
Tracer Study on
Training Graduates of Media Centre Programme
Panos South Asia

Study Conducted by
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Panos South Asia, February 2007

Background

Panos South Asia (PSA) has been operational since 1997 based in Kathmandu Nepal as a regional office for South Asia of the global network of Panos Institutes. It started the Media Centre Programme in 2002.

Since the launch of the Media Centre Programme PSA with various funding supports have organised several thematic and digital technology capacity building activities. The capacity building activities have been organised targeting mainstream media and other communication practitioners in South Asia in the form of various type of training workshops.

All these training workshops that have been primarily of three types¹, have been organised in line with the basic mission of Panos South Asia "to raise the marginalised voices and development issues to stimulate informed public debate to affect development". The five thematic areas where Panos South Asia works (Conflict, Environment, Globalisation, Public Health and Media Pluralism), combined with the new media technologies, the training programmes have been designed to both build the capacity of media and communication practitioners on thematic issues, and the skills to use the new media technologies. Combining both to impact to raise marginalised voices in development and development issues to affect the development process.

In this regard between the period July 2002 to December 2006, there were several training workshops organised by the Media Centre Programme. In order to trace the participants or the training graduates who attended the Panos training workshops this Tracer Study was carried out between the period 11-31 January 2007.

The finding of this Tracer Study has been reported here as succinctly and objectively as possible.

Aim and Objective of the Study

The overall aim of the study was to trace the graduates of the Media Centre Programme training activities and rapidly review what has been the impact.

The specific objectives of the study were:

¹ These three types were: 1) Radio Reporting Using Digital Technology; 2) Online Journalism and Web Publishing; and 3) TV, Digital Technology and Online Broadcasting.

- To trace the graduates from the Media Centre Programme training workshops between the period 2002-2006;
- To find out how the graduates have been utilising the training imparted to them;
- To find out whether graduates have been able to arise marginalised voices and development issues in their media or communications works; and
- To assess the overall Media Centre Programme training workshop impact.

Methodology

The general methodology used for the study was basic Social Science Survey Methodology combined with Internet/e-mail technology. Structured Questionnaire by e-mail was used as survey tools. Purposive sampling method was used to sample the training workshops.

The structured questionnaire was sent out by e-mail between the period 11-31 January 2007 to a total of about 100 graduates from the eight sampled Media Centre Programme training workshops. Primary information and data were collected by e-mail questionnaire survey. The Questionnaire tool used is attached as Annex 1.

From the various training workshops organised by Media Centre Programme between July 2002-December 2006 eight training workshops were sampled for this study. The sampled training workshops were as tabulated below.

Table 1: Sample Training Workshop Data

No.	Training Workshop Type	Date	No. of Participants
1.	Radio and Digital Technology	26/08/2002-01/09/2002	13
2.	Conflict Reporting in Radio Using Digital Technology	20/08/2004-27/08/2004	11
3.	Public Health Reporting in Radio Using Digital Technology	19/04/2005-26/04/2005	17
4.	Radio Reporting Using Digital Technology	25/07/2006-01/08/2006	14
5.	Online Journalism and Web Publishing	15/08/2005-19/08/2005	12
6.	Online Journalism and Web Publishing	09/05/2006-14/05/2006	14
7.	TV, Digital Technology and Online Broadcasting	04/07/2006-10/07/2006	14
8.	TV, Digital Technology and Online Broadcasting	29/11/2006-05/12/2006	14
Total number of participants (sample)			95

Source: Various PSA Media Centre Programme documents.

Nature of Respondents

Of the total 95 graduates to whom the Questionnaire was sent by e-mail 22 responded. In other words 23 percent of the respondents responded to the survey. The response percentage

was good enough to generalise the findings by Social Science Research Survey Methodology Standards².

The detail data on the respondents were as tabulated below.

