote economic, social and cultural development through targeted programming in a wide range of relevant topics, including health, agriculture, financial literacy, education, rural livelihoods, capacity building, environment, self-help group support, and any other issues of local relevance to promote social development.

Mann Deshi Tarang seeks to be a harbinger of change for the agrarian community.

As stated on its home page <http://www.manneshifoundation.org/radio/about.html>, its objective is "to improve the well being of the community in and around Mhaswad through useful and relevant programming which will enrich their civic and cultural life." Mann Deshi Tarang also aims to provide a creative outlet for expressions of local culture such as folk and religious music.

S.M. Yadav, who is the station director, has to play the role of an announcer, editor and field officer as per demand. The time slot of the Mann Deshi Tarang is from 7.00 to 8.30 in the morning, 12.30 to 1.30 in the afternoon and the previous morning's repeat telecast session from 7.00 to 8.30 in the evening.

The following recorded program goes on air:

Malavarch Shivar (Open Farming): The Farmer is the prime focus of this program. It includes the interviews of the farmers, interviews of their families, the successful experiments of the farming, information of the market price, animal husbandry.

Gammatt-Jammatt (Fun): This program is specially designed for the children of the farmers and the community. The children of 3-12 years can participate in the program. The program includes children's performances of songs, stories, games, poems and art.

Sakhi-Sajni (Women Friends): This program is especially for the women. Success stories of female farmers, Success stories of female entrepreneurs, about their hobbies, healthy recipes, essays from books, local folk music and guidance for the financial literacy and household business.

Tarunai (Youth): As the name suggests, it

is made for the youth. The program provides information about personality development, competitive examination, employment opportunities, different courses and English speaking.

Radio Doctor: Again as the name suggests, this program is about health awareness. Experts give information about nutrition, diet, exercise, first aid, ayurveda and healthy recipes.

Prasangik (Occasional): This program is based on the local festivals, local traditions and the beliefs of the community. Through this program, the information, importance and Dos and Don'ts of the occasion are conveyed to the community.

The following programs are weekly:

Balrang: On Monday: The program is for and by children.

Lokrang: On Tuesday: The program is based on folk music.

Chittrarang: On Wednesday: The program is about Marathi film songs on demand.

Bhaktirang: On Thursday: The program is based on the bhakti sangit i.e. devotional music. People of local Bhajani-Mandali (Local group of people who play devotional music) plays that music.

Bhavrang: On Friday: In this program, Marathi devotional songs from Marathi films are played.

Kavyarang: On Saturday: In this program, listeners read their favorite poems of other poets or written by themselves.

Saptrang: On Sunday: In this program, listener's favorite Hindi film music is played on demand.

Ashwini Kamble
Shivaji University, Kolhapur

First person account : Low Power FM in the US

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Community volunteers and outside enthusiasts, including engineers, students, journalists, lawyers, musicians, and others come together to build a studio, raise an antenna mast, and put the station on air for the first time - all over the course of three days. Concurrently, workshops are conducted on a range of topics

such as FCC regulations, radio engineering, citizen lobbying and media reform advocacy, programming, fundraising, and movement-building.

While there is certainly something for us to learn from this vibrant training/community-building model, Pete Tridish also reminded me, in an email communication later, about the need for undertaking a systematic spectrum analy-

sis. As we are beginning to hear about the vanishing spectrum for community radio in the major cities (e.g. Delhi and Bangalore), Pete urges us to not give up but keep looking for spaces in between the full-power radio stations.

Vinod Pavarala
President, Community Radio Forum

CR Network web portal to unite radio stations from across India

With over a hundred community radio stations springing up across the country and more in the pipeline, the collective strength of the community media movement is becoming more formidable by the day. But what is missing right now is a common platform where these disparate entities can come together to take action on pan-Indian issues.

Can these hundreds of radio stations from across the country unite for the common purpose of resolving the major social and development issues affecting the country?

The answer is a vehement yes, and it is to harness this potential of the community radio movement that Gram Vaani, Nomad Networks, and Radio Bundelkhand have joined hands to develop a Community Radio Network – a web-based platform bringing together radio stations from across the country.

