

**An Evaluation Report  
on  
“Building ICT Opportunities for Development Communications  
Project  
A part of the Building Communication Opportunities (BCO) programme  
(1<sup>st</sup> February – 5<sup>th</sup> March 2007)**



**Submitted by:**  
**Siddartha Shrestha <[siddartha.shrestha@gmail.com](mailto:siddartha.shrestha@gmail.com)>**  
**BCC Consultant, Nepal**

**Submitted to:**  
**Panos South Asia, Kathmandu, Nepal**



**March 2007**

## Table of contents

Acknowledgement.....	I
List of figures.....	II
List of case studies.....	II
Acronyms.....	III
Executive Summary.....	1
<b>Chapter1: Introduction</b>	
1.1 Background.....	3
1.2 Objectives of the study.....	4
1.3 Focus of the study.....	4
1.4 Research methodology.....	4
1.4 A. Sampling.....	5
1.4 B. Data collection methods and instruments.....	5
1.4 C. Quality Control, Data Processing and Analysis.....	5
1.5 Field Work.....	6
1.6 Limitations of the study .....	6
<b>Chapter 2: Research Findings and Analysis</b>	
2.1 Online Journalism and Web Publishing Training Workshop.....	8
2.2 Local Content Fellowships .....	14
2.2A Grass Roots Options, India.....	14
2.2B Unnayan news, Bangladesh.....	17
2.3 Focus Group Discussion in Bangladesh.....	19
2.4 Response from PSA management and donors.....	21
2.5 Response from the Trainer.....	22
<b>Chapter 3: Recommendations and Conclusion</b>	
3.1 Recommendations.....	24
3.2 Conclusion.....	26
<b>Annex</b>	
I. Research Instruments	
a. Trainees' evaluation questionnaire.....	28
b. In-depth Interview Guide – Fellowships.....	32
c. FGD Guide for Bangladesh participants.....	34
d. Questionnaire for Panos South Asia and donors.....	37
e. Questionnaire for trainers.....	38
II. Letter of Support [ICAR to Grassroots Options].....	39

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

The consultant would like to extend his sincere appreciation to Panos South Asia office for funding the study. Without their trust and support, this study would not have been possible.

Special heartfelt thanks to the respondents who participated and helped in the study by providing valuable feed back on the project. Without their support, the evaluation would not have been possible.

Sincere thanks to the two fellowship recipients from India and Bangladesh, Mr. Sanat Chakraborty and Mr. Shahjahan Siraj respectively for taking their time off their busy schedules and providing significant contributions and feed back for the improvement of the program.

The Panos Bangladesh Country Office deserves special mention for their hard work in coordinating the country evaluation exercise in a smooth and effective manner.

The consultant is particularly indebted to Mr. Kishor Pradhan, Country Representative for Nepal for his valuable inputs during the planning and development of the evaluation.

Last but not the least, I would like to thank the entire team at Panos South Asia office and in particular, Ms. Rati Sharma for providing me with timely and efficient support during the course of the study.

**Siddartha Shrestha**

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Response of participants – Country-wise.....	8
Figure 2: Learning experience for each other.....	9
Figure 3: Length of workshop was appropriate.....	9
Figure 4: The instructor demonstrated knowledge of workshop subject....	10
Figure 5: Links with MDGs (Millennium Development Goals).....	11

## LIST OF CASE STUDIES

Case Study 1: Breaking ground from traditional to online journalism	
- Md. Arafatul Islam.....	12
Case Study 2: Grassrootsoptions.org: Working towards sustainability.....	16
Case Study 3: Online video is an effective fund raising tool	
- Shahjahan Siraj.....	19
Case Study 4: Master Trainer – Ripon Haque.....	20

## ACRONYMS

BCO	Building Communication opportunities
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
FGD	Focus group discussions
GO	Grass Root Options
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ICT4D	Information and communication for development
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
OJW	Online Journalism and Web Publishing Training Workshops
PSA	Panos South Asia
SDC	Swiss Development Cooperation
TDO	TV, Digital Technology and Online Broadcasting
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

'Building ICT Opportunities for Development Communications' project implemented under the BCO programme at Panos South Asia aimed to raise the capacity of the South Asian media to use ICT to enhance coverage of development issues in the media. The major activities included four training workshops focusing on online Journalism, web publishing, TV, digital technology and online broadcasting and the other commissioning three fellowships to produce local contents using ICT.

An evaluation to document the progress, lessons learnt and possible impact of the project was conducted by an independent consultant in close consultation with Panos South Asia. The consultant developed a variety of research instruments for the different target groups ranging, from the primary group of workshop trainees to the trainer.

A structured questionnaire was employed as the primary data collection method which was sent through email communication to all the participants who had attended the various workshops. In order to get an in-depth understanding and assessment, the consultant made field visits to the countries of India and Bangladesh. In this field trip, he interviewed two recipients of the fellowships, Grass Roots Options from Shillong and Unnayan News from Bangladesh. In addition, he conducted a Focus Group Discussion in Bangladesh among the workshop trainees where valuable information and feed back was gathered for the program.

A majority of the respondents were satisfied with the general arrangement of the trainings including the instructor. The major concern voiced by them was the length of the workshop which they believed was too short and suggested the duration to be at least ten days. Another important suggestion indicated the consultation of the trainees during course development.

The findings shows a majority of the participants have more confidence in developing web based content and activities due to the training and initiations have been cited by around 40% of the trainees. However, there seems to be not enough efforts made at raising voices of the poor by the participants except for a few which are highlighted in the form of case studies.

On the other hand, the fellowships appear to have made a satisfactory contribution towards the project objectives as evident in the findings supported by case studies in India and Bangladesh. It is suggested that provision of more fellowships can be an effective way to meet the project objectives and work towards making the initiative sustainable.

Lastly, the project can be successfully replicated and planned for expansion to demonstrate impact on 'raising marginalised voices through ICT' in the future.

# Chapter 1: Introduction

## 1.1 Background

Panos South Asia (PSA) with a grant support from Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) implemented a project entitled 'Building ICT Opportunities for Development Communications' under a global partnership programme 'Building Communications Opportunities (BCO)', between 1 January, 2004 - 31 December, 2006.

BCO is a global initiative, spanning Latin America, Africa and Asia, that investigates, mobilizes and supports key information and communication for development (ICT4D) opportunities that impacts on poverty. BCO synergy and collaboration is harnessed through joint partner activities on the ground, as well as through dialogue, networking, sharing and learning. The identified goal of the BCO is to achieve three key outputs, namely, 1) ICT4D mainstreamed in development sectors; 2) Stronger voice and debate, enabled through ICT4D; and 3) Demonstrated impact of ICT4D on poverty.

'Building ICT Opportunities for Development Communications' project implemented under the BCO programme at Panos South Asia aimed to raise the capacity of the media to use ICT to enhance coverage of development issues in the media to improve public understanding of these issues. The specific objectives of the project were: 1) to facilitate access to ICTs for South Asian resource poor media; 2) to build the technical and editorial capacity of media in South Asia to use ICTs; and 3) to provide post-workshop follow-up support to ensure the journalists use their improved ICT and editorial skills to include more voices of poor and marginalized people in local coverage and development issues.

