



Newsletter
November 2024

AMARC Asia-Pacific

Special Edition:
Community Radios against Poverty



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Developing community radio trainers in Asia-Pacific

AMARC Asia-Pacific organizes a pan-regional trainers' training workshop

AMARC Asia-Pacific, in partnership with CAMECO and financially supported by the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development, BMZ, Germany, hosted a trainers' training in Kathmandu, Nepal. The training was held from 26-30 August 2024 and was attended by community radio managers and producers from Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Nepal, and Timor-Leste. The training aimed at developing competent community radio trainers with the skills to design and implement training programs for local broadcasters. In the longer term, the training is aimed at contributing towards the development of a pool of community radio trainers in the Asia-Pacific region.

Lin Xueling, a well-known senior journalist cum trainer along with Wilson Goh, a research specialist in education, both from Singapore, facilitated the training program. Suman Basnet, of AMARC Asia-Pacific, and Eng Eng Wang, a senior video content creator co-facilitated select sessions.

Participants worked through a series of guided questions and activities to clarify their goals, understand their target audience, and articulate the

purpose behind their initiatives. They examined elements of the theory of change framework (ToC), within which 'inputs' encompassing financial resources, human capital, materials, and information figured first. By clearly identifying and securing necessary inputs, organizations can ensure the means to execute their planned activities effectively. Next came the 'activities,' which included conducting workshops, creating content for broadcasts, and engaging with community members. The value of well-defined activities for ensuring a proper understanding by stakeholders of their roles and responsibilities, fostering mutual collaboration, and maximizing resource utilization was emphasized.

'Output' was taken up as the third element within the ToC framework. The discussion included monitoring the number of training sessions conducted, training materials produced and distributed, and programs produced by the broadcasters. It was clarified that by tracking outputs, organizations could measure immediate results and assess whether they are on track to achieve their intended 'outcomes.' 'Outcomes' connected output with broader goals by illustrating how immediate results lead to longer-term benefits. The trainers discussed the importance of focusing on outcomes for organizations to evaluate the effectiveness of their interventions and make necessary adjustments to enhance impact, such as increased listenership, greater community participation, and so on.



The training participants on the way to Radio Sindhu

The trainers took up 'impact' as the final step within the ToC framework. Impact represented the ultimate goal, such as enhanced community cohesion or improved access to information among marginalized groups. Understanding impact allowed the local radio stations to measure their efforts and secure ongoing support by demonstrating their contributions towards significant social change.

The workshop stressed the importance of aligning activities with desired outcomes and measuring success through clear indicators. In addition to the interactive and highly engaging discussions, participants were provided ample opportunities to engage in practical sessions for drafting training programs.

A day-long field trip to community radio Sindhu was one of the main highlights of the trainer's training. The field trip was guided by clear instructions for tasks to be performed by the trainees, which included detailed interactions with the local broadcasters for devising training plans to suit their requirements.



Wilson Goh (left) and Lin Xueling (right)

Words from the trainers:

"She walked quickly towards the building. People were always saying she never walked slowly and she grinned to herself - maybe they were right. There it was. All the work, the call-to-action shows, and the persuading when everyone was tired, was worth it. There it was, the best toilet in the community. The best because it was built. Radha-ji - activist, presenter, senior producer - snapped a picture with her phone and smiled another of her captivating smiles. If her radio listeners could have seen her, they would have smiled right back. Training this group of energetic radio station managers and senior producers reminded us why community radio can be such a powerful force for change, for good. The training programs they came up with were creative, insightful, and most of all grounded in what their communities need. It was an incredible honor and pleasure to be the facilitators in this Training of Trainers program - it would be hard to find a more warm, engaged, and dedicated group of people to work with. We hope the Theory of Change tools we suggested will help them make the exciting, and tough, choices they face."