Table 2: Data on Respondents

No.	Name	Country	Date/Type of Training Workshop Attended	Current Organisational Affiliation
1.	Shazad Malik (M)	Pakistan	29/11/2006-05/12/2006; TV, Digital Technology and Online Broadcasting	APNA TV Channel
2.	J. Devprakash (M)	India	04/07/2006-10/07/2006; TV, Digital Technology and Online Broadcasting	Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL)
3.	Bidhata Rai (F)	Nepal	29/11/2006-05/12/2006; TV, Digital Technology and Online Broadcasting	Kantipur Television
4.	Kinga Penjor (M)	Bhutan	20/08/2004-27/08/2004; Conflict Reporting in Radio Using Digital Technology	Bhutan Broadcasting Service
5.	Damcho Wangchuk (M)	Bhutan	19/04/2005-26/04/2005; Public Health Reporting in Radio Using Digital Technology	Bhutan Broadcasting Service
6.	Abdul Saboor Noorzad (M)	Afghanistan	25/07/2006-01/08/2006; Radio Reporting Using Digital Technology	Equal Access Afghanistan
7.	Tharidi Fonseka (F)	Sri Lanka	19/04/2005-26/04/2005; Public Health Reporting in Radio Using Digital Technology	Freelancer (TV and Radio)
8.	Jigme Thinley (M)	Bhutan	15/08/2006-19/08/2005; Online Journalism and Web Publishing	Bhutan Broadcasting Service
9.	Debasish Roy (M)	Bangladesh	25/07/2006-01/08/2006; Radio Reporting Using Digital Technology	Radio Today FM 89.6
10.	Bhushan Shilpakar (M)	Nepal	04/07/2006-10/07/2006; TV, Digital Technology and Online Broadcasting	Y! Magazine
11.	Pradip Pariyar (M)	Nepal	29/11/2006-05/12/2006; TV, Digital Technology and Online Broadcasting	Dalit Welfare Organisation
12.	Shahjahan Siraj (M)	Bangladesh	15/08/2005-19/08/2005; Online Journalism and Web Publishing	Machizo Multimedia Communication (http://www.machizo.com), UnnayanNews (http://www.unnayannews.net)
13.	Dilrukshi Handunnetti (F)	Sri Lanka	09/05/2006-14/05/2006; Online Journalism and	Leader Publications Pvt Ltd

² In Social Science Research of the total universe or sample 10-15 percent is accepted as a standard for generalisation.

			Web Publishing	
14.	Sisira Kannangara (M)	Sri Lanka	15/08/2005-19/08/2005; Online Journalism and Web Publishing	Research Officer Media Unit Centre for Policy Alternatives
15.	Madhusudhan Guragain (M)	Nepal	25/07/2006-01/08/2006; Radio Reporting Using Digital Technology	Radio ABC, FM 89.8 MHz
16.	Sushmita Malaviya (F)	India	19/04/2005-26/04/2005; Public Health Reporting in Radio Using Digital Technology	Hindustan Times Bhopal
17.	Md. Zamal Ahammad (M)	Bangladesh	09/05/2006-14/05/2006; Online Journalism and Web Publishing	E-Biz (http://ebiz.ittefaq.com)
18.	Dinesh Kumar Pariyar (M)	Nepal	04/07/2006-10/07/2006; TV, Digital Technology and Online Broadcasting	News Reporter Image Channel 0977-9803164121 www.imagechannels.com
19.	Bibhor Baral (M)	Nepal	09/05/2006-14/05/2006; Online Journalism and Web Publishing	Tanneri.com, Ketaketi.org, Damadol.com, Peacejournalism.com
20.	Mahibul Haque Ripon (M)	Bangladesh	29/11/2006-05/12/2006; TV, Digital Technology and Online Broadcasting	Channel One
21.	Basant B. Thapa (M)	Nepal	15/08/2005-19/08/2005; Online Journalism and Web Publishing	Himalaya Times and Department of Mass communication & Journalism, T. U.
22.	Mohammad Kawsar Uddin (M)	Bangladesh	09/05/2006-14/05/2006; Online Journalism and Web Publishing	Editorial Assistant, The Daily Sangbad Vice President, Bangladesh ICT Journalist Forum (BIJF)

Female (F): 4; Male (M): 18.