Specifically, the project organized two different types of activities which were all completed. The activities were: i) two types of four capacity building activities in the form of training workshops for media and communication practitioners and, ii) commission fellowships to graduate trainees to produce local contents using ICT.

The training workshops were based on various themes, namely 'Online Journalism and Web Publishing Training Workshops' and 'TV, Digital Technology and Online Broadcasting'. Regarding fellowships, three of these were awarded to produce local contents.

In order to conduct an evaluation and possible impact of the project, an independent consultant was contracted for the assignment which started from Feb 1 till March 5, 2007. The following narrative details the evaluation study which comprised of structured questionnaires, field visits, telephone interviews and focus group discussions.

## **1.2 Objectives of the study**

The primary objective of this study is to review and evaluate the major activities of the project in line with overall BCO and the project's vision.

### Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of this project would be to assess and evaluate:

- a. Quality of the training workshops?
- b. Benefits received by the trainees
- c. Level of success to provide post-workshop follow-up support by journalists using their improved ICT and editorial skills to include increased voices of the poor and marginalized people.
- d. Contribution of the project activities towards the desired results.

## **1.3 Focus of the study**

### Target audience

- a. Participants from the four workshops based on the themes: "Online Journalism and Web Publishing Training Workshops" and "TV, Digital Technology and Online Broadcasting".
- b. 3 organisations/individuals who were awarded local content Fellowships
- c. Donors of the project
- d. Trainers of the workshops
- e. PANOS management

As the participants were represented from all South Asian countries, it was decided to sample at least representatives from two countries. After discussion with PANOS SA, it was decided to conduct field visits to India and Bangladesh. In this trip, a sample of the workshop trainees as well as two fellow ship awardees would be covered.

## **1.4 Research Methodology**

To develop the research methodology, the consultant organized a series of meetings with the Country Representative of Panos South Asia and conducted a thorough and analytical desk review of relevant project documents/literatures

This section outlines the methodology which was used for the evaluation, under three sub-headings:

### **A. Sampling:**

For the workshop trainees, it was decided to include every participant in the sample size through email communication. This was done to ensure at least a 50% response rate which would be followed-up through telephone calls.

Local content fellowships are one area which is critical for the evaluation and thus required undivided attention and time. The Grass Roots Options from Shillong, India and Unnayan News from Bangladesh were selected for the in-depth evaluation out of the three fellowships.

For a more comprehensive evaluation and overall picture, it would not suffice to cover only the trainees and fellowships. Therefore, the regional programme manager of Panos South Asia, the trainer(s) and the donors were included in the sampling frame.

### **B. Data collection Methods and Research Instruments:**

As mentioned above, there are four distinct categories of the target group: a) workshop trainees b) local content fellowships c) trainer and d) donors and Panos South Asia management. Since a generic approach is not appropriate for this diverse category, it was suggested to have separate research instruments for each category.

**A structured questionnaire** comprising of both close and open ended questions was developed for the workshop trainees while a separate **interview guide** were prepared for fellowships. The donors, trainer(s) and Panos SA management were provided with separate **questionnaires** for their responses. In addition, a **focus group discussion (FGD) guide** was developed as a supplement to the questionnaire where the opportunity for direct interaction was organized.

The Consultant developed the first draft of the survey instruments for both quantitative and qualitative survey. These instruments were submitted to Panos South Asia for review. The comments and suggestions received from Panos SA were incorporated into the development of the final version of the instruments.

### **C. Quality Control, Data Processing and Analysis**

Quality control is essential for any evaluation activity, no matter how big or small. In this case, small measures were taken such as the data generated through structured questionnaire interviews were coded for computer entry. The open-ended questions were standardized and coded after the receipt of the responses. Since the sample size was small and not very complex, all the data tabulations and analysis was done using the MS Excel program.

Information collected through focus group discussions were first transcribed and then analyzed.

### **1.5 Field Work**

The field work being a mandatory part of the assignment, it provided an insight on the level of achievement in relation to the project objectives. After several meetings, it was mutually decided to organize field visits to two countries, India and Bangladesh.

The purpose of visiting India was to interview Mr. Sanat K. Chakraborty, Editor of Grass Roots Options, Shillong who was the one of the recipients of the local content fellowships. And the Bangladesh visit focused on conducting an in-depth interview with another fellow-ship recipient, Mr. Shahjahan Siraj of Unnayan News and to organize a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with the workshop trainees, comprising of both 'Online Journalism and Web Publishing Training' and 'TV, Digital Technology and Online Broadcasting Workshops '. A total of six trainees were present for the FGD where they actively contributed to the discussion proceedings and gave valuable inputs for the project. The Panos Bangladesh office made adequate arrangements for conducting the discussions and interview.

### **1.6 Limitations of the study**

As the entire evaluation exercise was scheduled to complete within a months' time, it was not possible to make field visits to more places. Moreover, the consultant could only meet the editor of Grassrootsoptions in Kolkata instead of Shillong due to the uncertain security situation in neighboring areas. The visit to Shillong would have provided an opportunity to have general feel of the ICT infrastructure and facilities in the North-eastern region of India.

Due to the distance factor of trainees in different countries, communication with them was not always concise and clear. This led to relying primarily only on the structured questionnaires.

## **Chapter 2:**

# **Research Findings & Analysis**

## Research Findings and Analysis

As mentioned in the methodology section, the research instruments consist of both quantitative and qualitative techniques. In order to have a systematic structure, the findings and analysis have been divided according to the project objectives. To gain additional insight and information, a FGD and responses from donors, PSA management and the trainer were included.

### 2.1 Online Journalism and Web Publishing Training Workshop

#### (Project objectives 1 and 2)

##### Workshop Trainees

A total of 27 trainees with representation from each participating South Asian country sent responses through email communication. This exercise was followed-up by telephone communication. Out of the 27 responses, it was represented by 37% of the trainees from Nepal followed by 15% each from India, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka with the remaining 4% only from Bhutan.

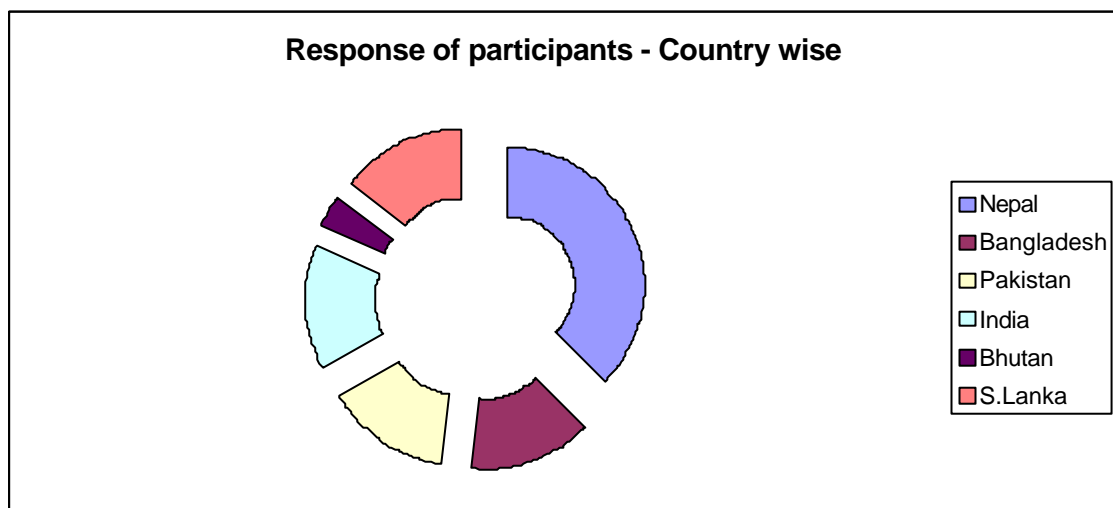


Fig. 1

The questionnaire comprised of sections such as feedback on the general aspect of the program, instructor/trainer qualities, learning etc. Included in these sections were the important issues on their understanding and possible contribution of raising marginalized voices through these training workshops.

