



December 2023

NEWSLETTER

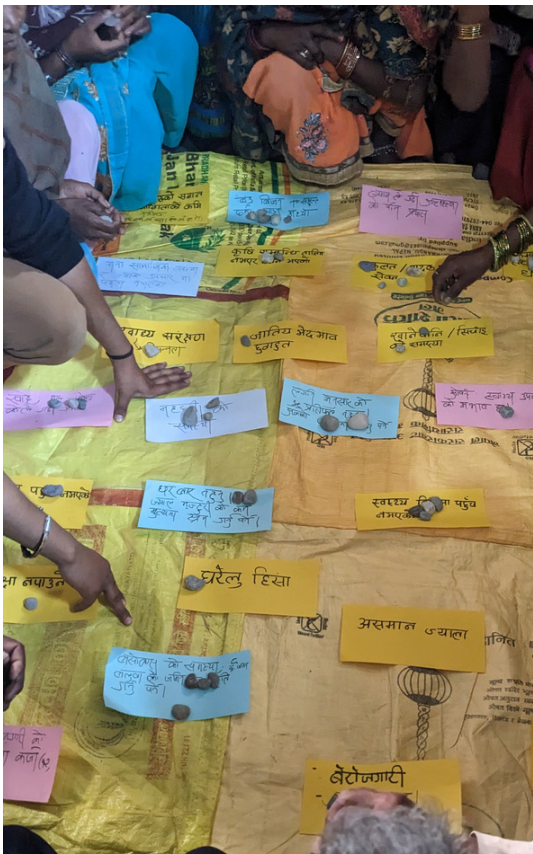
"We are about people having a voice."

Special Edition:
Community Radios Against Poverty, Part I

Poverty reduction has been a "cross-cutting issue" at AMARC Asia-Pacific for many years, and the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic gave it renewed urgency. In the year 2021 – in the early post-COVID days – AMARC Asia-Pacific launched a program specially designed to "Combat Pandemic-Related Poverty in Rural Regions of South and Southeast Asia."

Financially supported by the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development, Germany, and in partnership with the Catholic Media Council (CAMECO), the current phase of the program is working with 60 community broadcasters from 30 community radios in Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Timor Leste, and Nepal. The program mainly aims to enhance the capacity of community radios to effectively address issues concerning the most impoverished and marginalized within local communities.

In this special edition of the AMARC Asia-Pacific newsletter, we share with readers some of the highlights of the accomplishments so far.



Community Mapping: Know your Community better

A Community Mapping (CM) tool has been designed to help community broadcasters understand issues that matter to those suffering from the consequences of poverty.

Community broadcasters and residents work together to identify issues and resources in their community. Because maps are visual and easy to relate to, CM helps create a comprehensive picture of what it is like to live in a specific community.

Community Mapping is a mapping process carried out by the community to collect information to create a map of community issues and available resources within a defined area. A community map can highlight physical structures, organizations, and institutions as well as relevant people. The outcome is used by the broadcasters to produce radio programs that can best address local concerns.

More about the Community Mapping Process

The purpose of the toolkit for Community Mapping is to understand the target community's needs and preferences, especially of the poor, to involve them in producing radio programs genuinely community-centric. CM therefore involves careful planning and close consultations with the target community members.

Community radio experts Raghu Mainali and Yadab Chapagain developed the toolkit, closely supported by Sofie Jannusch of CAMECO, community radio representatives of Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Timor Leste and Nepal, and the core team of AMARC-AP.

In early 2023, AMARC Asia-Pacific worked with Civil Society Organizations (CSO) and community radios partnering in the poverty program to conduct the first community mapping exercise in the five program countries.

The process included a simple method for pre-mapping planning, involving basic research about the geographic, demographic, development, livelihoods, poverty, institutional, and governance information. The research mainly relied on information that was already available in local government offices or similar institutions as well as online resources.



Context mapping followed, identifying methods, framing questions, and conducting fieldwork to analyze issues and identify patterns.

The radio stations, led by the CSOs carried out the mapping in their respective coverage areas. Interviews were conducted with community members to identify the most important issues, and focus group discussions were organized to deepen discussions on specific issues. Eventually, the participating broadcasters produced radio content highlighting the issues identified by the community members during the mapping.