-Lin Xueling and Wilson Goh

Feedback received from the participants was highly positive with many highlighting the training's practical approach and the opportunity to apply the theory of change framework to their own projects as significant learning steps. They appreciated the hands-on activities and the chance to receive personalized feedback from Lin and Wilson. They felt that the use of ToC in the training enhanced their confidence for better serving their communities and for measuring the impact of their activities. "I look forward to introducing the ToC in my community radio station to make better content and measure the impact," was a common statement heard across all the participants.

At the end of the workshop, a formal agreement was made with the participants for planning and implementing a training workshop for local broadcasters in their respective areas, aimed specifically at enhancing the participation of the most marginalized communities in the local radio stations.

AMARC Asia-Pacific community radio sustainability survey

Social Sustainability receives the highest priority



Participants of the community radio management training

The recently concluded 'AMARC Asia-Pacific survey of community radio sustainability' assessed four major dimensions of community radio sustainability – economic, technical, and organizational. The survey was participated by 28 community radios from Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Nepal, and Timor-Leste.

Economic sustainability has emerged as one of the most critical concerns, particularly in Timor-Leste and Bangladesh. It was also clear that stations with diverse income sources demonstrated a greater likelihood of financial stability. The survey results clarified the need for a robust fundraising strategy and effective marketing for enhancing economic resilience among community radios.

Technical sustainability was accorded a lower rating by the respondents. While most stations claimed to have adequate level of hardware and software, and availability of regular maintenance, lack of adequate data security measures, and poor signal – of radio frequencies and internet services – posed serious technological problems.

Organizational sustainability was accorded a higher priority by the respondents across the five countries. The analysis of the responses demonstrated that many stations had clarity regarding their vision and mission, with organizational charts and editorial guidelines in place. However, staff motivation and turnover come across as major concerns.

Social sustainability received the highest ratings, reflecting the relevance and appreciation of programs by the audience. However, a lack of well-structured methods of receiving listeners' feedback and infrequent programmatic adjustments were found to be major gaps in the way to socially relevant and sustainable community radios.

The results of the survey formed the basis for planning the 'community radio management training' conducted for community journalists from across the region. *(Please refer to the August Newsletter for more details.)*

AMARC Asia-Pacific supports community radio to design and implement sustainability action plans

In an ongoing effort to improve the overall sustainability of community radios, partner stations in Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Nepal, and Timor-Leste have launched action plans for their respective stations. The action plans have been designed and are being implemented in collaboration with AMARC Asia-Pacific, which has engaged community radio experts to mentor the partner stations through the entire process of designing and implementing the action plans. The mentors have supported the community radios to create actionable plans addressing their unique challenges. The entire process is geared toward the community radios taking proactive steps to improve their overall operation and ensure long-term success.

The sustainability survey (*for more details, please refer to the article about the sustainability survey in this newsletter*) marked the beginning of the sustainability action plans. The action plans are designed to guide the efforts of the respective stations for a longer period whereas the mentoring support has been made available for approximately six months. During this time, the mentors are working with the stations to solve specific issues related to the action plans. The mentors help the stations to focus on short-term fixes and establish sustainable frameworks for future growth and problem-solving. They provide critical insights into project management, helping the community radio stations measure and track the success of their action plans. The mentors, carrying rich experience in the field of community broadcasters, offer valuable suggestions on whether the proposed goals are achievable, and the improvements that can be made along the way. Each station has participated in an initial introduction session, followed by individual mentoring sessions tailored to their specific needs.

The sustainability action plan and mentorship program are about learning to track and improve any action plan or project. Through expert guidance, community radio stations are learning to monitor their progress, identify potential setbacks, and collaborate on solutions. It is an effective exercise in teamwork, where both the community radio staff and the mentors work together to refine projects and enhance outcomes. The stations are gaining a deeper understanding of evaluating their plans critically, assessing progress, and making necessary adjustments along the way.