#### i. Quantitative

The general aspects of the training such as workshop venue, training centre facilities, quality of refreshments and learning experience for each other were evenly appreciated by both the training theme participants. However, the satisfaction level in terms of 'learning experience for each other' was lower for the trainees of TDO Workshops' as compared to 'OJW Training'.

This could be attributed to the fact that a more diverse mix of participants attended the 'TDO' with some having a good technical know-how while others possessing little technical knowledge.

*It was voiced aptly by a participant "I do think that it would be better to ensure that all participants come from similar levels of familiarity with the subject matter – in our case, there were some people who already knew what was being taught, and others were complete novices – it was evidently difficult for the trainers to provide something to value to both groups"*



Fig. 2

A majority of the respondents strongly stated that the length of the workshop was not appropriate and would have preferred a longer duration. However, it has to be noted that a sizeable percentage agreed that the length was suitable for these types of workshops.

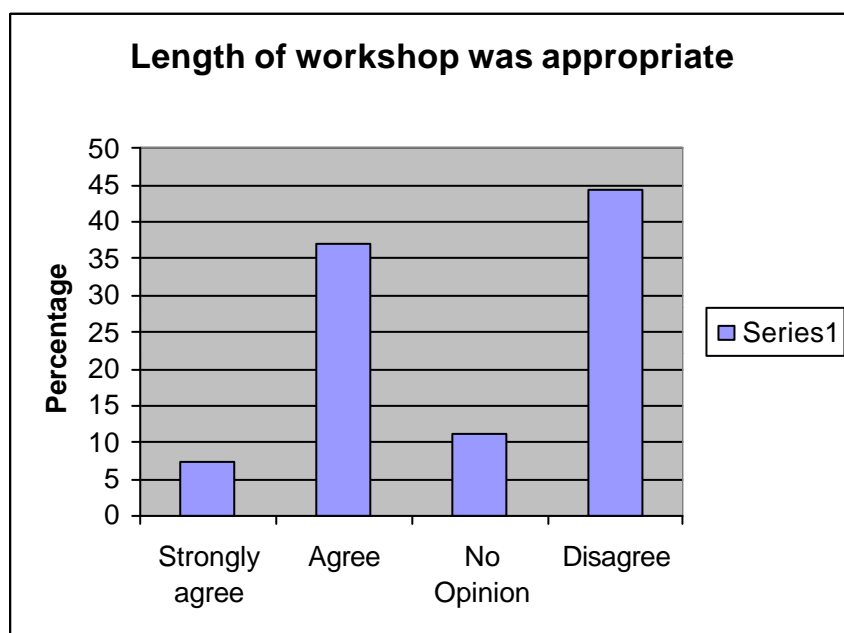


Fig. 3

On an average, a majority of the respondents agreed that the workshop objectives were clearly identified and the content was arranged in a logical sequence. Most of the participants rated the practical sessions and demonstrations to be good as a part of their training program.

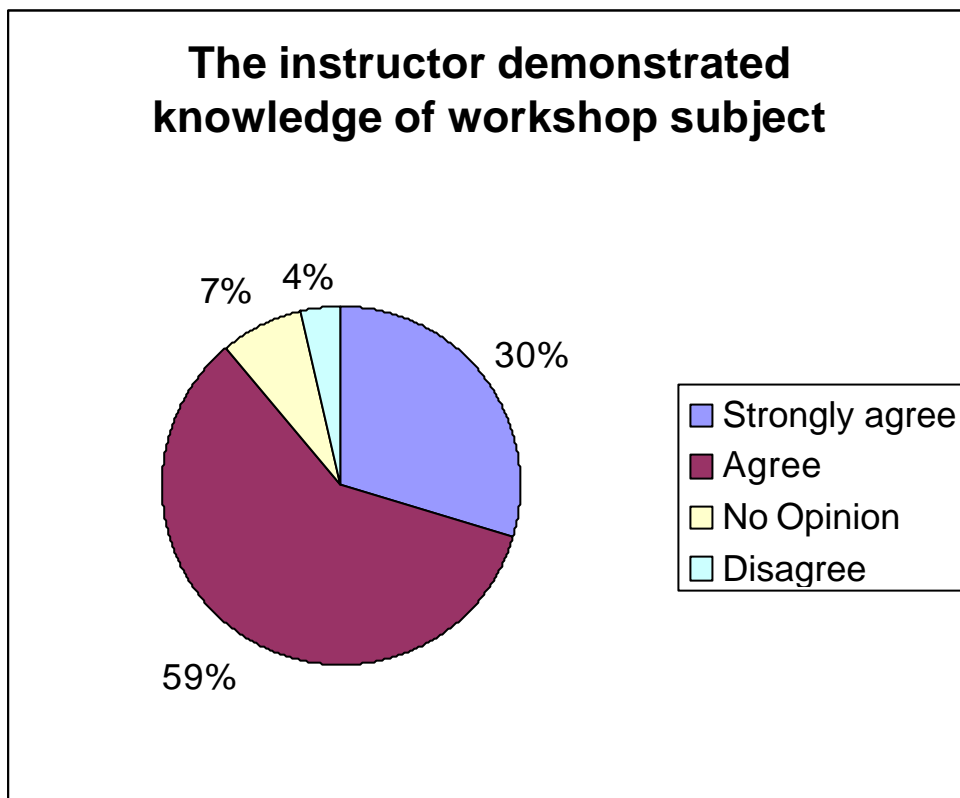


Fig. 4

To support the pie-chart provided above, a majority of the respondents stated that the instructor was easy to understand, was prepared and well organized.

When asked about the usefulness of the materials presented provided, over 95% of the trainees responded affirmatively. Almost the same percentage of respondents claims to have oriented three or more people (friends/colleagues) on the contents after receiving the training.

To assess the trainees' level of understanding on relevant development issues, respondents were asked if the training contents had substantial links to Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). 33% of the trainees stated substantial links with the MDGs out of which 75% cited 'to develop a global partnership for development'.

