



# AMARC ASIA-PACIFIC NEWSLETTER

*"We are about people having a voice through radio."*

## IN THIS ISSUE

---

Experience Sharing by Idha Saraswati, Focal Person for Indonesia

Extreme Poverty Rose by 80 Million in Asia and Pacific due to COVID-19

Experience Sharing by Soumya Jha, Focal Person for India

Expanding opportunities for urban poor in East Asia and Pacific cities

### **"THIS KIND OF WORKSHOP HELPS STRENGTHEN SOLIDARITY AMONG COMMUNITY RADIOS."**

**– Idha Saraswati**

The workshop involving participants from different countries, backgrounds, and languages had created a different atmosphere. I could see that participants from Indonesia were very enthusiastic, even though they did not understand English very well. The common interest and vision as community radio activists made them excited to participate in the entire workshop process that involved participants from other countries. For most of them, it meant they had to stop working and put a halt to their daily routine during the workshop.

Of course, there were challenges. The language barrier was one of them. Therefore, the presence of translators was a necessity. Still, for things that are very specific in the context of community radio, I had to explain it more to the participants.

As the focal person for Indonesia, I carried out my duties and responsibilities online. I contacted the participants via online communication tools as they were from different parts of the country and the online connection helped me to reach out to them despite the space and time differences. In this context, digital technology was very useful in setting up the workshop that participants from different countries attended.

At first, I was worried that the online training would be challenging, because of internet illiteracy or technical issues, including poor internet connection. Thankfully, I was wrong. Although minor technical issues still occurred, I can say that all of the Indonesian participants followed the workshop schedule on time. The community radios in Indonesia had adapted to the context of the pandemic. Some of them even played important roles in their community during the pandemic, by conducting online learning for the student and



© Sangkala, JRKI, Indonesia

providing pandemic-related information for their community.

I believe that the participants have learned a lot from the trainers, facilitators, and other participants from the workshop. However, due to time and internet constraints not all of the participants had an equal chance to

share their feedback. Therefore, I think in the future it would be good to organize a session where each participant can present their assignment or feedback and can learn from each other.

I also think that the participants need more time during the introduction session. The facilitator could use a type of online participatory fun game to make the participants share their activities, stories, and struggles, particularly during the pandemic, so they could get the sense that they are one community during the workshop despite the language barrier.

Like the introduction session, in the end, a session where the participants can share their feelings and feedback after completing the training sessions, their plans, and expectations for their community radio could help inspire each other. By doing that, the learning and sharing process will continue after the workshop.

Lastly, in my opinion, this kind of workshop is important not only for the purpose of capacity building but also for connecting the community radios in the region and strengthening solidarity, particularly during difficult times.



*\* Idha Saraswati is an independent writer and researcher from Indonesia. She was the focal person for Indonesia during the project and helped coordinate our communication with Indonesian participants.*

## **EXTREME POVERTY ROSE BY 80 MILLION IN ASIA AND PACIFIC DUE TO COVID-19**

According to latest report by Asian Development Bank (ADB), the COVID-19 pandemic has magnified long-standing social and economic inequities experienced by millions living below or near the poverty line. Estimates already suggest that, compared to a baseline scenario without COVID-19, there were approximately 75 million to 80 million more people living in extreme poverty in developing Asia by the end of 2020.

To contain the spread of COVID-19, governments imposed some of the most extensive community lockdowns in history, sharply constraining economic activity and upending livelihoods. Airports, railways, and other public services and amenities were temporarily closed during 2020 and into 2021, while a variety of businesses, including restaurants, movie theaters, and gyms, were shut for long periods. International travel was severely restricted and human movement within localized lockdown areas were also limited. In a bid to help health systems cope and to limit the loss of life, responses to the virus have crippled economies, left millions without jobs, and caused the deepest global recession since World War II (World Bank 2021b).

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was launched in 2015, with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) covering areas such as the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, quality education for all, gender equality, protection of natural resources, addressing climate change, improving disaster resilience, attaining peace and security, achieving economic growth, and creating decent jobs.

The COVID-19 pandemic has created unprecedented challenges for many economies attempting to achieve development targets, including the SDGs. With 10 years to go before the final SDG assessment, many economies in Asia and the Pacific are still trailing behind several critical targets set by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Overall, the data and associated analyses in ADB's Key Indicators for Asia and the Pacific 2021 show how the COVID-19 pandemic has made the world's social and economic fault lines more visible than ever.