Working with the CSOs helped community broadcasters learn the ropes of community-based research.

The target community members remained fully involved throughout the process, completing the circle with receiving feedback after the programs were aired. They helped to ensure that the process was inclusive and that the voices of community members were heard. Community Mapping proved to be a valuable tool for improving the lives of people in rural communities. The radio stations have shown that they are committed to using this tool to make a difference.

Illustration



Voices of Community Broadcasters

Our understanding of communities has been rather general and based mostly on anecdotal information. It was only after participating in the community mapping exercise that I realized that although I and many of my fellow broadcasters belong to the same communities, our understanding of local issues was quite insufficient.

The community mapping exercise helped us understand clearly that lack of education and a severe shortage of skilled human resources for seasonal work (e.g., harvesting of seasonal crops in certain months of the year) were considered by the community members to be the biggest hindrances to their efforts to rise out of poverty. We are now working towards ensuring that our radio content is aimed at addressing those issues.

Mina Gurung,
Director,
Radio Marsyangdi FM 95 MHz,
Nepal



Community mapping programs are not new to local communities; they have been implemented, albeit not exactly in the same manner as when the government executes a nationwide empowerment program to eradicate poverty. However, for these communities, the community mapping conducted by community radio appears more specific and takes a locally relevant perspective on poverty. Members of the community feel happy because the identified perspective on poverty is broader, not only from an economic and livelihood perspective but also considering the viewpoints of women as well.

Atip Rohyana,
Director,
Rasi FM,
Indonesia



Voices of Community Broadcasters

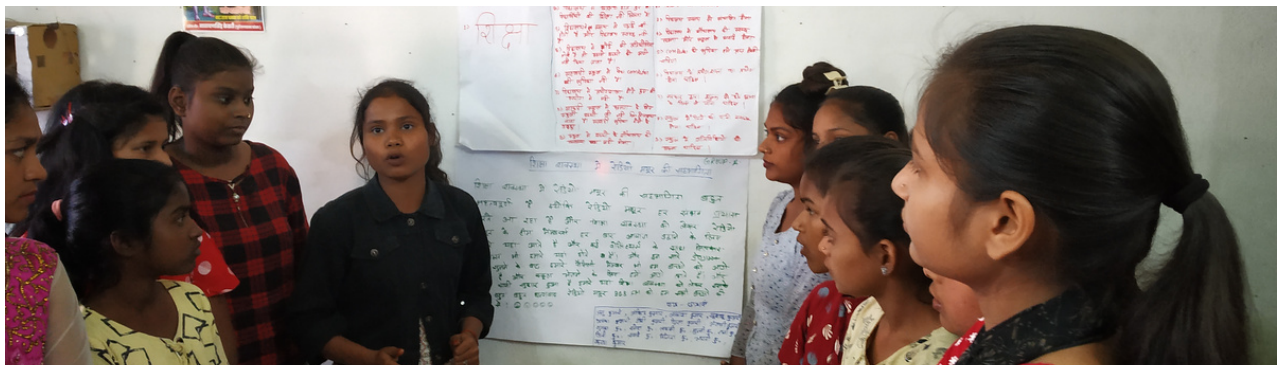
Community mapping has had a profound impact, transforming our approach to raising the issues and how we perceive a community. Previously, our initiatives targeted the entire locality without focusing on the unique challenges of specific areas. However, after incorporating community mapping into our strategy, our work became more targeted and precise. We shifted from addressing common problems to directly engaging with the needs of the local population, particularly those in marginalized or backward areas.

Pata Dey Brishti,
Program Producer,
Radio Sagor Giri FM 99.2,
Bangladesh



Our team had an enriching experience participating in the community mapping exercise. In this participatory tool, we learned how to bring all sections of society together in a place. It was also beneficial as we learned how to prioritize problems daily.