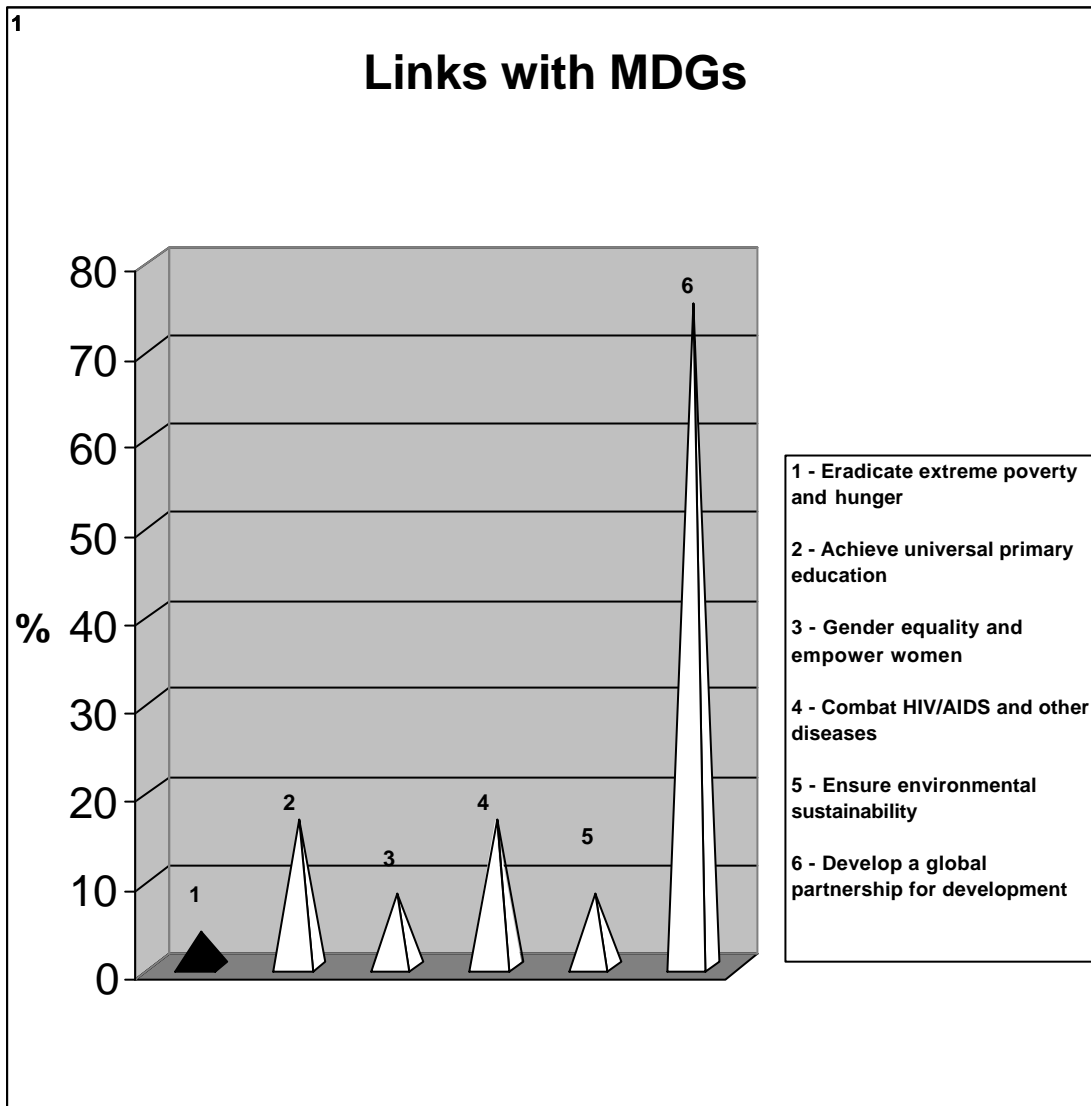


Fig. 5

The overall rating of the training was termed very good by 70% of the respondents.

#### ii. Qualitative

Since all the components could not be analyzed quantitatively, a list of open ended questions were included in the questionnaire. A summary of the responses to the open-ended questions are narrated below.

The software "Adobe Premiere", script writing and packaging were cited as the popular things/items they have learned during the workshop. A few also mentioned "Dream Weaver" and camera handling.

When asked about the type of materials they have developed after receiving the training, the responses were varied with some mentioning the contribution of articles, production of online radio and TV programs to others designing web-sites and creating blogs. It is interesting to note that some of the

respondents developed programs focusing on raising the voices of the poor such as production of documentaries for the youth based on poverty issues, a news portal concentrating on issues relating to competitive trade, consumer rights, health and environment etc. But the one that certainly deserves a mention is the creation of an online discussion forum, named 'Voice of South' for South Asian Journalists, civil society, stake holders and policy makers by Md. Arafatul Islam, a participant from Bangladesh.

### Case Study 1

#### Breaking ground from traditional to online journalism

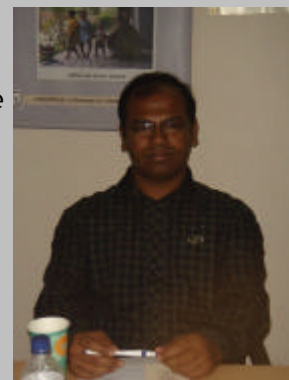
- Md. Arafatul Islam

*Md. Arafatul Islam is a young and enthusiastic journalist working as a staff correspondent for BD News, Dhaka. After receiving the training, he has posted articles on Online Journalism and Web publishing in the national media and through online discussion groups.*

*After receiving positive feed back from this initiative, he then created an online discussion forum, named 'Voice of South' for South Asian Journalists, civil society, stake holders and policy makers. The objective of the forum is to share information on general and development issues and projects in South Asia. He claims the forum currently has over 600 active members.*

*It seems that there are no brakes to his innovativeness and pursuit of new ideas. He now plans to create a development news portal for South Asia, [www.voiceofsouth.org](http://www.voiceofsouth.org). The portal will basically highlight the development stories of the rural areas of South Asia.*

*This is definitely an example of productivity not only by the individual but evenly supported by the confidence the training workshop instilled in him.*



There was a specific question which attempted to bring out the participants initiatives (if any) to linking the workshop on raising key development issues such as poverty, education, gender, rights of disadvantageous groups etc. There were generic comments from a number of participants in response to this but some were specific in citing key development initiatives.

One in particular was a Sri Lankan participant who has reported extensively on gender equality, coastal development and its impact both on their health and

environment, the increasing refugees in the northeast, health implications of those living in war ravaged areas, lack of justice for displaced communities and the unsustainability of mega development projects.

There were two examples from Nepal too where a program was developed and produced for the Dalits (disadvantageous group) of Nepal focusing on their rights. And the other raising the issues of marginalized Tharu people through radio programs by way of mass dissemination and posting their issues on the web.

It seems that a majority of the participants have more confidence in developing web based content and activities due to the training in units such as script writing, online radio, publishing etc. This has led to development of new websites (with some focusing on rights issues, poverty issues etc.), improvement in the online editions of their respective media and uploading videos on the web which has led to increased hits and traffic on their sites.

The theoretical component of the training workshop was considered to be the least valuable as voiced by a number of participants. It was mentioned here that the course would be more interesting if the trainees would be consulted during course development.

On the other hand, the practical sessions in which they were asked to go outside and film ongoing activities was interesting and valuable for quite a few participants from the TDO. However, there were a few comments that only the experienced participants were given more opportunity to handle the camera due to less time and limited equipment.

A majority of the trainees recommended increasing the length of the workshop to a minimum of ten days or more. The primary reason in increasing the workshop duration was the availability of more time to practical sessions while one mentioned the provision of sufficient equipment at the training centre.

*“Also, when it came to the practical session, perhaps a better quality final product could be achieved if a few more hours are added.” - Quote from a participant*

The other suggestions to be considered were the smaller division of groups for ensuring maximum participation, paper presentations by the participants and creating a regional network for local content producing and publishing centering on Panos’ initiatives.