The CR Network website (<http://crindia.in/>) is in the process of profiling CR stations and already 18 radio stations have been profiled. We encourage more radio stations to send us their profile details so we can feature them too.

While in the initial phase an obvious outcome of the effort would be to showcase the collective identity of CR in India, in the future it is also likely to satisfy the felt need of these stations to network with each other and share knowledge wherever necessary. They will be able to listen to programs from other stations, ask questions, give feedback, and essentially use the network as a peer-to-peer mentoring platform.

Fellowships for public information campaigns

Gram Vaani and IIT Delhi have also launched a fellowship scheme to encourage reporters working in community radio stations to work on month-long public information campaigns on development themes in their respective communities.

The stress here is on creating awareness and gathering feedback on the implementation of different govern-

ment schemes addressing social development concerns of the community.

Currently, three themes are being addressed: implementation of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, functioning of Public Distribution System and implementation of the Right to Education Act.

As part of the fellowship scheme, Gram Vaani is also connecting the community radio stations with regional experts and activists as a follow-up on feedback gathered from the grassroots.

The campaigns are expected to meet the twin objectives of building up capacity of the stations to run campaigns for review of government schemes, and connect stations with regional experts who can provide suggestions for local action, even in the long term. With the CR Network gaining in strength, we hope that the campaigns will soon become an across the country initiative.

There are already some encouraging stories from the stations that have partnered with us on the campaigns. PARD Vaanoli, the first one to go on air with the campaign initiative in February, was able to highlight both the ups and downs of the implementation of NREGS in Madurai district.

It reported on the underpayment of wages to NREGS workers during the campaign which resulted in a hike of Rs. 3 in their daily wages. In Bangalore, Radio Active is actively participating in undertaking social audits of the public distribution system.

The progress of the campaign work is also being actively reported on the CR network website. We would love to hear from members of the CR community on how they would like to contribute to this effort.

Stations that would like their profiles to be featured on the website and want to take part in the campaigns can write to me at vidyajourno@gmail.com or call 0-8447835303.

Vidya Venkat
Research Associate
Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

UNICEF-AMARC to partner for strengthening CR stations

Montreal, June 30, 2011. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC) are pleased to announce their signing of a global Memorandum of Understanding.

The MoU is aimed at strengthening the use of community radio in promoting the realization of the rights of children and women, particularly the most vulnerable ones.

The agreement, signed on June 26, 2011, will contribute to local level development by involving children and their families on the discussion of issues related to their own social, economic, cultural and political realities via community radio.

At global level, AMARC and UNICEF will discuss the development of guidance for local affiliates as they seek to expand community radio activities in their countries; how best to monitor the use of community radio as a local media channel for community empowerment and participation; and ways to strengthen evaluation of community radios as vehicles for communication.

At country level, the MOU will encourage expanded planning, implementation and monitoring of sustainable community radio programmes and, by its very nature, boost the participation of children and their families and communities, promoting dialogue with service providers.

The Memorandum of Understanding was signed by Marcelo Solervicens, Secretary General of AMARC, and by Richard Morgan, Director of UNICEF's Division of Policy and Practice, on 17 June 2011.

Source:
International Secretariat, AMARC,
Montreal, Canada

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Bush Radio facing closure

Reproduced from: http://www.thenewage.co.za/27011-1011-53-Bush_Radio_facing_closure



The signage that greets you on arrival at the Bush Radio offices

Bush Radio, which has been at the forefront of community broadcasting for more than two decades, is facing closure over unpaid rent and other expenses.

The Cape Town-based radio station is struggling to pay its rent and operational costs and needs extra funds.

During the apartheid years Bush Radio campaigned against injustice. The station also actively campaigned for a free and independent broadcasting authority.

The mother of community radio also played an incredible part in the shaping of the history of the new South Africa.

According to managing director Brenda Leonard, their landlord had given them until the end of this month "to come up with a tangible proposal of how to raise money for rent".