Radha Shukla,
Coordinator,
Waqt Ki Aawaz 91.2 FM,
India



AMARC Asia-Pacific Poverty Program Partners

Bangladesh

- Lokobetar FM 99.2, Barguna District
- Radio Nalta, Satkhira District
- Radio Mahananda 98.8 FM, Chapainawabganj District
- Radio Sagor Giri FM 99.2, Sitakund District
- Radio Pollikontho FM 99.2, Moulvibazar District

India

- FM 90.4 Mhz Henvallvani Community Radio, Uttarakhand
- Radio Muskaan, Odisha
- Mandakini Ki Aawaz, 90.8 FM, Uttarakhand
- Radio Mayur 90.8 FM, Bihar
- Waqt Ki Aawaz 91.2 FM Apka Apna Baja, Uttar Pradesh

AMARC Asia-Pacific Poverty Program Partners

Nepal

- Ichchhakamana FM 102.4 MHz, Bagmati Province
- Pratibodh FM 102.4 MHz, Lumbini Province
- Radio Gurbaba FM 106.4 MHz, Lumbini Province
- Radio Kapilvastu 104.2 MHz, Lumbini Province
- Radio Marsyangdi FM 95 MHz, Gandaki Province
- Radio Rapti FM 104.8 MHz, Karnali Province
- Radio Rudraksha 98.8 MHz, Madhesh Province
- Radio Sindhu 105 MHz, Bagmati Province, Nepal

Indonesia

- Radio Komunitas Petani Merapi (Merapi FM), Central Java Province
- Magita FM, Lampung Province
- Mosintuwu FM, Central Sulawesi Province
- Nina Bayan FM, West Nusatenggara Province
- Rasi FM, West Java Province
- Sipurennu FM, South Sulawesi Province
- Suara Waditra FM, West Java Province
- Taratak FM, West Sumatera Province

Timor-Leste

- Los Palos FM (Radio Comunidade Los Palos) FM, Lautem,
- Lorico Lian FM, Dili
- Radio Komunitas Maubisse Mauloko Jalan FM, Maubisse Villa Ainaro



AMARC Asia-Pacific announces “Handbook of Community Mapping”

AMARC Asia-Pacific is pleased to inform the readers that a handbook of community mapping will be released by early 2024.

The community mapping handbook is a step-by-step, practical guide and an expanded version of the mapping toolkit methodology.

The handbook is being designed to primarily serve community broadcasters to learn about community mapping in detail, through the mapping tool kit. Readers will also benefit from the lessons learned from the pilot exercise conducted in early 2023 in Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Timor Leste, and Nepal. The handbook will inspire community broadcasters to use the community mapping tool to identify their target communities’ needs, especially those of the marginalized within a community. It will also benefit civil society organizations and development practitioners seeking to work with local broadcasters.

The Community Mapping Handbook is being developed by Ashish Chandra Sen, a well-known community radio advocate from India.

News from AMARC Asia-Pacific

AMARC Asia-Pacific Regional Conference has concluded electing a Board of Directors for the next term and endorsing the Bangkok Declaration

The 5th AMARC Asia-Pacific Regional Conference of Community Radios held from 27-30 September 2023 in Bangkok, Thailand has elected a Board of Directors for the next term.

The newly elected Board is led by Dr. Ramnath Bhat, India as its President. The other elected members are Supinya Klangnarong, Thailand (deputy President), Raymund Villanueva, Philippines (Treasurer), Arti Jaiman, India (representative, Women International Network), Subas Khatiwada, Nepal (vice President, South Asia), Sinam Mitro Sutarno, Indonesia (vice President, Southeast Asia), Asuka Hashizume, Japan (vice President, East Asia) and Shane Gregory Elson, Australia (vice President, Pacific). The newly elected Board of Directors will serve for the next four years.

Endorsing the Bangkok Declaration, community radios of the Asia-Pacific region have resolved to deepen interactions with regional inter-governmental bodies, donor organizations, national networks of community media, and United Nations organizations, to develop strategies, programs, and training opportunities for community radio stations to be better equipped to serve local communities. The declaration has called on the governments of the Asia-Pacific region to recognize the vital role community broadcasting plays in developing a vibrant, responsive, and democratic society, and to create regulatory and legislative frameworks that support freedom of operation, growth, and sustainability of community radios.