## 2.2 Local Content Fellowships (Project objectives 1, 2 and 3)

### 2.2A Grass Roots Options (GO), Shillong, India

#### Introduction

Grass Root Options was founded by Mr. Sanat K Chakraborty and Ms. Linda Chhakchhuak - who initiated the media project to produce the print magazine, **Grassroots Options**, Northeast India's first magazine on people, environment & development in 1994. This is an independent media initiative of a group of working journalists based in northeastern region of India. Each journalist either attached with a newspaper or a freelancer, volunteers time and resources to produce this magazine. The magazine mainly focuses on three key areas - people, environment and development - in Northeast India, and its neighbouring Eastern Himalayan and the Asian region that share unique geo-political history and socio-cultural affinities.

The efforts to make the print copies sustainable were increasingly becoming difficult due to expensive costs and lack of corporate advertisers. As a result, the magazine became irregular. They have managed to print 22 issues of the magazine till now. However, Internet opened up a new opportunity for the rejuvenation of the magazine. It had additional benefits such as a cheaper option and no space constraints.

This initiative of creating a multimedia online magazine became a reality with a short-term fellowship grant from Panos South Asia. The grant included provisions for training and equipment to develop a multimedia website.

#### In-depth interview with Mr. Sanat K. Chakraborty, Editor

Sanat started his career with Amrita Bazaar Patrika where he felt that it was just reporting about dull issues such as politics and power. That's where the idea of raising people related issues was conceptualized and Grass Roots Options was born.

He believes in the principle of using public money for public good. That was one of the primary reasons cited by him for not fully exhausting the complete budget allocated for the fellowship. He stated that since they have not been able to upload the audio and video content due to limited capacity, the related equipments were not purchased and the balance



returned to PSA. However, the training and purchase of other resources has helped the organization to create infrastructure for a full fledged studio.

He suggested having a provision for post training facilitation which is crucial for the program. However, there was a discussion forum created in the PSA website which was hardly used by the participants. The reason for the forum's discontinuation will be covered in the trainers' response section. Another interesting suggestion is the mentor-trainee concept where mock and real projects could be submitted online and graded accordingly.

The GO website has definitely created a wealth of online information regarding development issues, resources, people and opportunities in the North-East region. A number of stories and articles have been used and referred to by researchers and students but Sanat stated that they cannot be fully authenticated as no source is mentioned. On the bright side, it helped to strengthen networking partnership and provided a concrete opportunity for sustainability.

*"GO provides ready reference on development issues of the region to students, faculty, foreign visitors and scholars through their website" - Sanat*

When asked to share their experience on developing local content, he mentioned that the mandate of GO cannot impose on the level of commitment of other journalists as this is all done voluntarily. However, the articles are written by other journalists while some provide inputs while undertaking field visits. He is proud to state that a majority of their articles are backed by research facts and hence credible.

GO had proposed to set up a daily news page as one of the targets but he stated it was not in their control due to limited capability of the editor and had to depend on the available time of the web master. It seems there are very few qualified web masters in Shillong who are perpetually busy running their computer institutes having little time to support web-site initiatives such as GO. However, the web-master has been contracted for the whole of year 2007 to maintain the web-site and provide support for periodic updates.

The editor is exploring opportunities for receiving additional training from various sources to provide a more independent solution. This can also help to achieve the target of updates five times a year while the routine of adding new stories based on a variety of development issues is organized every month.

There seems to be an unfulfilled desire on the part of the editor to receive additional training and develop powerful audio visual materials in their web-

site. By completing this training, he states this would generate increased interest and action on a number of pressing development issues.

However, the consultant believes the fellowship indeed has already started to show signs of achieving at least a part of the project objectives. This can be succinctly addressed by the following case study.

## Case Study 2

**grassrootsoptions**  
Northeast India's first online magazine on people, environment & development

[www.grassrootsoptions.org](http://www.grassrootsoptions.org) : Working towards Sustainability

*One quick look at the GO web-site and you wouldn't miss two prominent banners in a hurry. They are the banners of the Indian Council for Agricultural Research (ICAR), one of the largest research institutes in India and the Cane and Bamboo Technology Centre (CBTC), a pioneer organization in the North-East for the development and application of bamboo products.*

*It all started a few months after the launch of [grassrootsoptions.org](http://www.grassrootsoptions.org). A collective contribution of articles prudently selected by the editor focused on local issues such as bamboo production, a livelihood for many in the North-East and a huge potential for agricultural research in this part of the country.*

*The articles based on field work gradually generated interest among the researchers and scholars which soon reached the ears of these two institutions. They expressed their interest to establish a partnership with Grass Root options where GO would provide research reports and technology-related activities on hill farming & allied sectors and promote community-based bamboo development in the northeast region. In turn, these organizations would provide sponsorship and publicize its activities, and events in the same section.*

*The Initiative turns out to be a win-win situation for both, where the organizations get an opportunity to receive first hand information at the community level and GO provided more exposure and a means of support towards long term sustenance of the web-site. But without comprising the most important issue – "Working towards raising the voices of the marginalized communities through this web-site and related activities"*

*(A letter of agreement from ICAR is included in the Annex)*

Sanat ends the interview by mentioning the full and true impact of Panos support can be evaluated even better once the multimedia component is uploaded on the web-site and managed locally.

## 2.2B Unnayan news (UN), Dhaka, Bangladesh

### Introduction



Unnayan News with the motto `News Makes Development` has been initiated to publish online multimedia local content in Bangladesh since December 2005. Unnayan News is a multimedia and development webzine that actively promotes human rights and development matters through its issue based publications and list serving .Its an independent non-political platform and South Asian first online multimedia journalism initiative. Along with news dissemination and story telling, it does advocacy for majority access to information and democratic participation in development process that profoundly impact to solve the digital divide, poverty alleviation and human rights development as well as to establish the desired harmonious, peaceful information society.

PSA provided a one year fellowship to produce online multimedia local content on various issues in Bangladesh, primarily focusing on environment, social, development and other issues of human interest.

### In-depth interview with Mr. Shahjahan Siraj, Editor

Shahjahan Siraj is a multimedia designer who started his career with Drik Communications in Bangladesh. He has designed a number of development web-sites and multimedia productions.

His articles "Democratizing force of ICT" and "One information in one village" posted in the web-site were well received as indicated by the number of hits and extracting of information by fellow journalists and students in Bangladesh. He mentioned his interest dealing on issues which are not found on other local web-sites such as the article and radio clip about the rickshaw pullers in Dhaka. However, to have regular articles posted by other journalists is a serious challenge because



they expect financial incentives for every article raising questions of sustainability.

Siraj has initiated efforts for exploring income generation activities such as Ad Sense by Google. But getting banners from interested companies is difficult as the web-site is not time-bound news. He plans to start a TV portal and structure it on a chapter basis so that he can insert news whenever articles are received.

He has currently based unnayannews.net on five development themes, namely Marginalized Community, South Asian voices, Environmental Justice, Culture & Development and Conflict Resolution. He plans to add one more theme "Education and Health in the near future. For the regular updating of the web-site, Siraj has suggested to establish PSA trainees Alumni Association for contributing articles to these different themes and possibly vice-versa.