"The total cost we are trying to raise is R300000, which will include rent and operational costs until December," she said.

"If we decide to scale down on our projects, it will be to the detriment of the community. Every year we train 60 young people between the ages of six and 18 years in broadcasting. We train them to be radio presenters and to produce programmes.

We also have a Youth against AIDS programme in which we engage communities in discussions around the issue. For this programme, we won the Prince Klause Award. We also won several other awards, including a silver medal at the New York Radio Festival, as well as the SABC Community Radio Award for news and current affairs," she said.

It is also at the same radio station where many journalists and others working in the media industry cut their teeth. This includes people like Vernon Adams, the station manager of Heart FM, Sandra Rosenberg from Good Hope FM, and many others.

Bush Radio currently has a listenership of 275000 and, according to Leonard, the station is continuing to grow. "It would be a huge loss if the station should close its doors," she said. For more information, the radio station can be contacted on 021 448 5450.

Picture Credit - bushradio.wordpress.com

UNFCCC admits AMARC as observer organisation

The World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC) is pleased to announce that it was admitted to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) as an observer organization on August 17, 2011. AMARC will have the opportunity to attend various sessions of the UNFCCC assemblies. AMARC may also organize side events and exhibitions.

The participation of AMARC as an NGO will begin at COP 17 in Durban, South Africa, at the end of this year, as well as at the Rio+20 in Brazil, in June 2012, where it can demonstrate the important role of community radio in the prevention, support and as an educator during natural disasters and in the context of climate change and contribute to:

- Uphold the right of everyone to receive clear and timely information on environmental issues, and on development plans that may affect us, or in which we have an interest.
- Adopt the climate change agenda so that communities we work with in different parts of the world have quality information that enables them to take more effective action and to demand that those in power adopt policies to mitigate the causes of climate change.
- Strengthen the standards of environmental reporting and build the capacity of environmental communicators at local and community level.
- Support civil society at local, regional and global levels, and promote the partic-

ipation of all individuals and organizations in decision making that affects their lives and livelihoods.

- Protect and exercise the right to freedom of opinion, expression, association and dissent to rethink new, more just, more equitable and more sustainable models of development
- Strengthen local communities capacity to take care of their environment
- Adopt best practices in our own activities with respect to environmental management and promote a carbon neutral community media sector.

Source:

International Secretariat, AMARC, Montreal, Canada

Honour for Sangham Radio staff reporters



Sangham Radio reporter Algole Narsamma carrying out field recording

The community radio experiment -Sangham Radio-, run by a group of illiterate rural dalit women at Machnoor village, Medak district continues to attract attention and accolades. The School of Journalism and Communication of University of Queensland, Australia has commended the dalit women for their 'innovative and practical mode of communication contributing to grass-roots levels sustainable development'.

The commendation is part of a global competition '2011 Communication for Social Change Award', which was conducted by University of Queensland. Close

to 60 competitors drawn from 22 countries vied for the top honours. The community radio, which was set up by Deccan Development Society (DDS), is being exclusively run by dalit women from rural background. Commending the work by rural women, The Centre for Communication and Social Change, School of Journalism and Communication, University of Queensland has sent a letter.

"We commend the courage and extraordinary commitment you have demonstrated to communication for social change. The Centre commends your contribution to innovative and practical

communication that has contributed to grassroots-level sustainable development," the letter said. "The poor and marginalised, especially rural dalit women, are excluded by traditional media. The issues that impact their lives are hardly covered by anyone. The Sangham radio is an attempt to give such women a voice and a platform to share views," Director of DDS, P.V. Sateesh said.

Supported by DDS, about 18 women have been creating content for the community radio on a wide range of issues. The community radio is billed as the first such initiative in India that is run and managed fully by rural dalit women. The women were provided training on the intricacies of broadcasting and running a community radio by DDS.

"There are close to 5,000 women members of DDS and they contribute Rs. 5 every month to run the community radio. Issues like ecological agriculture, local healing systems, violence against women, locally relevant education, childcare and tradition and community care of natural resources are discussed in the radio," Mr. Sateesh said.