Source: Soumya Jha, Focal Person, India



Mentors, Indonesia and Timor Leste



Adi Rumansyah



Sinam Mitro Sutarno



Dr. Mario Antonius Birowo

Mentors, India



Arti Jaiman



Nimmi Chauhan

Mentor, Bangladesh



Francis Sumon Gomes

Mentors, Nepal



Dr. Raghu Mainali



Subas Khatiwada

Waqt Ki Awaaz, a community radio station in the state of Uttar Pradesh, India has become a reliable source of information for around 500,000 residents across 300 villages, addressing critical issues such as women's empowerment, sanitation, education, and sustainable farming.

In 2023, Waqt Ki Awaaz embarked on an ambitious project: a comprehensive mapping exercise to identify the community's pressing needs. The team gathered local teachers, health workers, and self-help group (SHG) members for a series of engaging discussions. Participants eagerly shared personal stories of how the radio programs had positively influenced their lives, noting significant changes like increased school attendance among girls and a decline in domestic violence.

One of the most poignant sessions took place in the village of Ludhora, where 57 participants, predominantly women, came together to talk about poverty. They discussed their community's most pressing challenges, which included open defecation, waste management, lack of education, alcoholism, and damage to crops from roaming animals. Through a democratic voting process, they prioritized these issues, igniting detailed discussions to formulate local solutions.

The villagers resolved to initiate a cleaning campaign and raise awareness about the dangers of open defecation and the societal effects of alcoholism. They understood that raising awareness about the negative impact of alcoholism was vital and planned to communicate these issues to local authorities as part of their advocacy efforts. Recognizing the importance of education, the participants also decided to engage an educated local girl to address the educational needs of children and pushed for the establishment of a formal educational institution.

As Waqt Ki Awaaz looks to the future, several recommendations emerged from the mapping exercise. They included promoting hygiene through broadcasted messages, advocating for children's education, sharing real-life stories to combat alcoholism, and engaging local authorities on pressing community needs. The overarching goal is to sustain these initiatives for long-term impact and empowerment.



Source: Community mapping report, India

Roundtable discussion: State of community radio in Indonesia

On August 2, 2024, AMARC Asia-Pacific, in collaboration with Combine Resource Institute (CRI) and Jaringan Radio Komunitas Indonesia (JRKI), organized a roundtable discussion in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. This discussion, which centered on the current state of community radios in Indonesia, was participated by vital stakeholders including representatives from the community radio sector, academicians, and members of civil society organizations. The meeting generally focused on assessing the state of media policies, challenges faced by community radios, and possible pathways into the future.



Stakeholders stressed the urgency for community radios to engage more actively with local communities as well as policymakers, and promote networks, nationally as well as internationally, to revitalize their operations. Participants of the meeting were unanimous in citing regulatory challenges as one of the biggest hurdles in the way of community radio development in Indonesia.

They emphasized the need for simplified and affordable broadcast permit processes. Adi Rumansyah, President, JRKI informed about the ongoing efforts aimed at eliminating financial burdens related to permit fees, especially in regions struggling with license renewals.

Participants expressed concerns over the concentration of community radios in Java, leaving eastern regions underserved. Some stations are contemplating transitions to private entities or NGOs to secure funding, complicating the landscape further.

The discussion concluded with a call for renewed advocacy for community radios, emphasizing their crucial role in addressing local issues such as social justice and cultural preservation. It underscored the need to leverage digital platforms while staying committed to community identity.

A decline in community radios since their peak in the early 2000s, largely due to regulatory challenges and insufficient government support, was noted. Despite streamlined licensing processes, many requirements remain cumbersome, deterring potential operators.