The fellowship has helped him to focus more on development issues and raising the voices of the poor such as the controversial article "Marginalized Community: Rights and Reality" quoting the high interest rates charged by Grameen Bank from the poor farmers. Another article "Brutality in Garments" highlighting the dismal situation of the garment employees has contributed to a string of follow-up articles leading to mainstreaming of this issue in the national media.

The best example which comes closest to a (possible) indirect impact on poverty can be illustrated by the case study in the following page.

### Case Study 3

#### Online video is an effective fund raising tool

– Shahjahan Siraj, Editor of Unnayan news



It all starts with the story of Mohammed Hassan, a young activist and a second generation refugee who won his rights to secure citizenship of Bangladesh.

His story on pursuit of his rights and a better life was concisely and cleverly captured on film by Shahjahan Siraj, the editor of Unnayan News. He later edited and packaged it as an online video content for the web site. This online video interview was used by young Hassan as a fund raising tool during communication with the UNESCO office. The powerful advantage of this audio visual tool helped to secure funding from UNESCO to support various activities based on improving health and education for almost 300,000 refugees residing in Bangladesh. This pressing issue is currently being developed into a full fledged documentary by Siraj on his own initiative.

The refugees should definitely be thankful to Hassan and Siraj in making efforts for improving their lives and making their voices heard where it matters !

His future plans are to start a TV portal by 2007 and continue doing what he knows and likes best: web support and design. One day, he hopes to see the ICT in South Asia progressing from urban to the rural areas which encourage

#### 2.3 Focus Group Discussion (FGD) in Dhaka, Bangladesh

Mayeen, the country representative of Bangladesh gave an introduction of the organization and the objectives of the meeting. There were a total number of six trainees who had participated in OJW and TDO workshops.

Before getting their views and feedback on the training workshops, the consultant initiated a discussion on the role and scenario of ICT in Bangladesh. A lot of interesting ICT initiatives seems to be piloted and organized in the country such as the 'Internet on Boat' concept funded by the Gates Foundation to educate the rural population of several villages on different development issues and the internet. A participant stated that the concept of internet in South Asia is attached to a free service hence limiting revenues for regular updates and sustainability of web-sites, development ones in particular. Moreover, internet is limited only to urban areas which pose a challenge to Net TV for disseminating development issues in the rural network.

They have used the knowledge received in the workshop to highlight the power and benefits of ICT in various platforms such as the ICT Journalists Forum which has managed to reach the district level journalists. They cited this would help in getting the journalists based outside the capital interested in this subject, as some do not even know how to use the internet for effective communication.

A majority of participants were enthusiastic to mention their achievement or some called it their best contribution after the workshop. A trainee developed a video capsule extracted from available footage based on minority rights violation and broadcasted in prime time news bulletin. While a participant has supervised a documentary series "Our voices, our development" based on social entrepreneurship, social communication activities and the last depicting the selection process of the ultra poor. This series has already started to disseminate among the target population. He states that the training helped him build the necessary skills and confidence to manage such an assignment successfully – a first time experience for him.

After the training workshop, others mentioned producing web based documentaries and writing online articles based on environmental issues, human rights violations and rights of indigenous tribes. It has also translated into other types of success such as a trainee being offered to lecture on 'Multimedia and Journalism' by a University.

#### **Case Study 4**

##### **Master Trainer – Ripon Haque**

Ripon is a media professional of the young generation working for a TV station in Bangladesh. A quiet person by nature, he tends to give his opinion only after several requests.

After approval and encouragement from his management, he conducted a three day training course for twenty colleagues in the TV station premises. The training content was based on the course materials received during the PSA workshop and reference materials supported by Karun Thapa, the regional trainer. They now have plans to initiate development specific issues and broadcast it in their channel.

Indeed a commendable initiative by using the opportunity to educate people on the power of online broadcasting. Hats off to the Master Trainer!



## **2.4 Response from PSA management and the donor (SDC)**

### **a. PSA Management**

Kishor Pradhan, the country representative for Nepal believes this type of project can be replicated at scale successfully. Regarding poverty aspects, the project achieved in building the capacity of media and communication practitioners to raise marginalized voices in the poverty and development process. And it made efforts to facilitate the two way flow of information in terms of communication for development (C4D).

His suggestions for the project improvement emphasized on creating more synergy between media and community organizations in capacity building to raise the voices of the disadvantaged.

### **b. Donor (SDC)**

The team of Patrick Kalas and Gerolf Wiegel from SDC has responded jointly to the questionnaire provided to them. They feel the overall strategic goal of this win-win partnership with Panos consist of the aim to contribute to multi-dimensional poverty reduction and empowerment through strengthening the voices and interactive communication capacities of the poor and marginalized to influence decisions that affect their lives, to identify, discuss and articulate their priorities for action and to foster self-expression of their cultural identity. SDC will have access to PSA's extensive network while PSA will learn and build their capacity on ICT from SDC's expertise in this field.

They believe the three objectives of the project have been satisfactorily met including the overall project implementation. There is a mention of a possible continuation to enter into another phase with PSA. It is agreed that the impact issue is difficult to evaluate within a short span of time due to the complex process. There are no negative experiences but rather would like to see the reflection of knowledge sharing in the national and regional networks, efforts made for mobilizing additional donors, enhancement and strengthening of a M&E process and the incorporation of lessons learnt in the first phase.

In their opinion, the project addressed the poverty aspects of supporting the process of "Indirect" empowerment of the poor and marginalized through strengthening intermediaries to contribute to a systemic change. They voiced their interest in knowing if any significant opportunities were

identified and documented as they believe the approach should be a mix between management by objectives and opportunities.

The suggestions provided by them include strengthening the capacity of CSOs as communication intermediaries and contributing to a better understanding among the different professional cultures (e.g. journalists and community organisations). And fellowships should have an efficient follow-up process to assess any possible impact within the allocated budget.

On their response to the prospects of a long-term partnership with PSA, they stated it is dependent on factors including the SDC strategy to systematically integrate ICTs within the operational units, where the geographic desks should with time take-over the ownership of this process.

### **2.5 Response from the Trainer**

In the trainer's opinion, the objectives have been achieved significantly. The trainees seemed very enthusiastic and from their feedback, it was felt the training was an eye-opener for most of them.

The trainees were exposed to the technology, development of media and problems of media in South Asia. They had a chance to interact with each other and share knowledge. The introduction to publishing digital content online is an immense accomplishment achieved in South Asian region.

Almost all committed to implement what they learnt in their day-to-day jobs. Some of them have already used what they learnt immediately and have given satisfactory outputs. Even the beginners who were very new to online journalism and never used a computer started their community website after they returned.

A discussion forum was created in the web-site, [panosmultimedia.org](http://panosmultimedia.org) after the workshops which was discontinued after a few months. The trainer believes the major reason for discontinuation was the unfamiliarity with using forums. They found the forum complicated or inconvenient and were rather comfortable communicating through emails. To overcome the forum problem, Google Groups were used for discussion as posting in the group would mail them without registration.

His suggestions were to extend the training course to two weeks which he firmly believed would really make the course effective and the same was voiced by the workshop participants too. He suggested the training centre to be equipped additionally with streaming hardware and faster internet connection. And spending adequate time on a specific topic/unit would be more productive rather than covering everything within a short span of time.