*\* The above article is an excerpt from the report published by Asian Development Bank*

<https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/720461/ki2021.pdf>

## **“ONE'S EXPERIENCE IS USEFUL TO ANOTHER.”**

**– Soumya Jha**

Being the focal person for the project was a very learning experience for me. Initially, I felt that maybe some sessions or some parts of the session may be missed by the participants as I feared they would not know how to use the interpretation services. The sessions were conducted in the English language while simultaneous interpretation services were available in Nepali, Hindi, Bangla, and Bhasa Indonesia languages were available for the participants. But I realized I need not have worried as all the sessions were conducted smoothly and easily without any major issues.

The way the AMARC-AP team coordinated the workshop was commendable. The participants faced no problem in sharing their thoughts and comments in the language of their choice from the very first session despite it being a multilingual webinar. The community radio journalists from India participated enthusiastically and had ample opportunities to share their comments and questions during the sessions. In fact, community radio practitioners from other countries too spoke without hesitation and seemed to understand the trainers without any difficulty. Community radio practitioners from other countries were equally interactive and it seemed like they were encouraging and inspiring each other.

There was a very friendly and interactive learning atmosphere; if the interpreter or trainer or participant had any problem during the session they could convey it easily in the middle of the session which helped with addressing the problem immediately.



© Gurgaon ki Awaaz, India

As a focal person, during the initial survey at the beginning of the project, I also got to know some things about community radios in India like their parent organization and media environment in their respective regions which was new for me. I was part of every step of the project from maintaining the line of communication among the Indian participants to pre-session preparation and attending all of the training sessions to ensure that the participants faced no problems.

Besides being a focal person for the project, I was also a trainer for a few sessions. It was a great opportunity for me as I could share my learnings and experiences with the participants and at the same time learn from them.

In the future, this type of training should continue as one country learns from another country, one community radio learns from other community radios and one's experience is useful to another. Then, we start to take an interest and learn about how community radios function in other countries. Furthermore, interacting with people of different religion, culture, age, and gender also help in gradually increasing communication and

understanding among each other and this is what community radio is all about. Actually, this type of webinar not only enhances and builds the capacity of participants, but it also builds the capacity of trainers, coordinators, focal persons, and organizers in different capacities in respective areas.



*\*Soumya Jha is an independent Community Radio Trainer and Consultant from India. She was the focal person for India during the project and was also the trainer for a few training sessions.*

## EXPANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR URBAN POOR IN EAST ASIA AND PACIFIC CITIES

Cities across East Asia and the Pacific are not delivering infrastructure, jobs, and services at a pace as rapid as urban development, leading to widening inequalities which may hamper economic growth and lead to social divisions, says a new World Bank report called “Expanding Opportunities for the Urban Poor”.

East Asia and the Pacific is the world’s most rapidly urbanizing region, with an average annual urbanization rate of 3 percent.

According to a World Bank Report, urbanization in the East Asia and Pacific (EAP) region has created enormous opportunities for many. Cities create jobs and boost productivity, while urban density has the potential to lower the unit costs of public service provision, enabling governments to extend access to basic services to more people.

The study raised a number of challenges facing cities in EAP that, if unaddressed, will put pressure on the region’s future growth, stability, and social cohesion. Yet if addressed, there is enormous untapped potential for creating more inclusive, livable cities. This situation presents tremendous opportunities at the country and city levels across the region.

The study aimed to provide a better understanding of issues of urban poverty, inequality, and urban inclusion in East Asia and the Pacific (EAP), particularly for those living in slums, as well as presenting a set of guiding principles for creating inclusive cities through multiple, interlinked dimensions—economic (jobs), spatial (housing and services), and social (equity in rights and participation, particularly for marginalized groups). The study was aimed at policymakers, researchers, donors, and practitioners working at both the city and national levels.

*\* The above article is an excerpt from the report published by the World Bank.*

<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/27614/9781464810930.pdf?sequence=13&isAllowed=y>

AMARC ASIA-PACIFIC  
SANEPA, LALITPUR-2  
NEPAL  
Phone: +977 1 5454811  
E-mail: ro@amarc-ap.org

AMARC Asia-Pacific is the regional autonomous chapter of the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC International). AMARC Asia-Pacific is constituted by the members of AMARC from countries in the Asia-Pacific region. AMARC Asia-Pacific has sub-regional governance structure that consists of South Asia, South East Asia, the Pacific and East Asia.