Members of AMARC have renewed their commitment towards creating spaces on the airwaves for peasants, workers, fisherfolk, refugees, displaced people, asylum seekers, the stateless, the trafficked, and diverse and marginalized voices, irrespective of cultural, ethnic, religious, social, class, caste, disability, gender, sexual or political identification. While reasserting the role of community broadcasting in countering disinformation, resolutions of conflicts, and peacebuilding, the Regional Conference unequivocally denounced all forms of sexual and gender-based violence, particularly during times of conflicts ranging from the domestic sphere to wars waged on the bodies of women and minorities. Furthermore, the significant role played by community radios in the promotion of human rights was reiterated.

The full text of the Bangkok Declaration is available [here](#).



From left to right:

Raymund Villanueva (Treasurer), Subas Khatiwada (Vice President, South Asia), Shane Gregory Elson (Vice President, Pacific), Ramnath Bhat (President), Supinya Klangnarong (Deputy President), Sinam Mitro Sutarno (Vice President, Southeast Asia), Asuka Hashizume (Vice President, East Asia) & Suman Basnet (Regional Director AMARC Asia-Pacific)

News from AMARC Asia-Pacific

AMARC-AP releases the 'State of Community Radios in Asia-Pacific 2023 Report'

AMARC Asia-Pacific has released the State of Community Radios in Asia-Pacific 2023 report. The report was released at the inauguration of the 5th AMARC Asia-Pacific Regional Conference held from 27-30 September 2023 in Bangkok, Thailand.

This is the first time that a comprehensive report presenting an overall picture of the community broadcasting sector of the Asia-Pacific region has been put together in a single publication.

The publication is primarily based on information collected through two methods. A comprehensive survey was conducted in ten countries of the Asia-Pacific region. The survey collected general information about community radios in terms of location, transmission capacity, staff, and volunteer situation, broadcasting languages, content types and formats, and ownership models. The survey also included questions about gender and social inclusion, disaster preparedness of the radio stations, and the involvement of indigenous communities, Dalits, and family farming communities in community broadcasting.

Dr. Ramnath Bhat, President of AMARC Asia-Pacific states in the preface, "I hope that this report will be widely read, not only by broadcasters but also by other actors working on issues of global development, social justice, feminism, climate change and so on. We are extremely grateful to the community radio managers, reporters, volunteers, etc., who have generously contributed their time in the preparation of this report."

The report can be downloaded [here](#).

STATE OF COMMUNITY RADIO IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION REPORT 2023

STATE OF COMMUNITY RADIO IN JAPAN
Facts and Assessments

AT A GLANCE

- First station: FM Inuka (official name Hakodate FM)
- Location: Hakodate
- Established: 1992
- Initiator: Mt. Hakodate Ropeway Corporation
- Currently operating stations: 338
- Coverage: Distributed across all regions
- Signals: FM
- Additional streaming: Yes
- Internet only stations: Yes
- Digital broadcasting strategy: Yes
- Media policy/regulation: Yes
- Name of policy/regulation: Broadcasting Law and Radio Law
- Enacted and amended: 1992 and 2022

MAJOR DEMANDS OF THE SECTOR

What needs to be done to improve funding?
Different schemes, moving away from the model and increasing support from the government.

What needs to be done to improve safety of journalists?
Ensuring the safety of station staff during coverage.

Which areas require support for capacity building?
Working with communities and building trust, communication with residents, and increase number of citizen reporters for disasters.

What is needed in terms of technology support?
Digital communication using SNS (Social Sites) and simul broadcasting, and hardware equipment.

Recommendations for improving sustainability
Understanding of significance of existing community radio stations, participation of programming and production, and increase for operations.

OTHER SELECTED FINDINGS SOUTH ASIA
Frequency of women-oriented programs

India records a greater number of women-oriented programs daily and other countries in the region record it highly on a weekly basis.

Country	Sample Size (n)	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Yearly
Bangladesh	5	20%	80%		
Bhutan	1	0%	100%		
India	40	21%	11%	7%	5%
Nepal	41	12%	7%	7%	14%

Imprint

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Simran Khanal & Robert M. Bichler, AMARC Asia-Pacific Regional Office, Kathmandu.

Editor: Suman Basnet

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