# **Chapter 3:**

# **Recommendations & Conclusion**

### 3.1 Recommendations

This section is discussed in line with the objectives of the project.

#### **1) To facilitate access to ICTs for South Asian resource poor media and 2) to build the technical and editorial capacity of media in South Asia to use ICTs;**

After a thorough analysis of the findings, the consultant feels that the training programs were developed, organized and coordinated in a professional manner. However, the following are a list of recommendations for further improving the program in the future.

- a. Though approximately 40% of the respondents mentioned to have initiated or developed activities for raising the voices of the poor, there still seem to be a lack of effort on their side. The responses were not convincing enough to justify their initiations except for a few. A follow-up or refresher training may be good for encouragement and motivation but a better alternative is always awarding fellowships which produces better results.
- b. The courses for the trainings should be carefully developed as per the target group of the trainees. It is suggested to organize a consultative meeting with the trainers, management and some potential trainees to develop the training course contents. This could be supplemented with a suggestion form sought from the target group. It is also felt that thematic training packages would be a more productive option.
- c. While it is good to have participants from different backgrounds, efforts should be made to select the trainees with the same level of expertise and knowledge. For example, in group work journalists are not very interested in script writing whereas the same may be of high value to a NGO staff.
- d. A stronger theoretical component on development issues e.g. Millennium development goals should be mixed with the other capacity building units so that participants would be able to package the same effectively in their respective careers.
- e. A brief evaluation form should be prepared and disseminated after each workshop to gauge the level of satisfaction as well as get suggestions for improvements in general terms as well as important issues such as course contents.

- f. Lack of time was the primary complaint by a majority of trainees including the trainer. Therefore, it is suggested to organize a workshop either of a longer duration or to allocate the same amount of time but with specific programs. In addition, measures should be taken to involve every trainee in the practical sessions e.g. camera handling techniques etc.
- g. Since the discussion forum did not work, it may be good to have an alumni association of trainees who could communicate through a common web-site. In order to generate continued interest, refresher meetings and discussions could be organized by the respective country offices and posted on the web. This will definitely have an advantage to document the progress and (possible) impact of these type of programs.

**3) to provide post-workshop follow-up support to ensure the journalists use their improved ICT and editorial skills to include more voices of poor and marginalized people in local coverage and development issues.**

As supported by the research findings and analysis section, local content fellowships have definitely resulted in a satisfactory level of success. The case stories are evidences of this accomplishment. To improve the fellowships component, here are some recommendations that can be considered.

- a. Sustainability of these initiatives is easier said than done especially when one has to find their own resources after the agreement is completed. Therefore, a strategy needs to be developed where the recipients should be oriented on fund raising and resource mobilization techniques in order for continuity beyond the project period.
- b. The support in terms of both editorial and technology should be provided to the PSA fellow persons/organizations as there seems to be a substantial room for improvement. This could be in the form of local or regional support systematically streamlined into their respective initiatives.
- c. Documentation and evidence is the key to every project's success. The same holds true for initiatives in fellowship. Therefore, the agreement between PSA and the awardees should include both quantitative and qualitative indicators like no. of hits in the web-site, feedback column, case stories etc.
- d. The current development issues raised by the two fellowships are commendable and should be continued in the same manner for

new projects. In fact, the issues and articles could be categorized in terms of priority depending upon the nature, need and type of project for future reference.

It may be worth reviewing the initiative of a Bangladeshi participant, Md. Arafat Islam on his plans for a web portal, [www.voiceofsouth.org](http://www.voiceofsouth.org). If he is given some technical guidance and orientation, it would be a good proposition for a future fellow ship.

### **3.2 Conclusion**

The project “Building ICT Opportunities for Development Communications” is an interesting project with lots of challenges and opportunities. And as with any project, we cannot expect to see immediate impact just by implementing a few training programs and fellow ships. This concept needs to be provided a further thrust with a possibility for expansion in the near future.

Besides the satisfactory achievement of the project objectives, the other important outcomes are the increased confidence and the knowledge of the trainees on key development issues which could play a major role strengthening ICT in South Asia.

# Annex

# I. Research Instruments

## a. Trainees' evaluation questionnaire

### EVALUATION Questionnaire for workshop participants

[Online Journalism and Web Publishing Training & TV, Digital Technology and Online Broadcasting Training workshops]

As a part of PANOS SA BCO evaluation, we would appreciate your time to complete this questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of both fixed choice and open-ended items. Though it may be quite some time since the training for some participants, kindly recall and respond as realistic as possible.

Your candid response would serve us in two ways a) help us improve our program and capacity building techniques and b) document the lessons learnt, progress and possible impact for possible scaling-up activities. The responses will be kept strictly confidential. Please tick below which training workshop you attended.

1. Online Journalism and Web Publishing Training Workshop

2. TV, Digital Technology and Online Broadcasting Training Workshop

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

---

#### A. Feedback on the general aspect of the program

Please rate the following issues on the basis of organizing the training on a scale of 1-5 (Please ✓ tick your answers)

A.	Organization of the training	Satisfaction				
		Low				High
1.	Workshop venue	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	Training centre facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	Quality of refreshments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	Learning experience for each other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Directions:** Please ✓ tick the response which best reflects the extent of your agreement with each statement.

#### B. Training workshop

5. The length of the workshop was appropriate

6. Workshop objectives were clearly identified

7. Workshop content was arranged in a logical sequence

	Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree
5.					
6.					
7.					

8. Rate the hands-on activities (practical sessions and demonstrations)

	Excellent	Good	Average	Below average	Poor
8.					

### C. Instructor/Trainer

9. The instructor demonstrated knowledge of workshop subject

10. The instructor was easy to follow and understand.

11. The instructor was prepared and well organized.

	Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree
9.					
10.					
11.					

### D. Learning

12. How useful was the material presented

	Very useful	Useful	Moderately useful	Hardly at all useful
12.				

13. Please list two specific things you learned during the workshop that you have used in your work. (e.g. names of software etc.)

a. \_\_\_\_\_ b. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

14. After this training, what type of materials/communications (e.g. web based news, articles, web-sites etc.) have you developed and disseminated?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

15. How many people (friends/colleagues) have you discussed/oriented the skills acquired in the workshop?

	1	2	3	More than 3
No. of people				

16. How have you in any way linked this training to raising key development issues such as poverty, education, gender, rights of disadvantaged groups etc. Please explain in a brief paragraph.

---



---



---



---

17. A majority of the training participants had mentioned launching/initiating/completing various web based activities in their respective essays on the basis of which you were selected. Please provide in brief as to what have you achieved? [E.g. articles published on the web, online broadcasting etc.]

---



---



---



---



---



---

**E. Others**

18a. Did the training contents have substantial links to Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

18b. If yes, which component(s) do you think the training links to the MDGs?

Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger	Achieve universal primary education	Gender equality and empower women	Reduce child mortality	Improve maternal health	Combat HIV/AIDS and other diseases	Ensure environmental sustainability	Develop a global partnership for development

19. What part of the training program did you consider the most valuable and the least valuable? Give reasons?

---



---



---



## b. In-depth Interview Guide – Fellowships

### Interview Guide for Fellowships

#### General

- Discuss while asking Sanat and Siraj to respond to the trainees evaluation questionnaires
- How do you plan to make this initiative sustainable? Action Plan, if any.
- What were the project objectives in terms of poverty interventions and have they been met (optional)
- Share your experience while conducting the local content development activities
- Has any of the articles/opinion pieces posted in your respective web-sites helped to lobby/put pressure on the concerned groups and bodies for positive change (particularly with respect to raising marginalized voices or linking with MDGs)? If yes, what in detail [Case story probable]
- After receiving the fellowship, what online content did you develop and in our opinion, how much impact is made?