Reproduced from:

The Hindu, Hyderabad

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/tp-andhrapradesh/article2317693.ece>

UoH launches Bol Hyderabad 90.4 fm



Bol Hyderabad 90.4 fm, University of Hyderabad's (UoH) Campus Radio Station was launched on August 15, 2011. Bol will be broadcasting to the university campus and communities surrounding it.

The Vice-chancellor, UoH, Prof. Ramkrishna Ramaswamy started the day's playlist to launch the radio station. Mr. Veda Kumar, President, Forum for a Better Hyderabad, launched the radio station website and the web-streaming function.

Launching the radio station, Vice-chancellor, Prof. Ramaswamy said

the radio was for communities both within and outside the university. Unlike most commercial FM stations, Bol Hyderabad would focus on programmes reflecting the ethos of Hyderabad and issues concerning its listeners besides broadcasting entertainment programmes. He called upon faculty members, non-teaching staff and importantly, students to actively participate in programming and make the radio station a success.

Mr. Veda Kumar said the radio station was uniquely placed in a vibrant university that it could be a very good vehicle to broadcast on civic issues and help in making 'Cyberabad' a better place to live in.

Prof. Vinod Pavarala, Dean, S N School said the radio station would follow an open door policy and welcome ideas from all sections of the extremely diverse society encompassing students, civil ser-

vants, NGOs, educationists and IT professionals. He said the radio station would constantly tune itself to the aspirations of the communities residing around it.

Bol Hyderabad 90.4 fm will broadcast programmes in English, Hindi, Telugu & Urdu to cater to the communities in its surrounding areas within a 10 km radius of Gachibowli and Lingampally.

A Radio Advisory Council (RAC) has been put in place to guide Bol Hyderabad towards achieving its goals. In keeping with the spirit of the radio station, the RAC has members from among the university community and also those residing around it. It involves schools, institutions of higher learning & representatives of the communities.

A Bol Hyderabad release

Working Paper makes recommendations for Community Radio Support Fund of India

Economic viability and sustainability continues to be the major challenge for community radio stations in India especially in rural areas. This working paper proposes the establishment of a Community Radio Support Fund of India, to be referred to as the CRSFI. It urges the government to adopt mechanisms for state support to the community radio sector with a view to expand and improve access of the marginalised to media.

The detailed working paper submitted on behalf of Community Radio Forum of India at the meeting of the Working Group on Community Radio Support Fund set up by the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, July 14-15, 2011 first described the structural and operational plan of Community Radio Funds in other countries before making recommendations for the management and administration of CRSF of India. Excerpts from the paper dealing with recommendations follow:

1) A Community Radio Support Fund of India (CRSFI) be created to provide financial support to holders of Community Radio licences, and, more generally, to promote community radio sector in the country.

2) The Fund should be set up as an independent and autonomous body. It should provide a strategic cross-subsidy funding mechanism for community broadcasting. While primary sources of funding would emanate from the various Ministries of the Government, additional resource mobilization would also be accessed by the fund from donor agencies, multilateral organizations, corporate social responsibility/private sector sources and others.

3) The CRSFI's structure and decision making should demonstrate independence, transparency, and accountability in its efforts to facilitate an enabling environment for the community radio sector in the country. This should be reflected in the composition of its board members, grants evaluation panel and other advisory committees. Representatives on these groups should comprise a mix of community radio actors and eminent peo-

ple with proven credentials in areas like governance, media, fund raising, and the law.

4) Government of India (or MIB, as the case may be) and community radio associations such as the Community Radio Forum should nominate representatives to serve on the Community Radio Fund of India.

5) The philosophy of community radio is fundamentally different from the mainstream media. While all applicants must be treated equally, the fund's priority should be to address the legacy of imbalances in access to the media. It must seek to support community radio projects in under-served, needy communities, especially in remote and rural areas that are lacking in core media competencies within the community radio sector. Only not-for-profit community based organizations would be eligible for grants.