Of the total respondents there were 4 female and 18 male. Most of the respondents were the ones who had attended the recent training workshops in between 2005-2006. Though most of the respondents were the ones who attended the TV (8 respondents) and the online journalism (8 respondents) workshop types there were other respondents who had attended the radio workshops (6 respondents).

Country-wise breakdown of respondents were: Afghanistan - 1; Bangladesh - 5; Bhutan - 3; India - 2; Nepal - 7; Pakistan - 1; and Sri Lanka - 3.

Question Specific Responses

The structured questionnaire contained five key questions (see Annex 1). The questions specific responses were as follow.

1. *Where are you currently employed?*

In response to this question 2 or 9 percent of the respondents were found to have changed or expanded their profession into new media sectors. One respondent from Bangladesh was able to get employment in a newly started radio station as an assistant editor after attending the Panos organised radio workshop. The other respondent from Sri Lanka was invited to host a show in a private radio channel. This graduate was also found working as a radio programme consultant for Internews Sri Lanka which she attributes as an impact of the Panos organised workshop.

Rest of the respondents, that is 20 or 81 percent of them are continuing to work with the organisations with which they were affiliated when they attended the workshop organised by Panos South Asia.

2. What is the nature of your work?

It was found that all the respondent's nature of work is reporting, producing, editing or presenting in different media.

The exact designation of the respondent's current works included: assistant editor (for radio, TV and print), web editor, sub-editor (for radio, TV and print), producer (radio and TV), and programme/content consultant for radio and TV.

All of them were found to be involved in that level of media or communications content production process where they can influence one way or the other the nature of the media product. In other words influencing incorporation of marginalized voices and development issues.

3. Was the training attended by you organised by Panos South Asia of any help in your work and career?

The responses to this question were mixed. Most of the respondents opined that the workshops they attended definitely helped them to better their work. All the respondents opined that it helped them to understand the application of technology better in their work. Also, helped them to make an effort to incorporate marginalized voices in their respective media products. And make efforts to incorporate more development issues in their media products.

Two of the respondents were able to expand their profession and career in sectors of media where they were not working earlier. Debashis Roy from Bangladesh who is currently working as an Assistant Editor in the recently launched FM radio in Bangladesh responded, "The training of Panos South Asia help a lot of (sic) my career. Now I am the Assistant News Editor of country's 1st radio station because of those training."

One of the respondents Bidhata Rai who is working for Kantipur TV in Nepal as a News Reader/Sub-editor said, "I have started reading news only after understanding the matter and I thank Panos for having directed us to do so in order to get the feel of it and hit hard on the audience."

Tharidi Fonseka, who works as a freelance media professional in Sri Lanka for radio and TV, said, "Yes, it was very useful for me, the training helps me to get into radio, and I have been invited to host a show in a private radio channel, later on I got the opportunity to work as a programme consultant for Internews Sri Lanka. Because of the training I have got from Panos it became easy for me to take these challenges."

Shahjahan Siraj³ from Bangladesh said, "Yes, the training that I joined would help me to launch UnnayanNews (<http://www.unnayannews.net>) podcasting site."

Dilrukshi Handunnetti⁴, Editor, Investigation of Sunday Leaders in Sri Lanka said, "The workshop on new media technology was largely for the personal acquisition of knowledge which I later shared with our web designing team. I am certain that some of what I shared with them were of use to them."

4. If you are working for mainstream media (print, radio or TV) or engaged with any other development communication related work, in your work, have you been able to raise marginalized development and other issues and voices?

There was an interesting mix of responses to this question. Bidhata Rai said, "No, not as yet. Our channel prioritises political agenda more than anything else and I feel it lacks behind in covering marginalised issues raising voices in these areas. But, I do want to deal in these areas of work and will do so as soon as I get the opportunity for the same."

Bhusan Shilpakar, Web Editor of Y! Magazine in Nepal said, "Yes I do raise issues of 'marginalized development' because Y! runs stories like that of Barta Gandarva and Jhamak Ghimire and stories of disaster preparedness etc."