Meeting participants:

-  Ade Tanesia, Secretary, CRI
-  Adi Rumansyah, President, JRKI
-  Akhmad Nasir, Komisi Informasi Daerah (KID) Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta
-  Prof. Dr. Antonius Birowo, Universitas Atma Jaya Yogyakarta
-  Antonius Darmanto, Badan Riset dan Inovasi Nasional (BRIN)
-  Aris Harianto, Program Coordinator, CRI
-  Budhi Hermanto, Treasurer, CRI
-  Elanto Wijoyono, Director, CRI
-  Ferdhi F. Putra, Program and Innovation Management Unit, CRI
-  Himas Nur Rahmawati, Communications Officer, CRI
-  Masduki, Universitas Islam Indonesia
-  Panji Dwi Ashrianto, Universitas Pembangunan Nasional "Veteran" Yogyakarta
-  Ranggoaini Jahja, President, CRI
-  Sinam M. Sutarno, Vice-President, South-East Asia, AMARC Asia-Pacific
-  Suman Basnet, Regional Director, AMARC Asia-Pacific



AMARC Asia-Pacific and UAJY renew MoU for community radio development



AMARC Asia-Pacific, Universitas Atma Jaya Yogyakarta (UAJY), and Jaringan Radio Komunitas Indonesia (JRKI) have renewed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for another five years, until August 1, 2029.

The MoU aims to develop an atmosphere of cooperation for academic and community radio development and to promote relations and mutual understanding between all institutions. Key activities envisioned include establishing a knowledge center for community radio and organizing seminars, workshops, and research projects jointly.

Additionally, AMARC Asia-Pacific and JRKI will support in placement of UAJY students for internships. UAJY will organize guest lectures by representatives from AMARC Asia-Pacific and JRKI to share the current updates on community radio practices. The partnership emphasizes mutual understanding and advancement in community broadcasting across the Asia-Pacific region.

AMARC Asia-Pacific's Latest Initiative to Support Family Farming

AMARC Asia-Pacific has launched the latest round of Family Farming Radio Campaign 2024, with the support of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (UN FAO). AMARC Asia-Pacific is collaborating with member stations across six countries including Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, the Philippines, Nepal, and the Solomon Islands to implement the radio campaign. The campaign is supporting community radios to collaborate with farmers' organizations so as to effectively address their concerns and issues. The campaign is taking place under the aegis of ComDev Asia (CDA).

The main objective of the initiative is to coordinate a radio campaign that informs and engages local communities while supporting the objectives of the United Nations Decade of Family Farming (UNDF). The campaign will run from July to November 2024, highlighting priority family farming issues, fostering dialogue, and promoting local solutions.

AMARC members reported from the Global Family Farming Forum 2024, Rome

As part of the ongoing collaboration between the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (UN FAO) and AMARC Asia-Pacific, community radios Radyo Sagada 104.7 FM, represented by Gwen Gaongen, and Radyo Natin Guimba, represented by Vermarie (Armi) Carranza -- both from the Philippines -- were nominated to join the Rural Radio Reporting Initiative, as part of the Global Family Farming Forum 2024, from the FAO headquarters in Rome, Italy.



Gwen Gaongen



Vermarie (Armi) Carranza

From 15-18 October, Gwen and Armi generated rich content, including interviews, panel discussions, and cultural segments. They focused on key topics such as public policies, innovation, market opportunities, and the critical roles of women and youth in family farming. The Forum celebrated the midterm of the United Nations Decade of Family Farming (2019-2028) and brought together various stakeholders to discuss challenges and future priorities for family farming. The event featured an exhibition area showcasing diverse family farming practices and an on-site radio station that broadcasted discussions to a global audience.



Upcoming AMARC Asia-Pacific Publications

[all publications will be available for free download from <https://amarc-ap.org>]

Peace stories from community radio stations

AMARC Asia-Pacific will be releasing by the end of 2024 a publication of success stories of community radios resolving conflicts and promoting peace in the local communities.

Pocketbook of community mapping

A community mapping pocketbook for community radio reporters will be released at the end of October 2024.

Handbook of Community Mapping

A community mapping handbook will be released by the end of October 2024. The handbook will cover experiences of community mapping by NGO partners and community radios, personal insights, and lessons learned based on the experiences of the five countries that participated in the initiative namely, Nepal, India, Bangladesh, Indonesia, and Timor-Leste.

AMARC Asia-Pacific CR Directory 2024

The Directory will contain basic information about community radio stations in the AMARC Asia-Pacific region.

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