6) There are various concerns surrounding the potential cost implications of running CRSFI. Therefore, while CRSFI should seek to increase funding for the CR sector from multiple sources, administrative overheads for its operation should be kept to a minimum and stations should receive funding promptly after its sanction. Administrative costs should not exceed 15 per cent of the annual disbursement of CRSFI.

7) A list of the activities/services for which the CRSFI resources would be made available/awarded must be clearly indicated (as also the ineligible categories). However, an assessment of individual applications which takes into account their needs and merits, must be done for determining the quantity and objective of the funding being made to them.

8) Emergency grants should be available in exceptional circumstances, with preference being given to stations operating in areas which are prone to disasters.

9) Two rounds of grant awards may be made in each financial year. Though recurrent funding should be available to sta-

tions, subsequent applications from groups that have already once received support from the Fund, should be considered on a lower priority. This is also to ensure that stations become less grant-dependent over a period of time. Priority should be given to licensees that have NOT been awarded a grant and to newly-licensed stations.

(Continued on page 12)

Gurgaon Ki Awaaz Samudayik Radio initiates internet streaming



On August 25, 2011, Gurgaon Ki Awaaz started internet streaming of its broadcasts. This was made possible by the collective efforts of Gramvaani and Nomad India Network, and supported by the Radiophone project, Listeners across the world can now tune in to Gurgaon Ki Awaz by clicking on this link: <http://208.43.81.168:8621>

It takes about 6 to 8 minutes to buffer, after which the streaming is smooth. Arti Jaiman, Station Director : Gurgaon Ki Awaaz Samudayik Radio Station 107.8 MHz FMsays, "Feedback is not just welcome, we earnestly solicit it." Please check the website: www.trfindia.org or email: arti@trfindia.org

For those who may not be knowing, Gurgaon Ki Awaaz is the first and only civil-society-led community radio station in the National Capital Region of Delhi. They broadcast 24X7, in Hindi and Haryanvi, with a team of community reporters, generating community content, and community participation.

Source:
cr-India

Working Paper on Community Radio Support Fund

(Continued from page 9)

10) While a mechanism should be in place to monitor that CRSFI funds are used appropriately, it must also be ensured that CR stations do not lose their self-governing, participatory character and their sense of accountability to the communities they serve. Community Radio stations applying for CRSFI need to also reflect management models that demonstrate community ownership.

11) CRSFI funding may include:

- i) One-off support for newly-launched stations
- ii) Fund for capacity building to involve the community in running the station. This could be for initial training, skill-enhancement, and for horizontal learning between communities running radio stations.

iii) Programme Production and Community Outreach: Priority will be given to initiatives which strengthen governance, local arts, culture and information, and marginalised groups. Within these groups, particular attention should be given to women, youth, tribal communities, dalits, and the disabled. These costs do not include the day to day running costs which need to be raised by the community radio stations themselves.

iv) Transmitter or studio equipment. Infrastructure/equipment grants. These would be seed grants and would not exceed 20 per cent of their total costs.

v) Listenership surveys, fund raising, business development and revenue generation efforts.

vi) Innovative Research and Development initiatives that would deepen the impact and scale of community broadcasting

12) Exclusions List

- i) Retrospective grants i.e. to cover expenditure already incurred
- ii) Funding for the repayment of loans
- iii) Vehicle costs; Travel and other expenses
- iv) Cost of building repairs, construction or maintenance
- v) Purchase of office equipment and furnishings
- vi) Rent due on premises and/or mortgage payments
- vii) Day to day running costs of the CRS
- viii) Licence fees
- ix) Application for the same/similar grants should be avoided.

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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.

Kindly note:

- Contributions should be in English, restricted to 300 words for news/event and 450 words for opinion pieces or 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 September 25, 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 typed articles/reports/features to:

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

We look forward to hearing from you about your community radio station or all the community radio related developments that you are following.

Thank you in anticipation.

Please also send us your feedback about this issue to make *CR News* bolder and better as we go along.

Best Regards,
Ashish Sen (Editor)
Kanchan K. Malik (Associate Editor)