Sushmita Malaviya, Deputy Chief Copy Editor of the Hindusthan Times Bhopal, India said, "Yes very much on: the drought situation in Madhya Pradesh; challenges that tribal people face – health, education and their livelihood; introduction of Panchayati Raj/Gram Swaraj in Madhya Pradesh; grassroots stories on Panchayati Raj (decentralization); status of women under Panchayati Raj in Madhya Pradesh; water and sanitation; child rights - plight of the girl child, juvenile problems, child prostitution; education for all; and NGO initiatives within Madhya Pradesh."

Bibhor Baral, content and web editor of several online social web magazines published from Nepal said, "My Ezine ketaketi.org is fully dedicated to Nepali Children. Similarly tanneri.com raises all the sorts of issues related to the youth from all the background, race, caste etc."

5. If you have tried or have had raised marginalised development and other issues and voices in your work, could you please give some examples.

Shahjahan Siraj who attended the first online journalism training workshop and was given a one year fellowship to produce multimedia local content under the project Unnayannews in Bangladesh gave examples of UnnayanNews issues on Marginalised Community (<http://www.unnayannews.net/archive/marginalized.html>); PRSP and You (E.book); and Drishtipat (www.drishtipat.org)

Dilrukshi Handunnetti gave examples of that she wrote on her environmental columns about Sri Lankan aboriginal community known as the Veddahs and their right to inhabit their jungle homes and to hunt (this also formed part of my first PANOS Fellowship on environmental justice. The Mahaweli project and the displaced communities. The Upper Kothmale and the displacement of families once relocated under the Mahaweli scheme.

³ Siraj was provided a one year fellowship for the Unnayannews project by Panos South Asia under its Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) supported component of the Building Communications Opportunities Programme (BCO) between 2005-2006.

⁴ Dilrukshi Handunnetti is a classic case of Panos South Asia's fellowship to trace. She was a participant in Panos South Asia's environmental justice project's training workshop in 2002-2004. She was given a fellowship also under this project and as a result of which she started her own environmental justice column in the newspaper that she works for in Sri Lanka. Later she attended one of the thematic and new media technology workshops also. The response received from Dilrukshi is attached as Annex 2.

Sushmita said, "Only recently one of my pieces on how poor families were surviving on a grass (latara), moved the drought-hit Tikamgarh district administration in Madhya Pradesh to swing into action to provide succour to these families. (Please see that HT clip in this link <http://www.empowerpoor.com/programmereport.asp?report=469>)."

Basanta Thapa responded, "I have done such a (sic) issues of western Nepal Tharus' issues and their fundamental rights including other.

Dinesh Kumar Pariyar who was earlier working for Dalit Welfare Organization in Nepal and who has recently joined a mainstream TV channel said, "Yes, I work for Image Channel one of the mainstream media of Nepal which has both Television and Radio stations. I am working here since (sic) 4 months. Before I worked for Dalit Welfare Organization and still I am helping them to produce SAHAYATRA TV program on voluntary basis. Even in Image Channel my work beat is specially human rights and social issues."

Assessment of the Responses

While assessing the responses it is found that cent percent of the responded opined that the training workshops organised under the Media Centre Programme are useful. For about 10 percent (2) the respondent the training helped them to climb the ladder in their media career. For the rest or 20 (80%) it was found that it helped them to better their work whether it is reporting, production or editing.

As far as how effectively the graduates have been able to raise the marginalized voices and development issues in their respective work was concerned. It is still a challenge. This is a whole issue of the media governance, system and ownership. As the content of the media is incumbent upon who owns and decides, as well as determined by the market force, it will take sometime to bring about changes in the nature of the content or priority of the content of the media.

This is the reason why Panos South Asia works with three levels of media practitioners, namely, the gatekeepers, mid-career and the young journalists. This is also exactly the reason why the 'citizen media' and more community media have emerged in the developed countries. Such alternatives are yet to find space in developing sub-continent like South Asia's media systems.

It is also assessed that the thematic and technological training followed-by a proper fellowship can render the chances of marginalized voices and issues being produced as media content whether as mainstream media content or in alternative forms like the case of Unnaynews.