#### 1. Grass Root Options

- Review, analyze and discuss the financial statement of the project (including possible reasons for unspent amounts; around Rs.2 lakhs IC)
- How did the purchase of the equipment improve/complement/facilitate the initiative and to what extent? Probe here to discuss reasons for delays in uploading audio and video files?
- One of the project objectives mentioned was putting up a daily news page – breaking news page -. What were the reasons for not initiating/continuing with this innovative effort? Was it because of not much response?
- Have you or are you organizing any awareness generating exercises for attracting more hits to your web-site e.g. through your print magazine?
- Another objective is the mention of updates initially 5 times a year and later on a monthly basis. What is the status?

- Webmaster for the project? Couldn't your team and the volunteer journalists after receiving training handle the updates? Justification for documenting lessons learned.
- Capacity building and orientation in Shillong
- Discussion on the status of using ICT in education [for Shillong]
- Discussion on various articles posted in the web-site [bamboo]?
- Positives and negatives of the fellowship? [including advantages and disadvantages]
- Challenges for transparency and accountability.
- Encouragement to youth to explore ICT
- Future plans....

.....

## **2. Unnayan News**

- Discussion on the web-site's three themes individually [South Asian voices, Culture and Development and Marginalized Community: Rights and Reality]. In one particular article on "marginalized community", did this be used as a lobby for politicians to help reduce items such as high interest rates of micro-credits etc.
- Siraj's articles and its (possible) demonstrated impact
- His views on the future prospect of ICT in Bangladesh
- Discussion on VISP (Village Internet Service Provider)
- Discussion on various other similar development sites (banglarights.net etc.) in relation to unnayannews.net Vision for "One info-center in one village"
- How is the justification of Unnayan News being an effective media vehicle for raising people's voices when this only reaches affluent city people only? Isn't it contradictory? Discuss.

## **3. Mayeen**

- PRSP Fellowship information
- About PANOS Bangladesh office and activities which may be important for evaluation

### c. FGD Guide for Bangladesh participants

## FGD Guide for Bangladesh

Focus group discussion (FGD) is an informal, guided discussion about a particular topic, normally with six to ten people. As a qualitative research technique, FGD can explore topics in some depth and answer 'how' and 'why' questions.

### Participant List

S. No.	Name	Institution	Age	Address

### Section I

(20 minutes)

- Greetings
- Self Introduction
- Introduction to the program
- Objective sharing and purpose
- Self-Introductions by participants [their current employment]

#### (Rapport building)

- Make all participants complete the sentence 'ICT is important because ....."

### Section II

(30-45 minutes)

#### *Instigate Discussion*

- The role of ICT in South Asia [use project proposal as background and compare with developed countries.....though they have internet, PANOS helps to raise voices and gets funds from donors]
- ICT challenges and opportunities [ref. in context with Bangladesh]
- ICT profile of Bangladesh [with respect to current developments]

- Capacity building and its significance/benefits
- Strategies for building technical and editorial capacity of SA media with respect to ICTs

## **BREAK**

**(120-150 minutes)**

### *Instigate Discussion*

- Ask the participants to recall the PANOS workshop they attended and respond to the following:
  - Organization of the training [Workshop venue, Training centre facilities, Quality of refreshments and Learning experience for each other]
  - About the training [length, objectives, materials, content etc.]
  - Quality of the trainers
  - What did you learn from the workshop and what new skills do you acquire?
- Ask each participant to talk about their (best or any) web based activity (articles, online broadcasting etc.) they have put up on the web.
  - The discussion will be followed in relation to the training received, raising marginalized voices, career growth etc.) [This could possible be developed into a case-story if interesting]  
*[For example, MD. Kamal Hossen could be enquired about the initiation of Net based Television which he was involved in. He would be asked in what way the training benefited him in this respect]*

After the presentation of all the participants, the qualitative research technique of **Most Significant Change** is planned to be executed.

*This is a participative method that aims to draw meaning from actual events, rather than being based on indicators. The method involves collecting stories from stakeholders about what they think is the most significant change a project has brought about. These stories are then analyzed, discussed and verified. This method has the advantage of capturing the unexpected and also helps to identify why change happens.*

In this case, basically the participants will vote the best web based activity among the participants and the reasons for their selection.

## END (CAP) SESSION

(20 minutes)

- Feedback and suggestion from the respondents (any other type of trainings and activities that would help raise marginalised voices in South Asia)
- Summary of the discussions
  - What additional impact would have been made if you had received a fellow-ship? Without that too, what online content did you make?
  - Why have you not been able to raise marginalised voices in your work. If you had received fellowship, would that have been possible?
- Closing by Panos SA Country Representative
- Wrap up

***Thank all the participants***

#### d. Questionnaire for Panos South Asia and donors

### Questionnaire for Donors and Panos South Asia

*As a part of PANOS SA BCO evaluation, we would appreciate your time to complete this questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of only open-ended items.*

*Your candid response would serve us in two ways a) help us improve our project implementation process and b) document the lessons learned and progress.*

1. What were the project objectives in terms of poverty interventions, have they been met? Do you think the project achieved the stated objectives? Please give reasons for negative as well as for affirmative reply.
2. What was fulfilled in term of SDC program objectives? Are you satisfied with the overall project implementation [e.g. from progress reports]?
3. What aspects of poverty do you think the project addressed?
4. If there were challenges and obstacles during the project implementation, do you think these challenges were effectively overcome or addressed?
5. After the results and experience of this project, do you think these types of projects can be replicated and taken at-scale (expansion of program)?
6. Please provide some suggestions for the further improvement of the project (if continued in the future).
7. In your opinion, what are the prospects of a long term partnership in similar type of projects with Panos South Asia? Are there any plans?
8. Lastly, please provide any additional comments and suggestions (if it is not covered in the questions above).

## e. Questionnaire for trainers

### Trainers Questionnaire

*As a part of PANOS SA BCO evaluation, we would appreciate your time to complete this questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of only open-ended items.*

*Your candid response would serve us in two ways a) help us improve our project implementation process and b) document the lessons learned and progress.*

- 
1. In your opinion, to what extent were the trainees objectives achieved?
  2. What specifically did the trainees learn or be usefully reminded of?
  3. What commitment have the trainees made about the learning they are going to implement on their return to work?
  4. How successful do you think were the trainees in implementing their action plans?
  5. Did the trainees have additional queries (after their training) on their return to their respective places? If yes, what were the major queries and how did you respond to them?
  6. In the PANOS web-site: [panosmultimedia.org](http://panosmultimedia.org), a discussion forum was created to exchange ideas and queries after the workshops. In your opinion, what were the reasons for the forum concept not working or continuing as expected? *What suggestion (or ideas) do you have to make this more productive and sustainable in the future?*
  7. Please provide any additional final comments and suggestions *(separately for Online Journalism and TV Broadcasting trainees)*

Thank you!

## II. Letter of Support [ICAR to Grassroots Options]