Limitation of the Study

The very limitation of the study was it was undertaken in-house by Panos South Asia. This questions the independence of the study.

Also, the communication tools used for the study's survey, i.e. the e-mail though provided data and information in written form, is not always a good tool for accurate primary information and data collection. In other words the study lacked field visits for primary information and data collection.

Annex 1: Survey Questionnaire



Panos South Asia, Kathmandu, Nepal Survey Questionnaire

Dear friends and colleagues,

Panos South Asia is in the process of tracing the people who have attended various training workshops organised at the Panos Media Centre since it was launched in July, 2002.

This Survey Questionnaire has been especially sent to the people who have attended various training workshops organised at the Panos Media Centre in Kathmandu between the period 2002-2006.

We would appreciate it very much if you would kindly take out some time from your busy schedule to fill out the questionnaire below. Please send back the filled out questionnaire to psa@panossouthasia.org not later than 31 January, 2007.

Looking forward to your contribution.

Best regards,

Kishor Pradhan
Country Representative
Panos South Asia, Kathmandu, Nepal

Name:
Country:
Organisation:
Type of Training Attended:
Date of Training Attended:

Please answer the following question as briefly as possible.

1. Where are you currently employed?
2. What is the nature of your work?
3. Was the training attended by you organised by Panos South Asia of any help in your work and career?
4. If you are working for mainstream media (print, radio or TV) or engaged with any other development communication related work, in your work, have you been able to raise marginalised development and other issues and voices?
5. If you have tried or have had raised marginalised development and other issues and voices in your work, could you please give some examples.

Thankyou for your time and contribution!

Annex 1: Sample of Response

----- Original Message -----

From: [Dilrukshi Handunnetti](mailto:Dilrukshi.Handunnetti)

To: kishor@panossouthasia.org

Sent: Tuesday, January 23, 2007 1:48 PM

Subject: Reply to your questionnaire

Name: Dilrukshi Handunnetti

Country: Sri Lanka

Organization: Leader Publications Pvt Ltd

Type of Training Attended: Training workshop on environmental justice
New media technology workshop
Date of Training Attended: September 2002
May 2006

Please answer the following question as briefly as possible.

1. Where are you currently employed?

With Leader Publications Pvt Ltd, Colombo. The office is located 98, Ward Place, Colombo 07.

2. What is the nature of your work?

I work as Editor Investigations for both *The Sunday Leader* and *The Morning Leader* and work with a small team investigating issues of public concern.

For our weekly publication, *The Sunday Leader*, I also compile a regular parliamentary column and write regular columns on a variety of topics ranging from politics to human rights.

For our mid weekly, *The Morning Leader*, I compile two columns. One is on environmental concerns while the other column, "Law Notes" seeks to educate the public of the minor violations of the law committed by the public and attempts to create awareness and promote a heightened civic sense.

These two columns are more on advocacy lines than analytical as opposed to my columns in *The Sunday Leader*.

3. Was the training attended by you organized by Panos South Asia of any help in your work and career?

Indeed they were of significant use.

The first one on environmental justice prompted me to create an ad hoc desk covering developmental issues and later to formulate my own column on environment which does promote the concept of environmental justice.

The workshop on new media technology was largely for the personal acquisition of knowledge which I later shared with our web designing team. I am certain that some of what I shared with them were of use to them.

4. If you are working for mainstream media (print, radio or TV) or engaged with any other development communication related work, in your work, have you

been able to raise marginalized development and other issues and voices?

Yes I have. My environment column as well some of the writings based on diverse rights issues seek to raise awareness the topics mentioned above.

5. If you have tried or have had raised marginalized development and other issues and voices in your work, could you please give some examples.

Sri Lankan aboriginal community known as the Veddahs and their right to inhabit their jungle homes and to hunt (this also formed part of my first PANOS Fellowship on environmental justice

The Mahaweli project and the displaced communities

The Upper Kothmale and the displacement of families once relocated under the Mahaweli scheme.

(Sorry to have answered this one very briefly. Have written so much on the above but my index is not available with me).